



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Report on the Inquiry into Building a United Community – Volume Two

Written Submissions (1-60)

Ordered by the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and
deputy First Minister to be printed on 1 July 2015

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COMMENCEMENT OF THE DEBATE IN PLENARY.**

Membership and Powers

Powers

The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is a Statutory Committee established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Belfast Agreement, Section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Assembly Standing Order 48. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and has a role in the initiation of legislation.

The Committee has the power to;

- consider and advise on Departmental Budgets and Annual Plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- approve relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee stage of primary legislation;
- call for persons and papers;
- initiate inquiries and make reports; and
- consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Membership

The Committee has eleven members, including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, and a quorum of five members.

The membership of the Committee is as follows:

Mr. Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)^{1,2}

Mr. Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr. Alex Attwood¹⁴

Mr. Michael Copeland^{3,10,11,12,16,17}

Miss Megan Fearon⁵

Mrs. Brenda Hale⁸

Mr. Alex Maskey

Ms. Bronwyn McGahan⁶

Mr. David McIlveen¹⁵

Mr. Stephen Moutray⁷

Mr. Jimmy Spratt^{4,9,13}

- 1 With effect from 26 September 2011 Mr Mike Nesbitt replaced Ms Sandra Overend
- 2 With effect from 17 April 2012 Mr Mike Nesbitt replaced Mr Tom Elliott as Chairperson
- 3 With effect from 23 April 2012 Mr Danny Kinahan was appointed to the committee
- 4 With effect from 21 May 2012 Mr Tom Buchanan replaced Mr Jimmy Spratt
- 5 With effect from 10 September 2012 Ms Megan Fearon replaced Mr Francie Molloy
- 6 With effect from 10 September 2012 Ms Bronwyn McGahan replaced Ms Caitriona Ruane
- 7 With effect from 01 October 2012 Mr Stephen Moutray replaced Mr William Humphrey
- 8 With effect from 01 October 2012 Mrs Brenda Hale replaced Mr Trevor Clarke
- 9 With effect from 01 October 2012 Mr Paul Givan replaced Mr Tom Buchanan
- 10 With effect from 15 October 2012 Mr John McCallister replaced Mr Danny Kinahan
- 11 With effect from 25 February 2013 Mr Robin Swann replaced Mr John McCallister
- 12 With effect from 11 March 2013 Mr Leslie Cree replaced Mr Robin Swann
- 13 With effect from 15 April 2013 Mr Jimmy Spratt replaced Mr Paul Givan
- 14 With effect from 07 October 2013 Mr Alex Attwood replaced Mr Colum Eastwood
- 15 With effect from 06 October 2014 Mr David McIlveen replaced Mr George Robinson
- 16 With effect from 06 October 2014 Mr Roy Beggs replaced Mr Leslie Cree
- 17 With effect from 13 October 2014 Mr Michael Copeland replaced Mr Roy Beggs

Table of Contents

Membership and Powers	i
List of Abbreviations	v
Report	
Executive Summary	1
Key Conclusions and Recommendations	2
Introduction	8
Together Building a United Community	8
Underlying principles	8
Key priorities and aims	9
Budget allocation	9
Committee Approach	9
Aim	10
Terms of reference	10
Call for evidence	10
Evidence gathering	11
Deliberations	11
Consideration of the Evidence	13
General Comments on “Together: Building a United Community”	13
Narrow focus	15
Consultation and co-design	15
Building a United Community: Theory and Practice	17
Academic Research & Good Practice	17
Definitions and terminology	18
Resourcing T:BUC	20
Financing Together: Building a United Community	20
Provision of Funding	22
Role of Local Government	24
District Council Good Relations Programme	25
Community planning & the involvement of communities in decision making	28
Approaches to addressing sectarianism and division	31
Exploring shared issues: Contested Spaces/Interfaces Programme	31
Single Identity Approach	33
Shared Space	33
Relationship building and trust	35
Urban interfaces	36
Contested space in rural communities	38
Mixed communities	40
General comments on approaches to addressing sectarianism and division	41
Mental Health/Intergenerational Trauma	41
Good Relations Indicators	43

Appendices

Appendix 1

Minutes of Proceedings 47

Appendix 2

Minutes of Evidence 85

Appendix 3

Written Submissions 241

Appendix 4

OFMDFM Papers and Correspondence 883

Appendix 5

Research Papers 967

Appendix 6

Other Papers and Correspondence 1083

List of Abbreviations

ACNI	Arts Council Northern Ireland
AoH	Ancient Order of Hibernians
BCDA	Ballynafeigh Community Development Association
BCRC	Ballymoney Community Resource Centre
BME	Black Minority Ethnic
BRIC	Building Relationships in Communities
CAJ	Committee on the Administration of Justice
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CERD	Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CoE	Council of Europe
CRED	Community Relations and Diversity in Education
CRIS	Community Relations in Schools
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CLC	Children's Law Centre
CoE	Council of Europe
CRC	Community Relations Council
CR/CD	Community Relations / Community Development
CRED	Community Relations Equality and Diversity
CSI	Cohesion, Sharing and Integration
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DCGRP	District Councils Good Relations Programme
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DOE	Department of the Environment
DoJ	Department of Justice
DPCSP	District Policing and Community Safety Partnership
DPP	District Policing Partnership
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECNI	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
EWL	European Women's Lobby
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FETO	Fair Employment and Treatment Order
FSME	Free School Meals Entitlement
GB	Great Britain
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GFA	Good Friday Agreement
GRMF	Good Relations Measurement Framework

GRO	Good Relations Officer
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICR	Institute for Conflict Research
ICRED	International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
IFI	International Fund for Ireland
IRFU	Irish Rugby Football Association
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender
LGD	Local Government District
LGR	Local Government Reform
LINI	Landscape Institute Northern Ireland
LORAG	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
MIFC	Media Initiative for Children
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NBCAU	North Belfast Community Action Unit
NEET	Not in Education Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NICEM	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NIHRC	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
NILGA	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NIYF	Northern Ireland Youth Forum
NUS – USI	National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
PCSP	Policing and Community Safety Partnership
PfG	Programme for Government
PHA	Public Health Agency
PSNI	Police Service for Northern Ireland
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
RCN	Rural Community Network
RoI	Republic of Ireland
RRO	Race Relations Order
RUC GC	Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SELB	Southern Education and Library Board
SF	Sinn Fein
SIB	Strategic Investment Board
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers
T:BUC	Together: Building a United Community
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UPRG	Ulster Political Research Group
WHO	World Health Organisation
YCNI	Youth Council Northern Ireland
YLT	Young Life and Times



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Appendix 3

Written Submissions (1-60)

List of Written Submissions

1. Armoy Community Association
- 1a. Armoy Community Association Survey
2. Arts Council of Northern Ireland
3. Ballymena Borough Council
4. Ballymoney Community Resource Centre
5. Ballynafeigh Community Development Association
6. Ballynahinch Support Group
7. Banbridge District Council
8. Belfast City Council
9. Belfast Healthy Cities
10. Carnegie UK Trust
11. Children's Law Centre
12. Committee for the Environment
13. Committee for Finance and Personnel
14. Committee for Social Development
15. Committee on the Administration of Justice
16. Community Arts Partnership
17. Community Relations Council
- 17a. Community Relations Council Briefing Paper
- 17b. Community Relations Council Correspondence
18. Co-operation Ireland
19. Department for Employment and Learning
20. Department for Regional Development
21. Department for Social Development
22. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
23. Department of Culture Arts and Leisure
24. Department of Education
25. Department of Justice
26. Derry City Council
27. Early Years
28. Equality Coalition
29. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
30. Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland
31. Forthspring Inter Community Group
32. Foyle Trust for Integrated Education
33. GAA, Irish Football Association, IRFU
34. Glencree Women's Programme
35. Golden D
36. Holywell Trust, Peace & Reconciliation Group, The Junction

37. Institute for Research in Social Sciences - University of Ulster
38. Interaction Belfast
39. Knox, C Professor & McWilliams, S
40. Landscape Institute Northern Ireland
41. Linking Generations Northern Ireland
42. National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland
43. Newtownabbey Borough Council
44. NIACRO
45. NIAMH (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health)
46. NICIE (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education)
47. Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
48. Northern Ireland Environment Link
49. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
50. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
51. Northern Ireland Local Government Association - Briefing Paper
- 51a. Northern Ireland Local Government Association - Correspondence
52. Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership
- 52a. Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership - Community Profiles for Local Government District (Extract)
53. Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
54. Northern Ireland Youth Forum
55. Oakgrove Integrated College
56. Participation and Practice of Rights
57. Playboard Northern Ireland
58. Police Service of Northern Ireland
59. Presbyterian Church in Ireland
60. Rathfriland Resident
61. Rural Community Network
62. Speedwell Trust
63. Start360
64. Strabane District Council
65. Suffolk Community Pocket Plots
66. The Bytes Project
67. The Peace Walls Programme
68. UNISON Northern Ireland
69. University of Ulster
70. Women's Resource and Development Agency
71. Youth Council for Northern Ireland
72. Youth Councils of Newry & Mourne, Armagh, Dungannon
73. Youthnet

Armoy Community Association

Inquiry into Building a United Community Terms of Reference

The Inquiry will:

Explore perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations including:

Thanks for the opportunity to make contribution to this Inquiry.

The BTUC paper when launched contained really pragmatic opportunities to do real work that I felt would make a difference. I could identify with what would work - because in a community like ours we were already doing some of this. We have since 2001 a Cross community playgroup and for 22 years cross community summer schemes (each just after Twelfth). across the divide for the past 22 years in what often were difficult times.

And in 2014 notable for having NO Summer scheme due to lack of funding.

And we had over a 100 children attending.

That summer scheme was the basis for starting a community group here at a rural interface area.

So hopes raised and big disappointment on many fronts but most notable unable to access funds for type of programme needed to meaningfully engage Protestant and Catholic young people.

And will this lead to winding down our cross community endeavours.

Thought the BTUC paper in 2013 was there to make it happen for communities like ours.

Context and experience

My experience is based on 'lived experiences' -was 18 years old in 1968.

So all my adult life has been in the context of 'troubles' and since 1994 involved in a voluntary way in rebuilding community here.

I live in a rural interface area in Armoy North Antrim.

I live in the same place - same land as my ancestors lived when that 'agricultural census' of 1803 was carried out - post 1798!

Politics and division - pulling together and being pulled in different directions has been part of the dynamic of this area for generations.

In 1911 Armoy ward was one of the very few wards in the whole of non divided Ireland that was 50% Protestant : 50% Catholic.

We have and live side by side and know about what that reality is.

Back then...

Not much of substance has been written about Armoy.

But it was important in the old Kingdom of Dalriada; the Round Tower signifies an importance back then of place and the people; the Cairn of Peace to commemorate the 1959 World Ploughing contest was a great event; the old Hump Back Bridge was built around the time of the Battle of the Boyne and still looks old and beautiful!

The new Bridge was added just 150 years ago; the Narrow Gauge Railway to connect Ballymoney and Ballycastle and us was closed in July 1950; our connection with Motorbike racing is legendary- Joey Dunlop and the Armoyn Armada.

All of this and more is shared history and shared appreciation...

Mixed community - who cares?

But there is a greater reality that not much happens here; two sides can create difficulty - the historical mistrust, lack of representation , being labelled etc in a mixed / interface area can create apathy, indifference , resignation, acceptance and blame culture?

The alternative that creates an energy at interface areas is often conflict, contesting space, disputes etc and if they are packaged in a political divisive manner then the profile of the area and needs etc are raised and addressed? But who needs to or wants to speak for 'the needs' of both Protestants and Catholics? Even real common needs - an equality unfortunately often determined by lack, deprivation etc is ignored.

And that is largely our continuing experience here. There is no given constituency of people to back a few volunteers who step out into that sort of work.

And do politicians and their departments want to back those doing real work that applies across the interface?

Indeed what degree of understanding is there after all these years of what it means and the challenges to building neighbourliness across the divide with those local people who share the same place? It is really fine doing programmes, projects and publicity with interested people but building community with those who are different - where one lives is the acid test. This tests tolerance and overcoming some of the obstacles is not easy - extremely difficult - similar to what happens in the professional arena of politics.

And this area knows about the division , segregation , sectarianism etc and what it is to live at an interface area. But we have strived and ran with an alternative which changes things. But the real work is hard and at present very undervalued.

Inspired by our own politicians

Armoyn has seen progress over the past 20 years in rekindling the decency of neighbourliness that was once the hallmark of this rural area.

We also know the realities and resistances - from 20 years experience.

And how was this possible? Simply of what happened in August / October 1994.

And we applaud all our politicians who have taken the brave steps to create circumstances that inspired a small place like us here on the 5th October 1994 to form a cross community group to address real needs of this community.

Since 2001 we have a shared facility literally at the crossroads where one community ends and the other begins. A shared facility used daily for the shared needs of Protestants and Catholics. A shared facility directly opposite where Mervyn Storey MLA was reared. And his journey from here to his political position is important to us.

And in terms of being a mixed community we feel that there is currently a lack of political willingness to help a rural area like this. Yet this is working in spite of having the thinking applied to support places like this build a united community.

The support both financial and moral in the period ~ 1994 to 2004 allowed us to access funds to build a shared community building is in contrast to the apparent pulling back in support since the Executive became operational.

We are left to our own devices to run a shared community centre without financial assistance from any government agencies. There is now a distinct lack of interest - even a reluctance - distaste from agency staff etc to hear or mention this Protestant and Catholic thing. Our political stagnation, polarisation appears to have taken the 'shared' emphasis into something not for now but for the future.

If you talk for the Catholic / Nationalist or Protestant / Unionist side you can be taken seriously but the mixed area is pushed to the margins.

Shared space

It appears that we have a more favourable climate towards acceptance of single identity areas.

We accessed capital through IFI /DSD to build a shared space. Single identity areas and facilities are backed on either side of the divide. However a single mixed identity group with a shared facility that carries all the overheads etc operating at an interface does not have the luxury for volunteer support similar to the social capital existing in a single identity community. This community facility is used by both sides but to take on the responsibility etc to run with a cross community agenda is still out of kilter with the political context currently operational. So volunteers running with this shared agenda are very few.

This facility was jointly proposed at an open community meeting in 1995 by both a DUP and SF councillor - and at a time when they allegedly were not speaking to one another.

Their willingness to see the real needs of this community was and is still an inspiration that 'needs' can be common despite divergent party political allegiances. So at our interface area - Armoy there is a litany of neglect - of being bypassed.

Yes this mixed area offers the potential to do a lot to show that ordinary people with a great diversity of difference can unite around common needs. Good groundwork has been done on which we could propel this community forward.

Our Centre Tilly Molloy's has allowed the playgroup to operate in a shared centre, allows Surestart to do wonderful work, provides space for a Community pharmacy, cafe, 2 rented flats, rented out public toilets, hairdresser's, Mother and Toddlers group etc In this shared space people get to know what unites them rather than divides them .

All of this managed voluntary. We have been Building the United Community for 20 years .

We are grateful to agencies , government bodies who helped us. And we are Grateful to a whole range of unlikely people who bought into what they could see we were doing. Through use of the facility relationships have been transformed.

And the shared conclusion or shared consensus just hours ago with someone from well across the divide is that this community is ignored because there is not enough trouble here!

Yes it appears that there is a continuing penalty or lack of real interest in a mixed and rural interface area for going about it in a peaceful way?

But the real and enduring legacy here is around relationship building. Shared space, shared facilities , shared needs etc allows ordinary people to get to know one another and they personally value getting to know and even like people across the divide.

Yes there is a shared pride in belonging to a small place that is diverse - has 3 Orange Lodges, 3 Church Halls, GAA club, Rugby Club, Masonic Hall, 2 primary schools and a shared community facility - Tilly Molloy's .

As we reach 20 years of doing this there is a great yearning and confidence that our politicians can start to bat together to give this mixed area a real lift by directing resources here to show that the alternative peaceful way is a viable option to follow.

Many thanks - for what this is worth

Gerry Burns

Sec Armoy Community Association

Armoy Community Association Survey

Inquiry into Building The United Community at Ballymoney Resource Centre Armoy Community Association March 2015

Since 1994 the Armoy Community Association have carried out two major audits in the area. One in 1995/ 96 that provided the case/ context for the Community Centre - Tilly Molloy's -opened in October 2001 by DSD - Minister Maurice Morrow.

The professional and independent approach adopted in these surveys/ audits allowed and empowered people and groups to have a say.

Having a say / getting a say' in a rural interface area was a new experience!

For generations - the question was who would/ could speak for a small place like Armoy? The answer - no one. The result was years of neglect - a downward spiral and virtual abandonment of both sides of one community. Despite 20 years of chiselling away we are a poor relation relative to many other single identity areas. We still have a very feeble voice as a single mixed identity group.

We are not taken seriously!

The process of engaging with local people through consultation/ surveys was helpful. It allowed individuals to have a say and in reflection as groups 'among their own sort' it was positive and challenging as it asked hard questions like 'how did / could we get on with one another'?

The downside it raised expectations locally of both Protestants and Catholics. Getting agencies over the past 5 years to take an interest in the views of what the people of Armoy (2009) felt - has been most disappointing. There is no joined up approach; sometimes no approach and sometimes no understanding of the most basics of what we are about!

On the positive side since this survey was conducted I would say 'community relations' in the Armoy area have been 'positively transformed' onwards and upwards even from that positive base of 2009.

People here now feel pretty good about themselves and good about one another. There is a shared trust and confidence in one another. The investments by many agencies over the years have made a real difference.

The stability of the political structures and the work towards peace has helped us in a mixed community like Armoy.

We feel it is a privilege to share some of that experience and journey with your committee.

And we hope those associated with BTUC - politicians and civil servants will some day visit Armoy - see what has been done and what has yet to be done .

Thank you

Gerry Burns
Sec Armoy Community Association

Some findings from Armo Community Survey 2009

Respondents

165 respondents completed questionnaire
119 females and 46 males
28% in age range 26-40
33% over 55 years

Additional 55 completed by young people

Length of time at current address

64% have lived in Armo for 21 years +
11% 3-5 years
27% have lived in the area for 10 years or less

Housing tenure

79% live in privately owned
14% owned by Housing Executive

Community spirit / community relations (2 questions but results similar)

70% felt community spirit was good or excellent
26% felt it was 'fair'
4% felt it was poor

Stress and anxiety

46% felt that in 'their household' they knew of someone under pressure, stress, anxiety
44% did not

Causes of stress

Health problems 20%
Money problems 18%

Long term health problem

19% had a long term health problem
63% no one with long term health problem

Disability

16% have a physical disability
10% another member of household
70% no one with a physical or sensory disability

Caring responsibilities

20% of households provide regular care for another person - age, state of health or disability

Of the 20% above -

36% would welcome information on financial help
33% would like someone to talk to
27% interested in contact with support organisation re access to aids, advice etc

Community safety

77% always felt safe
17% sometimes felt safe

Housing

49% felt that there was need for more housing
 18% there was not
 31% saying they did not know one way or the other

Environmental matters

62.% felt road gritting in winter poor or very poor
 34% stating road surfaces are poor or very poor
 29% unhappy with footpaths(poor or very poor)

Steps to improve general look of Armoy

Improved car parking - 57%
 More flower beds / tubs in village - 51%
 Clean ups - 46%
 Reduction in vandalism - 45%

Views on development of tourism

Development of B&B accommodation- 46%
 Walking - 44%
 Development of playing pitches - 39%

Factors which would make a positive difference

Respondents were asked to select the five factors which would make the most positive difference to people in their household

Findings

- safer roads, new footpaths (46%)
- activities for young people (43%)
- improved policing (40%)
- more educational opportunities/local classes (37%)
- traffic calming measures in the village (35%)
- opportunities to socialise more (31%)
- better transport (29%)
- better availability of affordable housing (29%)
- more outings for older people (25%)

In this survey the following groups and organisations local or active in the Armoy area were consulted alongside the community survey.

These groups included:

Armoy Pride of the Park Flute Band
 Glens Rural Community Group
 Armoy Cross Community Playgroup
 Church of Ireland
 Catholic Church
 Armoy Womens Institute
 St Olcan's Primary School
 Armoy Rugby Club

Orange Lodge
 Armoy Over 55s
 Dalriada Rural Surestart
 Presbyterian Church
 Armoy Mother and Toddler Group
 Armoy Primary School
 Armoy Youth Group
 Christian Family Centre - Armoy

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Arts Council of Northern Ireland submission to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building a United Community

Introduction

1. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the development and funding agency for the Arts in Northern Ireland. We distribute public money and National Lottery funds to develop and deliver a wide variety of arts projects, events and initiatives across Northern Ireland.
2. The arts provide a rich offering to building peace and a shared future: a safe space where we can explore our many-faceted identities and our hopes for the future as well as appreciate difference and grow common ground; they can nurture a sense of optimism through events such as the City of Culture 2013 and Belfast Culture Night; and, indeed, we have witnessed how arts venues can be a place where genuine encounter can occur. Time and again, we experience the arts reaching across boundaries and division, providing opportunities for us to live life together in ways which serve a society seeking to be shared, healthy and embracing of diversity.
3. The Arts Council welcomes the Inquiry into Building a United Community undertaken by the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Overview of Arts Council activity relevant to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference

4. In Northern Ireland, the arts have been used as a component of peace building, helping to bring together communities split by religious, political and ethnic divides.

There is a variety of arts activity and initiatives occurring across Northern Ireland, in both urban and rural areas, which promote good relations and build a shared future.

These include:

- Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities
- The Intercultural Arts Strategy and Programme
- The Cultural Funding Scheme
- The forthcoming Community Arts Strategy
- Arts Council funded organisations and projects (Exchequer and Lottery funding)
- The Arts Council Troubles Archive

Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities Programme

5. In February 2013, the Arts Council launched the £3.1m Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities Programme¹. The programme is rooted in the building of a shared future for Northern Ireland. It supports community groups and local authorities across Northern Ireland and the Border Areas of the Republic of Ireland in tackling the manifestations of sectarianism and racism.
6. The programme encourages the creation of vibrant and attractive shared public space through the use of the creative arts in the public realm, which celebrate life, enhance the physical and natural environment and help people feel part of the community in which they live. The

1 This programme is funded by the European Union's Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE III)

purpose of this next phase of funding is to build peace and improve community relations through consultation, creative engagement and the development of public artworks.

7. The programme aims to tackle the different forms of segregation and division in their variety of manifestations across Northern Ireland. For example, within the larger urban areas, the programme aims to free the public realm from visible displays of sectarian aggression and intimidation such as graffiti, flags and murals; and within the numerous small villages and rural communities, where displays of the visible trappings of sectarian division are limited, the programme recognises that barriers nonetheless exist and are manifest in a number of ways, including people's ability to move freely and safely about the community.
8. Projects must address one or more of the programme's strategic themes:
 - A. Community Cohesion - to provide opportunities for more stable, safer neighbourhoods and develop strong, positive relations between people from different backgrounds.
 - B. Regeneration through the Arts - to develop more inclusive civic and cultural identities through the production of high quality artwork for the public realm.
 - C. Positive Relations at the Local Level - utilise the arts and arts processes as a means with which to challenge sectarian and racist attitudes and build positive community relations at a local level.
 - D. Build Peace and Reconciliation - support progress towards a peaceful, shared and stable society and promote reconciliation through community led programmes of arts activities.
 - E. Connecting Communities - utilise the arts and arts processes as a means in which to connect communities throughout Northern Ireland and the Border Areas.
9. The programme prioritises projects that: (1) are cross-community, inter-community, cross-border or inter-cultural, (2) target the participation of young people, (3) target the participation of minority ethnic communities, (4) are located in areas which had little or no participation in the previous Re-Imaging Communities Programme, and, (5) involve the removal of signs of sectarianism / racism along main arterial routes.

The programme aims to deliver long-term, cross-community and cross border projects which will in turn complement current work by addressing issues of sectarianism, racism and prejudice between communities.
10. An evaluation of Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities Programme will be published in late 2015, following the conclusion of the programme.
11. Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities is an example of local best practice which brings divided communities together and develops shared spaces (Committee Terms of Reference 1). The evaluation of the predecessor programme to Building Peace through the Arts found impacts relating to: the creation of shared spaces; the usefulness of art as a medium; the building and/or strengthening of community/good relations; cohesion, empowerment and ownership; and the projects being catalysts for further improvement².
12. In relation to Committee Terms of Reference 2, it should be noted that communities are involved in the decision-making processes of the created artworks and that the evaluation of the first programme highlighted how it included individuals and groups not normally involved in community matters. As such, the arts could be a useful vehicle in the community development work allied to the removal of barriers at interface areas.

2 More information can be found here: http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publicationsdocuments/Re-Imaging_Final_Evaluation.pdf

13. The second phase of the Re-Imaging programme sought to build on the successes of the first phase as well as seeking to address any gaps. The Arts Council recommends the development of a successor programme (a third phase) to Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities when it concludes in 2014. Consolidating and extending the successes to date will help the Northern Ireland Executive build a shared future for everyone in Northern Ireland working in collaboration with communities across Northern Ireland and thus, support the objectives of Together Building a United Community. (Committee Terms of Reference 3).

Intercultural Arts Strategy and Programme

14. The overarching aim of the Arts Council Intercultural Arts Strategy is to increase access to and participation in the arts amongst minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. The strategy was prepared in recognition of the priorities set out in ACNI's five year Strategy, Creative Connections 2007-2012. The strategic themes include:
- Intercultural Engagement - Promoting exchanges between different cultural groups within society.
 - Developing the Minority Ethnic Arts Infrastructure - Develop collaborative working, through arts and cultural activity between new and existing communities.
 - Using the Arts to develop Community Cohesion - Working to promote cohesion and integration for a shared and better future for all.
 - Using the Arts to increase awareness of diversity - Develop understanding of the diversity that exists in Northern Ireland.
 - Using the Arts to develop Good Relations - Working to develop good relations between new and existing communities in Northern Ireland.
 - Using the Arts as a vehicle to Tackle Racism - Working to tackle racism between new and existing communities in Northern Ireland.
15. The Arts Council has committed £300, 000 over a three-year period to the Intercultural Arts Programme. Launched in May 2012, the programme has a number of elements: Intercultural Arts Grants; Artist in the Community Awards; Minority Ethnic Individual Artists Awards; Intercultural Arts Support Programme.
16. The Interim Evaluation indicates that a future programme should include ongoing development of programme strands (grants programme, support for artists, support and networking opportunities for minority ethnic communities) and ongoing training and support for the Arts Council's Annually Funded clients in providing inclusive and accessible programmes of activities. The final programme evaluation is due in May 2015.
17. As noted above, the Intercultural Arts Programme is based upon the findings of the research contained within the Intercultural Arts Strategy and seeks to use the arts to develop community cohesion, to increase awareness of diversity, to develop good relations and as a vehicle to tackle racism. Using the arts in this way allows the exploration of perspectives relating to sectarianism, division and good relations and the bringing together of divided communities in a manner which builds trust **(Committee Terms of Reference 1)**.
18. We advocate the continued development of the Intercultural Arts Programme beyond the lifetime of the current programme in order to build upon the achievements to date. The evaluation of the programme will recommend the trajectory for any succeeding programme to take in the years ahead. It is our view that given the increase in racist attacks this year, continued support remains of strategic importance to building a united community **(Committee Terms of Reference 3)**

Cultural Funding Scheme

19. In September 2013, the Arts Council announced the creation of a Cultural Funding Scheme in collaboration with Belfast City Council to support cultural and community groups. Over a three year period, the scheme will target communities which are less likely to participate in culture and arts due to social, economic or other barriers. Each organisation has committed £450,000 to provide an overall investment of £900,000.
- Each of the successful projects must demonstrate the use of arts and culture to address the challenge of social inclusion and demonstrate that they are: Cross-community; Cross-city; Delivered in partnership between arts and community organisations; Benefit hard-to-reach areas and communities.
20. Three of the first four projects to be funded as part of Creative and Cultural Belfast have relevance to building a shared future. They are³:
- Abhainn bheo na Fearsaide/The living River Farset - The River Farset gave Belfast its name, but today, it has largely been built over and forgotten. Abhainn bheo na Fearsaide – a partnership between Cultúrlann and Spectrum Centre – will return the Farset to the heart of Belfast through creative workshops, heritage digs and public art.
 - Draw Down the Walls 2015 - Golden Thread Gallery is commissioning a new visual arts project that will provoke debate about the ‘barriers in our society’. Its vision is to create the conditions needed to imagine a city without barriers.
 - Nine Nights - ArtsEkta’s Nine Nights will be an outdoor theatre spectacle. Working in partnership with Walk the Plank – producers of the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture event, the Return of Colmcille – Nine Nights will combine music, dance and pyrotechnics, retelling centuries-old Hindu folklore as a thrilling, contemporary Belfast celebration.
21. Funding streams such as this are sound examples of how the Arts Council (together with Belfast City Council) is seeking to develop relations between communities across the city of Belfast and to use the arts to develop spaces as both shared and vibrantly alive. (Committee Terms of Reference 1).
22. Supporting and promoting projects such as those highlighted above is important in helping Northern Ireland tackle the racism and sectarianism and other forms of intolerance (Committee Terms of Reference 3).
23. The second funding round of the Cultural Funding Scheme opened in early September 2014.

The forthcoming Community Arts Strategy

24. Community Arts reaches and speaks to the most marginalised given its underpinning principles of authorship and ownership within an approach of collaborative arts practice. It also reflects the understanding that art is not created in a vacuum but within, and with reference to, a community, embedded within place and identity. Engagement with communities is predicated on sound practice, and with the pursuit of artistic excellence at the forefront of ambition. This is achieved by developing flexible, creative and imaginative responses to local issues, empowering artists, individuals and communities to fulfil their creative potential and address some of the challenges facing Northern Ireland such as poverty and social exclusion.
25. For over three decades the Arts Council has been an advocate of the transformative power of Community Arts. It has encouraged other government departments and funders to support Community Arts practice to help them realise their own policy objectives. These have been in fields such as regeneration; peace-building; community development; and in building

3 The fourth project is - BabyDay - In 2015, Replay Theatre Company will bring the world's first BabyDay to Belfast. BabyDay will decorate the city with playful art and fill the streets with families, much like on Culture Night – but for babies.

confidence and skills amongst marginalised children and young people. **(Committee Terms of Reference 1)**

26. During research for the Community Arts Strategy, our strategic stakeholders told us that they recognise the contribution Community Arts can bring to the social change agenda including: promoting equality of access (economic, social and physical); creating shared spaces; accessing 'hard to reach' sections of the community; bringing communities and generations together. **(Committee Terms of Reference 1)**
27. In community arts, the sector's effectiveness in engagement is a key strength. Consideration could be given to the role of the arts in community engagement in order to achieve Executive objectives such as the removal of interface barriers. **(Committee Terms of Reference 2)**
28. We continue to recommend government departments across the Executive to consider the impact that community arts can make in realising individual departmental objectives. The ability of the arts to nurture, strengthen and challenge the theory and practice of community in equal measure should not be under-estimated. **(Committee Terms of Reference 3).**
29. In 2014/15, the Arts Council will implement a revised Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) survey in to more accurately measure the quantifiable outputs from all arts organisations working in community contexts. We will publish the findings of the revised RFO Survey.

Arts Council funded organisations and projects (Exchequer and Lottery funding)

30. In 2013, the Arts Council distributed over £13m to its core funded arts organisations through the Annual Funding Programme (AFP) which is designed to support organisations to deliver year round arts programmes. These organisations represent the Arts Council's primary means of engaging with local communities by taking their work to new audiences via outreach schemes and audience development initiatives.

By way of example, two Arts Council annually-funded organisations with a high level of cross-community work are Greater Shantallow Community Arts and Arts for All.

31. In addition, in the Regularly Funded Organisation Survey 2011/12 (published in February 2013), it is reported that 69% of arts activity was described as crosscommunity in nature, involving a mix of individuals from both the main community backgrounds. This does not necessarily mean that activity was designed to strengthen cross-community relationships; rather that it simply involved a balance of individuals from more than one community background. However, the impact of encounter in a shared setting has a number of benefits including: building respect, sharing common interests and breaking down the perception of difference.
32. In July 2014, the Arts Council announced Lottery project funding awards to fifty-four organisations amounting to £1.5m. By way of example, three funded projects impact upon how the arts build community relations and allow encounter in shared spaces to occur. These are:
 - Culture Night Belfast: CNB encourages audiences to explore and engage in new arts activities with many activities coming alive in public squares and streets, resulting in a vibrant celebration of the cultural life of Belfast city. It brings life, laughter and a sense of family-friendly fun to Belfast.
 - North West Carnival Initiative: This organisation aims to promote participation in and production of high quality carnival arts and performance in the North West, and support communities in celebrating and showcasing their work, reflecting the cultural diversity of the city.
 - Spectrum Centre: The Spectrum Centre aims to build partnerships and increase the number of Belfast wide events taking place at the centre, support community arts programmes and contribute to the Greater Shankill Neighbourhood Action Plan through

activities which address reconciliation, social awareness, community engagement and education.

33. In addition, Arts Council Lottery funded projects including the Small Grants Programme and Public Art Programme can support the development of community cohesion. An example of this is:

- Artichoke: In April 2014, the Arts Council awarded funding towards the development of a large public art project for the Derry/L'Derry area. 'Temple' will be created by internationally renowned sculptor, David Best through extensive city-wide engagement and aims to bridge divisions through a programme of cross-community work leading to a public light performance on International Day of Peace (September 2015). Temple will see the creation of a citywide shared platform through the delivery of apprentice, back-to-work and voluntary training schemes, aimed at fostering ownership while addressing the movement towards a One City. **(Committee Terms of Reference 1, 2 and 3).**

The Arts Council Troubles Archive

34. The Arts Council will soon launch its Troubles Archive, a digital archive containing many of the key artistic works that were created against the backdrop of the Northern Ireland Troubles. It has been produced in recognition of the contribution that the arts make to our understanding of the Troubles, and of the impact that the conflict has had upon the arts in Northern Ireland. We will continue to develop the depth and scope of material as we build this unique, comprehensive record. **(Committee Terms of Reference 1)**

Closing Comments

35. Together Building a United Community notes its commitment to the continued use of the arts as a means of improving good relations. The Arts Council welcomes this commitment and will continue to build upon its support to organisations and projects which enhance community relations and cohesion.

Ballymena Borough Council



Inquiry into Together: Building a United Community (TBUC)

**Evidence on behalf of
Ballymena Borough Council
Contact: Greg Dornan - Head of Policy**

September 2014



**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.

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre

For the community, by the community, with the community.



Submission from Ballymoney Community Resource Centre to the OFMDFM Inquiry into Together: Building a United Community

8 October 2014

Response prepared by Lyn Moffett

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BT53 7LH. Tel: 028 2766 5068.

Website: www.ballymoneycrc.org.uk E-mail: info@ballymoneycrc.org.uk

Registered as a company limited by guarantee No: NI071172. Recognised as a charity by the Inland

Revenue no: XR52104

Background Information

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre (BCRC) provides a support network for community and voluntary groups; providing advice, guidance and information on community development issues, projects and funding; as well as focused support to areas of weak community infrastructure (Including three Small Pockets of Deprivation). BCRC is committed to promoting universal rights and addressing inequalities and also manages an Ethnic Minority and Migrant Workers Support Project for the Causeway Coast and Glens area, a CRC core funded Community relations Programme, a Reaching Out: Connecting Older People's project and a Disability Development Programme. BCRC organises events, seminars, conferences, and the website and newsletter promote the work of the local community and voluntary sector. Other services include needs analysis, research and evaluation, use of venue and office equipment etc. BCRC is particularly active in promoting cultural diversity and equality. As most of our area of influence is rural, we are also very active in addressing issues of rural isolation and inequality.

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre aims:

To articulate the voice of the community and voluntary sector and provide a link to policy and decision making at local and regional level;

To promote and facilitate relevant training and capacity building initiatives to the community and voluntary sector in the NE, in order to increase group capacity and sustainability;

To promote good relations and build social capital throughout the new Causeway Coast and Glens council district;

To promote a networking culture;

To manage and develop the Disability Programme;

To manage and develop the Ethnic Minority and Migrant Workers support programme;

To provide support and services to older people;

To provide relevant, accessible information to community and voluntary groups to aid the advancement of their community and work.

RESPONSE

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the enquiry on Together: Building and United Community from the perspective of community development and community relations practitioners, some of whom have in excess of 20 years experience of working in conflict resolution and peace-building.

- 1.1 If the strategy is committed to exploring perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations, including theory and practice, it is essential that representatives of all sections of society are included in the research, planning and implementation – this has to be an inclusive bottom-up and top-down process, not one that is imposed on grassroots communities.
- 1.2 There is no real acknowledgement of the need still to deal with the past and the legacy of the conflict. There also needs to be much greater recognition of the role that civic society can play in implementing this strategy – local communities are cast very much in a support role for statutory agencies rather than as key players. It is essential that the voices of young people, victims and survivors, interface communities, prisoners, ex combatants, women and others are fully included in the implementation of TBUC. A cohesive, united community can only become a reality if the concept is embraced at all levels of society and the contribution to peace-building by grass roots activists acknowledged. There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution, and while learning from other international conflicts or even sharing good practice around Northern Ireland can be valuable, every area is unique and policy makers and practitioners must take this into consideration.
- 1.3 BCRC believes that in order to bring people and communities together and build stronger relationships founded on trust greater emphasis should be placed on developing and implementing plans to address the following:
 - Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling disadvantage. We have to demonstrate a real commitment to addressing the ‘hard issues’. Tackling the ‘multiple social issues effecting and entrenching community separation, exclusion and hate’ should be a short term aim. This fits well with the theme of ‘community

renewal' and is of particular importance in areas of relative deprivation. It is particularly important in times of recession that addressing social deprivation should continue to be a priority, to avoid even more 'protectionism', envy, fear and mistrust of other communities.

- Tackling the visible manifestations of racism, sectarianism, intolerance and other forms of prejudice. Cultural identity, including issues around flags and emblems, murals, bonfires, cultural expression, language and popular protest' should be addressed as soon as possible and not left as a long-term goal. We must not underestimate the power that these forms of cultural expression have to affect good community relationships at all levels of society, with territorial marking and contentious parades cementing segregation and division.
- Encouraging shared neighbourhoods and reducing and eventually eliminating segregated services must be goals for the immediate future, resourcing segregated services cannot be sustained in times of recession.
- Adopting a zero tolerance approach to all incidences of, and reasons for, attacks motivated by sectarian, religious, racist hatred or prejudice, including those on symbolic premises, cultural premises and monuments;
- Creating a new and improved framework for the management and regulation of public assemblies including parades and protests. Rasharkin and Dunloy are both in Ballymoney Borough, and a new and improved framework for the resolution of public assembly disputes is essential as members of both traditions are highly critical of recent determinations by the Parades Commission. We need only to look back to the extended periods of community tension and conflict during recent marching seasons to see that this must be a priority. There will still be a need for a politically independent organisation to act as an arbiter in parading disputes, however.
- Achieving the full participation of all sectors in all aspects of society;
- Supporting local communities to resolve local issues through local solutions;

1.4 Working with **young people**, both through formal education and through street intervention initiatives is of primary importance, and should start immediately and be permanently ongoing. Anti-social behaviour has an adverse affect on intergenerational relationships as well as on community safety and fear of crime, plus

there is a perception (not always accurate) that young people are heavily engaged in erecting flags, building bonfires, protests and riots etc

- 1.5 Education is key, particularly integrated education from early years, but there must be recognition that community education and participative learning is as important as formal education, and that there is no 'one size fits all' solution for building the capacity of our young people to engage with the peace process and become active citizens. Street intervention programmes, 'dream schemes' and sports programmes have all been used to good effect when working with disaffected young people.
- 1.6 However, we have to get beyond the 'contact theory' of the 1970s – yes it is good to bring young people from different community backgrounds together to learn, train, play sport, go on holiday together, but these can't be short term, one off initiatives or opportunities for people to work or play together. Relationships built on trust take time to develop, and the foundations for building relationships will only bear real weight when all services including education are truly shared. This will also have benefits for the economy.
- 1.7 This is the third policy statement to be released since the 1998 Agreement. Shared Future was a vision that many practitioners in the Community and Voluntary Sector and others could work towards. Cohesion, Sharing and Integration lacked substance and failed to meet the needs of many of the Section 75 groups, not to mention victims and survivors and ex-combatants. Together: Building and United Community has diluted the vision of a Shared Future even further. Unless our political, civic and community leaders show a real commitment to implementing this document and addressing the hard issues through a detailed action plan, which is adequately resourced, this too will end up on the shelf and communities will become more polarised rather than more united.
- 1.8 It is important to nurture leadership at local level – there is a great deal of work to be done with our elected representatives to encourage them to become transformative leaders and to take responsibility for good relations in their boroughs without disappearing into their traditional political silos. It is essential that community leaders

and grass roots activists are also empowered to speak and act for their communities, and that their voices are listened to with respect. Together: Building a United Community must become part of the foundations for each new council's Community Planning process.

1.9 While it is important that local councils are part of a delivery process for good relations work, and that they are encouraged to accept their statutory obligation to promote good relations, it is hard to believe that all of the new councils will step up to the mark, set aside political difference, and make decisions based on the common good. Local council good relations officers are competent and committed, but levels of commitment amongst councillors fail to inspire confidence.

1.10 If the Together: Building a United Community policy document is to be effectively implemented it must be adequately resourced, and those resources must be distributed via a mechanism that is politically independent, transparent and accountable to the public.

Ballynafeigh Community Development Association

Response to TBUC Inquiry by OFMDFMNI Assembly Committee

Ballynafeigh Community Development Association (BCDA) welcomes this opportunity provided by the committee to input into this Inquiry.

Background to BCDA

Ballynafeigh Community Development Association (BCDA) was established in 1974 during that turbulent period in Northern Ireland when so many people were hastening to the perceived safety of living with their 'own kind' in an endemic movement towards social separation which prevails to this day.

Conversely, many Ballynafeigh residents came together to protect the mixed/shared nature of their district, a brave endeavour because, although the promotion of mixing and sharing of people and place were ideas that they themselves valued, these beliefs were out of kilter with what was actually happening on the ground. Nevertheless, BCDA's founding goals were to foster good community relations, a sense of belonging to a diverse neighbourhood and to promote the principles and practice of community development.

BCDA's Learning from Shared Neighbourhood Work

BCDA has also long recognised that shared neighbourhoods like Ballynafeigh don't happen by accident. It is not enough to build housing estates and designate them as 'shared' or to create a 'charter' for a shared neighbourhood and ask residents to 'sign up to' or 'buy into' it.

Rather, a great deal of conscious effort and careful people investment must be expended to ensure that the essential network of relationships between individuals and groups are developed and sensitively supported in order to generate and maintain these shared living spaces.

Furthermore, perhaps the most significant of the lessons learned from all BCDA's work on both shared neighbourhood reinforced in our emerging interdependence work to date, has been that although communities and neighbourhoods can be shared, this does not make dealing with the issues they face any less difficult.

Conversely, BCDA has also found that solutions to these difficulties can arise directly from the daily operational infrastructure of a shared neighbourhood like Ballynafeigh, often unexpectedly, and that these can quickly alleviate or suggest alternative approaches to dealing with seemingly intransigent problems.

The skill is in recognising these opportunities as and when they arise, so that they can be acted on immediately. Practitioners operating in a shared neighbourhood context to deliver community development initiatives, must be capable of empathetically responding to this complexity. Critically, they must also be able to foster and support the development of crucial personal relationships, those all important social bonds representing the social capital of a shared neighbourhood; a process which BCDA characterises as the 'generation and regeneration of the social fabric of the district'

Points to the Inquiry

- BCDA is very concerned that the TBUC Initiative, while acknowledging shared spaces and places, does not provide for the sustaining and regeneration of existing shared neighbours. There is much attention paid to establishing new shared neighbourhoods and urban villages but no attention paid to the learning from existing practice and the networks that have been built over time.

- BCDA is Pessimistic about the impact of TBUC because the real impacts of previous government initiatives such as Shared Future and Cohesion Sharing and Integration amounted to nothing. TBUC has been “live” now for around 18 months and has yet to deliver on its grand promises. We fear that the policy document may be yet another set of gestures without substance.
- In our day to day work with groups on the ground we are still encountering the contentious issues that have sustained and continue to sustain division and are in danger of sustaining the Conflict. This strongly indicates that the divisions in our society still run deep and are strongly felt. BCDA is greatly concerned by the decreasing amount of funding which is available for peace and reconciliation work.
- All government, and especially Stormont, needs to be demonstrating a positive attitude of leadership. This would generate energy and morale around peace building and reconciliation and enable us as a society to move forward.

Katie Hanlon (Director)

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Ballynahinch Support Group

I am a volunteer with this Charity in Ballynahinch.

I am interested in and the care and well being of all involved, in the Charity and the Charity itself.

- 1 Communities to be involved and actively in all aspects of life, living and community life and for all.
- 2 Communities to be appropriately and actively involved in prevention, care, health and well being, education, research, professional training, safety, finance and for all.
- 3 Communities to be involved and actively in improving, updating and maintaining all services and for all.
- 4 Communities to be involved and actively in professional, reviewed, researched, up to date, regular, feedback and monitoring on the above areas of community living, to take place, continue and at all times for all.
- 5 More and availability of opportunities and to take place for the above and to happen and progress to be maintained and appropriately developed for all.
- 6 More opportunities for and of encouragement of concerns, worries, anxieties, stresses to be shared and resolved equally in and by communities to further enhance community life, it's well being for all to share and enjoy.
- 7 More opportunities and for appropriate recognition and outcomes to be shared and awarded to and by all communities for their contribution, work, input and service into the daily life experienced and lived in communities and by all.
- 8 Appropriate representatives to be appointed and professionally trained, where and when needed and required to further lead communities, community life and for all to share in any difficulties that may arise and to share responsibilities and favourable outcomes, results for all to manage and support, protect equally and for the future.
- 9 More opportunities and for global contribution, input, service and help to be included, maintained and returned by and in all communities and for the future, for everyone's well being and health to be achieved and shared.
- 10 More opportunities and awareness and for events to take place and to enable all this to happen and in communities and life for all.

Banbridge District Council

Appendix A

OFMDFM - Inquiry into Building a United Community.

Draft suggestions

- Much work has been carried out and progress made in relation to building a shared community and this should be recognised, with lessons learnt and best practice examples built upon.
- In planning for the future we would suggest bring people together around shared agendas which are affecting society today for example: poverty, employment and health issues to include mental health this builds relationships, friendships, reconciliation and in the long-term a sustainable civic society. Recognition needs to be given to civic society, how they succeed / succeeded.
- Whilst there is a need to address good relations issues directly, often groups and individuals can usefully be brought together around a different, but common agenda. This could be used as a means to bring people from diverse backgrounds together through uniting people over shared issues, therefore the theme of “difference” is not the dominating factor. This has been used in England wherein people from neighbouring estates where a gang culture was in operation were brought together through the formation of a community choir, which performed a range of songs that were acceptable to all. Too much focus on “difference” can lose the what we need to achieve, more emphasis on what is common required.
- Sport, the arts and creative medium can be used as a means through which to engage a wide range of people from differing backgrounds. However we would suggest that this should include additional sports beyond Rugby and Football.
- The importance of youth work and education within schools from an early age in terms of promoting shared agendas and acceptance of difference is viewed as a positive contribution towards addressing sectarianism and division.
- The role of local communities in being enabled to contribute effectively towards policy and decision making is of key importance. We would advocate a grass roots community development approach to support local people have their views and voices heard. However there is also a need to ensure that the voices being heard are representative of the wider population.
- Facilitated discussion and mediation with all those who are involved in the peace process and who have influence within their local communities is useful in terms of continuing to advance towards a shared community and creating ways to move forward.
- We would suggest the funding environment would support this shared agenda and community based approach that would enable individuals and groups to come together on an agreed basis.
- Conflict, mediation and community integration have been well researched and we would suggest that the findings from the research are promoted in developing funding streams to support community intervention.
- There is a clear need to ensure that monitoring and evaluation measures are robust and based upon evidence based research. In times of budget constraint it is imperative that value for money, accountability and results are demonstrated through all the existing fora and funded activity, with clear strategic leadership and evidence based operational planning and review.

- Often money is not the deciding factor, but rather how engaged and committed individuals and groups are to the process and therefore creativity and best practice would be welcomed in order to develop new ways of working. We would welcome new approaches and longer term evidence based strategies for intervention.
- Building a United Community requires attitudinal and cultural change. Attitudes and cultures are perpetuated over the centuries; therefore it is inevitable that change will take a long time. In order to reflect this, we would suggest a long term policy approach with a 20 year strategic plan.

Ten key points:

- 1 The strategy needs to be ambitious focussing on relationship building and reconciliation as a prerequisite for long-term peace.
- 2 Definitions of good relations, racism and sectarianism are required. Any definitions should meet international standards and obligations to ensure the development of good practice.
- 3 Adequate, long term, outcome focused and accessible resourcing for Peace building work is needed on-the-ground, as well as funding for cross Departmental commitments. This financial investment would reflect the priority in government given to the achievement of reconciliation, partnership, equality and mutual trust and a society free from sectarianism, racism and intolerance.
- 4 Interface work should be about more than just barrier removal. It should be informed by practice on the ground, as well as providing structured support for regeneration initiatives which lead to and enable, the eventual creation of open and vibrant communities free from fear, threat or any obstacle to interaction across the region. Not all barriers are structural.
- 5 Co-ordination of reconciliation efforts on a regional basis should be facilitated by a regional body, including the management and allocation of long term funding, as well as developmental support for organisations working within communities at a grass roots level.
- 6 A major rethink of how larger and significant budgets such as education, housing, community development, regeneration, justice and culture intersect and present opportunities for reconciliation and peace-building is also necessary. And how will these be incorporated into “Community Planning” with the new super councils.
- 7 Proper research and a robust evidence base for the scale and complexity of the challenges in building the peace and reconciliation is required, and should examine and report on the benefits to society (including the public purse) of transforming relationships within Northern Ireland, North and South and between these islands
- 8 Development of strong structures within government responsible for cross departmental activities is critical. These structures should promote linkages to communities, providing a balance between the need for government to manage, along with civic society’s right to influence. This also includes the identification and empowerment of drivers and champions for the delivery of the strategy within each department.
- 9 Adequate development, monitoring and accountability arrangements within government should involve civic society.

- 10 The planning process is started now to build on TBUC in the development of the next reconciliation and peace-building plan that involves civic society in its planning and production.
- 11 There needs to be a recognition that patriarchal societies have major influence on good relations / peace building / reconciliation and we require recognition to address this in helping our society to develop.

Belfast City Council

OFMDFM Committee Inquiry into the Together Building A United Community Strategy Draft Belfast City Council Response

Introduction

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to submit the enclosed information to the Committee of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister as part of its inquiry into the Government's Together Building a United Community Strategy.

As the Council understands it, the Inquiry seeks to undertake the following:

- 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;
- 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 might include:
 - seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers 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.
- 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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.

Belfast City Council hopes that the following may assist the Committee in its tasks and is happy to provide any follow-up information should this be required.

Response

1. 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;

Through all-party agreement, Belfast City Council adopted "Promoting Good Relations" as a key corporate objective in 2001 and established a dedicated Good Relations Unit within the organisation. It developed an initial Good Relations Strategy in 2003 which was underpinned by the reconciliation theory outlined by Hamber and Kelly.

The Council's own Good Relations Strategy states that we "will encourage and support good relations between all citizens, promoting fair treatment, understanding and respect for people of all cultures". The principle of equality of opportunity underpins the Council's approach to all good relations issues.

The Council set up a Good Relations Steering Panel in 2004 – later becoming the Good Relations Partnership – and developed a City-wide Good Relations Plan in 2007. The purpose of this plan was aimed at “tackling sectarianism and racism & promoting cultural diversity”. The underpinning objectives of the plan were to:

- Secure Shared City Space
- Transform Contested Space
- Promote Shared Cultural Space
- Build Shared Organisational Space.

Within this, the Council developed a series of ‘shared space principles’. It is important to understand that ‘shared space’ is not neutral space; it is a place where ones identity can be expressed in an open and non-hostile environment. Shared space should therefore be:

- **Welcoming** - where people feel secure to take part in unfamiliar interactions, and increase an overall sense of shared experience and community
- **Accessible** – well-connected in terms of transport and pedestrian links within a network of similar spaces across the city and managed to promote maximum participation by all communities
- **Good quality** – attractive, high quality unique services and well-designed buildings and spaces
- **Safe** – for all persons and groups, and trusted by both locals and visitors.

The Good Relations work of the Council is 75% funded by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister under the District Council’s Good Relations Programme. Each year the Council develops an annual Action Plan, which is based on an independent audit of Good Relations needs within the City. The Action Plan seeks to develop programmes that can address the issues within the audit and also challenge others to embed these shared space principles into all activity. Most of the activity in the Action Plan is delivered through a grants programme by third party community and voluntary organisations, or through direct delivery by Council officers. The Action Plan is targeted at areas such as work around interfaces, bonfires, decade of centenaries, participation & inclusion of migrant and minority ethnic communities, mural replacement programmes and training.

In relation to Council delivered programmes, the funding is targeted at those programmes and projects that primarily contain interactive activity on specific Good Relations issues. Therefore, the following criteria are a central component for participation in Council funded or delivered programmes:

- Ideally programmes and projects should contain participation that is cross community. However it is also recognised that some groups require single identity projects, which can be supported on the understanding that this LEADS to inter-community engagement.
- Projects that demonstrate ‘interactive’ engagement between participants will command a higher score for funding than those where engagement is ‘social’ or ‘passive’.
- Interactive dialogue commands the highest funding award, in recognition of the reality that this will have the best Good Relations outcomes.
- Good Relations events will be open to all and there will be no elements (music/flags/bunting etc) that the general public could perceive as being offensive present at such events.
- Generally projects should achieve an outcome that facilitates participants in respecting differences through greater understanding of the ‘other’.

The Good Relations Unit is a small unit of staff and therefore it relies on the role of community leaders in actual delivery of projects. The Council sees its role as being to support

them in the delivery of projects at a neighbourhood level under the above criteria. This can be challenging for local workers. However as a Unit, the Good Relations team in the Council spend a lot of their time in relationship building and fostering trust between the Council and community leaders. This in itself is a crucial engagement process in the task of building Good Relations within the City.

The Council, as the Civic leader in the City, sets the criteria, vision and envisaged outcomes for Good Relations work – but delivery is reliant on buy-in from community leaders, community groups and the general public.

Good Relations Partnership

The Good Relations Partnership is a working group of the council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Partnership is comprised of political and external representatives, which deals with issues around equality, good relations, sectarianism, racism and cultural diversity. This group was formed to include cross-party representation in addition to people from a range of other sectors, including minority ethnic organisations, churches, central Government, statutory, trade unions, business, and the community and voluntary sectors to ensure that it is as representative of the wider community. It is the only council working group to include external representatives in recognition of the importance of being accountable to, and engaging with the wider community on good relations issues. It has been central to gaining the political and community buy-in to Good Relations practice and delivery in the City and adds 'external voices' to the challenges faced by the political make-up of the Council.

Shared Space

The “welcoming, accessible, good quality & safe” principles, as detailed above underpin the development of shared space in Belfast and should be reflected in the design, programming and management of project activity, particularly emerging capital projects.

PEACE III

It is important to note the significant contribution made by the European Union's support for peace building and reconciliation work funded under the various PEACE Programmes.

Many worthwhile projects have been delivered in Belfast and the Council has led the delivery of a successful local action Plan under the current PEACE III programme which is now drawing to a close.

The opportunities presented by the proposed new PEACE IV Programme have also been welcomed by the Council as reflected in its submission to the Special EU Programmes Body's consultation on the Draft Operational Programme for PEACE IV.

Collaborative approach

There is a huge transformative potential of major developments which have Good Relations and Shared Space principles at their core. City master plans, community planning, transport networks and other major initiatives all have the potential to build better relationships between people from different neighbourhoods. Such projects can facilitate the opening up of civic space, collaboration at a local level on development, networking of ideas and ultimately promote local engagement and relationship building.

There is a need for increased consideration of shared space principles and good relations impacts of major infrastructure/ capital projects. .

Some examples of projects that demonstrate good practice

1. Preventing a return to conflict:

From 2010 – 2011, 3 ex-prisoners organisations got together to develop 2 booklets called “Preventing a return to conflict” and “Time stands still”. The first of these booklets was a summary of the experiences of former Republican and Loyalist Prisoners of prison life. They sought to deromanticise prison life by detailing their experiences. This booklet was then used for workshops with young people involved in interface conflict and the result was a reduction in incidents at one notorious interface flashpoint area in Belfast. The second booklet sought to document the forgotten experiences of the partners, wives and children of prisoners. Their powerful story brought different communities together in a common human experience and provided former prisoners with a story that had not been heard before. These booklets had a number of outcomes: a sharing of a common story between former enemies, greater understanding of the reality of prison life, education for young people who were ‘romanticising’ conflict and prison life, the reality of the experiences of families of prisoners and a reduction in interface conflict.

2. Creating Cohesive Community project

This was led by LORAG and South Belfast RoundTable and was funded under the PEACE III Programme. The project sought to promote cohesive community relations in south Belfast and tackling discrimination & prejudice and building links between migrants and host communities. It targeted mainly the Roma community in an effort to foster greater education and cultural awareness as well as providing social activities for young people to interact and integrate.

3. Decade of Centenaries Programme

The Council has led on a series of actions and activities to support the City in marking and commemorating the current Decade of Centenaries. In 2011 the all-party group of Councillors agreed to a series of Principles around which the Decade of Centenaries would operate. Following this agreement the Good Relations Unit facilitated Members in developing a series of programmes to cover three areas, the first of which would be the 1912 – 1914 period. For this period, the Council produced a unique exhibition entitled “Shared History, Different Allegiances”. The exhibition incorporated the events of the signing of the Ulster Covenant, the Gaelic Revival, the Larne and Howth gun running, the Suffragette movement and the rise of the Labour movement. There were huge numbers from across the political divide who viewed the exhibition. In addition there were a series of talks and events held which drew large numbers in a programme that brought people together for a joint exploration of our common history.

Other examples of good practice include:

- an inter-agency joined up collaborative approach to tackling anti-social behaviour and needs of young people especially around interfaces in the city.
- Drawing Down the Walls Project and associated re-imaging programmes
- Creative Legacies Project led by Belfast City Council’s Tourism, Culture & Arts Unit
- Numerous Good Relations and intervention programmes funded by the Council and OFM/DFM and delivered by community and voluntary organisations

2. 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 might include:

- seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers 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.

In 2011, Belfast City Council agreed to a notice of motion on interfaces which called for work to begin to seek to remove all barriers within the City. This was a political initiative. Following this motion, the Good Relations Unit in the Council developed a 'framework for action' to put together a series of interventions to begin this process within the City. Also in 2011, the Community Relations Council developed a guide to tackling interface issues. It cannot be stressed enough of the importance of putting communities at heart of any process with regard to any intervention on interface barriers. The two underpinning principles to the Council's work on interfaces are that the safety and security of those living closest to any barrier is paramount & nothing will be done to any barrier without the involvement and consent of those living closest to it. Those who live closest to interface barriers must be willing to consent to change and this involves intensive, effective engagement and communication with residents. Part of this is to manage expectations and allay concerns and fears.

The Council has developed a programme of work, in partnership with the Department of Justice, on 15 physical barriers in the City. The current process centres on what we have termed a "softening" of the barrier through small scale environmental works, addition of art-works, removal of items such as barbed wire, replacement of a steel gate with a see-through fence and other elements. It is deemed to be the case that a softening will build confidence and could lead to a further transformation of the barrier, possible adjustment of the barrier and may lead to ultimate removal.

There are huge resources required for this work as much of the physical works require an injection of capital moneys. In addition, there are significant barriers placed on this work by a lack of a joined up approach to the issue by statutory and Government agencies. Emergency powers legislation catered for the erection of barriers, but there is no equivalent in place to facilitate their removal.

A long term strategy is required with the appropriate resources and a comprehensive inter-agency approach. Legislation may also be required in order to speed up the process (planning permission, ownership, confidence building measures)

In addition, the issue of interface barriers has become one of equality. The poorest people within our City (from all communities) are those who live closest to interface barriers, where their life expectancy is 10 years less than people who do not live at an interface. The quality of life and health & well-being for such residents suffers as a result of their address where safety fears, lack of opportunity and poor health dominate their daily lives. All statutory and government interventions should seek to tackle these inequalities at interfaces, which can ultimately have a positive outcome on the removal of physical structures.

3. 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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.

Tackling sectarianism and racism needs to be at the core of all public policy and programming. The goal of tackling sectarianism and racism should underpin capital projects, educational programmes, community initiatives and civic events. Such initiatives should seek to define how their project or programme will build better relationships between people from different political, racial and religious backgrounds.

Dedicated and adequate resources for programmes such as the District Council's Good Relations Programme need to be long term and sufficient to deliver real change within and between neighbourhoods. The recommendations within the recent NISRA evaluation

of the District Council's Good Relations programme need to be adopted by OFM/DFM and implemented into strategic policy and delivery.

The District Council's Good Relations programme can be the best tool under which to deliver effective intervention programmes that meet the needs and requirements of locally elected and accountable civic leaders. Grant aided programmes should be intercommunity (or single identity leading on to intercommunity engagement) and interactive in order to positively change attitudes and perceptions of the 'other'. Grant aid programmes should also seek to develop interactive engagement between minority ethnic communities and host communities. Some good examples of projects that engage on participation and inclusion of minority ethnic communities include the Council's Migrant Forum and the PEACE III funded "Creating Cohesive Communities" programme which seeks to undertake practical programmes to support inclusion and participation.

As part of the impending devolution of Community Planning powers to Council's, Good Relations needs to be at the heart of this process. A community plan that facilitates connectivity and mobility within and between neighbourhoods can succeed in connecting people across communities.

Civic leadership, from the top of Government down needs to be prominent, focussed and dedicated to the promotion of Good Relations and have an impact into all aspects of civic and social life.

Progress on interface barriers requires a need to place communities at the centre of this process. Validation and resources are required to the phased approach as set out in point 2 above.

In relation to making progress on interfaces and changes to physical structures, legislation may be required to force statutory agencies and Government Departments to speed up the delivery of any interface intervention.

Belfast Healthy Cities

Response to Office of the First and Deputy First Minister Evidence Hearing on Building a United Community

October 2014

Belfast Healthy Cities welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the evidence hearing on Building a United Community.

Belfast Healthy Cities is a partnership organisation working to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Belfast and beyond. The organisation acts as the link to the World Health Organization (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network on behalf of Belfast as a WHO Healthy City, and currently holds the WHO secretariat for the Network. Belfast Healthy Cities' key partners include Belfast City Council, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Bryson Group, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Public Health Agency, Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster, as well as Departments including Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Department for Social Development and Department of the Environment.

The Healthy Cities approach focuses on bringing organisations and sectors together to consider how their work contributes to health and wellbeing; to share evidence and build capacity, and to introduce and pilot new concepts linked to core themes identified by the WHO European Healthy Cities Network. A core principle of the Healthy Cities movement is tackling inequalities in health and strengthening equity, and all Belfast Healthy Cities' work focuses on how equity can be strengthened, with a view to enabling people to take control of their own lives

As a member of the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, which has a strong membership throughout Europe, Belfast Healthy Cities has access to both academic evidence and good practice on tackling disadvantage and inequalities in health.

Belfast Healthy Cities has previously responded to key OFMDFM consultations, including the Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People Strategy and the Active Ageing Strategy 2014-2020.

Belfast Healthy Cities would like to submit evidence on two aspects; the important role of communities in addressing health impacts and the including the views of children in building a united community. The inquiry is interested in how decision making in respect of building an strengthening communities and it is vitally important that all age groups are included.

Impacts of Violence and Unrest on Communities

The World Health Organization states that '[beyond deaths and injuries] violence has serious, life-long, and far-reaching consequences. These include mental health problems; job, school, and relationship difficulties; involvement in further violence as a victim or perpetrator; and the adoption of high-risk behaviours such as alcohol and substance misuse, smoking, and unsafe sex. Often years later, these can lead to cardiovascular disease, cancer, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS and other diseases.'¹

¹ Global Status Update on Violence Flyer, WHO, 2014

Living in a state of unrest and in divided communities has well acknowledged and wide-ranging socio-economic influences on the lives of citizens. The built environment in areas that are physically divided tends to be of poorer quality and incomes tend to be lower and deprivation levels higher. The lower people are on the socio-economic gradient, the more vulnerable they are to the negative health impacts of environmental factors such as poor air quality, poor quality living environments and waste tipping that contribute to the gaps in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest areas.

Professor Sir Michael Marmot, in a review of social determinants and the health divide across Europe, makes a range of recommendations on how to address this divide at a community level including to 'ensure championing of partnership and cross sector working by local leaders' along with more extensive partnership working that uses local knowledge, resources and assets in communities². Belfast Healthy Cities believes that these observations, which are based on extensive research throughout the WHO European region could form a basis for improved collaboration between decision makers and communities.

Belfast Healthy Cities currently provides the secretariat for the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, and would be pleased to support in identifying and sharing relevant evidence. This includes access to a database of case studies from cities across Europe, providing experience and learning from concrete interventions and approaches that could potentially be adapted for use at a local level. Through its role in supporting WHO Europe in facilitating the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, Belfast Healthy Cities has access to internationally leading expertise, including the Institute of Health Equity at University College London, which is led by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, cited above.

Belfast Healthy Cities believes that stable and resilient communities have a vitally important role in addressing these challenges. Communities are the core of our society, and play a key role for the wellbeing of people, at a physical, mental and social level. The environment within which communities exist sets the context for the opportunities and choices that are open and realistic to people, and as such shapes the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Strong communities depend on supportive environments, which also play a role in tackling disadvantage.

Tackling disadvantage remains one of the 'wicked' issues, as it is a complex and multi-faceted problem. Belfast Healthy Cities believes that it is vital to build future work on a strong evidence base and understanding of the causal and event chains that affect disadvantage, and the solutions that tackle these.

Sharing evidence and capacity building are among the core roles of Belfast Healthy Cities, and Belfast Healthy Cities would be pleased to explore opportunities to share learning from WHO Europe on tackling disadvantage and building shared communities. Many approaches from across the European region would be complementary to initiatives already under way and adaptable to the process of strengthening communities in Northern Ireland. (See appendix 1)

As part of previous capacity building programmes, speakers have included Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Dr Erio Ziglio, then Head of the World Health Organization European Office for Investment for Health and Development, who contributed to the Committee for

² Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European Region: final report UCL Institute of Health Equity 2013

Health, Social Services and Public Safety inquiry into health inequalities in 2012. As part of the organisation's 25th anniversary celebrations in 2013, we also welcomed Dr Agis Tsouros, WHO Europe Director of the Division of Policy and Governance for Health and Well-being, which led to collaboration between DHSSPS and WHO Europe on the Making Life Better policy, which now reflects key themes of the WHO Europe public health strategy Health 2020.

Children in Communities

Belfast Healthy Cities has a particular interest the impact that the physical environment and communities have on the lives of children and their health. Our Child Friendly Places programme has involved children in assessing their own environments and making recommendations about how places can be improved and spaces used in a different way.

Programme1: Shaping Healthier Neighbourhoods for Children worked with 400 primary school age children across Belfast. Children participated in guided walks where they identified healthy and unhealthy aspects of the built environment in the areas surrounding their schools. While many children identified features associated with violence and sectarianism, including graffiti, vandalism and dereliction; there was also a clear sense of optimism. All the children identified positive aspects in their communities, most felt safe in their neighbourhoods and almost all mentioned the importance of feeling part of their community.

The culmination of the programme in 2014 was the development of Children's Voices- A Charter for Belfast, which collected a series of recommendations from the children on issues including open space, clean and safe environments and liveable communities. Belfast Healthy Cities believes that these recommendations should be used to inform the strategy.

Programme 2: KidsSpace has successfully transformed under used city centre space in accessible, family friendly venues that offer children and their families active, creative and free play activities. Since the first event at the newly constructed St Anne's Square in 2011, sessions have been held across streets in the city centre, in a community café and in an empty shop unit in CastleCourt shopping centre demonstrating that model is adaptable to location.

Both programmes have the aim of supporting children to be active and visible members of their communities. Belfast Healthy Cities believes that the strategy should reflect their views and aspirations as we move forward towards a united community.

Appendix 1

Evidence from WHO European Healthy Cities Network:

Udine, Italy: The healthy municipality of Udine has taken approach to developing community gardens similar that being undertaken in many areas of Northern Ireland at present. Their approach differs slightly in that they have developed the growing spaces as 'green plazas', public meeting spaces that are used as multifunctional spaces to bring members of the community together, increasing green space and providing functional venues for education, entertainment and recreation.

Over a number of years, Udine has also involved citizens in planning the built and environment and services in their communities, which is particularly relevant to Northern Ireland as increased public involvement in planning at a community level is introduced. Experiences of their approach, including the challenges could provide valuable learning for communities in Northern Ireland seeking to achieve similar goals.

Belfast Healthy Cities has collated case studies from previous WHO European Healthy Cities Annual Conferences (2010-2014) detailing examples of good practice under a range of WHO themes, including Health Equity in All Policies, Healthy Urban Environment and Caring and Support Environments, and would be happy to share further evidence to inform and support policy development.

Appendix 2

Reports from Belfast Healthy Cities

[Children's Voices: A Charter for Belfast](#)

[Shaping Healthier Neighbourhoods for Children](#)

[KidsSpace- Exploring Child Friendly Space](#)

Carnegie UK Trust



CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES

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2 September 2014

Dear Karen

Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Carnegie United Kingdom (UK) Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building a United Community. We have chosen only to respond to the terms of reference where we have experience and relevant evidence. Further information on our work is available on our website www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk.

Evidence base

The Carnegie UK Trust has been actively involved in promoting wellbeing measurement since the establishment of the first [Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring What Matters in Scotland](#) in 2010. The Trust's new discussion paper [Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland: A new conversation for new times](#) reports on the outcomes of the [conference](#) the Trust hosted in Autumn 2013 in Belfast on measuring economic performance and societal progress in Northern Ireland. To progress this work, we are now convening a Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland with our Carnegie Associates at the School of Law at Queen's University Belfast, Dr Peter Doran and John Woods. The Roundtable will seek to raise awareness of the importance of measuring wellbeing and the positive impact that this has on policy development. It will also explore the next steps necessary to develop a wellbeing framework in Northern Ireland focused on achieving wellbeing outcomes. We are pleased to have the support of Finance Minister, Simon Hamilton MLA and the Assembly Finance Committee Chair, Daithí McKay MLA, for our work in Northern Ireland.

Honorary President: William Thomson CBE
 Chair: Angus M Hogg
 Chief Executive: Martyn Evans

Carnegie United Kingdom Trust
 Incorporated by Royal Charter 1917
 Scottish Charity No: SC 012799 operating in the UK and Ireland

To engage different groups in Northern Ireland with the Roundtable process, the idea of wellbeing and how it should be measured, focus groups were conducted with women, young people, ethnic minorities, and older people - groups which are traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises - and semi-structured interviews were held with sixteen key stakeholder groups. We have drawn on our own research and contributions from our conference attendees, Roundtable members, focus group participants and stakeholder interviews to inform our response.

The challenges to good relations

Exploring how the concept of wellbeing can be used to promote social change has a special urgency in Northern Ireland as communities emerge from generations of conflict. More than fifteen years after the Good Friday Agreement, some of the most enduring post-conflict challenges are, we believe, at their heart, questions of wellbeing.

This appears to have been confirmed by our focus group participants who, despite a range of backgrounds, identified three common challenges to their subjective wellbeing:

- **Social isolation or loneliness.** Participants across the focus groups spoke of the general breakdown of communication across society, a lack of family support or traditional family relationships, a lack of peer support or friendships or physical isolation.
- **Mental ill-health.** Mental ill-health and the stigma surrounding it were identified by each focus group as a key challenge. At the first meeting of the Roundtable, the close correlation between Troubles-related trauma and suicide was recognised, along with the fact that there is limited understanding of this correlation, and little meaningful action on issues such as addiction and depression. It was raised that there have been nearly as many suicides in Northern Ireland since 1998 as there were deaths during the Troubles. Therefore, any strategy to improve good relations and societal wellbeing must acknowledge that many of the barriers to progress are rooted in the experiences of people during the Troubles.
- **Fear.** Representatives from ethnic minority communities, older people and women in particular highlighted fears for personal safety as a significant challenge to wellbeing. Fear for the future in terms of uncertainty over job and economic prospects and quality of life generally, particularly in the continuing period of austerity, was also a challenge common to all the focus groups.

Overall, the challenge for wellbeing and good relations in Northern Ireland is to address multi-generational deprivation, which cannot be addressed by project scale interventions; this requires systemic change.

How division can be addressed

The above challenges to good relations undermine the wellbeing of citizens and a united future in Northern Ireland with a strong sense of common purpose. In such challenging times, it is important for the Northern Ireland Executive to design policies in way that improves the personal circumstances of citizens, and also builds community resilience, economic activity and political stability.

Below we have outlined four ways in which the concept of wellbeing can help to address division in Northern Ireland:

- **Focus for government.** In our Roundtable meetings, focus groups and stakeholder interviews, there was overwhelming support for the idea of wellbeing as a useful and important focus for the Northern Ireland Executive, local government and partners. A focus on wellbeing was seen as having a potentially important impact on inequality and poverty, providing a unifying vision across government, and a shift away from an overriding focus on economics. Our participants believed that the vision for government is currently limited to a general aspiration to improve the economy, and that a focus on wellbeing would provide a more holistic and inclusive agenda and approach to policymaking. Leadership from the Northern Ireland Executive is critical for the wellbeing agenda to prosper and to be embraced across the public sector.
- **A shared narrative.** As with a vision for government, our participants also believed there to be a limited shared narrative across government, focusing only on the economy and job creation. The prospect of a shared narrative across government based on improving the wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland was universally welcomed. This was based on the premise that a focus on wellbeing could enable people to have discussions which they may not otherwise have, such as the human and economic costs of division, and shift the focus away from the zero-sum game of resources between communities. The concept of wellbeing is therefore a useful tool to address a number of legacy issues such as low educational attainment and health inequalities, and for cross-community work. A shared narrative based on wellbeing has the potential to help the Northern Ireland Executive get beyond the concept of a divided community to one that embraces diversity and includes a politics that re-engages groups which are currently alienated, such as women and young people. An early indication of support for a shared political narrative based on wellbeing was provided by Finance Minister, Simon Hamilton MLA and the Assembly Finance Committee Chair, Daithí McKay MLA, at our conference in Belfast last autumn.

- **Political institutions.** Our participants were of the view that a shared narrative on wellbeing could, in turn, help to form a coherent Programme for Government which would achieve joined up working across government departments and the public sector. There are significant opportunities to embed the wellbeing agenda across the Northern Ireland administration in the context of a range of on-going government initiatives, including the creation of a Public Sector Reform Division within the Department of Finance and Personnel, in the development of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Delivering Social Change framework and within the Northern Ireland Executive's core commitment to equality, good relations and prosperity. An outcomes-based performance framework based on improving wellbeing was welcomed by our participants, if the outcomes set by government were meaningful and realistic. Such a framework could provide transparency and a tool for scrutiny for the Northern Ireland Assembly, the media and the general public on progress being made towards achieving wellbeing outcomes, facilitate working across government departments and the public sector and lead to more efficient resource allocation.
- **Public engagement.** A new national conversation with the public and the voluntary sector about what matters in Northern Ireland across all communities would help to inform a wellbeing framework focusing on achieving wellbeing outcomes. Embedding public engagement for setting outcomes into the reform of community planning and building on existing good practice in a number of councils could help secure meaningful engagement with a wellbeing performance framework. Communities could also be empowered to help measure wellbeing through the network of clubs, groups and forums in Northern Ireland and their significant reach into communities.

We hope that you find these comments helpful. If you would like to discuss our response, or would like to find out more about our work please contact my colleague Lauren Pennycook, Policy Officer at lauren@carnegieuk.org or by telephone 01383 721 445. We would also be pleased to provide oral evidence to the Committee on this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Martyn Evans
Chief Executive

Children's Law Centre



Written Evidence to the Committee for the First and Deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building A United Community

1. The Children's Law Centre

1.1 The Children's Law Centre (CLC) is an independent charitable organisation established in September 1997, which works towards a society where all children can participate, are valued, have their rights respected and guaranteed without discrimination and where every child can achieve their full potential.

1.2 CLC undertakes education, training and research on children's rights, produces information on a wide range of children's rights topics and makes submissions on law, policy and practice affecting children and young people. We have a dedicated free phone legal advice line for children and young people and their parents and carers, known as CHALKY, through which we offer free legal advice and information on a wide range of children's legal rights issues. CLC also has a youth advisory group called youth@clc that act as peer advocates and inform our work. CLC provides free legal representation in strategic cases. We represent at the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, School Admission and Expulsion Appeals Tribunals and the Mental Health Review Tribunal. We also provide legal representation in a limited number of strategic cases via judicial review and have experience of submitting written and making oral interventions as a Third Party to proceedings in a small number of cases with a particular focus on children's rights.

Within our policy, legal, advice and representation services we deal with a range of issues in relation to children and the law, including the law with regard to some of our most vulnerable children and young people, such as looked after children, children who come into conflict with the law, children with special educational needs, children living in poverty, children with disabilities, children with mental health problems and children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, including Traveller children.

1.3 Our organisation is founded on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in particular:

- Children shall not be discriminated against and shall have equal access to protection.
- All decisions taken which affect children's lives should be taken in the child's best interests.
- Children have the right to have their voices heard in all matters concerning them.

- 1.4 The human rights standards contained in the UNCRC should be reflected in all laws and policies emanating from the Northern Ireland Assembly as one of the devolved regions of the UK Government. The UK Government as a signatory to the UNCRC is obliged to deliver all of the rights contained within the Convention for children and young people. From its perspective as an organisation which works with and on behalf of some of our most vulnerable and socially excluded children and young people, both directly and indirectly, CLC is grateful for the opportunity to provide evidence on the Inquiry into Building A United Community. CLC has been extremely supportive of and worked extensively on the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations since the introduction of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as we believe that both duties have the potential to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children and young people across Northern Ireland.

2. International Children’s Rights and Human Rights Standards

- 2.1 CLC believes that the Inquiry into Building a United Community must be conducted within the framework of international children and human rights standards, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UNCRC. We would also submit that in carrying out the Inquiry the Committee for the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister should also take into account all of the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s¹ Concluding Observations made following examinations of the United Kingdom’s compliance with the UNCRC and relevant General Comments issued by the Committee to assist in interpreting the obligations under the UNCRC.
- 2.2 Through the ratification of the UNCRC the Government has committed to giving effect to a set of non-negotiable and legally binding minimum standards and obligations in respect of all aspects of children’s lives. Government has also committed to the implementation of the Convention by ensuring that United Kingdom (and that of the devolved administrations) law, policy and practice relating to children is in conformity with UNCRC standards. The UK Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights in its report² on the UNCRC described the obligations the UNCRC places on Government as follows:

“The Convention should function as the source of a set of child-centred considerations to be used as yardsticks by all departments of Government when evaluating legislation and in policy-making... We recommend, particularly in relation to policy-making, that Government demonstrate more conspicuously a recognition of its obligation to implement the rights under the Convention.”³

- 2.3 All children and young people under 18 are entitled to enjoy the protection of all rights afforded by the UNCRC. At its core the Inquiry into Building a United Community must ensure that primary consideration is given to the best interests of the child (article 3), in a manner which is non-discriminatory (article 2) and which

¹ The independent body that monitors implementation of the UNCRC by its States parties.

² Joint Committee on Human Rights ‘The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child’ Tenth Report of Session 2002 – 03, HL Paper 117, HC 81.

³ *Ibid*, para 25.

respects and takes into account the views of the child (article 12), protecting the child's inherent right to life, survival and development to the maximum extent possible (article 6). In addition to these principles of the Convention, other Convention articles relevant to the Inquiry include the child's rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 14), freedom of association and peaceful assembly (article 15), privacy and family life (article 16), protection from abuse and neglect (article 19), play and leisure (article 31) and protection from torture and deprivation of liberty (article 37).

- 2.4 The ECHR as incorporated by the Human Rights Act 1998 must guide the Committee in carrying out its Inquiry into Building a United Community. Relevant to the Inquiry are the right to life (article 2), the right to freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment (article 3), the right to liberty and security (article 5), the right to respect for private and family life (article 8), the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 9), freedom of assembly and association (article 11) and the right to protection from discrimination in conjunction with any of the other Convention rights (article 14).
- 2.5 The Committee on the Rights of the Child in its most recent examination of the UK Government's compliance with its obligations under the UNCRC⁴ highlighted its concerns about inequality in a number of areas in its Concluding Observations⁵ and called on the UK Government and its devolved administrations to address inequalities in children's lives across a range of areas including poverty, standard of living, education and health. The Committee also called on the Government to take action to address discrimination faced by children and young people and to introduce penal sanctions to address discrimination faced by children and young people if necessary. It also called on the Government to promote, facilitate and implement, in legislation as well as in practice, within a range of settings, including communities, the principle of respect for the views of the child and called on the Government to collaborate with civil society organisations to increase opportunities for children's meaningful participation.

3. Building a United Community – Good Relations

- 3.1 CLC is very supportive of the vision outlined in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy,

"a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance."

It is our view that the creation of a united community with equality of opportunity, good relations and reconciliation at its core is critical. We have a number of concerns

⁴ 23rd and 24th September 2008

⁵ 3rd October 2008, CRC/C/GBR/CO/4

however that the importance of 'equality of opportunity' is not adequately reflected in the Terms of Reference of this Inquiry.

- 3.2 CLC is one of the lead organisations working on the full and proper implementation of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the legislative embodiment of the relevant provisions of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. We are firmly committed to the full implementation of and effective operation of the section 75 and have worked towards this since the implementation of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. We believe that the importance of section 75 cannot be over emphasised and it is vital to acknowledge the high constitutional importance of section 75 in the context of the new settlement in Northern Ireland. Children and young people are the most vulnerable group in our society and they are not a homogenous group. Most will fall into a number of the section 75 categories as children and young people have multiple identities which should afford them extra protection under section 75. CLC has evidence that the effective operation of section 75 has the potential to deliver extremely positive outcomes for children and young people, however it is our experience that the potential of section 75 has not been realised to date and while there has been some success with regard to compliance with section 75, on the whole section 75 has not delivered to the maximum extent possible for children and young people in Northern Ireland. We would welcome a greater emphasis on and more progress being made in the proper discharge of and consequent realisation of the obligations under section 75 to improve the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland.
- 3.3 The Committee will be aware that section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places two distinct but inter-related duties on designated public authorities in Northern Ireland. The first of these duties is detailed in Section 75(1) and is known as the 'equality duty'. This duty places a positive obligation on designated public authorities in Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally, between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without. **Critically it entails more than the elimination of discrimination and requires designated public authorities in Northern Ireland to take proactive action to promote equality of opportunity between members of the 9 section 75 categories identified in section 75(1). It also encourages public authorities in Northern Ireland to take action to address inequality among members of the 9 specified groups where inequality has been identified.**
- 3.4 The second duty is the 'good relations' duty and this can be found in section 75(2) of the NI Act 1998. Section 75(2) places an obligation on public authorities to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. Guidance on this duty is clear that it extends beyond the religious / political dimension of 'community relations' and that compliance with the good relations duty requires consideration of the needs and interests of all minority ethnic groups.
- 3.5 One important point to note is the difference between the weight to be given by public authorities with regard to the duties under section 75(1) and (2). Section 75(1) talks

about the obligation on public authorities to have *due* regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between members of each of the nine section 75 categories and the good relations duty in section 75(2) refers to the need to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The term 'due regard' was intended by parliament, after significant parliamentary scrutiny to be and is stronger than 'regard', meaning that it is the legislative intention that the equality duty is the stronger of the two duties and places a greater obligation on designated public authorities. This weighting in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 is reflective of the provisions of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the development of the earlier non-statutory Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) Guidelines.

- 3.6 Even though one duty is stronger than the other both duties always apply. Where there is a perceived tension between the two duties, both duties need to be discharged in all circumstances. What the greater strength of the equality duty means in law and practice is that the discharge of the good relations duty cannot be an alternative to or set aside the equality of opportunity duty.
- 3.7 While CLC is very supportive of an increased emphasis on good relations with a view to the move towards a more peaceful, inclusive and shared society for our children and young people, it is CLC's experience that the good relations duty has on a number of occasions been misused and misinterpreted by designated public bodies and in so doing they have undermined and fail to give effect to the equality duty under section 75, i.e. the emphasis was on equal treatment rather than equality of opportunity. With regard to this Committee Inquiry and its focus on seeking views on good relations and what good relations means it is vital in developing a definition of good relations that the will and intention of Parliament in drafting section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the provisions of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement are upheld with primacy being afforded to the equality duty.
- 3.8 The concept of good relations was first introduced in law in Northern Ireland by a rarely used provision under Article 67 of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 which places a statutory duty on councils to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between different racial groups. This was followed by the introduction of the good relations duty under section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Further examination of good relations was contained within OFMDFM's "*A Shared Future*,"⁶ document and the Northern Ireland Executive's, "*Together: Building a United Community*," strategy (TBUC)⁷.
- 3.9 TBUC proposes to represent a major change in the way that good relations will be delivered across government. It also proposes, rightly in CLC's view, that the promotion of equality of opportunity is an essential element in the building of good community relations and considers that good relations cannot and should not be built on a foundation of inequality⁸. TBUC states that,

⁶ 2005

⁷ May 2013

⁸ *Ibid*, para 1.17

“...all of our policy making and legislative actions must take into account the Section 75 duties in their entirety. Whilst the main focus of this document is on improving community relations, we cannot look at these issues in isolation. To tackle issues of inequality we must improve equality of opportunity; by improving equality of opportunity for all, we make positive strides to address better community relations. Likewise, by tackling sectarianism, prejudice and hate we can contribute positively to removing and reducing the motivation for discrimination. Therefore, in our decision making and policy implementation, we regard the promotion of equality of opportunity as an essential element in the building of good community relations and consider that good relations cannot and should not be built on a foundation of inequality.”⁹

- 3.10 CLC is very supportive of this analysis of the relationship between good relations and equality of opportunity and believes that the full and proper implementation of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 is key to progressing good relations in Northern Ireland and ensuring the promotion of equality of opportunity and addressing sectarianism and division.
- 3.11 CLC is supportive of the need for a definition of good relations as we believe that clarity of law and measurement of success can only be achieved through the adoption of a clear and understandable definition of what is meant by good relations. We believe that the development of an agreed definition of good relations should be done through widespread consultation with stakeholders, including children and young people and their advocates to obtain the views of children and young people living with division and inequality. Central to compliance with the statutory duties imposed under section 75 is the concept of increased participation in policy making and development through public consultation. There is an obligation on public authorities to carry out public consultation on the impact of policies and on matters to which the section 75 statutory duties are likely to be relevant. This would clearly apply to the establishment of a definition of good relations.
- 3.12 The intention of the equality duty under section 75 is to encourage public authorities to address inequalities and demonstrate measurable positive impact on the lives of people experiencing inequalities. Its effective implementation should improve the quality of life for all of the people of Northern Ireland. It is clear that a great deal of work remains with regard to ensuring equality of opportunity for all in Northern Ireland. There is widespread acknowledgement that inequalities exist across all areas of children’s lives including income levels, standard of living, access to health care and health outcomes, educational attainment levels, lifetime opportunities etc. The equality duty under section 75 aims to mainstream equality of opportunity among members of the nine groups detailed in the legislation through changing the practices of Government and public authorities so that equality is central to policy making, policy implementation and service delivery. Such an approach can address inequalities which exist but it requires positive action to give all children the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential and to break the cycle of disadvantage and inequality faced by many vulnerable groups in society. It is therefore fundamental that the primacy of the equality duty under section 75 is respected in developing a definition of good relations.

⁹ *Ibid*

- 3.13 The Equality Commission's Guidance, "*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 A Guide for Public Authorities*"¹⁰ is clear that the Section 75 statutory duties require more than the avoidance of discrimination. The Guidance states that public authorities should actively seek ways to encourage greater equality of opportunity and good relations through their policy development. It also provides that public authorities should give particular consideration to positive action where the impact of a policy will affect different people in a different way recognising that certain groups may experience greater inequalities¹¹.
- 3.14 It is also CLC's view that if section 75 was fully implemented by designated public authorities, both with regard to the equality and good relations duties, outcomes for children and for society more generally would be significantly improved with regard to tolerance and integration through meaningfully addressing the inequalities which exist in society and impact so negatively on children's lives and life chances in Northern Ireland.
- 3.15 CLC has number of concerns about the implementation of section 75 to date which we believe must be addressed in taking forward work on good relations and giving effect to both the equality of opportunity and good relations duties. Underpinning all concerns on the effective operation of section 75 is the lack of a sufficient enforcement mechanism and sanctions which we believe must be addressed in examining good relations and enhancing policy in uniting communities and community integration, including how communities are involved in decision making as per the Terms of Reference of this Inquiry. Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 details the procedures to follow when there is a perceived breach of a public body's section 75 duties. Complaints can be made to the Equality Commission by a person who claims to have been directly affected¹² by the failure of a public authority to comply with its equality scheme¹³ or the Equality Commission can carry out an investigation into a public authority's compliance without having received a complaint¹⁴.
- 3.16 As stated above, there are extremely limited sanctions in terms of the outcome of an investigation. In the case of Northern Ireland public bodies, the Equality Commission is required to compile a report with recommendations for action by the public authority if deemed necessary. If the Commission considers the action recommended has not been taken within a reasonable time, the Commission may refer the matter to the Secretary of State who may give directions to the public authority¹⁵. If the public authority is a Government Department, the Secretary of State does not have the power to issue directions but the Commission has discretion to lay the report before Parliament¹⁶ as was the case with the Commission's report on its investigation of a complaint by the Children's Law Centre of a failure by the Northern Ireland Office

¹⁰ April 2010

¹¹ *Ibid*, pages 8 and 9

¹² Schedule 9, para 10 Northern Ireland Act 1998

¹³ A document approved by the Equality Commission which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its section 75 obligations.

¹⁴ *Op cit.* 12

¹⁵ *Op cit.* 12, para 11(2)-(5)

¹⁶ *Op cit.* 12, para 12(5)

(NIO) to comply with its Equality Scheme. Despite the Equality Commission's recommendation that the NIO carry out an Equality Impact Assessment¹⁷ on that occasion, the Secretary of State's Ministerial Statement stated that, "...an Equality Impact Assessment was not necessary."¹⁸ There is the possibility of legal redress in relation to a breach of section 75. In the Court of Appeal Judgement¹⁹ in the Re Neill Application for judicial review the court ruled that,

*"The conclusion that the exclusive remedy available to deal with the complained of failure of NIO to comply with its equality scheme does not mean that judicial review will in all instances be unavailable. We have not decided that the existence of the Schedule 9 procedure ousts the jurisdiction of the court in all instances of breach of section 75... Judicial review should therefore be available to deal with substantive breaches of the section. ."*²⁰

However it is unclear what type of breach will be considered a substantive breach of section 75.²¹

- 3.17 CLC believes that an effective enforcement mechanism is critical in ensuring the realisation of the full potential of equality of opportunity and good relations. We believe lessons must be learned in the course of this Inquiry from the failure of section 75 of deliver as it was intended. A central element to this is ensuring the enforcement of compliance with equality of opportunity and good relations as the foundation for good relations.

4 Building a United Community – How communities are involved in decision making

- 4.1 We are very supportive of the Committee for OFMDFM examining how communities are involved in decision making as part of this Inquiry. It is CLC's experience that the involvement of children and young people in decision making is piecemeal at best. CLC has continually raised the lack of involvement of children and young people in policy making including in their communities as an issue across all aspects of children's lives with various Government Departments and agencies. It is CLC's view that the exclusion of children and young people from decision making in their communities on issues which impact on their lives leads to adult based solutions to community wide issues.
- 4.2 CLC would submit that Article 12 of the UNCRC is particularly relevant to any discussion around how children and young people are involved in policy and decision making including within their communities . Article 12 of the UNCRC provides that,

¹⁷ The mechanism where proposed and existing policies are assessed to determine their impact on members of the nine categories under section 75

¹⁸ Peter Hain's Ministerial Statement on Equality Commission Report on ASBOs 16th March 2006

¹⁹ Re Neill Application for judicial review [2006] NICA 5

²⁰ *Ibid*, para 30

²¹ *Ibid*

“States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

Article 12 as one of the general principles of the UNCRC, establishes not only a fundamental right in itself, but should also be considered in the interpretation and implementation of all other rights contained within the UNCRC.²²

- 4.3 The Committee on the Rights of the Child has issued General Comment No. 12 on the right of the child to be heard in order to assist States in the effective implementation of Article 12. This identifies that the views expressed by children may add relevant perspectives and experience and should be considered in decision-making, policymaking and the preparation of laws.²³ The Committee also emphasises that Article 12 requires not only the participation of individual children and clearly defined groups of children, but the participation of groups of children, such as indigenous children, children with disabilities, or children in general, who are affected directly or indirectly by social, economic or cultural conditions of living in their society.²⁴

In highlighting the link between Article 12 and Article 2 of the UNCRC, the Committee on the Rights of the Child notes that Article 2 provides that every child has the right not to be discriminated against in the exercise of his or her rights, including those provided under Article 12. States are required to address discrimination, including against vulnerable or marginalised groups of children, to ensure that children are assured their right to be heard and are enabled to participate in all matters affecting them on an equal basis with all other children.²⁵

- 4.4 The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child notes within the General Comment that much of the opportunity for children’s participation takes place at the community level. The Committee welcomes the growing number of local youth parliaments, municipal children’s councils and *ad hoc* consultations where children can voice their views in decision making processes, but highlights that these structures for formal representative participation in local government should be just one of many approaches to the implementation of Article 12 at the local level, as they only allow for a relatively small number of children to engage in their local communities.²⁶ The Committee urges States parties to avoid tokenistic approaches, which limit children’s expression of views, or which allow children to be heard, but fail to give their views due weight. It emphasises that if participation is to be effective and meaningful, it needs to be understood as a process, not as an individual one-off event.²⁷

²² United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 12 (2009) ‘The right of the child to be heard’, CRC/C/GC/12, 20th July 2009, para.2.

²³ *Ibid*, para.12.

²⁴ *Ibid*, para.87.

²⁵ *Ibid*, para.75.

²⁶ *Ibid*, para.127.

²⁷ *Ibid*, para.132 – 133.

- 4.5 In addition, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its 2008 Concluding Observations, following the most recent examination of the United Kingdom Government's compliance with the UNCRC recommended that the United Kingdom, in accordance with Article 12 of the Convention, should promote, facilitate and implement, in legislation as well as in practice, within the family, schools, and the community as well as in institutions and in administrative and judicial proceedings, the principle of respect for the views of the child. The Committee further recommended support for forums for children's participation.²⁸
- 4.6 It is clear from the UNCRC and the associated recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child that the participation of children and young people in decision making including within their communities is vital. CLC is concerned that currently children and young people's voices are not sufficiently heard in policy and decision making including within their communities. We recommend that formal mechanisms be introduced to ensure sufficient inclusion of children and young people within decision making structures in communities in line with the obligations under Article 12 of the UNCRC.
- 4.7 The meaningful involvement of children and young people in community decision making is vital when one considers that it is well acknowledged that children and young people are disproportionately viewed as being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour²⁹. The Northern Ireland Policing Board's (NIPB) Children and Young People's Thematic Review³⁰ noted that children and young people are subjected to inaccurate and unfair stereotyping and that rather than being subjected to this, children and young people must be protected and respected.³¹ The Review considered issues around anti-social behaviour out of a desire not to suggest that children and young people are the protagonists of such behaviour, but rather because they are often *perceived* to be the protagonists, a myth the Review wished to dispel.³² The Review highlighted that in communities built upon mutual empathy and respect, there was a reduction in the perception of anti-social behaviour. The negative stereotyping of children and young people fed perceptions of anti-social behaviour, and this almost certainly resulted in increased numbers of reports to the police and an increased focus by the police in response.³³ This diminished the ability of the police to concentrate on policing actual criminal activity. CLC believes that the meaningful involvement of children and young people in decision making including in their communities is vital given the fundamental importance of the involvement of young people in the issues of policing and community safety and the need for their voices to be heard in developing inclusive and effective solutions.

²⁸ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding Observations United Kingdom, CRC/C/GBR/CO/4, 20th October 2008, para.33(a) and (b).

²⁹ 'Hoodies or altar boys? What is media stereotyping doing to our British boys?' Women in Journalism, March 2009.

³⁰ January 2011

³¹ 'Human Rights Thematic Review – Children and Young People' Northern Ireland Policing Board, January 2011, p.3.

³² *Ibid*, p.14.

³³ *Ibid*, p.15.

5 Building a United Community – Addressing sectarianism and division

- 5.1 CLC is supportive of the emphasis in this Inquiry on what good relations means in practice, on bringing divided communities together and on addressing intolerance and issues to encourage community integration. We believe that in attempting to address community division and intolerance, solutions must be long term, sustainable and in the best interests of the entire community. CLC does not believe that such solutions can be arrived at without a comprehensive examination of the legacy of the conflict and the particular circumstances which exist in Northern Ireland as a result of the conflict including its impact on children's lives on a daily basis.
- 5.2 The complexity of the legacy of the Northern Ireland conflict and its associated issues, which impact on the lives of our children and young people who are growing up in post conflict Northern Ireland, require significant interrogation. CLC believes that the legacy of the Northern Ireland conflict is very pervasive today in the lives of our children and young people. We examine below some of the issues faced by children and young people in Northern Ireland as a consequence of the conflict, which we believe need to be addressed in ensuring long term solutions and a settlement which will guarantee a more secure future for the children and young people of Northern Ireland.
- 5.3 The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister³⁴ records that 36% of those killed in the conflict in Northern Ireland were children and young people. Goretti Horgan and Marina Monteith³⁵ found that children and young people living in areas of deprivation continue to experience social exclusion and conflict related violence. They note growing evidence that children are suffering mental ill health as a result of inter-generational trauma. Meanwhile, Government acknowledges the inadequate provision of child and adolescent mental health services³⁶ and indeed CLC has determined that investment in child and adolescent mental health services is extremely inadequate to meet the growing need.
- 5.4 There are no complete figures for children injured as a result of the conflict. Between 1991 and 1997, 120 young people were shot (usually in the kneecaps) and 234 assaulted by paramilitaries. All of these young people come from the most disadvantaged communities³⁷. While there had been a steady decline in shootings and assaults by non-state forces in Northern Ireland since 2000/01, according to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) statistics, there was a sharp increase of around 125% in the number of non-state force style shootings (from 20 to 46) and a near 100% increase in the number of non-state force style assaults between 2008/09 and 2009/10 (from 41 to 81).³⁸ Unfortunately these PSNI statistics are not collated by age, therefore we do not know how many of these attacks were targeted at children or young people. Further PSNI statistics show that whilst the number of non-state

³⁴ 2006

³⁵ 2009

³⁶ 2006

³⁷ *"The Impact of Political Conflict on Children in Northern Ireland"* Smyth et al 2004

³⁸ 'Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics: Annual Report covering the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012', Police Service of Northern Ireland, p. 5.

force style assaults and shootings has since decreased, from 1st April 2010 until 31st March 2012, there were still 66 non-state style shootings in total.³⁹ Over the same period there were 96 non-state style assaults in total.⁴⁰ It should be noted that these statistics only include those incidents that are brought to the attention of police and some incidents may not have been reported.

- 5.5 In Northern Ireland it is vital that there is adequate acknowledgement of the impacts of the conflict and its legacy. Many of the children whose past trauma went unrecognised and untreated now have families of their own. Trans-generational trauma manifests itself in a variety of ways,

“...it’s affecting children’s education, their mental health and their ability to participate in society.”⁴¹

- 5.6 Children and young people today, *“...are more likely to experience small-scale, sporadic acts of political violence rather than large-scale, widespread violent confrontation”⁴²*. While many will have no direct experience of violence, some do. It has been argued that reflecting the historical, political and social contexts in Northern Ireland, activities involving violence in a post Good Friday Agreement society are generally connected to segregated living and sectarianism.⁴³ Those living in ‘interface’ areas, in particular, are likely to witness or engage in occasional, opportunist acts of violence targeted at members of the ‘other’ community.⁴⁴ It has been argued that the exceptional levels of violence experienced by children during the conflict have led to a high tolerance and ‘normalisation’ of violence as a primary means of settling disputes, demonstrating opposition or drawing attention to perceived injustices.⁴⁵
- 5.7 Research conducted over three years with 196 children and young people across six communities heavily affected by the conflict, with the aim of understanding and exploring the lives of children living in those communities, found that, *“violence has remained a part of everyday life for children and young people living in communities defined by uncertainty, unease and the continued presence of paramilitaries or dissidents”⁴⁶*. Many of the young people interviewed reported being exposed to

³⁹ ‘Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics: Annual Report covering the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012’ Police Service of Northern Ireland, 10th May 2012, p. 2. ‘Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics 2010/11 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011’, Police Service of Northern Ireland, 12th May 2011, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 244

⁴² Leonard, M. (2007) ‘Trapped in Space? Children’s Accounts of Risky Environments’ Children and Society, Vol. 21, pp. 432-445, p. 433

⁴³ Roche, R. (2008) *Sectarianisms and Segregation in Urban Northern Ireland: Northern Irish Youth Post-Agreement. A Report on the Facts, Fears and Feelings Project*, Belfast: Queens University Belfast, p136-147

⁴⁴ Hansson, U. (2005) *Troubled Youth? Young People, Violence and Disorder in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research, pp. 18-30

⁴⁵ Horgan, G. (2005) ‘Why the Bill of Rights should protect and promote the rights of children and young people in Northern Ireland. The particular circumstances of children in Northern Ireland’ in Horgan, G. and Kilkelly, U. (eds) *Protecting children and young people’s rights in the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Why? How?*, Belfast: Save the Children and Children’s Law Centre, p. 13

⁴⁶ McAlister, S., Scraton, P. And Haydon, D. (2009) *Childhood in Transition Experiencing Marginalisation and Conflict in Northern Ireland* QUB, Save the Children, The Prince’s Trust. p. 152.

sectarian violence, community violence, rioting against the police and paramilitary style threats and punishments.

- 5.8 Northern Ireland continues to be a highly segregated society. Segregation in housing, education, public services and leisure facilities continues to be the daily reality experienced by most children and young people. Over 90% of public housing continues to be segregated along religious lines.⁴⁷ In Belfast, 98% of public housing is segregated into Protestant or Catholic areas⁴⁸. McAllister et al⁴⁹ found segregation to be a defining characteristic of children and young people's lives, "*every aspect of the lives of children and young people was defined by division-their identities, communities, schools, social networks, sporting activities and use of free-time*".⁵⁰ Children learn the language of division from about 2 years of age and are then educated mainly in separate schools. Friendships in adult life are mainly in-group as are some 90% of marriages.⁵¹
- 5.9 Given the "conflict profile" of children in Northern Ireland CLC believes that it is essential that there is increased investment in child and youth focused services in the communities most impacted upon by the conflict.
- 5.10 It has been well recognised that factors associated with the conflict and with a society emerging from conflict have impacted severely on child and adolescent mental health in Northern Ireland.⁵² The Chief Medical Officer estimated that more than 20% of young people in Northern Ireland are suffering "*significant mental health problems*" by their 18th birthday.⁵³ Yet there has been a gross failure to recognise and respond to the long term consequences of trans-generational trauma. McAlister et al⁵⁴ have noted that,

*"...the inter-relationship of unaddressed conflict-related trauma, interpersonal violence within families, continuing paramilitary intimidation, forced exiling, economic marginalisation and social exclusion constitute 'special circumstances' for children, young people and their families in Northern Ireland".*⁵⁵

There has been an associated failure to adequately resource appropriate mental health services.⁵⁶ In Northern Ireland in 2012/13, only £19m has been allocated to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, which equates to 7.9% of the total

⁴⁷ *Mixed housing scheme is launched*, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 30 October 2006.

⁴⁸ *Constructions of Social Exclusion Among Young People From Interface Areas of Northern Ireland* Owen Hargie, Aodheen O'Donnell, and Christel McMullan, Youth Society, 2011

⁴⁹ 2009

⁵⁰ *Op cit* 46 p 151.

⁵¹ *Op cit* 48

⁵² DHSSPS (2005) *A Vision for a Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service – The Bamford Review* November pp 15-16

⁵³ Chief Medical Officer (1999) *Health of the Public in Northern Ireland: report of the Chief Medical Officer, 1999: Taking care of the next generation* Belfast DHSSPS.

⁵⁴ 2009

⁵⁵ *Op cit* 46 p 25

⁵⁶ O'Rawe, A. (2003) *An Overview of Northern Ireland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services* Belfast: Children's Law Centre.

mental health expenditure for that period⁵⁷, despite the fact that children and young people under 18 represent nearly a quarter of Northern Ireland's population.

- 5.11 Children living in areas most impacted upon by the conflict are more likely to have mental health needs. Evidence that experience of the Northern Ireland conflict is associated with poorer mental health is strong⁵⁸. Population-based surveys show that those who experienced most violence have significantly higher rates of depression than those with little or no experience. People whose areas had been heavily affected by violence had very high rates of depression⁵⁹. Children have been injured, killed, subject to punishment beatings, bereaved and have witnessed terrible violence.⁶⁰ Many children remain undiagnosed and services are patchy and geographically uneven.
- 5.12 There is an extremely worrying and rising suicide rate, particularly in relation to under 18's, in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland which are also the areas to have suffered worst as a result of the Northern Ireland conflict. North and West Belfast has a population of around 150,000 living in some of the most socially and economically disadvantaged wards in Northern Ireland. The area has a large youth population and the impact of the conflict in these areas has been widespread. Research shows a higher rate of mental illness in the North and West Belfast Trust area than elsewhere in Northern Ireland. The average rate of suicide in Northern Ireland is 9.8 per 100,000. In North and West Belfast the rate is much higher with an average approaching 18 per 100,000⁶¹.
- 5.13 The Guardian newspaper reported in March 2011⁶² that suicide rates have been rising markedly in Northern Ireland over the past decade. According to the Public Health Agency (PHA), after a period of relatively static figures in the latter half of the last century, between 1999 and 2008 rates of suicide in Northern Ireland increased by 64%. Most of the rise was attributable to young men in the 15 to 34 age group. A large proportion was concentrated in disadvantaged areas and, in particular, north and west Belfast, the area most impacted upon by the conflict. In 2002, 76% of all suicides in Northern Ireland were male, and 60% were between 15 and 34 years old. By 2008, the latest year for which a reliable breakdown of the statistics is available, 77% of suicides were male, but the proportion aged between 15 and 34 had risen to 72%. This marked increase in the number of suicides in Northern Ireland is at a time when rates in Britain have remained relatively static.
- 5.14 Reasons given for this rise include the long term impact of entrenched deprivation in some communities when coupled with issues of identity in a "post-conflict" society and the legacy of the Troubles for some of the younger generation of men and boys.

⁵⁷ Freedom of Information Request from the Health and Social Care Board, dated 8th April 2013

⁵⁸ Miller *et al.*, 2003; O'Reilly and Stevenson, 2003; Muldoon *et al.*, 2005

⁵⁹ Suicide and Young People: the case of Northern Ireland - Mike Tomlinson School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work Queen's University Belfast 4th October 2007

⁶⁰ Geraghty, T. 'Getting It Rights?' Children's Law Centre and Save the Children 1999. pp 53-54 and Smyth, M. 'Half the Battle: Understanding the Impact of the Troubles/Conflict on Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' INCORE. 1998.

⁶¹ June 2006

⁶² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/mar/16/suicide-rates-northern-ireland>

- 5.15 Consultant psychiatrist Dr. Philip McGarry contends that there are a number of important aspects of suicide to be considered in the Northern Ireland context, including the legacy of the Troubles. When discussing the fact that suicide rates in Northern Ireland have risen since the Good Friday agreement was signed, Dr. McGarry told The Guardian,

"That paramilitary violence remained a feature of working-class communities such as west and north Belfast "long after" the agreement was signed, and that so many young men in those areas have mental health problems as a result, he says, is no coincidence⁶³."

- 5.16 There is a clear need in addressing the past and the legacy of the conflict on children and young people in Northern Ireland, to address the under resourcing of child and adolescent mental health services and to invest in suicide prevention, particularly in areas most impacted upon by the conflict.
- 5.17 There is considerable robust evidence to demonstrate that Northern Ireland has higher levels of children living in poverty than any other region in the UK or Ireland. An acknowledgement of the relationship between experience of the conflict and experience of poverty should be reflected in government policy to impact on poverty in the region, if those policies are to be successful.
- 5.18 The inter relationship between poverty and the conflict is deep rooted. Horgan⁶⁴ has noted that, "...there is a marked concentration of poverty in a relatively small proportion of Northern Ireland's electoral wards. Many of these wards are in and around the areas most impacted by the conflict".⁶⁵ This is illustrated by the fact that in 2006, 25 out of a total of 566 wards recorded child poverty above 75% compared with 180 out of 10,000 wards in Britain.⁶⁶
- 5.19 Recent research supports this finding with the highest levels of poverty being concentrated in areas most impacted upon by the Northern Ireland conflict. In Belfast 60 %, 61%, 64% and 68% of children are living in poverty in the Ardoyne, Whiterock, Falls and Colin Glen Districts respectively. 61% and 63% of children in the Brandywell and Creggan Central Districts of Derry and 66% of children East Strabane live in poverty.⁶⁷
- 5.20 Poverty is a defining factor in the lives of many children and their families in Northern Ireland, negatively affecting health and well-being, educational and employment opportunities and access to quality accommodation⁶⁸. The proportion of children living in poverty in Northern Ireland is higher than the UK average, (20%) with Derry (35%) and Belfast (34%) placed 4th and 5th respectively in a league table of the UK

⁶³ *Ibid*

⁶⁴ 2005

⁶⁵ *Op cit.* 45. p. 7

⁶⁶ McLaughlin, E. and Monteith, M. (2006) *Child and Family Poverty in Northern Ireland Belfast*: OFMDFM Equality Directorate Research Branch

⁶⁷ <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/poverty-in-your-area>

⁶⁸ Save the Children, 2007

local authority areas with the highest rates of child poverty based on figures for 2012⁶⁹.

- 5.21 Benefit levels remain below the poverty line and income levels of lone parent families and couples with children are lower than comparable levels in Britain. Income deprivation is compounded as poor households pay proportionately more in Northern Ireland for essential goods and services such as food, fuel, transport, insurance and banking. People living in the 20% most deprived electoral wards have poorer life expectancy, higher rates of admission to hospital, more infant deaths and more suicides than Northern Ireland's population as a whole⁷⁰.
- 5.22 The Institute of Fiscal Studies predicts that due to welfare cuts and other austerity measures, child poverty rates in Northern Ireland are likely to rise in 2020 to 30%⁷¹.
- 5.23 By 2014-2015, it was estimated that spending on benefits across the UK will be £18 billion less than it was in 2011 (in cash terms), with the loss to NI benefit recipients of more than £600 million per year.⁷² These cuts are happening at the same time as increasing costs in everyday living (for example housing and household services, which includes utility bills, climbed 30% between August 2007 and January 2013, transport climbed 23%, food and drink climbed 34%⁷³) potentially pushing greater numbers of children and families into poverty.
- 5.24 A report from the Centre for Social Justice⁷⁴ commented that the disillusionment surrounding worklessness among young people has become a critical problem in Northern Ireland. In January - March 2014, there were 32,000 young people (aged from 16 to 24) in Northern Ireland who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).⁷⁵ For the period January - March 2014, the Northern Ireland NEETs rate for those aged 16-24 stood at 14.6%, compared to a UK average of 12.6%.⁷⁶ Youth unemployment is also extremely high. From April – June 2014, the rate of unemployment amongst young people aged 18 – 24 was 19.4%. The rate was as high as 24.7% in July – September 2013.⁷⁷ A recent study found that a third of long term unemployed young people have contemplated taking their own lives. The research found that long term unemployed young people were more than twice as likely as their peers to have been prescribed anti-depressants. One in three (32%) had contemplated suicide, while one in four (24%) had self-harmed. The report found 40% of jobless young people had faced symptoms of mental illness, including

⁶⁹ http://www.barnardos.org.uk/130212_ecp_local_report_final_2_.pdf

⁷⁰ Haydon, 2008

⁷¹ *Child and Working-Age Poverty in Northern Ireland from 2010 to 2020*, James Browne, Andrew Hood and Robert Joyce, Institute for Fiscal Studies

⁷² Tomlinson, M., Kelly, G. (2011) Response to NI's draft budget, Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK Project, p.1

⁷³ <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/business-news/high-cost-of-living-in-northern-ireland-29077204.html>

⁷⁴ Breakthrough Northern Ireland, September 2010

⁷⁵ 'Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey' January – March 2014, p.17

http://www.detini.gov.uk/lfs_quarterly_supplement_january-march_2014.pdf?rev=0

⁷⁶ 'Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey' January – March 2014, p.18

http://www.detini.gov.uk/lfs_quarterly_supplement_january-march_2014.pdf?rev=0

⁷⁷ http://www.detini.gov.uk/index/what-we-do/deti-stats-index/labour_market_statistics/stats-labour-market-unemployment.htm Table 2.9 'Unemployment by age'.

suicidal thoughts, feelings of self-loathing and panic attacks, as a direct result of unemployment.⁷⁸

- 5.25 Statistics on educational achievement in Northern Ireland have indicated concerns about underachievement among working class pupils and in particular working class Protestant boys⁷⁹. In 2001, OFMDFM⁸⁰ concluded that the educational non-progressor was most likely to be a Protestant working class male. Recent research from the Community Relations Council⁸¹ found that disproportionate educational underachievement of this particular group of young people continues. 19.7% of Protestant boys who were entitled to free school meals (FSME) achieved at least 5+ GCSEs A*-C or higher (or equivalent) compared with 32.4% of Protestant girls (FSME), 33.2% of Roman Catholic boys (FSME) and 43.8% of Roman Catholic Girls (FSME).
- 5.26 Additional research⁸² which found high levels of under achievement in education by working class Protestant males found that that differentials in educational performance lie (to a degree of 80% or more) outside schools and the classroom. It found that systemic educational improvement will require comprehensive, long-term responses to inequality. The research also highlighted the deindustrialization and the loss of traditional labour markets and skills. Generations of working class Protestants were heavily involved in manufacturing industry and viewed getting a trade as the main form of educational requirement. The collapse in this labour market and the movement towards a consumerist, service driven economy has, to a degree, left elements of the Protestant working class stranded with redundant skills-sets and abilities. It is clear that this results in a sense of alienation for this group of young people.
- 5.27 Children who are underachieving in education are at a greater disadvantage than they have been for some time due to limits in their progression in education preventing them from being able to compete for education and employment opportunities. These children tend to be from socially deprived areas and /or face barriers to learning such as SEN or additional needs related to a disability.
- 5.28 Education is a fundamental element in the provision of opportunities for children and young people in Northern Ireland. The lack of opportunity for children and young people, through the education system failing them, results in a sense of frustration and resentment which manifests itself in a number of negative ways in our communities. In arriving at long term solutions for Northern Ireland to prevent societal regression the Inquiry must consider ways to restore hope to our young people. This involves focusing on the provision of opportunities for children and young people and addressing inequalities in educational attainment by certain groups of young people.

⁷⁸ The Prince's Trust Macquarie Youth Index, January 2014

⁷⁹ Free School Meal entitlement is used as a proxy indicator of deprivation as specific data on pupil's class background are not recorded in official Department of Education databases

⁸⁰ OFMDFM (2001) Report on Participation Rates in Further and Higher Education

⁸¹ Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report Number 3, P. Nolan, March 2014

⁸² A Call to Action *Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class*, Issued by Dawn Purvis MLA and the Working Group on Educational disadvantage and the Protestant working class, March 2011

- 5.29 In Northern Ireland 322,000 people or 18% of the population living in private households have some degree of disability. When broken down this means that 285,000 people or 21% of adults and 26,000 children or 6% have a disability. 37% of households in Northern Ireland include at least one person with a disability and 20% of these contain more than one person with a disability. Prevalence increases with age ranging from 5% among young adults to 67% among those who are very old (85+) and male prevalence rates are only higher than female rates amongst the youngest adults (16 to 25) - 6% of males compared with 4% of females. 8% of boys aged 15 and under were found to have a disability, compared with 4% of girls of the same age⁸³.
- 5.30 Goretti Horgan's research⁸⁴ refers to the fact that there are higher levels of disability and ill health in Northern Ireland than in other parts Great Britain. Some of this is due to physical and mental damage caused by the conflict. But much is related to higher levels of poverty and poor diet generally, particularly the poor diet of many expectant mothers. She also states that, in spite of these higher levels of disability, there is poorer provision of services for families dealing with disability. Some of this dearth of services is likely to be because of the high costs of duplicating some services due to the segregated nature of society here.
- 5.31 Almost half of all claimants of out of work disability benefits in Northern Ireland suffer from mental or behavioural conditions⁸⁵.
- 5.32 Higher levels of disability in Northern Ireland is just one of the legacies of the Northern Ireland conflict. There are a number of factors to consider when examining disability as an issue, including the fact that areas most impacted upon by the conflict have higher rates of both physical and mental disability. The lack of adequate service provision to meet the needs of those with disabilities, the additional cost to families of raising a child with a disability which is estimated to be three times more⁸⁶ and the lack of opportunities for children and young people with disabilities all contribute to a sense of alienation and frustration in communities which live with the legacy of the conflict.
- 5.33 The reality in Northern Ireland is that the communities most impacted upon by and living with the legacy of the conflict are living in poverty. Research shows that worklessness, benefit dependency and poverty are defining factors of the lives of those living in interface areas⁸⁷ and areas most impacted upon by the conflict. Children and young people living in poor communities which as a result of the conflict are almost entirely religiously segregated are often socially excluded and lacking in hope for the future. Rising youth unemployment, poor educational attainment of children from socially deprived areas and a lack of opportunity for children and young

⁸³ DHSSPS's "Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy 2011 – 2015" Consultation December 2010

⁸⁴ "The particular circumstances of children in Northern Ireland", Horgan G November 2005

⁸⁵ DSD IB and SDA statistics, February 2010 data, updated December 2010

⁸⁶ Contact A Family for families with disabled children, Facts and Figures

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media-enquiries/>

⁸⁷ *Op cit.* 48

people is resulting in a sense of frustration and resentment of the 'other' community through a perception that their community has been left behind. In arriving at long term solutions for Northern Ireland it is vital that we consider ways to address these fundamental issues. This will involve a clear focus on the provision of opportunities for children and young people, the provision of critical services such as CAMHS and investment in addressing child poverty in line with the Government's obligations under the Child Poverty Act 2010. All of these actions must be approached from the principle of equality of opportunity.

- 5.34 CLC believes that in order to achieve long term solutions in the best interests of all of our children and young people and their communities that what is necessary is a human rights framework. The imperative of a human rights framework was recognised by all involved in reaching a peace settlement in Northern Ireland.
- 5.35 The Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations on Children and Armed Conflict, Mr Olara Otunnu after his second visit to Northern Ireland argued that,

"Following conflict, the prospects of recovery often depend largely on giving priority attention to young people in the rebuilding process, rehabilitating young people affected by war, and restoring their sense of hope. This issue must become a priority. All key actors responsible for developing post-conflict peace-building programmes should make the rights and protection of children a central concern in their planning, programming and resource allocation."

He appealed to political leaders,

"to address the basic concerns of children in Northern Ireland, particularly social and educational integration, youth unemployment, substance abuse and poverty, improved access to health facilities and housing, increased access to counselling, and improved administration of child protection and juvenile justice. Children's rights should be incorporated into the new Northern Ireland Bill of Rights."⁸⁸

- 5.36 The Bill of Rights was an integral part of the peace agreement for Northern Ireland, ensuring that past abuses of human rights which fuelled and maintained the conflict could never re-occur, and that society moved forwards on the basis of respect for human rights and equality for all. Children and young people have been particularly adversely affected by the conflict and violence in our society over recent decades including post the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. The guaranteeing of protection and respect for children's rights are essential elements in securing a better future for all children, something which a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland has significant potential to help achieve. A jurisdictionally specific Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland as provided for in the Agreement represents a unique opportunity to enshrine children's rights at a constitutional level in Northern Ireland and to consolidate the protection of children's rights into one binding and enforceable document. In so doing

⁸⁸ United Nations General Assembly Fifty-fifth session: Agenda item 110: Promotion and protection of children's rights. 3 October 2000:pp 9-10

there will be a strong robust foundation on which to address the issues of sectarianism and division.

- 5.37 The political, social, economic and cultural context of children's lives in Northern Ireland illustrate how the conflict and its legacy continue to cast a dark shadow over children and young people's lives today. The harsh reality of too many of our children and young people's lives also underscores how critically important it is that the potential of the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland to address many of these fundamental rights issues for children and young people is fully realised.
- 5.38 It is extremely disappointing that no significant progress has been made in delivering a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland since the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission advised the UK government on recommendations for the content of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland in 2008. CLC wishes to see a renewed focus on and commitment to the delivery of a Bill of Rights for all of the people of Northern Ireland.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 CLC welcomes this Inquiry into Building A United Community being carried out by the Committee of the First and Deputy First Minister. We hope that our comments have been useful in taking the Inquiry forward. CLC believes that equality of opportunity and good relations are central components to addressing intolerance and addressing community division, as well as ensuring the meaningful involvement of children and young people in decision making including in their communities. Equality of opportunity and good relations are also the key to providing long terms solutions to the problems faced by so many of our young people who live with division and inequality on a daily basis. We look forward to the progression of the Inquiry and are grateful for the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee.

Committee for the Environment



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**Committee for the Environment
Room 245
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**Tel: +44 (0)28 9052 1347
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To: Kathy O’Hanlon
**Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**

From: Sheila Mawhinney
Clerk to the Committee for the Environment

Date: 16 September 2014

Subject: Inquiry into Building a United Community

1. At its meeting on 11 September 2014 the Committee for the Environment considered correspondence from your Committee inviting it to respond to the Inquiry into Building a United Community.
2. The Committee did not wish to make a response to the Inquiry.

Sheila Mawhinney
Clerk
Committee for the Environment

Committee for Finance and Personnel



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

Committee for Finance and Personnel

Room 144
Parliament Buildings
Tel: 028 9052 1843

From: Shane McAteer
Clerk to the Committee for Finance and Personnel

Date: 10 October 2014

To: Kathy O'Hanlon, Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Inquiry into Building a United Community

At its meeting 10 September 2014 the Committee for Finance and Personnel considered your memo of 8 July 2014 in respect of your Committee's Inquiry into Building a United Community. The Committee subsequently wrote to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) to establish whether it would be responding to the Inquiry, in terms of any relevance to the Department's remit.

At its meeting on 8 October 2014, the Committee noted the attached correspondence from DFP which stated that it would not be responding to the Inquiry. On the basis of this, the Committee therefore agreed that it would also not make a submission to the Inquiry.

SHANE MCATEER

☎ 21843

Assembly Section

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Mr Shane McAteer
Clerk
Committee for Finance and Personnel
Room 419
Parliament Buildings
Stormont

Our Ref CFP/363/11-15

2 October 2014

Dear Shane,

Your letter of 15 September 2014 requested that the Committee for Finance and Personnel receive a copy of any submission made by DFP into the COFMDFM inquiry regarding Building a United Community.

This is to advise that DFP has made no submission to the COFMDFM inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

GEARÓID CASSIDY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Committee for Social Development



COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Room 284, Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3XX
Tel: 028 9052 1864

To: Karen Jardine, Senior Assistant Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

From: Kevin Pelan, Clerk to the Committee for Social Development

Date: 22 September 2014

Subject: Building a United Community

At its meeting on 4 September 2014, the Committee for Social Development noted the Terms of Reference for your Committee's inquiry into Building a United Community.

Given the busy work schedule with its own inquiry, the Committee provided no comment on the Terms of Reference and I am therefore writing to advise you of a nil response.

Dr Kevin Pelan
Ext 21864

Committee on the Administration of Justice



Written Evidence to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister inquiry into 'Building a United Community'

Committee on the Administration of Justice ('CAJ')

October 2014

CAJ is an independent human rights organisation with cross community membership in Northern Ireland and beyond. It was established in 1981 and lobbies and campaigns on a broad range of human rights issues. CAJ seeks to secure the highest standards in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland by ensuring that the Government complies with its obligations in international human rights law.

Background: the 'T:BUC' strategy

The Northern Ireland Executive's *'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy*, ('T:BUC') was published on May 23 2013.¹ This strategy has been commonly referred to as community relations, anti-sectarianism, integration or peace building strategy, and superseded the earlier Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration consulted on in 2010.²

The *T:BUC* strategy proposes legislation to potentially take forward two matters:

- Proposed changes to turn the Equality Commission into an 'Equality and Good Relations Commission' and add a 'good relations' section into Equality Impact Assessments;
- The incorporation of a definition of sectarianism in law;

Related to the T:BUC process was the establishment of a Panel of Parties to address matters such as parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and dealing with the past. This led to the Haass-O'Sullivan talks and consequent Proposed Agreement published at the close of 2013.³

The Committee's Inquiry

In summer 2014 the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced it would undertake an inquiry into 'Building a United Community' with the purpose of informing the Executive's approach in the actions it takes to tackle sectarianism,

¹ Available at: <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community> [August 2013].

² See CAJ's [submission no. S. 269](#) 'CAJ's response to the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister's consultation on Cohesion, Sharing and Integration' November 2010.

³ See [CAJ briefing to Haass on T:BUC s418](#) (August 2013), '[Proposed Agreement Among the parties of the Northern Ireland Executive](#)' 31 December 2013 (Haass-O'Sullivan Proposed Agreement) and Holder, Daniel '[The Haass / O'Sullivan Proposed Agreement on parades and flags: analysis from a human rights perspective](#)' *Rights NI* 13 January 2014



racism and other forms of intolerance as well as recommendations on policy on integration. Among the terms of reference are an examination of theory and practice with regard to 'good relations' and seeking views on what 'good relations' means.⁴ This CAJ submission will focus on these questions in relation to the two areas envisaged for potential T:BUC legislation, namely 'good relations' policy and the definition of sectarianism.

'Good relations' and T:BUC

The T:BUC strategy proposes transforming the Equality Commission into an '*Equality and Good Relations Commission*' and granting the body additional 'good relations' powers. In addition, and the focus of this section, the T:BUC strategy proposes changes to the 'Equality Impact Assessments' (EQIAs) required under the existing 'section 75' statutory equality duty. The change, if implemented, would formally include 'good relations' considerations within such impact assessments. This revives an aborted proposal envisaged by the ill-fated direct-rule '*Shared Future*' strategy almost a decade ago, albeit with a different formulation. In this instance the proposal is for a 'good relations' section in EQIAs to measure the implementation of the T:BUC strategy itself. T:BUC proposes:

An augmented [Equality] impact assessment will be developed that assesses the extent to which policies and other interventions contribute to meeting the objectives of [T:BUC]⁵

It is worth noting T:BUC does not provide for 'good relations' impact assessments to be on a par with the counterpart equality considerations, rather envisaging a good relations 'section' in EQIAs. T:BUC itself also references the intended primacy of the equality duty in the current formulation of Section 75. However, in CAJ's view the proposals as they stand, even if these caveats are honoured, still risk undermining the equality duty. When T:BUC proposals were formally released, CAJ published our own research – '*Unequal Relations*'⁶ which collated evidence about how 'good relations' considerations were already being interpreted in existing EQIAs. Although not required by law some public authorities have already included 'good relations' impact considerations in EQIAs. The key finding of the CAJ research was that equality and rights goals were being undermined by the then interpretation and application of 'good relations' in EQIAs. The research concluded that this would be exacerbated if 'good relations' criteria were further formalised into EQIAs in an ill-defined and subjective manner. At worst our concern is that the good relations duty, rather than being a duty focusing on tackling sectarianism and other forms of racism as originally anticipated, essentially becomes a crude political veto by taking a lay definition that the 'good relations' duty is engaged by any action which is politically contentious, even if such action is precisely in pursuit of the equality and rights based goals EQIAs were designed to promote.

⁴ Terms of Reference available at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Office-of-the-First-Minister-and-deputy-First-Minister/Inquiries/Building-a-United-Community/Terms-of-Reference/> [October 2014].

⁵ T:BUC para 6.30, also pages 8 and 31. Reference is also made to an enhanced good relations 'section' in Equality Impact Assessments on page 6 and page 27.

⁶ [CAJ 'Unequal Relations: Policy, the Section 75 duties and Equality Commission advice: has 'good relations' been allowed to undermine equality?' May 2013](#)



What is 'good relations'?

CAJ notes that the T:BUC strategy references the concept of 'good relations' 179 times but does not define it. 'Good Relations' is also not defined in law in Northern Ireland, despite having been defined in the counterpart duty in Great Britain for some time. The statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 across England, Scotland and Wales, defines 'good relations' as being primarily about tackling prejudice and promoting understanding across all the equality groups in that legislation.⁷ The Committee seeks views as to what good relations should mean. CAJ advocates that the existing legal definition in GB is adopted in a format consistent with Northern Ireland legislation and that the following definition is adopted into law:

**good relations ...means having regard, in particular, to the desirability of —
(a) tackling prejudice, and (b) promoting understanding.**

CAJ regards as untenable the contradictory position that 'good relations' is both highly important but that it is undesirable or impossible to define it. In our view the above definition would not only help prevent misinterpretation of the duty but would also assist in supporting a framework for existing good practice in good relations work.

Should 'good relations' be clearly defined as above we would also suggest going beyond restricting the concept to the current three categories and covering the full range of equality categories. The section 75(2)⁸ duty at present only covers the three grounds of religious belief, political opinion and racial group⁹ and does not extend, for example, to gender. The only similar current duty in Northern Ireland on other grounds is the duty, among other matters, to promote positive attitudes to persons with disabilities, under disability discrimination legislation.¹⁰

Good Relations and 'tackling prejudice and promoting understanding'

In relation to what being 'in particular' (i.e. not exclusively but primarily) about tackling prejudice and promoting understanding means the Explanatory Notes to the GB Equality Act 2010 give examples of what is intended in practice.¹¹ In relation to 'tackling prejudice' strategies to tackle homophobic bullying in schools are mentioned (as the good relations duties in GB cover sexual orientation). In relation to 'promoting understanding' the example of measures to facilitate understanding and conciliation between different communities is referenced. The above definition therefore provides for a duty which encompasses tackling sectarianism and other forms of racism as well as other anti-prejudice initiatives and, where appropriate, also provides for reconciliation initiatives as part of 'promoting understanding'.

⁷ s149 of the Equality Act 2010

⁸ Of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

⁹ There is also a duty on district councils to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups under section 67 of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

¹⁰ s49A Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended).

¹¹ [Explanatory Notes](#), Equality Act 2010, paragraph 484.



To take a practical example defining good relations as ‘*tackling prejudice and promoting understanding*’ could contribute to tackling the causes of the ‘segregated’ nature of housing in our communities, whereby persons are effectively prevented from moving into certain areas in which they would be a minority.¹² If the categories were extended the duty could also contribute to tackling prejudice, and hence resultant hostility, against other equality groups.¹³

The above formulation of ‘tackling prejudice and promoting understanding’ also concurs with and hence can assist with the implementation of the state’s human rights obligations. Rather than promoting a ‘Northern Ireland exceptionalist’ approach, framing ‘good relations’ in this way allows interpretation of the concept to draw on international instruments and good practice. Such instruments are themselves an important interpretative instrument to flesh out the meaning of terms such as ‘promoting understanding’. Some relevant duties include:

¹² There are differing approaches in the good relations sphere in relation to addressing the goal of more integrated housing, depending in part on the analysis of the cause of the problem. As a crude ‘ideal type’ if there is an understanding that the cause of segregation is individual choice, that persons in single identity areas are culturally insular and do not wish to mix, a ‘good relations’ policy response would be one of seeking to engender shared housing communities through quotas or similar mechanisms. To CAJ this is not the right approach. In addition to questions as to whether such an understanding of the causes of segregation is in itself based on prejudice, such approaches will conflict with the equality duty where there are existing inequalities and parity or quota based approaches replicate or exacerbate them. In seeking to implement *A Shared Future* government proposed to amend legislation to remove protection against religious/political to facilitate the envisaged shared or mixed housing schemes (see *Shared Future Triennial Action Plan*, 2006 p18). CAJ at the time noted that if there were an equal playing field the worthwhile goal of integrated housing could be pursued without conflict with equality imperatives, however in the context of clear differentials, the allocation of ‘shared’ housing on the basis of (religious) quotas would perpetuate inequalities, allocating resources away from those in greatest objective need, which we argued in itself would surely, in lay terms, undermine ‘good relations’ (CAJ, *Rhetoric and Reality*, 2006, page 95.) Such an initiative in our view would not be an appropriate interpretation of ‘good relations’ duties in the context of housing policy. Alternatively if the understanding of the primary cause of segregation is that persons do not move into a particular area where they would be in a minority, largely because of a real and genuine fear of sectarian or racist intimidation on account of their background, the ‘good relations’ approach to remedying the problem, and hence lessening segregation, is precisely to tackle sectarianism, other forms of racism and those who advocate it. Such an approach facilitates everybody’s right to housing and promotes more integrated communities by tackling the actual causes of segregation. In addition, opposition to needs based approaches to housing provision and regeneration on the grounds they can generate community ‘tension’ can be mitigated by a duty to ‘tackle prejudice and promote understanding’ which would require a public authority to explain its approach of putting in resources to an area is on the basis of objective need rather than one which unduly favours a particular group.

¹³ For a positive example of the impact in Great Britain of framing the good relations duty this way see the outworking of the *Core Issues Trust v Transport for London (TfL)* [2013] EWHC 651 judicial review. This upheld the decision of the London authorities not to carry adverts on its buses which insinuated people could be cured of being gay. The court found that not only was this a justified restriction on freedom of religious expression to protect the rights of others, but also related to discharging the properly formulated ‘good relations’ duty to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. The Court concluded “under the Equality Act 2010, TfL was under a duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment against gays and to ‘foster good relations’ ‘tackle prejudice’ and ‘promote understanding’ between those who have same-sex orientation and those who do not. Displaying the advertisement would have been in breach of that duty” [paragraph 177]. Earlier the judgement elaborated “In my judgment, TfL would be acting in breach of its duty under section 149 if it allowed the Trust’s advertisement to appear on its buses, as it encourages discrimination, and does not foster good relations or tackle prejudice or promote understanding, between those with same-sex sexual orientation and those who do not” [144].



- 'State Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures... with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups...' (Article 7 [UN] *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* ICERD)
- State Parties to: 'raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities; To combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life; promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.' (Article 8 *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, UNCRPD)
- Parties to 'encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity,' (Article 6 Council of Europe *Framework Convention for National Minorities*, FCNM).
- 'The Parties undertake to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages'... (Article 7(3) Council of Europe *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* ECRML).

A 'good relations' duty *can only contribute* to the above goals however if it is actually interpreted and implemented compatibly with them. In the present context whereby good relations has not been defined in law there has been poor experience in this regard to the extent that a Council of Europe committee itself raised concerns that the concept of 'good relations', in the T:BUC predecessor policy, had taken a direction of substituting conceptual human rights goals. The FCNM Advisory Committee also raised concerns that 'good relations' was reportedly being used to veto minority rights initiatives:

...the CSI Strategy has developed the concept of 'good relations' apparently to substitute the concept of intercultural dialogue and integration of society. The Advisory Committee has been informed that, in some instances, the need for keeping good relations has been used as justification for not implementing provisions in favour of persons belonging to minorities...¹⁴

CAJ recalls that the Equality Commission (ECNI) in 2005 produced a working definition of good relations, focusing on the growth of relationships and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge its religious, political and racial context.¹⁵ The ECNI subsequently recommended public authorities adopted a definition of good relations but were (rightly) not proscriptive that it should be this particular definition.¹⁶ The ECNI working definition is lengthy and not

¹⁴ Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for National Minorities (Third Opinion on the UK adopted 30 June 2011) ACFC/OP/III(2011)006, paragraph 126.

¹⁵ The full text is "The growth of relationships and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms." ECNI, Guide to the Statutory Duties, 2005, p81.

¹⁶ Promoting Good Relations, Guide for Public Authorities 2007, paragraph 3.26.



itself designed for legislation. CAJ notes the ECNI is now advocating support for a definition to be adopted in legislation, that its stakeholders have a ‘clear desire’ for such a definition and had expressed support for the GB definition.¹⁷ CAJ is of the view that it has become clear that legal certainty needs to be brought to the concept of good relations and that the definition in law in Great Britain should be adapted into Northern Ireland law. CAJ would regard this as an essential pre-requisite to any addition of a ‘good relations’ section into Equality Impact Assessments. As recommended in our *Unequal Relations* research, CAJ would also recommend that an appropriate tailored methodology, duly subordinate to and compatible with equality assessments and international obligations, would also be developed for such a purpose, and that a duty is placed on the oversight body, the ECNI, to interpret good relations compatibly with human rights standards.¹⁸

T:BUC states that ‘good relations’ is to refer to meeting the aims and commitments in the T:BUC strategy itself. Whilst this may be less problematic than a subjective, face value concept of good relations, it is difficult to see how this would be operationalised. The alternative is to formulate the meaning of good relations on the face of the legislation to give it specific meaning drawing on the existing definition in law in Great Britain as we have suggested above.

The T:BUC strategy also foresees the transformation of the Equality Commission into an Equality and Good Relations Commission.¹⁹ The TBUC strategy enumerates 11 new statutory duties the new Commission is to discharge. It is debatable as to whether the implications of the powers envisaged in T:BUC have been thought through and CAJ is concerned that such proposals could be retrogressive to the ECNI’s equality remit. To give one example these new duties include one to “*To enforce and investigate as appropriate where there is a failure to comply with section 75(2)*”. This presumably means that the Commission will have new powers to investigate and enforce the existing good relations duty. However it is not clear how this differs from the ECNI’s current enforcement powers over the s75(2) duty. These powers were exercised recently in its investigation report into the naming of the Raymond McCreesh park in which the ECNI held there had been a breach of the ‘good relations’ duty.

In summary, and in addition to the above matters, CAJ urges the Committee to recommend the incorporation into Northern Ireland law of the following definition of good relations:

**good relations ...means having regard, in particular, to the desirability of
(a) tackling prejudice, and (b) promoting understanding.**

In order to provide further evidence as to our view on the need for the definition of ‘good relations’ to be taken forward an appendix to this paper provides further background information on the subject of ‘good relations’ in EQIAs.

¹⁷ TBUC / Good Relations – Stakeholder Event (26 June 2014): Translating policy to practice Summary of Key Points raised in discussion (available at: <http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/TBUC/workshop1.pdf> accessed October 2014)

¹⁸ CAJ, *Unequal Relations*, 2013, p64.

¹⁹ Paragraph 6.29
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Definition of sectarianism

The *T:BUC* strategy states that appropriate consensus will be sought around including a definition of sectarianism in draft legislation. CAJ welcomes this important aim, and stresses the importance of correctly defining sectarianism in legislation. In the present context, despite the term being regularly used by public authorities, there is often no official definition or restrictive or vague definitions are adopted, that tend to defer to limited interpersonal *manifestations* of sectarianism (e.g. hate crimes) rather than defining sectarianism per se.²⁰ It is notable that whilst a draft interim definition is included in the *T:BUC* strategy this definition is itself restricted to individual behaviour and appears derived not from a definition of sectarianism per se but rather from a definition of sectarian chanting at sports matches.²¹

CAJ believes it is not sustainable to argue 'sectarianism' here is a unique phenomena, beyond definition. The primary treaty bodies dealing with anti-racism at United Nations and Council of Europe level (to which the UK is a party) have both stated that sectarianism in Northern Ireland should be treated as a specific form of racism.²² UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination stated its position following representations from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. The Commission had raised concerns that "policy presenting sectarianism as a concept entirely separate from racism problematically locates the phenomenon outside the well-developed discourse of commitments, analysis and practice reflected in international human rights law" and hence was not harnessing this framework to tackle sectarianism.²³ The Commission has also stated "This does not mean that

²⁰ For example the PSNI, in its published 'hate crimes definitions' states "*The term 'sectarian', whilst not clearly defined, is a term almost exclusively used in Northern Ireland to describe incidents of bigoted dislike or hatred of members of a different religious or political group. It is broadly accepted that within the Northern Ireland context an individual or group must be perceived to be Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist, or Loyalist or Republican.*"

²¹ *T:BUC* states "*For the purposes of this Strategy, sectarianism is defined as: threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour or attitudes towards a person by reason of that person's religious belief or political opinion; or to an individual as a member of such a group.*", (paragraph 1.36, see also paragraph 5.28). Section 37 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 makes chanting at a major sports match an offence if it is 'sectarian' or specifically "consists of or includes matter which is threatening, abusive or insulting to a person by reason of that person's colour, race, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability" (subsection 3(c)). Despite discussion during its legislative passage ultimately the Act did not provide a definition of sectarian chanting.

²² In 2011 the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination made clear that "*Sectarian discrimination in Northern Ireland [...] attract[s] the provisions of ICERD in the context of "inter-sectionality" between religion and racial discrimination*" (paragraph 1(e) UN Doc CERD/C/GBR/18-20, List of themes on the UK). Later in the same year the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for National Minorities directly addressed the approach in the predecessor draft strategy to *T:BUC* raising concerns that the Committee "*finds the approach in the CSI Strategy to treat sectarianism as a distinct issue rather than as a form of racism problematic, as it allows sectarianism to fall outside the scope of accepted anti-discrimination and human rights protection standards*" (Third Opinion on the United Kingdom adopted on 30 June 2011 ACFC/OP/III(2011)006, paragraph 126).

²³ The Commission elaborated "*This risks non-human rights compliant approaches, and non-application of the well-developed normative tools to challenge prejudice, promote tolerance and tackle discrimination found in international standards. In particular, it seriously limits the application of ICERD to Northern Ireland, and therefore obligations on the state to tackle sectarianism along with other forms of racism.*" Northern Ireland
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sectarianism should not continue to be individually named and singled out just as other particular forms of racism are, for example, anti-Semitism or Islamophobia²⁴ and the UN has emphasised that in tackling sectarianism care should be taken not to neglect tackling other forms of racism experienced by “vulnerable ethnic minority groups in Northern Ireland.”²⁵

It follows that it is clear what sectarianism is and that its definition should draw on such international standards. The benefit of this is that such standards also provide a tested framework in relation to addressing sectarianism.

The UN International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) does not provide a definition of racism per se but defines ‘racial discrimination’.²⁶ The 1978 UN declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice does provide a lengthy definition of racism, and sets out a broad range of phenomena which would encompass manifestations of racism.²⁷

The Council of Europe specialist body in the field, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in its recommendation on key elements of legislation against racism and racial discrimination, defines racism as follows:

“racism” shall mean the belief that a ground such as race,²⁸ colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons, or the notion of superiority of a person or a group of persons.

Human Rights Commission, ‘Parallel Report on the 18th and 19th Periodic Reports of the United Kingdom under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination’ (ICERD), paras 17-23.

²⁴ NI Human Rights Commission ‘Parallel Report to the Advisory Committee on the Third Monitoring Report of the United Kingdom on the Framework Convention on National Minorities, February 2011 paragraph 59.

²⁵ Concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the UK, 1 September 2011, CERD/C/GBR/CO/18-20, paragraph 20.

²⁶ In Article 1(1): *In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.*

²⁷ Article 2(1): *Any theory which involves the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently superior or inferior, thus implying that some would be entitled to dominate or eliminate others, presumed to be inferior, or which bases value judgments on racial differentiation, has no scientific foundation and is contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity; (2) Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behavior, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts; it hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practice it, divides nations internally, impedes international co-operation and gives rise to political tensions between peoples; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, consequently, seriously disturbs international peace and security; (3) Racial prejudice, historically linked with inequalities in power, reinforced by economic and social differences between individuals and groups, and still seeking today to justify such inequalities, is totally without justification. Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice, 27 November 1978 Adopted and proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO at its twentieth session, on 27 November 1978).*

²⁸ The recommendation elaborates in relation to the use of the term race: *“Since all human beings belong to the same species, ECRI rejects theories based on the existence of different “races”. However, in this Recommendation*

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This definition could be drawn upon and tailored to define sectarianism in Northern Ireland for example as follows:

“Sectarianism” shall mean the belief that a ground such as religion, political opinion, language, nationality or national or ethnic origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons, or the notion of superiority of a person or a group of persons.²⁹

CAJ urges the definition of sectarianism in legislation to draw on international standards relating to racism. We draw attention to the above definition which is derived from recommendations from the Council of Europe specialist agency as an option to this end.³⁰

**Committee on the Administration of Justice
October 2014**

ECRI uses this term in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as belonging to “another race” are not excluded from the protection provided for by the legislation.

²⁹ Council of Europe CRI(2003)8 *ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 On National Legislation To Combat racism And Racial Discrimination Adopted On 13 December 2002.*

³⁰ An alternative definition is provided by the Institute of Conflict Research as follows “*Sectarianism should be considered as a form of racism specific to the Irish context. Sectarianism is the diversity of prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and practices between members of the two majority communities in and about Northern Ireland, who may be defined as Catholic or Protestant; Irish or British; Nationalist or Unionist; Republican or Loyalist; or combinations thereof.*” See Jarman, Neil. 2012 ‘Defining Sectarianism and Sectarian Hate Crime’ Belfast: ICR, p10.

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9



Appendix: Good Relations and Equality Impact Assessments, some background

The current 'good relations' duty was not provided for in Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The Northern Ireland Office nevertheless included it in the Agreements' implementation legislation as section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Unlike its nine ground equality counterpart under section 75(1) of the same Act, the good relations duty is restricted to the three grounds of political opinion, religious belief and racial group.

At the time of the legislation there was considerable concern among equality focused NGOs and trade unions that a subjective 'good relations' duty would be open to interpretations in a manner which would actually undermine equality initiatives on the grounds they might lead to 'community tensions'. An example from Great Britain, from the *Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)*, illustrates this point well:

...in one area, officers recommended that regeneration funding should be allocated to a predominantly ethnic minority area, based on strong evidence of need. The council refused to approve this and redirected the funding to predominantly white British areas. A number of interviewees in this area felt this was motivated by fear of a 'white backlash'.³¹

The fear was that an undefined 'good relations' duty could be used to institutionalise a practice whereby equality and rights initiatives were blocked on the grounds that there were objections to them. In effect the duty could become a veto-mechanism for the opponents of rights and equality to stifle positive action. Back in 1998 the Labour Government agreed to put safeguards on the face of the legislation to address these concerns. The main two safeguards were first ensuring the equality limb of the duty had primacy and second formulating equality impact assessments so they were about equality. More recently, in light of this being insufficient there has been discussion on defining 'good relations' on the face of the legislation to bring a measure of legal certainty to its use.

The legislation was formulated in a way that ensured primacy for the equality duty, with the good relations duty to be undertaken, for example, 'without prejudice' to it. The purpose of this was to introduce the safeguard that 'good relations' could not trump equality of opportunity considerations. There have been a number of attempts over the years to reverse this. This includes two recent proposals by the Alliance Party to introduce equality and good relations considerations without this safeguard into the Local Government Bill.³² On both occasions the Petition of Concern mechanism was used to prevent this formulation and protect the safeguards over the equality duty. Instead the SDLP Minister put forward a clause

³¹ Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) *Formal Investigation into Regeneration and the Racial Equality Duty* September 2007, page 24. In the above CRE 'white backlash' regeneration scenario the correct 'good relations' response would have been not to divert funding to the dominant ethnic group but to go out into the community and explain that resources were being put into ethnic minority areas on the basis of objective need, i.e. *to tackle prejudice and promote understanding*.

³² Insofar as the community planning functions of the new councils would consider both equality and good relations among the long term objectives for improving social wellbeing. See Official Report (Hansard) Northern Ireland Assembly Consideration stage (18-19 March 2014) and Further Consideration Stage (1 April 2014).



which stated “the reference to improving the social well-being of the district includes promoting equality of opportunity in accordance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and, without prejudice to this, having regard to the desirability of promoting good relations” which, as the Minister told the assembly was “framed to ensure that the type of existing safeguards between equality and good relations in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are maintained.”³³ Ultimately all parties accepted this formulation which now stands as section 66(3)(a) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.

The second safeguard of note in the legislation is that the processes for Equality Impact Assessment, and identifying ‘adverse impacts’ and consequent alternative policies and mitigating measures apply to the ‘equality of opportunity’ duty only and not its more subjective ‘good relations’ counterpart. To this end the Equality Commission recommended a seven-stage methodology for EQIAs in its guidance on the equality duty. There have also been a number of attempts over the years to change this. The introduction of a ‘good relations impact assessment’ had been proposed under the NIO 2005 *Shared Future* Strategy, in this instance ‘to assess impacts on the promotion of sharing.’ This proposal was never legislated for. The Equality Commission in 2007 nevertheless recommended that public authorities do include ‘good relations’ considerations in their EQIAs, and that that public authorities use the same seven-stage methodology that had been carefully tailored and designed for equality, for their good relations assessments. However, the risk in applying such objective equality methodology to good relations is that simple negative perceptions, ‘impacts’ or ‘tensions’ which do not actually objectively reach the threshold of adverse impact, could in a lay sense be considered as such. Consequently it could then be read that the public authority is ‘required’ to take measures against such an ‘adverse impact’ on good relations grounds.

At worst CAJ has expressed concerns that interpreting the good relations duty in this way can turn EQIAs on their head and allow them to become a veto for equality and rights initiatives, including anti-poverty, housing and other policies based on targeting objective need. There are examples of this happening in the *Unequal Relations* research, which also cites Council of Europe human rights experts, as well as our local Human Rights Commission, having also raised concerns about ‘good relations’ considerations being used to thwart initiatives to promote the Irish language taken in accordance with treaty based obligations the UK has signed up to. In such scenarios it is often the opposing views of a section of the political constituency, ‘attitudinal’ differences across the community or even statistics showing that more Catholics than Protestants speak Irish which are put forward as ‘evidence’ of ‘adverse impacts’. This risks prejudice or differentials which are not ‘adverse’ becoming the basis for policy. For example, in advice to Magherafelt Council the Equality Commission cites both ‘mixed views’ among councillors and a public attitudes survey from which it highlights that ‘Of note’ are ‘differing views of Protestant and Roman Catholic communities towards the Irish Language’ and goes on to caution against policies which are ‘divisive’.³⁴ In response to this the Equality Coalition expressed concern about the potential impact of such a policy approach meaning advice could be given to caution against any equality initiative subject where there

³³ Official Report (Hansard) Northern Ireland Assembly Further Consideration Stage (1 April 2014).

³⁴ ECNI Comments on Magherafelt Council’s Draft Irish Language Policy 25 June 2012.



are political differentials in support, highlighting for example the implications for LGBT rights of such an approach.³⁵

Some elected representatives have taken the view that ‘good relations’ as a concept has been misused. For example, in an Assembly debate on the duties in 2010 Stephen Farry MLA of the Alliance Party, stated that any use of the concept of good relations to veto equality initiatives was indicative of a “misunderstanding of the concept of good relations, which has been used and abused by certain politicians.”³⁶ Since then there has been most prominently ‘good relations’ discourse over housing on the Girdwood barracks site. In 2011 the DSD Minister overturned an earlier decision to build around 200 new homes on the site, most of which would have likely been allocated to Catholics on the basis of objective need. The rights based NGO Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) report the Minister used as a justification for his decision a prerequisite of ‘cross community agreement’ for revised proposals.³⁷ However, any approach which in effect is stating that houses cannot be built in an area on the grounds the ‘other’ might live in them, until the ‘community’ in that area agrees, is clearly not human rights compliant. Such a position would be similar to stating that ethnic minorities should not be allowed into the workplace until the majority white workforce agrees. In a rights-based approach rights to housing and employment should never be subject to such considerations.

Breaches of the existing ‘good relations’ duty: the Raymond McCreesh playpark report

The Equality Commission’s April 2014 investigation report into Newry Council’s decision, originally in 2001, to name a Council-run play park after IRA hunger striker Raymond McCreesh also provides some insight in the evolving application of the existing good relations duty.³⁸ The decision was unusual in that it found *substantive*, rather than *procedural* (e.g. failure to conduct an EQIA) breaches of both the equality and good relations duties. The decision provides an insight into how the Commission may interpret any expanded ‘good relations’ duties without the concept being further defined.

McCreesh significantly moves on the precedents of what the Commission is likely to find as a substantive breach of an Equality Scheme. Citing developments in equality case law in Great Britain, the Commission highlights the meaning of ‘regard’ and ‘due regard’, in the context that the public authority under the existing legislation is to have regard to the ‘good relations’ duty and due regard to the equality duty. Such mandatory commitments are contained within Equality Schemes. The report includes case law derived Baker-Brown principals of “due regard” which it summarises as follows:

³⁵ Correspondence from Co-Conveners of Equality Coalition 9 September 2013, to Chief Commissioner ECNI and response of 19 September 2013.

³⁶ [Official Record, Northern Ireland Assembly](#), Equality and Good Relations Motion, 28 September 2010.

³⁷ PPR [Background Briefing on the North Belfast Housing Inequality](#) [There is also some further indication of a ‘good relations’ considerations on the Minister’s own blog](#)

³⁸ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Investigation under Paragraph 11, Section 9, Northern Ireland Act 1998, Newry and Mourne District Council [Final Investigation Report](#), March 2014. For further analysis see [CAJ Community Relations Week Commentary: Briefing Paper no 2: The Equality Commission’s Raymond McCreesh Park investigation implications and analysis for proposed ‘Equality and Good Relations Impact Assessments’](#).



...the decision maker must be aware of the duty; the statutory goals must be taken into consideration; “due” regard means the amount that is appropriate in the circumstances of the case; it is NOT a duty to achieve a particular outcome or result; the duty must be fulfilled at the time the decision is being considered; it must be exercised in substance, with rigour and an open mind; it is non delegable; it is a continuing duty; and it is good practice to keep records³⁹

The Commission also states:

In general terms “to have regard” to a factor means that, when making a particular decision or formulating a policy, the decision maker must “take into account” or “give consideration to” that factor. To have “due regard” generally refers to the amount of regard i.e. “proportionate regard”.⁴⁰

The Commission elaborates that case law implies that elected representatives “cannot approach decision making in a biased way, with a closed mind and without impartial consideration of all relevant issues.”⁴¹ The Commission also holds that in order to fulfil the statutory duties “there must be evidence that the duty was exercised in substance, with rigour and an open mind.”⁴² This provides a broader framework for how substantive breaches of the statutory duties will be considered and has significant implications as its application in the *McCreesh* case demonstrates.

In *McCreesh* the ECNI held that the Equality Duty had been engaged as the play park name presented a ‘significant chill factor’ for families of a Protestant/Unionist background in relation to a using a council facility. It is this and the failure to adequately consider it which appears at the centre of the Commission’s finding that the equality of opportunity duty had been breached. This has quite significant implications for a number of public authorities who would run their facilities in a manner which may constitute a ‘significant chill factor’ to others. The obvious example would be Council’s who continue to fly the Union Flag from their leisure facilities. The Equality Commission has already cautioned against the flying of the Union Flag on places other than Council headquarters.⁴³ The *McCreesh* decision implies however is that there is now an arguable case that doing so constitutes a breach of the Council’s Equality Scheme.⁴⁴ An obligation on public authorities to run their facilities and functions in a manner which does not unduly constitute a significant chill factor to a section 75 group will be broadly

³⁹ McCreesh Final Investigation Report, paragraph 4.9, emphasis in original.

⁴⁰ McCreesh Final Investigation Report, paragraph 4.7.

⁴¹ McCreesh Final Investigation Report, paragraph 4.10.

⁴² McCreesh Final Investigation Report, paragraph 4.14.

⁴³ “...while it is acceptable and appropriate, in the Commission’s view, for a local Council to fly the Union Flag at its Civic Headquarters, the rationale for its display at every Council location, facility and leisure centre would be questionable” Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment, A Guide for Employers and Employees’, Equality Commission, October 2009, page 7.

⁴⁴ This could also be the case for flags flown on Council headquarters should they present a similar ‘chill factor’. *McCreesh* makes clear that the facility in question is not exempt from the chill factor consideration merely because it is in an area predominantly used by one side of the community (paragraph 4.5).



welcomed. However unless this is more tightly defined across a broader range of policies CAJ views risks of subjective interpretation. This is not least in the potential for ‘chill factor’ complaints become a vehicle for successful objections, including to minority rights initiatives themselves, based on prejudice or even mere association of something with the ‘other side.’ In our view the risks of subjective interpretation are however enhanced in relation to the ‘good relations’ limb of the duty.

As referenced above, rather than tying it to a specific definition and hence set of identifiable duties one approach is to give ‘good relations’ its literal and face value meaning. In effect this means ‘good relations’ is engaged by anything the ‘other side’ takes umbrage with. In our experience such good relations discourse does not tend to make reference to grievances of the representatives of ethnic minorities, and hence in practice is about the competing views of the representatives of unionism and nationalism. The approach which is reflected in the *McCreesh* investigation is similar to this position. The ECNI states that the good relations duty is ‘certainly engaged’ in the context of both a complaint by the Orange Order to the Council and that there has been ‘much public discussion in the context of good relations and a shared future’ which itself is seen as ‘indicative of the potential for good relations to be damaged’.⁴⁵ The Commission concludes that the ‘good relations’ duty has been breached by the decision to maintain the *McCreesh* park name. The decision is however not entirely clear as to *how* and *what in particular* has breached the ‘good relations’ duty beyond stating that both equality and good relations duties had been breached as they had not been ‘exercised in substance, with rigor and with an open mind.’⁴⁶

As alluded to above the Commission did cite case law that elected representatives should be impartial and not show bias in decision making, and the decision states “In this particular case, the Council’s decision appears to be based on Councillors views on the wishes of one section of a divided community rather than on how this decision will impact on good relations”.⁴⁷ This indicates that a factor in the decision was the manner in which the decision only reflected the views of ‘one section of a divided community’. Taking a step back from the specificities of the *McCreesh* park this particular statement itself could set a significant precedent as to how the Equality Commission interprets the duty. One of the findings of the CAJ *Unequal Relations* report was that the Commission itself, for example, in its advice on policies to promote the Irish language had cautioned *against* proposals on the grounds of real or perceived objections from unionism. This highlighted the risk of the good relations duty becoming a political veto. One interpretation of the *McCreesh* decision, in holding the process was flawed as it only paid regard to the views of one side of the community, is that it does implicitly imply that real or perceived objections from ‘one section of a divided community’ should no longer be sufficient in themselves to block rights-based policy initiatives.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *McCreesh* Final Investigation Report, paragraph 4.5.

⁴⁶ *McCreesh* Final Investigation Report, paragraph 5.4.

⁴⁷ *McCreesh* Final Investigation Report, Paragraph 4.1.

⁴⁸ Such a change in approach is far from guaranteed as the research observed that there were significant inconsistencies in how the Commission advised on the implications of the ‘good relations’ duty in different policy areas. For example the research noted “Within the advice on flying the Union Flag the good relations duty is rarely mentioned. By contrast in advice on Irish language policy good relations considerations, which the ECNI



The ECNI investigation decision does not however state how objections should be filtered to ensure that views based on intolerance or prejudice do not become the basis of policy. The absence of such safeguards increases the risk of the duty being used as a veto, including for equality and rights based initiatives.

The *McCreesh* jurisprudence on decision making on the wishes of one side of the community does present a further conundrum. Namely what public authorities do when different sections of a divided community take different positions. A Council could be caught in a situation whereby a decision either way could be challenged as having breached the good relations duty if they ultimately, regardless of having considered both options in substance, with rigor and an open mind, are left in circumstances where there is not an obvious third way with having to take a decision which will match one or the other positions and 'adversely impact' on the other. Overall the *McCreesh* decision highlights unless some parameters are put on how the 'good relations' duty is to be interpreted in impact assessments there is significant risk of subjectivity.

From an equalities perspective there is also the risk that undefined 'good relations' issues could become the focus of EQIAs and displace the bread and butter and more objectively defined equalities issues EQIAs were designed to address.

Defining 'good relations' in law, previous initiatives

Since the publication of T:BUC there have been initiatives at both Westminster and the Assembly to seek a definition of good relations on the face of legislation drawing on the formulation in Great Britain of 'tackling prejudice and promoting understanding'.

During the passage of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 at Westminster an amendment was tabled by Mark Durkan MP to define 'good relations'. There was support for the amendment at Westminster with the Shadow Minister stating the Labour Party were 'extremely sympathetic'. The UK Government stated however that whilst it did not oppose the amendment in principle the matter should be best dealt with by the devolved institutions.⁴⁹

More recently the Northern Ireland Assembly had the opportunity to debate defining 'good relations' insofar as it related to the new community planning functions on local councils. The Minister, the SDLP's Mark H Durkan, stated on the official record (Hansard) that good relations in local government bill in the context of community planning:

...are intended to be interpreted in line with the definition of good relations that has been in legislation in Great Britain for a number of years under the Equality Act 2010

regards as an important consideration of language policy, are often prominent and decisive." (Unequal Relations, page 57.)

⁴⁹ UK Parliament Official Record (Hansard) Public Bill Committee, Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill [Tuesday 16 July 2013, Column 33](#).

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as meaning across the grouping in section 75 and as primarily being about tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.⁵⁰

The Minister went further by seeking to place this definition on the face of the legislation. With the exception of the Alliance Party, there was broad support from other political parties that the concept should be defined. The SDLP and Sinn Féin voted for the above definition to be placed on the face of the legislation after the debate. The Unionist parties, whilst not opposing a definition per se advocated for more work to be done on the wording (DUP), a 'proper, full and detailed debate' (NI21) or that the definition 'may be a bit narrow and a bit too focused' (UUP). In this context the amendment fell. The Alliance Party also called for wider discussion, expressed the view that they were not convinced there was a need for a definition, but also indicated that if there was one, it should be broader to encompass matters of 'reconciliation, integration or sharing'.⁵¹ It may be therefore that we are finally moving towards defining the concept which dominates the T:BUC strategy.

⁵⁰ Official Report (Hansard) Northern Ireland Assembly Further Consideration Stage (1 April 2014).

⁵¹ Official Report (Hansard) Northern Ireland Assembly Further Consideration Stage (1 April 2014).

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Community Arts Partnership

Community Arts Partnership submission to the inquiry on Together Building a United Community

Introduction

1. In recent times Northern Irish society has exhibited both the best of intentions towards the creation of a shared, safe and inclusive society and the worst, with protests, on occasion violent, around flags and emblems, paramilitary activities in city centres, to a frightening rise in attacks, many directly intimidating, even physical, on people from an ethnic minority background. In Belfast racist attacks doubled in the space of a year from 2013 to 2014, this coinciding with inappropriate and offensive choices of language from our leading politicians; it might seem then that Northern Ireland is at any one time a few steps away from creating the potential for change just as much as it is ready to maintain high levels of division and conflict.
2. And yet survey research shows that people believe that a society free from segregation, from sectarianism, from racism, an inclusive society, a society of shared and safe spaces, a society that would welcome unity alongside cultural heterogeneity, is not only possible and desirable, it is in the process of being constructed.
3. The research commissioned by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister through the Economic and Social Research Council, suggests that the public perception is that Stormont is reaching the targets in developing shared spaces and a shared society and creating safer communities.
4. Seventy two per cent of people in 2012 expressed a preference for living in neighbourhoods of mixed religion. Six in ten people surveyed didn't feel that their community was a divided community. Forty six per cent of Catholics said they would feel safe going to an event in a nearby town if it was in an Orange Hall with a similar result on Protestant side if going to a GAA club. (ESRC)
5. In terms of shared space, seventy four % of Protestants and seventy eight per cent of Catholics wanted the removal of Peace Lines either immediately or soon. (ESRC on Peace Lines)
6. Beyond that there are high levels of support for integrated education, some surveys suggesting support as high as seventy four per cent. (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education)
7. We can see the potential, the future vision arguably most notably in the arts, when 50,000 people (and tens of thousands more throughout Northern Ireland) come together to attend Culture Night, sampling all manner of cultural expressions without any sense of being excluded or of one's cultural identity being belittled or violated, or the hundreds of thousands in attendance during Derry/Londonderry's City of Culture Arts extravaganza, where new connections between communities were made by bridges built through artistic practice, or the sense of connectedness, even pride for the emerging film and television industry, or the success of Northern Ireland's writers, poets, actors, artists and filmmakers portrayed mostly as symbols of universal acclaim rather than any particular communal connection.
8. Probably even more evident is the ever increasing use of arts and artistic activity to look closely, to reflect upon where our society has been and where it might be steered in the future, the reimaging of communities, the search for inclusive symbolism and language.
9. In the face of potential polar orientations, the "Together Building a United Community" from our perspective appears at once ambitious, strident and all encompassing, from the building

blocks of anti-sectarian education introduced through cross community “buddy” systems as early as nursery school, through educators trained in educative practices which engender the sharing of our previously contested space, to the eradication of divisive symbols and the demolition of all 54 peace walls a decade from now.

10. There is an element of the New Lanark, of a new Utopian type of society, a society as we wish it to be, free from segregation, division and conflict, and yet “The Strategy” might also appear too narrow, trapped in the binary of our indigenous cultures not fully cognisant of the new emerging Northern Ireland, the “new arrivals” now a decade into their residency, still not fully integrated, still not mainstreamed, and so there are new interfaces, new cultural expressions, requiring new reflections and perhaps, and the Community Arts Partnership would suggest that there is a role for community arts practices at this juncture to establish new, more suitable approaches to integration and cohesion.

The situation as we now find it

11. Firstly though we have to assess the situation as we now find it. We live, as The Strategy document suggests, in difficult and challenging times economically. There are substantial stresses and strains on the arena of public financing.
12. Those challenges may have just been made all the more difficult with the recent announcements of a raft of reductions in funds available for expenditure on local public services. Not least affected are the Arts in general and Community Arts in particular experiencing already a 5% in year cut to exchequer funding and facing an 11% cut in the coming year.
13. As we all know the cuts impact almost universally in terms of departments and services and are heavily weighted against those most marginalised already living with high levels of deprivation prior to the funding cuts.
14. Again there may be required some moments of reflection regarding just how the future might be progressed if the financial wherewithal is not forthcoming.
15. It would be reasonable to suggest that increased financial tensions, poverty resulting from cuts to public spending could impact attitudes regarding sectarianism and racism.
16. The “Together, Building a United Community” is predicated on finances being made available for the key building blocks of the strategy - the creation of the United Youth programme with 10,000 places, the ten shared educational spaces, the building of “urban villages”, the interface barrier support package, the demolition of peace walls, the new shared housing schemes, the support networks of educators, the shared summer schools, and the varied and various other elements of the strategy. Without funds what happens to The Strategy and beyond that what capacity to contribute Community Arts Partnership’s expertise in building good relations, working in interface areas, working in intergenerational and intercultural settings, all being put under threat by withdrawal of financing.
17. Equally worthy of attention is the linkage between where we are now, the strategy document is watermarked by the period in which it was written, so suggestions that much progress has been made with stable political structures, sectarian attacks in abeyance, in some cases at alltime lows and racism and racist attacks lessening, seem a little off, perhaps even wide of the mark. As previously stated hate crimes in general have risen over the past period with the PSNI most notably documenting the meteoric rise in racist attacks and identifying particular paramilitary groupings as ring-leaders.
18. Nevertheless, despite the economic difficulties and the worsening of the sociological situation, there is still enough evidence of sentiment for a shared, safe and inclusive future that Community Arts Partnership, in harmony with the central aims of the Together Building a United Community strategy, works in all avenues whether in delivery, support of, research and advocacy for community arts practices towards a shared, safe and unsegregated society and

in so doing welcomes the inquiry into the “Together Building a United Community” strategy document put forward by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister.

19. In this submission Community Arts Partnership will outline the primary elements of the organisation, the activities we undertake, the impact of those activities, the learning associated from them, paying particular attention to our work in intercultural relations, where our PICAS project is ground-breaking in the mainstreaming of ethnic minority artists, melding ethnic minority cultural identity with the various cultures and identities locally to create potentially a unified expression of culture, an interculturalisation of Northern Irish society.
20. Community Arts Partnership sees potential for a community arts based exploration in areas of civic engagement. If Together Building a United Community is to be realised then connectedness to and ownership of this project would need to be felt fully in all our communities with particular emphasis on the most marginalised economically and those discriminated against on the basis of social or sexual orientation or disability.
21. Perhaps at this juncture the recent experience in Scotland and the unprecedented levels of engagement both socially and politically created through community discussions around not only the question of Scottish independence but what that independence would consist of may have lessons to teach us for periods of transition.
22. Some evidence of the shift in Scottish political engagement can be found at the links below.
<http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-blogs/management/a-new-politics-anew-democracy-and-a-new-scotland>
<http://www.scvo.org.uk/scvo-news/scvo-stuc-nus-scotland-joint-indyrefstatement-people-must-lead-what-comes-next/>
23. Community Arts Partnership would suggest also that Together Building a United Community requires a re-examination of theories and explanations of Sectarianism. The theoretical exposition on offer in Together Building a United Community seems less robust than it needs to be, suggesting that sectarianism is purely contained within the habits and actions of individuals, referring little to historical orientations, institutions or political frameworks.
<http://rightsni.org/2014/05/sectarianism-in-northern-ireland-time-for-a-definition-in-law/>
<http://statecrime.org/data/uploads/2011/10/rolston2007c.pdf>
24. We would stress the need to revisit definitions in order to facilitate the delinking and uncoupling of our binary cultural model which while replicated and reinforced through our institutions, political make-up, our schools and estates, won't be easily transcended by the creation of islands of sanctuary as proposed in the strategy document.
25. Finally Community Arts Partnership might examine the need for the arts in general and community arts in particular to be integral to the process of social change. The Strategy document does allude to this but Community Arts Partnership would suggest some finessing of The Strategy to incorporate the utility of the processes of community arts practice

Community Arts Partnership

26. Our organisation, the Community Arts Partnership is the lead organisation in the promotion, development and delivery of community arts practice in Northern Ireland.
27. The organisation has a two-fold approach to arts development: firstly, supporting access and participation by seeking to affect policy through advocacy and leadership and secondly, promoting authorship and ownership through the active engagement in projects and programmes.

28. Our mission is to take the lead in the promotion, development and delivery of community arts practice, to affect positive change.
29. Our vision is to see the emergence of a just, inclusive, peaceful and creative society, where difference is welcomed and participation is valued.
30. That the work delivered by Community Arts Partnership whether through our on the ground projects, our advocacy, our intercultural and cross community work, our research or our support given to local communities is at core about creating the capacity for change through creatively engaged citizenry.
31. Community Arts Partnership supports, promotes and advocates for community arts To promote participation in and enjoyment of the arts across all sections of society through a high quality inclusive arts programme to affect positive change
32. CAP engages in high level, strategic community and good relations work as well as promoting shared and safe spaces
33. Being one of 20 organisations engaging with CRC on the Racial Equality Strategy
34. Representing cultural support for marginalised groups within the CAL Inquiry into access to the arts for the working class.
35. Northern Ireland's only dedicated arts support programme for BME communities, Programme for Intercultural Arts Support (PICA)
36. Community Arts Partnership's foundations are based upon the following definition,

"Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice"
37. Put simply, community arts practice develops original creative thinking, activity and outcomes to affect positive change.
38. Community Arts Partnership is principally and primarily an arts organisation. Whilst much of the work that we do has secondary, instrumental impact, at the core of our programme of workshop-based projects and advocacy for the transformative power of the arts, lies a belief in the intrinsic value of arts and creativity; arts for art's sake.
39. This intrinsic core is not only the preserve of genius producers and great artists but is present in every original thought turned to creative action. How one harnesses that intrinsic power commutes to instrumental impact. Commentators including John Holden recognise other characteristics and attributes that can be exploited by the arts, in our cultural value system.
40. Beyond the intrinsic and the instrumental, the arts can reflect and support a political state's core expressions of identity and creativity, providing civic leadership and cultural security.
41. Therefore this institutional value can attach to the arts as well. A triangulation, from the intrinsic to the instrumental and the institutional offer us a model that can help describe the multifaceted role that the arts can play in our society.
42. Community Arts Partnership develops and delivers a core arts workshop programme consisting of a wide range of inspirational participant-led workshops which are offered to community groups, and primary, postprimary and special school students in N Ireland, with

a focus on those marginalised for a variety of circumstances - social, economic, cultural, personal.

43. Our Arts programme brings together organisations and individuals on projects which: are developed and delivered at very high standards; are rooted in the local community and are responsive to local needs and interests; develop and empower individuals and communities; target delivery within disadvantaged communities, contributing to the social, economic and cultural regeneration of our society.
44. Our Arts programme contributes to social cohesion by providing a platform for cultural dialogue and understanding within and across communities, and addressing social issues, including racism, sectarianism and discrimination.
45. Our Arts Programme promotes participation in the arts to individuals and groups of different abilities, traditions, ethnicities, backgrounds, age and sexual orientation; expands opportunities to experience the arts by bringing the arts to community /public spaces; advances the role of local artists in the community as contributors to personal and community self-esteem and empowerment; support artists by providing employment and development opportunities; encourage partnership working and collaborations among and between arts, educational, voluntary and statutory organisations and aims to integrate and complement schools and community groups' activities, resources and services; have a regionwide dimension. The programme consists of different main strands which encompass visual, performing and verbal arts, traditional and digital media, and fashion.
46. All workshops across different programme strands are facilitated by professional artists with expertise in a spectrum of disciplines and a wealth of experience in working with community groups and schools. Artists act as 'catalysts' throughout the projects to enable participants to express their full creative potential. Our core workshop programme is highly in demand among community organisations and schools, which have prized our innovative and creative approaches to personal and community development, and the professionalism of its facilitators.
47. We have been able to offer a core workshop programme to community organisations and schools free of charge thanks to the support of public funders.
48. In the past year our programme has engaged over 4,900 participants from at least 54 community organisations and 34 schools in workshop activity and we have assisted another 6,000 individuals and organisations through our information and advocacy services.
49. Our website traffic is substantial, close to three quarters of a million site hits annually.
50. Our Community Arts Weekly bulletin, the primary source for information regarding artistic activity generally and community arts in particular has a mailing list of over 3000 people and a readership many times that figure.

Community Arts Partnership's Projects

51. Landmarks (formerly Belfast Wheel) is a visual arts / art in public project. Participants are encouraged to produce pieces of work which can express their views of the world and/or have a particular resonance to their own community or the area where they live. Participants are also offered the opportunity to work with other groups from different communities / areas to create a joint piece of art inspired by a theme relevant to them all. Joint pieces produced in the past included two large scale sculptures: Belfast Wheel in King William Park (Belfast) and Century Citizen and Belfast Bloom to be installed in Jubilee Gardens and Botanic Gardens respectively, and The Sails mosaics on the front of Cotton Court building in Waring Street (Belfast).
52. Masque is a carnival arts project, it now also incorporates all forms of performance related activities such as dance, drama, costume and mask making, stage make-up, and set and

- float building. Whilst the project provides cross-city links for large-scale performance events, groups can choose to focus on smaller community based performances, or experiment with different art forms without necessarily working towards a final piece. Works created through Masque have been showcased in carnivals and festivals in Belfast, Derry, and Sligo.
53. Poetry in Motion Schools has since 2000 had more than 13,000 students taking part in this project, and the project has published over 2,000 poems. Poetry in Motion for Schools aims to develop the creative abilities of young people and enable their poetic voice through language and image. We achieve this through workshops conducted in schools by published/producing poets. These facilitators have a wealth of experience in working with young people, helping to foster creativity via the spoken and written word. Schools that have taken part in this project see it as an enriching experience for both pupils and teachers and find that it also forges many links with the curriculum and supports wider learning. Our innovative projects send out a clear message that poetry is alive and well and capable of progressing with the fast changing landscape of language, technology and cultural innovation.
54. Poetry in Motion Community is a poetry project for local writers / aspiring writers. The programme focuses on practical outcomes and transferable skills. Poetry in Motion Community not only encourages writers to write, but assists them in learning how to edit, plan, schedule, choose illustrations, market themselves, negotiate with others and speak publicly. Poetry is at the core of the programme's activities, but additional projects are facilitated in any medium that involves creative engagement with text and/or performance skills. The work of local poets and writers has been promoted and brought to the general public through several publications and over 100 poetry performances, including BBC Radio 4 Poetry Slam – All Ireland Heat (2009). This year we incorporated the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing a new award connected to our practice and orientated towards our practitioners as well as being open to the wider poetry community.
55. Side by Side works in parallel with other programme strands and offers workshops in a variety of art forms. Side by Side integrates groups of people with disabilities, the elderly and ethnic minorities with the able-bodied, and individuals of different ages and backgrounds, thus extending the reach of arts-based workshops and providing a supervised setting for new relationships to be built between groups. This offers the opportunity for the arts to be practiced by individuals within a mixed learning and physical ability, skill base and different social background, allowing creativity to inspire all.
56. Trash Fashion is an eco-aware clothing design project which uses recycled clothes and materials as the basis for re-branding and re-making items in whatever creative style the participants wish. This innovative project encourages participants to slash, shred, stencil, embroider, embellish, print and dye, deconstruct and metamorphose second hand clothing, to create a unique look. Workshops educate participants about recycling, sourcing eco-friendly materials, the historical connection to textile production in Belfast, and provide them with the freedom of creative expression. Workshops also give them the opportunity to showcase their original outfits and celebrate their achievements in a professionally staged fashion show.
57. This is Me is a multi-media exploration of identity project. Working across different media including video, photography, animation and music, This Is Me seeks to tell stories that inhabit our communities within their history and identity. Stories are told and listened to, and in so doing new skills and higher levels of confidence are gained, a fresh understanding and communication is created between individuals, communities and the wider world. This is Me workshops provide hands on-artistic creativity and community owned art through digital images and sounds to accompany the stories of our existence.
58. PICAS - The Programme for InterCultural Arts Support (PICAS) is a new CAP programme offering a range of opportunities to support the delivery of key areas of the Arts Council Intercultural Arts Strategy. The Purpose of the programme is to encourage and foster initiatives in the intercultural arts arena. This two year programme has been designed to assist communities and individuals, artists and activists to support the Intercultural Arts

Strategy. The PICAS programme offers a range of different supports to so-called indigenous working-class communities and new communities. In seeking to facilitate greater intercultural understanding, supporting communities, individuals and arts professionals to maximise their impact in an intercultural setting, Community Arts Partnership has developed a range of initiatives. PICAS has networking opportunities training programmes artists support creative programs funding clinics and mentoring opportunities to promote the widest possible impact for new, established and marginalised communities.

59. This year by SOAS, 60 per cent of all CAP community projects are conducted in areas of deprivation, falling in the highest quintile of need. The remaining 40% of participation centres on those marginalised primarily through disability, minority ethnic status, vulnerable adult status and are described as section 75 groups as per ACNI procedures. Of the schools programme, 19 schools of 30 across N Ireland, this year, are located in areas in the highest 50% of deprivation. Again, special schools taking part are in the main located in less deprived areas. By electoral area, the percentage is 90% for the community programme alone.
60. Community Arts Partnership, since 2011, has offered a balanced programme right across Northern Ireland. We support community groups and schools in taking what is off on their first steps on an artistic journey. Our programs are available currently in every county; across every age group; in schools, community centres, church halls local community development offices, libraries et cetera.

The potential of Community Arts Practice

61. Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice.
62. This definition enables community organisations and CAP to frame our partnered practice within a local context as well as providing community arts practitioners with models of good practice. At the centre of this definition is the principle of partnership and inclusivity which places an emphasis on the role of participants within a project in defining both the artistic processes and end product shaped within a context of access, positive contribution and participation. This provides communities wishing to explore local, personal, social and community relations issues with the creative means to pursue their ambitions, and embodies the values of dignity and respect, autonomy, justice and equality and safe, effective, person-centred care as outlined above.
63. Therefore, Community Arts practice has a great many of the same aims and objectives as Community Relations or Good Relations Work, the methods used and the outputs may be very different but the outcomes can be similar.
64. Both aim to bring positive transformation to society through a greater number of people positively and actively engaging in their own neighbourhoods. Community Arts can be the vehicle for individuals to start the journey of transformation through creatively introducing the themes of Community Relations and ensuring they are central within the Community Arts process during the several weeks the group(s) come together and meet.
65. Training of community arts facilitators alongside community workers is key within this process as both groups bring their areas of expertise and knowledge. It also means that there are standards and expectations set by group leaders and CAP facilitators that are well communicated and upheld throughout the partnership process. The training also means that community workers have a greater role within the process and the community relations principles.

66. The merging of Community Relations principles and practice with Community Arts principles and practice has not been done in this intentional way before in Northern Ireland meaning that we are clearly addressing a gap in provision.
67. Also, in reviewing our consultations with groups and schools, 100% of the schools that have applied over the last three years expressed a desire to be supported in inter-community arts processes. In fact, in 14 years of Poetry In Motions Schools, every applicant has affirmed their wish to take part in a cross-community programme. Bearing in mind that we are always over-subscribed for these projects, it is evident that there is a real desire to do this work and a dearth of opportunity to actually take part. Of 387 groups and schools that have applied since 2011-12, just over 76% have asked to be considered for cross-community arts workshop programmes.
68. In view of T:BUC and the regard therein to interculturalism, we are taking the lead in applying this practice to an arts setting. We offer the only intercultural arts support programme underpinning a recognised Strategy. That strategy, The Arts Council of Northern Ireland Intercultural Arts Strategy, has a Steering Group made up of various representatives of groups and organisations, including Jacqueline Irwin from the Community Relations Council.
69. Whilst some may talk of a “culture war”, we prefer to look at the fault line and inherent potential friction as perhaps offering a dynamic backdrop to creative exploration. We assert that beyond developing mere tolerances of extant cultural diversity in our small region, we should be striving to create and hybridise new opportunities and culturally shared and significant moments.
70. Creating community alternatives, sensitively crafted, wedded to identity but allowing for new formation to emerge is key to our innovative dynamic approach. The first community arts reader, which will be published by CAP next year, framing the ethno-political dynamism of Interculturalism in the context of community arts practice in the so-called “Race Hate Capitol of Europe” , will mark a significant moment for arts practice and community relations.
71. This interculturalisation via community arts practice, asserts the need to guide specific cultural interactions with the aim of making them fair and equal, recognising a position that exist and proactively developing creative avenues to the discovery of new shared outcomes and formations. This unique operation of community arts practice, insisting on original arts creation (not recreation or decoration), affords us this potential for new paradigms of community relations activity. We would say that the development of Landmarks of sculpture, of performance, of publication and of practice, point us beyond the merely tolerating into the fusion of identities and perspectives that only the creative arts, properly and sensitively managed and processed, can deliver.
72. The term interculturalism generally indicates a set of perspectives and attitudes aimed at “promoting an open and dynamic interaction and exchange between different cultures and is not limited to defending the right to their co-existence within a determined space” (Comedia Network, n. d, p. 1). Féral (1996) argues that interculturalism develops “something deeper and more interesting than multiculturalism: the idea of a mutual friction of cultures, an interaction, an exchange between cultures” (p. 1). There are three particular intercultural actions: borrowing, exchange and hybridisation. The Council of Europe in 2008 has supported this area of emerging process: Council of Europe, 2008 - definition.
73. Cohesion of Culturally Diverse Societies “Intercultural dialogue is understood as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. Intercultural dialogue contributes to political, social, cultural and economic integration and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies.”

74. Given that the NI Assembly's T:BUC Strategy, as contained in earlier elements of this application, has indicated a willingness to support Interculturalism, we would like to champion that process locally and represent an excellent opportunity to do so given the evidential demand by groups and schools expressing interest in our programmes.
75. To paraphrase the Dutch academic Ria Lavrijsen "The value of art, lies perhaps in the fact that art is constantly offering test cases in which a culture can prove it is serious about pluralism."
76. Comedia Network (n. d) Interculturalism. Retrieved March 12, 2004, pp. 4, from http://www.comedianetwork.org/glossary/worddescription.php?url_wordid=6#top
77. Féral, J. (1996) Pluralism in art or interculturalism? Retrieved March 12, 2004, pp. 10, from http://kvc.minbuza.nl/uk/archive/amsterdam/ukverslag_feral.html
78. John Foote talks of : "at least three types of dialogue: a dialogue between people of different cultures often but not always enclosed within national boundaries, a dialogue based on attitudes of non-violence, openness to others and a willingness to see solutions, and cooperation facilitated or occasioned by the dialogue" (Fred Bourguin 2003)
http://www.ericarts.org/web/files/131/en/intercultural_dialogue_johnfoote.pdf
79. And Nausikaa Schirilla, in her 2008 article Contribution to Conflict Transformation says "The conception of intercultural dialogue is in a certain sense a contribution to conflict transformation, as many conflicts have a cultural dimension or are touching cultural problems." (Source: "Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Transformation: A Feminist Perspective")
80. Whilst a lot of work has been evidenced on areas of competing national identities elsewhere in Europe and beyond, the core problematic at this centre of Northern Ireland experience is this reflection of national and ethnographic identity in opposition to another. By mainstreaming our cross-community practice to allow for true intercultural making, we are allowing creative expression to be a key agent of change and mutual understanding and interdependent developments.
81. On the basis of reorientation of thinking around the question of Interculturalism it would be appropriate here to explore Community Arts Partnership's thinking regarding Sectarianism.
82. <http://statecrime.org/data/uploads/2011/10/rolston2007c.pdf>
<http://rightsni.org/2014/05/sectarianism-in-northern-ireland-time-for-a-definition-in-law/>

Conclusion

83. It would be a reasonable to suggest that "Together Building a United Community" recognises that the United Community will not be created overnight – as is recognised in the strategy document, a period of around a decade is envisioned.
84. The operationalisation of the Together Building a United Community strategy therefore requires a transition period where citizens can engage with the key ideas, can participate in reflection regarding the past and gravitate meaningfully towards the future.
85. It is in that transition period that the contribution from the processes of community arts practice would be a necessary and vital component in terms of aiding the transition.

Community Relations Council

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Community Relations Council



COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

Submission to the Committee of OFMDFM inquiry into Building a United Community

10 October 2014

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Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Contents Page

Executive summary

Section 1 Introduction

Section 2 TBUC must be ambitious and fit for purpose.

Section 3 Uniting communities and community integration, including how communities are involved in decision making.

Section 4 Examine the theory and practice with regard to good relations, shared space and shared services in bringing divided communities together.

Section 5 Legislation and definitions.

Section 6 Good Relations Indicators in monitoring and measuring the progress of government interventions.

Appendix 1 CRC supported work

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Executive summary

CRC welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Inquiry into Building a United Community. It is especially poignant at this particular juncture in our peace process when there is a sense that Northern Irish society is at a crossroads, with an urgent need for agreed government commitments and actions to stabilise and reconfigure existing tensions.

It is critical that the Executive's strategy Together Building a United Community (TBUC) is developed as a new and progressive discourse, with innovative and ambitious actions that will continue to address the legacy of the past and assist in building a shared and reconciled society.

Key for CRC is the aim of the inquiry which is to *'inform the Executive's approach in the actions it takes to tackle sectarianism and racism and other forms of intolerance'*

CRC highlights the following key points as issues which should be given full attention by the Committee during its deliberations. These and other issues will be further elaborated upon within the body of our response:

- **Delays in implementation.** It is over a year and a half since the policy was first announced but there is little activity on the ground.
- **Financial implications.** There are serious financial implications with the loss/reduction of international funders and the constrictive domestic funding situation.
- **Local Government.** There is a need to ensure that the new 11 District Councils have equality and good relations at the forefront of everything they do.
- **Regional Co-ordination.** Regional co-ordination of community relations work is required, which should bring together and synchronize interventions at regional government level along with district councils and community initiatives.
- **Sectarianism and Racism.** Sectarianism and racism should be tackled in an effective and co-ordinated way. This is particularly important bearing in mind budget restraints imposed on Departments and their agencies which may impact negatively on tackling sectarianism and racism (for example, recent concerns expressed by PSNI around the negative impact of budget cuts in relation to policing interface areas).

CRC welcomes the September 2014 announcement by Northern Ireland Secretary of State Theresa Villiers, on the convening of a new round of cross-party negotiations to focus on the outstanding issues, including how to deal with flags, parades and the past and wishes it success in addressing these outstanding legacy issues which continue to impact on community relations and resources.

CRC also acknowledges the important role the Committee of OFMDFM has in relation to scrutiny, policy development and consultation with respect to OFMDFM and its key role in the consideration and development of legislation. In order to ensure a robust and transparent inquiry process, CRC recommends that the Committee:

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

- Make inquiry submissions publicly available.
- Enlist the services of dedicated advisors to the inquiry.
- Call for evidence from all relevant departments regarding spend to date and future resourcing for the implementation of the United Community strategy priority areas, headline actions and community relations issues with no headline action attributed e.g. the regeneration of interface areas, flags/emblems, parades/protests and other legacy issues.
- Make recommendations to other Departments as part of the final inquiry report.
- Pro-actively engage with the sector on issues emerging from inquiry submissions through thematic and organisational events during the autumn and winter.
- Involve practitioners in the writing of the next version/update.
- Post-inquiry, make a commitment to engage with relevant cross-departmental officials on the Inquiry's Report i.e. recommendation for an ongoing examination on the impact of the Inquiry on policy/programme change. This would be invaluable to those interested in the implementation and delivery of TBUC.

CRC hopes that the learning and recommendations from the Inquiry submissions will be embedded in the ongoing TBUC planning and implementation processes and future plans so that peace building, countering sectarianism and racism and supporting reconciliation will be at TBUC's core.

One of CRC's areas of responsibility is the provision of practical and policy development and funding support to a broad network of statutory, private, and voluntary/community sector organisations. The Inquiry has provided an invaluable opportunity to revisit TBUC with these organisations. Hence during September CRC facilitated a wide ranging discussion with the sector in relation to the Inquiry and its terms of reference, as well as broader issues that are affecting the groups on the ground. CRC's response has captured some of this discourse and we would like to offer assistance to the Committee in the coordination of evidence gathering events with the sector – this direct engagement with those doing 'relationship building' on the ground would be significant as well as symbolic.

CRC, as the regional body would particularly welcome the opportunity to give evidence directly to the Committee over the coming months – it would be important to have this regional perspective.

Finally, CRC wish the Committee success in highlighting a clear vision for the development and delivery of TBUC to build cohesive, strong relationships across all levels of society, protect minorities and demonstrate fairness that inspires trust in the strategy.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

The Community Relations Council (CRC)¹ is the regional body for community relations in Northern Ireland, established as an independent charity and acting as an arm's length body through sponsorship by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). The board is appointed through a supervised public appointments process and the Memorandum and Articles provides for up to one third of the Board to be appointed by the Government.

CRC's vision is of a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society founded on the achievement of reconciliation, equality, co-operation, respect, mutual trust and good relations, of an open society free from intimidation and threat, where peace and tolerance are considered normal.

To support the securing and attainment of this vision CRC's responsibilities as a regional body are:

- advocating and challenging progress towards a better, shared and prosperous inter-community partnership and inter-cultural co-operation;
- increasing awareness of community relations work and encouraging the flow of ideas and practice on North-South, East-West, European and international levels through commissioning and undertaking research;
- developing, supporting and disseminating best practice examples of peace-building and facilitating constructive debate on difficult, sensitive and controversial topics, whilst acknowledging and promoting good relations actions;
- providing support for local groups and organisations (finance, training, advice and information) to develop opportunities for cross-community understanding;
- providing practical opportunities for inter-community and inter-cultural partnership understanding and interventions; and
- assisting central and local Government in the development, implementation, and delivery of policies, programmes and actions by connecting community relations issues through learning from research and programmes at regional, sub-regional and local level.

Since its establishment in 1990 CRC has supported practical initiatives underpinning progress towards a society whose principles are fairness and justice, the peaceful celebration of variety and difference, and the importance of sharing, trust and inclusion. CRC supports cross-community partnerships and co-operation, inter and intra community dialogue, and sustained engagement; in addition to this CRC promotes better practice and aims to influence policy development processes. As the regional body for peace building, CRC acts as an independent voice championing change to achieve and maintain a shared and open society based on fairness, the celebration of diversity and variety, and genuine reconciliation and interdependence.

¹ CRC was formed in January 1990 with the purpose of supporting and promoting community relations work at all levels within the community, a role which it continues to carry out. It originated from a proposal of a research report commissioned by the NI Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights titled 'Improving Community Relations' (Frazer & Fitzduff 1986).

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Furthermore, CRC provides a challenge function that promotes a shared and better future throughout government and civic society. The consultation responses to *A Shared Future* clearly indicated that there was widespread support for such a regional body, independent of government and capable of commanding support to promote good relations throughout government and society, support organisations through funding, training and development of good practice and to provide a challenge function across the public sector and wider civic society through research, best practice and policy development

Context

Given CRC's central role in peace-building and relationship building in our post-conflict society we are particularly concerned with the formulation of strong, robust policy making that influences and supports best practice on the ground.

Before embarking on the specifics of OFMDFM's Inquiry into Building a United Community it is worth taking note of some of the key relevant commitments and reactions to our society's peace process.

In April 1998 the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement states in its first paragraphs that *'we make a fresh start in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.'* It further states *'we are committed to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between these islands'*. Then in October 2006 the St Andrews Agreement states that *'the culture rights and aspirations of all are respected and valued, free from sectarianism, racism and intolerance'*.

External expectations. There is a sense that Northern Irish society is at a crossroads in our peace process which requires agreed government commitments and actions to stabilise and reconfigure existing tensions. The Haass/O'Sullivan process failed to produce consensus or an agreed blueprint for dealing with some of the most contentious issues facing our post-conflict society. More recently, Nancy Soderberg², accused Northern Ireland politicians of an *'abysmal abdication of leadership'* and unionists and nationalists of being *'far too stuck in the past, making progress vulnerable and even reversible'*. This was echoed by Minister Flanagan at the British Irish Association Conference (September 2014) when he referred to the Irish Government's concerns over the past year *'as politics in Northern Ireland has atrophied across a range of issues; not only the reconciliation agenda, which goes to the heart of the peace process itself, but other bread and butter issues have also fallen foul of disagreement within the Executive'*. At the same meeting Secretary of State Theresa Villiers, reiterated strongly to political parties reluctant to move forward to creating a fresh approach on the past that *'there are risks but the status quo is increasingly unsustainable and is putting ever greater pressure on our policing and criminal justice system'*.

Scale of the challenge. Recognising the problem is a recurring theme across a number of policy development areas, and it is therefore important that the Committee in taking forward its inquiry, reflect on the realities and the problems still facing our

² Senior aide to former US president Bill Clinton

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

society as it moves from peace-building to reconciliation. CRC would like to draw specific attention to the most recent findings from the third *Peace Monitoring Report* (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Peace-Monitoring-Report-2014.pdf>). Finally, CRC's core grant and community relations/cultural diversity grant schemes have suffered a decrease in budgets whilst witnessing an increase in applications. This is both symptomatic of the increased need to carry out the work, as well as the shrinking financial support for this work to take place i.e. exiting of Atlantic Philanthropies and International Fund for Ireland programmes as well as the gap between Peace III and Peace IV. The shrinking of the sector has the potential to impact negatively on peace-building activities.

Together Building a United Community strategy. It is critical that the Executive's strategy Together Building a United Community (TBUC) is developed as a new and progressive discourse, with innovative and ambitious actions that will continue to address the legacy of the past and assist in building a shared and reconciled society. CRC welcomed the launch of TBUC in May 2013 stating that, given that the details of implementation plans and budgets had still to be formulated it viewed the document as a statement of policy intent and would consider it further as these details unfolded.

It is well over a year since TBUC was issued and CRC welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Inquiry into Building a United Community. Key for CRC is the purpose of the inquiry to *'inform the Executive's approach in the actions it takes to tackle sectarianism and racism and other forms of intolerance'*.

CRC views this inquiry as hugely important at this particular juncture in our peace process.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

SECTION 2 TBUC MUST BE AMBITIOUS AND FIT FOR PURPOSE

The TBUC strategy must match the ambition of wider civil society to live in a truly and fully reconciled region. It is a critical strategy within the NI peace process which must work in practice and not just in theory.

The successful development and implementation of TBUC depends on:

- **Having a clear framework** for departmental structures around the development and delivery of TBUC's four priorities and seven headline actions and how these will work, both individually and collectively.
- **Producing a meaningful assessment** of the scale of the challenge to help inform TBUC actions and programmes. This includes assessing inter and intra communal violence which continues to impact on people's lives, security budgets and the peace process. Some of this information can be found in CRC publications such as the *Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Reports* which provide a dispassionate analysis of the dynamics within NI society. The reports have been welcomed as an important source of information that allow us to examine, on the basis of evidence, our journey towards or away from peace on issues including security, equality, political progress and cohesion and sharing. The reports use statistics in the public domain but which have not been previously assembled across the wide range of issues affecting life here. The reports are available on CRC's website along with many other valuable research reports that underpin our knowledge of issues affecting community relations including CRC's Shared Space research journal (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/programmes/sub-page-1/shared-space/>) which publishes current academic research on the themes of peace, conflict and community relations journal.
- **Developing actions with clear and measurable outcomes**, as well as indicators and interventions using appropriate evaluation tools. This will enable the Executive, its departments and related agencies to properly demonstrate what these programmes have achieved, especially in relation to sustained cross-community sharing and reconciliation.
- **Being capable of addressing the complex mix of issues** that link poverty with long-term social disadvantage such as housing, education, regeneration and community safety, which are inextricably linked to the more fluid issues of identity, cultural expression and community division.
- **Ensuring TBUC will be funded**. This is one of the most critical questions to be addressed by the inquiry. Exact detail is required on what expenditure has been committed and what is being sought to properly resource TBUC's commitment to tackle sectarianism and racism and enhance policy in uniting communities and community integration.
- **Reconciliation**. The TBUC commitment to the '*desirability of good relations and reconciliation*' should be strengthened and reflected in subsequent actions. The PEACE III programme is based on a widely accepted definition of reconciliation developed by Hamber and Kelly for the PEACE II programme (<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/dd/papers/dd04reconddef.pdf>) and agreed by the current Executive in 2007. This definition retains merit and credibility, and should be adopted and re-affirmed as TBUC moves forward.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Executive must ensure all Departments work together to embed TBUC and not just as a strategy for certain executive partners. TBUC must influence and guide the entire Executive, along with its Section 75 obligations, to make a positive contribution to reconciliation and peace-building. This should involve processes to review existing and new policies through a TBUC lens and civil servants engaged in writing and delivering TBUC should be given training to assist them in their understanding of the issues and engaging with the sector. Ministers should also ensure that TBUC is not only delivered but strongly advocated for across the entire Executive.

- **Joined up government.** The importance of inter-departmental co-operation can only be resolved through political commitment and Executive agreement. What is clear however, is that no serious issue in building a united community can be tackled by one Department alone working in a silo. For example:
 - significant change in the pattern of housing will require changes in safety, policing, transport, education and the location of public services;
 - shared space will require actions by the Departments of Social Development, Regional Development, Culture and Leisure, Education, and Justice, as well as local government;
 - there will be no change on the interfaces if there are not changes in planning, regeneration, transport, employment and education;
 - tackling the past will involve actions for justice, education, health, employment and community relations; and
 - tackling hate crime and racial inequalities is clearly a matter of serious inter-departmental action.
- **Practice shaping policy.** The TBUC strategy was issued in May 2013 with practically no results to show on the ground due to the fact that it is mainly focused on departmental programme development and delivery, largely ignoring the vast inter-community infrastructure in the most volatile areas which has been built up over many years through major international investment. The sector now reports a current financial crisis and is concerned that it will be unable to contribute fully to the implementation of TBUC. At a recent meeting with sectoral stakeholders 92% stated that their community had not yet benefitted from TBUC programmes. The strategy must work to link more effectively with good practice on the ground.

In addition to the general comments above CRC has the following observations to make on the current design and implementation of TBUC.

Participation. A number of design teams, subgroups, working groups have been established to take forward actions, but the involvement of the sector within this design process has been limited. The positive example of the Interagency Group established by the Department of Justice to drive forward its commitment to interface barrier removal is an example of good practice within and between key stakeholder government agencies and community groups. However, it is unclear as to whether or not this process will be able to find adequate resources to fund the TBUC commitment of barrier removal by 2023. The 'United Youth Programme' design team has engaged widely with the youth sector, young people, and training organisations but these examples do not seem to have been replicated across the other actions. There is no clear sense as to how the other programmatic areas are being designed.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

A commitment to engage strategically with the relevant knowledge base should be given and actioned across all headline action programmes during the remaining design period.

Implementation. Overall progress is slow. Aspects of programmes have emerged i.e. three shared campuses announced, two urban villages identified, the United Youth Programme is now moving to the selection of pilots. Other programmes still appear to be either in design mode or currently working up terms of reference to establish one. However, there is growing frustration at the delays.

Peace-building focus. Departments should also be more accountable in relation to the TBUC programmes for which they have responsibility in terms of their good relations content and impact. For example, the two urban villages programmes announced appear to have little or no good relations content and local minority communities appear to be excluded from the areas of benefit. TBUC also refers to a number of strategies relevant to Section 75 (1) categories e.g. Childcare and Gender Equality Strategy. It is important to clarify if these strategies will include peace-building as a core objective, CRC stresses the need to ensure that no government agency should be allowed to reinforce division.

Co-ordination. It is critical for the Executive to ensure Departments work together to deliver a joined up approach to TBUC. Each department should consider how it will:

- respond to community relations issues throughout its area of responsibility;
- work in partnership with other Departments and communities: and
- develop clear and transparent targets to assist in the delivery of TBUC priorities and measure progress.

Leadership. Strong Ministerial leadership is an important principle and Ministers should ensure that TBUC is not only delivered but also advocated for. To ensure a joined up inter-departmental approach to the strategy, leadership offered by the Executive should be efficient, effective and transparent. It should hold regular planned meetings and publish reports on progress which should be presented to OFMDFM Committee and circulated widely. To date there has only been one Ministerial Panel meeting.

Local Government reform. Councils should be supported in the development of strong reconciliation and funding programmes to strengthen and mainstream their significant contribution to peace which has been supported over many years by the European Peace Programmes and OFMDFM's Good Relations Funding.

Resources. TBUC will not be plausible without a serious resource review and the commitment of adequate resources. This includes urgent support for groups on the ground vital to implementing TBUC actions. A major rethink of how larger and significant budgets such as education, housing, community development, regeneration, justice and culture intersect and present opportunities for reconciliation and peace-building is also necessary. Without this review, commitment to reconciliation and peace building is likely to remain merely piecemeal.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Outstanding contentious issues. It is difficult to know how the Haass/O'Sullivan Panel of Parties and the issues it was set up to address currently sit/fit within the TBUC framework as discussions on these matters are currently stuck. Therefore, the Executive must:

- break the impasse and provide stability by returning to fully engaging on the key outstanding issues of flags, parades and protests, marking anniversaries and how to deal with the past;
- find agreement on the overarching principles and structures to address them;
- engage with other key organisations with responsibility for, and expertise in peace building activity to help support and sustain progress.

At the September 2014 Conservative party conference the NI Secretary of State, Theresa Villiers, announced a fresh round of all-party talks, involving the Irish Government commenting *"It's essential that the institutions crafted so painstakingly in 1998 function effectively and efficiently. There can be no doubt that both welfare and the legacy issues of flags, parading and the past are now impacting on the ability of the Executive to do that. A situation where decision-making becomes deadlocked is not something we could simply sit back and allow to happen"*.

In September 2013, the CRC submitted a briefing to the Panel of Parties established under TBUC (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CRC-Haass-Submission.doc>). The briefing acknowledged that the Panel of Parties was taking place at an important time in our peace process and gave analysis and comment on the issues of flags and related matters; parades and protests; dealing with the past. The submission also gave examples of the CRC's practical engagement with these issues:

- 1. Agreement on overarching principles** – CRC believes that our society is reaching the limits of what can be achieved by pragmatic negotiation on a case by case basis. To move beyond the management of our difference to the acknowledgement of our diversity, CRC believes it is time to enshrine principles that form the basis of our collective rights and responsibilities to each other in relation to the remaining matters. These principles could form the foundation for the approach we take to these issues and could provide security for all identities without prejudice to the wider constitutional question.
- 2. Structures for sustaining peace** – It can be as difficult to live within a peace settlement as it is to negotiate it in the first place. CRC believes that our society has underestimated the implications of this important point and that the negotiating structures for sustaining peace should be revisited. Tensions and divisions will remain within Northern Ireland for the foreseeable future and sporadically lead to violence and disturbances in the street. Acknowledging this is not to be fatalistic, indifferent or undemanding of our peace process. It is simply the reality of the difficulties of transforming a deeply divided society. Therefore we suggest that negotiations on the three key issues should consider whether the ad-hoc approach taken to these inevitable issues is, in itself, creating instability and an erosion of trust.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

SECTION 3 UNITING COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION, INCLUDING HOW COMMUNITIES ARE INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING.

Acknowledging the sector. The unparalleled scale of international support and community effort for peace-building over the years and the pace of progress and learning from practice on the ground must be strongly reflected within the strategy.

This acquired practice must be a key influence on current priorities and actions, yet it appears for the most part, that communities and practitioners have played a minimal role in the actual design and delivery of TBUC to date. The strategy should commit to the principle that the achievements on the ground throughout the conflict and peace process are the bedrock of future progress and commit to ensuring there is no regression from current levels of inter-community activity and partnership.

The void between TBUC and community need, has left much of the community relations sector vulnerable, frustrated and pessimistic. Enormous efforts have gone into the task of making peace and seeking real and meaningful reconciliation on the ground. Many people and organisations took big risks for change even when reconciliation was dismissed as naive. They hold the expertise in and commitment to the delivery of relationship and trust building work. TBUC should include a programme of actions and resources which are authentic, credible and rooted in the learning from this work.

CRC was established to support these efforts and to build from their insights and achievements (examples of CRC supported projects can be found in appendix 1). International partners have also made a huge contribution to this change including the EU Peace fund, Atlantic Philanthropies, the International Fund for Ireland, the Irish Government and others that have invested in economic regeneration and reconciliation for many years and enabled the direct participation of hundreds of thousands of people in building peace. This broadly based support for a genuine people's 'peace process' sustained hope through years of political disagreement and difficulty and was vital to the ultimate possibility of political agreement.

Wider inclusion. TBUC must be stronger in its acknowledgement of:

- the positive contribution by people from minority ethnic backgrounds, and minority faith backgrounds;
- how segregation and legacy issues within society impacts on minority ethnic and faith communities; and
- the need for a strong link with the Racial Equality Strategy, or else we will lose complementarity.

Furthermore, a number of other categories or groupings receive a guarded mention in the strategy, rather than being viewed as important contributors to the vital work of peace-building e.g. women, NGO's, churches, faith-based organisations, ex-combatants, trade unions, private sector and business community, and finally those organisations working to develop and strengthen communities through a community development approach.

Resourcing the sector. Declining and inadequate funding, as well as delays associated with release of Government funding delivery is leading to a diminishing

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

and fractured sector. It is critical that government consider both current and long term consequences of a reduced sector, such as 'How can peace building work continue in the current climate where experienced staff and good projects have closed, or are at risk of closure?' and 'Who will be left to implement TBUC on the ground?'.

Future funding must move from piecemeal to long term community based activity based on hard indicators with results that are outcome based. The outcome of the Good Relations Funding Review should detail OFMDFM's commitment to sustainable, long-term resource allocation for community relations activity and CRC recommends that the Committee call for the publication and full consultation on the review findings as part of this inquiry.

Affirmation and inclusivity. There is growing concern regarding the genuine political commitment to the TBUC strategy. The Interface Community Partners group is made up of community relations practitioners from across the region, and at a recent meeting (July 2014) the group expressed deep concern at what they viewed as a potential emerging crisis over the coming period and called on the Executive to acknowledge the good practice on the ground and give due focus, support and leadership to peace-building activities on the ground. The voluntary/community sector and the communities for whom they work, have invested time, energy and reputation in the peace process and need to be reassured that the Executive will commit to the principle that the achievements throughout the conflict and peace process, is the bedrock of future progress and ensure that there is no regression from current levels of inter-community activity and partnership.

Additionally, the planning process that has started now to build on TBUC in the development of the next reconciliation and peace-building plan, must involve civic society in its planning and production.

In order to build confidence in the process, political and government representatives must exercise stronger influence and be more engaged in community relations issues at local and regional level to show that TBUC is being supported collectively by all political parties. Anything short of a united stance by the Executive places TBUC at an immediate disadvantage and the community cannot be expected to achieve a level of unity which is beyond the politicians.

Local Government reform also provides a golden opportunity to mainstream the work within all eleven council structures. In particular, area community planning within Councils should be harnessed as an effective tool to mainstream cohesion, sharing and integration into real decisions at local level.

Another potential method of providing confidence at local level and developing a united peace building approach is for regular cross party plenary surgeries within communities involving all of the political parties. This method has been successfully used by the Greater Whitewell Community Surgery group. Statutory organisations are already using the '*Collaborative Working in Disadvantaged Areas*' and '*Delivering Social Change*' frameworks to try to work together more effectively. Other models of good practice in community engagement could also be helpful in relation to engagement with the sector. For example CRC's commissioned research 'A

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Model of Consultation? Transformation and Regeneration at the Interface (ICR September 2013) (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/A-Model-of-Consultation.pdf>) identifies partnership, comprehensive preparations, creative and open community engagement; evidenced action; and thoughtful follow-up as the core elements that have made for successful consultations in Northern Ireland. A further example of how practice has influenced policy is CRC's publication '*From Conversation to Transformation – a journey of change at the interface*'. The pack is a helpful tool for those engaged in conflict transformation at local and international level and contains a set of publications (see list below) drawn together by CRC to help capture the work it has been leading in the development of a policy and practice framework for the transformation of interface barriers and the regeneration of interface areas:

A Model of Consultation? Transformation and Regeneration at the Interface ICR 2013 (link above)

Interface Community Partners seminar – Towards a United Community (November 2013) <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Interface-Community-Partners-Seminar-Towards-a-United-Community-November-2013.pdf>

Interface Community Partners & Interagency Group Annual Conference (December 2013) <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Interface-Community-Partners-Interagency-Group-Annual-Conference-2013.pdf>

The Interface Working Group – A Review ICR 2012 (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/IWG-review-with-exec-summary-130313-final.doc>)

Report on the Joint Conference of Interface Working Group and Interface Community Partners on City Interfaces CRC 2011 (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/crc-remembering-the-future.pdf>)

Beyond Belfast – Contested Spaces in Urban, Rural and Cross Border Settings RCN & CRC 2010 (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/master-beyond-report-web.pdf>)

Challenge of Change Conference CRC 2009 (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/IWG-Final-CoC-report.pdf>)

Towards sustainable Security – Interface Barriers and the Legacy of Segregation in Belfast CRC 2008 (<http://conflictresearch.org.uk/reports/sectarianism-segregation/CRC-Towards-Sustainable-Security.pdf>)

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

SECTION 4 EXAMINE THE THEORY AND PRACTICE WITH REGARD TO GOOD RELATIONS, SHARED SPACE AND SHARED SERVICES IN BRINGING DIVIDED COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

CRC comment on TBUC priority area: Our Shared Community

As an organisation responsible for the promotion of reconciliation and peace building, CRC believes it is critical to afford opportunities for interaction across all spheres of life. This involves enhancing and increasing access to public facilities and services regardless of their geographical location. In a society emerging from conflict this often means navigating a segregated landscape peppered with perceptions as to who the 'space' belongs too. Whilst much progress being made in opening up and maintaining public spaces as 'shared' it is important to continue a range of efforts across local and central government.

CRC has developed the following positions regarding shared space:

- Public resources and services should be of good quality, and should be equally welcoming, accessible and safe for all members of society;
- Shared space must be developed within a framework of economic and social relevance to town and city centres, access and arterial routes, retail centres, public services and housing estates;
- Shared spaces must be useful, well designed, thoughtfully located and managed;
- Regeneration can play a key role in the transformation of communities, particularly those that are in close proximity to physical barriers and interfaces;
- A systematic commitment is required to ensure that all future development maximises the openness of all resources, commits to shared public realm and integrates the concept of sharing into the planning and management of assets;
- Progress requires serious inter-departmental working. No commitment to this idea in practice will materialise without significant resources, determination and effort and a willingness to manage the difficulties;
- Achieving shared space will require actions from a range of Departments e.g. DSD - ensuring *city and town centre master-planning programmes* promote shared spaces and that physical development and public realm projects work to remove physical evidence of the conflict such as redundant security measures; and DRD developing guidance on strengthening community cohesion, fostering a stronger community spirit and the importance of city and town centres as shared spaces; and
- Communities are working hard to address barriers and to enable change - this progress must be supported and mentored and Inter agency/community initiatives must continue to be developed.

Housing. Housing is a critical matter for community relations. Housing in Northern Ireland touches on profound issues of territorial control, choice, freedom of movement and intimidation³. Intimidation and fear prevent and reduce housing choices, and also create an unequal and unfair reaction of the relocation of the victims of intimidation and discrimination. The continuation of the SPED programme

³ In 2011 twenty-eight homes were purchased under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwelling Scheme (SPE³), and between November 2010-October 2011 fourteen properties were purchased at a total cost of £2.898 million. Intimidation and fear prevent and reduce housing choices, and also create an unequal and unfair reaction of the relocation of the victims of intimidation and discrimination.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

is a sharp reminder that the legacy of the past continues to impact negatively on people's lives, people's housing choice and the economies of housing provision. Therefore reducing fear and intimidation could enable greater housing choices in previously restricted areas, thereby contributing to efficiency savings in the current budgetary climate.

To address the legacy of housing patterns and choices requires a re-framing of public policy around a framework of equality and conflict-transformation. Equality in housing provision is of critical importance and CRC believes that the allocation of housing and the pattern of living together must be addressed so as to end effective segregation in public housing and the ongoing distortion of free choice through fear.

Progress has been made, yet the self-developing and maintenance of shared neighbourhoods has depended largely upon the level and effectiveness of local voluntary and community organisations in terms of offering support and leadership and commitment. CRC has endeavoured to assist those seeking to achieve this transformation.

In moving forward, the future long term direction for housing must fully acknowledge the difficulties facing our society, specifically the communal segregation of communities along religious and political demarcations.

Workplaces. The workplace has been paramount in the promotion of change in Northern Ireland. It is currently one of the few genuinely shared spaces where people mix as a matter of routine, and businesses and the trade unions are to be congratulated for their efforts. CRC has and continues to engage with the business sector and trade union movement and has offered support through a range of activities.

Community Development. Community development organisations and groups play an important role in creating shared resources, strong partnerships and networks within and between communities.

Developing the various aspects of a shared community requires broader thinking, encapsulating issues such as tackling poverty, regenerating communities and utilizing future opportunities under community planning to ensure positive developments for communities.

MOVING FORWARD

Shared Spaces/Regeneration/Social clauses. In order to maximise opportunities for creating shared spaces/community cohesion CRC has the following suggestions:

- Values such as open, welcoming, safe and accessible spaces should underpin the usage of all assets/facilities/services;
- Proposals for use of space located in 'contested spaces' should clearly demonstrate how they will contribute to the development and maintenance of community relations;
- Proposals emphasising shared ownership should demonstrate this within its governance arrangements e.g. competencies of the managing organisation should include a knowledge of community relations, as well as a willingness to promote and develop relations and partnerships;

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

- Infrastructure that helps develop good relations partnerships should be supported;
- Local assets/facilities led by government agencies/community organisations should explore the opportunities to form partnership consortia which take advantage of the competence and capacity that has been built up by those involved in peace building activities via cross-community partnerships;
- Economic, social and environmental benefits should be shared by all in the area. Applications should clearly demonstrate what positive impact the transfer will have on the local community.

Housing. Given the post-conflict nature of Northern Ireland it is important to give further consideration as to how housing providers can meet objective need as well as making a positive contribution to better community relations. This could include the following:

- Examination of what shared housing looks like in a post-conflict society and how this moves forward in terms of equality, reconciliation and transformation;
- Housing Stock should be looked at in the context of the legacy of the past. There is a clear need to examine how *all* agencies can build confidence that enables consideration of all available housing and examine impact of communal chill factors;
- Proactively monitored reasons for accepting, reluctance or refusals specifically relating to communal issues e.g. spatial segregation, murals, flags or physical barriers - the collation of this data should be used to help inform the development of programmes/interventions which could be used to widen the geographic boundary of choice;
- Develop a set of indicators to measure change i.e. (a) demand for shared housing, (b) how shared housing is being supported and developed within a range of policy areas e.g. planning statements and how are designs being modified to maximise safety (c) what is the experience of living in a shared neighbourhood?
- Investigate short-term approaches that can measure the ability to meet objective need whilst also enabling more choice in housing provision;
- Shared communities supported in the context of increasing choice and promoting a shared and cohesive society i.e. could include the monitoring of trends, for example where intimidation and exclusions occurs in Housing Executive estates, (albeit a significant amount of the housing stock may now be privately rented), trends could usefully be monitored in conjunction with PSNI and the shared neighbourhood charter;
- Housing Associations and other housing providers should work with their tenants to commit to living in Shared Future communities - this should be measured under performance inspections;
- Future commitments are needed to support, develop and incentivise pilot schemes on integrated housing (without having a negative impact on equality and objective need); mixed home ownership to promote less divided territory; new build shared housing projects in both the public and private sector; supporting the intervention of an increased level of housing management in potential Shared Future Estates to tackle early attempts to destabilise these areas.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Workplaces. There is insufficient recognition of the central role of trade unions have played in combating harassment. It would be appropriate if design teams that are engaging on workplace actions and employment opportunities identified a role for trade unions, as well as businesses, in order to reduce existing or potential barriers to cohesive shared workplaces.

Community Development. In moving forward under this current strategy it is perhaps timely to re-emphasise community development principles of participation and inclusion, and highlight the importance of a commitment to acknowledge the impact its work can have on good relations as well as potential opportunities to promote good relations through its activities.

CRC comment on TBUC priority area: Our Safe Community

Interface Communities. Cities and towns are divided by the physical barriers which were once seen as short term protection for embattled communities but have now become part of the permanent structural landscape. These structures serve to remind us that the hostility, fear and anger of the past remain alive and continue to threaten the peace of people and communities on either side of the barrier – the fact remains that, without the barrier, lives will be put at risk. Safety, both in terms of its perception and its reality, is critical.

Whilst the physical barriers serve to remind immediate and wider society of a continued fear and uncertainty between communities, there are consequences other than segregation, such as sustained and ingrained patterns of poverty. Many of these areas have been those most traumatized and shaped by conflict and many have been left as the poorest areas in our society. Therefore tackling the removal or dismantling of physical barriers and non-physical barriers is a complex issue. It needs to have the regeneration of these communities at its heart encompassing inward investment, public realm, increased employment opportunities, and the creation of a culture of safety and openness.

It is therefore CRC's vision, where possible, to find ways to provide structured support for initiatives to regenerate interface areas, leading to the eventual creation of open and vibrant communities free from fear, threat or any obstacle to interaction across the region.

To achieve this CRC has long prioritised Interfaces in its peace-building activities and has committed a range of resources – both financial and developmental – to assist communities move from a culture of management i.e. mobile phone networks towards a culture of transformation. CRC believes that a key principle in all responses to the legacy of physical segregation is that the safety and security of those people living near to interfaces and interface barriers must be the priority. Yet, at the same time it is the responsibility of government to develop responses to the real challenges of fear and threat which do not rely on permanent barriers or patterns of exclusion and violence.

CRC's investment in people, organisations and programmes to alleviate violence and to create advocacy for communities on the interfaces has led to the development of a range of policy comment and practical developments. In 2009

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

CRC brought forward a framework '*Towards Sustainable Security: Interface barriers & the Legacy of Segregation in Belfast*' which focused on the regeneration of interface communities. CRC's 2011 *Guidance Paper on Proposed Process for Interface Barrier Transformation/Removal* (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/iwg-interface-barriers-guidance-nov-2011.pdf>) advocated for the development of local strategic approaches to barriers, safety and security (both BCC and DOJ have formally adopted the Barriers Interface Guidance as a framework for working within interface communities).

CRC calls for a strategic approach that includes:

- supporting peace-building initiatives in the development and delivery of short, medium and long-term actions to address social, community, physical, economic and security and safety issues in interface areas;
- build upon existing good practice and address any gaps in provision;
- calls on government departments to adapt a flexible approach to practices which may be beneficial to enabling or sustaining regeneration and transformation approaches which take full account of the problems and opportunities for local areas and the entire region;
- Departments should create the conditions for the removal of all interface barriers across the region;
- The process of removing interface barriers should be part of an inclusive, community approach towards building a shared society;
- New barriers will only be built if all other avenues of intervention have been tried and failed. Priority must be given to other forms of investment in communities to ensure their safety and security without the need for physical structures.

CRC also recognises that interfaces are not just about physical barriers but also invisible barriers that separate communities often demarcated by CCTV cameras, derelict buildings, flags etc. CRC's 2010 publication *Beyond Belfast - contested space in urban rural and cross border settings* outlines an even broader range of contested space/interface typologies which must also be recognised in relation to the physical division of communities.

Safety. All people should be free and safe to live where they want, and all people should be safe to walk the streets and access services as workers, service users or visitors. It is important that policy aspirations realise these high level goals in practice. Creating cities, towns and neighbourhoods as safe places for everyone should involve the goal of 'shared space' as a central theme in the designing, developing and implementing of measures and programmes.

In addition to this it is very important that society works to eliminate attacks on cultural and symbolic property. This requires effective strategies and action plans to improve protection and enforcement in relation to hate crime and attacks on cultural, faith and symbolic property and monuments. In developing protection it is important to acknowledge the vulnerability of property belonging to all faiths and symbolic properties relating to minority ethnic groups.

CRC supports efforts to ensure that justice is served on those who intimidate - this requires strong connections between policing and communities as well as the

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

engagement of statutory services. This should be directly connected to community policing strategies and community development plans.

Local organisations who are involved in tackling hate crime at local level are critical to any policy development, interventions or programmes aimed at promoting better community safety and reducing tensions and violence, as well as creating shared spaces, especially at interfaces. Likewise, targeting hotspots will require a joined up approach and must include work with community leaders.

TBUC highlights a wide range of important and relevant issues such as rural and urban interfaces. Central to the TBUC priorities is the elimination of peace barriers by 2023, and the development of an Interface Barrier Support Package. In addition to these actions the strategy also refers to issues such as designing out crime, the involvement of government and local communities, as well as the development of an Inter-Agency group.

Another TBUC objective is the aim of creating a culture where more people feel able to report intimidation and harassment, and highlights the role of the Community Safety Strategy as well as the Policing & Community Safety Partnerships in supporting and developing confidence and access to relevant reporting structures. Other issues include safety and young people and safety of property.

CRC has invested heavily in this area with the aim of empowering communities to live peaceful, safe and interconnected lives. The following are a number of suggestions that would help support OFMDFM and the Executive achieve the aim of creating '*a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety*'.

Firstly, the removal of barriers and the opening of gates between communities represent a very important exchange of trust which must be carefully nurtured for the sake of the next generations that should never have to live in fear. However, the responsibility for changing our segregated landscape does not rest solely on the shoulders of local communities. It will take vision, investment, and changes in strategy across a wide range of public policy areas including housing and social development, education, culture, and physical economic regeneration.

Secondly, it is imperative that government departments and agencies utilise the knowledge and expertise currently in place for any long-term intervention - local learning must permeate the policy making process across all government departments. In moving forward CRC suggests the following actions:

CRC's recommends that the *Guidance Paper on Proposed Process for Interface Barrier Transformation/Removal* (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/iwg-interface-barriers-guidance-nov-2011.pdf>) is used as a framework for moving forward to ensure the following:

- Interfaces should be considered at a strategic level therefore ensuring they are given due regard when developing local action plans.
- An inter-Departmental approach needs to tie changes in communities to changes in regeneration and investment.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

- Build on the desires and knowledge of local communities and tie interface communities into the regeneration of our cities and region.
- Use regeneration to develop opportunities for social inclusion and cohesion, both at inter and intra community level.

It is important that OFMDFM considers existing structures such as the Interface Community Partners and the Inter-Agency Group. There is a coherency to these relationships and associations, and it would be useful to examine possible duplication and overlaps, as well as learning from what is currently working.

Regeneration. The generation of a 'vibrant, inclusive and diverse environment' needs to build in social, economic and environmental benefits, and these should be addressed collectively in a coherent and coordinated fashion. Benefits should be mobilized to local communities, the wider city and region and visitors, connecting previously marginalised areas into the local economy and society.

Safer Communities. Tension monitoring is an important tool drawing on policing methodologies at local government level to measure potential or growing problems in a locality, as well as tasking and coordinating cross-agency interventions. Some thought is required to consider how this can be developed as an effective tool in de-escalating and preventing tensions, and in other district council areas with high level of sectarian and racist incidents and crimes, and criminal damage.

Community relations and good relations should be mainstreamed into the management of shared space programmes and central to intervention and diversionary programmes. This would create committed partnership rather than dialogue as the prime model of interface management. This could create programmes which allow people to explore both intra and inter community violence, the damage it causes and to devise shared practical outcomes.

Children and young people.

It is clear from the work that CRC supports on the ground that there is a huge appetite from young people to engage and interact with difference and 'otherness' both in formal and non-formal settings.

It is therefore the role of the TBUC strategy and those who will support its implementation, to facilitate and meet these expectations.

In order to help achieve the aspirations of children and young people CRC has the following comments and suggestions to make in relation to the proposed strategy initiatives:

- The range of commitments and actions set out in the strategy has the potential to add value to current and past work, yet it is crucial that all actions are looked at holistically.
- The strategy rightly acknowledges the critical role children and young people play in reconciliation and peace building⁴.

⁴ CRC is pleased that OFMDFM have listened to concerns from the previous CSI consultation and have instead taken a more positive view of the role young people have in society.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

- The strategy acknowledges many of the challenges facing children and young people, and refers to a range of research and good practice which sets the context for the future development of this work with young people.
- The strategy welcomes the various initiatives set out to help develop and build on current practice; in particular OFMDFM's commitment to developing longer-term interventions, as well as the crisis interventions required at certain periods and in particular areas during the year.
- However, it is important to move beyond the rhetoric and ensure action that will address the structural and political issues that continue to impact on the ability of generations of young people to live in a shared and peaceful society.

CRC is aware that much of this work is in a developmental phase and is being taken forward by various departmental design teams. It is imperative progress updates are regularly published, as well as continual engagement with relevant stakeholders and experts involved in current/past initiatives. In particular, this should include schools, youth organisations, communities and researchers. Work with children and young people on the ground that evidences need and acknowledges good practice will help shape these initiatives.

CRC expects the TBUC strategy to support children and young people to understand the challenges facing them in a society emerging from conflict, as well as leading the way to challenge the patterns of the past and assist in building a shared and reconciled society. In light of this, CRC makes the following suggestions for moving the various proposals forward:

- All children should have the opportunity to engage in activity that promotes, encourages and develops better community relations.
- Proposed activities should seek to enhance and increase existing and current engagement in order to take full advantage of best-practice relationship-building activity.
- Continue to support targeted and intensive work in areas experiencing communal tensions, and examine how any new work will compliment/align with local peace-building activity i.e. compliment and develop a whole community/school approach.
- Summer camps/schools, cross-community sporting events and buddy schemes should support/link with other areas of the curriculum and ensure a collective approach that brings added benefit to ongoing work as well as providing a continuum of progressive activity.
- CRC is represented on the United Youth Programme oversight group which has engaged extensively with key stakeholders and is making progress in the development of programmes in relation to young people not in education or training. Nevertheless, the programme does not have a confirmed dedicated budget to carry out its stated aims.
- CRC recommends that the United Youth Programme undertake a survey of young people's attitudes and experiences of good relations. This should then be fed back into the formal education system to ensure current practice is reviewed in light of experiences – opportunities to adjust methods/material earlier in the formal and non-formal structures.
- In relation to shared campuses, it would be useful to engage with the trade union movement that has led the way in creating and ensuring safe workplaces regarding sectarianism and racism.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

- Shared Campuses should build upon the practice of current sharing and integration, and the department should establish a benchmark for these campuses and their progression post-financial support.
- Proposals/applications for 10 Shared Campuses should identify existing local peace-building activity and identify opportunities for complementarity.
- In addition to Shared Campuses, the department should indicate how previous/existing models that have delivered positive outcomes will be mainstreamed into public policy; as well as update how/when the recommendations set out in the Ministerial Advisory Group Report on Advancing Shared Education will be progressed.
- Existing and current engagement should not be affected by new initiatives i.e. should avoid displacing funding from interventions that have positive outcomes/outputs;.

Finally, appropriate budgets must be set to meet these obligations, as well as indicating how the work will be mainstreamed.

CRC comment on TBUC priority area: Our Cultural Expression

Culture remains a vital and unresolved area of concern for inter-community relations affecting all communities. In this context of faith and minority ethnic diversity and the legacy of the conflict, important issues include language, commemoration; cultural expression as part of shared space i.e. flags, emblems, parades and protests, as well as the important role of arts, culture and sport as critical parts of a policy of participation, culture and change.

CRC supports a cultural diversity policy that has at its heart a commitment to reflect the variety and complexity of cultural life, to raise questions, to create safe and open places for interaction and debate, to create gateways for engagement and to resolve political issues in a way that is consistent with the overarching values of equality, human rights and reconciliation.

CRC has a long history of work with Parades and Protests, Arts, Sports, Festivals and Museums. Recent examples include long term work both directly and through funded organisations that work on parades, protests and local disputes. CRC has partnered with the Arts Council on Cultural Diversity and Re-Imaging Communities, and has offered strategic and local support for festivals and community arts and sports initiatives including the Belfast St Patrick's Day festival, Orangefest, the Mela, the Maiden City Festival, Feile an Phobail, Football for All and Peace Players International. Finally CRC has worked with museums on conflict, cultural diversity, symbols, and religious diversity.

CRC believes that culture and arts make a positive contribution to peace-building, reconciliation and the promotion of good relations, and using these practical interventions CRC has developed a range of policy comment which is relevant to this policy and practice discourse.

- The link between culture, investment in arts, culture and creative industries and tourism is well made, and engaged and active communities are a prerequisite of success. It is important that opportunities exist to access and engage with high-quality arts and culture, but in doing so stakeholders need

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

to recognise that the divided geography and existence of contested space continues to impact on mobility and accessibility. These issues would be especially applicable to Community & Youth Arts programmes, and the application of a good relations lens at the development stage of programmes/projects with relevant groups and stakeholders would help identify barriers and develop actions to redress exclusions.

- Promoting access to culture and arts presents huge potential for the promotion of good relations outcomes. This could be facilitated by encouraging and supporting inter-community dialogue within and between the particular categories. In particular engagement with the Department of Education and ESA/ELB's should explore how this interaction can create opportunities for inter-community school contact. This is especially relevant given the recent publication of the Ministerial Advisory Group's Report on Advancing Shared Education.
- Museums have a vital role as places of interaction and public education. In a divided society this has a particular importance, as museums offer a safe space to engage with evidence, experience, artefacts and stories which may be different from our expectations. There can be few more important places which enable us to make sense of our diversity, our interdependence and all of our cultural traditions and identities. Museums have the vital task of reflecting and reframing debates on key issues and events, through demonstrating a commitment to plural voices, encouraging active engagement with the stories and experiences of self and of others, and providing an open, safe and shared context within which that discussion can be validated in the public realm. It is important that museums in Northern Ireland make a commitment to open and shared learning, in relation to all aspects of the past. It should allow for a confident approach in dealing with divisions of the past, with the commemoration of controversial or divisive events or the legacy of violence. CRC views our local languages as an integral element of the rich cultural tapestry which we all share. This important part of our intercultural heritage needs to be respected. CRC welcomes opportunities to broaden acceptance and knowledge of Irish and Ulster Scots languages as well as encouraging usage and participation.

Commemoration. In post conflict contested societies the process of commemoration carries within it particular challenges and these challenges require specific responses, which should incorporate good relations approaches and dialogue as key components. Alternatives are needed in post conflict societies so that people are not locked into binary identity, and the European Convention proclaims that states need to involve states, institutional and private actors, including the public sector, in taking responsibility for cultural engagement in divided societies.

In developing our perspective on the importance of cultural expression in the context of making the politically significant decade of anniversaries, both CRC and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) have worked in partnership from 2010 to stimulate a conversation which seeks to raise the issue of remembering in public space and to promote a process that leads to the development of practice models and principles.

As society engages with the legacies of this revolutionary period there is potential to reinforce the development of political and civic culture – engaging with culture and

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

identity, rights, what we mean by democracy and the nature of political change. We may also be able to acknowledge the legacy of the decade and support engagement with the complexity of our history.

Following a wide consultation the following principles were developed by CRC and HLF for Marking Anniversaries

- Start from the historical **facts**;
- Recognise the implications and **consequences** of what happened;
- Understand that different **perceptions** and interpretations exist; and
- Show how events and activities can deepen **understanding** of the period;

All to be seen in the context of an 'inclusive and accepting society'.

These have been endorsed by DCAL, agencies and local authorities as programmes are developed to mark these events. It is also important to earmark principles for expressing commemorative practices in the public space. CRC strongly advocates that principles underpinning exploration and anniversary activities in the public arena should aim for a plural, interactive and modern approach. Understanding and practice of models for how commemoration set in broad historical contexts should be fostered in the public as opposed to private space.

Moving Forward

TBUC raises valuable points on issues such as principles of respect and tolerance, sharing traditions, responsible expression. It also highlights an Intercultural Arts Strategy, as well as the use of festivals as vehicles for expressing cultural difference and promoting understanding. The Strategy goes on to highlight a new Annual Community Relations/Cultural Awareness Week, Sports and Safety, as well as Commemoration work with museums, libraries, and a strategic discourse. Other issues mentioned include music, language, arts, and literature.

However, CRC considers the opportunities to promote culture, arts and sports as vehicles for integration and participation as undeveloped, and it remains unclear as to what constitutes new activity as opposed to current activity.

Finally, CRC highlighted in its response to TBUC's predecessor the lack of reference to faith diversity, as well as a lack of exploration of the barriers to integration and expression of faith and minority ethnic groups. This continues to be the case.

In Northern Ireland sectarianism is increasingly rooted in international standards. In fact, any ambiguity has been removed by recent decisions of the UN and Council of Europe – *for the purposes of human rights law sectarian identity is to be regarded as an ethnicity and sectarianism as a form of racism*. TBUC does not explicitly take into account existing protections under European Charter on Human Rights (ECHR) of Council of Europe Conventions. While couched in aspirational terms, building on the ECHR and The Council of Europe's Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society would give a stronger baseline from a cultural rights perspective.

CRC therefore recommends further work to be carried out on the definition of cultural heritage, ensuring it is inclusive and in line with Article 3(b) of the Convention on Cultural Heritage that draws together "the ideals, principles and values, derived from

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

the experience gained through progress and past conflicts, which foster the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law”.

The UN Special Rapporteur has also focused on culture in contested and post conflict societies and argues conflicting views are not the issue. How they are expressed or resolved is the critical issue. Culture has a potential role in bringing people together. However, it can be problematic if, for example, cultural expression becomes the battlefield or the place of future confrontation. In this context a cultural rights based approach suggests:

- The principle that one is free to express one’s own perspective of past events
- State has primordial role to set minimum standards
- Use all means to reduce tensions
- Importance of mutual respect and understanding
- Zero tolerance to calls for violence in the public sphere.

The basic principles suggested by the UN Special Rapporteur on Culture are:

- Healing process only if all included (memorials and narratives)
- Neutral space to enjoy and invent culture
- Individual identities privilege diversity and collective identities privilege similar; important to leave room for diversity
- We all have a stake and responsibility in a shared future based on non-discrimination and equality.

Cultural expression needs to take as its starting point the importance of movement between and within these identities. There is no one settled way of doing this and therefore the development of principles at a regional level are critical in assisting both the creation and management of conflicting views about culture. Against this backdrop CRC wishes to see:

- policies and programmes designed to renew and reclaim public space and reaffirm that community ownership has the potential to build good relations within and between communities;
- support given to sports bodies who seek to open up their sports to the participation of all;
- the utilisation of art galleries, museums and other creative approaches to contextualise how our society and communities has changed, as well as embracing growing diversity e.g. creating more collections concentrating on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the present day;

Regarding commemorations, government should explore how a cultural rights approach can inform the marking of the anniversaries of the recent conflict as these enter into the 20th, 30th, 40th and 50th anniversaries. As communities mark these tragedies with their own commemorative events, the development and adoption of principles based on the understanding gained from 2012 -23 work would provide a helpful framework over the coming years. It will be important in order to promote healing, acknowledge pain and avoid the prospect of increasing tensions or the threat of renewed violence.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Cultural diversity programmes within TBUC would be significantly enhanced if it incorporated the following :

- encourage a more complex debate about cultural expression, linking TBUC cultural expression aspirations with the ECHR e.g. practical implications and workable principles; and
- draw on expertise of UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights.

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

SECTION 5 LEGISLATION AND DEFINITIONS.

Following consultations with various funded and none funded groups that have a relationship with CRC and the promotion of community/good relations issues, it has become increasingly clear that there is a need to define what is meant by the term good relations. The TBUC strategy cites the concept of good relations but makes no attempt to provide a definition for the purposes of legislation. The strategy proposes to enhance the good relations duty through the establishment of an Equality and Good Relations Commission. This newly established body has the potential to significantly enhance the role of good relations in terms of a scrutiny role. CRC believes that TBUC must provide a formal definition of good relations, sectarianism and reconciliation and this must be included in the strategy and contained within the forthcoming legislation to establish an Equality and Good Relations Commission along with guiding principles.

However, an obvious gap in the strategy is the lack of progress around legislation which continues to leave the tensions between equality and good relations largely ignored. Definitions of good relations, sectarianism and racism should be included in any proposed legislation and conform to international standards. Particular attention should be paid to those treaties ratified by the United Kingdom through inter-governmental processes at the United Nations and Council of Europe. Relevant general comments issued by the treaty bodies and other soft laws should also be referred to when drafting the proposed definitions.

The outworking of the proposed legislation must also provide:

- an appropriate and robust legal framework to support good relations work at a regional level, and localised within communities;
- direction to public authorities in light of future changes regarding their statutory duties; and
- a robust legal framework for the private, community and voluntary sectors.

Any future Equality and Good Relations Commission must be cognizant of the expertise within the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and CRC in the provision of advice to the Northern Ireland Executive and Legislative Assembly with respect to measures necessary for the effective promotion of good relations, including reconciliation and peace-building. The new Commission must also have its independence guaranteed and protected.

What good relations means. The promotion of good relations, under Section 75 (2), is about breaking through the denial and avoidance of sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland by acknowledging its impact on society and the organisations working within it. It states a public commitment to these beliefs and continually seeks ways to build on them for the future.

However, the term *good relations* is not defined within TBUC. Nor is there any detailed information about the good relations principles referred to. This will need to be addressed since 'good relations' is the goal of the policy and the rationale for initiatives and methods that will be deployed. Organisations will approach this process from their own, unique perspective and with their own particular concerns. For example, words such as sectarianism, racism, equality and diversity can have

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

different and sometimes, loaded meanings as people work through issues from individual and community viewpoints. Below is a sample definition of good relations developed by CRC in the *Good Relations Framework* publication 2004:

“Good Relations challenges sectarianism and racism, promotes equality, develops respect for diversity and raises awareness of the interdependence of the people and institutions within NI” (http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Good_relations_final.pdf)

TBUC outlines a vision of “a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.”

Reconciliation. CRC believes that TBUC’s ‘desirability of good relations and reconciliation’ should be strengthened. The PEACE III programme is based on a widely accepted definition of reconciliation developed by Hamber and Kelly for the PEACE II programme as a result of support agreed through CRCⁱ (<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/dd/papers/dd04recondef.pdf>). The programme was agreed by the current Executive in 2007 and the definition still appears to us to be both accurate and helpful and should be reinstated:

“The definition regards reconciliation as a voluntary act which cannot be imposed and involves five interwoven and related strands, as follows:

- **Developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society:** *The development of a vision of a shared future requiring the involvement of the whole society, at all levels. Although individuals may have different opinions or political beliefs, the articulation of a common vision of an interdependent, just, equitable, open and diverse society is a critical part of any reconciliation process;*
- **Acknowledging and dealing with the past:** *Acknowledging the hurt, losses, truths and suffering of the past. Providing the mechanisms for justice, healing, restitution or reparation, and restoration (including apologies if necessary and steps aimed at redress). To build reconciliation, individuals and institutions need to acknowledge their own role in the conflicts of the past, accepting and learning from it in a constructive way so as to guarantee non-repetition;*
- **Building positive relationships:** *Relationship building or renewal following violent conflict addressing issues of trust, prejudice, intolerance in this process, resulting in accepting commonalities and differences, and embracing and engaging with those who are different to us;*
- **Significant cultural and attitudinal change:** *Changes in how people relate to, and their attitudes towards, one another. The culture of suspicion, fear, mistrust and violence is broken down and opportunities and space opened up in which people can hear and be heard. A culture of respect for human rights and human difference is developed creating a context where each citizen becomes an active participant in society and feels a sense of belonging; and*
- **Substantial social, economic and political change:** *The social, economic and political structures which gave rise to the conflict and estrangement are identified, reconstructed or addressed, and transformed.*

Definition of sectarianism. Sectarianism has shaped the structures which we have inherited from education, to public safety to community development. It has shaped

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the most basic personal choices like where we might live, what school we go to, what we can wear and what we might say to whom. All of this shapes our attitudes to politics, economics, our ideas about the law and culture and our understanding of history and morality in Ireland.

In relation to a definition of sectarianism TBUC states that for the purposes of the strategy *'sectarianism is defined as: threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour or attitudes towards a person by reason of that person's religious belief or political opinion; or to an individual as a member of such a group'*. CRC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the draft legislation (when published) to establish the Equality and Good Relations Commission which will seek to find an appropriate consensus around a definition of sectarianism to be included in the legislation. Sectarianism has not been defined in law in either Ireland or the UK. In Northern Ireland but is increasingly rooted in international standards. For the purposes of human rights law sectarian identity is to be regarded as an ethnicity and sectarianism as a form of racism. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) convention states:

'In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.'

(<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>)

The UK government is a signatory to international human rights standards which also bind the devolved administration and its executive agencies. In addition there is a body of important domestic human rights, equality/non-discrimination and good relations statutes, as well as criminal law. TBUC also rests on key international commitments such as the European Convention on Human Rights, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Resolution 1325, World Programme for Education, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as domestic legislation and policy commitments. CRC recommends that this legal framework is reflected in the draft legislation to establish the Equality and Good Relations Commission.

CRC's publication *Good Relations Framework - An approach to the development of Good Relations* (see above link) uses Ken Logue's definition of sectarianism in *Anti-Sectarian Work – A Framework for Action (1993)*

'Sectarianism in the context of Northern Ireland is discrimination arising from political or religious prejudice, leading to relationships of distrust between the two major politico-religious communities. Sectarianism is not just a matter of economic, social or political consideration; nor is it simply a question of personal attitudes or behaviour. It is an historical and cultural phenomenon arising out of political and religious differences and perpetuated by group and self interest'ⁱⁱ.

Logue's definition clearly points to political and religious prejudice as the identifiers of sectarianism. He also identifies the outcome of sectarianism in Northern Ireland as one of 'distrust' between the two main communities (British unionist, majority

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Protestant and Irish nationalist, majority Catholic). It is this issue of 'distrust' that begins to be addressed by good relations.

Sectarianism beyond the two main communities. Sectarianism in NI has tended to be in relation to fractured relationships between Protestants and Catholics. Beyond NI, sectarianism extends to discrimination or disadvantage suffered by someone because of their religious belief which goes beyond Catholic and Protestant and includes all minority faiths - Muslim, Bahá'í, Hindu, Judaism etc. Therefore, it is important to recognise that sectarianism goes beyond intra-Christian conflict.

TBUC must not only tackle the specific and enormous legacy of sectarian division, but also address hostility, discrimination and hatred targeted at those from minority ethnic communities. The relationship between sectarianism and the commitment to an inter-cultural future are clearly important aspects of TBUC including its relationship to the Racial Equality Strategy. Unfortunately TBUC made very little reference to this link. Similarly, the draft Racial Equality Strategy *A Sense of Belonging* does not make a strong or clear enough connection between these two interdependent strategies. However, the inclusion of both offers an opportunity to strengthen the connections and jointed up processes and programmes where possible.

Given the clear linkages between racism and sectarianism, CRC recently facilitated a number of discussions with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss and reflect on OFMDFM's draft Racial Equality Strategy, *A Sense of Belonging*. Emerging from this discourse was the desire to find common ground on a number of issues that concerned those working for and with people from a BME and minority faith background living and working in Northern Ireland. Subsequently, a unified response was developed and launched in the form of a 'Common Platform' paper (<http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CommonPlatform.pdf>) which highlighted an agreed twelve common themes and principles critical to the successful implementation of a strategy.

Recommendations

CRC would welcome the co-ordination of reconciliation and good relations efforts on regional bases and believes that this work should be facilitated by a regional body responsible for the management and allocation of long term funding, to address good relations, racism and sectarianism. The regional body should also provide long term developmental support in partnership with organisations (voluntary and statutory) working within communities at a grass roots level.

The promotion of understanding is also a concept referenced in human rights instruments (see Article 7(3) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in relation to promoting understanding -as well as respect and tolerance- in relation to minority languages.) Instead of looking for Northern Ireland based interpretations, good relations framed within legal international law and concepts could be adopted. This would then allow us to draw on international instruments and good practice. If this was to be implemented in Northern Ireland, it would bring a

Draft CRC response to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

measure of legal certainty to the good relations duty by actually having a definition of the concept on the face of the legislation.

CRC believes that definitions of good relations, racism and sectarianism are required in order to address these difficult issues. Definitions provided should meet with international standards and obligations ensuring practise is recognised as a standard-bearer for international protection and good governance. When giving consideration to this it is important to reflect on The Equality Act 2010 which states that good relations are about '*tackling prejudice and promoting understanding*'. The Explanatory Notes to the Act give examples of how this duty might apply in practice. In relation to 'tackling prejudice' strategies to tackle homophobic bullying in schools is mentioned (good relations duties in Great Britain cover sexual orientation and many other sub sections that we have in Section 75 (1) (2)). In relation to 'promoting understanding', measures to facilitate understanding and conciliation between different communities is referenced to.

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SECTION 6 GOOD RELATIONS INDICATORS IN MONITORING AND MEASURING THE PROGRESS OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS.

Peace-building evaluation has the potential to empower and to capacitate users and communities⁵. Therefore the development of appropriate indicators and outcomes provide an opportunity to strategically consider how societies are building peace, and what else needs to be done.

CRC has a strategic interest in monitoring and evaluating peace building activities, and uses this information to map progress in the building and development of good community relations. In addition to internal evaluation processes, CRC has also recently undertaken a 3 year (2012-2014) independent review of the condition and impact of the peace process in Northern Ireland. This appraisal was independently funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and resulted in the publication of 3 Peace Monitor Reports⁶. As previously stated the first report appeared in February 2012 and drew mainly on statistics that are in the public domain but which had not been previously assembled across the wide range of issues affecting life here⁷. Detailed and statistical evidence was gathered across four dimensions - security, equality, political progress, and cohesion and sharing. This annual monitoring provided a mechanism to measure the distance we have travelled either closer to or further away from the shared goal of a peaceful and inclusive society.

Given our strategic interest in this work, CRC contributed to the Good Relations Indicator Review 2013/2014 both as members the various thematic advisory sub-groups, as well as by a formal written submission. CRC's submission agreed with the development of high level indicators, thereby enabling a review against strategic objectives, but stressed the importance of being very clear as to what outcome was being sought, and then setting out how this would be achieved. CRC's formal response also drew attention to the Outcomes-Based Accountability model highlighting it as a useful process for devising outcomes which would be useful for further consideration by the department.

In addition to this CRC drew attention to the ambiguity of the consultation i.e. it appeared the intention was to measure proposals put forward in Together: Building a United Community, yet this would prove difficult given the lack of published detail on programme activity under each of the priorities.

However, if the intention was a wider measuring of good relations i.e. additional to TBUC, then CRC was of the strong view that the department, and consequently the indicators must then address how other elements of peace building work would be monitored and presented. CRC concluded that a TBUC *only* approach would be restrictive and would result in an incomplete picture on the health of good relations in our society, and CRC recommended comprehensive monitoring that included a

⁵ Bush, K. (2004) 'The Commodification, Compartmentalization and Militarization of Peacebuilding'. In Keating and Knight (eds) *Building Sustainable Peace*. Tokyo and Edmonton: UN University Press and U of Alberta Press, 23-46.

⁶ Under A Shared Future Strategy CRC was tasked with preparing a three-year assessment on the 'health' of community relations in Northern Ireland – this assessment would form part of the Government's main triennial report which the Assembly would be invited to consider, debate and report. This aspect was not taken forward by the local administration but CRC has been able to carry forward the concept of independent assessment with the support of JRCT & JRF.

⁷ Where official statistics did not tell the full picture survey-based data was also used.

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broad range of programme activity such as schemes and projects from across the Executive that are outside the TBUC sphere e.g. DE's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy and its corresponding Enhancement Scheme, as well as making efforts to include *all* peace-building programmes.

It is CRC 's position that indicators must act as a key stimulus for further change and should inform how much is being done and how well it is being done i.e. is society better off? The following are a number of general recommendations made within our submission and are relevant to this current TBUC Inquiry:

- **Research Forum:** a research forum should be established and used to identify gaps in the available data and advise on further research needed to create a coherent view of what is happening regarding peace-building (an expansion of the advisory panel).
- **Interpretation:** peace building is unpredictable and often experiences unexpected set-backs. Consequently it is important to capture the various realities of success so as not to discourage innovation and learning. It is for this reason the interpretation of data is such a critical aspect of monitoring peace as it can provide a wider perspective on how society is benefitting from peace-building activity e.g. impact of symbolic events. If wider interpretation of the data does not occur the framework could end up as a limited compendium of statistics (albeit useful but not as beneficial as it could be). Part of this interpretation would involve tasking each department to provide a yearly analyse of the impact of the work carried out or supported by them, either under TBUC or other programme activity?
- **Addressing gaps:** Currently the indicators appear to have a regional output. This is useful for a broad sense of progress, but another useful addition would be a geographical breakdown of progress under the various outcomes. The categorisation of data in this format would support local interventions, as well as assisting policy development, particularly for district councils. It is important to note that not all areas experience good relations in the same way, and it is important to be able to carry out comparative analysis and lesson learning within and between different geographies – this could support targeted good relations work on a range of thematic areas e.g. housing, regeneration, education, cultural diversity etc.
- **Together Building a United Community Remit.** However, if the proposed Good Relations Framework is to be guided by TBUC actions then the following should take place (a) an essential purpose of the good relations indicators is that they map achievements, change and impact. It is therefore necessary that officials devise a framework that charts trend lines across various indicators/outcomes; (b) review the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for *each* of the TBUC actions and replicate/align with a corresponding indicator; (c) engage with the various design teams and delivery bodies to devise data collection methods that will accumulate both quantitative and qualitative data; (d) as programmes develop OFMDFM should develop time series evaluation frameworks – it is important to measure the outcomes for participants within a scaled timeframe.
- CRC recommended further exploration regarding the measurement of attitudinal change across specific TBUC interventions – this additional data would bring added value to quantitative data.

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- Statistical data, research and information from evaluations should be considered collectively – a cooperative approach would provide a valuable overview of progress and support engagement on next steps between departments and strategic partners.

It was of particular concern that despite an objective of removing interfaces by 2023 there was no corresponding indicator to measure progress on this goal.

Finally, CRC made a response to the OFMDFM January 2014 public consultation on its good relations indicators. CRC is considering OFMDFM's recent consultation summary report set against CRC recommendations made.

Key Priority 1: Our Children and Young People

Shared Aim: to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.

Outcome 1.1 - Improving attitudes between young people from different backgrounds.

Outcome 1.2 - Young people engaging in bringing the community together.

Generally CRC is content with the outcomes, but considers other indicators are needed to capture success and progress/non-progress.

At first glance, the indicators appear loosely connected to TBUC. There needs to be a stronger association with the TBUC actions i.e. the buddy scheme, united youth, summer schools. If this connection is not made it will be difficult to prove it is the TBUC actions that are achieving the impact rather than other non-TBUC related activity. Clarification is needed as to whether OFMDFM intends to establish a monitoring framework within each of the proposed actions to measure attitudinal changes following engagement e.g. United Youth Programme, Buddy Scheme and Summer Schools etc?

It is unclear what data the framework will use as its baseline if it has omitted information held about other non-TBUC activity e.g. data on integrated education and CRED enhancement scheme. It is important that integrated education is included as a measurement within this outcome - it is a critical partner in bringing children together and influencing change. Again, there is confusion as to why certain aspects of community relations activity are not considered as a critical measurement tool for appraising government progress in building a shared and united community. This needs to be resolved.

Capturing the amount and type of sharing within education is important. Yet, much more crucial is the quality of this sharing. It is important to develop measures that measure this i.e. is the sharing experience a one off event, or part of a longer-term programme of engagement. Again it would be beneficial to know how different areas of the curriculum help facilitate this interaction, as well as which sectors are engaging with each other, and if this changes over time. As previously suggested a geographical breakdown would be extremely useful for planning and helping to target future support.

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Furthermore the indicator framework needs to capture data from sporting organisations and their related programmes - a corresponding indicator is needed. This also applies to diversionary activities etc and discounting this data would be a lost opportunity.

Finally, it is necessary to widen the age category across *all* the indicators, and not just a few. This is particularly important given Paul Connolly's research into children as young as 3 and their awareness of communal symbols. Given that OFMDFM has invested in a number of childcare initiatives within the 'Contested Space' Programme it would be useful to capture this attitudinal change amongst these participants as well.

Key Priority 2: Our Shared Community

Shared Aim: to create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

Outcome 2.1 - Increased use of shared space and services (e.g. leisure centres, shopping centres, education, housing)

Outcome 2.2 - Shared Space is accessible to all.

Again, CRC has similar concerns that the data collected for this outcome is narrow. Indicators that could enhance outcomes include:

Education:

- %/number of teachers involved in shared education programmes;
- %/number of trainee teachers who undertake placements in two or more different sectors.

Housing

- %/number of people living in non-single identity areas;
- %/number of people requesting to live in a mixed area;
- %/number of residents activity involved in creating and supporting shared neighbourhoods.

Social clauses

- %/number of government contracts incorporated with social clauses carrying out work in interface communities/contested space.

An indicator measuring shared employment should be developed given the emphasis on OFMDFM's United Youth Programme. It is also unclear how the indicators will monitor progress on Urban villages/Shared neighbourhood developments e.g. CRC would welcome a conversation given the recent announcement on the two urban villages which give little detail as to how they will facilitate a shared community.

Finally, the conclusions above are primarily focused on quantitative data. CRC has highlighted the need to supplement these indicators with qualitative data, either through specific research or data from evaluation processes. This supplementary data would enable an examination of the hows and the whys, as well as helping to inform future interventions.

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Key Priority 3: Our Safe Community

Shared Aim: to create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.
 Outcome 3.1 - Reduce the prevalence of hate crime and intimidation.
 Outcome 3.2 - A community where places and spaces are safe for all.

From the outset CRC is extremely disappointed at the absence of a specific indicator focusing on interfaces and contested space. This, despite a TBUC headline commitment to reduce and remove interface barriers by 2023, is very concerning. This requires urgent reviewing. CRC has a long history of working with community and interface workers and wants to ensure the work they are involved in is represented and recorded in the indicator framework. Again we would be happy to assist officials in this work, but in the meantime possible indicators could include:

- %/Number of Interface barriers removed;
- %/Number of new/strengthening of interface walls/gates/security barriers etc;
- %/Number of groups funded to carry out work at interfaces and contested spaces;
- %/number of people who feel positive and harmonious relationships exist between communities at interfaces/contested spaces.

Additional indicators for other aspect of the above outcomes could record:

- %/number of people who feel area they live in is safe;
- %/number of families/households applying for SPED or re-housed by SPED;
- %/number of people who would report a hate crime to the police;
- %/number of attacks on symbolic premises i.e. churches, chapels, schools, orange halls, GAA clubs.

Key Priority 4: Our Cultural Expression

Shared Aim: to create a community which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.
 Outcome 4.1 - Increase sense of community belonging (widens contribution beyond community background)
 Outcome 4.2 - Cultural diversity is celebrated

The draft consultation documentation highlights possible modification/amendments to reflect the outcomes of the Haass/ O’Sullivan Talks and their subsequent recommendations. Given the current stalemate interim indicators, need to be developed (taking into account previous indicators), which monitor progress as well as attitudes to parades/protests/flags etc.

Other indicators that could improve this section are:

- %/number of people who have attended an event that celebrates a different cultural tradition;
- %/Number of cultural events held during Community Relations/ Cultural Awareness Week;
- %/Number of cultural events supported by the District Council Community Relations Programme.

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It is unfortunate given the Decade of Commemoration that no corresponding indicators have been included. CRC works in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and would be happy to discuss possible indicators for mapping this important area of work.

Finally, as with other outcomes it is important to balance quantitative with qualitative data i.e. local decision making could be affected by capacity issues or power relations within the local community. This is a main concern across the indicator framework as a whole.

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APPENDIX 1 CRC SUPPORTED WORK

Over the past three years the Council's Pathfinder, CR/CD and Core Grants Schemes have supported many hundreds of good relations programmes across a wide and diverse range of communities.

The Council's Core Funding Scheme has been able to support and strengthen over 26 regionally focused organisations all of whom are focused on developing and sustaining peace building activities.

Our Core Groups have been at the heart of tackling the many CR issues that still have to be fully resolved such as dealing with the legacy of the past, parading disputes and interface tension community tensions. Through CRC support groups have been able to mediate local solutions to flags, bring together a range of communities to discuss the painful legacy questions that remain, intervene to help restore peace when community violence breaks out and look for collaborative approaches to how groups and communities can better work together.

In line with our core funded networks the programme has also supported nearly three hundred unique community relations programmes. There continues to be remarkable breadth and depth to the work that is supported through the Council's CR/CD Scheme. To give a flavour of the type of peace building activities that has been supported outlined below are the types of programmes that are receiving support:

- Programmes looking at the decade of commemorations and how they can unite communities and improve relationships between them.
- Public debates tackling very difficult issues around sectarianism, the legacy of the past and parading.
- Arts programmes that seek to explore and reflect on conflict and peace-building as well as celebrating the growing diversity of our community.
- Support towards improving relationships between and with minority ethnic communities.
- The programme supported this year Mela Event which attracted over 20k people in a positive & vibrant celebration of cultural diversity and the value that this brings to all.
- Work has been supported to provide diversionary activities particularly during times of community tension when communities are at risk of taking part in riots and civil disturbances.

Through this work, the Community Relations Council is seeking to assist communities to deal with the past, embrace the present and to dream a new future for Northern Ireland which is at peace with itself and which embraces and celebrates diversity.

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CRC core funded groups include:

Armagh City & District Council

REACT	REACT provides opportunities for individuals and groups of different cultures and identities to work together to develop mutual understanding and respect to reflect the Protestant and Catholic communities in Armagh City.
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Belfast City Council

174 Trust	174 Trust work to build peace and promote reconciliation in North Belfast
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	BCDA works to sustain, support and celebrate mixed communities and neighbourhoods within Ballynafeigh and elsewhere.
Ballymoney CRC	Ballymoney Community Resource Centre promotes development and sustainability in local communities and good relations is an integral part of its core work.
Belfast Interface Project	Belfast Interface Project works to support Interface communities in order to develop positive relationships.
Community Relations In Schools	Community Relations In Schools provides support to schools to reach out to and engage adults with active cross community and peace building programmes.
Interaction Belfast	Interaction Belfast aims to initiate, encourage and enable inter-community development and community action and to promote greater understanding and the reduction of community divisions along the Springfield /Falls/Shankill interface.
Intercomm	Intercomm works to address social and economic issues prevalent in North Belfast and other interface areas to build relationships within and between communities.
Linc Resource Centre	LINC Resource Centre works to develop good relations in North Belfast with the aid of the church and the community.
North Belfast Interface Network	North Belfast Interface Network aims to improve understanding and develop better relations within the community by addressing interface problems and improving inter community relations.
Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group	SLIG was established by two community forums in the neighbouring, but religiously divided, districts of Suffolk and Lenadoon who united to discuss social issues affecting both communities.

Down District Council

Harmony Community Trust	Harmony Community Trust works to bring about positive community relations and social inclusion focusing on the North Down, Ards, Down and Greater Belfast areas.
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Derry City Council

Junction / Holywell Trust	The Junction/Holywell Trust provides a safe space for cultural activity enabling it to build partnerships and networks across the community.
Peace & Reconciliation Group	The Peace and Reconciliation Group bring various communities together develop community relations learning through programmes incorporating training and residential programmes.
St Columbs Park House	St Columbs Park House seeks to contribute to peace-building and social inclusion through a range of programmes promoting civic participation, human rights and democratic pluralism.

Craigavon Borough Council

Shankill Parish Caring Association	Shankill Parish Caring Association brings people together to promote facilitate understanding reconciliation and compassionate response to social need in Lurgan.
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Multiple Councils

Community Dialogue	Community Dialogue has a unique facilitated dialogue process which provides an opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of conflict and peace-building.
Corrymeela Community	Corrymeela Community is a Christian Community of reconciliation. Drawn from many traditions, members individually and together are committed to reconciliation through the healing for social, religious and political divisions that exist in Northern Ireland and throughout the world.
Groundwork NI	Groundwork NI is a regional organisation working to promote community relations through training, network developments, addressing CR based issues whilst promoting dialogue, partnerships and capacity for change.
Irish School of Ecumenics	The Irish School of Ecumenics is an institute at Trinity College Dublin, Christian in its inspiration and committed to dialogue, peace and reconciliation.
Partisan Productions	Partisan Productions produces high quality theatre and film in relation to society and politics, in order to raise public awareness of development within different cultures and political opinions.
Rural Community Network	The Rural Community Network has a shared vision of reconciliation throughout the rural community and works to promote tolerance and mutual trust which can be translated into practical policies and actions.
Tides Training	TIDES Training delivers training in diversity, conflict management, good relations, labour mobility and capacity building themes across Northern Ireland.
Trademark	Trademark works towards social change in which the principles of social justice, equality and pluralism are actively pursued.

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Training for Women Network

Training for Women Network is a cross community network aimed at supporting women in training, employment and business.

Women's Information NI

Women's Information Northern Ireland works to provide women with support to enable them to have greater access to information and community conversations, a key area to this work is brokering good community relations.

Community Relations Council Briefing Paper

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
OFMDFM COMMITTEE
3RD DECEMBER 2014
TOGETHER BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY: INQUIRY**

INTRODUCTION

The Community Relations Council (CRC) welcomes the opportunity to present oral evidence to the OFMDFM Committee regarding the TBUC Inquiry.

From the Inquiry was launched, CRC has been engaged with key stakeholders and organisations interested in the development and implementation of Together: Building a United Community. This engagement influenced the CRC's formal submission to the Inquiry, and continues to act as a lever for ongoing discussion and debate. We are happy to elaborate on the content of these discussions during our evidence.

By way of background and for those members unfamiliar with the work of CRC, we have included a brief overview of the vision and functions of CRC (Appendix 1 expands on current developmental and grant-aid activities).

In addition to this CRC will provide comments on three issues:

- Overview of Good Relations in NI – what practice is working well;
- Funding;
- Good Relations Indicators

We are happy to expand on these issues during the evidence session.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL (CRC)

The Community Relations Council¹ was formed in January 1990 as an independent company and registered charity. It originated as a proposal of a research report commissioned by the NI Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights.

Vision

- Lead change towards a society free from sectarianism and racism
- Advocate for change towards a society whose principles are equity (fairness), the acceptance of diversity and a shared sense of our interdependence
- Support activity that promotes a shared and better future for all
- Support and encourage change in public policy and practice towards a shared and better future

Strategic Aim

Since it was established, the main aim of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council has been to assist the development of greater understanding and co-

¹ **Organisational Structure.** CRC is governed by the Members of the Council. The Council has twenty one members and meets bi-monthly. Currently the board is recruited through regular open public appointment processes regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Chief Executive, with the assistance of a senior management team, manages the day to day activities of the Council and reports directly to the Chairperson. The Chief Executive and senior management team also provide progress reports to all Council meetings.

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operation between political, cultural and religious communities in Northern Ireland; and to promote a peaceful and fair society based on reconciliation and mutual trust. It aims to do this by:

- Increasing public awareness of community relations work
- Developing opportunities for cross-community understanding
- Encouraging constructive debate throughout Northern Ireland
- Providing support (finance, training, advice, information) for local groups and organisations

Functions

Subject to the impact of *Together: Building a United Community*, the policy published by the First and Deputy First Minister in May 2013, the current functions that the CRC undertakes as a regional organisation and Non-Departmental Public Body of the Department are:

- assisting Government in the development of its plan and actions for good relations;
- delivering on actions falling to it as a result of those plans;
- promoting, in partnership with Equality Commission NI, good relations actions in the statutory, private, voluntary and community sectors, youth sector, church and other faith-based sectors within their respective areas of responsibility;
- providing training and development, support, advice, guidance and a source of specialist expertise to district councils in the development of their good relations plans;
- providing a challenge function to district councils on their good relations plans;
- working in partnership with departments to promote cultural diversity;
- acting as main funding source for voluntary and community organisations to provide innovative community and race relations programmes;
- developing and supporting interventions at interfaces and other 'at risk' areas;
- developing and producing good practice advice;
- commissioning and undertaking research;
- ensuring that best practice in addressing division and the problems of diversity in Northern Ireland is of international standards, and encourage the flow of ideas and practice on North-South, East-West, European and international levels.

Further information on current activities – development, grant and research etc can be found in Appendix 1.

The Committee indicated it would like CRC to focus its input on the following issues:

GOOD RELATIONS IN PRACTICE

It is CRC's opinion that *Together Building a United Community* (TBUC) must develop as a new and progressive discourse, with innovative and ambitious actions that will continue to address the legacy of the past and assist in building a shared and reconciled society.

CRC supports a wide range of organisations engaged in promoting, building and sustaining good community relations. This is supported through CRC's core funding

grant scheme, its community relations and cultural diversity grant scheme, OFMdfM's District Council Good Relations Programme, as well as working with regional bodies and stakeholders.

Activities supported fall under a number of themes and include:

- Interfaces (Urban) and development of shared spaces (area planning and design);
- Interfaces (rural) & contested spaces and development of shared spaces (area planning and design);
- Shared spaces – venue provision;
- Faith based work;
- Cultural celebrations & commemorations-*flags, parades, bonfires, emblems & work with institutions*;
- Policing & Community Safety;
- Addressing the legacy of the past;
- Identity based work-Women, Young adults (18+) and Single identity work;
- Sectarianism (tackling attitudes, intimidation and violence).

We are happy to provide further detail on these activities during the course of the evidence session.

CRC's recent engagement with our supported groups, along with interested stakeholders, has drawn attention to a number of issues that would be useful for the Committee to consider during the Inquiry. Some of this relates to issues already covered in CRC's submission e.g.

- Delays in implementation. It is over a year and a half since the policy was first announced but there is little activity on the ground.
- Financial implications. There are serious financial implications with the loss/reduction of international funders and the constrictive domestic funding situation i.e. a reduced infrastructure, and an over-reliance on a smaller cohort of organisations and key individuals;
- Local Government. There is a need to ensure that the new 11 District Councils have equality and good relations at the forefront of everything they do.
- Regional Co-ordination. Regional co-ordination of community relations work is required, which should bring together and synchronize interventions at regional government level along with district councils and community initiatives.
- Sectarianism and Racism. Sectarianism and racism should be tackled in an effective and co-ordinated way. This is particularly important bearing in mind budget restraints imposed on Departments and their agencies which may impact negatively on tackling sectarianism and racism (for example, recent concerns expressed by PSNI around the negative impact of budget cuts in relation to policing interface areas).

Again we are happy to expand on these issues during the evidence session.

FUNDING

Peace-building must undergo a re-prioritisation within government and should result in a resource review and the commitment of adequate resources. This includes urgent support for groups on the ground vital to implementing TBUC actions. A major rethink of how larger and significant budgets such as education, housing, community development, regeneration, justice and culture intersect and present opportunities for reconciliation and peace-building is also necessary. Without this pledge and a priority review TBUC will not be plausible, and commitments to reconciliation and peace building are likely to remain merely piecemeal.

Strong sustainable infrastructure will develop and safeguard positive community relations. Declining and inadequate funding, as well as delays associated with release of Government funding delivery is leading to a diminishing and fractured sector. It is critical that government consider both current and long term consequences of a reduced sector, such as 'How can peace building work continue in the current climate where experienced staff and good projects have closed, or are at risk of closure?' and 'Who will be left to implement TBUC on the ground?'

Future funding must move from piecemeal to long term community based activity based on hard indicators with results that are outcome based. The outcome of the Good Relations Funding Review should detail OFMDFM's commitment to sustainable, long-term resource allocation for community relations, reconciliation and peace-building activity and CRC recommends that the Committee call for the publication and full consultation on the review findings as part of this inquiry.

GOOD RELATIONS INDICATORS

Indicators must act as a key stimulus for further change and should inform how much is being done and how well it is being done i.e. is society better off? The development of appropriate indicators and outcomes therefore provide an opportunity to strategically consider how societies are building peace, and what else needs to be done.

CRC's strategic interest in monitoring and evaluating peace building activities is reflected in a number of activities. Firstly, we carry out internal evaluations to and use this information to map progress in the building and development of good community relations. Secondly, CRC has also recently undertaken a 3 year (2012-2014) independent review of the condition and impact of the peace process in Northern Ireland. This appraisal was independently funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and resulted in the publication of three Peace Monitor Reports². As previously stated the first report appeared in February 2012 and drew mainly on statistics that are in the public domain but which had not been previously assembled across the wide range of issues affecting life here³. Detailed and statistical evidence was gathered across four dimensions - security, equality, political progress, and cohesion and sharing. This annual monitoring provided a mechanism to measure the distance we have travelled either closer to or further away from the shared goal of a peaceful and inclusive society.

² Under A Shared Future Strategy CRC was tasked with preparing a three-year assessment on the 'health' of community relations in Northern Ireland – this assessment would form part of the Government's main triennial report which the Assembly would be invited to consider, debate and report. This aspect was not taken forward by the local administration but CRC has been able to carry forward the concept of independent assessment with the support of JRCT & JRF.

³ Where official statistics did not tell the full picture survey-based data was also used.

Given our strategic interest in this work, CRC contributed to the Good Relations Indicator Review 2013/2014 both as members the various thematic advisory sub-groups, as well as by a formal written submission. CRC's submission agreed with the development of high level indicators, thereby enabling a review against strategic objectives, but stressed the importance of being very clear as to what outcome was being sought, and then setting out how this would be achieved. CRC's formal response drew attention to the Outcomes-Based Accountability model highlighting it as a useful process for devising outcomes which would be useful for further consideration by the department.

In addition to this CRC drew attention to the ambiguity of the consultation i.e. it appeared the intention was to measure proposals put forward in Together: Building a United Community, yet this would prove difficult given the lack of published detail on programme activity under each of the priorities.

However, if the intention was a wider measuring of good relations i.e. additional to TBUC, then CRC was of the strong view that the department, and consequently the indicators must then address how other elements of peace building work would be monitored and presented. CRC concluded that a TBUC *only* approach would be restrictive and would result in an incomplete picture on the health of good relations in our society, and CRC recommended comprehensive monitoring that included a broad range of programme activity such as schemes and projects from across the Executive that are outside the TBUC sphere e.g. DE's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy and its corresponding Enhancement Scheme, as well as making efforts to include *all* peace-building programmes.

CRC made a number of general recommendations during the consultation period. Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 CRC CURRENT ACTIVITIES

DEVELOPMENT and SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

1. Decade of Commemorations - A major focus for the CRC's work in recent years has been on supporting new ways to engage with commemoration to ensure that our divided past does not undermine our ability to build a shared future. The Decade of Commemorations project was established in 2011/2012 in collaboration with the Heritage Lottery Fund. Through the project key principles for remembering centenaries in the public space were developed and these were widely disseminated to government, agencies, councils, culture, heritage and interested groups. Council particularly welcomed the fact that the DCAL Minister, Caral Ni Chuilin embraced these principles on behalf of the Executive. A ten week Lecture series on Remembering the Future, commemorating the Decade 1912-22, was organised by CRC and the Heritage Lottery Fund and launched in March 2012. Since then CRC and HLF have hosted regular meetings/events of agencies/organisations working on these issues, including a 'Remembering 1916' Conference (November 2013); CRC has attended a number of commemorative events for example Cross of Sacrifice of the Commonwealth Graves (laying of foundation stone and dedication in Glasnevin Cemetery), and is involved with the WW1 Commemoration (NI) Committee. Furthermore, CRC & HLF host the 'Commemorations Roundtable'. In addition to this engagement activity a number of resources have been gathered and made available on the web-site including 'Reflections on Remembering the Future Conference' (2012), a 'Good Practice Toolkit (2013), and 'Funding Advice' note for funders (2011/12). These publications can be located at <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/programmes/marking-anniversaries/>

2. Other support for policy development

CRC provides advice and a hub for the exchange of learning and best practice. The engagement between policy, practice and reflective evaluation remains critical to CRC and CRC uses this knowledge to influence the thinking, action and strategic approach of stakeholders, decision makers and influencers. In order to support this aim CRC's policy programme has produced policy comment on a range of thematic areas including shared housing, shared space, cultural matters, education and interfaces. The organisation's policy comment is based on evidence and experience, and ultimately aims to influence the design of public policy that will deliver change and progress.

CRC works closely with interface community partners and other agencies in seeking local agreement to reduce the number of peace walls and we provide guidance about agency processes to address changes in interfaces. CRC also co-ordinates the Interface Community Partners (ICP) which provides a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between the various interface groups across Belfast. Its membership includes representatives from a range of statutory organisations e.g. Northern Ireland Housing Executive, PSNI, and the Department of Social Development. The ICP is aligned with the Inter-Agency Group (IAG) which is led and coordinated by the Department of Justice. In addition, CRC facilitates a 'Beyond Belfast' discourse with rural stakeholders thereby ensuring the issue of 'invisible' barriers is also given priority in policy development.

3. Research: In addition to funding research and the Peace Monitoring Report (detailed elsewhere in this briefing) twice yearly CRC produces a journal '*Shared Space*' which focuses on recent relevant community relations research commissioned by CRC or others. All previous editions of *Shared Space* can be found on CRC's web-site.
4. Learning and Development Events: CRC delivers a full programme of conferences, seminars and other events to encourage learning and best practice. This includes organising thematic events on issues such as faith-based activity, cultural celebrations, dealing with the legacy of the past, and identity based work. In addition to this CRC promotes and hosts an annual Community Relations Week each year. 2014's theme of "Finish the Job" included CRC's annual Policy Conference, as well as over 200 events (an increase on the 170 in the previous year) organised and attended by civic society. For the first time, all 26 district councils planned events, an indication of the improving levels of commitment and expertise within local government regarding peace-building and reconciliation, albeit that there is quite a diverse picture across the region.
5. New Media: Beyond conferences and events, CRC continues to promulgate best practice through its web-site and for more immediate issues, increasingly through the newer communication channels of Facebook and Twitter⁴.

A. GRANT ACTIVITIES

CRC is a regional funder of community relations work. Based on the current *draft* Annual Report for 2013-14 over £2M in grants were paid out by CRC with the support of OFMDFM. The Council has a variety of funding schemes each tailored to promote certain aspects of community relations:

1. Core Funding Grant Scheme: The Programme's annual budget (£1,345,650 - 2013/14) contributes towards the salary and running costs of organisations which are considered of strategic importance in promoting community relations work in Northern Ireland. The organisations and the nature of work which have previously been supported by the Core Funding Programme are publicised in the Council's annual report which is available at www.nicrc.org.uk. A total of 26 groups are currently in receipt of this support and examples of these include peace and reconciliation centres, those involved in mediation and conflict transformation, training, community arts, church based work on reconciliation themes and interface projects.
2. Community Relations and Cultural Diversity Grant Scheme: This is a fund of approximately £470,000 which helps community/voluntary groups throughout Northern Ireland to develop their capacity to engage in community relations work and to enhance the community relations potential of projects they undertake. It seeks:
 - to develop opportunities for groups to explore *their own cultures, beliefs and traditions*, thus increasing their capacity to develop relationships of trust with those of different traditions and values;

⁴ 3427 on Twitter/1007 Facebook.

- to develop opportunities for groups to extend their knowledge and understanding of others' cultures, beliefs, traditions; increasing their acceptance of and respect for diversity;
- to enable groups to challenge stereotypes of their own and other communities in order to acknowledge and address difference; to increase the ability and confidence of groups and organisations to identify and address those issues that divide them;
- to develop networks of communication, trust and co-operation between divided communities and to promote models of good practice for community relations work in Northern Ireland.

The scheme is aimed at locally based groups such as community development groups, cultural organisations, women's groups, church groups, tenants associations and other organisations and groups involved in community relations, reconciliation projects and cultural engagement. The maximum award payable for each grant is £10,000.

3. Research: This Scheme has an available budget of up to £50,000 per annum to undertake research into community relations issues. 2012/13's research focused on two thematic areas: 'What role do/could historical commemorations play in promoting good relations and providing an opportunity for inter-community dialogue?' and 'In what ways do changes in people's everyday behaviours help to create a new culture of accommodation?' As a result of these research calls CRC supported 'Earl Storey who produced *Moving Beyond the Pale - The Church and a Decade of Historic Commemorations*', and Dr Orna Young published *New media and young people in interface areas of Belfast*'. Copies of these research reports are available upon request.
4. Media Grant Scheme: This scheme assists with the development and dissemination of Community Relations resources via print, broadcast or other widely accessible media. The maximum budget available under this scheme is £40,000.
5. Publications Grant Scheme: This scheme aims to encourage the production and dissemination of publications that will contribute to greater understanding and better community relations in Northern Ireland. The maximum award payable for this grant is £5,000.

OTHER FUNDING SUPPORT

1. OFMdFM District Council Good Relations Programme: CRC has an officer who works full time on advising and supporting OFMdFM on the delivery of the District Council Good Relations Programmes. This Programme is currently being aligned with *Together: Building a United Community* and preparation is also underway for the structural changes to Councils arising from reform of local government due to be implemented in April 2015.

In its wider work, CRC is also preparing to support the new Councils. Establishing trust and confidence in the treatment of equality and good relations at district council level will be a very important aspect of the structural reform. It will also be an important part of this stage of the wider peace process.

2. **EU PEACE PROGRAMME:** CRC has delivered EU funding since 1995 under Peace I, Peace II, Peace II extension, and Peace III (the latter in collaboration with Pobal until December 2013). Under the Peace III Programme, the Consortium was contracted to support SEUPB in the delivery of Measure 1.1 with District Councils – Building positive relations at the local level; and to directly implement Measure 1.2 – Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past.
3. **INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND:** In 2013-14 CRC delivered £1.6M on behalf of the International Fund for Ireland through the 'Community Bridges Programme' and the 'Peace Walls Programme' on behalf of the Fund. The 'Peace Walls Programme' continues but is now directly administered by the Secretariat of the International Fund for Ireland. The 'Community Bridges Programme' was designed by CRC to build on the community relations, reconciliation and cross-border ethos of the Fund with an emphasis on promoting the capacity of communities to address issues of difference and division. The Programme supported projects with the potential to make a significant contribution to reconciliation and the emergence of a shared and peaceful future. As it begins to curtail its funding operations in the region, the International Fund for Ireland closed this programme in 2013 along with others.

Appendix 2
CRC's submission to OFMDFM's Good Relations Indicator Consultation –
Recommendations Extract.

Indicators must act as a key stimulus for further change and should inform how much is being done and how well it is being done i.e. is society better off? CRC made the following recommendations:

- Research Forum: a research forum should be established and used to identify gaps in the available data and advise on further research needed to create a coherent view of what is happening regarding peace-building (an expansion of the advisory panel).
- Interpretation: peace building is unpredictable and often experiences unexpected set-backs. Consequently it is important to capture the various realities of success so as not to discourage innovation and learning. It is for this reason the interpretation of data is such a critical aspect of monitoring peace as it can provide a wider perspective on how society is benefitting from peace-building activity e.g. impact of symbolic events. If wider interpretation of the data does not occur the framework could end up as a limited compendium of statistics (albeit useful but not as beneficial as it could be). Part of this interpretation would involve tasking each department to provide a yearly analyse of the impact of the work carried out or supported by them, either under TBUC or other programme activity?
- Addressing gaps: Currently the indicators appear to have a regional output. This is useful for a broad sense of progress, but another useful addition would be a geographical breakdown of progress under the various outcomes. The categorisation of data in this format would support local interventions, as well as assisting policy development, particularly for district councils. It is important to note that not all areas experience good relations in the same way, and it is important to be able to carry out comparative analysis and lesson learning within and between different geographies – this could support targeted good relations work on a range of thematic areas e.g. housing, regeneration, education, cultural diversity etc.
- Together Building a United Community Remit. However, if the proposed Good Relations Framework is to be guided by TBUC actions then the following should take place (a) an essential purpose of the good relations indicators is that they map achievements, change and impact. It is therefore necessary that officials devise a framework that charts trend lines across various indicators/outcomes; (b) review the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for *each* of the TBUC actions and replicate/align with a corresponding indicator; (c) engage with the various design teams and delivery bodies to devise data collection methods that will accumulate both quantitative and qualitative data; (d) as programmes develop OFMDFM should develop time series evaluation frameworks – it is important to measure the outcomes for participants within a scaled timeframe.
- CRC recommended further exploration regarding the measurement of attitudinal change across specific TBUC interventions – this additional data would bring added value to quantitative data.
- Statistical data, research and information from evaluations should be considered collectively – a cooperative approach would provide a valuable overview of progress and support engagement on next steps between departments and strategic partners.

Community Relations Council correspondence

Community Relations Council



Jl/HS/CEO-CRC-OFMdf/O'Hanlon1012-14(CofComm)

10 December 2014

Ms Kathy O'Hanlon
 Clerk to the Committee
 OFMdfM
 Parliament Buildings
 Stormont
 BELFAST
 BT4 3XX

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for your letter of 4th December. I am responding in relation to the information requested on funding given to the Leadership in a Diverse Society project. The project was awarded £2,000 for a cultural diversity training programme but did not spend the full amount. The group received a first payment of £1,000 on 1st March 2012. A subsequent payment of £62.93 was made on 22nd June following final verification of actual expenditure.

Please feel welcome to contact me if you require further information in relation to this grant.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline Irwin
 Chief Executive



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Chief Executive: Jackie Irwin (Company Reg No: 11 04106)
 Accepted as a charity by the Charity Commission (Charity No: 11 04106)



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Ms Jacqueline Irwin
Chief Executive
Community Relations Council
6 Murray St
Belfast
BT1 6DN

4 December 2014

Dear Jacqueline,

The Committee would like to thank Peter, Sylvia, Joe and yourself for your briefing as part of the Committee's Inquiry into Building a United Community, which Members found very useful.

During the briefing you agreed to provide further information on funding for the Leadership in a Diverse Society project.

A response by 10 January 2015 would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee

Co-operation Ireland



Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
Inquiry into Building a United Community
Response by Co-operation Ireland

Date Submitted: October 9, 2014



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Co-operation Ireland welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into Building a United Community currently being undertaken by the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. Co-operation Ireland works to advance mutual understanding and respect through practical co-operation. We consistently promote peace-building across the community divide, providing innovative programmes which create opportunities for people to meet, share experiences and collaborate for mutual benefit with those of a different religion or tradition. Our programmes are focussed on:
- Increasing dialogue and understanding and co-operation at a community level
 - Increasing opportunities for disengaged communities to participate in cross community programme activity
 - Increasing the participation of young people in activities which develop their leadership potential and skills for living in a shared society

2. Good Practice in Addressing Community Division

- 2.1 Co-operation Ireland uses a range of methodologies and approaches in our work, tailored to the aims and circumstances of participating individuals and groups. Many of our programmes are based on the contact theory model, with the promotion of managed interaction and mutually beneficial co-operation at the core of our approach. Previous research and our own evaluations highlight the positive impact of appropriately structured contact on inter-group relations. In particular, contact has been shown to reduce anxiety about inter-group engagement, increase understanding, and address prejudice and stereotypes. Recent research in Northern Ireland has demonstrated that everyday interaction in mixed communities significantly impacts on inter-group attitudes, with people living in mixed areas more willing to engage in cross-community activity, feeling closer to the other community, and more likely to perceive relations between the communities as fair.¹ In contrast, people living in segregated areas had fewer friends from the other community, were more anxious about cross-community contact, and were more likely to perceive their community as threatened by the other. The research also found that superficial neighbourhood contact led to reduced anxiety about meeting members of the other community and that contact led, over time, to reduced prejudice. 'Indirect contact', where people are aware of others in their community involved in inter-group contact, was also seen to have a beneficial impact by changing norms about acceptable cross-community interaction and leading, over time, to direct contact.
- 2.2 Our programmes draw on a range of themes and vehicles for building relationships and supporting attitudinal change. Arts-based/creative approaches have proved particularly effective in facilitating exploration and discussion of difficult issues by encouraging perspective taking, deepening understanding, and promoting empathy. Practical community and active citizenship based activities have also been effective in encouraging recognition of shared interests and developing skills for negotiation and collaboration.
- 2.3 Addressing community divisions requires sustained, long-term interventions. Limited, intermittent programmes are not capable of bringing about meaningful change in attitudes and behaviour as they do not provide the necessary conditions for building capacity and developing sustainable relations. Effective programmes need to be designed around people's needs and priorities, securing their buy-in by demonstrating relevance to their current circumstances. Crucially, programmes need to have the flexibility to adapt to events and emerging issues and cannot be implemented in a rigid, unresponsive manner. The results of interventions can, given the nature and scale of the issues to be addressed, be uncertain. While effective programmes will be based on existing good practice and practitioner expertise, they also require openness to innovation and risk-taking.

¹ Hewstone et al, 2008. Can Contact Promote Better Relations? Evidence from Mixed and Segregated Areas of Belfast. Belfast: OFMDFM.



3. Meaning of Good Relations

- 3.1 The provision of an agreed definition of good relations will be a crucial component of developing a supportive policy framework for the building of a united community. If properly constructed and implemented, an agreed definition can become a driver of change in policy and practice across the public sector and beyond. While we recognise there will be difficulties in finding a formula which can secure broad acceptance, we suggest the following should be key components of any vision for the future of community relations in Northern Ireland:
- Good relations should be understood as a **dynamic, transformative concept**. A shared and cohesive society is based on more than mere tolerance for difference and a settling for separate but equal communal groupings. Instead, the fostering of good relations implies an active repairing of inter-community relationships, a rebuilding of trust, and an overcoming of fears and suspicions. Crucially, it requires a progressive dismantling of the institutions and practices which sustain segregation and sectarianism.
 - Related to this, a society characterised by good relations is one which has developed the **capacity to contain and constructively resolve conflict**. The theorist Johan Galtung has described how the development of such a 'peace culture', which legitimises creative, non-violent handling of conflict, is critical to the building of a sustainable peace.² In a Northern Ireland context, this requires acceptance of the legitimacy of opposing points of view and a movement away from zero-sum calculations to recognise that honourable compromise is possible.
 - **Positive relationships** between individuals from different community and cultural backgrounds, based on meaningful engagement, should be at the core of our conception of good relations. In culturally diverse societies, cross-cutting ties deepen mutual respect and understanding, foster recognition of common interests, and increase awareness of interdependence. While respecting individual freedom of choice, interaction and integration should be the norm in a shared society.
 - Good relations are based on, and require, a foundation of **social and economic equality**. Attempts to set up a false opposition between good relations and equality must be avoided.
 - The concept of good relations is future-orientated, entailing a **shared vision** for society. While communities can hold divergent long-term aspirations and different narratives of the past, there is recognition of common goals and priorities. There is also agreement on basic principles and values which will govern inter-community relations, regardless of any possible future political and constitutional changes.
 - Good relations also imply a **society at ease with itself**, where all share an equal sense of security and belonging. Regardless of background, people feel they have a stake in society and have confidence that their cultural identities are recognised and held in esteem.
- 3.2 The work of Brandon Hamber and Gráinne Kelly could provide a useful starting point in framing an agreed definition of good relations. While focused on reconciliation, their model remains very relevant to conceptualising community relations in a society emerging from conflict. In addition, valuable insights are available from the experience in Great Britain of developing community cohesion in the context of cultural and ethnic diversity. Key elements in GB definitions include shared aspirations and recognition of commonality, respect and appreciation for diversity, positive relationships and meaningful interaction, equality, a sense of belonging, and a sense of mutual commitments.³

² Galtung, Johan, 1996. *Peace by Peaceful Means*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute.

³ For example, see Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007. *Guidance on the Duty to Promote Community Cohesion*.



4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Building a united community in Northern Ireland will require sustained commitment and partnership between government, civil society, and local communities. Given the scale of the challenges to be overcome, progress will be measured in decades not years. The key role of government in this process will be to provide strategic and consistent leadership – to direct, coordinate and resource the efforts of individuals, groups, and organisations on the ground. Publication of Together Building a United Community is a welcome first step towards development of an agreed good relations policy. However, TBUC would be greatly strengthened by incorporating the strategy into an extended 10 to 15 year road map for change which can guide actions over the longer-term and provide milestones against which progress can be assessed. This would include long-term goals and targets for the promotion of integration, building of relationships, and addressing intolerance and prejudice.

Recommendation 1: The Executive should develop a long-term road map for the building of a united community in Northern Ireland, with measurable goals, targets, and milestones for the promotion of integration, building of relationships, and addressing intolerance and prejudice.

- 4.2 The building of a united community can only be progressed with a supportive policy and institutional framework for good relations. While work is currently on-going to implement the infrastructural changes proposed under TBUC, the provision of an agreed definition of good relations will be essential to guide and transform policy and practice across the public sector and beyond. This would give substance to the proposed introduction under TBUC of an enhanced good relations section for Equality Impact Assessment in all policy areas across government. In addition, an agreed definition of good relations would inform assessment of progress towards a united community and assist target development.

Recommendation 2: The Executive should, following public consultation, develop an agreed definition of good relations to guide policy and practice across the public and private sector and inform monitoring of progress towards the building of a united community.

- 4.3 While public policy and practice have key roles to play in creating a momentum towards a united community, real change can only come about through a shift in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups across Northern Ireland. Initiatives, including those proposed under TBUC, which address divisions and provide opportunities for greater cross-community interaction will be central to this process. However, on the ground change will also require the development of a supportive institutional structure for good relations at local level. There is a need to build capacity for communities to network and work together around common issues, raising confidence and developing skills to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and engage positively with diversity. This will require the nurturing of the next generation of community leaders and equipping them with the skills and perspectives necessary for working with others in a shared society. In particular, there is a need to support the development of alternative leadership structures in areas still under paramilitary influence.

Recommendation 3: The Executive and other funders should develop and resource sustainable, flexible, and innovative initiatives to build capacity at community-level for working together in a shared society, including supporting development of the next generation of community leaders.

Department for Employment and Learning



Department for
**Employment
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Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA
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Of the First Minister and
Deputy First Minister
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Our Ref: COR/394/14

| October 2014

Dear Mr Nesbitt,

Thank you for your letter of 7 July seeking evidence for the Committee's inquiry into the Good Relations Strategy "*Together: Building a United Community.*"

As you know this Department is leading on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive regarding the development and delivery of the United Youth Programme which is one of the flagship interventions within the Strategy. Our experience of the co-design process which we inherited from OFMDFM but developed further may be of interest to the Inquiry, particularly with regard to examining the role of communities in policy and decision making in relation to community integration.

There is no standard co-design approach but in essence it means involving end users and programme deliverers in every stage of the policy/programme design process. Not only does this help to identify what works but it secures buy-in from key stakeholders from the outset.

There has been huge interest in the United Youth Programme and much enthusiasm for the development approach we have adopted which offers freedom for potential providers, including voluntary and community groups to present their ideas on what works and why it works. This is essentially an open approach in which all interested parties are engaged in all parts of the process from beginning to end. In other TBUC areas which are highly sensitive, e.g. removal of interface barriers and the development of shared spaces and services, an open approach probably offers the best chance of securing community buy-in to any proposals for change.



people:skills:jobs:

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

FIONA STANLEY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

people:skills:jobs:

Department for Regional Development

CENTRAL MANAGEMENT BRANCH



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Your reference: DALO/D65/2014
Our reference: SUB769/2014

02 October 2014

Dear Mr Nesbitt

Inquiry into Building a United Community

Please find attached written evidence to the above Inquiry for the Department for Regional Development.

The Written Evidence sets out the Department's responsibilities regarding good relations, shared space and services.

This letter and enclosure is fully disclosable under FOI. This letter has been copied to the Clerk of the Regional Development Committee.

Yours sincerely

ALAN DOHERTY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Inquiry into Building a United Community

Written evidence submitted by the Department for Regional Development (DRD).

Overview of Department

DRD and its Arm’s Length Bodies maintain and develop the infrastructure for Northern Ireland. This includes water and sewerage networks, roads and footpaths, and public transport services.

The range of functions carried out by DRD include:

- regional strategic planning and development policy;
- transport strategy and sustainable transport policy;
- provision and maintenance of all public roads;
- public transport policy and performance;
- certain policy and support work for air and sea ports; and
- policy on water and sewerage services and management of the Department’s share-holder interest in Northern Ireland Water (NIW).

Written evidence to address the Terms of Reference

1	<p>Explore perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an examination of theory and practice with regard to good relations, shared space and shared services.
1.1	<p>A Section 75 Equality of Opportunity Screening Analysis Form is required to be completed on all new departmental policies and strategies to determine if an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is required. One of the key considerations when completing the Screening Analysis Form, is the impact that the policy or strategy might have on good relations and any of the Section 75 groups. All finalised screening forms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published on the Department’s website; and • Quarterly updates of completed forms are issued to over 100 voluntary and charitable organisations, on the Department’s mailing list, who we consider to be ‘Section-75 stakeholders’.

Due consideration is given to any feedback made by the organisations following sight of the screening forms.

Strategies that have required a full EQIA and have been considered to have had an impact on good relations are detailed below.

- **The New Approach to Regional Transportation**

The replacement for the Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-12, The New Approach to Regional Transportation, seeks to support the Executive's commitment to Building a Strong and Shared Community through better designed transportation networks which bring communities together and ensure equitable access to key services and facilities, particularly by sustainable modes. A key element of the vision for transportation set out in this New Approach is to have a transportation system which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life.

All potential transport interventions submitted for consideration under the Departmental Spending Plan for 2016-19 were priority assessed on their compatibility with a wide number of criteria, including the potential to build better relations within and between communities through promoting equitable access to key services and facilities, including tourist, cultural and recreational sites.

- **Regional Development Strategy (RDS) (2035)**

The EQIA carried out on the revised RDS identified several aspects of the strategy as potentially impacting positively on good relations.

There are key positive impacts within the guidance on Society, Economy, Londonderry and Belfast. This is due to the involvement in the strategy of promotion of community integration in order to share services and facilities. Regional Guidance 6 is called 'Strengthen Community Cohesion'. Within it, communities are encouraged to work together in a co-ordinated approach towards urban renewal and regeneration and to achieve balanced communities. In addition a better integrated transport system can help to promote a stronger more cohesive community.

- **Rapid Transit**

DRD carried out an EQIA of the proposals for Belfast Rapid Transit.

Following public consultation, the Final EQIA was published in April 2012.

The EQIA concluded that the Belfast Rapid Transit proposals are likely to be positive for good relations.

This will be due to Belfast Rapid Transit allowing for better access to and between East Belfast, West Belfast, Titanic Quarter and the city centre for everyone. It will provide frequent cross-city services linking East and West Belfast. This has the potential to reduce barriers between communities, promote greater integration and build a more cohesive city.

- **Draft Bicycle Strategy**

The DRD Draft Bicycle Strategy sets out a vision “to establish a cycling culture in Northern Ireland to give people the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle, and where all road users can safely share space with mutual respect”.

A key element of the strategy is a focus on public spaces and creating a desire to spend time in public spaces. It is about improving Northern Ireland for everyone, including those with no particular desire to get on a bicycle.

- **Flags and Emblems**

With regard to flags and emblems, DRD has signed up to the Joint Protocol on the display of flags in public areas that was launched in 2005. The protocol aimed, with support from communities and their representatives, to address the removal of flags from arterial routes, town centres and from particular locations, such as interface areas or near schools, hospitals and churches.

The protocol recognises that an effective resolution to the issues surrounding flags and emblems is more likely to be achieved through co-operation with local communities. It requires widespread community

support, for the partnership established by the Protocol to be effective.

DRD is generally not perceived to be the lead agency under the current protocol. In most cases, other parties such as the PSNI, OFMDFM, NIHE, or DSD are better placed to assume the lead role in arranging for the removal of flags and emblems through their contacts with community groups, local elected representatives and other relevant contacts.

When inter agency consultation is required by the protocol, the Agency that is in the most effective position to consult, negotiate or resolve the situation will take the lead, with the PSNI assuming this responsibility, where appropriate. The PSNI also take the lead where the display of any flags or emblems is causing tension, or having a detrimental effect on the quality of life in a community.

Under the protocol, Transport NI, when called upon by the lead agency, provides the access equipment and resources to remove unwanted flags, once agreement has been reached on their removal, particularly if their location proves to be inaccessible to members of the community concerned. In doing so, as a responsible employer, Transport NI has to take account of the possible risk to their workers in removing flags and emblems.

With regard to the erection of traditional arches, under Article 73 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 the Department has the discretionary power to issue consents in respect of the erection of traditional arches.

DRD's primary consideration in determining whether consent should be issued is the safety of all road users. However, it does recognise the differing views that members of the public will have on this issue, depending on their political/religious background.

2.	<p>Consideration of best practice, both locally and internationally, in bringing divided communities together, and in developing shared space and shared services.</p>
	<p>Draft Bicycle Strategy</p> <p>The afore mentioned DRD Draft Bicycle Strategy sets out a vision “to establish a cycling culture in Northern Ireland to give people the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle, and where all road users can safely share space with mutual respect”.</p> <p>A key element of the strategy is a focus on public spaces and creating a desire to spend time in public spaces. It is about improving Northern Ireland for everyone, including those with no particular desire to get on a bicycle.</p>
3.	<p>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 might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers to be removed.
	<p>As detailed in feedback on the Flags and Emblems protocol effective resolution is more likely to be achieved thorough co-operation with local communities as it requires widespread community support for the protocol to be effective.</p>
4.	<p>Examining the role of communities in policy and decision making in relation to community integration and particularly, the removal of interface barriers.</p>
	<p>Liaison with communities and representatives plays an important part in the operation of the flag protocol. The protocol recognises that an effective resolution to the issues surrounding flags and emblems is more likely to be achieved thorough co-operation with local communities. It requires widespread community support for the partnership established by the protocol to be effective.</p>

5.	Consideration of the effectiveness of the Good Relations Indicators in monitoring and measuring the progress of government interventions.
	<p>None of the Good Relations Indicators relate to DRD's specific functions.</p> <p>Regional Development Strategy</p> <p>The RDS 2035 annual Progress Report provides information on the 'provision' of shared space, how the local councils will involve the community in local planning, provision of mixed housing and community engagement. However, the indicators used by OFMDFM seek to measure 'use' of shared space rather than provision.</p> <p>These indicators measure what people think and will therefore require a different method of measurement.</p>
6.	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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.
	<p>Any policies/strategies developed to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance to unite communities are more likely to be achieved through co-operation with local communities and require widespread community support.</p>

Department for Social Development



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22nd October 2014

Mike Nesbitt, MLA
Chairman
Committee for the Office of the First and deputy First Minister

Dear Mr Nesbitt

Please see attached written evidence from the Department for Social Development in relation to the Committee's Inquiry into "Together: Building a United Community".

If you require any further detail or information from the Department, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

DAVE WALL

Director of Communication Policy and Strategic Support

Summary

1. The Department for Social Development (DSD) has strategic responsibility for urban regeneration, community and voluntary sector development, social legislation, housing, social security benefits, pensions and child support.
2. DSD's vision statement "helping people change their lives for the better" improving the quality of life and well being of our society aligns with the Programme for Government aim of "a shared and better future for all". Tackling sectarianism and promoting good relations is a core element in much of the work of the Department, including our town and city centre regeneration initiatives and our work in housing to support the development of shared neighbourhoods.
3. DSD considers there is evidence of good practice both within the Department (as above) and across the wider Executive, but that progress has been hampered by a number factors, including differential community capacities, the often sporadic allocation of funding for good relations initiatives and the lack of agreed outcomes measures and indicators of success.
4. DSD also considers that progress will continue to be hampered unless our way forward is framed with reference to the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing policy and operational environment. In this context, Local Government Reform (LGR) will present a significant opportunity given that this will transfer operational responsibility for many of the levers to address poverty and disadvantage to the new councils. There should therefore be a renewed focus on the promotion of good relations and tackling sectarianism on the ground.
5. Reflecting these and other views, a summary of the Department's recommendations is as follows:
 - The next Programme for Government should set a clear direction of travel for good relations work across Government;

- We must ensure that funding is targeted at specific outcomes and rigorously monitored to ensure that outcomes are achieved, otherwise we risk continuing to focus on processes to the detriment of delivering real and sustainable change on the ground;
- Departments must commit formally to working together to deliver wider good relations outcomes. There is a need for a coordinated approach to tackle sectarianism, deprivation and racism;
- Section 75 could be strengthened with the requirement to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, and racial group given the same focus by public authorities as the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- There needs to be a shift from a 'one size fits all model' of policy development and funding distribution, to a model which recognises and aims to address the often differential needs of our two main communities.
- Developing a cross departmental policy agenda that seeks to address paramilitarism and the criminality associated with it needs to be a key priority; and
- We need to recognise and utilise the potential of Community Planning to deliver real and lasting change in our most deprived areas.

Response

1. DSD's vision statement "helping people change their lives for the better" improving the quality of life and well being of our society aligns with the Programme for Government aim of "a shared and better future for all". We aim to provide access to decent housing, assist the vulnerable through the welfare system, focus support in the most disadvantaged areas and to bring divided communities together by creating urban centres which are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to live, work and relax in peace.

Explore perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations

2. There is clear evidence of a direct relationship between poverty, disadvantage and segregated communities. This evidence strongly suggests that DSD and the wider Executive will have limited success in its efforts to tackle poverty unless such action also aims to address divisions and promote good relations between communities.
3. The Department recognises that deprivation and division cannot be addressed by government alone but that success is dependent on partnership working across sectors, within and across communities. The Department considers that this will not only ensure that we capitalise on the strengths and skills of communities and all partners but that we deliver initiatives that actually meet the specific and often differential needs of communities.
4. The Renewing Communities initiative (document appended) offers a potential model of good practice in this regard. For instance, this initiative recognised that the Protestant Community had less well developed capacity at community level than their Catholic counterparts and that this negatively impacted on the extent to which Protestant communities capitalised on opportunities offered through government funded programmes and services to tackle disadvantage. It was also highlighted that in terms of educational attainment, a crucial determinant of future life chances, Protestant boys in areas of deprivation consistently lagged behind all other groups.

5. A preliminary evaluation of the Renewing Communities initiative, alongside local anecdotal evidence, suggests that some good results were beginning to emerge. However, success was hampered by the short term nature of many of the projects delivered and, as consequence, many deprived Protestant communities still exhibit that lack of community capacity and continued high rates of educational underachievement. These are priority areas that need to be addressed in order to help these communities out of deprivation and poverty which will, in turn, begin to create the right environment for political stability and long term good relations not just across religious divides but across racial and ethnic divisions.
6. The long term consequences of a failure to address this disadvantage will have damaging consequences for the communities that are so affected. There is therefore an urgency in developing a policy response across government departments that recognises the particular problems of our poorest Protestant and Catholic neighbourhoods. Furthermore, a key element of this response must be to address the paramilitary activity and associated criminality that continues to blight our poorest communities.
7. Local Government Reform (LGR) is also pertinent here as councils will have the power to shape their responses to disadvantage and good relations according to the particular characteristics and needs of local communities. In doing so, LGR through community planning will have the added benefit of moving the focus from neighbourhood level. Currently individual communities shoulder a lot of the responsibility for progressing actions to promote good relations and tackling sectarianism. Community planning must refocus efforts to build good relations across the whole community within council areas with all statutory agencies being held accountable through the community planning process.

Good Practice

8. DSD's work on shared city centre and town centres offers some good examples of best practice. The primary aim of these initiatives is to improve the competitiveness of our towns and cities. However, they have also helped create

more attractive, welcoming and safe environments to be shared by all in recognition that shared space is key to building a united community.

9. Specific examples include:

- The regeneration of Laganside and Belfast City Centre shared neutral spaces;
- The Victoria Square Development; and
- The Peace Bridge in Derry~Londonderry (funded under Peace III).

10. Evidence of the success of these types of initiatives is illustrated through hosting of festivals, international events and increased footfalls in Belfast and Londonderry city centres.

11. Religion is still a key determinant of where people live with some 90% of Housing Executive estates being predominantly single identity. However, evidence, such as, the NI Life and Times Survey indicates that the overwhelming majority of people in NI would prefer to live in mixed neighbourhoods. DSD has taken a number of key steps in order to facilitate and support the development of shared housing, include the Housing Executive's work on shared neighbourhoods which has quietly but effectively begun a process of encouraging, supporting and delivering behaviours in some of our social housing estates that both address sectarianism and build attitudes consistent with good relations.

12. In recognition of the opportunities presented by Local Government Reform and Community Planning, the Department has developed an Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework. This Framework provides a clear policy direction to partners in central and local government and also in the voluntary and community sector in terms of supporting actions to contribute to the promotion of Good Relations.

13. The Framework has at its core the 'Department for Social Development's Corporate Plan 2011-2015' and reflects the strategic priorities therein. The policy

objectives and supporting actions in the Policy Framework reflect the Department's priority "To bring divided communities together by creating urban centres which are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to live, work and relax in peace".

14. Within the Framework, there are 3 policy objectives supporting actions to contribute towards the promotion of Good Relations, for example:

- *Policy objective 2 – To strengthen the competitiveness of our towns and cities* - has as one of its suggested actions – "supporting the development of shared and safely accessible commercial centres and development sites".
- *Policy objective 3 – To improve linkages between areas of need and areas of opportunity*- has as one of its suggested actions "Physical regeneration of interface areas, including environmental improvement, remodelling, securing the release of development sites and the agreed removal of interface barriers where this is safe, practicable and desirable".
- *Policy objective 4 – To develop more cohesive and engaged communities* has as one of its suggested actions – "Strengthening networks and cross-interface schemes to develop positive community responses to social, economic and environmental problems".

15. Looking forward to a post April 2015 context, Councils will be given a statutory duty to have due regard to guidance issued by the Department, including the Policy Framework. This together with Councils' obligations under Section 75 and the Community Planning duties should contribute to good relations considerations becoming an integral part of their work in Urban Regeneration and Community Development.

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.

16. Good Relations is about improving community cohesion and removing division across Northern Ireland. There are many challenges attached to this task, some of which have been exacerbated over the years by the role of government.
17. The pattern of residential segregation in NI means that the majority of deprived communities, including Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, are single identity. It could also be argued that government has encouraged these single identity areas to be insular as the primary focus of many of its programmes and projects has been on addressing the causes and consequences of poverty within communities to the expense of encouraging and supporting intercommunity working and tackling sectarianism.
18. Evidence from the recent Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Evaluation (not yet published) however does provide some useful evidence in relation to best practice in mixed community areas. For example, the evaluation showed that in times of civil unrest (even within those areas with the highest interface conflict) the NR partnership structure allowed individuals from across the divisions to continue to meet and engage with each other and discuss areas of common interest and community need.
19. Partnership working has also proved crucial to other areas of the department's work in interface areas including the NIHE's to work to support communities who wish to remove/reimage barriers.
20. It is however essential that our support for communities does not stop at removing images of sectarianism and violence but that we (government and other agencies) help communities tackle the actual violence itself. This cannot be achieved unless we recognise and address the continuing dominance of paramilitaries in our most deprived areas.

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 deliver the Executive’s commitment on removing interface barriers.

- Good relations work continues to be seen as disconnected from the work of departments; it is an ‘add on’ rather than something that is factored into every aspect of government policy and services. It is essential that good relations work across government is supported with a clear sense of direction of travel. This must be part of the next Programme for Government;
- We need to take a fresh look at the Good Relations field and associated funding delivery structures with more co-ordination and smarter partnerships. There is a need to be realistic about future spending constraints and what can be achieved with constrained and decreasing resources;
- Sporadic allocation of funding for good relations initiatives has contributed to a lack of strategic direction in terms of focus for activity and has made it extremely difficult to access the actual impacts of such initiatives. These challenges have been exacerbated by the lack of agreed indicators/ measures for success and our lack of focus on monitoring/tracking outcomes. In moving forward we must ensure that funding is targeted at specific outcomes and rigorously monitored to ensure that outcomes are achieved, otherwise we risk continuing to focus on processes to the detriment of delivering real and sustainable change on the ground;
- Government Departments have a responsibility to promote good relations through their policy interventions. Departments must work together to deliver wider good relations outcomes. Central funding should be delivered in a way that is coordinated with and enhances mainstream programmes – such as city centre development and shared housing. There needs to be a recognition of big drivers, such as, housing and education and better “joined up” thinking to maximise the potential of smaller funding initiatives to deliver real and sustainable outcomes;

- Section 75 could be made stronger with the requirement to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, and racial group given the same focus by public authorities as the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- We must refocus efforts to build good relations across the whole community within council areas with all the statutory agencies being held accountable through the community planning process; and
- Paramilitary activity and associated criminality continues to blight our poorest communities. Developing a cross departmental policy agenda that seeks tackle these issues must be a key priority.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Pauline Keegan
Director of Rural Development

7 November 2014

Clerk to the Committee
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

Inquiry Into Building a United Community

Introduction

1. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has not been allocated any funding from the Building a United Community Strategy, nor is it one of the lead departments taking forward headline actions. However the Department, through its Rural Development Division, do report on actions which support the strategy under the Rural Community Development Support Service which is delivered through the local Rural Support Network structure. The Department does not wish to submit oral evidence.

Evidence

2. Part of the Department's commitment to improving community relations and building a united and shared society, as outlined in the strategy, is reflected in the work of the Rural Support Networks (RSNs) which deliver the rural community development support service funded through DARD's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) programme. Contracts for the delivery of a rural community development support service have been in place with 8 lead service providers since April 2012. As part of these contracts the Networks are required to promote and support measures to alleviate poverty, social isolation and inequality; and improve community relations in rural areas through community engagement. In addition, in 4 contract areas there is a specific requirement to deliver a community development service for the Unionist population living in rural border areas through actions such as: improving inter-community and cross-community relationships by, for example, addressing misconceptions, building trust, creating space for dialogue and discussion. From November 2013 the Department has also provided funding through the DSD Thematic Regional Support for Faith Based Engagement programme for two Project Officers to work in rural areas promoting and supporting the involvement of churches and faith based volunteers in social action projects to alleviate poverty, social exclusion and to improve the quality of life for people living in disadvantaged rural areas.
3. Building good relations within and between communities is at the core of work of the Rural Support Networks. Community Development is the ethos of these organisations and they believe that good solid community development cannot be built without underlying good relations between groups and communities. The work that the RSN's undertake in relation to supporting individuals and groups to avail of Rural Development Programme (RDP) funding and the other TRPSI programmes and projects has contributed to community confidence and improvements in the lives of those living in the rural communities. The thematic events that they organise regularly to review the impact of social policy changes are well attended by the community groups from all areas and present opportunities to develop inter community relationships.
4. The Department are members of the 'Beyond Belfast' group which represents the views of rural stakeholders in relation to good relations. As part of Community Relations Week in June 2014 a Conference was held with the theme of "Together Building a United Community – Looking Beyond Belfast". The key messages that came from the conference and which we support in relation to this inquiry were:

- The Strategy has had little obvious impact on “rural” to date with the perception in the rural areas is that the programme is too urban centred.
- Strict adherence to rural proofing of all programmes/projects being funded under this strategy needs to be undertaken.
- “Good Relations” needs an agreed accepted definition with a consistent set of standards and a code of practice for good relations funding.
- Good Relations needs to be central to the Community Plans being drawn up by local authorities.

5. I apologise for the delay in getting this information to you.

Pauline Keegan
Director of Rural Development

(90) 524586
E-mail: pauline.keegan@dardni.gov.uk

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



Department of
**Culture, Arts
and Leisure**

AN ROINN
**Cultúr, Ealaíon
agus Fóilíochta**

MÁNNYSTRIE O
**Fowkgates, Airts
an Aisédom**

Our ref: COR/214/2014

26 September 2014

Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA
Chairperson
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Dear Mr Nesbitt,

Re: OFMDFM COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY

In response to your letter of July 2014 regarding the OFMDFM Committee Inquiry into Building a United Community, please see attached the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL's) response which provides an overview of current and planned projects which demonstrate how the promotion of good relations is an important priority for DCAL, and provides important linkage with the Department's work on promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion.

Yours sincerely

 **Pat Wilson**
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Enc



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Annex A

Written Evidence to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)

Introduction

1. The promotion of good relations is an important priority for DCAL, and links with the Department's work on promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion. DCAL continues to be involved in a wide range of projects which aim to produce positive good relations outcomes. This paper sets out some examples of good practice; current projects the Department is taking forward to address division and feedback it has received on engaging with communities on good relations work.

Bringing Divided Communities Together

2. DCAL has taken forward a diverse array of projects which have contributed to the good relations agenda, for example:
3. Midnight Street Soccer (MSS) is a community football project for young people aged 12 – 17, which was originally developed by the North Belfast Play Forum in 2004. The programme was initially established to prevent sectarian youth led violence in flashpoint areas of North Belfast. The success of MSS has seen it expanded into a regional programme funded by Sport NI, with locations throughout the north of Ireland. In 2012-13 the target of 500 participants was greatly exceeded with 771 young people engaging with the project. These young people participated in seven sessions per venue, totalling 70 sessions. This was followed by a session with 44 teams, made up of 372 people from across the north of Ireland taking part in a Midnight Street Soccer finals event in Magherafelt. MSS was warmly received by its participants, 98 per cent of whom said that they enjoyed taking part in the programme. Feedback from the organisers and facilitators was also very positive.
4. Beyond Skin is an organisation which uses music, arts and media to assist in the building and development of cultural relations in the north, within the overall aim of addressing issues of racism and sectarianism. The Arts Council funds 'World Music Interactive Education Programme', a project delivering high energy World Music & Dance participative events across the north and aiming to promote inter-cultural dialogue & global arts. Facilitated by musicians representing various cultures, the programme uses music and dances as a tool to encourage engagement of new audiences especially those in disadvantaged and rural areas.
5. The Droichead Project, which was part of the City of Culture events programme, was a cross community project which brought together communities to ensure the Fleadh, Tattoo and Pan Celtic Festival showcased both traditional Irish and Ulster-Scots marching bands culture. It was a key part of the efforts to ensure the City of Culture was truly inclusive. Careful, professionally structured consultation with Fleadh participants, organisers and the Londonderry Bands Forum, individual bands and band members resulted in agreement to participate in the Fleadh and for the first time in its history, the event included marching band performances. The project arranged for a PSNI band to perform for the first time in uniform in public during the Fleadh. Participants recorded that their perceptions changed radically as a result of the collaboration. As a result of partnerships established, marching bands performed as part of the Pan Celtic Festival in April 2014 in Waterloo Place for the first time in 50 years (Pan Celtic was supported by DCAL as part of the City of Culture legacy actions). A short film is in development to promote the good relations outcomes to marching bands and traditional Irish music communities across the north of Ireland.
6. The ArtsEkta 'Belfast Suitcases' project brought together a group of the City's younger and older citizens to explore and celebrate the social diversity of the new multi-cultural Belfast. The main groups involved in the project were older people from the settled Indian Community in Belfast and women from the Islamic community. The project helped to address concerns

around isolation and increasing perceptions and fear of racist attitudes. The project further developed to include groups working with cross-community groups and the LGBT community.

7. The 3 year Cultural Awareness Strategy seeks to address historical tensions between the two main communities in the north of Ireland in the context of a shared and better future and to develop greater tolerance, understanding and respect for different cultural traditions. The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland and the Ulster Council of the Gaelic Athletic Association have been implementing projects which attempt to reduce distrust and misunderstanding under the Cultural Awareness Strategy since July 2012. In 2013/14 they have each exceeded their targets of delivering four events to organisations/groups within the community they are linked to and eight events to organisations/groups within the community linked to the other cultural tradition, which were open to persons from all Section 75 categories.
8. These examples illustrate the power of art, sport and culture to promote and bring about positive changes in relationships between divided groups and communities. A further recent example is that of boxer Carl Frampton who has attracted huge support across the communities of the north of Ireland and highlights clearly the power of sport to positively transform attitudes and behaviours.

Addressing Division

9. DCAL is currently taking forward the development of further projects to promote good relations, most notably through the delivery of a cross community youth sports programme under the Together: Building a United Community Strategy.
10. The pilot project for this programme will be delivered in 2014/15 and will seek to proactively and innovatively tackle good relations issues through the medium of sport. This project will focus on 11-16 years olds from all sections of the community but will specifically seek to attract female, ethnic minority and disabled participants to the programme. Sport can provide our young people with the values, discipline, resilience and confidence to succeed on and off the pitch and indeed to become ambassadors in their age groups and in their communities. The pilot project and subsequent wider cross community youth sports programme will seek to use sport to deliver a meaningful and sustained impact on good relations.
11. The power of sport to promote good relations will be explored further in a piece of research Sport NI has recently commissioned from University of Ulster to identify good practice in the area of 'Sport and Good Relations'. It is anticipated that this research will improve knowledge, understanding and leadership in relation to the promotion of good relations within sport by providing governing bodies and sports organisations with the necessary training, support and resources required to actively promote equality and good relations and address barriers to these within their organisations.
12. The Wheelworks ArtCart will be upgraded to a unique, fully accessible mobile arts vehicle which has the latest software and digital technology. ArtCart brings innovative programmes to isolated and rural groups who would otherwise never encounter such inspiring and stimulating digital arts technologies, skilled tutors and interesting programmes. Its mission is to bring arts opportunities to Section 75 groups so almost all the young people it targets experience some element of disadvantage whether it be poverty, discrimination, homophobic bullying or life traumas. The ArtCart develops young people's skills through the delivery of diverse activity while addressing important issues such as diversity, acceptance, inclusion, civic responsibility and respect. Its programmes evolve to meet the needs and demands of all potential participants, such as the homeless, the travelling community and asylum seekers. ArtCart will continue to not only deliver services to single identity communities, but delivers cross-community/inter-community work in rural, urban and interface areas.
13. Tapestry of Colours Online Educational resource was designed to highlight the complexity of inter-culturalism issues and the fusion of cultures emerging in the North of Ireland. Funded by DCAL through NI Screen, its aim is to increase cultural understanding and insights at a

personal level as well as having the potential to change attitudes in a significant number of young people and adults.

Community Engagement

14. DCAL's experience is that the involvement of the communities themselves in policy development is critical where integration and good relations are concerned. Community groups and community leaders are best placed to understand the particular challenges and opportunities facing their area. Collaborative partnership working on policy planning and development is a key factor in obtaining community buy in and ownership of a good relations project.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
September 2014

Department of Education



FROM: VERONICA BINTLEY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Date: 24 September 2014

To: Mike Nesbitt MLA
Chair to the Committee for the Office of the
First Minister and deputy First Minister

INQUIRY INTO BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY

1. I refer to your letter dated 7 July 2014 inviting individuals and organisations to submit written evidence to an inquiry into Building a United Community.
2. Please see attached submission from the Department of Education.

Veronica

VERONICA BINTLEY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUBMISSION TO OFMDFM COMMITTEE BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY INQUIRY

Introduction

1. The Department of Education (DE) welcomes the focus on building a united community as a means of tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance as set out in the Executive's Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Strategy.
2. Rebuilding a strong and vibrant society is a role for the whole of Government, but there is a valuable contribution that education can play and one that must be achieved if the next generation is to learn from and avoid the mistakes of the past.
3. There has been a long history of community relations work in schools and youth organisations throughout the period of conflict, from the formal public statement in the early 1980s to the Department's most recent Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education policy introduced in 2011.

4. Curricular

The early years, schools and youth work curricula provide ample opportunity for addressing sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance. Within school settings, the minimum curricula content for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding at primary level and Local and Global Citizenship at post-primary level, requires schools to actively address issues of sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance. Similar opportunities are provided in the Curricular Guidance for pre-school education through Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Additionally, at post-primary level, the minimum content for all curricular areas includes 'developing pupils as contributors to society' providing opportunity to address citizenship and cultural understanding. The Youth Service has a long history of addressing community relations and diversity issues through the model of youth work practice that includes equality, diversity and independence as part of its core values.

5. Policy

- 5.1 The Department's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education policy seeks to support and underpin the curriculum and other policy areas. The specific aim of the policy is to improve relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination.

- 5.2 The policy provides formal and non-formal educational opportunities for children and young people to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions. Funding is provided through the Education & Library Board's CRED Enhancement Scheme to schools and youth work settings, as well as through the Youth Council NI to regional voluntary youth organisations. Guidance was issued to early years, schools and youth work settings in 2011 and a dedicated website provides information, case study material and resources for practitioners.
- 5.3 Funding is also provided through the policy to ensure teachers and youth workers have the necessary skills to address community relations, equality and diversity issues, including handling sensitive and controversial issues. A significant number of teachers have availed of the training to date.
- 5.4 A formal review the policy by the Education & Training Inspectorate is scheduled in 2014/15, to assess its impact and to inform future policy implementation and development. As part of the monitoring indicators, the Department commissioned a module within the 2012 Young Life and Times Survey, the results of which suggest the policy was having a positive impact on attitudes of young people. The module is due to be repeated in the 2014 survey.
- 5.5 The CRED policy is therefore a key enabler to some commitments within the T:BUC strategy, in particular the development of an anti-sectarianism module and associated teacher training and the buddy scheme. Proposals on how the CRED policy can facilitate these commitments have been made to OFMdfM officials.
- 5.6 Other educational policies, such as Special Educational Needs and the Newcomer policy also assist in addressing the needs of young people and building support for their integration into society.

6. Shared Education

- 6.1 In addition, the Department is leading on the Programme for Government Commitments to advance shared education as a mechanism to improve educational and reconciliation outcomes. The Department welcomes the recognition given to shared education within the Executive's T:BUC strategy.
- 6.2 One of the headline actions in the T:BUC is a commitment to commence ten Shared Education Campuses in the next five years. Work on developing the new campuses is being taken forward by the Department of Education under the Shared Education Campuses programme.

- 6.3 The T:BUC Shared Education Campuses initiative is seen as complementing the work already underway in schools and will be targeted towards infrastructure projects aimed at improving or facilitating educational sharing initiatives within local schools. It is intended therefore that projects selected will build on a solid foundation of existing sharing.
- 6.4 The Education Minister, John O'Dowd, launched the Shared Education Campuses programme in January 2014. There was a significant level of interest in the first call for Expressions of Interest to the programme, with sixteen applications received. The Minister announced the first three projects to be supported under the programme on 1 July 2014 and the projects are proceeding to the planning stage. It is anticipated that a second call for Expressions of Interest will open towards the end of September 2014.
- 6.5 There may be additional ancillary benefits arising from the establishment of these new facilities, including increased opportunities for use by the wider community for a range of educational, sporting, recreational, arts or cultural activities, in line with the Department's *Community Use of School Premises: A Guidance Toolkit for Schools*.

7. Integrated Education

- 7.1 In addition the Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. It responds to parental demand, and funds integrated schools that are robust, do not involve unreasonable expenditure and meet specified criteria. Integrated education, together with all types of education, makes a vital and valuable contribution to building a peaceful and stable future for our children. Going forward, the Department of Education will ensure that it continues to have a rigorous approach to its duty to integrated education.
- 7.2 The Department's vision of ensuring that every learner achieves his or her full potential at each stage of development is supported through the Sustainable Schools strategy Policy and the area planning process. Both promote the need for a vibrant and sustainable education system. A strong education system has the potential to play a positive role in the normalising of society and promoting greater sharing amongst communities.

Department of Justice

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of
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Our ref: SUB/1258/2014

Mike Nesbitt MLA
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Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
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BT4 3XX

21 October 2014

Dear Mike

INQUIRY INTO BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's inquiry into Building a United Community. In particular, I would like to focus on one aspect of your Terms of Reference for the inquiry, namely "seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers to be removed".

My Department has been working, with some success, in this area through our Programme for Government Commitment 68 "to seek local agreement to reduce the number of peace walls". We have reduced the number of interface structures that we have responsibility for from 59 to 53, with further reductions planned. Since devolution of policing and justice functions, strong relationships have been established with all of the key stakeholders and, importantly, trust has been established at a community level in many areas. Naturally, I am eager for us to build on that success.

Building a United Community

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



The “Together: Building a United Community Strategy” has the potential to be a vehicle to do that. However, there remain challenges which need to be overcome if we are to achieve the removal of all structures by 2023.

Background

At the outset of devolution of justice, the Department of Justice assumed responsibility for 59 interface structures from the Northern Ireland Office. Cupar Way was the first barrier to be erected. It was a temporary wooden and barbed wire structure erected by the Army to separate communities in 1969. It is the longest barrier stretching to 650m long.

Between the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and 2008 eight new fences and one security gate were put in place. The last barrier erected was in 2008 at Hazelwood Integrated Primary School.

The structures maintained by the Department are located as follows:

Location	No. Walls/fences	No. Gates	TOTAL
East Belfast	4	0	4
West Belfast	12	6	18
North Belfast	14 (15)	4 (5)	18 (20)
North West (Derry/Londonderry)	4	3 (7)	7 (11)
South West (Portadown/Lurgan)	6	0	6
TOTAL	40 (41)	13 (18)	53 (59)

It is recognised that there are other physical barriers in Northern Ireland which the Department of Justice does not have responsibility for but which may be relevant to the issue of progress towards a shared future, for instance the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has responsibility for circa 20 interface structures.

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Strategic Context

Building shared communities is one of the pillars of the Department's Community Safety Strategy 2012-2017. The Strategy seeks to contribute to the creation of a safe, secure and shared future by addressing issues of prejudice and division and by working to support the efforts of many in society to overcome the physical and psychological barriers which exist in some communities.

In improving safety in interface areas and promoting community safety, the aim is to help to contribute to progress on issues like economic development, housing, shared space and employment growth.

It is clear that there are particular challenges in interface areas which in many cases have been disproportionately affected by the legacy of conflict. There has been considerable investment over the years aimed at improving delivery of services and the physical environment in interface areas, where some of the most acute divisions in our society are found. Our approach has been to build on that work.

We recognised through our work on the Programme for Government that solutions to the most deep rooted problems facing our community could not be delivered by any one Government Department or, indeed, by Government alone. We also acknowledged that change would require a process of careful engagement with communities over time.

Collaboration and partnership has been necessary at a number of levels including:

- Government;
- service delivery partners in the statutory and private sectors;
- community and voluntary groups; and

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- importantly, whether through the community and voluntary groups or otherwise, with local communities who need to play a leading role in identifying and defining priorities and needs and contributing to decisions about how those can be most effectively met.

The issue of funding to support change remains a significant factor, but especially in the current economic climate. Many of these areas face multiple difficulties resulting from high levels of social deprivation and economic disadvantage. These social factors can often lie behind problems of criminality and anti-social behaviour, or the fear of them, and so the issues cannot be addressed in isolation. The Department has been working with others including Belfast City Council and the International Fund for Ireland, as well as looking at the use of Government resources within other departments, to seek to identify ways in which change can be progressed using the funding that is available to best effect.

The priority in the Programme for Government concerning building a strong and shared community includes a commitment to “actively seek local agreement to reduce the number of ‘peace walls’”. The legacy of division and segregation is still obvious. While the interface structures are a symptom of the division in society and not the cause, a number of communities continue to see the need for physical barriers such as walls/fences or gates at an interface to ensure separation from ‘the other side’. For them, the barriers give a sense of security and so are welcome and perceived as necessary.

While recognising the concerns, there is an increasing appetite for change. That desire needs to be nurtured. Government and other agencies need to create the environment for, and facilitate, positive change. We are committed to facilitating alternative mechanisms which can enable safety for communities by supporting a transition from the view that safety is achieved through separation.

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Our work to date has focussed on an approach where crime and fear of crime is “designed out” or reduced. That might be by the approach of additional police resources for an area, or the provision of better street lighting, combined with CCTV, or redesigning physical structures etc. Our aim is to create spaces that are for the community as a whole and which the community feel safe using or passing through.

Our approach under the Programme for Government commitment is based on the following principles:

- The perceptions of safety and security of the people living near to interfaces and interface barriers must be addressed;
- We will aspire to the removal of all interface barriers over time;
- The process of removing interface barriers will be undertaken on the basis of sustainable regeneration as part of a process towards building shared cities and towns;
- As Minister of Justice I made it clear at the outset that I did not intend new security barriers or structures that serve to segregate communities to be built; rather priority must be given to other forms of investment in people and places that will provide appropriate levels of safety and security;
- Change is most likely to progress where it comes from within communities, but communities should be facilitated to see the benefit of such change;
- Government and its agencies should seek to facilitate change and, where possible, encourage it; and
- Greatest value should be obtained from the limited resources, and effort should be made to identify sources of funding.

Taking these principles we looked at two main stages in developing a framework for change. This framework sought to build on existing structures:

- First, at a Governmental level, to ensure that there is an appropriate level of support and engagement within relevant Government Departments, within key

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statutory agencies, and in the Police and other agencies responsible for safety and security; and

- Second, developing local approaches based on the need for inclusivity, involving community representatives and local residents, and recognising the need to take account of the local context. In other words, one size did not fit all. The approach to individual interfaces needed to be flexible.

The Department of Justice's experience from its work in interface areas to date is that collaborative working between Government Departments and statutory bodies undoubtedly assists in dealing with the issues more effectively. I agreed to create a standing Inter-agency Group, as signalled in the Programme for Government, so that we could respond to any request for the transformation of an interface structure coming from engagement with the community. The Group would also generate schemes for particular locations and then suggest these to communities to show what would be possible.

I recognise that the segregation in our society cannot be tackled through addressing community safety concerns alone. The issues that have perpetuated division are complex and inter-connected; and community confidence can only be built when community safety, community relations and community development issues are considered and addressed in a co-ordinated way. Shared space and wider investment in employment and services accessible to all are key parts in reducing the impact and number of interfaces over time.

The creation of the Inter-agency Group has led to a more strategic approach to how interventions are designed and resources are allocated. This Group, in dealing with issues concerning safety and security at interfaces, seeks to work with communities and to build community confidence. The progress made to date has created some momentum for progress which we want to build on. It works alongside the existing structures such as the Community Relations Council led Interface Community

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Partners Group and The International Fund for Ireland Peace Walls programme and aids their work in developing and nurturing requests for community initiated change.

Building a United Community Strategy

The most challenging commitment under this strategy is the complete removal of all peace walls by 2023. From the work we have engaged in under the Programme for Government and from wider studies on the regeneration of interface areas we recognise that:

- Residents are concerned about change because of concern about safety;
- Residents must be at the heart of decision-making about interface areas (although there are challenges in engaging/identifying residents);
- The regeneration of interface areas is at the core of addressing the problems experienced by residents;
- Residents have identified their priorities and should be listened to, but expectations in terms of what is possible and when also have to be managed;
- The focus on walls/barriers in isolation from other issues is unlikely to be successful in many areas;
- The walls/barriers were a symptom rather than a cause of division but now reinforce division/suspicion; and
- Public policies (including planning, education, health, and housing) need to give a firmer commitment to support and prioritise the regeneration and sustainable development of interface areas. (We need to keep in mind the developments in the organisation and responsibilities of councils).
- We need to utilise, for instance, the work of Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes which already exist in many of these areas, including the availability of data covering a wide range of indicators and the specialist skills

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and knowledge within the statutory agencies to support the community in selecting appropriate interventions.

The weaknesses we have identified in respect of the current approach are:

- The lack of a dedicated programme budget has led to difficulty in securing cross departmental funding as priorities identified within the programme often do not align with existing Departmental plans;
- Our focus therefore has been primarily on creating more attractive and safe environments through a range of physical renewal measures aimed at improving safety and security without the need for physical walls and barriers. Without a cross Executive commitment we have had limited opportunity to address economic, social, and community renewal as part of a holistic plan. That will be necessary for the more difficult areas.
- The IFI Peace Walls Programme has been advantageous in facilitating the close engagement between statutory agencies and local communities. However, there remain interface structures where engagement has yet to take place, such as Portadown/ Lurgan, East Belfast and parts of West Belfast where community relations, to a greater or lesser extent, are particularly fragile. There remains a need for continued, intensive good relations work in these and other areas to bring them to a point where they can engage in discussion on the removal of interface structures.

Taking these points into consideration, we believe that the United Communities strategy, having gained cross Executive support, should provide an opportunity to address the weaknesses in the overall programme and to create an innovative approach. However, at this time, without the ability to address these weaknesses and set the target within a wider framework of improving safety and supporting regeneration, combined with the resources necessary to deliver it, and consistent and sustained political leadership at all levels, there is a substantial risk of failure.

Building a fair, just and safer community

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



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I trust this information is helpful. I have copied this correspondence to the Chair of the Committee for Justice.

DAVID FORD MLA
Minister of Justice

Derry City Council



Derry City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Dhoire
Derry Cittie Cooncil

6th October 2014

RE: Inquiry into Building a United Community

Dear Mike Nesbitt MLA,

Derry City Council Community Relations team would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Inquiry into Building a United Community. Please find our response enclosed.

The response concentrates on the functioning and funding of the 'District Council's Good Relations Programme' specifically. The Good Relations Working Group of Derry City Council (A formal sub-group of council comprising of 1 elected councillor from each of our political parties – UUP, DUP, SDLP, SF) have authorised us to make this response. The response does not discuss wider policy issues or broader content of TBAUC as that is the role specifically of our elected political parties rather than necessarily the officers working to deliver Derry City Council's Good Relations Strategy.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact the Community Relations Team via sue.divin@derrycity.gov.uk tel: 71365151 ext 8218.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Divin, Carol Stewart, Angela Askin.
Community Relations Officers

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TBAUC Inquiry

Submission of Evidence from Derry City Council Community Relations Team

October 2014.



Derry City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Dhoire
Derry Cittie Coouncil

Submitted to: committee.ofmdfm@niassembly.gov.uk

Committee for OFMDFM, Room 285, Parliament Buildings, Belfast, BT4 3XX.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Value of opportunity to submit evidence
- 1.2 Context of Derry City Councils CR Team submission
- 1.3 Focus of the response on District Council's Good Relations Programme

2.0 Main issues and relevance to terms of reference

- 2.1 Specific relation to terms of reference
- 2.2 The District Councils Good Relations Programme
- 2.3 Importance of the District Council's Good Relations Programme
- 2.4 Diversity of Local Government Good Relations work.
- 2.5 Annual Lateness of Letters of Offer under DCGRP from OFMDFM
- 2.6 Negative impact of lateness of Letters of Offer annually
- 2.7 Transparency in competitive or non-competitive nature of DCGRP
- 2.8 Proportionality of application of budget cuts
- 2.9 Implementation of existing evaluation of DCGRP
- 2.10 Existing recommendations of DCGRP evaluation

3.0 Recommendations

4.0 Publication of information and further information.

5.0 Contacts for the Community Relations Team in Derry City Council

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Value of opportunity to submit evidence

Derry City Council Community Relations team would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Inquiry into Building a United Community. The 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy has a key impact on Derry City Council's Good Relations service delivery and we value the opportunity to submit evidence to the inquiry into it.

1.2 Context of Derry City Councils CR Team submission

This response is submitted by the Community Relations Team in Derry City Council. This team comprises of 3 Community Relations Officers, 2 placement students and one Part-Time administrator – all of whom work in the field of the promotion of Good Relations and collectively have around 30 years experience in delivery of Good Relations by and through local government in the Derry~Londonderry area. The Good Relations Working Group of Derry City Council (A formal sub-group of council comprising of 1 elected councillor from each of our elected political parties – UUP, DUP, SDLP, SF) have authorised us to make this response and are aware of its content.

1.3 Focus of the response on District Council's Good Relations Programme

The response concentrates on the functioning, funding and content of the 'District Council's Good Relations Programme' which is specifically referenced in the 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy (p.107 paragraphs 6.32 – 6.38). The response does not discuss wider policy issues or broader content of TBAUC as that is the role specifically of our elected political parties rather than necessarily the officers working to deliver Derry City Council's Good Relations Strategy. It is hoped that the response will highlight the breadth and quality of the work currently funded under the District Council's Good Relations Strategy and give constructive feedback on the practical management of the District Council's Good Relations Programme within OFMDFM.

2.0 Main issues and relevance to terms of reference.

2.1 Specific relation to terms of reference

This response relates to the issues as identified in Terms of Reference: 'Make Recommendations in order to support and enhance policy and decision-making with regard to building a united community' and 'Seek views on...[how] division can be addressed...'

2.2 The District Councils Good Relations Programme

The District Council's Good Relations Programme has existed since before the Good Friday Agreement and has developed significantly over this time. All 26 District Councils currently participate. Through it OFMDFM asks District Councils to bid for funding annually based on their 'Good Relations Internal and External Audits and Action Plans'. Many councils term this their 'Good Relations Strategy'. OFMDFM then assess the applications and issue letter of offer for whatever amount they see fit. 75% of the total offered is funded through OFMDFM with councils providing 25% match funding. Claims are made quarterly by councils and reimbursed. Councils also must provide an annual report to OFMDFM outlining their spend and the actions delivered/outcomes achieved. The committee may find it useful to examine the annual reports submitted by councils to have a full picture of the work under the District Council's Good Relations Programme. Headings in councils Action Plans mirror the TBAUC aims.

2.3 Importance of the District Council's Good Relations Programme

Derry City Council has participated in this programme since its inception and recognises that it provides an important and valuable funding stream for the promotion of Good Relations work locally. Without the District Council's Good Relations Programme much of the work done by councils would be severely reduced due to lack of funding. The type, quality, range and scale of the work done by participating councils under the scheme varies significantly from council to council. Many researchers, consultants and interested individuals sometimes make the assumption that District Councils simply give out 'Good Relations Grant Aid' under the scheme. In fact Grant Aid is only a very small part of the work done by Community Relations / Good Relations Officers in District Councils.

2.4 Diversity of Local Government Good Relations work.

Derry City Council encloses its own current Good Relations Strategy as evidence of the range of Good Relations work and professionalism of its service provision under the District Council's Good Relations scheme. Further information can also be found on www.derrycity.gov.uk/goodrelations Work done by Derry City Council under their Good Relations Strategy / DCGRP includes: Good Relations Core and Project Grant Aid to groups; provision of free Good Relations related training or training with a positive GR outcome to community groups/statutory agencies/staff; primary and secondary schools good relations, citizenship and anti-prejudice initiatives; interface diversionary and strategic work; Black and Minority Ethnic Strategic work; Ubuntu Global Festival; regular support to all types of community and other groups for the promotion of Good Relations; Community Relations Week; Local Democracy Week; GR intergenerational work; inclusion of GR in sports summer schemes; mainstreaming of Good Relations into council services such as Heritage and Museums, Environmental Health, City Engineers, Sports Development; Language and Local Awareness initiative for migrants/BME communities; publication of resources tackling prejudice and promoting diversity; Section 75 focused GR work; initiatives dealing with

the past; Single identity inclusion work (eg. Political ex-prisoners, loyal orders, AOH, Londonderry bands forum); work on shared space; Bonfires/Alternatives to bonfires initiatives; anti-Hate Crime work and general promotion of Good Relations work through the media.

2.5 Annual Lateness of Letters of Offer under DCGRP from OFMDFM

Whilst Derry City Council views the DCGRP as a positive initiative and welcomes its inclusion in TBAUC there are however some issue we wish to highlight. One of these is the annual extensive delay in the issue of Letters of Offer to District Councils. Councils usually receive a 4-6 week deadline for submission of applications once the commissioning letter has been received. Overwhelmingly this is the issue raised repeatedly over 10 years by local councils with OFMDFM and it has not improved. The following is a list of the dates that OFMDFM issued its Letters of Offer to District Councils for funding under the programme in recent years:

Financial Year	Date of Commissioning letter from OFMDFM asking councils to bid for funding	Date of Letter of Offer to Derry City Council	% of funding request allocated by OFMDFM to Derry City Council
2014/15	22 nd January 2014	27 th August 2014	82%*
2013/14	13 th May 2014	18 th October 2013	100%
2012/13	14 th February 2012	21 st September 2012	100%
2011/12	17 th January 2011	29 th July 2011	100%
2010/11	23 rd February 2010	23 rd September 2010	100%
2009/10	6 th March 2009	8 th July 2010 (revised letter 11 th August 2010)	100%
2008/09	Archived	4 th July 2008	Archived
2007/08	Archived	21 st May 2007	Archived
2007/07	Archived	21 st June 2006	Archived

*18% cut imposed on programmes expenditure to all district councils to the best of our knowledge.

This response wishes to highlight to the committee is that District Councils are (and for at least the last 9 financial years of this scheme) expected by OFMDFM to work 'At Risk' on expenditure and Good Relations Delivery. Please note particularly the dates that Councils receive their letters of offer and the trend around the delay in the issue of these which is getting worse rather than better. For the last 7 years councils have received their letters of offer for that respective financial year after the 1st quarter of the financial year has already passed. For the last 3 financial years the letters of offer 5-7 months into the financial year.

2.6 Negative impact of lateness of Letters of Offer annually.

The negative impact of the routine lateness of Letters of Offer on service delivery through the District Council's Good Relations Programme from OFMDFM cannot be overestimated. As this is the key vehicle for TBAUC delivery by District Councils we would request that the committee investigate why OFMDFM cannot manage to issue letters of offer for the financial year on 1st April annually and why this issue is getting worse rather than improving. Some of the impacts on TBAUC delivery are as follows:

- Local Councils are being expected to work at unacceptable risk. The DCGRP is now deemed a 'high risk' funding programme in Derry City Council. This damages the reputation of OFMDFM funding for TBAUC delivery.
- Budget cuts imposed late into the financial year mean that councils can no longer prioritise or plan as strategically as they wish. Derry City Council had to cut several initiatives completely and curtail others due to budget cuts this financial year – even if further funds are found that councils can bid for as verbally stated by officers in OFMDFM it is too late in the year to restore these programmes. This damages the implementation of TBAUC.
- The annual issue of letters of offer make longer term strategic planning difficult. This damages the implementation of TBAUC.
- Many staff (primary Good Relations /Community Relations Officers and support staff) funded under the DCGRP are placed on short term temporary contracts due to the annual nature of the DCGRP funding scheme and also due to the lateness repeatedly of letters of offer and the financial risk the DCGRP poses to councils. This means there is a high turnover of staff in these posts and a repeated drain of expertise out of these job roles. This damages the implementation of TBAUC.
- Many councils have had to take the decision to not issue grant aid letters of offer to groups until the Letter of Offer is received. This damages all Good Relations work related to this but may from now on mean councils can no longer fund summer diversionary and key interface work or Community Relations Week events as all of these traditionally require funding to be in place in the 1st quarter of the financial year.
- Community Relations Week has for over 10 years been a key public focus of Community Relations Delivery delivered in April/May/June (date set by CRC). Council's may no longer be able to participate in this higher profile event across Northern Ireland if letters of offer are not issued in time as the financial risk may be too great in light of recent budget cuts.

2.7 Transparency in competitive or non-competitive nature of DCGRP

There is at least a partial lack of transparency about understanding whether the DCGRP is a competitive programme or not. When applications are submitted by councils they are scored. In some previous years anecdotally we have heard that the 'top 5' councils got 100% of what they bid for with other councils taking a cut of some description in what was bid for initially and then having the chance in the 3rd quarter to bid for additional funds if they wished. In 2014/15 financial year it would appear that all councils took an 18% cut in their programmes budget regardless of the quality of their bid – but we have no definite evidence on this.

2.8 Proportionality of application of budget cuts

It is unclear whether the current budget cuts at Stormont are impacting the DCGRP disproportionately. Anecdotally it has been understood that many other departments programmes and initiatives have not been cut to the level of 18% at this stage. If the implementation of TBAUC is valuable to Northern Ireland then funding cuts applied to it (and specifically the DCGRP) should, if necessary at all, be proportionate.

2.9 Implementation of existing evaluation of DCGRP

Derry City Council's Community Relations team would draw the attention of the committee to the already existing findings of an evaluation of the District Council's Good Relations Programme 2 years ago. The NISRA 2012 'Evaluation of the District Council's Good Relations Programme' was set up to:

“Assess the impact and effectiveness of the District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP) and make practical recommendations for the development of the programme.”

(P.3 Executive summary of 2012 NISRA Report)

The 2012 Report made 29 recommendations. TBAUC specifically endorses these. We would ask why it has taken 2 years to endorse these and why scrutiny has not been applied to see what progress was made in the 2 interim years?

2.10 Existing recommendations of DCGRP evaluation

Some of the Recommendations specifically included:

1. 'Establish a working definition of Good Relations specific to the DCGRP' – to the best of our knowledge this has not been done.
2. 'Encourage the focus at Council level to provide funding to inclusive projects as opposed to single identity or projects with a weak link to Good Relations' – To the best of our knowledge the programme appears to have applied budget cuts regardless of quality for 2014/15.
3. 'A growing concentration and focus on hard issues following the release of the CSI Strategy, particularly among those council areas where significant progress has already been made on softer issues.' – To the best of our knowledge the programme appears to have applied budget cuts regardless of quality for 2014/15.
4. 'Review the scoring framework used to assess annual action plans submitted by Councils, to shift focus from spend to impact and account for previous activity/performance. – To the best of our knowledge the programme appears to have applied budget cuts regardless of quality for 2014/15.
5. Provide a higher level intervention in relation to 'selling' DCGRP to Council senior management and Councillors. – We would be keen to know if any progress has been made on this to date, in particular with the new Chief Executives for the new supercouncils and councillors for the new supercouncils.
6. Undertake a more transparent assessment of action plans with particular reference to relevance of individual activities to Programme objectives – To the best of our knowledge the programme appears to have applied budget cuts regardless of quality for 2014/15.
7. Investigate the feasibility of changing funding allocations to a longer cycle- This is still urgent and needed, especially in the climate of budget cuts and financial uncertainty.
8. Address the recurrent delay in the issue of LOOs - This is still urgent and critical, especially in the climate of budget cuts and financial uncertainty.
9. Hold in-year events to bring GROs from all Councils together – Budget cuts and current priorities from OFMDFM seem to indicate this has been reduced rather than even maintained at previous levels.

3.0 Recommendations:

1. **Letters of offer:** As an absolute priority OFMDFM must ensure Letters of Offer under the District Council's Good Relations Programme are issued on the 1st April annually so that negative impact on TBAUC implementation is avoided.
2. **Transparency/Competitiveness:** That the District Councils Good Relations Programme should be open and transparent in how competitive it is and that councils submitting the strongest bids and evidencing high quality of Good Relations work in line with TBAUC should be rewarded financially for their quality of service.
3. **Budget cuts:** That the District Council's Good Relations Programme should be valued for the quality of work it delivers and consequently treated proportionately in terms of any budget cuts rather than taking a higher level of budget cut than elsewhere.
4. **NISRA 2012 Evaluation:** That all recommendations made in the NISRA 2012 evaluation be implemented.
5. **Officers evidence:** That if the committee wish to be further informed by oral evidence on the District Council's Good Relations Programme that they invite a selection of willing Good Relations / Community Relations Officers from a number and range of councils to give evidence collectively.

4.0 Publication of information and further information.

Derry City Council Community Relations team are fully aware that this submission or extracts from it may be published and have no issue with this.

Derry City Council Community Relations team will be happy to provide further evidence or give oral evidence if requested by the committee.

Derry City Council Community Relations team will not be formally publishing their evidence but note that the information contained in this submission could be made public if requested under Freedom of Information.

5.0 Contacts for the Community Relations Team in Derry City Council:

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09/10/2014

**Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
Inquiry into Building a United Community**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction and context of submission**
- 2. Exploring perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations**
- 3. Seeking views on how sectarianism and division can be addressed**
- 4. Focusing on the challenges at both rural and urban interface areas**
- 5. The role of communities in policy and decision making**
- 6. Supporting and enhancing the policy and decision-making process**
- 7. Consideration of best practice both locally and internationally**
- 8. Expression of interest in the further submission of evidence**

1. Introduction and context of submission

- 1.1 Early Years¹ is the largest voluntary organisation working with and for all young children 0-12 in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It is a non-profit making organisation and in 2015 will celebrate 50 years of working to promote and develop high quality, evidence-informed early childhood services for young children, their families and communities. Our vision is that children are strong, competent and visible in their communities; physically and emotionally healthy; eager and able to learn and respectful of difference. We have currently over 1,000 members across the statutory, community, voluntary and independent sectors supporting the child care and early education needs of over 30,000 children on a daily basis.
- 1.2 Currently Early Years provides a range of information, training, and advice and support services for parents, early childhood care and education providers, management committees and boards, employers, local authorities, departments and agencies. Projects and activities relate to child focused community based health and education; tackling social and educational inequalities; working with young Traveller children and their families; community development and working with children, practitioners, management boards, parents and carers to respect the various forms of difference in our society.
- 1.3 These and other local and cross-border evidence-based services and projects offered by our organisation also have proved to be internationally applicable through our participation in a number of international partnerships and networks designed to 'export' and share knowledge and best practice concerning peace building, shared spaces and early childhood education and care.
- 1.4 Early Years welcomes this opportunity to submit written evidence. The organisation would also be willing to further participate in the process by giving oral evidence to the committee on anything contained in this submission.
- 1.5 Commentary on elements of the Terms of Reference set for the Inquiry relevant both to our remit as established above and our practice based experience is as follows.

2. Exploring perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations

- 2.1 It is vital that the approach to a shared future and united communities embraces an ecological framework approach beginning in the earliest years and continuing through primary and secondary education levels. In developing a positive sense of self and others it is essential to address issues of inclusion and exclusion from an early age. It is well documented in early childhood research that children as young as three years old are aware of difference and by age six can develop negative attitudes and behaviour towards others who are different². Such work must be underpinned by a clear perspective on children's rights and universal services to promote accessibility and inclusion of all children towards the best outcomes.

¹ For more see <http://www.early-years.org/>

² Too Young to Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 Year Olds in Northern Ireland
Connolly, P., Smith, A. & Kelly, B. (2002)

2.2 Relevant approaches must then also embrace wider support networks involving parents, families and communities as well as schools and education providers. In this area opportunities must be provided for parents from diverse backgrounds to share their beliefs, concerns and positive learning experiences across socio-economic, ethnic, cultural and gender borders with other parents and agencies.

2.3 Engaging with parents and other adults is also vital in order to address the intergenerational transmission of prejudicial attitudes to young children. Engaging with parents, carers and practitioners courageously therefore allows for attitudes and behaviour to be explored, including addressing prejudices and stereotypes. It is vital that space is created that is both safe and challenging for exploring these issues.

3. Seeking views on how sectarianism and division can be addressed

3.1 Early Years has designed, developed and implemented a flagship programme focused on developing respect for diversity and inclusion in the early years which is informed by and includes all of the principles outlined in section two above.

3.2 This is highly innovative in that the approach addresses inclusion in all its aspects focusing on ability, race, cultural ethnic and religious identity through age appropriate programmes. The Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) Respecting Difference Programme has been externally evaluated³ though a randomised controlled trial and found to have a positive effect on young children's attitude towards and respect for others who are different.

3.3 The MIFC Respecting Difference Programme is currently linked to relevant curricula for children aged from two to seven years and consideration is being given to further development of the programme covering the timeframe right through to the end of primary school.

3.4 Through shared parent workshops and in management committee/board of governors workshops, adults have the opportunity to share their own experiences including experiences which as children shaped their identities and attitudes. They also have opportunities in an informal way for discussion and sharing with others who have been raised with different perspectives and attitudes. In this way parents, teachers, pre-school staff, governors and management committee members are themselves engaging, reflecting and building their own understanding of others who are different.

3.5 Many elements associated with the MIFC Respecting Difference programme make clear links into not only the pre-school but also the Foundation Stage curriculum (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) and Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) by addressing such themes as self-awareness, similarities and differences, relationships and feelings and emotions.

3.6 The key strengths of MIFC Respecting Difference are that it places a strong emphasis on promoting socio-emotional development as the foundation upon which diversity work can be undertaken and it looks at diversity and inclusion in all its aspects focusing on ability, race, cultural ethnic and religious identity through age appropriate programmes. The programme looks first at sameness before addressing difference. This is done using persona dolls where a character is developed which incorporates different aspects of

³ Evaluation of the Media Initiative for Children: <http://www.early-years.org/coral/research.php>

identity. The children see the points of similarity and subsequently the points of difference. The persona dolls are an ideal practical tool to encourage the development of empathy, to see a situation from another's perspective.

- 3.7 It is vital therefore that children's identity is validated in the school or pre-school setting. One of the innovative aspects of the MIFC is that it explicitly addresses issues of identity with young children rather than ignoring or attempting to neutralise identity. In this way the ethos and identity of individuals, families and communities are respected and validated while children also grow in awareness of the identity of others.
- 3.8 Practices that foster multiple identities need to avoid two pitfalls – colour-blindness and tokenism. Colour-blindness is the denial of differences, very often out of an honest concern to treat 'all children equally'. The message children get from this is to be silent about difference. Tokenism is an effort to be inclusive in a limited time-bound way such as acknowledging cultural difference but only on a particular day e.g. Chinese New Year. Such activities risk being both patronising and stigmatising, in that they overlook the complexities of children's personal histories and family cultures and ignore socio-economic and other differences.
- 3.9 An example of this reflection from evaluation was that parents from the Unionist tradition participating in the MIFC programme in the Derry/Londonderry area commented positively on the fact that the programme actively engaged in open, honest dialogue with aspects of their tradition, for example in portrayal of marching bands. They felt that this contrasted sharply with other programmes which attempted to neutralise identity: "Looking at this town, people from the British tradition do tell their children not to mention certain things because of the fear factor. I've even encountered this in integrated education where people are not encouraged to talk about things like the Orders, the parades, it's a no-go area."
- 3.10 We would further draw attention, concerning engagement and partnership working best practice with a shared focus to improve outcomes for children, to the Toybox Project⁴ strategic partnership implemented by Early Years - the organisation for young children.
- 3.11 The Toybox Project is a rights-based outreach service development model which aims to significantly reduce social and education inequalities experienced by young Traveller children aged 0-4, maximise participation in available programmes and services and strengthen capacities, engagement and partnership working.
- 3.12 The Toybox project also was subject to an independent evaluation⁵ which stated that in terms of service delivery, the project has been very successful in terms of engaging families and supporting the development of children through play. Furthermore the evaluation found that the project has been very successful at filling the gap, and being a catalyst, between families and statutory support services, health visitors, social workers and others in the statutory sector. We believe that this innovative project represents a successful outreach model for enhancing child development outcomes for disadvantaged groups. By using the above practical strategies, informed by a robust programme design, the principles of equality of opportunity and access to education are translated into inclusive practice in the classroom.

⁴ <http://www.early-years.org/toybox/>

⁵ 'Toybox: Early Years development through play for Traveller children'; <http://www.early-years.org/toybox/toybox-evaluation.pdf>

4. Focusing on the challenges at both rural and urban interface areas

- 4.1 Many communities in rural regions can encounter invisible community division lines with fewer opportunities for rural interfaces and have high levels of new immigrants in the area due to employment opportunities. A greater level of detail and focus is required in these respects to promote social inclusion, equality and respecting difference in the areas of gender, religion, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.
- 4.2 Over recent years our organisation has been involved in a range of success initiatives and projects in this area.
- 4.3 One practical example of this has been delivery of the Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) Respecting Difference Programme through the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme, to schools in Co Fermanagh to provide a vital foundation for teachers, boards of governors, parents, children and local communities to successfully engage in the provision of shared education
- 4.4 Furthermore, the organisation has been involved in the implementation of a 'Faces and Spaces' project, funded by Atlantic Philanthropies/OFMDFM's Contested Spaces programme, in schools and early years settings in five contested/interface communities in Northern Ireland including urban interfaces in Belfast and Derry and rural contested spaces in Castlederg and Newtownstewart. Such work has given us a model in designing and implementing a robust evidence-based approach with pre-school, primary, youth, parents and the wider community.
- 4.5 The project was overseen by both a regional steering group and importantly by four local partnerships which ensured that the schools, playgroups and SureStart projects had ownership of the project and that a shared community development ethos underpinned the programme.
- 4.6 This approach enabled the development of a community of learning based upon shared beliefs and approaches to inclusion to be created around the needs of all children aged between two and seven in the area. The local partnerships met on a rotational basis in each other's premises to plan the development of the programme. In addition to implementing MIFC within their own settings, the schools and pre-school groups came together for shared implementation, for shared parent workshops and for shared management committee/board of governors workshops.
- 4.7 The shared implementation was very different from a basic contact approach to shared activity. Settings came together to plan purposeful activities that engaged with the programme themes around inclusion. Together, they had opportunities to participate and reflect on issues of identity, culture, race, ethnicity and ability communicated in an age appropriate way.
- 4.8 In further reflection of the significance of such issues in and for rural communities our organisation, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council and the Border Counties Childhood Network implemented a Rural Respecting Difference Programme⁶ part-funded under the PEACE programme, based on the MIFC Respecting Difference Programme.
- 4.9 This project brings another dimension to the MIFC Respecting Difference Programme as it gives Early Years an opportunity to engage with harder to

⁶ <http://www.early-years.org/rural-rd/index.php>

reach families in rural areas through an innovative approach to inclusion and diversity related work.

- 4.10 The Rural Respecting Difference Programme is aimed at rural-based primary schools and afterschool clubs in a number of geographic areas along the border in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland across counties Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Tyrone.
- 4.11 The Programme includes workshop based training delivered by Early Years Specialists; comprehensive curriculum resource packs containing persona puppets, cartoon/media messages, CD of songs and rhymes, age appropriate jigsaws and games; a Teacher/Leader Service Design Manual; ongoing on-site support from an Early Years Specialist to assist programme implementation; Support for Board of Governors or Management Committees in practical delivery of equality opportunities and anti-bullying policies and opportunities to participate in good relations workshops and develop tailored good relations plan for school or after school.
- 4.12 The Rural dimension of the MIFC Respecting Difference programme has recently been further enhanced with the addition of a new message, persona doll and associated resources addressing issues from a rural perspective.
- 4.13 The content for these was developed by a steering group consisting of representatives from the Rural Development Council, Early Years and the Border Counties Childhood Network alongside the GAA, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Southern Education & Library Board, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme and South Armagh SureStart.

5. The role of communities in policy and decision making

- 5.1 The considerable capacity building in the initial phases and on-going support elements of this work cannot be understated. The work of Early Years has always been underpinned by a strong community development, grass-roots mobilisation ethos focused on helping communities to assess the need for, develop and manage their own early years setting.⁷
- 5.2 Here we would advocate reference to many of the required principles and skill-sets as reflected in the work of a Community Development Team within our organisation which works directly with independent and voluntary organisations in the sector by building capacity and empowering local communities and services; providing start-up support and information and ongoing training, information, coaching and mentoring in governance, leadership and management to develop quality sustainable childcare services.
- 5.3 Early Years firmly endorses participative approaches whereby the active participation of relevant members and the children, families and communities and agencies they represent form an essential part of the development, evaluation and ongoing monitoring of progress on the implementation and delivery of any plans, policies or strategies. Early Years is in the process of implementing and establishing a robust focus on participatory evaluation pedagogy and practice.
- 5.4 Prior to the adoption of this approach, research on and evaluation of the work of Early Years had been carried out by external evaluators and in the main focused on quantitative research methodology. The evidence gathered has

⁷ <http://www.early-years.org/committee-mgt/>

provided greater credibility and visibility for the work of Early Years locally and nationally. Building upon this culture of evaluation and research, Early Years now wish to develop a capacity for participatory evaluation within the organisation and sector so that Early Years staff become skilled in on-going evaluation and reflective practice and develop the ability to use this evidence to further improve practice and programmes.

5.5 The enhanced and more developed usage of more participatory approaches to evaluation will not only help us understand how our projects and programmes are improving outcomes for our youngest citizens but it will also enable us to assess our impact and embrace a more fuller and participative method of engaging with our members, customers and stakeholders in truly finding out from them the types of the information, support and materials they need and how best to provide that to them.

6. Supporting and enhancing the policy and decision-making process

6.1 The effective linkage and adequate commitment to resourcing of such key strategies as Delivering Social Change, Together: Building a United Community, the Programme for Government, the Racial Equality Strategy and other policies and strategies to tackle inequalities with specific attention paid to multiple identities, multiple discrimination and inequalities experienced is strongly encouraged. To these we would further add the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Child Poverty Strategy, the Traveller Child in Education Action Framework and, given not only the considerable developmental benefits for young children but also wider employment, economic and social opportunities and benefits⁸, the Bright Start Child Care Strategy, presently under development.

7. Consideration of best practice both locally and internationally

7.1 Early Years continues to build upon a significant knowledge base derived from practical experience and evidence-based research relating to diversity and inclusion with our youngest citizens, their carers and families and the communities in which they live.

7.2 We feel that it is vital that practice is informed by impact based evaluations of previous initiatives and through international and local best practice and partnerships. We support the development of such measures and see this as vital in the growth of future social and economic developments.

7.3 Services and projects provided by our organisation also extend to the Republic of Ireland, through HighScope and other cross-border initiatives, and beyond through a number of international partnerships and projects designed to 'export' knowledge and best practice. Some recent examples of this include:

7.3.1 *An International Network on Peace Building with Young Children*⁹ project leading the sharing of best practice across countries experiencing conflict and post-conflict situations through the use and development of internationally applicable programmatic tools and resources and ongoing implementation of a Masters Programme on Applied Peace and Conflict Studies with early years, in partnership

⁸ See 'Contribution of the Voluntary, Community and Independent Early Years Sector in Northern Ireland' report; Early Years; 2011 <http://www.early-years.org/policy/state-of-sector.php>

⁹ <http://www.early-years.org/international/>

with the International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE) at the University of Ulster;

- 7.3.2 Participation in the Network for the Quality in Early Childhood Education from 0-6 years (NetQ6) , which is a cooperative network with educative and training institutions in Europe. The project aims are to compare, analyze and face the socio challenges that arise in the growth of early childhood and compile the best practices in the field to find solutions for the new realities and special needs found in a range of education systems;
- 7.3.3 Contribution to the work of the *Partnership for Reconciliation through Early Childhood Education and Development in Europe (PRECEDE)*¹⁰ which aims to support civil society influence over reconciliation process and cohesion through education in early years in the Balkan region and Europe. It will develop a sustainable Balkan Region Network of civil society organisations concerned with young children and promoting acceptance of others and respect for diversity; develop sustainable country level networks of civil society organisations promoting acceptance of others and respect for diversity through early childhood education (ECD) in the Western Balkan region countries; and will link country level networks and the PRECEDE Network of civil society organisations with the International Network for Young Children in Conflict and Post-conflict Countries;
- 7.3.4 Participation in the Determinants to Reduce health Inequity Via Early childhood, Realising fair employment and Social protection (DRIVERS) project funded by the 7th Framework Programme to promote health equity through policy and practice in early childhood development, employment & working conditions, and income & social protection;
- 7.3.5 Supporting the delivery of pre-school programmes within Serbia and Turkey;
- 7.3.6 Hosting annual Service Learning Trips in partnership with Wheelock College, Boston to allow students from the College undertaking disciplines in psychology and early childhood development a unique opportunity to experience the work that is currently underway in Northern Ireland and study exemplary peace building efforts in early childhood settings;
- 7.3.7 Hosting visits by Turkish delegates from the Ministry of Education and UNICEF to view models of good practice, visit settings and participate in round table debate; and
- 7.3.8 Advocating, along with other members of the Early Childhood Peace Consortium¹¹, UNICEF and the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, for the next Millenium Development Goals and a new UN Resolution to include peace building through Early Childhood Development.
- 7.4 Such activity enables Early Years to both consolidate and extend its international relationships and to continue to work to develop practice materials, training, advocacy tools and strategies on reconciliation and peace building through early years programmes to the benefit of local and international service providers.

¹⁰ <http://www.tacso.org/doc/PRECEDE%20corrected.pdf>

¹¹ <http://childstudycenter.yale.edu/international/peace/ecpc/index.aspx>

8. Expression of interest in the further submission of evidence

8.1 Early Years welcomes this opportunity to submit written evidence. The organisation would also be willing to further participate in the process by giving oral evidence to the committee on anything contained in this submission.

Equality Coalition



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9 October 2014

Submission to the Inquiry into Building a United Community (T:BUC)

The Equality Coalition is a network of over 80 trade unions and equality NGOs from across the nine 'section 75' categories and beyond and is co-convened by CAJ and UNISON. The Equality Coalition commissioned two expert briefing papers, written by Dr Robbie McVeigh, on key matters relating to the T:BUC legislation, and we enclose these papers by way of submission to the Committee's call for evidence.

The first paper '**Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: towards a definition in law**' was finalised in April 2014 after discussions with stakeholders and addresses this matter, including potential definitions, that could be used to define sectarianism within the T:BUC framework and in any legislation emerging from the strategy.

The second paper '**Good Relations in Northern Ireland: towards a definition in law**' was finalised in October 2014 after discussions with stakeholders in the context of the T:BUC strategy proposing an extended 'good relations' role for the Equality Commission and that there be a 'good relations' section in Equality Impact Assessments..

The Equality Coalition would be willing to provide oral evidence to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Holder
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Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: Towards a definition in law

Expert paper by Dr Robbie McVeigh

April 2014

Special thanks go to UNISON
for the financial support in
developing this paper



Contents

1.1 Introduction	Page 1
1.2 Undertheorisation	Page 2
1.3 Northern Ireland	Page 6
1.4 England and Wales	Page 11
1.5 Scotland	Page 16
1.6 UN and Council of Europe	Page 17
1.7 Defining Sectarianism	Page 19
1.8 Ethnicity Denial	Page 26
1.9 Conclusions	Page 28
1.10 Bibliography	Page 31

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Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: Towards a definition in law¹

1.1. Introduction

- [1]. The term sectarianism is used widely both academically and journalistically to name and address two main subjects. *First*, divisions within major religions – for example tensions within Islam between Sunni and Shia are commonly designated ‘sectarian’; and *second*, divisions between and within political groups, particularly but not exclusively on the Left. In both cases the term at least implies an intimacy to the divisions involved – these are divisions between people who know each other rather than people who do not know each other. The term sectarianism does not feature greatly in human rights discourse.
- [2]. In Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland the term sectarianism is widely used to name and address divisions between Protestants and Catholics, mostly, but not exclusively, related to Irishness. In this sense it is used routinely to describe incidents and processes. The standard use of the report that, ‘the police are describing the incident as sectarian’ provides some illustration of this commonsense understanding across Northern Ireland. Despite its everyday application in this context, however, the term is rarely defined. Moreover, despite the ubiquity of the term, it is poorly conceptualised.
- [3]. While sectarianism per se has not been defined in law in either Ireland or the UK, aspects of sectarian identity have been defined in both legislation and through jurisprudence across different jurisdictions of the UK. Arguably the whole conflict in the north of Ireland can be characterised as ‘sectarian’. Thus when ‘dealing with’ fair employment or ‘community relations’ or ‘peace’ itself, the target has often been sectarianism, at least in part. Consequently concepts like ‘community background’, ‘religious identity’, ‘perceived religious identity’ and ‘political opinion’ all help to frame notions of sectarianism in law. More broadly different targets – like ‘anti-Irish racism’, ‘institutional racism’ and ‘institutional religious intolerance’, all overlap with sectarianism and provide the building blocks of a definition in law.

¹ A draft of this paper was presented at an Equality Coalition seminar in Belfast in March 2014. The paper was informed and improved by the discussion at that seminar. The draft was also improved by comments from Daniel Holder of CAJ and Professor Bill Rolston. Remaining errors of fact or judgement remain my own.

1.2. Undertheorisation

- [4]. In Northern Ireland – despite both ongoing political tensions and previous conflicts being characterised as ‘sectarian’ – sectarianism has been undertheorised or underconceptualised (McVeigh 1992). There is no corpus of research and analysis to compare with, say, the body of work that exists on racism in Britain. One response to this discussion of an earlier draft of this paper sums this up perfectly:

I welcome the fact that consideration is being given to defining sectarianism. I believe that the continuing failure to define or name the “elephant in the room” (i.e. sectarianism) serves to perpetuate the divisions that characterise NI society and has the knock-on effect that sectarian crimes go unpunished thus tending to normalise a level of racism/sectarianism that many newcomers say they find disturbing. In addition, from a public health perspective, there is emerging evidence that living in a divided society may contribute to the extremely poor mental and emotional wellbeing experienced by many within Northern Ireland. I appreciate that defining sectarianism and identifying the particular elements that can be outlawed will be fraught with difficulty but strongly believe that this is timely and that many will recognise and support the spirit and values behind the definition – when it is achieved.

- [5]. This recognition of the impact of undertheorisation of sectarianism in one key area of Northern Ireland life might be applied equally to almost any other. Sectarianism continues to be the ‘elephant in the room’ – characterised by difficulty of find *any* practice to address its pervasive consequences. Defining sectarianism is a key part of changing this reality. Generally this accords with the principle of legal certainty, whereby particular concepts which may carry sanctions are set out with sufficient clarity in law to provide a framework where both the state and individuals to regulate their conduct. But alongside this there is a specific need to find ways of framing sectarianism that allow it to be countered. Of course no act of defining is perfect – the very complexity of a phenomenon like sectarianism means that any definition begs refutation. But this has been equally true of other forms of oppression and discrimination. As participants in the roundtable discussion noted, it may have been clear to affected persons what sexual harassment was, until there was a definition in law it was difficult to get a framework to move beyond protestations of subjectivity and effectively counter the phenomena.
- [6]. Moreover, despite the undertheorisation of sectarianism, there is an expanding theoretical and research literature that helps throw light on the human rights and equality implications of the term. There is a literature suggesting that sectarianism is – or is much the same as – racism (Jarman 2012; McVeigh and Rolston 2007) and another literature that says it is

Equality Coalition

different from racism (Brewer and Higgins 1998). (Even without engaging with the text, titles like 'Race Relations in the Six Counties' (Moore 1972) or 'Holy War in Belfast' (Boyd 1969) give some sense of this disparity.) There is also a literature directly comparing the two phenomena (Brewer 1992; McVeigh 1998; McVeigh and Rolston 2007). Insofar as any substantive *difference* between racism and sectarianism is spelt out, the analysis is usually that the conflict in Ireland is predominantly religious – as the formally religious appellations 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' would suggest. For example, Bruce suggests:

The Northern Ireland conflict is a religious conflict. Economic and social considerations are also crucial, but it was the fact that the competing populations in Ireland adhered and still adhere to competing religious traditions which has given the conflict its enduring and intractable quality. (1986: 249)

- [7]. In this analysis it is argued that what sectarianism involves *is* theological dispute – a contemporary rehearsing of the explicitly theological differences within Christianity that characterised the Reformation, not only in Ireland, of course, but across Europe and beyond.
- [8]. But this analysis only covers part of the story; there is a plethora of other evidence illustrating the more ethnic dimension to conflict in Ireland. The English/Irish and Settler/Native dynamic predates the Reformation and *ipso facto* looks more like 'race' than 'religion' – using the notion of descent we find both actual and perceived connections between present day 'Protestants' and 'Catholics' and historical, pre-reformation differences (McVeigh 2008). Moreover other labels – like 'Unionist' and 'Loyalist' or 'Nationalist' and 'Republican' – signify the political and ethnic elements which also constitute identities that appear formally theological.² Once the additional 'economic and social considerations' are added to the mix it becomes increasingly difficult to disentangle these different elements. This already suggests that we are dealing with *ethnicity* – which recognises just such an amalgam of different elements – rather than faith. Tellingly in the jurisprudence of 'fair employment', 'perceived religious identity' came to be more important than 'religious identity'. The ethnicity paradigm offers a holistic reading of inequality and discrimination in Northern Ireland that the 'religious conflict' approach cannot.

² Furthermore, following the retirement of Ian Paisley, there is a dearth of 'political religious' figures in Northern Ireland. There is nothing akin to 'political Islam' among either major political tradition; indeed, politics in Northern Ireland appears generally more secular than, say, in the USA.

- [9]. Moreover, over the last thirty years there has been a further tangible 'convergence' of these different elements – religion, political identity, institutional religious intolerance as well as race - across the different jurisdictions within the UK which make it even more difficult to isolate those elements that might make something a discrete 'religious conflict'. Thus the rise in and focus on Islamophobia and 'institutional religious intolerance' suggest lines of demarcation are already more blurred generally; recognition of anti-Irish racism, particularly in England and Scotland, the focus on the overlap between anti-Irish racism and anti-Catholicism in sectarianism in Scotland, the blurring of distinctions between racism and sectarianism within 'good relations' practice in Northern Ireland: all suggest definitively that what we are dealing with should be regarded as ethnicity – a concept which is embedded with all these complexities – rather than some abstract, discrete issue of 'faith'. Even if we stick to the crudest and most brutal manifestations of sectarianism in Northern Ireland, the widespread genocidal imperative, we find identities that look more like ethnicity than faith: 'Kill all Irish'; 'Kill all Taigs'; 'Kill all Huns'.
- [10]. Despite this, some actors continue to resist the analysis of sectarianism in terms of ethnicity – not necessarily because it is 'really about' religion but rather because it is so exceptional that it can't be contained within any existing paradigm of analysis. This approach regards sectarianism as a phenomenon *sui generis* – so exceptional that this precludes inclusion in any broader equality analysis or agenda. The repudiation of ethnicity is particularly significant in terms of its implications for human rights discourse. If sectarianism is regarded as purely 'religious' then the appropriate mechanisms are weaker. The 'exceptionalism' approach largely pre-empts any protections at all. Not surprisingly, this kind of exceptionalism is usually adopted by those who want to exclude such issues from international protection – witness the Indian government approach to Dalits or the Irish government on Travellers. It involves the dangerous strategy of 'ethnicity denial' (McVeigh 2009). Crucially, the British Government has not taken this position on sectarianism.
- [11]. It has also sometimes been argued that sectarianism should not be recognised as a form of racism in Northern Ireland for tactical reasons (McVeigh 1998). This is the notion that it is better not to recognise sectarianism as racism because it might 'confuse' intervention against other forms of racism. This is not without logic in a context in which BME communities are often placed in a vulnerable relationship with regard to larger Protestant and Catholic communities. This strategic argument is weak, however, in terms of human rights discourse.

Equality Coalition

- [12]. Moreover, if it ever were the case that general anti-racism in Northern Ireland was served by the exclusion of sectarianism 'from the mix', this hardly now obtains. First, Northern Ireland achieved the 'race hate capital of Europe' tag despite this exclusion – so it has not worked very well as an anti-racism strategy. Recent allegations by the PSNI about the involvement of Loyalist paramilitaries in 'ethnic cleansing' continue to signal the intimacy of the connections between racist and sectarian violence (BBC News 2014). Second, the exceptionalism of sectarianism from race discourse has not seen the post-Macpherson advances implemented in Northern Ireland even in terms of BME communities (NICEM 2013). Finally, as already mentioned, the post-Good Friday Agreement state has very consciously integrated analysis and intervention on racism and sectarianism with respect to concepts such as 'good relations'. This has had a negative impact on anti-racism in Northern Ireland because it disconnects it from both best practice in other parts of the UK as well as international standards. Thus, while it may help to address sectarianism through wider analyses of racism, this can never be justified to 'dilute' the analysis of racism through its association with sectarianism. One obvious example of this can be found in the use of the term 'equity' instead of 'equality'. The importation of a *sui generis* term from the exceptionalist approach to sectarianism is profoundly problematic – anti-racism has always been centrally about equality not equity. In other words, the synthesis of racism and sectarianism within the 'good relations' paradigm has encouraged a 'lowest common denominator approach' and moved anti-racism as well as anti-sectarianism away from a focus on international standards and human rights compliant approaches.³
- [13]. In short, the case for exceptionalism is poor and poorly made – it rarely moves beyond statements on the complexity of sectarianism, defined by its indefinability. Furthermore, no one has suggested that the conflict in Northern Ireland is *solely* a religious conflict. Like most conflicts it involves a complex mix of different elements including religion. So the issue is already nuanced – when people seek to force this issue they are really saying the conflict is *primarily* a religious conflict or primarily an ethnic conflict. From a human rights point of view this debate doesn't really matter. Providing that it is accepted that the conflict has an element of ethnicity then that 'bit' of the complex is deserving of protection by international mechanisms that address ethnicity and racism. (And by extension those 'bits' that are purely religious

³ It bears emphasis that the notion of 'good relations' shares a similar lack of definition with even less grounding in international law, despite recent attempts in the UK to improve the robustness of the term (Johnson and Tatam 2009; Wigfield and Turner 2010). Given this lack of clarity, the statutory good relations duty on public bodies in GB definition in s149 of the Equality Act 2010 is the most useful as well as the closest to being definitive: *good relations ...involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—(a)tackle prejudice, and (b)promote understanding.*

should be protected by mechanisms that address religion like the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance.)

- [14]. It is also increasingly difficult to justify the need to separate different forms of inequality given the growing recognition of *intersectionality*. Intersectionality - sometimes 'intersectionalism' - is the analysis of the way forms of oppression and discrimination support and reinforce each other. This paradigm recognises that different inequalities compound each other in specific ways and insists that focussing on single issue discriminations often misses the reality of inequality for those who are most unequal and discriminated against. (Crenshaw 1989). The significance of intersectionality has been increasingly recognised in international human rights discourse (Thornberry 2008, 2013). In other words there is a general tendency towards accepting the overlap between racism and issues like religion, ethnicity and gender.
- [15]. Before turning to the lessons of international mechanisms, however, it is useful to look at how sectarianism – and more widely, race and religion – is named and addressed across the different jurisdictions and equality regimes in the UK. As has been suggested, there has been a degree of convergence in all of these. But it is also possible to trace contradictions and disjunctions which illustrate precisely why international standards are necessary in supporting best practice in human rights and equality mechanisms.

1.3. Northern Ireland

- [16]. The emergence of the state of Northern Ireland followed the partition of Ireland in 1920 on explicitly sectarian grounds – the state boundary was designed to secure a 'working' Protestant majority. Whether regarded positively as, 'a Protestant Parliament' and a 'Protestant State' or negatively as an 'Orange State', overt sectarian discrimination was embedded in the polity from the start. Much of the reformism of the last 50 years has been a movement away from that formal, explicit state endorsement of sectarian discrimination. To a large extent the periods of constitutional change since have been movements away from that specific form of institutional sectarianism.⁴

⁴ This Northern Ireland state also repudiated any need for anti-racist legislation – mostly because of the dangers of 'readacross' to sectarian discrimination. The issue of the extension of the legislation to Northern Ireland was raised specifically during discussions leading up to the first Race Relations Act in 1965. The British Home Secretary was asked if the views of the Northern Ireland Government had been sought on the matter. The response of Frank Soskice was that, '[t]heir views have been sought, and they do not wish the Bill to apply to Northern Ireland'.

Equality Coalition

- [17]. Both Direct Rule (1972-97) and the post-GFA state have been reformist in this way. Despite the absence of agreed definitions outlined above, there has therefore been a fair amount of intervention against some of the key indicators and consequences of sectarianism in Northern Ireland in the context of both Direct Rule and the post-GFA state. While much of this activity was couched in terms other than 'sectarianism' or 'anti-sectarianism', the reformist project has had dealing with the legacies of sectarian inequality at its core.

Anti-Discrimination - Fair Employment and Section 75

- [18]. This kind of legislative reform began with incitement to hatred legislation in 1971 which was followed by a raft of administrative reforms under Direct Rule. Legislatively it was dominated by the Fair Employment Act 1976. The 1976 Act expressly addressed direct discrimination in employment issues. This was extended to indirect discrimination by the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989 and to goods and services by The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. It was extended to include an equality duty through Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998). This section imposed quality proofing across a range of equality issues as well as imposing a subordinate duty to promote good relations. The 1998 Order was amended by the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 in December 2003 to meet the requirements of the EU Framework Directive for Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation. But the 1976 Act continued to define categories. (Thus "political opinion" and "religious belief" shall be construed in accordance with section 57 (2) and (3) of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1976).
- [19]. While this legislation was clearly designed to manage discrimination connected to sectarianism, it carried a wide range of targets and even further implications. It expressly protected people from religious and political discrimination. Through case law the scope of the Act extended to cover acts of political discrimination that had very little connection to the conflict in the north of Ireland.⁵ In terms of religious discrimination, it covered acts that were clearly connected to discrimination that was immediately connected to notions of sectarianism. But it also extended to cases that were unconnected to conflict – like, for example, Christians being required to work on a Sunday. Finally, it extended to non-Christian religious groups that were in no way

⁵ It is striking that case law on Fair Employment also opened it up to the broader, explicitly political, discrimination. Here the term is being used much more akin to the Left/Right political sectarianism indicated above. This kind of formally 'political discrimination' would be outwith most international protections from *ethnic* discrimination.

connected to Protestant/Catholic conflict, however defined. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland provides a useful overview:

The FETO outlines situations where individuals may complain that they have been discriminated against on grounds of religious belief and/or political opinion. It may be that individuals believe that they are treated less favourably than others because they are Catholic or Protestant or because they are perceived to hold either of these religious beliefs; or because they are perceived to be nationalist or unionist; or indeed individuals may be discriminated against because they do not hold any of these beliefs or opinions. Political opinion is not limited solely to Northern Ireland constitutional politics and may include political opinions relating to the conduct or government of the state, or matters of policy, eg, conservative or socialist political opinions. A political opinion which includes approval or acceptance of the use of violence for political purposes in Northern Ireland is excluded. Religious belief includes those of other religions, eg, Judaism, Islam and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, as well as other faiths and philosophies such as Hinduism, Buddhism and philosophical theism, to name a few. (2012: 3-4)

- [20]. In the operation of the legislation, however, ethnicity clearly played a more significant role than either of the two manifest characteristics of the act – there were far more ‘ethnic’ cases than either religious or political. It is perhaps useful to think of this reality in terms of a simple Venn diagram – the interlocking circles were named by the categories ‘religious belief’ and ‘political opinion’ but most cases involved the intersection which was much more akin to notions of ethnicity. In other words, neither the politics nor the faith of most victims was as important as their ‘perceived religion’. It was the ethnic categorisation of the victim as ‘Catholic’ or ‘Protestant’ rather than their politics or religious beliefs that caused them to be discriminated against. In Northern Ireland for example there was an obvious similarity with the operation of the Race Relations Act in Britain. Where religious categories overlapped with ethnic ones – as in the case of ‘Jew’, there was no issue that the category should be afforded the protection of the legislation. Even though ‘Jew’ is a formally religious label, the instruction ‘no Jews need apply’ was outlawed. In the majority of fair employment cases, the categories ‘Protestant’ and ‘Catholic’ were being used in precisely this ethnic sense.

Equality Coalition

Community Relations/Good Relations

- [21]. A related but distinct paradigm also developed in the development of a community relations paradigm for addressing sectarian division in Northern Ireland. While this drew directly on US and UK community relations approaches to managing racism, it was resistant to identifying sectarianism as a racism. It played little part in the efforts to extend some form of British anti-racism relationship to Northern Ireland. This all changed, however, in the wake of the GFA.
- [22]. When the Community Relations Council launched its *A Good Relations Framework: An Approach to the development of Good Relations* in 2006, 'dealing with' racism had been unambiguously integrated into the community relations/ good relations paradigm:
- Those who have worked on anti-racism and anti-sectarianism approaches in Northern Ireland have acquired decades of experience. The promotion of good relations requires that both these areas of expertise be joined together to provide an approach that will enable racism and sectarianism *to be addressed equally and together*. (2004: 5, emphasis added)
- [23]. When the state's 'Good Relations' strategy emerged in the OFMDFM (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister) *A Shared Future* document in 2005 (2005b), the synthesis was complete.⁶ The blueprint for the 'Good Relations' response to racism and sectarianism was in place. This has largely continued. This 'convergence' is important since it further undermines the case for the exceptionalism of sectarianism – since the things are being addressed equally and together, it further begs the question of whether there is any substantive difference at all.
- [24]. As we will see, developments in England and Wales and Scotland also continued to support convergence. The recognition of both 'anti-Irish racism' and 'institutional religious intolerance' alongside a broader acceptance of the rising importance of addressing Islamophobia encouraged a British version of what the international community had recognised as 'intersectionality'.
- [25]. However, the continued failure to 'go the final step' and identify sectarianism as a form of racism carries with it many contradictions. For example, the PSNI, suggests in its 'hate crimes' definitions:

⁶ Although technically this emerged in a period of Direct Rule during a period of suspension of the devolved post-GFA institutions.

The term 'sectarian', whilst not clearly defined, is a term almost exclusively used in Northern Ireland to describe incidents of bigoted dislike or hatred of members of a different religious or political group. It is broadly accepted that within the Northern Ireland context an individual or group must be perceived to be Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist, or Loyalist or Republican.⁷

This approach leads to *three* separate categories of hate crime – 'racist', 'sectarian' and 'religious'. These are thus recorded in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) Report:

In Northern Ireland, 990 incidents and 771 crimes with a racist motivation were recorded in 2008/09; 46 incidents and 35 crimes with a faith/religion motivation were recorded in the same period, and 1595 incidents and 1017 crimes with a sectarian motivation were recorded. While the figures for crimes with a faith/religion motivation showed a decrease on the previous year, crimes with racist motivations increased. Amongst the crimes recorded, around 40% of crimes with a racist or sectarian motivation were violent crimes, as were 17.1% of crimes with a faith/religion motivation.⁸

- [26]. So in this definition of sectarianism the phenomenon is disconnected from both 'race' and 'faith/religion', whatever sectarianism is about, it isn't about either racism or religion. This is the clearest manifestation of the exceptionalist approach.
- [27]. In contrast new interventions like the '[Together](#)' document⁹ appear to collapse the difference between racism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland almost completely (OFMDFM 2014). Here the new paradigm of 'good relations' is used to integrate racism and sectarianism and separate them from other rights and equalities constituencies and issues. They become 'twin blights' to be addressed together and, just as importantly, largely separately from other forms of discrimination or hate. Either way, it becomes increasingly difficult to ignore the profound overlap between 'religion' and race in much of this approach.
- [28]. There are also specific reasons for looking at England and Wales and Scotland alongside the broad point that they are part of UK state reporting and implementation responsibilities. First there are issues in terms of good and bad practice – the Macpherson report and its outworkings remains a high

⁷ PSNI Annual Statistical Report: Report No. 3, Hate Incidents and Crimes, 1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009, pp4-5.

⁸ ECRI Report on the United Kingdom (fourth monitoring cycle) CM(2010)10 add4, paragraph 126

⁹ OFMDFM (May 2013) Together Building a United Community Strategy
<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community>

Equality Coalition

water mark on racial justice. This episode was less connected to international standards than domestic politics and justice but there are crucial lessons to be learned from Macpherson as well as other lessons from the relatively progressive regime on race in England and Wales. Second, the issue of 'readacross' continues to impact anti-discrimination –it appears that sometimes reforms are not progressed because of the impact they might have on other political issues.¹⁰ Finally, developments in England and Wales and Scotland illustrate important – and strikingly different – tendencies in the wider engagement with sectarianism. In England and Wales – post Macpherson there is a general tendency towards 'convergence' – a recognition of the overlap between the categories of 'religion' and 'race'; in Scotland a continuing struggle to make sense of the 'exceptionalism' of sectarianism as something that, however defined, isn't racism. Moreover, the currency in Britain of addressing 'institutional religious intolerance' in particular begs the question of what such an approach might bring to Northern Ireland. In this context, it is remarkable that the implications of the Mubarek Inquiry into the racist murder of a Muslim in custody do not seem to have informed policy in Northern Ireland at all. This kind of omission seems attributable – at least in part – to the ongoing desire to maintain racism and sectarianism as 'separated discourses'.

1.4.England and Wales**Race Relations Act 1976, Mandla v Lee and the Equality Act 2010**

- [29]. It bears emphasis that the 2010 Equality Act marked the formal convergence of race and religion (alongside other 'groups') in British anti-discrimination legislation. In other words, the festishing of the difference between racism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland appears very odd once the intersectionality embedded in contemporary approaches in the rest of the UK is recognised. This was already compounded by the outworking of Race Relations legislation, in particular the *Mandla v Lee* case which has become definitive in the jurisprudence of ethnicity:

For a group to constitute an ethnic group in the sense of the 1976 Act, it must, in my opinion, regard itself, and be regarded by others, as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics. Some of these characteristics are essential; others are not essential but one or more

¹⁰ Here the failure to introduce anti-racist legislation in Northern Ireland is a classic example – this appeared less consequent on the concern to continue to discriminate legally against BME people in NI than on concerns that this might impact on sectarian discrimination.

of them will commonly be found and will help to distinguish the group from the surrounding community. The conditions which appear to me to be essential are these: (1) a long shared history, of which the group is conscious as distinguishing it from other groups, and the memory of which it keeps alive; (2) a cultural tradition of its own, including family and social customs and manners, *often but not necessarily associated with religious observance*. In addition to those two essential characteristics the following characteristics are, in my opinion, relevant: (3) either a common geographical origin, or descent from a small number of common ancestors; (4) a common language, not necessarily peculiar to the group; (5) a common literature peculiar to the group; (6) a common religion different from that of neighbouring groups or from the general community surrounding it; (7) being a minority or being an oppressed or a dominant group within a larger community, for example conquered people (say, the inhabitants of England shortly after the Norman conquest) and their conquerors might both be ethnic groups. ([1983] 1 All ER pp. 1066-7, emphasis added).

- [30]. The case itself concerns an identity which is at least as explicitly 'religious' as 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' in Northern Ireland – discrimination against a Sikh child because of his use of a religious symbol. Moreover it goes on to identify religion as a key element within the indication of ethnicity. Thus in the definitive UK test case on ethnicity, religion and religious identity is already inextricably connected to race. The Race Relations Act 1976 provided the template for the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. *Mandla v Lee* was a key referent in discussions leading up to the Order and proved crucial in the naming of Travellers as a group protected by the Order.¹¹

Criminal Justice Act 1991

- [31]. Section 95 of the [Criminal Justice Act 1991](#) has resulted in comprehensive ethnic monitoring across criminal justice system in England and Wales. This states that:

The Secretary of State shall in each year publish such information as he considers expedient for the purpose of facilitating the performance of those engaged in the administration of justice to avoid discriminating

¹¹ Ironically, if the *Mandla* case were brought in Northern Ireland it seems likely that it would be taken as a fair employment case - given the centrality of Sikhism to the case. In other words, the case that was definitive of ethnicity in England and Wales would not be recognised as race discrimination in Northern Ireland. Integrating race and fair employment law would avoid some of these more bizarre contradictions.

Equality Coalition

against any persons on the ground of race or sex or any other improper ground.

[32]. The consequent data brings together statistical information on the representation of BME people as suspects, offenders and victims within the Criminal Justice System and as employees/practitioners within criminal justice agencies. This allows appropriate critical engagement with other non-statutory actors on race and criminal justice. It provides key baseline data in order to examine the three core questions on race and criminal justice concerning victimisation, criminalisation and employment.

Table A: Overview of Race and the Criminal Justice System: Proportion of individuals in the CJS by ethnic group compared to general population, England and Wales 2012

	White	Black	Asian	Mixed	Chinese or Other	Unknown
Population aged 10 or	87.1%	3.1%	6.4%	1.7%	1.7%	-
Stop and Searches (s1)	67.1%	14.2%	10.3%	2.9%	1.3%	4.2%
Arrests	79.5%	8.3%	5.9%	3.0%	1.4%	1.8%
Cautions	83.9%	7.0%	5.2%	-	1.4%	2.6%
Court Proceedings (Indictable)	71.4%	7.8%	4.7%	1.9%	1.1%	13.1%
Convictions (indictable)	73.2%	7.5%	4.5%	1.8%	1.1%	11.9%
Sentenced to Immediate Custody (Indictable)	70.6%	8.9%	5.5%	1.9%	1.7%	11.4%

[33]. There is obviously a key question to what a similar overview might reveal in Northern Ireland – in terms of both BME and sectarian identities.¹² This would be important positive innovative addition to the state’s contribution on racism and should be provided to meet existing international obligations on minimum standards.¹³

¹² Recent research in [The Detail](#) on sectarian disparities in the Prison Service offers one example of what this might look like. The key point is that this information should be provided upfront by the state as part of its equality duties – as it is in the CJS Race data - rather than extracted via Freedom of Information requests (McCracken 2014).

¹³ For example, the Prison Review Team (2011) offers one example of what this might look like. But this kind of monitoring should be routine and should be made with regard to ethnicity as well as ‘religion’ or ‘community background’.

Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and Macpherson Report

[34]. Macpherson defined 'racism' and 'institutional racism' thus:

"Racism" in general terms consists of conduct or words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as in its overt form. "Institutional Racism" consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.

It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (MacPherson 1999: 6.4, 6.34).

[35]. Crucially Macpherson addressed the notion of institutional racism with specific reference to the criminal justice system. None of this analysis should suggest that Macpherson was 'perfect' – it diluted earlier definitions of 'institutional racism' and there are many more radical approaches to anti-racism. Recent revelations suggest that the inquiry was profoundly compromised by 'secret policing'. Moreover, it can hardly be claimed to have ended 'institutional racism' in the UK – or even the Metropolitan Police – over the past 15 years. Nevertheless, Macpherson represents a high watermark in UK state anti-racism and an important international model for both other states and other jurisdictions within the UK.

Mubarek Inquiry and Keith Report

[36]. Finally the discussion of sectarianism in Northern Ireland should also pay specific attention to the *Mubarek Inquiry*. This engaged with institutional racism in the British prison service in some detail. It also has wider implications in terms of the interface of race and religion and criminal justice – these are particularly important obviously in terms of Northern Ireland:

The Inquiry's terms of reference did not, of course, permit it to investigate generally how Muslim prisoners are treated in prison. It is an important topic which should be properly investigated by professionals in the field. But the perception that Islamophobia is on the rise highlights the fact that the definition of institutional racism adopted by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry focused on discrimination and prejudice because of a person's colour, culture or ethnic origin. It did not refer to the person's religion. There is no reason why institutional prejudice should be limited to race, and thought should be given by the

Equality Coalition

Home Office to recognising the concept of institutional religious intolerance. (Keith 2006: Volume 2: 617)

- [37]. In consequence, Keith argues, 'Since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry's definition of institutional racism was accepted by the Government, there is no reason why it should not be adapted to define institutional religious intolerance':

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their religion. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage people of a particular religion. (Keith 2006: Volume 1 546, 62.27)

- [38]. Thus there is a general tendency towards 'convergence' or intersectionality in the context of England and Wales:

The Ministry of Justice Head of Profession for Statistics is responsible for the content and timing of Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System, and takes very seriously the view of users of the publication. Police data on racially or religiously aggravated offences have been published in the report since 2002 and tables showing the figures for individual police force areas have been published since 2003. Due to the way in which police figures are recorded, it is not possible to separate offences that are racially aggravated from those that are religiously aggravated.... The religion and belief of defendants and victims has been collected by the Crown Prosecution Service since April 2007, and we are assessing data quality for inclusion in the next publication. The Ministry of Justice's chief statistician is responsible for the timing and content of statistical releases and will ensure that if the data are of sufficient quality it will be published.¹⁴

- [39]. Thus while the British model fails to disaggregate racially and religiously-aggravated offences, the interest in recording and identifying both is not specific to Northern Ireland. Moreover, convergence between race and religion categories appears to be increasing.

¹⁴ House of Lords, Written answers and statements, 22 October 2010 Hansard source (Citation: HL Deb, 22 October 2010, c205W)

1.5.Scotland

- [40]. Scotland followed a slightly different path following the Macpherson Report. Although Scotland had a devolved criminal justice system and was not directly addressed by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, there was a period of intense activity in Scotland in response to Macpherson (Scottish Executive 1999; Scottish Parliament 2000; Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Steering Group 2001.) It bears emphasis that this contrasts starkly with the absence of similar intervention in Northern Ireland (NICEM 2013).
- [41]. More specifically there has also been recent intervention on sectarianism with much closer reference to Northern Ireland – addressing relations between Protestants and Catholics in Scotland with frequent reference to the politics and culture of Northern Ireland (Scottish Government 2013) (This follows similar work by Scottish NGOs like Nil By Mouth (2014). From the perspective of the *Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland*:

Sectarianism in Scotland is related to, but distinct from, racism and other forms of religious bigotry such as anti-Semitism or Islamophobia. We do not make any judgement here that sectarianism is more or less serious than any other form of discrimination or hostility, but believe that it, too, should be acknowledged and acted against in a systematic way and on the basis of evidence. (2013: 13)¹⁵

- [42]. The working definition of 'intra-Christian sectarianism' is:

Sectarianism in Scotland is a complex of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, actions and structures, at personal and communal levels, which originate in religious difference and can involve a negative mixing of religion with politics, sporting allegiance and national identifications. It arises from a distorted expression of identity and belonging.

It is expressed in destructive patterns of relating which segregate, exclude, discriminate against or are violent towards a specified religious other, with significant personal and social consequences. (2013: 18)¹⁶

¹⁵ However the Advisory Committee also insists, 'Anti-Irishness, in a cultural sense, is clearly a form of racism and should be named as such' (2013: 18).

¹⁶ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) – Final report on the United Kingdom adopted by ECRI at its 50th plenary meeting (15-18 December 2009), paragraph 126

Equality Coalition

- [43]. The emphasis on religion in the Scottish definition appears odd. Especially since the definition appears to be at pains to insist that it is not about religion. In further 'Notes on the working definition':

It is always difficult to compress complex concepts into short working definitions; the process risks losing nuance and, ultimately, intelligibility. Here we outline some reflections on the working definition to aid understanding.... Our definition does not presuppose that those who engage in sectarian behaviour are currently religious believers or have religious motivation; only that the original difference had a religious element. In some circumstances that element may now be lost, leaving, perhaps, only 'them' and 'us' opposition. (2013: 18)

- [44]. This ambiguity appears bizarre since what is often regarded as the paradigmatic example of Scottish sectarianism – the 1923 Church of Scotland publication *The Menace of the Irish Race to our Scottish Nationality* – makes the race and nationality element explicit. This is a religious institution, making a broadly religious intervention but its concern is unambiguously about 'race'. It is important obviously to continue to learn from the Scottish process but it might be suggested that some of the limitations of the definition follow from not situating the work in terms of international standards. More positively the response of the Scottish Government to Macpherson provides an example of how a devolved administration might respond more proactively to the notion of 'institutional racism'.

1.6.UN and Council of Europe

- [45]. In short, recent developments within the different jurisdictions of the UK suggest a broad convergence of race and religion based discriminations but they also, less helpfully, continue to confuse different elements. Fortunately recent work in Northern Ireland has seen sectarianism increasingly rooted in international standards. In fact, to some extent the broader ongoing discussion around the nature of sectarianism is a moot point with regard to human rights discourse since any ambiguity has been removed by recent decisions of the UN and Council of Europe.

In other words in terms of human rights and equality discourse, there is no ambiguity – *for the purposes of human rights law sectarian identity is to be regarded as an ethnicity and sectarianism as a form of racism*. This emerges from general trends on race and ethnicity as well as specific discussion of racism in Northern Ireland.

- [46]. Thus generally ethnicity has been read broadly and exclusively. Regarding the question of who belongs to which group, it is the opinion of the Committee

on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) that the identification of individuals as being members of a particular racial or ethnic group, 'shall, if no justification exists to the contrary, be based upon self-identification by the individuals concerned'.¹⁷

- [47]. In other words should either Protestants or Catholics self-identify as an ethnic group this would be enough to bring them into CERD in the absence of justification to the contrary. Moreover, either group can self-identify in this way so it would be enough for one group to so identify. It is also clear that justification to the contrary should involve a higher standard of proof. If a state is to so justify, it has to do it in a robust and non-arbitrary manner. Thus, for example, India maintains the position that discrimination based on caste falls outside the scope of the ICERD Article 1 and the Convention is not applicable in this case. However, taking note of such argument and after having an extensive exchange of views with the State party, the Committee still "maintains its position expressed in general recommendation No. 29" and "reaffirms that discrimination based on the ground of caste is fully covered by article 1 of the Convention." The Irish Government has been similarly criticized for its failure to recognise Traveller ethnicity.
- [48]. In terms of the specific case of sectarianism in Northern Ireland in international human rights discourse, there has been a process of discussion at both UN and Council of Europe levels. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission reiterating the position that sectarianism needs to be recognised as a form of racism put this to CERD to make clear that sectarian discrimination falls under Article 1(1) of the Convention, Which would make clear sectarianism is to be placed within the international framework for tackling racism in all its forms. In relation to this issue the Committee decisively ruled:

Sectarian discrimination in Northern Ireland and physical attacks against religious minorities and their places of worship attract the provisions of ICERD in the context of "intersectionality" between religion and racial discrimination (CERD 2011: 2)

- [49]. The Concluding Observations of the Committee also raised the specific concern that official anti-sectarian strategies in Northern Ireland ignore the

¹⁷ Although CERD jurisprudence suggests that this is slightly more complicated. The ICERD practice is not to include any group solely differentiated on religion as falling under its definition of racial discrimination – it will only do so where there is overlap with the other indicators of ethnicity in article 1(1). 'Protestants' and 'Catholics' in Northern Ireland do overlap in this way – given descent, national identity and so on - this is where the 'intersectionality' issue comes from (Thornberry 2008).

Equality Coalition

CERD and the Durban Declaration frameworks. They asked the UK to re-examine this and specifically look at applying CERD/Durban to anti-sectarianism policy and to report back to the Committee at the next examination as to the advisability of adopting a holistic approach to all.

- [50]. Later in 2011 the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for National Minorities directly addressed the exceptionalist approach:

[T]he Advisory Committee finds the approach in the CSI Strategy to treat sectarianism as a distinct issue rather than as a form of racism problematic, as it allows sectarianism to fall outside the scope of accepted anti-discrimination and human rights protection standards. Similarly, the CSI Strategy has developed the concept of “good relations” apparently to substitute the concept of intercultural dialogue and integration of society. (CoE 2011: 25)¹⁸

- [51]. The key point is that this issue doesn't have to be endlessly reworked. The key international bodies have already accepted the analysis that sectarianism is a form of racism. The UK does not appear to dispute this approach (In contrast, for example, to the Irish approach to Traveller ethnicity with CERD). While there may remain outstanding definitional issues in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland which will have implications for Northern Ireland, the key work is already completed. The core definition is that 'sectarianism is a form of racism'.

1.7. Defining sectarianism

- [52]. In grounding any definition, it is important to note the distinction between *ethnicity* (alongside other identity grounds like religious or national identity) which is either 'good' or neutral and to be protected and *racism* (which is generally accepted as 'bad' and which should be eradicated). Both of these elements are central to the defining process in racism and yet they involve very different dynamics. Thus if the process is focussed on *ethnicity* as a qualifier for protection from racism we get something akin to the *Mandla v Lee* judgement on ethnicity in England and Wales outlined above.
- [53]. If, in contrast, we focus on *racism* we get something like the definitive UNESCO *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice*:

¹⁸ As if to further illustrate 'intersectionality', this document also describes sectarianism as 'anti-Irish racism'. While some sectarianism in Scotland is unambiguously anti-Irish racism, some isn't and requires a broader, more inclusive categorisation (like 'sectarianism' or 'ethnicity').

1. Any theory which involves the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently superior or inferior, thus implying that some would be entitled to dominate or eliminate others, presumed to be inferior, or which bases value judgements on racial differentiation, has no scientific foundation and is contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity.

2. Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutionalised practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts; it hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practice it, divides nations internally, impedes international co-operation and gives rise to political tensions between peoples; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, consequently, seriously disturbs international peace and security.

3. Racial prejudice, historically linked with inequalities in power, reinforced by economic and social differences between individuals and groups, and still seeking today to justify such inequalities, is totally without justification. ([UNESCO](#), 1978).

- [54]. There are explicit (and implicit) definitions of both ethnicity and racism in the ICERD process. In the context of Northern Ireland, therefore, defining begs two separate questions. First, are the categories 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' ethnicities (or, alternatively, 'races' or 'colours' or 'languages' or 'nationalities' or 'national or ethnic origins')? Second, is sectarianism a form of racism? As suggested above, the literature is in comprehensive agreement that inequality and discrimination in Northern Ireland has *something* to do with ethnicity – this in itself is a sufficient standard of proof for protection under international mechanisms. Ethnicity is probably the most permissive of all these categories, so it is the simplest to address but we can also observe in passing that discrimination and inequality in Northern Ireland has also included many of the other CERD and ECRI categories.
- [55]. In other words, providing we accept that there is no reasonable case for arguing that sectarianism has *nothing* to do with ethnicity and racism, we have a starting point for a more constructive engagement with international standards and practices on racism. Regarding sectarianism as a form of racism is the intellectually soundest and most practical approach. In this context the *defining work falls on the word racism rather than the word sectarianism*.

Equality Coalition

- [56]. For example, the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) draws directly on The Council of Europe specialist body in the field, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) to move this forward (CAJ 2013a). ECRI, in its recommendation on key elements of legislation against racism and racial discrimination, defines racism as follows:
- “racism” shall mean the belief that a ground such as race,¹⁹ colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons, or the notion of superiority of a person or a group of persons.
- [57]. Thus using the ICERD definition we get something like the CAJ suggestion:
- Sectarianism shall mean the belief that a ground such as religion, political opinion, language, nationality or national or ethnic origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons, or the notion of superiority of a person or a group of persons. (CAJ 2013a)²⁰
- [58]. By implication there is something about group identities in Northern Ireland that qualifies them for protection from racism – in other words, the ‘perceived religions’ ‘Protestant’ and ‘Catholic’ are ethnicities in the context of Northern Ireland. As we have observed, other categories – such as ‘national identity’ or ‘race’ - would clearly apply even if ethnicity did not. For example, the instruction that, ‘No Irish need apply’ would be unlawful currently in Northern Ireland as it is in England and Wales. In such a case, at minimum, those citizens of Northern Ireland who hold Irish passports would have recourse to protection by the Race Relations Order on the grounds of both race and national identity.
- [59]. This point also begs the question of some of the practical difficulties of defining sectarianism in law. The current ‘separated discourses’ approach to race and sectarian equality legislation at least raises the issue of having different legislative regimes for different categories of equality. At present, this is dealt with by trying to keep the regimes separate. For example, the RRO is framed as *not* including any group defined by religious belief and political

¹⁹ ECRI qualifies the use of the term Race by stating “Since all human beings belong to the same species, ECRI rejects theories based on the existence of different “races”. However, in this Recommendation ECRI uses this term in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as belonging to “another race” are not excluded from the protection provided for by the legislation.”

²⁰ ‘CAJ, ‘urges the definition of sectarianism in legislation to draw on international standards relating to racism and draws attention to the above definition, itself derived from recommendations from the Council of Europe specialist agency’. Committee on the Administration of Justice, August 2013.

opinion. Likewise FETO does not allow claims on nationality.²¹ Of course, the simple solution to this is to accept that sectarianism is a form of racism and integrate anti-racism within one ethnicity and racism regime. Such integration should take place on a best practice rather than a lowest common denominator approach. In other words, disparities between the anti-racist and anti-sectarian regimes should be resolved on a 'levelling up' rather than a 'levelling down' basis. In fact, there has been an ongoing discussion regarding a commitment to a single equality act for Northern Ireland - and this could have led to an easy resolution of this issue.

- [60]. This does not mean of course that sectarianism should *not* be regarded as a *specific form* of racism. In other words there is every reason to continue to use the term 'sectarianism' as a discrete subset of all racisms in Northern Ireland. This approach helps name the specificity of the dynamic between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland whilst acknowledging that this belongs within the wider paradigm of ethnicity and racism. Like 'antisemitism' or 'Islamophobia' or 'antigypsyism', the recognition of specificity facilitates understanding and addressing of specific features within the context of broader work.²² In the context of England and Wales anti-Irish racism has been used in just this way to distinguish between the experience of the Irish in Britain and BME groups.
- [61]. Likewise, interventions on antisemitism will be different from interventions on antigypsyism, not because they are not both forms of racism but because the specificity of their impacts sometimes demands a differential approach. In other words, there remains a point in continuing to engage with the question of the specificity of sectarianism beyond recognition that it is a form of racism.
- [62]. It is also the case the BME communities will want to maintain recognition of the specificity of their experience of racism in Northern Ireland and the continued use of the term sectarianism in the sense above allows this to happen.
- [63]. Moreover, it is likely that definitional issues will continue to be live in Northern Ireland because the issue of specificity will be regarded as central to anti-sectarian practice. In this context, the definition of sectarianism still remains important. (In other words, we cannot let the word racism do *all* the work.) In this vein the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) suggests:

²¹ This also suggests that the simplest legislative device to remove the separation of racism and sectarianism in discrimination law in Northern Ireland would be to remove either or both of these exclusions from existing legislation.

²² CERD's own work on 'people of African descent' is a further example specific to the ICERD process.

Equality Coalition

Sectarianism should be considered as a form of racism specific to the Irish context. Sectarianism is the diversity of prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and practices between members of the two majority communities in and about Northern Ireland, who may be defined as Catholic or Protestant; Irish or British; Nationalist or Unionist; Republican or Loyalist; or combinations thereof. (Jarman 2012: 10)

- [64]. My own definitional work is broadly similar to these approaches. It also makes clear the centrality of violence to the dynamics of sectarianism.²³ This focus on violence is at least a reminder of why international protection matters so much. While much of the discussion focuses on discrimination or 'good relations, in Northern Ireland sectarianism is most brutally characterised by – and experienced as – violence. This includes assault, intimidation and widespread population movement, 'ethnic cleansing' and a society divided by 'peace walls' – alongside the ubiquity of the aforementioned 'genocidal imperative'. In practical terms this means that the criminal justice system should be at least as central to anti-sectarianism as anti-discrimination or 'good relations' mechanisms.
- [65]. It is perhaps useful to try and conceptualize these different dimensions to sectarianism as help to the defining process (see Table B below). The key issue is that any definition must be capable of embracing the *totality* of sectarianism – it is dangerous and counterproductive to equate it solely with one aspect – such as discrimination or 'good relations'. Moreover, while generally we might expect a synergy between these dimensions, this isn't necessarily the case. Crucially any definition must be able to encompass and critique what the state does or does not do – alongside the widespread tendency to focus on 'evil' behaviour by individuals or communities. It bears emphasis that each of these areas can learn from existing good practice on race and racism in the UK and elsewhere.

²³ I have suggested the following definition: 'Sectarianism in Ireland is that changing set of ideas and practices, including, crucially, acts of violence, which serves to construct and reproduce the difference between, and unequal status of, Irish Protestants and Catholics'. (McVeigh 1995: 643).

Criminal Justice	Discrimination	Good Relations
Addresses sectarian violence and intimidation. Key issues include sectarian hate crime and 'chill factor' but also full gamut of race and criminal justice issues addressed by Macpherson Report. It should therefore be able to engage reflexively with the notions of 'institutional sectarianism' and 'institutional racism'. It should provide baseline data that is at least as robust as CJS statistics on race.	Addresses sectarian discrimination. Key issues includes discrimination in employment and goods and services (including crucially housing and education). Includes traditional fair treatment interventions against sectarian discrimination. It should provide baseline data that is at least as robust as EHRC statistics on ethnicity.	Addresses community/good relations between 'Protestants' and 'Catholics' Key issues include need to define good relations interventions in context of any legally grounded definition of sectarianism. Should abandon 'exceptionalism' and focus on the process of 'tackling prejudice' and 'promoting understanding'.

- [66]. Broadly, however, there is not a huge difference between the CAJ and ICR definitions and either of them should be able to address the full range of manifestations of sectarianism from 'institutional racism' to 'good relations'. The CAJ offers a definition rooted in international law; the ICR focuses more on the specificity of the dynamic in Northern Ireland. Crucially both definitions recognise that sectarianism should be seen as a form of racism. The ICR process shows an ongoing engagement with the notion of sectarianism as a form of racism - by both NGOs and the statutory sector - particularly significantly key actors in the criminal justice system CJS (Jarman 2012). Moreover both approaches recognise that there is a pressing need for clarity of definition in support of anti-sectarian practice. Whatever the nuance here, the key point is that *there should be a definition of sectarianism embedded in law*.
- [67]. On this the 'Together' strategy states that, 'appropriate consensus will be sought around issues including a definition of sectarianism in the draft legislation emerging from the strategy' (OFMDFM 2014: 19). CAJ and others welcomed this important aim, and stressed the importance of correctly defining sectarianism in legislation. In the present context, despite the term being regularly used by public authorities, there is often no official definition. At other times restrictive or vague definitions are adopted that tend to defer to limited interpersonal manifestations of sectarianism - particularly hate crimes. The tentative definition offered in Together threatens to continue this process:

For the purposes of this Strategy, sectarianism is defined as:
threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour or attitudes towards a

Equality Coalition

person by reason of that person's religious belief or political opinion; or to an individual as a member of such a group. (OFMDFM 2014: 19)²⁴

- [68]. As has already been suggested, it is neither helpful nor sustainable to argue in terms of the *exceptionalism* of sectarianism. As is detailed above, the primary treaty bodies dealing with anti-racism at United Nations and Council of Europe level have both stated that sectarianism in Northern Ireland should be treated as a specific form of racism. Moreover we can suggest that this approach is much more likely to make the notion of ethnicity 'work' in Northern Ireland. It is important that the concept is made 'fit for purpose' in terms of the provision of baseline data. Currently the census defines ethnicity primarily in terms of *colour* – thus 98.21% of residents are defined solely as 'white'.²⁵ This does nothing to capture the ethnic complexity of Northern Ireland and nothing to help construct policy or practice on ethnicity. There is an urgent need to find a methodology for 'deconstructing whiteness' in order to provide a statistical basis for equality work – as well as all the many other issues that might correlate with ethnicity. Regarding 'Protestants' and 'Catholics' as separate ethnicities would allow a much more nuanced and accurate approach to ethnicity and equality in contemporary Northern Ireland.
- [69]. It is important to suggest that the reference to international human rights principles need not be the whole story on understanding sectarianism as a form of racism. International law indicates the minimum standards established by the international community and these, of course, should be adhered to. It is, however, possible to suggest that the British state position post-Macpherson provided a stronger, more proactive definition of racism, particularly *institutional racism*. It would be odd, therefore, to ignore this in the context of another part of the UK, particularly in the context of reporting to international mechanisms. The recognition of institutional racism was the major step forward in the Macpherson process in England and Wales. It is possible to suggest that it has not been adopted in NI with regard to either racism against BME groups or sectarianism. While meeting the minimum standards enforced by international mechanisms would be an important first step towards better anti-sectarian practice in Northern Ireland, there is every reason to simultaneously integrate best practice definitions from England and Wales.

²⁴ This definition was put forward for the NI 2011 Justice Act – to define not sectarianism per se – but sectarian chanting at sports matches. It almost went through but fell as it was argued that this definition might outlaw 'legitimate' political chanting at football matches. Practice in Scotland has seen similar difficulties with 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' expressions of political opinion.

²⁵ Source: NI Census 2011: Table KS201NI: Ethnic Group.

- [70]. Finally, in terms of international standards and the ongoing debate around defining sectarianism in Northern Ireland, perhaps the most questionable aspect of existing definitions is the use of *political opinion* as a proxy indicator for ethnicity. (This element is also retained in the CAJ definition.) 'Political opinion' is included as a 'ground' in anti-discrimination law in NI because it was and is a basis for indirect discrimination (or more simplistically because the legislator's intent was to prevent the defence of 'I didn't discriminate because s/he was Protestant/Catholic but because s/he was nationalist/unionist').
- [71]. More generally, however, it is usual to regard 'political identity' as a formal choice – in the same way that most religious belief is a formal choice. Whether such choices need the same level of protection as ethnicity from international law is a moot point. This becomes even more problematic at the point at which such choices undermine other people's human rights. For example, it would seem difficult to persuade most people that the right to be a Nazi Party member is deserving of international protection.
- [72]. In the ICCPR, for example, 'political or other opinion' is protected separately from race. Moreover, international standards do not include political opinion in constructions of ethnicity. In other words, the international practice is that ideological/party affiliation shouldn't sit within 'race' and ethnicity protections. This may be a separate philosophical discussion and it bears emphasis that the 'political opinion' ground was included within the fair employment paradigm for good reason. My own opinion, however, is that this should be removed from race and equality precisely because it does not sit easily with international practice. Arguably, once sectarianism is regarded as a form of racism, and the categories 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' as ethnicities, the reasons for the inclusion of 'political opinion' in fair employment legislation are removed.

1.8. Ethnicity Denial

- [73]. It is important that once the implications of ICERD and CoE rulings are understood that they are followed through. While it is both positive and crucial to see that there appears to be no current ethnicity denial by the UK state regarding Northern Ireland Protestants and Catholics, there is some evidence of resistance by some non-state actors. Despite the evidence, ethnicity denial continues through the exceptionalism of sectarianism approach. In this context it is useful to look at some of this debate in terms of broader international law on ethnicity. First, because this helps further clarify issues around 'ethnicity denial' and what it is appropriate for governments to both do and not do in terms of repudiating the ethnicity of different groups. Second, because the current position of some NGOs and the NI Government position

Equality Coalition

has profoundly negative implications for international law and practice on this issue (McVeigh 2009).

- [74]. As we have already seen, the general principle of ethnicity recognition is well established in international law. Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes that “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language”.
- [75]. This approach is confirmed by the UN Human Rights Committee: ‘The question of the existence of minorities is addressed by the Human Rights Committee in its general comment No. 23 (1994) on the rights of minorities, which elaborates that “the existence of an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority in a given State party does not depend upon a decision by that State party but requires to be established by objective criteria”. This approach is further supported by CERD and ILO confirmation of the principle of ‘self-identification’.²⁶
- [76]. The issue of ethnicity denial was further interrogated in the 2011 Mission to Rwanda. Ethnicity was not to be ignored or denied even for the best reasons (legacy of genocide):

12. While the independent expert recognizes the unique history of Rwanda, the policies of the Government must be assessed as against the State’s obligations under international human rights law. Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes that “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group,

to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language”. The question of the existence of minorities is addressed by the Human Rights Committee in its general comment No. 23 (1994) on the rights of minorities, which elaborates that “the

²⁶ The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination stated in its general recommendation No. 8 (1990) on identification with a particular racial or ethnic group (art. 1, paras. 1 and 4) that “such identification shall, if no justification exists to the contrary, be based upon self-identification by the individual concerned”. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries also recognizes the principle of self-identification. Article 1, paragraph 2, states that “self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply”.

existence of an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority in a given State party does not depend upon a decision by that State party but requires to be established by objective criteria”.

13. Considering identification with particular racial or ethnic groups, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has stated in its general recommendation No. 8 (1990) on identification with a particular racial or ethnic group (art. 1, paras. 1 and 4) that “such identification shall, if no justification exists to the contrary, be based upon self-identification by the individual concerned”....

14. The right of individuals to freely identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic, religious or linguistic group is therefore well-established in international law. It is also notable that the existence of a common language or culture does not necessarily negate the possibility of ethnic difference, but may rather be evidence of assimilation of different population groups over generations. Domestic law relevant to ethnicity, identity, minority status, equality and non-discrimination should recognize such rights and ensure that no individual or group suffers from any disadvantage or discriminatory treatment on the basis of their freely chosen identity as belonging to (or not belonging to) an ethnic, religious, linguistic or any other group. (McDougall 2011)

- [77]. In short, the protection of ethnic identity is well grounded in international law. Moreover, ethnicity denial – even when it occurs for professedly positive reasons - is not tolerated by international human rights mechanisms. It bears emphasis that neither non-state actors nor *governments should deny ethnicity without careful assessment of the evidence and without consideration of the implications of such a policy*. There is no evidence that the UK government would want to deny the recognition of sectarianism as a form of racism in the CERD and CoE analyses nor any indication that it would refuse to supply appropriate data to either body to help it ensure best practice in delivering equality for Protestant and Catholics in Northern Ireland. But if this were to occur it would be a very serious matter with significant consequences.

1.9. Conclusions

- [78]. There has been an increasing focus on race and *intersectionality* in recent years. Recent discourse and practice across difference jurisdictions in the UK has also supported the idea of *convergence* between religious and race discrimination. This further compounds the implicit intersectionality between religion and race embedded in UK law since at least *Mandla v Lee* and copperfastened by the 2010 *Equality Act*. In this context, racism is a clearer and better descriptive for sectarianism in Northern Ireland than ‘institutional

Equality Coalition

religious intolerance'. 'Perceived religious identity' or 'community background' as it is understood in Northern Ireland reflects ethnicity rather than 'faith'. Moreover, following the deliberations of CERD and CoE, even if some academics and good relations practitioners want to continue the wider debate about sectarianism in Northern Ireland *sui generis*, in terms of international law and discourse the process is concluded. Thus the current reality is that whatever else continues, in the context of reporting to and meeting international obligations, the UK and NI governments must operate on the basis that sectarianism is a form of racism and that 'perceived religion' or 'community background' is an ethnicity.

- [79]. More generally it is possible to suggest that intellectual integrity and practice would be improved if the conclusions of the international human rights community were to be accepted and applied in other contexts, notably in 'good relations' approaches. Those who engage in ethnicity denial would do well to remember the advice of the NI Human Rights Commission: 'This risks non-human rights compliant approaches, and non-application of the well-developed normative tools to challenge prejudice, promote tolerance and tackle discrimination found in international standards. In particular, it seriously limits the application of ICERD to Northern Ireland, and therefore obligations on the state to tackle sectarianism along with other forms of racism' (2011). More broadly, accepting sectarianism as a form of racism means that much of the *defining work falls on the word racism rather than the word sectarianism*. Thus what is best and most effective in anti-racist analysis and practice can be mobilised to address sectarianism without losing recognition of the specificity attached to the term.
- [80]. For the most part the objections to the 'sectarianism is a form of racism' thesis appear to be practical. There clearly are concerns that integrating race and fair employment law would produce contradictions such as uneven protections between different inequalities and 'double dipping' – the attempt to bring a case on the grounds of both fair employment and ethnicity. But both of these objections have been around since the advent of anti-discrimination legislation and neither of these is insurmountable. Moreover there is now a simple template in the operation of the single equality act in the UK. From a human rights point of view, we would expect protections to be 'evened' *up* rather than *down* but this is a technical rather than jurisprudential issue.
- [81]. The only other argument that is offered is a 'tactical' one – it is suggested that it is in the interests of either BME groups or Protestants and Catholics to separate the politics of racism from the politics of sectarianism in Northern Ireland. It is dangerous to go too far down the road of 'tactical' discussions of the meanings of terms – international law definitions tend towards 'minimum standards' and they rightly point towards just conclusions however politically

unpalatable the consequences. Nevertheless the key issues in terms of ethnicity and Northern Ireland bear discussion in terms of their broader political impact. First, the tactical approach has not resolved profound issues in terms of BME communities and human rights – Northern Ireland remains in a ‘pre-Macpherson state’ with widespread and routine ‘ethnic cleansing’ of BME communities. Second, the notion that human rights discourse alienates Protestants and unionists has changed somewhat in the post-GFA state – certainly the application of protections to sectarian identities is much more likely to offer practical protection to Protestants now than it did thirty or forty years ago when Protestant/Catholic inequality was much more one-sided and absolute.

[82]. This final point that bears emphasis, initially in sociological and political terms but with human rights implications. Traditionally in Northern Ireland anti-discrimination was a paradigm that was seen to disproportionately ‘advantage’ Catholics. In so far as Catholics were disadvantaged by institutional sectarianism, this was probably broadly true. Although of course this should not matter in terms of human rights discourse, it was central to political discourse around rights and equality. In principle, of course, both Protestants and Catholics were and are protected by anti-discrimination measures and this, of course, is how it should be. But in the new form of state emerging in Northern Ireland, the practical implications of this dynamic have changed and continue to change. In this context such protections may be just as important in reality – as well as principle – to Protestants as Catholics. As Catholics increasingly form the majority in the education sector and the workforce and the state itself, human rights and ethnic equality measures may become as practically important to Protestants in the future as they were to Catholics in the past.

[83]. The Northern Ireland state in 2014 is very different to the one that repudiated the need for anti-racism legislation in 1965 (McVeigh 2013). It is possible to suggest that this new, post-GFA state faces its central challenge in addressing ethnicity and racism. The unwanted sobriquet of ‘race hate capital of the world’ is one indication of a profound problem with racism while on-going political crisis around culture and identity illustrate the continued potential for widespread sectarian conflict. In other words making sense of the specificity of the dynamics of ethnicity and racism is not a minor footnote to understanding contemporary Northern Ireland – it is crucial to the success of the historic compromise of the GFA.

In this context securing a legal definition of sectarianism grounded in international law is central to human rights and equality and, ultimately, to peace itself.

Equality Coalition

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**Good Relations in Northern Ireland:
Towards a Definition in Law**

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Contents

Introduction	Page 1
The evolution of the community relations paradigm	Page 3
Interculturalism: good relations in international law?	Page 5
The evolution, interpretation, application and impact of the 'good relations' paradigm in Northern Ireland	Page 8
The relationship between 'good relations' and human rights, equality and anti- racism goals	Page 13
The definition of 'good relations' in law in Great Britain	Page 16
Recent Debates on incorporating a definition in Northern Ireland	Page 20
Conclusions	Page 24
Bibliography	Page 26

Good Relations in Northern Ireland: Towards a definition in law¹

Introduction

- [1]. This paper gives effect to the commissioning of an expert briefing paper on 'Good Relations in Northern Ireland: towards finding a definition in law'. The paper was to be presented at an Equality Coalition roundtable discussion. The paper was required to cover matters such as: the evolution, interpretation, application and impact of the 'good relations' paradigm in Northern Ireland from its inclusion as s75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, through a 'shared future' to the 'Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) and 'Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC)' strategy; the relationship between 'good relations' on human rights and anti-racism (including sectarianism) goals; the definition of 'good relations' in law in Great Britain and recent debates on incorporating a definition in Northern Ireland. While it stands alone, it can be usefully read in tandem with a previous paper 'Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: Towards a definition in Law', also commissioned by the Equality Coalition.² There are key areas of overlap and many of the challenges of finding a definition in law for good relations are mirrored in the similar attempts to define sectarianism.
- [2]. Recent discussions in Northern Ireland have confirmed that there is little consensus on what good relations involves. There is arguably even less agreement on any definition in law although most actors agree on the *need* for a definition.³ Unfortunately, there is little immediate assistance for any such definition in wider international law – this is not a term that can draw immediately on any existing template. Unlike with human rights or equality, there are no obvious 'minimum standards' on good relations to which we might appeal. Of course, good relations appears to be a societal good – it is hard to be 'against it'. It references a whole

¹ A draft of this paper was presented at an Equality Coalition roundtable in Belfast in September 2014. The paper was informed and improved by the discussion at that roundtable. Since the roundtable was conducted under Chatham House Rules in order to encourage unfettered dialogue, individual contributions are not identified but their contribution is much appreciated. The draft was also improved by comments from Daniel Holder of CAJ, Emma Patterson-Bennett of the Equality Coalition, Patricia McKeown of UNISON and Professor Bill Rolston. Remaining errors of fact or judgement remain my own.

² Expert Briefing Paper by Dr Robbie McVeigh [Sectarianism in Northern Ireland Towards a definition in Law](#) published by the CAJ-UNISON convened Equality Coalition.

³ This consensus on the need for definition was echoed in the roundtable discussion. While participants brought very different perspectives on good relations to the discussion, there was broad consensus on the requirement for definition.

series of social objectives - like reconciliation, integration, sharing or interdependence – that are both hard to oppose and hard to define. Each of these words has multiple interpretations. Like peace itself, the notion of ‘good relations’ seems to straddle a whole continuum from the absence of conflict to the presence of justice.

- [3]. At best the good relations paradigm comes from a different perspective than human rights and equality; at worst, it can be an *alternative to* human rights and equality. For example, its predecessor community relations paradigm emerged when African American resistance to racism was causing widespread unrest across America cities. But it was not referenced when African Americans were enslaved, or when segregation was entrenched in legislation or when lynching was widespread. In other words, the ‘goodness’ of relations can be very one-sided and subjective. It is telling that the community relations intervention in the USA, as characterised by Lyndon B Johnson, was to be a *solution to the civil rights movement* rather than a solution to institutional racism (CRS 2014).
- [4]. In general, therefore, there are broad concerns regarding the tension between community/good relations approaches to conflict and division and those based on equality and human rights. In Northern Ireland this has taken more concrete form around the potential of community and good relations approaches to undermine the equality and human rights obligations of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) – although the primacy of the equality duty remains embedded in law. Moreover there has been a specific concern in Northern Ireland around the practical ‘misuse’ of the good relations duty to avoid or evade equality obligations (CAJ 2013, 2014, 2014a).⁴ There are also specific concerns around the ability of the paradigm to address - rather than disguise - ongoing racist violence against Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities across Northern Ireland (McVeigh and Rolston 2007).
- [5]. These issues acknowledged, there is no getting away from the likelihood that good relations will continue to frame policy in Northern Ireland. There is a developing practice around the paradigm - in Great Britain as well as Northern Ireland. The British model provides a key comparator for work in Northern Ireland. This ‘GB approach’ emerged from race equality work which has employed the community relations paradigm since the 1960s. Moreover, the term good relations *is* defined in law in England and Wales and Scotland and this remains a key referent in discussions in Northern Ireland. This wider good relations work helps us resist the tendency in Northern Ireland towards *exceptionalism* - the insistence that good relations are both profoundly important and undefined and undefinable. If the good relations paradigm is to be given an increased statutory importance, it needs to be

⁴ For example, CAJ and others have been specifically concerned by the ECNI decision to use Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) towards good relations objectives (CAJ 2014: iii).

grounded in a definition that meets the basic principles of clarity of law and allows meaningful measurement across objective indicators of success or failure.

The evolution of the community relations paradigm

- [6]. The community relations paradigm emerged from the federal state response to civil rights protests in the USA. The US Community Relations Service was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and remains within the US Department of Justice.⁵ It describes its contemporary mission thus:

The Community Relations Service (CRS) helps local communities address community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, and national origin. CRS also helps communities develop strategies to prevent and respond to violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or disability. (CRS 2014)⁶

- [7]. The term 'community relations' was subsequently adopted in the context of early British 'race relations' interventions. The Race Relations Act of 1968 introduced and resourced a national, statutory Community Relations Commission and a series of local Community Relations Councils. A related but distinct intervention appeared with the development of a community relations paradigm for addressing sectarian division in Northern Ireland (McVeigh 2002; McEvoy et al. 2006, Morrow 2013). The appeal of the paradigm in terms of the Northern Ireland conflict was obvious – institutionalised violence and discrimination was resulting in widespread unrest and unambiguously 'bad' relations between different communities. As McEvoy et al suggest: 'From its inception, particularly to the more progressive elements of Unionism, community relations was arguably always a softer and more palatable alternative to rights discourse with its inevitable critique of the state'. (2006: 86)

⁵ As CRS records: "It could be one of the longest and most far reaching steps toward an ultimate solution to the civil rights movement that can be taken." With those words, then-Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson, on January 20, 1959, introduced a bill to establish the Community Relations Service. Five years later, CRS was established under Title X of the Civil Rights Act, which President Johnson signed into law on July 2, 1964' (CRS 2014).

⁶ In response to recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, the US Attorney General announced: 'In order to truly begin the process of healing, we must also see an end to the acts of violence in the streets of Ferguson. Those who have been peacefully demonstrating should join with law enforcement in condemning the actions of looters and others seeking to enflame tensions. To assist on this front, the Department will be dispatching additional representatives from the Community Relations Service, including [CRS] Director Grande Lum, to Ferguson. These officials will continue to convene stakeholders whose cooperation is critical to keeping the peace' (US Department of Justice 2014).

- [8]. While this emerging paradigm drew directly on US and UK community relations approaches to managing racism and anti-racism, it was resistant to identifying sectarianism as a racism. This was ironic since the analysis was almost identical. For example, the template for community relations intervention in Northern Ireland - 'Community Conflict Skills' (Fitzduff 1988) - was borrowed from a US manual on community relations which focussed solely on race. Despite the obvious resonances, however, community relations proved reluctant to address the racism experienced by BME communities in Northern Ireland.⁷ It consequently played little part in the efforts to extend some form of British race equality legislation to Northern Ireland. This all changed, however, in the wake of the GFA *even though neither community relations nor good relations had featured in the GFA negotiations.*
- [9]. The shift from community relations to good relations was a change imposed by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 rather than emerging organically from anti-racism and community relations practice. Even as late as 2004, the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council reported that: 'an agreed definition for the promotion of good relations does not exist' (2004:6). Nevertheless, when the Community Relations Council launched its *A Good Relations Framework: An Approach to the development of Good Relations*, 'dealing with' racism had been unambiguously integrated into the community relations/ good relations paradigm:

*Those who have worked on anti-racism and anti-sectarianism approaches in Northern Ireland have acquired decades of experience. The promotion of good relations requires that both these areas of expertise be joined together to provide an approach that will enable **racism and sectarianism to be addressed equally and together.** (2004: 5, emphasis added)*

- [10]. Historically the paradigm was neither a rights- nor an equality-based approach to racism but rather a state-led conflict management approach to addressing widespread social unrest consequent upon racism. In other words, good relations does not easily sit within a rights-based framework. This said, in both the US and Great Britain it is clearly connected to racism and the consequences of racism – which suggests at least some overlap with the conflict in Northern Ireland. Moreover, while it emerged from other dynamics, it is constantly in dialogue with rights and equality based approaches. In England and Wales and Scotland the community/good relations paradigm evolved *within* race equality legislation – it was a subset of wider attempts to address racial discrimination and inequality. In this sense 'relations' were regarded as integral to the equality project. It was fairly obviously that 'race relations' – including both racist and anti-racist violence - could not be managed without some movement towards equality and human rights that at least addressed the most egregious aspects of racial inequality. Thus in both Northern

⁷ Thus the definitive CRC publication 'Approaches to Community Relations Work' made no reference to race or racism (Fitzduff 1991).

Ireland and Great Britain notions about improved 'relations' tended to be integrated with state equality projects. But this has not found much wider resonance. For example in the UK Johnson and Tatam suggest:

Good relations do not seem to have much salience beyond the UK at this stage; and even that is somewhat limited as we come to discuss later. Indeed, some international contacts with whom we explored the idea felt unable to contribute much due to the fact that good relations was a 'very Anglo-Saxon' concept. (2009: 26)

- [11]. This remains a legitimate analysis. It might be argued that the failure to find any wider audience for good relations is evidence enough of the limitations of the concept. From this perspective, good relations might be better repudiated than defined and institutionalised. But such an approach would have to disregard the currency that the paradigm continues to have in Northern Ireland.

Moreover, it would have to posit some better paradigm for addressing the issues currently bundled around good relations. Unlike the case with equality and human rights, there is no simple alternative international template.

Interculturalism: good relations in international law?

- [12]. Many organisations, including CAJ, have been keen to anchor Northern Ireland policy development in terms of best practice internationally. In particular, it is argued that equality and human rights work should be grounded in international law. This draws on a vast well of international experience as well as providing a key template of 'minimum standards' for any local legislation. Unfortunately the notion of 'good relations' does not feature in international law. As Johnson and Tatam suggest:

*There is a lack of international material that has a direct bearing on good relations. Many of the concepts described above have an international resonance – in particular contact theory, social capital and human security. Some others, notably community cohesion and integration ... are increasingly being used internationally having started off as intellectual approaches rooted in British circumstances. As such, we have found **nothing** that could be directly applicable to the idea of 'good relations' as set out in the [UK] Equality and Human Rights Commission's mandate. (2009: 26, emphasis added)*

- [13]. This idea that there is *nothing* that is directly applicable to good relations stands in stark contrast to the way in human rights and equality measures can be directly linked to international law. This is not completely surprising, however. As we have already seen, its antecedent 'community relations' paradigm emerged from a conflict management paradigm rather than from equality or human rights discourse. There is little hard law to support the specific process in Northern Ireland.

- [14]. Arguably, however, something akin to ‘good relations’ is at least implicit in some of the founding principles of international law. For example, in the Preamble to the UN Charter we find: ‘We the peoples of the United Nations determined... to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours’. Beyond this kind of fairly vague sentiment, however, there is not much immediate help in international law for any attempt to ground the concept in law in Northern Ireland. The nearest concept which does find support in international law and practice is the notion of ‘interculturalism’ or ‘intercultural dialogue’. This analysis is supported by Wigfield and Turner in their work on good relations in Britain who – in contrast to Johnson and Tatam – note the resonance with interculturalism (2010: 7).⁸
- [15]. The notion of *interculturalism* (sometimes also ‘interculturality’ or ‘intercultural dialogue’) has been particularly promoted by the Council of Europe, not least as an alternative to ‘multiculturalism’ (Barrett 2013). But it is also used by the European Union and the United Nations. Interculturalism shares some of the ambiguity attached to ‘good relations’ – it is definitively *not* a well-defined legal construct. Nevertheless it clearly resonates with aspects of good relations and it has a much wider international reference. Essentially the notion of Interculturalism encourages exchange and interaction rather than either assimilation or segregation. It embraces openness to change from ‘both sides’ of any cultural interface - the majority population as well as from minority groups.
- [16]. The CoE/European Commission Intercultural Cities project provides a useful definition:
- Rather than ignoring diversity (as with guest-worker approaches), denying diversity (as with assimilationist approaches), or overemphasising diversity and thereby reinforcing walls between culturally distinct groups (as with multiculturalism), interculturalism is about explicitly recognising the value of diversity while doing everything possible to increase interaction, mixing and hybridisation between cultural communities. Interculturalism is also about addressing issues of cultural conflict or tension (religious customs and requirements, communitarianism, women’s rights etc.) openly through public debate, with the involvement of all stakeholders. (CoE 2014)*
- [17]. This approach has brought good relations in Northern Ireland onto the radar of different international bodies in reference to implications on anti-racist work. For example in 2011 the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework

⁸ Interculturalism has also been a particularly significant paradigm in the Republic of Ireland – for example, the national body was named ‘National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism’. This has become less influential, however, as this state anti-racist infrastructure has been largely dismantled over recent years.

Convention for National Minorities directly addressed the exceptionalist approach to sectarianism in Northern Ireland:

[T]he Advisory Committee finds the approach in the CSI Strategy to treat sectarianism as a distinct issue rather than as a form of racism problematic, as it allows sectarianism to fall outside the scope of accepted anti-discrimination and human rights protection standards. Similarly, the CSI Strategy has developed the concept of “good relations” apparently to substitute the concept of intercultural dialogue and integration of society. (CoE 2011: 25)

- [18]. In other words, the CoE is making it clear that *with regard to racism at least* the specificity of good relations work in Northern Ireland does not permit abandoning the broader lessons of an interculturalist approach.
- [19]. As was argued in *Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: Towards a definition in Law* (McVeigh 2014), the crucial point is that this issue does not have to be endlessly reworked. The key international bodies have already accepted the analysis that sectarianism is a form of racism. It is sensible to let the word racism do most of the ‘work’ in Northern Ireland. In other words, once sectarianism is regarded as a form of racism, we can get on with the work of addressing racism rather than worrying endlessly about definitions of sectarianism. But this also means that the discipline of anti-racist paradigm should be applied to ‘good relations’. In this context it does at least overlap with the notion of interculturalism or intercultural dialogue. Moreover, the international monitoring bodies are at least encouraging ‘good relations’ to be seen in this way. Neither is this process all one way. There is some evidence that government in Northern Ireland has been addressing this point. For example, there is reference to interculturalism in the TBUC strategy: ‘We believe that an approach based on intercultural dialogue can help facilitate greater integration and build a more united community’ (OFMDFM 2013: 79, 88-9).
- [20]. Thus interculturalism may well offer a way forward in terms of practice that at least overlaps with ‘good relations’ and is grounded in international law and practice. The key point is that international monitoring bodies are saying that good relations is not enough on racism and sectarianism. Moreover OFMDFM are at least acknowledging this issue in the TBUC strategy. There is certainly a window of opportunity for further work in this vein, especially as it dovetails with developments in good relations in England and Wales and Scotland. This does not, however, mean that any convergence of good relations and interculturalism is a silver bullet that might end tensions and difficulties associated with the definition of good relations in Northern Ireland. The interculturalism paradigm is a far from finished article anywhere. While it is an increasingly important international term and it does provide a wider frame of reference for Northern Ireland based work, it does not provide a simple template for good relations work – nor any simple transferable definition. It is important, however, that the development of definitions for good relations makes

explicit the resonance between the two terms and encourages ongoing dialogue with best practice on Interculturalism in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

The evolution, interpretation, application and impact of the 'good relations' paradigm in Northern Ireland

- [21]. Broadly there were three key stages in the evolution of good relations paradigm in Northern Ireland. First it was named in legislation in Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This new phase in 'relations' interventions by the state did two key things that continue to frame discussions around good relations in Northern Ireland. First – drawing on developments in Britain around race equality - it signalled that 'good relations' rather than 'community relations' was the defining concept in this new statutory approach. Second, it made clear that this notion of good relations was to *include* race alongside Protestant/Catholic relations and *exclude* other equality grounds.
- [22]. Later the role of good relations expanded further and it became the key framing device for 'normalisation' in Northern Ireland in the *A Shared Future* document of 2005. Finally, it became a leitmotif of the attempts to address ongoing tensions and conflict (within both government and wider society) through the recent TBUC strategy. In this sense good relations is now at least symbolic of what holds the new state together. The interpretation and meaning of good relations has changed markedly over this period so it is useful to trace this evolution in depth.

Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- [23]. Even though the term good relations was not mentioned in the GFA, it was integrated into the Northern Ireland Act 1998 through which the British Government provided the legal context for the implementation of the agreement. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 placed a key statutory equality duty on public authorities. This was the outworking of the British State commitments on equality that had been central to the GFA:

(1) A public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity—(a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; (b) between men and women generally; (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and (d) between persons with dependents and persons without.

- [24]. But Section 75 then went on to introduce a new and somewhat unexpected good relations duty:

(2) Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

- [25]. There are a number of important dimensions to this. First, the term appeared in law for the first time in Northern Ireland.⁹ Second, it integrated ‘anti-sectarianism’ and ‘anti-racism’ for the first time. Third, the hierarchy between equality and good relations was firmly and clearly established – the legislation makes it clear that equality ‘trumps’ good relations in the sense that good relations must be promoted without prejudice to equality. In other words, it is explicit that equality must take precedence if there is a contradiction between equality and good relations.

A Shared Future 2005

- [26]. When the state’s ‘Good Relations’ strategy emerged in the OFMDFM (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister) *A Shared Future* document in 2005 (issued under direct-rule), the importance of good relations had been fleshed out and foregrounded. This was now presented as a ‘Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland’. There was some attempt to envision this approach:

The establishment over time of a normal, civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere, and where all people are treated impartially. A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and a recognition of our interdependence.

- [27]. The document also engaged with the Community Relations/Good Relations overlap:

There was criticism that the terms ‘community relations’ and ‘good relations’ were not properly defined. ‘Community relations’ refers specifically to division between the Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland. ‘Good Relations’ refers to Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which includes persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. (2005: 63)

- [28]. Importantly therefore the racism/sectarianism synthesis within good relations was complete.¹⁰ The blueprint for an integrated ‘Good Relations’ response to both racism

⁹ Shortly before the 1998 Act, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 was introduced and for the first time protected ethnic minorities from discrimination. Article 67 of the Order does place a statutory duty on local councils only, to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and ‘good relations’ between different ‘racial groups’. This provision is rarely used.

¹⁰ Although technically this emerged in a period of Direct Rule during a period of suspension of the devolved post-GFA institutions.

and sectarianism was in place. This has largely continued. This ‘convergence’ is important since it further undermines the case for the exceptionalism of sectarianism. Since racism and sectarianism are being addressed equally and together while other equality issues are being excluded, it further begs the question of whether there is any substantive difference between racism and sectarianism *at all*.

- [29]. A *Shared Future* also addressed the relationship between equality and good relations directly:

*Concern was expressed that the equality agenda would be suppressed to promote the good relations agenda. However, we regard equality of opportunity and good relations as complementary and believe that good relations cannot be based on inequality, between different communities or ethnic groups. To add emphasis to this point, the new policy and strategic framework has included as a fundamental principle: **Progress towards a shared society must be built upon the significant progress that has been achieved in promoting equality of opportunity and human rights.**” (Original emphasis)*

- [30]. The document also acknowledged contradictions of this approach in terms of other equality constituencies. Many people were concerned that ‘good relations’ would not explicitly address homophobia or sexism within the paradigm. Nevertheless, the paradigm was located very specifically within the Section 75 categories – in this sense it was specifically about race and sectarianism and specially not about other forms of inequality or hate crime or violence:

This new good relations policy and strategic framework aims to address particular manifestations of community division between the Section 75 (2) categories – persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. This does not diminish the importance of other equality categories and this document represents just one facet of a multi-dimensional approach to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. (2005: 62)

The TBUC strategy 2013

- [31]. The most recent development in evolution of the good relations paradigm in Northern Ireland is the *Together: Building a United Community* (TBUC) Strategy, published in May 2013. This draft strategy, ‘reflects the Executive’s commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society’. It bears emphasis that good relations is by this stage absolutely central to the presentation of policy – at least symbolically:

The Together: Building a United Community Strategy outlines a vision of “a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the

desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance”.

- [32]. The document makes it clear that the strategy represents a ‘major change in the way that good relations will be delivered across government’. A key action of the strategy will be the establishment of an independent and statutorily-based organisation to provide advice to government and to challenge all levels of government in terms of its performance in improving good relations:

The Equality Commission already fulfils a similar role in terms of monitoring public authorities against the statutory duties in Section 75 of the NI Act 1998. We will therefore establish an Equality and Good Relations Commission to change their roles and responsibilities to include good relations, this will incorporate the existing role and new good relations role. This will place significant functions currently under CRC on a statutory basis.

- [33]. The document also confirms the difference between equality and good relations but insists that equality remains central to the strategy:

Therefore, in our decision making and policy implementation, we regard the promotion of equality of opportunity as an essential element in the building of good community relations and consider that good relations cannot and should not be built on a foundation of inequality.

- [34]. Despite this, however, the concept appears as elusive as ever when definition is required:

In relation to the draft legislation to establish the Equality and Good Relations Commission we will seek to find an appropriate consensus around a definition of sectarianism, based on this Strategy, to be included in that legislation.

- [35]. A new Equality and Good Relations Commission is regarded as key to this process:

In order to achieve this we will amend the remit, roles and responsibilities of the existing Equality Commission and incorporate the following functions into an Equality and Good Relations Commission: Advice and challenge to Government; Research and evaluation on good relations issues; Scrutiny; Scrutiny of and challenge to District Council Good Relations Delivery Programme; and Regional advisory role to individuals and groups working on good relations issues.

[36]. TBUC also details the statutory duties of the Equality and Good Relations Commission which flow from these augmented functions:

- To challenge and scrutinise Government in its progress towards meeting the commitments and aims of this Strategy;

To scrutinise and provide advice on action plans arising from this Strategy;

- To enforce and investigate as appropriate where there is a failure to comply with section 75(2);
- To promote good relations across all sections of the community and support the development of best practice across the public service and the private sector;
- To commission appropriate research in order to inform the implementation and delivery of this Strategy;
- To carry out an assessment of progress against the objectives of this strategy and produce a report to the Assembly every two years;
- To provide advice and scrutiny to the Ministerial Panel in the development of the District Council Good Relations Programme;
- To challenge District Councils in respect of their performance against Good Relations Action Plans;
- To submit an annual work plan to OFMDFM and report on progress against agreed targets;
- To facilitate the sharing of best practice on a North-South, East-West, European and international level; and
- To connect actions to promote good relations at a regional, sub-regional and localised level. (2013: 105-6)

[37]. Throughout this sweeping plan, however, there is a profound failure to address the question of just what this good relations work involves. Without a definition – and in the face of very different perceptions of what it *should* mean – this is a recipe for disaster. Moreover, the continued failure to ‘go the final step’ and identify sectarianism as a form of racism in line with the recommendations of the international bodies carries with it many contradictions. In integrating racial justice with sectarianism which remains undefined and good relations which remains undefined, the strategy threatens to do more harm than good.

[38]. These contradictions are at their most extreme when they overlap with issues that should be more central to criminal justice. Since ‘hate crime’ might be regarded as the quintessential example of ‘bad relations’, it is unclear why some equality constituencies should be addressed by good relations while others should not.¹¹ The

¹¹ This issue is raised throughout TBUC – particularly in terms of homophobia and the LGBT community. Thus TBUC acknowledges: ‘Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have and do play a role in building good relations across our community. This was highlighted extensively throughout the public consultation when a number of individuals and representatives of lesbian, gay and bisexual groups, and transgender people, spoke of the need to apply good relations principles more widely across all s75 groupings (2013: 16-17).

TBUC document appears to collapse the difference between racism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland almost completely (OFMDFM 2014). Here the new paradigm of 'good relations' is used to integrate racism and sectarianism and separate them from other rights and equalities constituencies and issues. They become 'twin blights' to be addressed together. But, just as importantly, they are presented as something to be addressed separately from other forms of discrimination or hate. In direct contrast, the construction of 'hate crime' in Northern Ireland creates an unusual profusion of categories. The PSNI, approach leads to *three* separate sub-categories of hate crime connected to racism and sectarianism (and therefore, presumably, to good relations) – 'racist', 'sectarian' and 'religious'.¹² In all there are six hate crime categories recorded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) - sectarian, racist, homophobic, faith/religion, disability and transphobic. Yet only three of these is presented as directly negative in terms of good relations in the TBUC strategy. This contrasts starkly with the situation in the UK where the application of good relations 'extends to all equality strands, including social class' (Wigfield and Turner 2010: 9).

The relationship between 'good relations' and human rights, equality and anti-racism goals

- [39]. There is an ongoing ontological tension in terms of discussions of what precisely good relations is about. This is one of the reasons that an acceptable definition is proving so elusive. At the heart of this is the tension between two contradictory formulations of good relations. First, there is the idea that good relations is really about human rights and equality and anti-racism – in other words it should be understood solely or primarily in terms of these goals. (Here the approach is best captured by the work on good relations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in Great Britain – it is perhaps not surprising that an equality and human rights commission would define good relations in terms of equality and human rights.) At the other end of the spectrum is the notion that good relations is essentially separate from both human rights and equality. This is most highly developed in the work of Tom Hadden– which suggested that issues of 'sharing and separation' were both *different from* and *just as important as* issues of equality (Boyle and Hadden 1994; Hadden et al 1996). This approach acknowledged that sometimes one might take precedence over the other (CAJ 2013: 6-11).
- [40]. This difference was in effect recognised in the Northern Ireland Act 1998, although it also made clear that equality obligations retained primacy over those of good relations. It has also been present in some of recent debates in which the notion of the 'equal importance' of equality and good relations was to the fore. Much of the time, however, this ontological difference is implicit in the positions that different

¹² PSNI 'Hate Crime' http://www.psni.police.uk/index/advice-and-legislation/advice_hate_crime.htm

actors take on good relations. And often is simply assumed that they cannot but be complementary. But there are obvious contradictions. For example, human rights and equality were – alongside security – presented as two of the three pillars of the Good Friday Agreement. Neither 'community relations' nor 'good relations' played any significant part in the agreement. Yet every Council across Northern Ireland has one or more centrally funded 'good relations' officers - there is no equivalent programme for equality or human rights officers¹³.

- [41]. The notion of good relations is equally complex and contradictory in terms of its relationship with racism and anti-racism. As we have seen community relations in Northern Ireland began as a paradigm that explicitly disavowed any connection with racism. From this perspective it was 'about' 'Protestant and Catholic communities' and sectarianism was defined as something other than racism. This has changed more recently as anti-racism has been grafted on – sometimes completely unthinkingly – to the existing community relations paradigm as it rebranded as good relations. Where this becomes particularly problematic is the point at which it begins to distort anti-racism in Northern Ireland (McVeigh and Rolston 2007). For example, it is not hyperbole to suggest that relations between white communities and BME communities are at an all-time low in Northern Ireland. It can be suggested that the BME communities have lived the peace process in reverse – surviving the worst of the conflict by being to an extent removed from unionist/nationalist tensions – yet seeing the ratcheting up of racist violence in the context of 'peace' as Northern Ireland becomes routinely characterised as the 'race hate capital of Europe'. As racist violence escalated across Northern Ireland through 2014, the PSNI finally publicly confirmed that the UVF is behind some of this violence.

We might expect that this would indicate pathologically 'bad relations' in anybody's book. Yet it has provoked little sense of crisis – and little action - across the state or politics or the contemporary 'good relations' infrastructure. Despite the rhetoric of TBUC, addressing increasing racist violence appears to be a job for someone else – it is not good relations work.

- [42]. In this sense, good relations work continues to distort anti-racism in a profoundly problematic way. It is emblematic of this reality that within the OFMDFM 'racial equality' is situated within the *Good Relations and Building a United Community* 'theme' rather than the *Equality, Human Rights and Social Change* 'theme'.¹⁴ It might be suggested that anti-racism is primarily about 'equality, human rights and

¹³ Thus the outworking of policy often compounds the difference between equality and good relations objectives.

¹⁴ OFMDFM 'Equality and Strategy' <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality-and-strategy.htm>. Arguably this should not be an either/or – anti-racism should straddle equality and good relations. But if it is to be either/or, race equality work should sit within an equality rather than a good relations paradigm.

social change' not about 'good relations' almost anywhere else in the world. But this is not simply about symbolism. Despite the frequent 'Northern Ireland is the race hate capital of Europe' warnings, BME communities have had to wait for over five years for a new Race equality strategy. In other words, in Northern Ireland at least, all the focus on good relations has proved to be singularly ineffective in driving any effective anti-racist strategy. And this is a society where the police are acknowledging that a terrorist group is leading a campaign of racist violence and 'ethnic cleansing' against migrants and people of colour.¹⁵

- [43]. Meanwhile, in GB the trajectory has been somewhat different. Community relations there was always primarily about racism. As the good relations paradigm took over, other equality constituencies were grafted onto the core project of improving relations between different ethnic groups. In other words, while the good relations paradigm has extended to cover a whole range of other equality constituencies, its practice remains grounded in anti-racist work. Writing in 2009, Wigfield and Turner suggest:

*the closest form of good relations that is currently in operation relates specifically to race under the Race Relations Act (1976) (as amended in 2000) under which public authorities have a general statutory duty to promote race equality. The duty has three distinct parts: to work to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and, crucially for the GRMF [Good Relations Measurement Framework], to promote good race relations. Johnson and Tatam (2009) rightly point to the importance of the guide for public authorities on promoting good race relations, which was produced by the CRE in 2005. The guide identified five key principles which were all necessary to achieve good race relations: **Equality** – equal rights and opportunities for everyone in all areas of activity. **Respect** – acceptance of the individual right to identify with, maintain and develop one's particular cultural heritage, and to explore other cultures. **Security** – a safe environment, free from racism, for all. **Unity** – acceptance of belonging to a wider community, and of shared values and responsibilities, rooted in common citizenship and humanity. **Cooperation** – interaction by individuals and groups to achieve common goals, resolve conflict and create community cohesion. All five of these principles are directly relevant to achieving good relations.... (2009:4-5)*

- [44]. The tension between the situation in Northern Ireland and Great Britain is also marked in terms of the *focus* of good relations work. In England and Wales in particular, good relations has reference to the whole range of statutory equality constituencies *as well as class*. In contrast, in Northern Ireland, good relations has

¹⁵ BBC News. 2014. UVF 'behind racist attacks in Belfast' 3 April 2014. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26871331>

been very firmly - if clumsily and arbitrarily - constructed as something that refers solely to sectarianism and racism. So the grounding in anti-racism of a broad good relations paradigm in Britain contrasts starkly with a much narrower good relations paradigm in Northern Ireland - which has palpably failed to intervene effectively in a situation of 'bad relations' characterised by racist violence.

- [45]. Of course it may be argued that this is a consequence of poor practice rather than a bad paradigm. At present existing legislation accepts, at least implicitly, that there is no necessary correlation between equality and good relations – they are formulated as different, if related, things. There is nothing unusual in this – unless good relations were a direct function of equality, we might expect that the two are not always complementary.¹⁶ In other words, despite the insistence of many good relations practitioners, there are situations in which the equality and community relations agendas maybe directly antagonistic. By the same token, we can suggest that there is no necessary correlation between good relations and human rights. But if this is the case, it becomes clear that legal protection from racism is likely to come primarily through equality and human rights measures, not through the good relations paradigm. In this context, it is important that good relations does not undermine human rights or equality protections in any way.

The definition of 'good relations' in law in Great Britain

- [46]. There are specific reasons for looking at England and Wales and Scotland beyond the broad point that they are part, alongside Northern Ireland, of UK state reporting and implementation responsibilities on human rights and equality. First, there is the issue of overlap and synergy between definitions. When the term 'community relations' was defined in law in the 1968 Race Relations Act, the connection to race was explicit: "*community relations*" means *relations within the community between people of different colour, race or ethnic or national origins*'. When the term 'good relations' first appeared in legislation in the 1976 Race Relations Act it also remained unambiguously within the broad ambit of race equality. The CRE and others were given a statutory duty, 'to promote equality of opportunity, and good relations between persons of different racial groups generally'. But this specificity has changed over time. The UK reading of good relations is now a particularly permissive one. As Wigfield and Turner confirm:

Although the concept of good relations has, to some extent, emerged from the desire to achieve good race relations in Britain and as a way to challenge sectarianism and racism in Northern Ireland, it is important to emphasise that the GRMF extends to all

¹⁶ For example by analogy, we might suggest that bussing in the US had an important positive impact in terms of equality since it improved the quality of education of many African Americans. But the 'race' rioting that accompanied such bussing was almost definitively negative for 'community relations'.

equality strands, including social class. Indeed, the introduction of a good relations duty across the seven equality strands on all public authorities within the Equality Act 2010 augments the widening of good relations beyond race relations and religious belief. Good relations is thus intended to cover in a non-exclusive and non-normative way the interaction and coexistence of economically, culturally and socially diverse populations in the UK. (2010: 9)

- [47]. Second, there are issues of ‘read across’ between Britain and Northern Ireland - in terms of both good and bad practice. Scotland provides an additional comparator as a devolved administration managing the tensions between national and regional dynamics around good relations (Dobbie 2010; EHRC Scotland 2012). In the Scottish case, this has led to the contemplation of jettisoning the concept altogether:

The primary barrier to evidencing good relations is perhaps the issue of conceptualisation and language.... [T]he terminology of good relations is not well understood outside of the equality movement. To achieve recognition of good relations, or to further community cohesion work, we may need to consider dropping the phrase almost entirely from our lexicon, or accept that it has a limited compliance-centred application. (EHRC Scotland: 7)

- [48]. Either way, it is particularly important to pay close attention in Northern Ireland to good relations practice within the relatively progressive regime on race in Great Britain.¹⁷ This is not, of course, a one-way process. Ironically, perhaps, much of the development of the good relations paradigm in England and Wales references the development in Northern Ireland (Johnson and Tatam 2009: 26-9). Thus, the EHRC review suggests: ‘A lot of the initial work on defining good relations and the essential prerequisites necessary for good relations has been undertaken in Northern Ireland’ (Wigfield and Turner 2010: 15).

- [49]. From this departure, however, the paradigm that emerges in Great Britain looks significantly different. First, it is clearly located in anti-racist discourse. Second, it now references all equality constituencies. Third, it specifically references its relationship to human rights and equality. (For example, the Equality Act 2006 defines good relations very specifically in terms of ‘respect’ for human rights and equality. At this point, however, it is not clear what the added value of the label ‘good relations’ is. It is essentially suggesting that equality and human rights are positive in themselves – which most people would support – but adding little extra to the notion of good relations.) Finally, the term is defined in law. This is obviously significant since, as we have seen, there is little else to anchor the term to in terms of international discourse beyond the work that we have mentioned on interculturalism. It is also significant since it occurs within another jurisdiction of the UK. Legislation

¹⁷ See, for example, Wigfield and Turner’s review of the GRMF (2013). It seems obvious that this kind of analysis should be informing good relations practice in Northern Ireland.

does not have to be identical across the different devolved administrations, obviously, but it would seem ridiculous to offer a definition in law in Northern Ireland that was significantly removed from the existing legal definition for England and Wales and Scotland.

- [50]. On this front there have been recent attempts in Great Britain to improve the robustness of the term (Johnson and Tatam 2009; Wigfield and Turner 2010). It has found more precise definition in recent equality legislation. For example, the Equality and Human Rights Commission was created by the Equality Act 2006 which provided it with a 'good relations' mandate to build:

...mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing of diversity, and on shared respect for equality and human rights.

- [51]. Section 10 of the 2006 Act defined the Commission's responsibilities in respect of promoting good relations, as to:

- (a) promote understanding of the importance of good relations:
 - (i) between members of different groups, and
 - (ii) between members of groups and others
- (b) encourage good practice in relation to relations:
 - (i) between members of different groups, and
 - (ii) between members of groups and others
- (c) work towards the elimination of prejudice against, hatred of, and hostility towards members of groups, and
- (d) work towards enabling members of groups to participate in society.

- [52]. This broad approach to good relations was confirmed by the Public sector equality duty included in the 2010 Equality Act:

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- [53]. This Act also offered a definition of good relations:

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to— (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

- [54]. It has been noted that this formulation also includes a subtle shift from ‘promoting’ to ‘fostering’ good relations (EHRC Scotland 2012: 4). If anything, however, this makes the approach even more lacking in conceptual rigour. Finally the Act made explicit the ‘protected characteristics’ – essentially the core equality constituencies to be addressed by good relations interventions:

The relevant protected characteristics are—age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

- [55]. It bears emphasis that these protected characteristics are much wider than those in Northern Ireland. In addition, as Wigfield and Turner make clear:

Although socio-economic status/class was not listed as one of the equality strands, it is increasingly recognised that it needs to be taken into account and has implications for good relations. It is also being added to the other measurement frameworks. (2010: 3)

- [56]. Given the lack of clarity and agreement in Northern Ireland, adapting the statutory good relations duty on public bodies in GB definition in s149(5) of the Equality Act 2010 is the closest to being definitive: *good relations ...means having regard, in particular, to the desirability of —(a) tackling prejudice, and (b) promoting understanding.*

- [57]. Finally there are important lessons for Northern Ireland in the process of the EHRC generating a Good Relations Measurement Framework (GRMF) for Great Britain (Wigfield and Turner 2010). The GRMF aims to produce a set of indicators that collectively ‘paint a comprehensive picture of the current state of good relations in Great Britain, for England, Scotland and Wales, and in individual localised areas’. The Commission’s stated aims are that the GRMF will:

- contain indicators that paint a comprehensive picture of the current state of the nation in terms of good relations;
- have the confidence of the Commission and its major stakeholders, including the government, statisticians and academics; and
- be developed through a consultative process to support legitimacy. (Johnson and Tatam 2009: 1)

- [58]. The EHRC report outlines the Good Relations Measurement Framework which comprises four key domains and associated indicators (Wigfield and Turner 2010). These indicators were arrived at through a complex methodological process involving a quantitative review, focus groups and stakeholder discussions.

The four domains selected to measure good relations are: *attitudes; personal security; interaction with others; and participation and influence.* The report also discusses the reasons for the selection of each domain and indicator, considers how well these can be measured by existing research and identifies gaps in the evidence.

- [59]. Clearly the GRMF has vitally important lessons for Northern Ireland. We would expect the TBUC strategy to invite a similar degree of objective measurement and assessment. It bears emphasis, however, that this Framework for Great Britain is based upon the relatively tight definition of good relations contained in the 2010 Act. The farther the Northern Ireland definition of good relations from the Great Britain definition, the lesser the relevance of lessons from interventions like GRMF. The looser and woollier the definition used, the less easy it is to provide any measurement at all.

Recent debates on incorporating a definition in Northern Ireland

- [60]. In the absence of any definition of good relations in law, there are a number of fairly vague, sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory definitions. Many of these are a survival of the old community relations paradigm with racism crudely tacked on – or ignored altogether. But there has been some new work in this area since 1998. For example, the Assembly Code of Conduct states, “*Members will act in a way that is conducive to promoting good relations by providing a positive example for the wider community to follow by acting justly and promoting a culture of respect for the law*”.
- [61]. Since the ECNI is supposed to take responsibility for this process in the TBUC proposals, its current views are particularly salient. The Equality Commission’s ‘working definition’ of good relations as set out in its Good Relations Guide (2007) is:

The growth of relationships and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of the society but seek to promote respect, equity and trust and embrace diversity in all its forms.

I have been critical of this type of definition in the past, in particular in its divergence from the post-GFA equalities framework (McVeigh and Rolston, 2007, page 15). What is most striking however is that the working definition diverges significantly from how the same paradigm is defined in the rest of the formal jurisdiction. This threatens to return Northern Ireland to a pre-1997 situation in which people find themselves in a substantially different, and markedly weaker, race equality regime.

- [62]. The ECNI has also made interventions to encourage wider adoption of its broad framing of good relations:

We recognise that neither ‘good relations’ nor ‘promoting good relations’ is defined in legislation nor is there a commonly agreed definition. The Commission has however set out in its guidance for public authorities on guidance on promoting good relations its working definition of good relations in order to provide further clarity to public authorities:

“the growth of relationships and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms.”

[63]. In addition:

we are of the view that ‘promoting good relations’ is not primarily concerned with ‘acting justly’ or ‘promoting a culture of respect for the law’. We also consider that the draft code does not fully capture good relations as a positive and dynamic concept. Instead we consider that good relations is concerned with proactive steps that embrace diversity and promote respect, equity and trust.¹⁸

[64]. There has also been recent discussion in the context of Assembly discussion at the Further Consideration Stage of the Local Government Bill.¹⁹ At this point there appeared to be a desire for consensus on definition from both unionists and nationalists. In other words, at least the need for definition was recognised.

[65]. However, the ensuing discussions suggested that there was unlikely to be an immediate consensus on any definition. For example, Anna Lo spokesperson for the Alliance suggested:

We are not convinced that a definition is required, if no definition is required in the Northern Ireland Act and as there has already been 15 years’ worth of good work with the legal framework that exists. More than that, I am deeply concerned that the amendment makes no reference to reconciliation, integration or sharing. Those must all be part of our approach to good relations, and we cannot leave them out. To do so would be to roll back valuable good relations work and would limit good relations work far too narrowly. A comprehensive definition is needed if one is to be applied at all. This definition is not good enough and could undermine work done so far.

[66]. This contrasts starkly with the position adopted by Colum Eastwood speaking in response for the SDLP:

¹⁸ A CAJ briefing also argues that at times a ‘literal and face value’ definition of ‘good relations’ has been operationalised whereby the duty is engaged by actions the ‘other side’ takes umbrage with. CAJ states that “Such good relations discourse does not tend to make reference to grievances of the representatives of ethnic minorities, and hence in practice is about the competing views of the representatives of unionism and nationalism” and voices concerns the duty could simply become a political veto. The example given is the Equality Commission investigation into the naming by Newry council of a play park after IRA hunger striker Raymond McCreech. The Investigation Report states that “the good relations duty is ‘certainly engaged’ in the context of both a complaint by the Orange Order to the Council and that there has been ‘much public discussion in the context of good relations and a shared future’” (CAJ, 2014a).

¹⁹ <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Reports-13-14/01-April-2014/>

I would have loved to have read your definition of good relations, but you made no attempt to define it in the Bill. We did, and we did it on the basis of ensuring that objective need and equality will not be trumped by good relations or anything else. However, we stand by the principles of community relations and good relations, and we will not allow them to be used to veto policies on the basis of need and to stop equality becoming a central part of our society and this Government. People fought very hard to ensure that we have a rights-based approach in this society and that we can develop that. All the work around the Good Friday Agreement — not everybody in this room says they agree with it, but they are all here — was about ensuring a rights-based approach. That was because we have a history in this society of not having had that approach. People in this city and in the North of Ireland had to fight and march in a peaceful and democratic way even to be allowed to use their vote. I think that people very clearly understand why equality is an essential part of this.

- [67]. Thus even two of the most committed supporters of the ‘good relations’ paradigm appear poles apart on the issue of definition. CAJ and others made interventions in this context (CAJ 2014). In the event the Minister put forward a clause which stated “the reference to improving the social well-being of the district includes promoting equality of opportunity in accordance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and, without prejudice to this, having regard to the desirability of promoting good relations;” which, as the Minister told the assembly was “framed to ensure that the type of existing safeguards between equality and good relations in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are maintained.” All parties accepted this formulation which now stands as section 66(3) (a) of the Local Government Act 2014.
- [68]. In this context, cross-party support for any new definition appears unlikely in the immediate future. As it stands consensus is reached only in the sense that political actors are forced back to the 1998 legislation which protects the primacy of equality but provides no definition of good relations.
- [69]. There are a number of salient points here. First, the notion that a definition is not needed is ridiculous. The basic principle of clarity in law means that the increasing statutory prominence of good relations must take place in a context in which people are clear about what kind of behaviours are being made unlawful or inappropriate. The very fact that there is such a contradictory discussion confirms the need for definition. It seems impossible to have an intervention which is presents as having such relevance yet incapable of defining itself. This becomes ever more problematic as it is suggested that good relations assumes the enhanced status suggested in the TBUC strategy. If good relations cannot be defined in Northern Ireland, it would be better to jettison the term completely and accept that most of what it attempts to achieve is already implicit or explicit within equality and human rights work.

- [70]. Second, as we have seen, there *is* already a simple, functioning definition in law in the UK. Although this definition did not attract sufficient cross-part support to be included in the Local Government Act, this remains the best option available. Unless there is unanimity across the Assembly, it seems inappropriate to generate a definition of good relations which is itself divisive. It would be ironic if the definition of good relations were itself to become a manifestation of ‘bad relations’. In this context, the simplest and best solution is to adopt the definition already embedded in UK law – at least until some other ‘appropriate consensus’ is reached. In other words, in the absence of any other definition, adapting the statutory good relations duty on public bodies in GB definition in s149 of the Equality Act 2010 remains the best template: good relations ...means having regard, in particular, to the desirability of — (a) tackling prejudice, and (b) promoting understanding.
- [71]. Finally, this definition is useful because it emerged from a race equality paradigm. This should reinforce the reality that ‘good relations’ – as framed by the Northern Ireland Act – *should* be as responsive to bad relations between ethnic groups as bad relations between Protestants and Catholics. Yet ongoing racist violence played almost no role in recent debates. There are two ways to remedy this – either the good relations paradigm transforms its capacity to address the contemporary reality of racism in Northern Ireland or it absolves itself of this responsibility. In other words, if good relations cannot address the profound challenge of contemporary racism, the concept may have to be disarticulated again and represented as ‘community relations’ between Protestants and Catholics once more.²⁰
- [72]. But this raises its own contradictions since the notion that sectarianism is a form of racism is now recognised by the key international bodies. Moreover, as we have seen, the trajectory in Britain is completely in the opposite direction – good relations is becoming ever more permissive in its target interventions. Certainly the paradigm in Northern Ireland cannot have it both ways. Either good relations is solely about Protestant/Catholic relations and these are so exceptional that they require an entirely separate approach from anti-racism; or the paradigm must accept the discipline that comes from working on racism. If good relations in Northern Ireland continues to include anti-racism then the paradigm cannot be allowed to distort work on racism in the negative way that it has over recent years. In terms of the *sui generis* approach, there are plenty of arguments to suggest that this is not a sensible option.²¹ It is much more practical for Government to continue to integrate approaches to anti-sectarianism with broader anti-racism as they have done over recent years. This is precisely the approach supported by CERD and CoE through

²⁰ For example, this could be achieved relatively easily legislatively by removing the ‘or racial group’ element from Section 75 (2) which would leave good relations in Northern Ireland in the more traditional domain of pre-GFA ‘community relations’.

²¹ These are discussed in more depth in the parallel Equality Coalition document ‘Sectarianism: Towards a Definition in Law’ referenced in footnote One.

their recognition of sectarianism as a form of racism. But this means that the core values of anti-racism – including those laid down in international law – have to obtain.

And this means that equality and human rights must remain central to racial justice. Other dynamics – like ‘equity’ or ‘sharing’ should not be allowed to dilute or undermine this project.

Conclusions

- [73]. Good relations is about to enter a new phase in Northern Ireland through the outworking of the TBUC strategy. For good or ill, the paradigm is becoming a defining feature of consensual politics in the new Northern Ireland. Negatively it appears as the lowest common denominator in unionist/nationalist power sharing since almost everybody can subscribe to the broad goal of ‘good relations’. It is, however, important not to be too dismissive of this reality – in a post-conflict situation all of the processes referenced by good relations – sharing, reconciling, understanding, integrating – present genuine challenges. In such circumstances a ‘soft’ approach to the causes of division may be the most obvious one available, especially if politics is being driven by the need to establish ‘sufficient consensus’. This means that the good relations paradigm is unlikely to go away – in this context it is important that it is made to work as effectively as possible in support of the equality and human rights of all citizens of Northern Ireland. A key part of making it work is having a definition in law.
- [74]. Alongside a functioning definition, it is important to pay closer attention to other jurisdictions which are addressing broader similar issues in different ways. In particular, the trajectory of good relations practice in England and Wales and Scotland is significant because it appears more and more dissimilar to that in Northern Ireland. In this context, it seems bizarre to further institutionalize a form of good relations in Northern Ireland that is increasingly divergent from the model in Great Britain. In the absence of international standards, the British good relations model provides the default standard. Any deviation from this – in terms of definition, scope or monitoring frameworks – should be justified in terms of something more substantive than political expediency or Northern Ireland exceptionalism. Beyond this there are lessons from the US and Australia and other countries that continue to make use of the community relations paradigm. It is also important to draw on the lessons from the interculturalism model which has more grounding in international law and practice and is much more current at EU level. In other words, a key corrective to Northern Ireland ‘exceptionalism’ is the recognition that most other societies are engaging with similar questions to those bundled around ‘good relations’. Moreover, they are often addressing these in more innovative and more radical ways.

- [75]. The community/good relations paradigm has always been positioned in an uneasy relationship with equality and human rights. There is no natural synergy between rights-based and community relations-based approaches and at times they may be directly antagonistic. Moreover, good relations has had a specific problem in addressing racism in Northern Ireland. While it has arguably subsumed race equality since 1998, it has been very poor at delivering anything approaching 'good relations' for Northern Ireland's BME population. Despite the affinity between race equality and good relations in Britain, in Northern Ireland good relations has singularly failed to acknowledge - let alone address - the commonly-held characterisation of Northern Ireland as the 'race hate capital of Europe'. In a context in which the police service themselves are identifying racist violence as being orchestrated by illegal paramilitary organisations and characterising this as 'ethnic cleansing', the good relations paradigm has failed to generate an appropriate response to racism.

There needs to be a more appropriate rights- and criminal justice-based response to racism in general and racist violence in particular. In this sense there was more integrity to the 'old' community relations approach in Northern Ireland— it did not pretend to have any competence in addressing racial equality or racist violence. This issue should be resolved in framing any definition of good relations in law.

- [76]. Finally, the TBUC strategy threatens to make a rod for its own back in terms of the failure to define either sectarianism or good relations.²² In terms of good relations in particular it appears nonsensical to further institutionalize and legalize a paradigm that cannot define itself and which has failed to situate itself in terms of international law and standards. But it also seems unlikely that the wished for 'appropriate consensus' on any new definition is going to be achieved, at least in the short-term. In absence of any existing or likely cross-community consensus on a definition for good relations in Northern Ireland, adapting the statutory good relations duty on public bodies in the GB definition is the most useful available: *good relations ...means having regard, in particular, to the desirability of —(a) tackling prejudice, and (b) promoting understanding.* This definition should inform any further development of the good relations paradigm in Northern Ireland.

²² The previous paper argued that the solution to this problem of definition with sectarianism is to start from the position of CERD and CoE and recognise that 'sectarianism is a form of racism'. With this approach the 'work' of defining falls on racism – which already has a well-established rights- and equality-based paradigm to draw on (McVeigh 2014).

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Equality Commission for Northern Ireland



**EVIDENCE TO THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF
THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER
INQUIRY INTO BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY
OCTOBER 2014**

1. Introduction and summary

- 1.1. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee's Inquiry into Building a United Community. Further details on the scope of the Commission's remit, duties and expertise are contained in Annex 1.
- 1.2. The Commission welcomes the Committee's focus on informing the Executive's approach to tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance. It is critically important that the Executive works to secure improved relationships in Northern Ireland and to support continuing transition to a peaceful society. Addressing the issue of the relationships between people who live and work in Northern Ireland, and between their children who will shape our future, is one of the most pressing policy issues facing us¹.
- 1.3. The Commission's vision for Northern Ireland is as a shared, integrated and inclusive place, a society where difference is respected and valued, based on equality of opportunity and fairness for the entire community. We consider that all people must be valued equally and believe that everyone should be allowed the opportunity to develop to their full potential.
- 1.4. Both equality of opportunity and good relations are essential to creating a just and fair society. We recognise that equality and good relations are inter-dependent and inextricably linked. One cannot be effectively pursued without the other and neither will find its full expression in the absence of the other. It continues to be imperative to address key inequalities as well as focus attention on good relations.

¹ Response to the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, ECNI, 2010

- 1.5. The Commission's submission sets out the importance of addressing inequalities and good relations; the value of a clear, coherent legal framework; the need for adherence to institutional frameworks and conventions; the need for a clear definition of good relations in statute; the significant role of communities in policy and decision making and the importance of good relations indicators to monitor and measure progress.

It also makes recommendations relating to leadership, expression of culture, display of flags, education, housing, dealing with the past, women and peace building and law reform.

- 1.6. The Commission would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further should the Committee wish to invite the Commission to provide oral evidence during its Inquiry. The response covers those questions most relevant to the Commission's remit and experience and addresses the relevant points set out in the Terms of Reference in turn.

2. Perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations

Theory and practice with regard to good relations, shared space and shared services

- 2.1. The Commission has a statutory remit in the area of good relations, derived from section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Race Relations Order 1997. The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order also has relevance for good relations. Specifically, the Commission's remit provides that should:
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups²;
 - promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious beliefs and political opinions³;
 - provide advice to public authorities and others on, as well as keep under review the effectiveness of, the duties on public authorities to pay regard to the desirability of promoting good relations⁴.
- 2.2. This legislative framework, and the effective application of anti-discrimination legislation and the statutory equality and good relations duties, has made a significant contribution to creating the circumstances for change in Northern Ireland. Lessons can be drawn from this in the context of addressing good relations going forward.

Good race relations

- 2.3. The Commission considers further action by Government to be imperative to enhance relations between people of different racial groups – noting this encompasses majority and minority racial groups. This is of direct relevance to

² Race Relations Order 1997

³ Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998

⁴ Northern Ireland Act 1998

securing better outcomes in the context of this Inquiry. Our recommendations⁵ are that the Executive, Departments and other key stakeholders, amongst other areas, take action to:

- address current gaps in rights and protections through law reform;
- tackle prejudicial attitudes and racism;
- address concerns about treatment of children on the grounds of their race in schools, whether in experiences of bullying or reflection of cultures in the curriculum;
- address issues in the workplace such as harassment and action to counter negative behaviours, potential discrimination and barriers experienced.

2.4. The Commission is making these recommendations, and others, in response to OFMDFM's consultation on *A Sense of Belonging: Delivering Social Change through a Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 – 2024*.

Shared space – the experience of the workplace

2.5. The anti-discrimination legislation provides both workplace protections and employer responsibilities⁶. The Commission's guidance on Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment directly addresses matters which could be raised as complaints within the context of the anti-discrimination legislation; and the work by employers towards fair participation through affirmative action agreements has had a positive impact on the balance of the workforce and integration in workplaces⁷.

2.6. The fair employment legislation has helped to change behaviour in the workplace. As a result, we no longer see workplaces bedecked with emblems associated with either community and the emblems we do see tend to be of a more subtle nature. Employers and employees behaviour is regulated by equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies and procedures and it is fair to say that, in general, workplaces have become more integrated. Employers and employees are clearly aware of the behaviour expected of them, and in most cases act accordingly⁸.

Developing policies and service planning: public authorities' duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations

2.7. Public authorities must have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations when they carry out their functions, such as when developing and delivering policies and services.

2.8. In the development of policies, the Commission recommends methodologies for public authorities to use that provide an evidence base that is available to inform decisions on a policy and implementation. Through this, the public authority can

⁵ Racial Equality Policy - Priorities & Recommendations, ECNI 2014. <http://www.equalityni.org/Delivering-Equality/Equality-Themes/Racial-equality.aspx>

⁶ Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998

⁷ *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland – A Generation on*, Osborne & Shuttlesworth (Editors), Blackstaff Press 2004

⁸ Response to the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, ECNI 2010

demonstrate how it has paid the required “regard” to the desirability of promoting good relations.

- 2.9. The Committee will be aware that this duty is set out in section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and public authorities must also fulfil section 75 (1) which requires them to have “due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity”. The Commission’s guidance is clear about the difference between the levels of consideration they require respectively.
- 2.10. In terms of what “due regard” and “regard” mean, it is established that the consideration must be given in advance of a final decision being made, not afterwards, and it must be done with an open mind to achieve the goals set out in statute. Hence due regard and regard are not determinants of final policy outcomes but are the processes of providing the appropriate levels of consideration.
- 2.11. A public authority’s equality scheme must set out its arrangements for assessing its compliance with section 75⁹, and therefore the evidence of public authorities’ practice of consideration of the desirability of promoting good relations when they are planning and delivering services is available through the reporting arrangements arising from these schemes¹⁰.
- 2.12. Public authorities report annually on progress with their section 75 duties¹¹. These reports present the relevant authority’s projects, initiatives and policy processes, not only to give the appropriate consideration to the desirability of promoting good relations, (and appropriate consideration to the need to promote equality of opportunity), but they also tend to include information about how the public authority is achieving improved outcomes directly on the promotion of equality of opportunity, addressing inequalities and improving relations. This self-assessment framework provides examples of progress to implement the good relations duty and what is presented can vary widely between authorities.

Consideration of best practice in bringing divided communities together

- 2.13. In consideration of international practice, the Commission continues to prioritise engagement with relevant international frameworks and conventions¹². The recommendations arising from the relevant committee, following an examination of a state party report, provide an expectation of national practice based on international standards. There are clearly a number of relevant conventions, for example the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, a multinational treaty directed to minority rights.

⁹ Schedule 9 (4) (2) (a), Northern Ireland Act 1998

¹⁰ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities, ECNI 2010, Chapter 7

¹¹ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – a Guide for Public Authorities, ECNI 2010, page 36

¹² The Commission has provided evidence to the UN Committees on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It also has a direct role outlined in Annex 1 in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2.14. The Commission recommends that the Committee continues to support and encourage the Executive to fully participate in these reporting processes and ensure the circumstances of Northern Ireland are fully reflected in the UK state party reports. The Executive should also fully consider action in relation to the resultant recommendations from the relevant Committee¹³

2.15. The Committee will note that the Commission continues to make a full contribution to international events, projects and presentations of international best practice in bringing divided communities together¹⁴. This international engagement focuses on the advances made in the workplace in Northern Ireland, as addressing inequalities is fundamental for creating the conditions for peace.

3. What good relations means and how sectarianism and division can be addressed

What good relations means

3.1. There is no current statutory definition of good relations. The Commission provided a definition in its guide to public authorities on promoting good relations; and the guide also included a number of other definitions in use by public authorities at the time¹⁵.

3.2. There is a clear need for a definition of good relations in statute, to ensure clarity, and consistency of purpose in shaping actions and promoting good relations. The Commission considers a number of elements to be helpful in the formulation of a definition of good relations, to inform any legislation to establish powers and duties for an Equality and Good Relations Commission. This draws from what is already provided for in other statutes and is closely aligned to powers and duties originally given to the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Britain¹⁶. The Elements are:

- a high level of dignity, respect and mutual understanding;
- an absence of prejudice, hatred, hostility or harassment;
- a fair level of participation in society.

¹³ The Commission has noted the following in relation to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Fourth report of the Committee of Experts in respect of the United Kingdom:

"12. Information about Irish and Ulster Scots in the fourth periodical report is still confined to those areas which remain the sole competence of the UK Government in London. Areas which have been devolved to Northern Ireland are not included. It was explained to the Committee of Experts that the responsibility for preparing these relevant parts of the report was that of the Northern Ireland power-sharing Executive. According to the authorities it was again not possible to agree within the Executive on the relevant text to be included in the report. The Committee of Experts regrets that the periodical report does not include important information relating to one Part III and one Part II language. It reminds the UK Government that it is its duty under the Charter to submit a complete report on time and expects that the forthcoming report will comply in full with Article 15 of the Charter." January 2014

¹⁴ For example, The Commission has hosted visiting delegations from countries such as Macedonia and Bahrain

¹⁵ Promoting Good Relations – A Guide for Public Authorities, ECNI 2007.

¹⁶ Equality Act 2006, section 10

- 3.3. The definition contained in the Equality Act 2010 which provides public authorities with direction on how they should fulfil their duty to have due regard to the need to foster good relations is also useful:

(a) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to —
(b) tackle prejudice, and
(c) promote understanding.¹⁷

- 3.4. The Commission held a discussion session with stakeholders in June 2014 in anticipation of draft legislation to establish an Equality and Good Relations Commission. In consideration of definitions, there was support for applying the definition as has been adopted in Britain from the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.5. The Commission notes, however, that the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy does not propose any new or additional responsibilities on any public authorities or other organisations, apart from what is proposed to augment the powers and duties of the Commission.
- 3.6. The Commission has also, in anticipation of the legislation, concluded that the intention signalled in the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy to provide a definition of sectarianism in the legislation needs to be considered in relation to what conduct or legally defined actions the definition will apply to.
- 3.7. The Commission welcomed the commitment in the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy to a framework for delivering good relations across a wide range of grounds, going beyond issues of sectarianism. The Commission also considered that a multi-faceted approach to promoting good relations is called for, given the complex society in which we live and given changing, dynamic sets of identities; in order to promote a better future for all¹⁸.
- 3.8. The Commission also considers that its powers and duties on good relations, in statute, should apply to other grounds covered in the anti-discrimination legislation¹⁹.

Removal of interface barriers

- 3.9. The Commission recommends the following to contribute to the development of programmes to remove interface barriers:
- greater regulation of displays of flags and emblems by private individuals or groups in public spaces, or on public property (see paragraph 4.4-4.5);
 - effective engagement by public authorities with affected groups and communities when planning policies or services (see paragraphs 3.10-3.11);

¹⁷ Equality Act 2010, section 149 (5)

¹⁸ Response to the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, ECNI 2010

¹⁹ Response To OFMDFM Consultation Paper, 'A Single Equality Bill For Northern Ireland', ECNI 2004

- mainstreaming consideration of both equality and good relations matters by public authorities throughout the development of options and delivery of policies (see paragraphs 2.7-2.12); and
- the direction of attention and action by public authorities in the framework of an appropriate definition of good relations (see paragraphs 3.2-3.3).

Role of communities in policy and decision making

3.10. The role of communities in policy and decision making is vital, including in respect of good relations work. Effective stakeholder engagement and consultation is an integral part of good policy making. Planning public service delivery must take the needs of everyone into account, and therefore engagement requires building confidence and cooperation, not only with and between stakeholders, but also their confidence in a process to ensure their contribution is respected, valued and taken into account. Effective engagement processes can result in communities having a greater ownership of decisions, alongside improving their capacity to ensure they are able to provide meaningful contributions.

3.11. The framework of an equality scheme provides for mainstreaming good relations considerations throughout the functions and policies of a public authority. Therefore when a public authority is considering the purpose of its policies, or developing new policies/services, it must consider whether the desirability of promoting good relations is relevant in that context. If it is, it must then be consulting with communities in relation to the duties, in advance of decision being taken. This will be to ensure that it has regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

3.12. The framework of the equality scheme has provided a significant focus on consultation practice over the past decade, with innovative approaches to consultation reported as a result from public authorities. The Commission has enhanced its advice over time as a result of the considerable learning and best practice in consultation²⁰, for example providing a significant contribution to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Good Practice Guidelines for Effective Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines, as launched in January 2014²¹.

3.13. For example, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development undertook a consultation exercise on their draft 2020 Strategic Plan and its associated Equality Screening. It did so using a number of methods, including a teleconferencing forum to enable consultees to engage with the process from their homes or places of work²².

3.14. In addition, in respect of the role of communities, the Commission recognises that adequate resources need to be made available to support good relations activities

²⁰ The Commission's Section 75 Guide for Public Authorities (2010) makes a number of recommendations for consultation practice for public authorities (pages 38-39) which have, in the main, been adopted by authorities in their Equality Scheme arrangements.

²¹ Developed by the Policy Champions Network.

²² Good Practice Guidelines, Effective Stakeholder Engagement, NICS 2013, page 24

at a local level. Completion of the Review of Good Relations Funding Delivery announced in *Together: Building a United Community* should be an urgent priority for OFMDFM.

Good relations indicators in monitoring and measuring progress of government interventions

3.15. It is clear that to ensure a purposive approach to implementing the *Together: Building a United Community Strategy*, a measurement framework is required. In the Commission's response to the OFMDFM consultation on the Good Relations Indicators, we welcomed the production of indicators associated to the strategy and recognized the challenge of this. The following general comments were made:

- that the proposed indicators should not be seen or referred to as (a comprehensive set of) indicators of 'good relations', given the noted plans to develop additional indicators under other strategies (for example: race, sexual orientation etc).
- that the commitment in the 'United Community' Strategy to take good relations considerations forward via a range of strategies suggests a scale of work that offers the potential for developing wholly new indicators where appropriate.
- that the indicators developed in support of 'United Community', while necessarily focussed on 'community' background, should also be capable of extension to the full range of anti-discrimination grounds.
- that there are merits in considering good relations indicators along two broad spectrums – noting the benefits in considering:
 - *a continuum of indicators from attitudes to behaviours where 'attitudes' can be considered as 'lead' indicators (outcomes) for subsequent positive or negative 'behaviours' (impacts)*
 - *indicators which span aspects of 'good relations' to be achieved, as well as aspects of 'bad relations' to be overcome²³.*

3.16. At the Commission's event in June 2014 in anticipation of draft legislation from the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy, it was noted that progress should be measured over a long period of time, with participants noting that changes in society are seen over a much longer period of time than the timescales for most government policy documents. Participants also noted the difference in relation to measurements of the delivery of the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy specifically, which relates mainly to specific actions²⁴

²³ Response from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to the Consultation by the Office of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister on Good Relations Indicator Review 2013/ 2014, ECNI March 2014

²⁴ <http://www.equalityni.org/Delivering-Equality/Addressing-inequality/Social-attitudes-good-relations/Policy-responses/Together-Building-a-United-Community.aspx>

4. Recommendations to support and enhance policy and decision making

- 4.1. The Commission welcomed the publication of the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy in May 2013, and its presentation of a range of agreed actions for implementation. The Commission also notes that the implementation currently is focused on the seven Headline Actions. In this context the Commission proposes that the Committee considers the following recommendations which reach beyond those headline actions, to support and enhance policy and decision making.

Importance of leadership

- 4.2. The Commission considers that leadership is critical in order to secure success both in delivery by institutions and in improved outcomes for our society. Clear leadership which identifies the direction and sets the tone is critical to the successful implementation of any good relations strategy. Leaders of public authorities need to demonstrate publicly in an unequivocal manner that promoting good relations is both central to and a measure of their success. All parties must show a willingness to compromise and move forward in a spirit of partnership, mutual support and respect. The Commission recommends that the Committee considers the importance of leadership at all levels in society, particularly from the Executive and elected representatives, in making any recommendations arising from this Inquiry.

Expressions of culture

- 4.3. The Commission recognises that we live in a society where, for some, the expression of one's culture is in many ways interpreted as a statement not of inclusion, but of exclusion for the other: a threat and something to fear. This clearly needs to be addressed and the Commission recommends that ways are found to encourage people to celebrate the positive aspects of their culture, focusing on being welcoming and inclusive so that no member of society is made to feel alienated.

Display of flags

- 4.4. The Commission has recommended the greater regulation of the display of flags, both in respect of Local Government reform and in its submission to the Panel of Parties in 2013, as follows:

The greater regulation of the display of flags. Regulation, and enforcement if appropriate, should aim to ensure that displays of flags and emblems promote mutual respect among the communities, while not allowing the display of emblems to be used to maintain, heighten or reignite sectarian tensions. While such regulations would differ depending on the various scenarios in which flags are

displayed, the principles for regulation should be consistent and based on a strong equality and human rights framework.²⁵

- 4.5. Based on the evidence arising from practice by public sector organisations, the Commission made further recommendations to the Panel of Parties in relation to the display of flags and emblems by private individuals or groups in public spaces or on public property:

The Commission endorses the commitments in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy around building a culture where everyone feels safe and creating a community where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

In making these commitments a reality and to facilitate expressions of identity in a sensitive way and in a way that will not be divisive, the Commission recommends:

- *Where the flags/emblems are associated with illegal organisations, they should be removed by the PSNI and enforcement action taken, if appropriate.*
- *A regulatory framework should be considered which clarifies the types of flags and emblems which could be displayed, the duration for such displays, the process for applications to display the flags/emblems and the sanctions if these processes are not adhered to. The types of flags that would be covered would be those used for civic occasions or celebration and the duration would allow the event to be properly marked in the community, but not so long as to allow the flags/emblems to mark out communities.*
- *Within the context of a regulatory framework, the Joint Protocol in relation to Flags Flown in Public Areas (2005) should be reviewed to create a forum for local authorities to engage with each other and with local communities to control the display of flags and emblems. The engagement would be enhanced, as clarity around appropriate displays as well as authority for their removal would be clarified. It is also noted that public authorities which have a potential role in engaging on these issues as part of the Protocol will have changed since that originally envisaged, for example with the newly created local councils (2015) and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.*

In terms of private property, it is recommended that consideration is given to the extent to which displays of flags and emblems are increasing community tensions and discouraging the two communities from sharing public spaces and whether this is an area for action also. Such considerations should be balanced against individual rights as well as the need to prioritise the development and maintenance of shared spaces.²⁶

Education

- 4.6. A system of shared education has a central role to play in advancing a shared society. A system of sharing should be across the full range of providers and

²⁵ Submission to the Panel of Parties, ECNI October 2013

²⁶ Submission to the Panel of Parties, ECNI October 2013

provision; one which routinely teaches students together via a shared curriculum in shared classes. The Commission specifically recommends:

- a system of sharing which routinely teaches students together via a shared curriculum in shared classrooms could better provide children with shared awareness, understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds in Northern Ireland;
- in furtherance of the aims of the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy, there is potential to enhance existing mechanisms (such as the Entitlement Framework and the Common Funding Formula) using lessons learnt to date, while providing appropriate mechanisms to incentivise and advance partnership working and shared delivery.
- that promoting equality and good relations within a school should complement school ethos and reinforce the importance of promoting equality and good relations in education.
- address concerns about treatment of children on the grounds of their race in schools, whether in experiences of bullying or reflection of cultures in the curriculum.

Housing

4.7. Despite the expressed views of people in Northern Ireland²⁷, people are often still living in largely religiously/politically homogenous areas²⁸. We recognise²⁹ that people need to feel safe where they live and consider that if society is to be transformed, bold steps need to be taken to integrate communities. We recall the recognition within the Belfast Agreement of the role of mixed housing in facilitating reconciliation³⁰ and also the recognition of the importance of enabling people to exercise choice in the type of community in which they wish to reside. We have expressed our view³¹ that segregated housing in Northern Ireland is not the way forward for our society and that we view socially, ethnically, politically and religiously integrated housing as the preferred option and long term goal.³² That said, we consider that any actions must meet objectively assessed housing need, having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

4.8. The Commission specifically recommends:

- current policy development in social housing provision should reflect the goal that segregated housing in Northern Ireland is not the way forward for our society. The Commission views socially, ethnically, politically and religiously integrated housing as the preferred option and long term goal, and

²⁷ [ARK \(2006\) Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2006: This indicated that 79% of people wished to live in 'mixed' areas.](#)

²⁸ 70% of social housing tenants live in communities that are at least 90% Roman Catholic or Protestant - Shuttleworth, I.; Lloyd, C.; (2006) Are Northern Ireland's Two Communities Dividing?: Evidence from the Census of Population 1971-2001, Shared Space, Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

²⁹ [Response to the draft Cohesion Sharing and Integration strategy](#), ECNI 2010

³⁰ [The Belfast Agreement, reached in the multi-party negotiations \(10 April 1998\) - see Section 6](#)

³¹ [Facing the Future DSD 2012](#)

³² [ECNI Response to Facing The Future 2012](#) See Executive Summary p3

- the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy should set the framework for equality and good relations work at neighbourhood level.

The legacy of the past

4.9. The Commission recognises that addressing the legacy of the past is a multi-faceted issue and there are many factors to consider. In giving consideration to this, the Commission recommends that the focus be:

- to tackle sectarianism, prejudice and hate, and the persistent and systemic separateness and lack of interconnection between the two main traditions in Northern Ireland;
- to involve and engage everyone in the process, not just those who, in the past, have suffered directly or inflicted that suffering;
- to ensure the process of reconciliation is based on equality and human rights principles; and
- to make the elimination of inequalities an essential element in post-conflict programmes³³.

Women and peace building

4.10. In the creation of new structures, women's roles in leadership and decision making must be encouraged, ensuring the participation of women in the post conflict process. The Committee should consider the opportunity of forthcoming elections to further encourage and ensure women's participation in public life positions.

4.11. Any of the Committee's recommendations on the structures and delivery mechanisms set out in the *Together: Building a United Community* strategy should reflect the need to provide opportunities for and encourage women's roles in leadership and decision making.

General recommendations

4.12. The Commission would also like the Committee to consider making recommendations to the Executive for public policy reforms which:

- address current gaps in rights and protections through law reform;
- tackle prejudicial attitudes, racism and sectarianism;
- address issues in the workplace such as harassment and action to counter negative behaviours, potential discrimination and barriers experienced.
- challenge the systemic separateness and lack of interconnection between the two main traditions, our children and young people should grow up learning how to live, play and work together in a diverse society.
- ensure inclusion underpins the ongoing and future delivery of public services which contribute to a shared and united future, through partnership, sharing and the further development of individual and community abilities.

³³ Submission to the Panel of Parties, ECNI 2013, paragraph 25.

Annex 1: The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

1. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission is responsible for implementing the legislation on fair employment, sex discrimination and equal pay, race relations, sexual orientation, disability and age.
2. The Commission's remit also includes overseeing the statutory duties on the Department to promote equality of opportunity and good relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Section 75) and to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
3. The Commission's general duties include:
 - working towards the elimination of discrimination;
 - promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging good practice;
 - promoting positive / affirmative action
 - promoting good relations between people of different racial groups;
 - overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of the statutory duty on relevant the Department;
 - keeping the legislation under review.
4. The Equality Commission, together with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, has been designated under the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as the independent mechanism tasked with promoting, protecting and monitoring implementation of the Convention in Northern Ireland.

Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland

Together building a united Community

A response from the Evangelical alliance.

It is often said that the Church has failed to show leadership or provide vision in the public square. And so we begin with our vision. It is not definitive or exhaustive but rather descriptive of the flourishing society we are working to co-create. We build on the work of [Seeking Peace and Prosperity](#) - our response to the PFG 2011-2015 and [Past/Future/Now](#) – our response to the Haass Talks. We offer a hopeful vision centred on relationships, identity and purpose. We seek the wellbeing of this place and its people.

Our vision - One United Community

We see a flourishing Northern Ireland, a place that is truly at peace. It is built on strong relationships within our community. One community shaped by generosity, hospitality and risk. We dare to see Northern Ireland as a world-leader, a place where broken things are given the opportunity to be made whole and where relationships grow healthier, stronger and deeper.

- / We see **one** community.
- / One community **united** around their desire for peace, wellbeing and whole-life prosperity.
- / One community in which all the broken and dislocated pieces get properly fixed and fit together in **vibrant** harmonies.
- / One community bound by a shared history but more so by a determination for a better future. The community is Catholic, Protestant, believers of all faiths and none, Unionist, Nationalist, Loyalist and Republican, those of all political beliefs and none. **Everyone** is respected as an image-bearer of God whether they believe in Him or not. Everyone has a voice, a vote and a part to play.
- / One community where all **leaders** lead by example. Leaders in this one community treat everyone with dignity, respect and kindness.
- / We see one community brave enough to respect **difference**.
- / One community with many differences and disagreements, like any other. But this community thrives on their **agreement** to disagree well - robustly, sensitively, and maturely.

- / *One community marked by respect for their collective cultures, identities and political aspirations. The principle of democratic self-determination is accepted as the umbrella under which opposing loyalties are accommodated.*
- / *We see a community more concerned with its **character** than its ultimate constitution.*
- / *One community marked by **forgiveness**. Where all who seek it are given another chance.*
- / *One just community. Where justice is restorative and mercy is outrageous. For in one community an injustice against one is an injustice against all.*
- / *One community which views **hurt**, not as a weapon or an excuse for hate, but as common ground on which to empathise with the other. Where the weak show us strength- where victims and survivors inspire us to show grace.¹*
- / *One **gracious** and humble community.*
- / *One community which is seasoned in giving the gifts of **generosity** and unconditional love; taking the first step, in going the extra mile, being the unlikely good Samaritan and in turning the other cheek.*
- / *One community that appreciates the cost of **peace**. Peace is not held lightly or cheaply. We see a community willing to move forward together away from lines drawn in the sand by previous generations. A community committed to creating a post-sectarian culture.*
- / *One community who **collaborate**.*
- / *One community who work together in health, politics, business, education and charity. Sides are put aside. There is a vibrant public square in which there is room for all. We see one community able to hold the tensions of **equity** and diversity. Where everyone is equal but accorded the respect of difference. Rights are vital but they flourish in the context of responsibility and relationship. Sectarianism, racism, homophobia, intolerance of religion and poverty are fought together.*

¹Victimhood and attitudes towards dealing with the legacy of the past. Brewer, J & Hayes, B. 2014.

- / *One community built on **relationships**. Family, community, institutionally - relationships are prioritised. The importance of good relationships is recognised at home, in school and the workplace.*
- / *One community where the **Church** humbly lives out a radical love of our neighbour and our enemy.*
- / *One community that **welcomes** the 'other'.*
- / *One community in which there are no no-go areas. A community which **shares** space, housing, education and infrastructure. A community without 'peace walls' of concrete, heart and mind.*
- / *One community where everyone can share **education**. Where the role of parents, Church and state are respected. Shared spaces where children learn and grow up together.*
- / *One community that **celebrates** culture.*
- / *One community which **respects** each other's flags and symbols. One community where flags can be raised and lowered for a day in celebration or remembrance not left on lamp-posts as territorial markings.*
- / *One community in which **parading** plays a positive role in our future, with **the loyal orders** moving from a focus on cultural preservation to the creation of new traditions for everyone based on the principles of 'The Glorious Revolution' – civil and religious freedom and democracy for all.*
- / *One community with a **culture** of peace, unity and prosperity. Culture therefore that can be celebrated – for example in an annual joint peace parade.*
- / *One community respectful of their forefathers but not trapped by the guilt of betraying them. A community more concerned about becoming **forebears** to new generations to come. We seek to create new culture to be celebrated in years to come, to be cultural architects and cultural pioneers instead of cultural curators.*

This is our vision for this place; one hopeful future-facing community. One community requires belief in a peaceful, prosperous and united future. A future where everybody counts and everybody has a role to play.

Identity

Symbols of identity are obvious and everywhere in Northern Ireland, including flags, parades and language but it is also much more subtle than that. It's in the newspapers we read, the sports we follow, the names we carry, even the way we refer to this place. Our identity is so bound up in everything that it would almost be easier in this part of the world if we could just be born again. For Jesus-followers, identity is no longer primarily defined by nationality, social status, politics, ethnicity or even what we've done in the past. Our identity is found in relationship with God and those around us. Constitutional loyalties are still legitimate but they form a secondary part of our identity.

We challenge a culture where identity is too often reduced to national allegiances. We find our identity and purpose in so many other things: faith, family, community and work. Coincidentally these identity-affirmers are in short supply in some of the most disadvantaged areas where sectarianism and par militarism thrives.

Statistics from the Long View Community Survey published in December 2013 show that with changing political circumstances comes a change in people's perceptions of their national identities with the most marked increase in 'Northern Irish' identification.

- Is there space to be developed for better political relations, continued peace and stability to help foster a more mutual view of national identity?
- We need long term vision from Government, civic society and Church to improve wellbeing, rebuild relationships and support healthy families and communities. Constitutional loyalties remain under the umbrella of democratic self-determination. However, there is a collective work to be done of re-orientating personal and community identity around shared things like family, civil and religious freedoms over and above contentious symbols.

Relationships

This is perhaps an appropriate place to insert a reference to the parable of the Good Samaritan – A man who belonged to the enemy community yet acted as a neighbour in a polarised society. It was in the encounter that things changed, one man reached across in loving action, transforming him from stranger to neighbour at the point of need. There is no hope for change or transformation of hearts and minds if people do not experience a meaningful encounter with the other.

Transforming society is about getting relationships right. We must understand the value of relationships in our society, articulate a vision for right relationships and create an environment in which these new relationships can flourish. We acknowledge as stated above the strides made in good relations due to shared space initiatives. However, doing life together is more valuable than the spaces and services themselves. Good relationships are vital to building a harmonious community. Relationships are a central part of our community, cultivated at a personal level and the responsibility of all members of our community.

Good community relationships are vital to a balanced and healthy life, physical and mental health. Northern Ireland has 20-25% higher rates of mental health issues than the rest of the UK². The mental health foundation published "The Lonely Society" in 2010, which states that 48% of us think that we are becoming lonelier and 42% of us have suffered from depression because of loneliness³. Can we unite to counteract this dangerous move towards an individualism that isolates and destroys both 'sides' of our community? A society that focuses on real community, family and relationships will prosper socially, economically and politically. Church has a part to play in this. The Church has historically sought to be and continues to be a presence in society which cultivates community. Church is about life, hope, relationship with God and others and seeks the peace and prosperity of the place in which God has placed them.

Moving on to more fractured relationships, parades and protests must be approached from a place of relationship, community respect, responsibility and well-being. We call for an end to the dangerous desire on each 'side' to dominate this land and its people. We call for an end to internal games, party pride and politicking, which has damaged relationships and trust. We call for humility on the part of all involved. If we want to see basic civility, good relations and respect on our streets we need to see it modeled in public leadership. We graciously encourage government, civil and church leaders, to lead by example in their relationships.

² http://www.chex.org.uk/media/resources/mental_health/Mental%20Health%20Promotion%20-%20Building%20an%20Economic%20Case.pdf

³ http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/the_lonely_society_report.pdf.

- We graciously suggest that MLAs design and sign up to a Good Relationships Commitment. This is not a legal document but a spirited agreement to treat each other with dignity and respect. In politics it's natural and healthy for people and parties to robustly disagree. This is not a naive call for niceness; it's about agreeing to disagree well, to improve the level of political discourse for the wellbeing of all in our society. It is a challenge to each politician to move beyond legal codes of conduct into real relationship and a very practical example of cohesion, sharing and integration. It's about leading by example. We do not seek to dictate the terms of the commitment from the outside but we suggest that these terms must be above partisan politics. For instance, agreeing to refrain from personal attacks, raising issues in private before going public. Could this be an opportunity for Northern Ireland to reframe everyday political discourse more constructively?
- Changing simple terminology from good relations to good relationships instantly brings the term to life, changing it from the general to the personal.
- We suggest that all new policies be "relationship-proofed" for their potential impact on family and community relationships. Policy proofing is an effective tool which is already in existence here in the form of rural proofing, having been used since 2002. In Northern Ireland four out of ten people live in a rural community, yet ten out of ten people are affected by the quality of their relationships. Northern Ireland could become a world leader in terms of innovative policy development which not only grows the economy but improves the quality of our daily life, wellbeing and relationships.

Victims

How we treat 'victims', those affected by the troubles/conflict, is vital to how we deal with division and good relations. Trying to build a united community without addressing 'victims' and the past is like trying to treat cancer with a sticking plaster. There is deep and painful work to be done to allow for new relationships and healing.

This issue sits right in the difficult area between truth, justice and mercy. Ultimately we need heart change over and above legal process. This is evidenced by the fact that whilst there is a legal definition of a victim, it is not universally accepted. There is then a danger that a hierarchy of victims develops and that those at the top have veto over how the past is dealt with. However if this is true, it must also be acknowledged that many of those most affected by the Troubles are most inclined to forgive.⁴ Sir Kenneth Bloomfield (1998) made

⁴ A practical earthing of the potential of victims as 'moral beacons' can be seen in recent research by Professors John Brewer and Bernie Hayes. 'In two pieces of research undertaken as part of the Leverhulme programme, John Brewer and Bernie Hayes report results that show that victims in Northern Ireland can be moral beacons pointing toward a progressive and shared future. The first has yet to be published but forms part of the working paper recently loaded to the Publications Section of the Compromise after conflict website. It conclusively shows that victims are less punitive toward ex-combatants than non-victims with respect to four popularly canvassed policies. The second piece of research has just appeared in the current issue of the journal *Political Studies* (volume 61, issue 2, 2013: 442-61), and uses data from the 2010 Northern Ireland Election Survey, which Bernie Hayes was involved with separately. It shows that individual victims - those who had directly and indirectly experienced violent incidences and perceived themselves as victims - were significantly

the case for a more universal approach to victimhood in Northern Ireland by finding “some substance in the argument that no-one living in Northern Ireland through this most unhappy period will have escaped some degree of damage”. Everyone has suffered because of the conflict in Northern Ireland, including those born since the Agreement. No single group of victims should have a veto over the process.

We commend the establishment of a Victims and Survivors Service on 2 April 2012, we suggest that a change of terminology altogether would be beneficial. However, while in no way seeking to diminish or undermine the hurt caused, we challenge the language of victimhood. The ‘victim’ label diminishes the hope of healing by keeping people tied to past traumas and shaping their identities around acts committed against them. Reducing a person to a ‘victim’ at some level robs people of their human dignity.

- We suggest a mechanism which offers tailored care and support to allow individual ‘victims’ to move beyond victimhood and the vetoes placed on them by politics and other ‘victims’.
- We suggest more hopeful language which emphasises human dignity above any violent acts committed.

Shared Space

In this vision of a united place, space which is shared by the public is very important. Perhaps a sensible starting point would be using the long established principles of private and public property. It is largely people’s own business what they do with their own private property. This is obviously subject to laws on displaying items associated with paramilitaries, other illegal organisations or offensive items. However, publicly-owned streets and their architecture such as lamp-posts, kerbstones etc. should be kept free of flags and symbols erected by private individuals or organisations. It is not the appropriate space to fly flags or paint national colours on these objects.

Roads and publically owned housing should not be referred to as ‘Unionist’ or ‘Nationalist’, ‘Loyalist’ or ‘Republican’. There is no such thing as a Loyalist Road or a nationalist street, these are publicly owned spaces. This is not to negate or minimise the feelings of the Protestant or Nationalist residents living in particular areas, it is simply to make the important linguistic distinction between residents who are people and publicly owned concrete and tarmac.

more supportive of power sharing arrangements under the Good Friday Agreement than non-victims. This held true regardless of whether Protestants or Catholic victims are considered.’ – *Compromise after conflict*

As

It is important then, that spaces are created to allow for transformative encounters like we saw in the parable of the Good Samaritan. While we very much welcome shared places like sports facilities and housing as outlined in the TBUC programme, this is not enough. There is a real need for structured and informal conversations that encourage the development of these radical relationships.

- People are free to display what they wish on their own private property. As long as it is not illegal or criminally offensive. However, publicly-owned streets and their architecture such as lamp-posts, kerbstones etc. should be kept free of flags and symbols erected by private individuals or organisations.
- The Executive parties should agree as a matter of urgency a consistent protocol on flying flags from public buildings and estate.
- **It must be very clear which body the public should contact when they have a complaint over an illegally erected flag, symbol, mural etc.**
- Language used to describe this public space needs to be fitting. Although subtle, it is not appropriate to describe residential areas as 'Nationalist' or 'Loyalist'. There needs to be a distinction between people and places eg. 'In an area where the population is largely nationalist.'
- **The move needs to be to shared bricks and sports pitches yes, but more so to shared hearts and minds.** Moreover, it is important that government policy encourages this transformational space approach when dealing with all aspects of education, housing, planning, interfaces and cultural expression etc.

Education

We commend the plans to establish 10 new shared education facilities and new schools on the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus model. However, the long-term community relations surveys spanning from 1989-2012 showed that over half of Northern Irish School children attend schools with 95% of the same religion or more (www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/voices.pdf). Notably, there has been a considerable shift away from the terminology of 'integrated schooling' to 'shared education' which raises questions as to whether this will require as much engagement or interaction between the two communities? We challenge any sort of drift from a commitment to furthering this cause. Part 2.1 of the TBUC programme states that 'Research indicates that prejudicial attitudes and behaviours can manifest early in childhood', emphasising the importance of children from different communities engaging at an early age.'

- While the specific politics and policies of education will vary and we as an organisation do not hold to a specific model, it is abundantly clear that children must socialise together as early as possible to transform relationships in this society.
- It could be profoundly beneficial for young people in our schools to have a compulsory education about our history and culture. This would not simply be taught as history but part of personal development and present day culture – Why there are parades, bands, why there are protests? What the troubles were all about and hearing different perspectives. This ‘curriculum’ could be facilitated and delivered by any number of credible NGO’s.

Housing

'It is in the Shelter of each other that we live.' Irish Proverb

In terms of housing, we want to move beyond co-existence to co-habitation. We commend the vision to implement a neighbourhood housing scheme which would create 10 new mixed housing estates.

The Church has been active in developing mutual spaces in the community. For instance the Dock Café, established in the Titanic quarter of Belfast as a neutral/mutual space for meeting and engagement to promote the united community aspect of that area. It uses a boat known as the Nomadic to hold services, to try to bring some church unity to an area of Belfast that was being given a new start –one united community. A further example of the church’s regeneration is the celebrated Skainos project run by the East Belfast Mission. It is inclusive of the whole community, a place where people can gather, eat meals together, worship, and find help for health, employment, education, childcare, housing, and spiritual concerns. This sort of re-creation and regeneration is the perfect place for the church to put into action its call to be an agent of transformation in society.

‘It’s about integrating care and developmental support for children, families, young people, people who are homeless or unemployed, and the elderly. And it’s about providing shared space for people from all backgrounds and communities in East Belfast.’ (The Skainos project, East Belfast Mission, <http://www.ebm.org.uk/skainos/>)

- We believe the church should offer encouragement for such initiatives and could provide support by offering space and/or mediation for dialogue and inter-community development in whatever forms are relevant to their particular cultural context.
- Churches close to the new neighbourhood housing schemes could collaborate to create a space of welcome and community for those moving into the area. It is critical that good relationships are formed to overcome the inevitable tensions that will arise between mixed groups who will be living together.

Interfaces

The ironically named 'Peace Lines' simply make the dividing walls in people's hearts and attitudes more obvious. A society which is physically and visibly divided stands little chance of building harmonious relationships. We hope for, and work towards, the removal of such barriers. We welcome the Northern Ireland executive's commitment to remove all Peace Walls by mutual consent by 2023. Fruits of this are already visible with the opening of the gates in areas such as Alexandra Park Avenue.

- We learn to celebrate the removal of each interface removed as true progress.
- Before each peace Wall is removed there is a programme of Community engagement addressing the deeper issues of hurt, fear, identity and relationship.

Change and Grace

Beyond the removal of physical walls, we need to address the walls in peoples' hearts and minds. A duty of the Church is to speak life and love into society with its message of restoration, renewal and redemption to the hopeless and hurting through Jesus (the Gospel). Both Protestants and Catholics share a Christian heritage and understanding of the importance of forgiveness, grace and repentance in the context of relationships. These virtues are central to the Christian faith and the restoration of broken relationships. This process requires:

- **Repentance:** An acknowledgement of wrong, remorse and turning away from wrong/sinful/harmful actions, mind-sets and attitudes, to change direction and seek change for the better.
- **Forgiveness:** To grant free pardon, to give up all claim on account of an offence or debt. A choice to let go of hurt and wrong caused. In this context it is not giving up the pursuit of truth and justice or betraying loved ones but accepting the reality that in this life the truth does not always come out and justice is not always served.

- **Grace:** Unmerited favour, giving and getting what is undeserved, not always seeking a pound of flesh, not dragging up the past for political gain, showing mercy.

We cannot and should not legislate to make people repent, forgive or be graceful. However, these principles are vital in some way at an institutional level if we want to empower and lead our citizens on to a better future not dictated by the events of our past. These are heart changes but they could be led by the Church and accompanied by very practical measures. The implementation of such framework principals can be challenging. Repentance is an unpopular concept because it involves admitting we were wrong and putting responsibility above rights. Repentance and forgiveness are deeply personal things which Christians understand through personal experience. If we cannot collectively agree on both sides that some things were wrong, murder and sectarianism, then we are bound to live through these things again. We need a new, shared mind-set, a forgiving and gracious attitude (not always dragging up the past or seeking our pound of flesh) to overcome difficulties which will definitely arise. This is about moving beyond constitutional agreements to a place of relationship commitment which we're calling for at Stormont. A commitment to go beyond partisan politicians and treat each other with respect and dignity, working for the common good.

We propose a joint statement of acknowledgement on the past. Acknowledging death, pain, violence, hurtful and actions and attitudes and a turning away from this. This would be a line in the sand statement issued jointly with humble remorse and a commitment to future distance from harmful actions and attitudes.

Forefathers

In this part of the world, the idea of forefathers is an extremely important part of our collective community culture. Loyalists and unionists celebrate the victories of their forefathers. Forefathers are equally respected in the Republican and Nationalist tradition. From the United Irish Men and the Easter Rising through to the more recent Troubles there is a custom of remembering and respecting the Irish 'patriot dead'. Many of our forefathers are long since dead but their grievances live on, profoundly shaping the culture of our entire community. Deeply engrained within the psyche of our entire community is a profound reverence and respect for the sacrifices of those who have gone before. It's time for new sacrifices to be made on behalf of our for-fathers. These new sacrifices will also cost us our lives – not in the sense of death but a completely new way of living. At the crux of our inability to move on from the past is fear. A fear that unionist politicians often use as a political strategy – fear of a United Ireland, loss of gospel freedom, terrorism, loss of control, loss of a flag, losing the right to parade. The same can largely be said of the Nationalist/Republican culture, there are things to be condemned and critiqued. Each side is

so scared of betraying our forefathers that we've forgotten we are forefathers to generations to come. Let's not become so concerned with cultural preservation that we miss creating new shared culture in the here and now. Perhaps the most profound way to honour our forefathers is to let their victories and defeats rest in peace with them. Can we honour forefathers in new ways, not by picking up their grievances but by taking up a new cause? Can we offer more creative ways of remembering, commemorating and celebrating?

Given the macho obsession with "Forefathers" and the fact that 91% of those who lost their lives in the troubles where men (<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/violence/cts/smyth97a.htm>), we suggest the establishment of a program for young men in Loyalist/Republican areas. The idea is to help people examine the influence of previous generations and determine what legacy they want to leave for their children and grandchildren - transforming their passion and pride for their past into thoughtful reflection upon the impact of their own actions on the future.

Time for New Language and New Understanding on Sharing

It's interesting that we sometimes share by dividing. If I was to share a loaf of bread with a friend I would split it in two. Ironically this understanding of sharing actually leads to more division. This is often the approach taken to sharing in Northern Ireland. Each side has their own broad culture with no relationship or dependency on the other. We need to rethink what it means to share. It is often understood as giving something away, having less for yourself - a parent making their child share their toys or sweets, being met with protestation. Sharing because one should and one has to, not to bless others or to achieve fairness. The Unionist community particularly has seen sharing in this way, as losing ground, giving things away, suffering loss to the other's gain. Shared future, shared space, shared island, shared history, shared culture. The prevailing experience of 'sharing' in Northern Ireland is closer to 'divide and conquer'.

- Shared spaces are sometimes divided and used, or seen to be used, to dominate the other through murals, flags, parades or other activities.
- Shared history is divided. Narratives are fought over, rewritten and used to dominate the other.
- There are shared forms of cultural expression; language, parading, protesting, flags, music, storytelling - but on the whole we're not telling the same stories. Each side uses their culture to draw their own boundaries against the other.
- Although we understand the concept of a shared future, it remains divided. In one sense this is entirely legitimate, everyone has the freedom to pursue different constitutional aims. However the futures of a United Kingdom or United Ireland are not united, they appear to be mutually exclusive.

Mutual creation and cultivation are perhaps better ways to understand 'sharing'. The word 'mutual' refers to something held in common by two or more parties, something owned by its members with the profits distributed between them. It's about being interdependent. This idea of common ownership and common benefit is important. When a mutual venture does well everyone benefits. Our culture will only truly be shared if we create or cultivate it together. This process of mutual creation gives ownership to the whole community. **We, and many others, care more about the character of NI than its constitution. We are more interested in the common cause and common values of our people than our flag.**

Mutual Cause

In the 2007 Sinn Fein document 'A new beginning - A new Ireland' we see one of the aims being 'guaranteeing **civil and religious liberty for all.**' The Orange Order may centre around defending Protestantism but it's origins and indeed the 'Glorious Revolution' was all about the exact same aim - guaranteeing '**civil and religious liberty for all.**' The Glorious Revolution was also about laying the framework for democratic government in these islands. This is something both Republicans and Loyalists affirm strongly as part of a modern day UK or Ireland. **Therefore three mutual causes to unite around on a daily basis are civil freedoms, religious liberty and democracy. This could be a useful mutual framework for policy development.**

Mutual values

MLAs have a 'general duty to act in the interests of the community as a whole' and a 'special duty to their constituents.' But what are the common or mutual values between Republicans and Loyalists? Values which the Church, Republican and Loyalist communities could seek together are civil freedoms, religious liberty and democracy as outlined above as well as equality and justice. We would also suggest a framework incorporating family, human dignity and well-being.

We need a framework for public discussion on the values held in common in our society, to create a value framework that everyone can affirm to guide mutual decisions and culture-making. Such values include; Equality/diversity, justice/mercy, truth/grace, freedom/responsibility.

Can we have a structured public discussion on the values held in common across this place. There are examples of various models attempting to approach policy from a basis of common values. This goes far beyond the Nolan principles of public life and an MLA's duty of office. These are civic values. For example, on a large scale the commonwealth charter outlines the values that all countries under the commonwealth hold and work under and together in (<http://thecommonwealth.org/our-charter>). Other examples include the 'African charter on values and principles of public service' (<http://www.au.int/en/content/african-charter-values-and-principles-public-service-and-administration>) and the adopted bill 'A policy for civil society' 2010 in Sweden. Within the framework of the policy there is intense dialogue with value based organisations, beginning in 2008 with the government entering into an agreement with 90 value based organisations within social sphere and the Swedish association of local authorities and regions, (<http://www.government.se/sb/d/14291>). This has resulted in many benefits for the community. For example it has worked towards improving the integration of newly arrived immigrants. Northern Ireland in its post-conflict state needs to adapt this approach more than ever to move forward.

The Church's Role

We acknowledge that the church hasn't always got it right. We remind ourselves that God is not Protestant nor Catholic. He is not conservative, liberal, unionist, nationalist or any other man-made label we try to make stick on him. We cannot tether God to our limited theology. May he forgive us for making him into an idol in our image. Jesus prayed for future believers that all of them may be one (John 17:21). Some have been so busy barricading the doors of the reformed church against the Catholic tradition that they have failed to notice the elephant of sectarianism in the pew. We acknowledge that the local Church continually needs a unified view of the church of Jesus Christ and his gospel beyond this time and place.

However, as noted above, Churches can and are working together for a much safer and united community. The scholar Bonhoeffer argues that we need to let our guards down and confess with each other to be in true community. We need to share with each other our common and dark experiences in a way that opposes hostility and finds common ground in our desire for a peaceful society. The aforementioned principles of repentance, forgiveness and grace are vital at an institutional level if we want to empower and lead our citizens on to a better future.

Hard work, good laws and political agreements will only take us so far – we need grace/generosity to create spaces for transformation.

- The church is a missional body across the globe. The church must constantly ask if the way it ministers enables it to reach across class, age, race and gender. Locally it must also ask if the flying of national flags and singing the national anthem is impacting its mission positively or negatively. The issue is not about what is right and wrong but what is wise and missional.
- For over a thousand years a rich Christian heritage has shaped the culture of this island. Today we continue to seek the peace and prosperity of this place. Could we as a church, help our community to creatively celebrate and commemorate things that aren't linked to one side defeating the other? Are there new spaces in the public square to work collaboratively on issues like family, well-being, social justice and the sanctity of life?
- There is no biblical mandate to parade or prohibition against it. People have the freedom to parade and express their culture within the law. The question for the church is a missional one. We suggest that the church have an important conversation about the place of loyal institutions within the mission of the church.
- Jesus calls us to love God and our neighbour. The simple act of opening our homes is not just Christian hospitality but an intentional contribution to good relations. More controversially Jesus calls us to love our enemies. This is so revolutionary to our cultural norm that violence erupted recently at an event on forgiveness. We inhabit a new dimension of human relationships. It can't be forced or legislated for it's a work of grace. We suggest that the church source a way of ensuring that love, hospitality, forgiveness and grace are part of our defining characteristics.
- It is imperative that we learn how to pass peace-making into the next generation. Peace-making language isn't fashionable compared to other social justice issues and can be lost on a younger generation of Christian who see the troubles as a previous generations moral failure. We suggest that the church create a new language and fresh ways of communicating reconciliation and conflict resolution. Training colleges also need to give proper and specific history and context for ministry in Northern Irish society.
- Our cultural, political and spiritual forbears continue to influence us today. We recommend that churches publicly give permission to new generations to think and dream differently about the future of this island.

The Evangelical Alliance, formed in 1846, is the largest body serving the two million evangelical Christians in the UK. We have a membership of denominations, churches, organisations and individuals.

In the UK we work across 79 denominations, 3,300 churches, 750 organisations and thousands of individual members.

We are a founding member of the World Evangelical Alliance, a global network of more than 600 million evangelical Christians.

Our Northern Ireland office was established in 1987 and for the last 25 years we have been contributing to public life here.

Our mission is to unite evangelicals to present Christ credibly as good news for *spiritual and social transformation*.

Our 2 main objectives are bringing Christians together - Unity, and helping them listen to, and be heard by, the government, media and society - Advocacy.

evangelical alliance 
better together

Forthspring Inter Community Group



Forthspring Submission to The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Inquiry into Building a United Community.

Introduction

Forthspring Inter Community Group is committed to working with local people in the Springfield/Woodvale area and promoting good relations within and between these communities. Forthspring is situated on the Falls/Shankill interface and has over 16 years experience of providing services on a cross community basis.

Our vision is of a diverse and peaceful community, where all people are free to live with dignity, hope, respect and understanding.

Forthspring has been successful in providing a much needed safe and welcoming environment where people from both communities can meet and find a different way from the violence and division of the past.

Forthspring brings together Protestants and Catholics to build relationships, understanding and trust by supporting people to talk about their religious, cultural and political similarities and differences within a safe space and to simply socialize and engage with each other.

Using a community development approach, a range of programmes are delivered that bring together people of all ages to move across the wall and to break down barriers. These include a large youth project, work with men and women, Springers after schools and senior citizens. Current projects include the 5 Decades project gathering peoples stories and memories of living through the 'Troubles', the community planning group, a gardening project and a range of art projects.

Key Points

- Ofm/dfm funding: the process of allocating money based on the initial call following publication of TBUC has been simply appalling.
- TBUC is a limited document
- There are major gaps in TBUC if the objective of reconciliation and building a shared future is to be achieved. These include the failure to address dealing with the past, the failure to address divisive issues such as parading and flags and the failure to confront the reality of barriers to reconciliation and sharing, most notably the persistence of sectarian attitudes and behaviours.
- The lack of the ability of political opponents to make progress on allegedly agreed goals undermines confidence in TBUC and in the general public's belief that progress is being made.
- The absence of a willingness or capacity to tackle difficult issues has reduced much of TBUC to agreement around the lowest common denominator of sharing in education and work with young people.
- This focus on the lowest common denominator is likely to skew and emasculate Peace IV funding.
- Whilst the emphasis on shared spaces and young people is welcome, resources committed to young people in particular should be additional and not simply support main stream responsibilities in education and training.
- The vision of a peaceful and reconciled society needs to be approached from two directions – a broad vision within which people can agree to disagree on constitutional and contentious issues based on respect for each other and a legislative framework that includes clear definitions of sectarianism and good relations.
- We would add our voice to those who have engaged in CRC's consultation process and argued that 'interface work should recognise the critical need for relationship-building across interfaces as a necessary pre-condition before complete barrier removal. It should be informed by practice on the ground, as well as providing structured support for relationship-building initiatives which enable communities either side of a barrier to develop the trust and mutual understanding which lessens fear and provides the context for interface barrier removal.
- We would add that relationship building must be combined with a strong emphasis on community safety and regeneration to provide people with the confidence to support the removal of barriers and the evidence that it will be accompanied by social and economic improvement on interfaces.
- TBUC proposes committing resources to community interface workers. Too often community workers are inclined to view young people as part of the problem. There are incidents at interfaces in which young people are involved but the reality is that

most young people are committed to engaging with the other community and are often in advance of adults in their community in relation to this. Resources spent on community interface workers should ensure that such workers have a clear remit to take on board the views and aspirations of all sections of the community, including young people and that there needs to be a youth work approach adopted to engaging with young people, particularly on the streets.

- There should be co-ordination of reconciliation efforts on a regional basis should be facilitated by a regional body that is independent from government. The regional body should be tasked with the management and efficient delivery of long-term funding as well as developmental support for organisations and individuals within communities.
- Much of Ofm/dfm's approach is based on the assumption of two mutually exclusive communities separated by a barrier or wall. An example was the Interface Barrier Support Package outlined in the TBUC statement from the First and deputy First Minister on 9th May 2013 . This only part of the story. In reality, on interfaces, there are existing points of contact and engagement between communities. Resources should be committed, not just to winning support for the reduction of divisions within communities but across communities, encouraging and building on what already exists. In particular individuals and groups who engage in cross community activity in advance of the reduction of barriers should be positively encouraged and supported.
- The delay in releasing Social Investment Fund monies evidenced the limitations of a strategy based on sharing resources out on the basis of the two communities, Protestant/Catholic; Unionist/Nationalist. The competition for scarce resources will always ensure that such an approach is divisive. We acknowledge the reality of community divisions but would argue that to achieve a shared future based on respect the criteria of need and fairness must determine the allocation. And it is not only a matter of who receives what, it is also a matter of how things are done. Do structures and practices promote the breaking down of divisions or the promotion of separation? Locally on the Springfield Road services are provided in a way that naturally reproduces community divisions. One side of the peace wall is policed by Grosvenor Road Police Station, the other side by Tennant Street. The left hand side of the Springfield Road heading up the road from the City Centre is cleaned by Belfast City Council's Environment Services team based in Springfield Avenue, the right hand side is cleaned by the team based in Tennant Street.

Conclusion

Forthspring continues to believe that progress is being made towards a peaceful and inclusive society but there is much to be done in tackling sectarianism, racism and social inequality. Key areas have not been adequately addressed including dealing with the past and contentious issues such as parading and flags. A combination of political agreement, leadership and work on the ground is required to achieve the progress that is both possible and essential.

Foyle Trust for Integrated Education

FOYLE TRUST FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION

14 Crawford Square
Derry~Londonderry
BT48 7HR
10 October 2014.

The Committee Clerk
Committee of OFMDFM
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
BELFAST

Re: "TOGETHER: Building a United Community": Public Consultation 2013-14.

Dear Sir/Madam

We begin by thanking your Committee for carrying out this public consultation on this crucial issue.

BROADENING CURRENT HE, FE AND SPECIAL SCHOOL INTEGRATED EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND:

Given the experience of this Trust for Integrated Education over the past 24 years, our submission will focus particularly our school system.

Currently Northern Ireland's universities, colleges of Further Education and Special Schools are integrated. We work to see this integration extended increasingly at primary and second level.

OFMDFM:

There is a widespread wish in Northern Ireland for a more united society. In the field of education, the Parties represented by the current First Minister and Deputy First Minister are both publicly committed to reconciliation. The Ministers have personally spoken publicly on this issue:

- Mr Peter Robinson MLA: First Minister: 16 October 2010:
*"We cannot hope to move beyond our present community divisions while our young people are educated separately ... The reality is that our education system is a benign form of apartheid, which is fundamentally damaging to our society. Who among us would think it acceptable that a state or nation would educate its young people by the criteria of race with white schools or black schools? Yet we are prepared to operate a system which separates our children almost entirely on the basis of their religion. As a society and administration we are not mere onlookers of this; we are participants and continue to fund schools on this basis. And then we are surprised that we continue to have a divided society...
"I entirely accept that such fundamental change will not happen overnight but that is no excuse for further delay in making a start. I know that we will face difficulties in dislodging the vested interests that are so strong in this sector, but I am absolutely convinced that we must."*
- Mr Martin McGuinness, MP, MLA, Minister for Education: 16 November 2001.
"As regards integrated education, people know where I stand. There is a duty and responsibility on me as Minister to both encourage and facilitate those parents who chose integrated education for their children. I intend to support those people the whole way down the line".

THE VIEW FROM OVERSEAS:

The view of the wider world of Northern Ireland's divided school system is exemplified by American officials who have worked in Northern Ireland:

- Barbara Stephenson, US Consul General, Belfast: "The News Letter" 3 March 2004.
"the default is set on a Protestant school and a Catholic school rather than an integrated school ... It is mind-boggling from an American perspective".
- Ambassador Mitchell B. Reiss, the US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland, addressing The National Committee on US Foreign Policy in New York on 30 September 2004:
*"Looking forward, the United States also has a role to play in supporting the Shared Future agenda, as our focus on integrated education shows. After taking on this assignment, I was astonished to learn that roughly 95% of Northern Ireland schoolchildren are educated in segregated schools. As Americans, we have first-hand experience with segregation, not so long ago. And we know it doesn't work. Segregation short-changes the students by denying them exposure to one half their society. And it weakens the country by embedding misunderstanding and distrust.
"... As a matter of priority, the Northern Ireland government and civic and religious leaders should recognise that their society will be richer and stronger if their educational system encourages more integration, so children there grow up embracing the diversity of their own culture".*

OFFER TO OFMDFM COMMITTEE:

This Trust has long and personal experience in assisting parents to create integrated schools. We are pleased to offer this experience to the deliberations and policy-making of your Committee and to help you form your recommendations to the Office of First Minister Deputy First Minister.

We shall be pleased to hear from you and wish you well in your vitally important work.

Yours sincerely

Anne Montgomery and Colm Cavanagh
Co-Chairs.

Ulster GAA, The Irish Football Association, The IRFU (Ulster Branch)



**Ulster GAA, The Irish Football Association,
The IRFU (Ulster Branch)**

**Joint Inquiry Response - Together: Building a United
Community**

Table of Contents

Title	Page
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	5
3. Irish FA Strategic Context	7
4. Ulster GAA Strategic Context	9
5. IRFU (Ulster Branch) Strategic Context	10
6. Best Practice: Sport & Good Relations	11
7. Issues to be Addressed	21
8. Role of the Community	22
9. Good Relations Indicators	22
10. Sport as a Key T: BUC Delivery Method	23
11. Partnership (Irish FA, IRFU Ulster Branch, Ulster GAA)	24
12. Cross Stadia Programme	25
13. Conclusions	28

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to put into context the current positions of Ulster GAA, the Irish FA and the IRFU (Ulster Branch) in relation to the T: BUC Strategy as well as make comment and provide recommendations to feed into the final formation of the programme.

The three codes have developed a positive relationship through the delivery of collaborative programmes, sharing experiences and methods of best practice. There is a strong willingness for the three governing bodies to build on the significant progress made as a result of the partnership.

A key outcome from the growing relationship between the three codes a number of flagship projects have been delivered, such as the 'Sport in the Community' Programme, funded under the Department for Social Development which aims to deliver volunteer, club and community development projects through a sports lens. As well as this a number of joint projects have been established, such as the Game of Three Halves programme, annual joint Good Relations Conference, the Belfast Interface Games, the Stadia Redevelopment and the 'Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion through Sport' Programme.

During this time the partnership has gained considerable experience in the field of Good Relations and welcomes the opportunity to submit recommendations to the Together: Building a United Community (T: BUC) Strategy. Sport is an important part of the Northern Ireland society, with a firm place in the culture of the region. We are enthused by the support from local government in investing in sport to tackle important societal issues, in recent years.

With the launch of the T: BUC Strategy and sport cited as a model of good practise through the Game of Three Halves, the three codes view this as an opportunity to enhance the social impact of sport and strengthen the foundations already built through current programmes. The T: BUC Strategy serves as a platform for sport to be applied to the delivery of the headline actions under the four strands of the strategy. Ulster GAA, the Irish FA and the IRFU (Ulster Branch) contribute to over 90% of all sports participation in Northern Ireland. The reach of the three major governing bodies highlights the potential for collaborative projects to have real impact against the Good Relations Indicators and Headline Actions under the T: BUC priorities. It is the view of the three sports that the good relations indicators are robust but involvement in sport isn't adequately reflected.

Sport is at the heart of culture in Northern Ireland, and an important feature of the community. To a certain extent sport is ahead of the game on a number of social issues, particularly in the area of good relations. Sport enhances a sense of belonging and safety as well as providing a safe space for people to express their own culture and their shared culture.

The three codes have an excellent track recorded working with various Government Departments through funded projects that deliver against the Programme for Government and broader government priorities. This experience positions the three sports to work effectively with OFMDFM in the implementation of the T: BUC Strategy.

The strategic aims of the three codes are consistent with the T: BUC Strategy, with a clear focus on driving the value of sport in society. Each of the sports is currently delivering a number of programmes that utilise sport as a tool to deliver against wider social outcomes. Ensuring inclusivity and providing opportunities for lifelong involvement in sport is a key component to these programmes.

While it is important to recognise the successful collaborations between the sports, it is of equal importance to highlight the work each body has delivered which its specific sport.

Ulster GAA have considerable experience in delivering club and community development programmes, putting the club at the centre of the community as a hub to enjoy Gaelic Sport and Pastimes. Initiatives such as Club Maith sets best practise for GAA Clubs across Ulster, with a specific emphasis on volunteerism, community enhancement and culture & heritage. This programme promotes that sports clubs are about more than playing the game but about being woven within the fabric of the community.

The Irish FA are well known for their 'Football for All' Programme, which aims to create a fun, safe and inclusive culture throughout football in Northern Ireland. The 'Football for All' Programme works across all strands of the game and plays a vital role in engaging with those that are socially marginalised and in peace building. The programme demonstrates the power of sport in bringing people together and impacting wider social issues.

The IRFU (Ulster Branch) have substantial experience in utilising Rugby as way of engaging with underrepresented groups, such as females and people with disabilities. Flagship projects like the International Tag Rugby Festival served as a celebration of Disability Rugby by inviting over 400 players from across the UK and Ireland to play in competition at the Kingspan Stadium. The projects leading up to the event focused on providing new opportunities for people with disabilities to participant in tag rugby as part of a key strategic aim of creating a more inclusive Rugby Community in Ulster.

The three codes have the ability to have considerable impact on the key priorities of the T: BUC Strategy through existing programmes and infrastructure. As well as this there is considerable scope to develop innovative projects, such as a new Cross Stadia Sport and Education Programme, which have the potential to ensure a real and meaningful impact on the wider Northern Ireland Community.

2. Introduction

2.1. IRFU (Ulster Branch)/Ulster Rugby

The I.R.F.U (Ulster Branch)/Ulster Rugby is responsible for the leadership, development and growth of the game of Rugby Union within the nine counties of Ulster. This includes the full spectrum of Rugby Union from grass roots participation through to the Ulster Rugby Professional team, which participates in two cross border tournaments, the European Cup and Guinness PRO12.

As part of the ongoing development and growth of the game, the IRFU (Ulster Branch) aims to provide opportunities to grow the game at grassroots level in areas where previously there has been little or no exposure to the game. These initiatives range from grassroots development programmes in schools, female leadership programmes, disability & inclusion programmes to match night experiences, the community gym initiative and player appearances – all of which contribute equally to the growth of the game.

The IRFU (Ulster Branch) recognize the significant role that sport has to play in wider society. It is with this in mind that programmes are designed in a way not only to encourage playing the game but enjoying the wider social aspects that involvement in sport can have on the individual and wider community.

2.2. Gaelic Athletic Association (Ulster GAA)

The GAA is the world's largest volunteer sporting, cultural and community organisation with over 1.2 million members of 3,000 clubs located in 54 countries across the world. The GAA promotes the indigenous sports of the island of Ireland namely Hurling, Gaelic Football, Camogie, Handball and Rounders in addition to the promotion of Irish Culture, Language and Pastimes. The GAA is an amateur sporting body governed by volunteers. The Ard Chomhairle (Central Council) of the GAA comprises of delegates from GAA units across the world and oversees the governance and policy.

The GAA is by rule and policy a strictly non-party political, anti-sectarian and anti-racist organisation. The organisation is committed to the values of respect, tolerance and the vision of a shared future as outlined in the Good Friday Agreement. The GAA underlines its commitment to these values by engaging in an important community outreach programme, which involves dialogue and engagement with individuals, and groups who traditionally have had no interaction with the Association.

Ulster GAA is the Provincial Council and governing body for the GAA in Ulster, which oversees and supports the activities of over 250,000 members, 584 Clubs and 9 County Committees. Ulster GAA is an open and welcoming organisation that encourages involvement from everyone regardless of gender, community and religious background, physical and mental ability, race, nationality, age profile, sexual preference or social background in the Association.

2.3. Irish Football Association (IFA)

The Irish Football Association (IFA) was formed in 1880 and is the governing body of football in Northern Ireland, working to develop all strands of the game – international, domestic and grassroots football.

The vision of the Irish Football Association is ‘to develop, foster and promote football for all in Northern Ireland’, and intends to become a world-class organisation with a winning mentality at all levels. The Association has developed a series of values, which will act as guides as to the way we conduct business.

These values (forming together the word ‘PITCH’) are as follows:

Professional – We must be professional in all we do, meticulous in our planning and execution, leaving no stone unturned and nothing to chance.

Inclusive – Football is truly for all and must be inclusive. Everyone loves the game regardless of gender, religion, politics, race or sexual orientation. We must continue to work to ensure all groups feel comfortable and welcome within the game in whatever role they fulfil.

Team – The Association must work as a team, each with his or her own task as part of a greater whole – knowing our roles and supporting and encouraging the other members of the team as we seek to achieve our winning goals.

Caring and Confident – The Association must show a duty of care for all involved in the game. It is not good enough to leave it to others – to all players, officials, supporters, referees, and administrators – everyone. We must show and be shown care and concern. Whilst the Association must be confident to believe in that we are doing in all aspects is right and for the right reasons.

Honesty – Being honest, saying it as it is, not being underhand or devious – honesty and integrity must be watch words for the Association.

Using these core values in our daily footballing and business life at the Association will enhance it, and show a maturity and sincerity, which will benefit the game and all who are involved in it.

The IFA has almost 1000 adult teams, 900 boys' teams, 300 school teams and 50 women's teams. Our work includes the development of both men's and women's football at the most senior level, operations, club licensing and facilities development, player registration, grassroots football (boys' and girls'), disability football, schools football, elite football development, coach education, safeguarding and player welfare and community relations.

3. IFA Strategic Conetext

3.1. Long Term Objectives and Strategic Plan (2013 - 2018)

The Association has identified six key long-term strategic objectives, which include:

- Qualify for a major tournament
- Deliver the new national stadium and improve other facilities
- Foster a balanced, flourishing senior domestic game
- Create a healthy domestic game at all other levels, i.e. intermediate, junior, women's, boys, schools
- Build a culture of lifelong participation in football
- Reach beyond the game – use the power of football for health, education and social development

The foundations of our strategic action plan are based on our six long term objectives across three areas - International, Domestic and Grassroots. Some of the key actions and priorities outlined within this strategy include:

3.1.1. Qualify for a major tournament

- Improve player welfare
- Elite Programme & Talent ID
- Presence in Schools
- Small sided games policy
- Coaching framework

3.1.2. Deliver the new national stadium and improve other facilities

- Complete **National Stadium** lease agreement
- Stadium management company
- Community consultation process
- Sub-regional projects: investment in a National Training Centre, Major Capital Intervention project, upgrade of grounds

designated under the Safety at Sports Grounds, **community and social cohesion** projects

3.1.3. *Foster a balanced, flourishing senior domestic game*

- Create a **league governance body**
- Develop club academies for better player development
- **Good governance** in clubs (e.g. HMRC, salary capping)
- Develop club education on best practice planning and management
- **Club Excellence Mark** for clubs involved at all levels of the game which will include community relations and coach education
- **Respect** campaign
- **Good Relations and Fans Charter**

3.1.4. Create a healthy domestic game at all other levels, i.e. intermediate, junior, women's, boys, schools

- Support clubs to become '**community beacons**' or **hubs** through club education and development programme
- **Club Excellence Mark** award as a benchmark of club quality
- Build closer links with Divisional Associations to review national competitive/recreational football structure
- **Women's football plan**
- **Boys' and schools football plans**

3.1.5. Reach beyond the game – use the power of football for health, education and social development

- RESPECT Campaign
- Social impact tracker
- 'Football for All' (FFA) Educational Resource
- International Fans Handbook
- 'Football for All' introductory award
- Continue to build on success of Homeless World Cup Poland, through Street League Project and future international tournaments
- FFA Youth Forum established
- International Fans Seminar
- Social and economic impact of FFA on communities across NI using data from social impact tracker
- Good Relations and Fans Charter
- Interface football programme
- World United multicultural programme recognition

3.1.6. Build a culture of lifelong participation in football

- **Disabilities football plan**

- **Volunteer Development** Programme
- Annual joint community volunteer awards
- Youth football forum
- Irish FA **volunteering policy**
- Veterans football plan
- **'Sport in the Community Programme'** collaboration with Ulster GAA and IRFU (Ulster Branch)
- **Interface and homeless** football projects
- **Summer camps & festivals**
- Create culture of **futsal**

4. Ulster GAA Strategic Context

4.1. Ulster GAA Strategy, 'Family and Community: The Fabric of the GAA'

"Teaghlaigh agus Pobail: An Fabraic de CLG" is the third strategic plan to be rolled out by Ulster GAA. All the targets set in the previous two plans were achieved, most of them well ahead of schedule and the delivery of this plan is following the same pattern.

Five core values shape and influence how Ulster GAA does its work. Those values are: Community, Volunteerism, Identity, Inclusion and Excellence.

The detail of Ulster GAA's work is in turn taken forward under five themes:

- Keeping Ulster GAA Fit for Purpose: Governance
- Increasing and Improving the Games
- Increasing and Improving the GAA Plant: Facilities and Infrastructure
- Enhancing the "Gaelic" in GAA: Culture and Heritage
- The GAA's End Purpose: Community Development, Inclusion and Cohesion

4.2. Public Affairs Resource and Programme, 'Building Better Communities'

The GAA underlines its commitment to the values of respect, tolerance and the vision of a shared future by engaging in an important community outreach programme. This programme involves dialogue and engagement with individuals and groups who traditionally have had no interaction with the Association. GAA Clubs are key community anchors and are key providers of sporting, cultural and community activities across Ulster. This approach aims to further diversify the make up of the GAA and to enhance understanding of the Association among those who may not have previously engaged with it.

4.3. Ulster GAA Community, Strategy and Public Department

Ulster GAA has a dedicated Department who are charged with bringing to life one of the 5 strategic themes, "The GAA's End Purpose: Community Development, Inclusion and Cohesion". The work of this Department aims to better equip Clubs to enhance the communities they exist in, addressing agendas such as health and wellbeing, cultural awareness, volunteer development, strategic development, inclusion and outreach.

4.4. Cultural Awareness Strategy (DCAL)

Ulster GAA is working with DCAL Languages and Waterways Ireland Branch to address historical tensions to develop greater, understanding, tolerance and respect for our indigenous cultural traditions.

5. IRFU (Ulster Branch) Strategic Context

As one of four provincial branches of the Irish Rugby Football Union, the IRFU (Ulster Branch) is aligned to the IRFU 2013-17 Strategic Plan - "From Grassroots to International Success; One Island, One Passion, One Goal".

The IRFU Strategic Plan is built on the values of Irish Rugby.

- Respect - Discipline and respect are cornerstones of our game. Participants show respect both on and off the pitch for teammates, opponents, match officials, and all those involved in the rugby family.
- Integrity - Integrity is the foundation of the game. It is generated through honesty, transparency, ethical (Drug Free) and fair play.
- Inclusivity - Irish Rugby celebrates camaraderie and teamwork, which transcends gender and cultural, racial, geographic, political and religious differences.
- Fun - Rugby generates enjoyment, passion, pride, excitement, emotional attachment and a sense of belonging to the Irish Rugby Family.
- Excellence - Irish Rugby aspires to be a Leader in sport and in the community, which achieves success at all levels through being transparent, innovative and forward thinking. Irish rugby prides itself in doing things well and in a professional manner.

One of the goals of Rugby on the island of Ireland is to continue to grow our clubs and schools through a player experience that maximizes retention and creates playing opportunities for all those who wish to play rugby, from all communities and to promote an involvement in the game for life.

In addition the IRFU (Ulster Branch)/Ulster Rugby in its Business Plan 2014-17 has clearly identified its vision to be a World Class Rugby Region. The achievement of this vision is dependent on a number of key factors including growing the game beyond its traditional playing base, increasing the number of and developing capacity of volunteers and an creating welcoming & sustainable clubs that serve the needs of the community.

6. Best Practice: Sport and Good Relations

6.1. IRFU Initiatives

6.1.1. Welcoming Clubs Programme

The IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme is designed to support the team “off the field” in growing the club and strengthening links to the wider community. The vision behind the programme is to create a community environment where the focus is on fun, safe activity, challenging activity and social outcomes.

6.1.2. Club Excellence Award

The IRFU Club Excellence Award celebrates and promotes best practice in on & off pitch management of a Rugby Club. The Award supports clubs in developing the best standards across the following key areas: Rugby Development, Club Management, Child Protection, Volunteer Management, Community Engagement and Health & Safety.

6.1.3. Club Community Rugby Officer (CCRO) Programme

The CCRO Programme is a partnership between the IRFU and affiliated clubs. The purpose of the programme is to provide clubs with the capacity to employ a development officer who is responsible for reaching out to the surrounding community of the club through participation programmes, opening access to facilities, creating new opportunities for underrepresented groups and supporting club structures.

6.1.4. Play Rugby Programme

The Play Rugby Programme is aimed at creating a Rugby Legacy within schools and communities across Northern Ireland and Ulster. The purpose of the programme is to equip new schools and communities to sustain rugby through the provision of equipment, educational resources and training. This provides schools/communities with another means of engaging with other schools and communities through the medium of Rugby.

6.2. Values Based Rugby

Rugby is a value-based game with a number of core values that develop players/coaches/volunteers/administrators/fans within a social and moral context. The international values of the game are: Integrity, Passion, Solidarity, Discipline and Respect.

These values are central to the fabric of the game and run right across all levels and aspects of Rugby in Ulster, from the elite level to grassroots participation. These values provide the base for the culture of Rugby and focus on the development of the social outcomes that are inherent to participation in sport.

6.3. IRFU (Ulster Branch) 'Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion (PETPSE) Through Sport' Programme

The PETPSE through Sport Programme ties into the redevelopment of the Kingspan Stadium aims to provide new opportunities through Rugby for people from areas of multiple deprivation and under represented groups e.g. females and people with disabilities.

Central to the delivery of this programme is creating an open and inclusive environment for people from all backgrounds to enjoy Rugby. The programme focuses on five key areas: Increasing participation among people from areas of multiple deprivation, providing new opportunities to increase female representation, providing opportunities for people with disabilities to get involved, promoting fitness and healthy lifestyle and leaving a lasting Rugby Legacy across the province.

6.4. 'Sport in the Community' Programme

The project is a joint partnership and programme between the IRFU (Ulster Branch), Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association (Ulster GAA) and the Irish Football Association (IFA) to help support club/community development and volunteering as well as use sport as a tool for community development.

The project was incepted organically from a relationship that had been developed over a number of years. There was a clear willingness to embark on a joint project, which would seek to deliver on areas such as:

- Club & Community Development
- Diversity programmes and Good Relations
- Training and Development Programmes
- Volunteer Development (supporting DSD Volunteering Strategy for NI)
- Policy Development
- Capacity Building

Whilst the three codes were already delivering in these areas, this joint flagship project would allow the three governing bodies to further develop their programmes and have a more significant impact on club and community development, capacity building and volunteer development. It also provided an opportunity for shared learning and examples of best practice.

Some of the projects main achievements over the past two years include:

- Developing Associations' framework for club and volunteer development
- Policy development and implementation
- Increasing reach and impact across Northern Ireland
- Programme development and implementation

The project has allowed for the governing bodies to deliver a host of joint work, but also to deliver a number of programmes specific to their own sporting requirements. The three codes have delivered the following programmes:

- Volunteer Goldmark (Young volunteers)
- Game of Three Halves (cross code diversity programme)
- Training workshops (sponsorship, funding, governance)
- Good relations events
- Volunteer recognition events

Independently, the three Associations have developed and delivered their own programmes in the following areas:

- Club development
- Volunteer development
- Community development
- Diversity and good relations

6.5. Kingspan Stadium Redevelopment

A significant investment by DCAL into the Stadia Redevelopment Programme enabled the IRFU (Ulster Branch) to construct a state of the art stadium at Ravenhill Grounds with a capacity of approximately 18,000.

An important element of the redevelopment is increasing community access to the stadium and working towards the vision set out in the Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy that Belfast will be a "City of Culture & Sport" by 2025.

Through community engagement and education programmes the stadium acts as a shared space where people can access rugby and help improve deprivation.

The stadium acts as a place to inspire people to participate in sport (rugby), which is at the core of DCAL's Strategy for Sport and Sport NI's Corporate Plan. The stadium is fully accessible and aims to promote equality and tackle social exclusion through sport.

6.6. IRFU (Ulster Branch): Nevin Spence Education Centre

As part of the redeveloped stadium complex at the Kingspan Stadium, Ulster Rugby will welcome visitors to a new education and heritage Centre celebrating the evolution of the game and its positive role in contributing to a healthy, shared society.

Housed in the new Memorial End Stand, The Nevin Spence Centre will enable visitors from the education and tourism sectors to explore the rich heritage of rugby in Ulster and will provide a dynamic stimulus for learning in alignment with the NI Curriculum and Ulster Rugby's existing outreach programmes.

Offering engaging interactive content, powerful audio visual storytelling and archive materials, it is envisaged that the NSC will also stimulate awareness of the positive impact of rugby on the health and welfare of individuals and communities and may result in increased participation from those in areas traditionally underrepresented in the sport.

A visit to the Centre will be a memorable experience, incorporating a curriculum-linked workshop with a dedicated Education Officer and an informative "behind the scenes" stadium tour. From the home changing rooms and media suite to the players' gym and training facilities, visitors will gain a fascinating insight into the home of Ulster Rugby.

6.7. Ulster Rugby: The Professional Team

A unique part of Ulster Rugby is the professional team associated to the province. In line with the values and culture of Rugby, our professional players are an important part of rugby both on and off the pitch.

As role models our professional players play an important role in growing and promoting rugby. Our players have the potential to positively impact the lives of the people they interact with, on and off the pitch – they serve as a platform to promote and inspire the values of Rugby. This is a core part of grassroots rugby, where player appearances, Q&As and special events compliment the delivery of various programmes.

6.8. Mid Ulster Sports Arena

The Mid Ulster Sports Arena (MUSA) acts as a safe and shared space for sports participation. The complex houses the facilities to caters for the majority of field sports with both indoor and outdoor spaces.

The MUSA enables the three codes to deliver programmes on the same site as well as cater for club participation to promote lifelong enjoyment of sport. The facility acts as a space where sport can be celebrated, where people come together for a common goal and embrace diversity as a crucial part of the game.

6.9. Game of Three Halves (GO3H)

The GO3H is a collaborative partnership between Ulster GAA, the IFA and the IRFU (Ulster Branch) that aims to provide opportunities for people from different backgrounds to have positive interactions through sport.

The three major governing bodies have driven this initiative from its inception with a focus on promoting respect for diversity. The demand for the GO3H has grown significantly during the past two years with considerable potential to enhance the delivery of the programme.

6.10. Belfast Interface Games (BIG)

The BIG uses the model of the GO3H to deliver a summer intervention programme in partnership with Ulster GAA, the IFA, the IRFU (Ulster Branch) and PeacePlayers International NI (PPINI).

The purpose of the programme is to offer young people the opportunity to participate in Gaelic Football, Rugby Union and Soccer in a Summer Camp setting. To compliment participation in each of the sports, a number of sport themed good relations workshops are delivered during the camps.

6.11. IRFU (Ulster Branch): Female Leadership Programme

The programme aims to grow female leadership within rugby in Ulster at all levels; playing, coaching, volunteering and administrating.

A panel of females will engage in a yearlong training programme which includes accredited rugby coaching, fitness instructor qualifications, practical experience and leadership training.

6.12. IRFU (Ulster Branch): Get Fit Women's Boot Camp

This programme is designed to utilise health and fitness as a way of engaging females into Rugby. Females are underrepresented within the leadership, playing and coaching of the game. This programme operates

out of Rugby Clubs across the province as a way of introducing new females to the sport by focusing on the health and fitness benefits to rugby.

6.13. International Tag Rugby Festival for People with Disabilities

The International Tag Rugby Festival is hosted across the UK and Ireland as a method of promoting and celebrating Disability Rugby for people with Learning Disabilities.

The Festival was hosted at the Kingspan Stadium during June 2014 and brought together over 400 players from across Northern Ireland, Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland to participate in a tournament that focused on participation and enjoyment.

6.14. IRFU (Ulster Branch): Community Gym Initiative

As part of capital investment the IRFU (Ulster Branch) have established 15 Community Gyms across Northern Ireland. The purpose of this programme is to promote and deliver health & fitness programmes, create access to gym/fitness services/facilities, support capacity building within deprived communities, enhance the employability of local volunteers and act as a stepping stone to lifelong involvement in Rugby.

The vision of the initiative is to create community hubs where people can improve their health & fitness and enjoy the social benefits of physical activity/involvement in sport.

6.15. Creggan Rugby Project

The Creggan Rugby Project is a partnership programme between the IRFU (Ulster Branch), City of Derry (COD) RFC, Derry City Council and the Creggan Community with the aim of developing better relationships, increasing participation in rugby and building the capacity of local coaches & volunteers.

The project involves establishing a satellite Mini Rugby (Ages 6-12) in the Creggan area, which will act as a hub for players, coaches and volunteers from diverse backgrounds to network, grow rugby and develop new relationships.

6.16. 'Sport in the Community'

The project is a joint partnership and programme between the IRFU (Ulster Branch), Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association (Ulster GAA) and the Irish Football Association (IFA) to help support club/community development and volunteering over a three-year period (April 2012 - March 2015).

The focus areas of the project cover: volunteering, good relations, club & community development and capacity building.

6.17. Ulster Rugby Crew

The Ulster Rugby Crew is a volunteer programme primarily targeted at 16 – 24 year olds from areas of high social need. The purpose of the programme is to empower young people from all backgrounds through capacity building and practical experience.

Rugby Crew volunteers are offered opportunities to gain skills and qualifications through training as well as putting their newly acquired skills into practice through programmes in schools and community groups. The young volunteers are encouraged to link with their local rugby club to gain further experience and provide a voice for young people across domestic rugby.

6.18. Respect Programme (Londonderry YMCA)

The programme is targeted at low capacity, grass roots sports clubs in a developmental process. The aim is to increase the confidence and capacity of local sports clubs, with a specific focus on improving attitudes among young members of sports clubs on issues of sectarianism and racism. Participants are offered a range of Good Relations training, alongside Child Protection and First Aid training, thereby qualifying them to support the safe delivery of sporting activities within their clubs.

6.19. IFA 'Football for All' Project

The 'Football for All' project, based within the Community Relations department, aims to create a fun, safe and inclusive culture throughout football in Northern Ireland.

'Football for All' works across all strands of the game (international, domestic and grassroots) and plays a vital role in engaging with those socially excluded (marginalised groups, young people, ethnic minorities, homeless, refugees and asylum seekers) and in peace building.

The main aims and objectives of this project include the:

- exchange of information and addressing national issues through the provision of sport
- providing a platform on which football fans, coaches and volunteers can discuss issues of the past
- development of community relations projects and strategies within domestic football clubs
- working with community hubs in and around premier league clubs to heighten community awareness, making football

accessible for all, promoting inclusivity and providing a platform for social cohesion

- developing educational resources and enhancing links with school.
- working with grassroots projects directly delivering intervention and integration programmes addressing sectarianism, racism, social integration, mental health, volunteer development, unemployed and homelessness

'Football for All' delivers a range of grassroots based programmes, which use football as a hook for social development purposes such as:

- Street League
- Limestone United
- Ardoyne Interface
- Women's World United
- World United
- 'Football for All' Youth Forum

These programmes are designed to reach beyond the game, with the practical side of football coming secondary to the impact it can have on individuals and communities. The 'Football for All' project provides a diversionary approach for young people at risk, and opportunities for education and training (mental health, drugs and alcohol, good relations, mentoring, and skills development) and increased pathways to employment.

From 1 January 2015, the 'Football for All' project will be developed and coordinated by the new Football and Social Responsibility Unit, based within the Football Development Department of the Irish FA. This unit will be the training wing of the Association, with a focus on education, outreach and development for individuals, volunteers, clubs and communities.

6.20. IFA: 'Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion Through Sport' Programme

The Irish Football Association is currently funded through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure under the 'Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion through Sport' Programme (2012 – 2015). Given the IFA's experience and reach into all communities across Northern Ireland, it was clear that our work could be supported under this programme, and indeed, that we could make a further substantial impact in terms of equality, diversity, community cohesion, health and well-being, social inclusion, community development, skills development, volunteering, pathways to employment, and social and economic regeneration.

This programme is far reaching in its geographical spread engaging with and delivering into communities across Northern Ireland, in some of the

most socially deprived communities across the country. It is vast in terms of its ability to meet the key aims and objectives of the programme, supporting a **Health** Awareness and Training Programme, Schools **Enterprise** Programme, **Club and Community Development** Programme, **Disability** Football Development Programme, **Small Sided Games** Programme and **'Football for All'** Programme.

6.21. Club Maith

Club Maith is an Ulster GAA derived initiative, which aims to acknowledge the unrivalled commitment and time invested by GAA volunteers to their GAA club. Tradition dictates that the work carried-out in GAA clubs is of a standard, which every GAA member can be proud of. Ulster GAA wish to recognise the sterling contribution of volunteerism in our clubs, while also laying-down foundations which will allow this culture to continue. To do this Ulster GAA have established core criteria on which clubs can benchmark themselves. The criteria have been divided into the following five areas: Governance, Duty of Care, Community Enhancement, Culture & Heritage and Coaching & Games Development. Club Maith offers guidance and support to clubs going through the process. The completion of the process will result in clubs gaining a better understanding of how good their club is, as well as ensuring best practice is standard in all clubs. Successful clubs are awarded either bronze, silver, gold or platinum awards.

6.22. Ulster GAA Cúchulainn Programme

The Cúchulainn Programme is Ulster GAA's flagship annual cross-community and cross-border competition. It offers young people from non-GAA backgrounds the opportunity to learn the skills of Gaelic Games in both hurling and Gaelic Football, and then to compete with teams from across Ulster. The programme is delivered in both the controlled and maintained sector with games participation linked to relationship forging and friendships established. The Cup competition is now in its seventh year with 11 teams representing 31 schools and over 220 players. The Cúchulainn Programme also comprises of a further outreach element including educational trips to Dublin and games participation in London.

6.23. Ulster GAA Community Outreach and Engagement Programme

The GAA underlines its commitment to the values of respect, tolerance and the vision of a shared future by engaging in an important community outreach programme. This programme involves dialogue and engagement with individuals and groups who traditionally have had no interaction with the Association. GAA Clubs are key community anchors and are key providers of sporting, cultural and community activities across Ulster. This approach aims to further diversify the make up of the GAA and to enhance understanding of the Association among those who may not have previously engaged with it. We also open dialogue and

engagement with Community leaders from a range of backgrounds, including reaching out to political leaders and groups to promote tolerance and respect.

6.24. Ulster GAA Community, Health & Wellbeing Programme

Ulster GAA have an extensive health and wellbeing programme aimed at enhancing the welfare of its members in clubs, counties and schools. The range of programmes delivered include: Heads Up (Mental Health), Stand out from the Crowd (Drugs & Alcohol), Live to Play (Road Safety), Healthy Hamper (Primary Schools), Social Initiative (Older Members), Cardiac Screening (Heart Health), First Aid and AED (First Responders). This programme has now been formalized in the structures of the association with each club now appointing a volunteer health and wellbeing officer and adopting a policy to provide a framework for future delivery.

6.25. Ulster GAA Twinning Programme with overseas units

The GAA is vibrant in many areas overseas. Ulster is twinned with Canada and Britain in the development of our games. This relationship has evolved over time with support overseas being provided in a range of ways. Referee tutors have been provided to run courses and to referee important games. Coaching tutors have been trained to deliver coach education courses. Coaches have supported summer camps and Ulster has provided equipment to support these developments. At a strategic level time has been spent on developing plans and strategies to help focus the membership to drive the GAA forward.

6.26. Ulster GAA Cultural and Language Programme

Ulster GAA organises a wide range of projects to promote the Irish language. These include holding a weeklong summer course for learners in Gaeltacht Dhún na nGall, funding 'Gaeilge sa Chlub' university diploma scholarships, assisting with the administration of Irish classes in local areas, and producing special Irish-language resources such as a booklet listing the names of all clubs in Ulster. Gaelic culture is promoted through the annual Scór competitions and other occasional events. The Ulster GAA heritage programme encompasses the organisation of special commemorative events and initiatives to archive historical material relating to Gaelic games. Clubs are given advice on how to enhance their cultural output and archiving policies.

6.27. Ulster GAA: GAA 4 All Programme

The development of opportunities for children and young people with learning and physical disabilities has been a very successful programme. Coaches work closely with schools and community clubs to engage with

the groups and teach them the skills of the games. They progress to regional events both indoor and outdoor and play games as part of the National League and Ulster Championships programmes. This work is still evolving and with the help of Disability NI four hubs are emerging that will facilitate wheelchair hurling and football. Able-bodied people can also be involved in this activity and it is hoped that a formal competition will emerge in 2014 across the hubs.

6.28. Ulster GAA: 'Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion Through Sport' Programme

Ulster GAA has been working with DCAL to deliver it's own top priority, and most important objective, 'To Promote Equality, and Tackle Poverty and Social Exclusion'. It is the Department's goal to contribute to social cohesion and united communities, and through the elimination of the economic, cultural and societal inequalities. Ulster GAA was selected as a body to deliver this agenda and have done so across the following areas:

- Urban Club and School Coaching Equipment and Support Programme:
- Disability Gaelic Games Programme:
- Club and Community Volunteer Development
- Health, Wellbeing and ASAP Programme
- GAA Volunteer Employment Skills Programme

7. Issues to be Addressed

Throughout the deliver of the T: BUC Strategy there are a number of important issues that need to be address for the implementation to be successful. If the Strategy is to realise the full vision of removing interface barriers, there are a number of key issues that need to be addressed before their removal:

- 7.1. Building Positive Intra & Inter Community Relationships
- 7.2. Deprivation
- 7.3. Levels of Unemployment
- 7.4. Levels of Anti-Social Behaviour
- 7.5. Decreasing the Occurrences of Hate Crime
- 7.6. Developing peoples Understanding Diversity
- 7.7. Providing Education & Training Opportunities
- 7.8. Enhancing Quality of Life
- 7.9. Addressing Health Inequalities
- 7.10. Increasing Access to Services
- 7.11. Increasing Access to Facilities

8. Role of the Community

Engaging the local community in decision-making is a key element to public policy making. The delivery of government driven programmes should reflect the needs of the local community through on-going consultation.

The T: BUC Strategy aims to remove interface barriers by 2023 and recognises the extent of the challenge associated with this. The majority of interface barriers are in areas of high social deprivation, with people feeling marginalised and disengaged from society. It is important to recognise that before barriers are considered for removal, it is crucial that people feel part of the community and engaged in society. The issue of interface barriers is a sensitive one, particularly for those living with them on their doorstep. The views and opinions of the people that will be most effected by their removal should take priority in the decision making process alongside those of the wider community.

Involving the local community in the development of Action Plans that work towards the removal of interface barriers in a timeframe that works for them, should be considered as part of T: BUC. This will provide a straight forward and transparent, step-by-step process developed and delivered in partnership with the local community.

9. Good Relations Indicators

The three codes are of the view that the Good Relations Indicators proposed by OFMDFM are robust, practical and measurable. It is with significant enthusiasm that we welcome the inclusion of sport in a number of the indicators, particularly under outcome 1.2 Young people engaging in bringing the community together.

However, sport is not limited under one Key Priority, in fact the impact of sport cuts across all four Key Priorities under the T: BUC Strategy. It is with this in mind that the following recommendations are included within the indicators to reflect this:

9.1. Shared space is accessible to all (Outcome 2.2):

Sports facilities are viewed as community hubs, where people come together to interact with others, enhance their health & fitness and develop personal & emotional skills.

This directly contributes to community cohesion and promotes positive social benefits. The sports club acts as a central point within the community where people can share their own cultural expression in a safe and inclusive environment. This is a key indicator that should be considered when measuring the impact of the T: BUC strategy.

9.2. A community where places and spaces are safe for all (Outcome 3.2):

Sports clubs/facilities are spaces for people to come together for a common passion and celebrate their cultural expression through sport.

A sports club promotes a self of belonging and working together for a common cause, which creates positive community cohesion.

Sports clubs/facilities should be considered as an additional area to be monitored under this outcome.

10. Sport as a Key T: BUC Delivery Method

The IFA, IRFU (Ulster Branch) and Ulster GAA contribute to over 90% of all sports participation in Northern Ireland – making the reach of the three major Sports Governing Bodies a considerable resource when working towards government priorities.

It is acknowledged in a number of Government Strategies that Sport is a key driver in delivering social and economic impact. The T: BUC Strategy details the following:

“We recognise that sport is a powerful tool in bringing people together. We know that sport can play a central role in breaking down divisions in society and can provide a mechanism to encourage sharing, learning, and friendship; as well as, healthy competition across all parts of our society.”

While investment into sport and sporting facilities has been sited as a model of good practise for delivery of the T: BUC Strategy, it is important to recognise that sport is not limited in it’s capacity to impact all Priorities of the Strategy.

Sport should be highlighted as a central delivery method within T: BUC across the four key Priorities. The associated principals of these priorities are all qualities demonstrated through sports clubs and sport in general. Sport is about working together for a common goal, creating a safe space where people can express their own identity but enjoy a joint identity at the same time. This is reflected in a recent Northern Ireland Life & Times survey where 84% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that sport has the ability to unite people across communities.

It is recommended that any future investment should take into consideration the extensive remit that the three major Governing Bodies have and the impact sport can have on the delivery of the T: BUC Strategy from a face to face grassroots perspective.

Sport also plays a vital role in contributing towards long term sustainable employment and furthermore, the attributes, qualifications and personal development that can be gained from sport will undoubtedly contribute towards job prospects in a wide range of disciplines.

According to the Sport NI; Economic Importance of Sport in Northern Ireland report, sport and associated industries are estimated to employ 17,900 people in Northern Ireland, accounting for 2.3% of all employment in the region in 2008. This figure represents a 12% increase since 2004 so in today's climate, the actual number and percentage is most likely to have increased.

Sport also has the power to develop many aspects of personal development, including education, and through initiatives such as coach education and sports leadership programmes linked with local Clubs and the infrastructure at a local level, the impact on people regarding their employability prospects would be significant.

A key consideration as part of the T: BUC Strategy should be the potential for capital investment in shared sporting venues in strategic places across Northern Ireland.

With investment from the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure into the Stadia Redevelopment Project, we have seen the impact capital investment can have on sport and the wider community.

A number of capital club projects have already seen considerable impact on the wider community and indicated the addition of updated/additional facilities have opened access and transformed the perception of the sports clubs to the surrounding community.

11. Partnership (Ulster Rugby, GAA & IFA)

The three major sports governing bodies have been working in partnership on a number of programmes such as the 'Sport in the Community' Programme (DSD Funded) and the Game of Three Halves, the Belfast Interface Games (Peace III Funded) and the 'Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion through Sport' Programme (DCAL Funded).

The three codes are committed to working together on programmes that have the potential to have significant impact on wider social issues. As part of the growing relationship across the three sports, collaborative projects have focused on promoting good relations and diversity through capacity building among clubs and volunteers at a grassroots level.

The partnership between the three Associations has provided an interesting learning experience over the last two years in particular, as part of the DSD funded 'Sport in the Community' Programme. It was clear from the outset that the reach and impact of the three codes in areas such as capacity building, community development, and good relations through sport was significant.

Whilst the codes are in a strong position to further develop their capacity building work for instance with clubs and volunteers across Northern

Ireland, the Associations have learnt that they differentiate in some ways for example, their structures and developmental stages.

The three codes have gained much experience of working in partnership with other stakeholders in developing good relations programmes that have defined targets and outcomes relating to shared actions, joint up working and inclusion as well as providing directed programmes in areas of high social need that promote equality, tackle poverty and social exclusion.

Each Association has their strengths and challenges with regards to delivering programmes around capacity building, good relations and community development. The Irish Football Association has a wealth of experience in good relations and diversity programmes, using football as the vehicle for social change, which is evident through their internationally recognised 'Football for All' project.

Ulster GAA has a strong delivery in the area of Club Development and Community Outreach, educating volunteers and providing outreach education to provide an open and welcoming environment for the entire community. Participation projects such as the Cúchulainn Project; establishing links with female codes and providing GAA playing opportunities for all who wish to partake.

The IRFU (Ulster Branch) has considerable experience in areas of Grassroots Rugby Development, providing opportunities for player, coach and volunteer pathways. In recent years the IRFU (Ulster Branch) has developed robust participation programmes focused on growing the game with underrepresented groups, specifically with females, people with disabilities and people from areas of deprivation. As well as this, through the redevelopment of the Kingspan Stadium the Nevin Spence Education Centre is leading the way through an innovative approach to education and learning.

This learning has brought a great deal of value to the multisport partnership of three codes and has strengthened their position for future delivery, in how they meet Programme for Government, government department objectives and the priorities outlined as part of the T:BUC Strategy.

12. Cross Stadia Programme (IFA, IRFU Ulster Branch, Ulster GAA)

As part of the redevelopment of the Kingspan Stadium, Windsor Park and Casement Park there is significant potential to deliver a cross-stadia sport & education programme that provides synergy to the capital investment from DCAL.

Each stadium will host an education centre where people will be able to engage in education through a sporting lens, with a particular focus on STEM subjects. This provides an excellent opportunity for students to discover the potential for sport to integrate with education as well as providing a shared

space to explore the culture of each sport in a safe and respectful environment.

It is recommended that a Cross-Stadia Programme between the Kingspan Stadium, Windsor Park and Casement Park be considered as part of the delivery of the T: BUC Strategy, particularly in relation to the Shared Community and Cultural Expression themes.

12.1. Kingspan Stadium

A significant investment by DCAL into the Stadia Redevelopment Programme enabled the IRFU (Ulster Branch) to construct a state of the art stadium at Ravenhill Grounds with a capacity of approximately 18,000.

An important element of the redevelopment is increasing community access to the stadium and working towards the vision set out in the Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy that Belfast will be a “City of Culture & Sport” by 2025.

Through community engagement and education programmes the stadium acts as a shared space where people can access rugby and help improve deprivation.

The stadium acts as a place to inspire people to participate in sport (rugby), which is at the core of DCAL’s Strategy for Sport and Sport NI’s Corporate Plan. The stadium is fully accessible and aims to promote equality and tackle social exclusion through sport.

12.2. Casement Park

The Ulster GAA Stadium Project Board have worked closely with their Design Team to produce impressive plans which will transform the current 12-acre Casement Park stadium site in West Belfast into an iconic stadium for all Ulster Gaelic Games, increasing the capacity of the stadium from its current figure of 32,500 to a 38,000 all seater. All GAA codes and activities will be catered for in the modern stadium to include Hurling, Camogie, Gaelic Football, Rounders, and Handball. The new building will also offer up to 2000sq metres dedicated to community facilities.

The stadium, as well as servicing needs of the Central GAA and Ulster GAA will also continue to serve all the needs of Antrim GAA as the County’s home ground and will provide for all codes at all age levels. The aspiration of Ulster GAA is to have all school children with an interest in Gaelic Games play in the new stadium within five years of its completion. It is anticipated that this major Project will bring many benefits and opportunities for the local area and for Belfast and Ulster. When

completed the Stadium will bring significant local economic benefits, through job opportunities and by attracting visitors from across Ireland and these islands to Ulster and Belfast.

12.3. National Stadium: Windsor Park

The Association has a once in a generation opportunity to transform its stadia over the next five years. The £29.2m re-development of Windsor Park into a state of the art 18,000 seat National Stadium will be more than a new ground for the national team.

It will be a new home for the Irish FA; a new conference facility for the city of Belfast; and provide new social and recreational facilities to local communities.

We hope that its construction symbolises a continuing confidence in a new Northern Ireland, and in turn inspires growing confidence and support for our team.

A further £36.2m investment is planned to develop sub-regional facilities for the benefit of both the international and domestic game. By improving and upgrading facilities across Northern Ireland, we will provide better environments to develop our players and improve the facilities for fans and supporters who come to watch the game.

In total, the NI Executive through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has committed £61.4 million of capital funding for football stadia and facilities. The Irish FA is committing a further £4 million (14% of the total stadium project costs), and we aim to attract further investment partners both at the new National Stadium, and for regional facilities. The preparation, planning and execution of this work must be carried out with immense care and thought to ensure that the maximum benefit is gained from this investment. With careful thought and willing partnerships we can deliver a revitalised physical infrastructure for football, inextricably linked to local community development in Northern Ireland.

Plans for the new National Stadium are now complete, and work has already begun. We plan to welcome fans and new supporters to the refurbished home of Northern Irish football in summer 2015. We have completed a Community Consultation Process which together with further engagement will shape our plans for community facilities at the stadium. Through partnership we will be able to offer a community space, GP surgery, or additional sports and leisure facilities to meet the needs of the surrounding neighbourhoods and kick-start renewal.

The Irish FA will be headquartered at the new stadium. Having all of our staff in a modern, fit for purpose building will be a huge boost to our teamwork ethic and will improve our ways of working.

A new management company has been created, as a subsidiary of the Irish FA, to run the new National Stadium and ensure its long-term sustainability as a venue, conference centre and museum from 2013. It will take operational control of the stadium's commercial and community facilities upon opening in 2015.

13. Conclusion

To conclude we welcome the opportunity to respond to the T: BUC Inquiry and make recommendations to the future delivery of the strategy.

There is a clear willingness for the three codes to deliver joint initiatives that will result in a major impact on the Northern Ireland Society. The T: BUC Strategy presents a key opportunity for the three codes to enhance the good work that is currently being delivered in the area of Good Relations. With the capacity to deliver effective and successful programmes across Northern Ireland, the three Governing Bodies are well placed to act as core delivery partners for sport in the implementation of T: BUC Programmes.

Creating new opportunities and increasing inclusivity is central to the strategic direction of the three sports. This is an area that we hold considerable experience and can demonstrate a number of methods of best practise.

We also welcome the opportunity to present the comments and recommendations outlined in this joint Inquiry Response to the OFMDFM Committee.

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Glencree Women's Programme

Karen Jardine
Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister
And Deputy First Minister
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7th October 2014

Dear Karen

**Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.
Inquiry into Building a United Community**

We are a diverse group of women from working class areas across Northern Ireland i.e. Greater Shankill, North, East and South Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Newry, Co. Down.

Evidence Base

We have been working together, sharing experiences and learning from and with one another as part of the Glencree Women's Programme.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building a United Community.

We have chosen only to respond to the terms of reference which are relevant to the dialogue processes we have undertaken and these have been focussed on sharing, learning and building understanding of one another's needs in relation to developing good relations. In these extended conversations we have taken time to unpack many of the issues which continue to divide our people and in a spirit of generosity agreed on the main areas of concern for all of us, our children and grandchildren and now wish to share our suggestions for moving forward together.

The Challenges to Good Relations

During our dialogue sessions we were introduced to the Government's strategy document "Together: Building a United Community" and read together the Ministerial Forward, signed by both ministers. We then read the Executive Summary and discussed the key priorities:

The Strategy outlines how Government, community and individuals will work together to build a united community and achieve change against the following key priorities:

1. Our children and young people
2. Our shared community
3. Our safe community; and
4. Our cultural expression

The Long Term Vision – A United Community

To assist our ability to look at developing good relations in a step by step process, we then agreed to vision what a truly united, integrated society would look like and prioritised the following as long term goals:

Education

One fully inclusive, planned, shared education system from pre-school, through primary, post-primary, college, university to life- long learning opportunities where the mix re diversity in each centre of learning would be approx. 40/40/20 percent i.e. 40% Protestant/Unionist, 40% Catholic/Nationalist and 20% new peoples making their homes here.

Social Housing

That all new public housing areas would have sharing at their heart and again allocation would be made on the same 40/40/20 percent basis acknowledging the reality of more mixed religion/culture families in today's society and the need to end division, segregated living and the fear of one another which resulted from deeply divided housing areas.

Cultural Celebration

We agreed that all cultural events funded from the public purse would ensure a welcoming, inclusive, non-triumphalist, planned, and shared ethos and implementation.

Community

We felt that any future applications for funding of community/women's/youth/sporting centres/initiatives should only be successful if they could demonstrate that they were planned and implemented as fully shared places and spaces and that existing separate facilities/initiatives should be financially incentivised towards mergers and sharing.

We added the following as the positive outcomes of the above:

Ease with difference
Celebration of cultural differences
Support for mixed relationships of all kinds
Sense of belonging for all
Good management of immigration
Shared community facilities the norm
Quality, inclusive, affordable childcare
Fully integrated education and housing
Politicians of all shades and community working together

The Reality of Today - The Challenges

To get a baseline of where we are now we shared what we see as the real challenges we as women from working class communities face today. These are as follows:

- The very real fear that persists both within and across communities and makes it very difficult for women in particular to raise their heads above the parapet and speak out.
- The power struggles at the heart of communities. The continuing reality of local gatekeepers who still dictate the level and pace of change.
- The political stalemate and lack of vision around a future that is truly shared. We often hear good words but find that very few of these words result in positive action.
- The lack of political leadership and risk averse politicians which is paralysing and it seemed it was always the same people, saying the same things with nothing new to offer a community hungry for positive and inclusive moving forward.
- The level of division which sees such a high proportion of housing and educational facilities divided.
- The reality of many more mixed relationships amongst our children and grandchildren and how the high segregation here leaves little room for this growing trend.
- The worrying resentment towards migrant workers
- The continuing and in some areas evidence of new interface barriers which in reality help people on both sides to feel safe in their homes in the current atmosphere of fear and lack of understanding.

- The lack of implementation of many areas of the Good Friday/ Belfast Agreement, sixteen years after it was passed at referendum. We feel that politicians are selecting areas of the Agreement which suit their own political ideologies and ignoring or interpreting areas of the Agreement to fit their own agendas. We are concerned that the spirit of generosity and compromise envisaged by the broad range of politicians who created this international Agreement and “commended” it to the people at referendum is being lost and in particular are very disappointed that the Civic Forum, the vehicle included to ensure engagement with civic society in all areas of peacebuilding has not been re-instated. This would certainly help women to engage and we feel the voice of women has been ignored by many politicians in recent years.

“Breakthroughs” – Our Ideas Around Initial Steps Towards Building a United Community

We are very clear on the issues requiring priority and urgent action in our communities.

These are:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Housing – more focus needed on creating mixed housing areas, attractive, welcoming and supported. Pilot more schemes based on learning from the challenges of the past in this area.
- Education including community education
- Dealing with all paramilitary activity, racketeering and drug dealing.
- Opportunities through dialogue, storytelling, sharing opportunities of all kinds to build understanding of one another, dispel myths, challenge stereotypes and create a sense of belonging and respect for all. This will include working with the new challenges immigration brings.
- Creating cultural harmony, even around the flying of flags and other contentious issues. Cultural expression shouldn't be about marking out territory of creating fear.

We found it very interesting that the intensive dialogue we had engaged in had not included any in-depth discussions on the current divisive and contentious issues of flags, parades and the past. We felt that these are red herrings that enabled the focus to be removed from the bread and butter issues that communities are most interested in. We do feel that the issues of the past would be best served by revisiting the recommendations made at the end of the Eames Bradley process.

Integration in Northern Ireland needs strong leadership and we feel the present situation contributes to inconsistent and ambiguous policies that hints at the fact that the status quo will remain as long as violence continues. We feel that the Agreement gave politicians a mandate that they are long overdue in fulfilling to enable Northern Ireland to enjoy a fully functioning, inclusive democracy.

We hope that you find our comments helpful. We would be very keen to meet with the Committee to provide oral evidence and to further elaborate on the issues we raise and our suggestions re moving forward.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Kelly – North Belfast
Irene Williamson – East Belfast
Roberta Gray - Greater Shankill
Donna McIlroy – Greater Shankill
Megan Lewis – Belfast 8
Kay Smith - Newry
Marie Gillespie – Derry/Londonderry
Theresa Holmes – Derry/Londonderry
Patricia Quigley – Derry/Londonderry
Maisie Crawford – Derry/Londonderry
Margaret Irvine – Derry/Londonderry
Siobhan Brinkley – Derry/Londonderry
Jennifer Doherty – Derry/Londonderry
Beth Neely – Derry/Londonderry

and Anne Carr

Dennis Golden

Dennis Golden

TOGETHER – BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY

The disunited NI Executive has published a strategy document “Together: Building a United Community” which in its title and content is hypocritical, inconsistent, self-defeating and futile in that it fails to name and address the very division, and its fundamental cause, which disunites our community, and implicitly recognizes that the division will remain, however tolerant and respectful of “the other side” we might become. The strategy might result in a reluctantly “Shared Territory”, but never in a “United Community”. Like the “Good Friday Agreement”, the strategy and document is an exercise in political pussyfooting.

If the political parties and individual politicians cannot lead by example by coming “Together” and demonstrating a “United” political/national identity, a “United” personal and party rejection and condemnation of religious bigotry and hatred, and demonstrate a common aspiration for the common good, how in all honesty can they claim to be “Together: Building a United Community” or ask the population to be so?

How can we possibly heal the religio-political division in Northern Ireland and form a united community when we have so many institutions, legitimate and otherwise, which reflect, exacerbate and perpetuate the division, and which rely on the division for their very existence?

We have the parading Orders, the marching bands, the paramilitary groups, the different Christian denominations, the separate school systems, the “We’re Not Irish” ethnic identity movement, the opposing political parties, a disunited Assembly and a disunited Executive.

The document advocates tolerance and respect for the other's identity and viewpoint, but tolerance has its limits, and Protestantism, by definition, and in actuality for many in Northern Ireland, does not respect Roman Catholicism. Unionists do not tolerate the Republican aspiration for a united Ireland. Republicans do not tolerate perpetual union with Britain. Catholic tolerance of Protestant bigotry reached its limit with the Civil Rights Movement in 1968/69.

Do we want a bi-cultural, bi-political, two communities population forever at loggerheads over religious and national identity or do we want an integrated united community with a mutually accepted identity and a common aspiration for the common good?

A stable bi-cultural, bi-political, two communities population in the Northern Ireland context is a non-viable concept, and has been so from the inception of Northern Ireland. Even Edward Carson acknowledged this fact. So, short of ethnic cleansing or re-Partition and transference of populations, how do we now forge an integrated united community with a mutually accepted identity and common aspiration?

Firstly we must deal with the elephant in the room, the problem that is never addressed head on, no less so than in the strategy document, – the religious divide and the fact that Unionism/Loyalism is motivated by a form of Protestantism with a residual mediaeval anti-Catholic ethos institutionalized in the British monarchy. The monarchy can thus be added to the list of divisive institutions.

Noticeably, the churches have not been included in any of the initiatives proposed in the document. Was it politically dangerous to ask the churches to come “Together” and “Build a United Church/Community”? Did the politicians and their parties fear that they would lose their mandates if such unity came about? Or

was it perhaps considered to be futile? Why have the custodians of religious difference, the church leaders, never come together of their own volition? Has Jesus (if he ever in fact existed) been eclipsed by Christianity in its many forms?

If our united community is to be based on and guided by Christian values and principles we need a clear definition, and common understanding and acceptance, of those values and principles. To define those values and principles, and to educate the population in them, we need a common form of Christianity combining the best in Catholicism with the best in Protestantism, and the best in other religions with similar values and principles which have a significant adherence in Northern Ireland.

So Churchmen, get off your backsides, throw off your denominational straitjackets, put your heads together and do the Christian, social and morally responsible thing. Distil your denominations to their basic common values and principles and produce a commonly acceptable form of Christianity (Reformation 2). Surely with the help of "God" that is possible, if there is a "god". If "God" declines to help you must do it yourselves. If there is no "god" we need neither Catholicism nor Protestantism nor any other religion. We need a commonly agreed social moral code. Perhaps you should consider re-interring Christ and resurrecting Jesus who, in his lifetime (if he ever in fact existed), provided such a code in very few words before he was posthumously christified and deified by Paul and his gospel writer associates (simple Jesuanity rather than Christianity with its contentious interpretations and forms).

With the religious difference removed, the divisive institutions become irrelevant and unnecessary and the political question becomes less fraught. Union with Britain and its Protestant constitution becomes less of an imperative for erstwhile Protestants /Unionists/Loyalists, while reunification with the now less Catholic

South becomes less pressing for erstwhile Catholics, now no longer a downtrodden and barely tolerated minority in a Protestant statelet.

An aspiration for a united Ireland might of course remain in some quarters, but the vast majority, now an integrated, united, non-sectarian community, could choose on practical, non-emotive issues whether to remain with the UK, or to seek union with the Republic, or to be independent of both. Extremists on both sides of the divide, and their religious and political representatives, fear such a harmonious scenario. They, together with institutions and other vested interests, will do their utmost to impede and prevent it coming into being.

Given the Republic's current disaffection with the institutional Roman church, people there might welcome and adopt a rationalized form of religion, or a social moral code, thereby removing an emotive obstacle to integration with the North. It remains to be seen if possible changes which might be introduced by the new Pope Francis might help to bridge the Catholic-Protestant divide.

Meanwhile, the process of serious and effective religious and social reconciliation and integration should be started here and now, with or without "God's" help.

With "God's" help, pigs, and elephants, might fly.

© Dennis Golden

1 October 2013

Holywell Trust, Peace & Reconciliation Group, The Junction

Holywell Trust, Peace & Reconciliation Group and The Junction Response to Inquiry into Together: Building a United Community

This paper was informed through engagement with the wider community at two sessions (23rd September & 1st October) and with representatives from each organisation.

About Our Organisations

1. Holywell Trust exists to facilitate understanding and healing, and sees itself as being at the heart of the social regeneration of the walled city. Holywell Trust is the lead partner of the DiverseCity Community Partnership, a collective of 10 organisations that have recently opened a new purpose built community building in the centre of Derry/Londonderry. The Partnership is working towards establishing our city centre as a truly diverse space.
2. Peace & Reconciliation Group has as its mission to promote and develop understanding and co-operation within and between individuals, communities and organisations. The PRG works towards this mission through a series of projects, the delivery of training and the facilitation of mediation.
3. The Junction is a community relations and peace building initiative set up to address issues of ongoing concern that are barriers to peace and a shared future. Among the projects that The Junction has developed and leads up are Ethical and Shared Remembering (concerned with a decade of violence and change 1912-1922 using the distant past as a prism to unpack the more recent conflict and violence of recent troubles), Towards Understanding & Healing (an organisation that recognises and validates individual experience in the context of the much wider story of the conflict in Northern Ireland and across these islands) and, City of Sanctuary (developing the city as a place where individuals and groups feel welcome, safe and embraced, where culture and cultural diversity is enriched through sharing together).

Reflections on the Strategy

4. **Welcome** – we welcome the publication of the Together: Building a United Community (T: BUC) strategy. The overall vision outlined in the document is clear and describes a society that our organisations are working towards. We were disappointed that, in our opinion, the headline priorities fall somewhat short in helping to achieve the vision of ‘a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation’.
5. **Resourcing** – we are concerned that there are no resources mentioned throughout the T: BUC document. A government strategy without ring-fenced resources is often no more than an aspirational document. The commitment of resources would reinforce government’s commitment to addressing the important issues within the document.
6. **Timeframes** – we were surprised to note that the document only contains three actions that have defined timelines, one of which (review and consult on the Good Relations indicators by the end of 2013) has already passed unachieved. Essential to the success of achieving targets is to set realistic timeframes aligned to dedicated budgets – this is core to any strategy.
7. **Connection with Programme for Government** – the current Programme for Government, to which this strategy is tied, is currently due to expire in March 2015. This inquiry is due to overrun this time period raising questions on the change that may result.
8. **Development of Strategy** – we were frustrated with the lack of engagement with the wider community in the development of the strategy. As a result there is an obvious disconnect between the strategy and community relations practice in local communities. The important

work of community relations organisations and practitioners is undervalued throughout the document which is overly focused on delivery at the departmental level.

9. **Definition** – whilst several key themes, e.g. reconciliation, good relations and diversity, are all mentioned in the document there is a need for these to be clearly defined to the highest international standards. This will support the monitoring and evaluation of progress against each and allow for best practice to be shared internationally. In addition the underpinning principles would also benefit from further definition within our wider societal context, e.g. if we are to have interdependence as an underlying principle what is meant by this, what does it look like in practice?
10. **Reconciliation** – whilst reconciliation is highlighted as a key concern of the strategy little detail is given on how this is likely to be achieved or how issues arising from the past are going to be addressed. The reference to the establishment of an all party group to address issues from the past does not inspire confidence as elected representatives have generally avoided dealing with these challenging issues in a constructive manner – the issues continue to stunt the development of relationships and effective governance.
11. **Political Leadership** – within the strategy political leadership is highlighted as key to the successful implementation of the strategy. This remains a challenge to the full implementation of the strategy as there does not seem to be a strong political commitment to achieving the vision contained within this document as evidenced by the current need for further political talks.
12. **Legislative Change** – broadening the remit of key organisations such as the Community Relations Council and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland will require a legislative change to Section 75. We are concerned that this legislative change may impact adversely on both the equality duty and on good relations work and commitments of public bodies. Our concern is that the promotion of good relations may be reduced to a tick-box exercise rather than a core function.
13. **Community Relations Council** – the strategy recommends that this independent charitable organisation is folded into the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. We feel that the strategy is reaching beyond its remit to directly impact on an independent organisation. The Community Relations Council is a valued and vital organisation in the promotion and delivery of good relations work throughout Northern Ireland, an organisation that the sector support and want sustained. The Community Relations Council currently help to support the co-ordination of good relations activity throughout Northern Ireland – a function that should be sustained.
14. **Interface Challenges** – the target of removing physical barriers between communities is welcome. However, by focusing on the physical element of interfaces without addressing the psychological challenges is potentially damaging.
15. **Limited Actions & Existing Priorities** – the actions contained within the document seem to reflect existing priorities within government departments repackaged as good relations activity. There are few new initiatives within the document or actions that reflect on the current best practice within the community and voluntary sector.
16. **Implementation** – limited detail is given on how the strategy will be rolled out. Departmental action plans are mentioned but progress against these is far from obvious. Community relations practitioners, who have significant experience in the developing and delivery of good relations activities, are entirely absent from any implementation process within the strategy.

Recommendations

17. **Leadership** – there is a need for good relations champions within government departments and the political sphere. These champions should have the power and influence to affect change and create meaningful connections and relationships with practitioners working at the

local level. At present there is a dearth of, but appetite for, inspiration – real leadership that can result in encouraging positive change.

18. **Resources** – finances need to be clearly identified for the delivery of good relations activities within each government department. This should also include resources to directly sustain community relations practice within the community and voluntary sector. How resources are distributed should also be open and transparent and the impact of projects subject to monitoring and evaluation.
19. **Ambition** – the headline priorities and actions contained within this strategy need to be more ambitious. This type of strategy is trying to create a society that is some distance from our current reality. The achievement of the vision set within this strategy will take a long-term strategy using a range of approaches – a robust strategy that is informed by but looks beyond Programme for Government timeframes.
20. **Integrated Education** – how we educate our children needs to be transformed so that meeting someone from a different community or ethnic background is the norm rather than the exception. We cannot continue to be brought up apart. We cannot continue to sustain institutionalised division. We are not serving the needs of our children or society as a whole. In our opinion, the best way to educate our children is through one fully integrated system. This needs reflected in this and any future strategy of this nature.
21. **Focus on Youth** – there is a continued need to focus on young people, to capture their energy for the creation of a new, shared society. Programmes should continue to be targeted at all young people. However, it is also vitally important that the issues arising from the conflict are addressed by wider society. Important, often divisive issues, cannot simply be left unaddressed in the hope that young people will not be burdened by them.
22. **Engagement with Wider Community** – the Civic Forum should be revisited and refreshed with a view to being a key vehicle in formulating approaches to dealing with difficult issues. A functioning and effective forum could provide the support and guidance required to help government and political leaders to address challenging issues in a positive manner.

Oral Evidence

23. Representatives from our organisations would welcome the opportunity to give oral evidence to the committee.

October 2014

Engagement Details

24. 23rd September – engagement was carried out through the Conversation Space programme delivered by Holywell Trust. The event was attended by:
 - Eamonn Baker (Towards Understanding & Healing)
 - James Greer (Europa Acadamé)
 - Jill Tellez (Europa Acadamé)
 - Seamus Farrell (The Junction)
 - Dr. Inder Pal Singh
 - Linda Morgan
 - Maureen Hetherington (The Junction)
 - Lisa Wilkinson
 - Michael Doherty (Peace & Reconciliation Group)
 - Dennis Golden

25. 1st October – a workshop to inform this joint response to the inquiry was held as part of the Garden of Reflection Lunchtime Event programme. This session was attended by:
- Carol Wright (Towards Understanding & Healing)
 - Richie Hetherington (The Junction)
 - Kevin Burns (The Junction)
 - Marjorie Baker (Garden of Reflection)
 - Gerry Sharkey (Pink Panthers)
 - Bornach Sharkey
 - Nuala Crilly (North West Community Network)
 - Gemma Harkin (Holywell Trust)
 - Neola Nelis McCrossan (North West Community Network)
 - Linda Nash (BSMC)
 - B Doherty (BSMC)
 - Flavio Oboti
 - Owen Donnelly (Peace & Reconciliation Group)
 - Colin Devine (North West Community Network)
 - A Lucrak (NICEM North West)
 - Jenny McClelland (Derry City Council)
 - Carol Stewart (Derry City Council)
 - Lisa Clements (Holywell Trust)
 - Roisin O’Hagan (Holywell Consultancy)
 - Lynne Edgar
 - Colm Cavanagh (Foyle Trust for Integrated Education)
 - Ursula Birthistle
 - Denis McLaughlin (Customised Training Services)
 - Matt Jennings (University of Ulster)
 - Vincent Coyle
 - Zach Jones (Peace Walls Project)
 - Julia Fair (Peace & Reconciliation Group)
 - Rebecca Carroll (The Junction)
 - Lisa Anderson (Culturlann)
 - Dr. Inder Pal Singh
 - Kate Nash (Bloody Sunday March Committee)
 - John McCormack
 - Frank Cary (St. Columb’s Park House)
 - John Lindsay
 - Charlotte Gordon
 - Dennis Golden
 - Anneliese Gregg
 - Kirsten Arbuckle (Peace Walls Project)

Institute for Research in Social Sciences - University of Ulster



Faculty of
Social Sciences

Submission to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Dr. Duncan Morrow, Dr. Jonny Byrne, Professor Cathy
Gormley-Heenan and Dr. Brendan Sturgeon
(University of Ulster)

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Introduction

This evidence submitted to the OFMDFM Inquiry into Building a United Community is drawn from our previous academic research which considered public attitudes around peace walls and interfaces (Byrne, Gormley-Heenan, and Robinson, 2012) and is also informed by our current knowledge exchange activities and research, funded by the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) in partnership with the Department of Justice (DoJ). This knowledge exchange work considers a range of issues related to the NI Executive's peace wall strategy contained within the *Together: Building a United Community* document (May 2013).

We are very grateful for the opportunity to respond to the consultation. Against the background of our current ESRC project, our response will focus on one key aspect of the Terms of Reference put forward by the *Inquiry into Building a United Community* (2014): **'Seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers to be removed.'**

1) Background

- 1.1 The first 'peace wall' was built in 1969 to separate the Catholic Falls Road and the Protestant Shankill Road in Belfast. A British Army Major, overseeing the construction of the wall at the time, said: *'This is a temporary measure... we do not want to see another Berlin wall situation in Western Europe... it will be gone by Christmas'*.
- 1.2 In 2014, this peace wall still remains and almost 100 additional walls, barriers and other such interfaces join the original, stretching more than 26 miles in length across Belfast alone. Twenty years after the first paramilitary ceasefires and 16 years after the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement it has still not been possible to remove these structures in any systematic way, usually on grounds that the security of residents in the immediate vicinity would be put at risk. In many ways then, the 'peace walls' have come to symbolize the ongoing gulf between the aspirations of the peace process and the implementation of peace in practice.
- 1.3 Before 2012, the devolved government in Northern Ireland had no substantive baseline evidence of public attitudes towards the peace walls and barriers that cluster in the towns and cities of this region. Given the significance of peace walls as a policy priority in post-conflict Northern Ireland, we believed that understanding public attitudes about peace walls was necessary and developed a public attitudes survey to gather this data (Byrne, Gormley-Heenan & Robinson, 2012).

1.4 Carried out in March and April 2012, the survey gathered quantitative data, which highlighted how those living in closest proximity to the walls and barriers felt about their physical landscape; what they knew (if anything) about the different initiatives that the devolved and local government were developing; and what they hoped for in future. This research suggested that a number of factors needed to be taken into account in order to progress the issue of peace walls from any agreed policy *objective* to an *implemented* policy. The primary challenge for policy makers would be reconciling the mixed messages of fear and optimism revealed within our survey of local residents views, as well as using the results to act as the stimulus for the creation of conditions, to allow for the successful implementation of both devolved government and local authority policies.

1.5 The research highlighted six key factors that could underpin the eventual implementation of a peace walls policy:

- a. There is a need to improve methods of sharing information, alongside the need to undertake further community consultations with those who reside closest to the peace walls;
- b. There is a need to extend meaningful co-operation and engagement between and across communities divided by peace walls;
- c. Outstanding security concerns still prevalent within communities must be addressed;
- d. There should be greater emphasis on ‘encouraging the imagination’ around what the landscape might look like post peace walls;
- e. This issue must be treated as one requiring real ‘joined-up’ government, with real co-operation between the various government departments with responsibilities for security, social development, the economy and the environment.
- f. The policy framework around peace walls needs to be clearer about those various stakeholders who should be included in the agenda setting and decision-making part of future processes. To reduce their roles to that of ‘street level bureaucrats’ tasked with the implementation of policy decisions taken at a more macro level runs the potential risks of undermining any implementation process (Gormley-Heenan, Byrne & Robinson, 2013).

2) Key Issues Today

2.1 There are a number of misconceptions and issues of confusion related to the *Together: Building a United Community* policy objective of the complete removal of all peace walls and barriers by 2023 through the implementation of a 10-year Programme, working together with the local communities. For instance, there seems to be an accepted public narrative that more peace walls have been built since the Good Friday Agreement (1998) than before. In fact, the total number of barriers has increased only slightly, but the rate of construction and proliferation has decreased markedly, especially since 2007. Furthermore there has been some progress in

removing barriers, softening their impact or increasing the degree of communication between communities.

2.2 The study compiled by members of our research team indicated that while 58% of residents living near the walls 'would like the peace walls to come down now or sometime in the future', 63% of those surveyed would still 'would like to know more about initiatives and discussions on the peace walls'. Moreover, the research indicated that governments have not yet managed to reassure communities living near the walls that they would not be negatively affected by the removal of the walls.

2.3 Two decades after formal ceasefires and 7 years since the establishment of devolution 69% of those surveyed feel that 'maintain(ing) that the peace walls are still necessary because of the potential for violence'. In addition, 58% of residents living in close proximity to the walls 'were very/fairly worried about the police ability to preserve peace and maintain order if the peace wall was removed.' This suggests either that level of fears between communities has not reduced sufficiently since the beginning of the peace process or that trauma in the past creates significant grounds for suspicion of anything which promotes integration. The multiple points of misunderstanding and uncertainty are exacerbated by the fact that 34% of 'peace wall residents' know little about policies related to the walls (Byrne, Gormley-Heenan & Robinson, 2012).

2.4 In the absence of clarity about the policy towards the removal of peace walls, we have, through our ESRC funded knowledge exchange activities, encountered widespread scepticism about the plausibility of their complete removal by 2023. **It is not clear what information and research was used in arriving at the target date as indicated in TBUC, nor what preparations have been made to ensure delivery.** Beyond uncertainty about the prospective target, **it remains unclear who would be responsible for the success or failure of the strategy, as the Department of Justice (DoJ), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and the communities themselves** (as they must agree) all appear to have duties in delivering the output.

2.5 Failure to achieve the ambitious TBUC target of having all peace walls removed by 2023 will have significant ramifications for the credibility and reputation of the Northern Ireland Executive. Internationally, the removal of peace walls is seen as emblematic of peace and progress in Northern Ireland. There is a substantial risk that failure to achieve or make significant progress towards the target will create the impression that the Executive is either unable or unwilling to act to reduce territorial segregation and enmity. In the domestic context, failure to achieve the target is likely to be accompanied by ongoing evidence of concentrated deprivation in interface areas – with concerns that these areas have been left out of the wider benefits offered by the peace process in Northern Ireland.

2.6 Within Northern Ireland, the impact on the communities targeted by the strategy (where the walls reside) could be significant if it were to fail, as the communities could be psychologically damaged by an unsuccessful process. A number of areas have developed a reliance on their respective walls (seeing them as their last

physical symbol of protection from their 'opposing' community) – as a consequence, failure to complete the process after the community has agreed to be part of the strategy could understandably be harmful.

2.7 We would suggest that the simplicity of the target may, itself, be misleading. Although the removal of walls is a critical and highly visible aspect of the emergence of a 'normal' western society, it should be understood as an output in the journey towards this wider target rather than a specific goal in itself. As of now, we are unaware of any significant measureable indices to ascertain progress towards the outcome of a safer, fairer and more peaceful society. The single-minded focus on physical barriers creates a number of significant policy risks:

- a. There is insufficient emphasis on the requirement to generate significant social and economic change to achieve the wider target,
- b. There is no mechanism to allow for a staged approach which takes account of very different local circumstances (with the progress in some areas likely to be slower than in others).
- c. There is no mechanism to allow for a graduated response to changing local circumstances or the distinctive nature of the relationship between each community and their respective wall.

2.8 On the basis of our research, and give the enormous public interest in this issue we propose that:

- a. The target of removing walls should be set within a wider framework of improving safety and supporting regeneration.
- b. Within three years, a clear strategy for implementation of the goal should be published for full consultation and engagement with community, political and other stakeholders.
- c. As part of that strategy, clear structure for delivery of the target should be established which clarifies responsibilities across Executive Departments and makes clear how community organisations and other statutory agencies will contribute to the outcome.
- d. The resources that are required and available to deliver the target, should be explicitly identified and planned for.
- e. A clear framework for monitoring and evaluation should be established which enables public accountability for progress and enables an open communication about opportunities, risks and challenges.

3) Critical Success Factors

3.1 Consistent and sustained political leadership is essential if this target is to be achieved. As this policy is the agreed policy of the whole Executive, it is important that the target has the active support of all of the political parties and the active engagement of local representatives of the parties. Furthermore, there needs to be

evidence that all Departments and relevant agencies are fully signed up both to the target and to the resources required to achieve the target.

3.2 Close working relationships with local partners and representatives will be essential to identify and address emerging issues and concerns in creating and sustaining the cohesion necessary to deal with the challenges that this type of strategy will likely create.

3.3 Sufficient resources will be required to ensure that the different agencies and groups involved are able to meet their obligations, including public safety, regeneration and reimagining. It is very important that statutory bodies have the capacity to interact with areas where there is ongoing evidence of alienation from public authorities. The police continue to face challenges in achieving cooperation and support in some areas, but negative perceptions in some communities of the PSNI can be adjusted by the establishment of a consistent visible and reliable presence. However, this will require time and resources.

3.3 Credible policies and planning to promote good relations and regeneration processes and outcomes must be created and delivered. This includes creating formal good relations elements within community plans at local council level. This should just not be restricted to encouraging areas to have a greater acceptance of their longstanding 'opposing' community, but also be aimed at creating the type of environment that will create more plurality, communication and connectivity between and within the traditional blocs.

3.4 Coherent and consistent inter-Departmental working is required to ensure that the target is connected to an improvement in community safety and quality of life – this includes creating a dynamic and durable connection between Social Development, Education, Employment and Learning, Culture Arts and Leisure and OFMDFM, under the leadership of DoJ.

3.5 High quality qualitative and quantitative research can offer detailed and timely information that can help steer the strategy in the appropriate direction, if properly connected in to the strategy's framework and should be both commissioned and then fully utilized.

3.6 Within three years, the Executive should publish an agreed and universally understood timescale to ensure that all stakeholders, including statutory agencies and community group, can understand their participation in this shared goal and will remain involved as well as committed and energized by the strategy until its full delivery in 2023.

We hope that you find these comments helpful. If you would like to discuss our response, or would like to find out more about our ESRC funded Knowledge Exchange activities in this area, we can be contacted using the details provided on the

coversheet. We would also be pleased to provide oral evidence to the Committee on this inquiry.

Dr. Duncan Morrow, Dr. Jonny Byrne, Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan, Dr. Brendan Sturgeon

9 October 2014.

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Interaction Belfast

Dear Committee Members,

We are submitting this paper to you in the hope that we can contribute something to your discussions around the issue reviewing the government policy of TBUC. Interaction Belfast is conflict transformation organisation based on the Interface in North and West Belfast since 1988. We believe that our collective experience and those of the many people from both communities who we have worked with over the past 26 years may give us some insight into the issues of the review of TBUC.

We would also like to request an oral hearing with the committee with our CEO Roisin Mc Glone and joint Chairperson Harry Maguire.

Having been involved progressively in Inter-community work, Interface work, conflict resolution and laterally conflict transformation work our organisation passionately believes in the civic society approach to peace building and has consistently provided evidence as to the success of this approach in an area that was one of the most deeply divided communities in our society.

We believe that some of the lessons we have learned about trust building, reconciliation and the making and keeping of agreements are key aspects to making progress in peace-building.

Although we are primarily concerned with future progress for interface communities we believe that successes and lessons learned in the Interface Communities provide key indicators of possible success for our peace process. Parades, Flags and the Past have defined the issues at Interfaces and shaped life for those who live in their shadow. More importantly they are the places where things can go wrong and so Interfaces are the true testing and learning grounds for our wider peace process.

Roisin Mc Glone
CEO Interaction Belfast
Farset Enterprise Park
Belfast

1. **Introduction and context**

2. **Our Conflict analysis and prevention strategy**

- **Fear and Mistrust and memory.**
- **Building trust and making and keeping agreements in a divided society.**
- **Capacity building/ dialogue**

3. **Sharing security Responsibility;
Case studies Interaction Belfast –**

- **De-escalation of violence- Mobile Phone Networks**
- **Springfield Inter- Community Forum**
- **Flags protocol**
- **Interface violence/ incidents protocols**
- **Trust-building processes**
- **Contested Space – Parades**

4. **Inclusive approaches to ‘Policing with the Community’.
Case study Interaction Belfast -**

- **Policing In Partnership**

5. **Conclusion**



1. **Introduction**

“Only governments can write peace treaties, but only human beings- citizens outside governments – can transform conflictual relationships between people into peaceful relationships” Harold Sanders

The issues of trust, peace building and are just some of the issues which are central to almost all ‘peaceline’ communities in Belfast and beyond. Interfaces have and continue to be the demarcation line between one community and the other and have in the past been the focus for sectarian violence and murder. This has cultivated a culture of fear and mistrust of those on the other side of the wall. For residents in these communities ‘peace walls’ are both central to their sense of security and well being and the source of stress on an ongoing basis due to their proximity to potential violence in times of raised tensions.

Those of us working in the sector of improving Community Relationships in divided communities, have for many years dispelled the myth that there is anything ‘peaceful’ about the walls that divide our communities. These walls were designed and built to keep warring communities apart and make people on either side feel safer, but these areas closest to Belfast's 26 ‘peace lines’ are still the most likely to provide opportunities to unravel our peace process.

Interfaces (as we living and working prefer to refer to them) became synonymous with violence and the micro manifestations of the macro political war ongoing on this part of the island. The walls themselves are just a symptom of much deeper divisions across our society; their existence condenses the performance of violence into distinct space. Nonetheless there have been enormous strides in terms of our peace process, and our organisation has seen much improvement in terms of relationships between community representatives on the ground at interfaces.

In our own location, although we have seen much suffering and violence we are proud of the fact that the Springfield/Falls/Shankill interface is one of the most settled in Belfast. But be clear, we do not and must never be complacent about that. We believe we have put in place the building blocks to sustain robust working relationships between activists in both communities but we never take the relative peace for granted and continue to be diligent and reflect on our successes in order to be prepared for all eventualities.

Over the past 26 years we have responded to a number of challenges that have faced our communities. Through trial and error and by listening to the communities we work with, coupled with lessons and experiences from academics and practitioners from ours and other conflicts, we have developed a number of processes which has

enabled us to broker agreements which have sustained and contributed to the peaceful resolution to difficult challenges. These have included agreements and protocols around Flags, Parades, Policing and Community Safety, dealing with violence, and developing positive and robust relationships.

We want to detail our experience and the conditions in which we have inched toward progress over 20 years in the hope that it will encourage progress.

We believe strongly that not enough sustained effort has been made to build relationships at a leadership level within our peace process. We strongly believe the processes developed and the subsequent achievements of organisations like our own who have worked at a grass roots level has much to teach our political and cultural leaders. Good local leadership can change political and cultural landscapes. Structured dialogue is the answer. Communication leads to dialogue which leads to relationships being formed. In turn relationships lead to trust which leads to understanding and negotiation, agreement and synergy and ultimately success. Successful organisational change comes with careful attention to the process of change and not focussing solely on its intended results this is also true of societal change.

We also believe that if sustainable funding is not provided for this work to continue we will slip back into violence on Interfaces and more residents will draw into violent extremism to solve issues and grievances.



2. Our Conflict analysis and prevention strategy

Fear and Mistrust and memory

We do not offer our thoughts lightly, much of our progress and successes have been hard won. We in interface communities have suffered some of the worst of the violence in the past 40 years. Residents in these areas have had to suffer both in terms of being in the worst 20% of areas suffering multiple deprivation and carrying the burden of the legacy of our proximity too and ongoing potential for the violence of the troubles.

Interfaces which had been planned as temporary security measures became permanent structures. This had come about because of the many sectarian murders and to nightly attacks and riots.

The resultant fear and mistrust between communities on both sides was almost absolute, which in turn compounded the experience of those residents and communities living there. A key symptom of these experiences, in terms of interpreting the meaning and nature of interfaces, is that of memory. Interfaces are an enduring 'aide-memoir' of harm done and of potential threat unstated.

The impact of these experiences of murders, violence and both the proximity to, and potential for violence, created communities filled with fear and mistrust. Later, after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement when stones or petrol bombs came across the walls, the community at the receiving end did not distinguish if the missiles came from a group of children or were paramilitary directed. So all attacks, no matter what their origin were perceived to be orchestrated attacks by, or on behalf of the 'other' community. This was compounded by the rumours that spread like wildfire across other interfaces the city. Where incidents could start life as a few stones being thrown across a wall, through mis-reporting of the story, fuelled by fear and siege mentality, they became stories of orchestrated attack of one community on another. Often these incidents would then escalate, resulting in both communities defending itself against attack by attacking the other. Often this would spread from one interface to many. This has resulted in Interface communities and residents symbolising the distinct and competing narratives so evident in wider society and our legacy of fear.

Peter Shirlow and Brendan Murtagh from the University of Ulster discovered that nearly 70 per cent of Troubles-related murders took place less than 500 yards from Interface barriers, which were meant to protect the rival communities from one and other, and that nearly 85 per cent of the killings in the conflict occurred within 1,000 yards of the walls and barriers. They also revealed that cases of intimidation in these

areas doubled from 56 to 108 between the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and 2001.

*"Cultural and political differentiation is both significant and undeniable. **Interfaces** are also a constant reminder of harm done and of threat implied. Their existence compacts the performance of violence ... they present a script from which community loyalty can be read. **Interfaces** both divorce and regulate intercommunity relationships, and in so doing they compress space"*

Shirlow records that the nearness of the killings to people's homes had created a population obsessed with the Troubles. *"The context of these barriers was supposed to be security and impede the capacity of killers to move between communities. What they became actually were markers indicating the "other side". Therefore you got a situation where it was easier to target the rival community."* He argued that interfaces still are the place where you are going to have violence and that continued sectarian separation was creating a 'Balkanised Belfast.' *"There is Balkanisation at present; in a benign way it could turn into ethnically-divided Belgium, or in a malign way towards the former Yugoslavia."*

In terms of dealing with the past Shirlow comments *"I think one of the reasons why you have discord is that these murders were burnt into the community's memory. But the memory is only exclusive to your own side. Violence on your doorstep leaves a lasting imprint. The geography of violence and its power of memory is still alive and keep segregation strong."*

So in this context Interaction Belfast believes that the work of dealing with the past must involve dealing with the legacy of our segregated communities and the inherent sectarianism in all its manifestations.

Building trust and making and keeping agreements in a divided society

It was the organisational view that the conflict was between two communities, states, and two ideologies over nationality and territory and that it was important not to blame either side for it, but to seek ways in which conflict could be positively addressed.

We confront and deal with the issues which divide our communities at the grass roots level in the day to day working of any community. Our aim is to improve the quality of life for those residents who have borne the brunt of the conflict for 40+ years. We have made much progress and would be considered one of the more stable Interfaces in the North. Our main weapons has been to build trust and develop mechanisms

where community representatives and communities make agreements and promises and hold each other to agreements and promises made.

We have also grounded our work in the framework of reconciliation. We see Reconciliation as the process of addressing conflictual and fractured relationships. We believe that reconciliation is a core issue for us living and belonging together and to that end we use a working definition of Reconciliation by Brandon Hamber and Grainne Kelly

The definition involves 5 strands –

1. Shared vision of an interdependent and fair society
2. Acknowledging and dealing with the past
3. Building positive relationships - building trust and confronting prejudice and intolerance
4. Significant cultural and attitudinal change
5. Substantial social economic and political change.

Reconciliation is not either a new concept or the property of our peace process.

In 1958 Hannah Arendt, French philosopher and holocaust survivor, details the implications for us living together and amongst other people – as meaning our lives to some extent are determined by what others do. Yet we also have the freedom to act, which can be self-serving or altruistic. She identified that we can only create our future *together* by making and keeping promises to each other.

She identifies two dilemmas associated with this which make us vulnerable;

1. Life is irreversible and cannot be replayed to change hurt or harm that has been caused to others.
2. Life is unpredictable and we cannot know with certainty either what is ahead of us or how others will feel or act toward us.

So both forgiveness and the making of promises to one another are essential to the building of relationships and so to reconciliation. The issue of forgiveness is a personal one and cannot be legislated for or in fact expected. But making and keeping promises to one another is a fundamental concept that we can work on daily.

In order that we can make and keep promises, (or what modernity would classify as agreements,) trust between parties is critical. Building trust after violent conflict between communities and between those communities and the state is neither easy nor apolitical.

Trust has been identified as a key element of successful conflict resolution. This is not surprising insofar as trust is associated with, enhanced cooperation, information

sharing, and problem solving. The political implications of trust were outlined by Onora O'Neill in the 2002 Reith lecture. O'Neill made her explicit focus on Northern Ireland as *'the exemplar of a society where relations of trust and mistrust have broad social significance'*. She constructs her argument around the relationship between mistrust, fear and terrorism and the potential of a resurgence of trust as a means of exiting a spiral of violence. Trust has to be built, and how do we build trust between individuals, communities and organisations? For O'Neill the answer to the problem of restoring trust is not to be found in the discourses of human rights and democracy but rather that these discourses as being reliant upon a basis of trust and not vice versa *"Trust engenders democracy rather than democracy providing trust."*

As an organisation our role is to facilitate difficult conversations with the aim of building trust between former enemies in order to impact on the political process, provide models of good practice thereby improving the quality of life for residents on Interface's.

Capacity building/dialogue

"Dialogue means we sit and talk with each other, especially those with whom we may think we have the greatest differences. However, talking together all too often means debating, discussing with a view to convincing the other, arguing for our point of view, examining pro's and con's. In dialogue, the intention is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discover." -- Louise Diamond, the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy

These two processes of trust and capacity building are linked because facets of capacity building help people approach dialogue with confidence and security. It is appreciated that different levels of dialogue will happen at different paces and that such dialogue will include issues of common ground, differences and difficulties. It is also accepted that such issues will be a blend of the local and big pictures.

The signing of the Good Friday Agreement opened up a whole new era for our organisation. We were faced with the prospect of the work we were doing becoming supported by political structures and championed by the political elites. But this new beginning didn't come quickly. We conducted a substantial consultation with 60 key groups along the interface in order to identify their current needs and how we needed to adjust our strategic planning. They identified that they wanted to focus on clearly identifying new approaches to inter- community conflict, analysis development and recording the work so as to identify best practice and build mature and sustainable relationships, and development robust mechanisms for everyday dialogue for former enemies. We have produced five research reports since that time, and have developed the following mechanisms/process.

We have been involved in and initiated a number of key trust building process's resulting in a number of mechanisms being developed where accountability has been central some of these initiatives, programmes and projects are detailed in the following section

3. Sharing security Responsibility:- Case studies Interaction Belfast –

De-escalation of violence - MPN

The Mobile Phone Network had been established in 1996 and was an innovative, organic project designed to address sectarian incidents and violence at interfaces. At its most active there were 28 phones distributed to a diverse group of voluntary community activists: representative of a range of ages, gender, and political differences.

Each is given a small card listing the numbers of the other phone holder and their geographical area of responsibility. When an incident occurred or violence broke out between communities, phone holders would contact each other across the interface in order to resolve the issues that had contributed to the outbreak.

De-escalation involves changes within each of the adversaries as well as new forms of interaction between them. In most cases, de-escalation does not occur until the parties have reached a prolonged stalemate in which both sides are being harmed by continuing the confrontation. Once the parties realize this, they are more likely to be willing to take part.

Springfield Inter - Community Forum

Emerging from our work on the de escalation of violence **SIF** was a network designed and facilitated by our organisation composed of 30 Community Activists from Community organisation along the Interface and who have a commitment to developing and sustaining relationships between activists, groups, and organizations on those interfaces in order to address contentious issues, community development, and quality of life issues.

Their work involved four core areas: Transforming relationships and resolving differences; reducing conflict and violence; exploring diversity; and increasing community capacity. This development came after the GFA when it was incumbent on us in civic society to develop mechanisms which would create the opportunities for activists and thereby communities to be able to make promises and to keep those promises as building blocks towards trust building and community development across the interfaces. So the forum became that mechanism. What these developments meant was that we could deal with both promise making and we could

build trust by that very keeping of promises. Nothing breaks trust more than promised being broken and by promises we mean agreements.

Specific Trust-building processes

In 2003 we were involved in the Kwa Maritane trust building process in South Africa which resulted in our organisation beginning its relationship with Brian Currin, who became an advisor to our organisation and is also an international human rights lawyer, a member of the Northern Ireland Sentence Review Board and an international expert on Conflict Transformation processes. In 2003 Brian came to Belfast and we run a trust building process between activists from both communities. We developed a week long trust building process from which we developed action plans to guide our work over the following two years. Known as the 'Farset Minute' we kept a running minute of the process and agree action plans which we revisited on a three monthly basis over the subsequent years. This process enabled numerous programmes and projects to develop out of the intense and honest discussions between activists from the two main communities in west Belfast Interfaces –some of which are detailed here.

Flags protocol

In the early 2007 we facilitated a process with key stakeholders to address the issues of the proliferation of flags, marking territory and intimidating on the interfaces. With the support of the stakeholders we supported the development of a flags protocol which has sustained to the present and which has left most of our interface flag free.

Interface violence/ incidents protocols

In 2006 we developed with both communities and the local district police a set of protocols for joint dealing with interface violence and incidents of intimidation.

Contested Space – Parades

“Orange parades are political rituals which reveal the nature of relations between Protestant and Catholic communities in Ireland. They also expose key political divisions within Unionism and the relationship of the Protestant community to the British state.” Dominic Bryan *Orange Parades, the Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control'*

Parades are an issue that is obviously central to so much else and requires more than local action. However, one of the local needs we identified was the need to stop violence on both sides of the parades dispute in order that the protagonists could have space to dialogue. We developed an intense conflict analysis on the basis of

consultation with all parties involved and offered a number of solutions some of which have been implemented. This conjunction with this the local residents group '5 point plan' has resulted in peaceful protests since 2003. With the exception to the parade of 2005 the parade has also been peaceful

4. Inclusive approaches to 'Policing with the Community'.-Case study Interaction Belfast

Policing In Partnership

Leading on from the Farset process a further trust building process was developed. This work started in 2004 with the acknowledgment that policing in both communities had a central role

A strategic 'Policing in Partnership' project was developed and run between 2007-2010. This process carried out with Brian Currin, was a trust-building process, between Republican and Loyalist activists and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The project was initiated at a time when this type of work was so fraught with risk it had to remain confidential and funded from outside Ireland. The project which began with the senior management team in the West Belfast District Command Unit of the PSNI in 2004 named 'Managing Change' spread to work with all Police districts across the North, with specialist units within the PSNI engaging with senior Republican and Loyalists' representatives.

The 'Policing in Partnership' programme was implemented in June 2007, supported by and engaged with by the PSNI with the agreement of the Chief Constable, Sinn Fein's Policing and Justice Committee and the leadership of Northern Ireland's two main Loyalist groups. From June 2007 through to April 2008 the Policing in Partnership programme delivered a total of nine two day workshops to a total of one hundred and forty four senior managers in the PSNI from across the North ranging from Chief Superintendent to Chief Inspector and including management teams from the PSNI's tactical support units and senior Republican activists, including SF members of DPPs and the Policing and Justice sub group and separately with loyalists and the PSNI.

In addition to the original programme the team organised and facilitated three additional processes involving the Chief Constable's top team and Sinn Fein at Hillsborough Castle, the eight District Commanders and Sinn Fein's policing and justice sub group and finally a three day trust building programme involving senior managers from the eight PSNI District Command Units and Loyalist representatives from the PUP and UPRG at Wilton Park in England.

The PSNI's CARE forum which incorporates the RUC widows, Parents Association, RUC GC Association, Disabled Police Officers Association, Retired Police Officers Association and Police Federation after briefings fully supported the rationale and need for this type of engagement. As the process has developed it became clear that much more work needs to be carried out at a grassroots level, although at a strategic level a great deal of progress has been made.

5. Conclusion

For those of us involved and working in Interaction Belfast we keep the following possibilities in mind; peace walls can be retained, replaced or removed. By not considering removal, in the range of hopes and possibilities, we have resigned ourselves to segregation.

We had hoped that success on the many other issues post Good Friday Agreement would ultimately make the walls redundant. That would be our vision, but the conditions are not right for communities to consider their full scale removal. For many outside these communities these walls appear a travesty, for us working alongside walled communities the complexities of the issues make their current state palatable in the short term to medium term. For us the recent building of new Interface walls is testament to the segregation in our communities and that segregation shapes our politics.

We have the solutions to our problems; the question is have we the will to implement them? These solutions center on dialogue and making and keeping agreements.

In terms of Parades, dialogue between the key stakeholders at local and strategic level is critical. Some capacity building with some parties in parallel may be necessary.

In respect of flags- an implementable protocol must be developed from the grass roots up, with statutory agencies monitoring it and reflecting back to the grass roots.

The key to the issues of Flags and Parades is about looking forward and not back. Our experience would demonstrate that once participants have made that psychological leap, significant progress can be made as was seen in the action planning workshops in all of the trust-building processes we have developed.

Furthermore changes, which were initially seen as negative, are now highlighted as examples of how participants have changed and developed positively. Unless attitudes are addressed, conceptualised problems will occur in the future. Trust is vital to the success of parties in a democratic society, community outreach is essential for gaining trust.

This lack of trust between the main political parties severely restricts the ability of the Stormont to implement policies. There is a history of negativity towards Republicans within the ranks of unionism, which is mirrored within Republicanism, these forms the greatest block to any progress. Building trust between republicans and unionists, and the community they serve is a core part of any democratic process.

This government TBUC strategy provided an excellent opportunity to develop and roll out a number of specifically designed 'awareness rising' 'peacebuilding' or trust building process between political, cultural and civic society leaders over a number of years, an opportunity which has not been grasped.

If this review of the strategy only looks at the gaps in the TBUC strategy then the OFMDFM committee also miss an opportunity to vision a reconciled society and suggest possible programmes and projects. There will be nothing beneficial in our representatives being part of a process that apports blame or attempts to claim the higher moral ground.

Trust-building processes can be greatly enhanced at an early stage by the development and implementation of dedicated trust building and action planning processes between former enemies, which will expose and interrogate underlying prejudicial attitudes in a constructive and progressive manner and contribute to effective planning in the future.

In terms of our outstanding issues in our peace process, we must engage in dialogue which enables and encourages the protagonists to make agreements on what can be agreed. Build in processes to monitor these agreements. Appoint observers to oversee/monitor the development of agreements, whilst continuing to attempt to agree that which has not been agreed.

Develop processes for trust building over a range of issues and groups whilst building capacity of the parties

We must also frame all of this work in a structure and the language of reconciliation. The issues of dealing with the past has most rightly been framed around those who have lost loved ones or been injured in the conflict. The experience of groups working specifically with those people best informs the way forward. Our own experience is of traumatised communities and the inherent difficulties they face. We must continue to provide opportunities for residents in these divided communities to see the humanity in the 'other'.

We must also give them hope and you on the committee can be an exemplar of that. It is your responsibility to give us hope for the future.

And finally to resources Interaction Belfast is not a large organisation. Over the years we have had limited funding and capacity and yet we are very proud of the work we have been involved in our innovative approach to peace-building – all of the work has been funded by the CRC, European Union Peace I and Peace II, the International Fund for Ireland, the Irish Government and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable foundation.

This funding has mainly been on 1 year contracts or short term project funding. We have never received mainstream funding from central government. As these funding sources leave the stage WHERE is the money coming from for us, as a society to continue our journey of Reconciliation? The TBUC strategy does not address this critical question. Long term, sustainable and supported programmes developed by grass roots organisations are a critical ingredient of peace-building in Interface communities and must be central to any government strategy for reconciliation. The expertise is out here, astute governments would use it, both in terms of financial prudence and in terms of effective progress in a divided society.



Roisin Mc Glone
10th October 2014

Inter-Action
B E L F A S T



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Submission to the Inquiry into Building a United Community Colin Knox & Sarah McWilliams

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3rd September 2014

Background

This submission to the OFMDFM Inquiry into *Building a United Community* (T:BUC) outlines the evidence accrued from the *Contested Space/Interface Programme* as a way of learning from pre-existing initiatives which could help with the implementation of T:BUC. The premise of the submission is that there are projects which have been pilot tested and evidence gathered on a number of the core themes associated with T:BUC. So, rather than starting from scratch, the argument in this submission is to learn from existing work which has proved its effectiveness. We therefore outline the details of the Contested Space/Interface Programme, the findings from the evaluations of this programme, and how it can directly align with several of T:BUC's core themes. The authors of this submission are the evaluators of the *Contested Space/Interface Programme*.

Origins

The Contested Space/Interface Programme 2011-15 was launched by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in March 2011. Its **key aim** is to promote and improve relations between and across disadvantaged contested space/interface communities. The programme provides these communities with opportunities to shape and influence how children and youth services are provided in a way that encourages reconciliation, increases participation of communities in policy making, and contributes to better outcomes for children, young people and families.

Funding and Eligibility

The programme has an original design in that it is **jointly funded** by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and the Atlantic Philanthropies (an external American based charitable foundation). It is a **£4 million four-year programme** in which **each funder makes a 50% contribution**.

To be eligible to participate in the programme, **groups had to form a consortium** which included at least one community organisation from each side of the contested space/ interface. Groups also had to be engaged in activities within the **top 20% of the most deprived wards** as measured by the 2010 multiple deprivation measures.

Focus

The programme focuses on four areas of support:

1. **Early years and parenting programmes** which concentrate on young people, children and parents living in contested space/interface communities.
2. **Shared space programmes targeted and delivered through schools** operating in contested space/interface communities.
3. **Interface youth engagement programmes aimed at young adults** including those not currently engaging with youth providers.
4. **Shared neighbourhood programmes targeted at families** living in contested space/interface communities.

Projects Funded

The Contested Space/Interface programme comprises **nine projects delivered in two phases**. The project budgets range from **£250,000, to £820,000**.

Phase 1 (March 2011 – June 2014)

1. **Achieving Personal Potential (APP):** Led by Shankill Women's Centre with partner organisations which work in *Shankill/Carrickhill, Ballysillan/Ligoneil, Skegoneill/Glandore; and Whitewell/Whitecity*. The aim of the project is to provide opportunities for young people to build relationships through: team building activities, drama, music, personal development, arts and crafts, and educational homework and revision workshops.
2. **Active Respectful Communities (ARC):** Led by Community Relations in Schools (CRIS), the project works with children and parents from six schools in *Ardoyne and Shankill* communities (Holy Cross Nursery School, Edenderry Nursery School, Glenwood Primary School, Wheatfield Primary School, Holy Cross Boys Primary School and Holy Cross Girls Primary School). The key focus areas for the programme are: early years and parenting, community relations education linked into the curriculum, and focused residential programmes for families.
3. **Aspire:** A partnership between Currie Primary School and Holy Family Primary School (inner *North Belfast*) which provides shared services that: increase parental engagement and skills supporting their children's learning; improves educational outcomes for children engaged in the programme; and raises expectations of parents and children. This is done through partner organisations such as Barnardo's, PIPS and Parenting NI.
4. **Faces and Spaces:** Project is based on *Early Years* approach to good relations and operates through community-led and shared partnerships in five interface areas (*Falls Road/Shankill Road; Castlederg/Newtownstewart; Waterside/Cityside; Ballymena; Short Strand/East Belfast*). The project is based around the well-established and highly successful *Media Initiative for Children, Respecting Difference Programme*.
5. **Foyle Contested Space:** A partnership of three post primary and five primary schools in *Derry/Londonderry* to widen the scope of shared education. This includes the shared delivery of curriculum activities at KS2 & KS3 (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding [PDMU] and Learning for Life and Work [LLW]), provision of shared teacher training, and issues of common concern in sexual health, internet/mobile phone safety and alcohol awareness.

Phase 2 (November 2012 – March 2015)

6. **Communities Unite in Reconciling and Building Societies (CURBS):** The CURBS programme, based in *Craigavon*, is managed by Craigavon Intercultural Partnership (CIP) which delivers the programme in conjunction with local partners. The programme is based around five key phases: Step Up, Step In, Step Forward, Step Beyond and Step Out. *Step Up* involves collaborative partner engagement and *Step In* involves a range of cross-community and cross-cultural activities based around sport, art and media.
7. **South Armagh Childcare Consortium (SACC):** Led by the South Armagh Childcare Consortium (a multi-agency partnership made up of a range of statutory and community agencies) the focus is on young families and children living in rural *South Armagh* – Bessbrook, Derrymore, Crossmaglen and Creggan. The programme delivers a cross community after-school project, the Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference Programme, Incredible Years Parenting Programme and a summer scheme.

8. **Spaces to Be: Playboard NI:** Spaces to Be is an outcomes focused diversity in play project targeted at children in middle childhood. The project is led and delivered by Playboard NI. It operates within four primary schools located in *East Belfast* (St Matthews and Nettlefield Primary Schools) and *Newtownstewart* (St Patricks and the Model Primary Schools).
9. **Waterside Partnership – Parents and Communities Together (PACT)** - This project is led by Action for Children in partnership with a range of community associations/groups in the Waterside area of *Derry/Londonderry*. The project is being delivered in three areas: Caw/Nelson Drive and the Triangle; Irish Street/Gobnascale; and Clooney Estate. PACT provides support to very young children and their parents. Its main elements are an eight week group work programme and individual support to parents/families at home.

Evaluation Findings

Participants

As of August 2014, across the two phases of the programme, there were **almost 13,800 distinct participants** (as opposed to repeat users). They are involved in a wide range of activities which straddle a number of target groups: nursery, pre-school, primary and post primary children; young adults; parents; and teachers/staff. Examples of activities included play based sessions (for nursery and pre-school children); shared curriculum activities, homework support/after-schools and social/creative/sporting activities for school age children; youth mentoring; and parenting and personal development programmes. Teachers and school staff participate in activities or are involved in delivering training sessions and workshops.

Programme Outcomes

Evidence collected by the ongoing programme evaluation is suggesting **positive outcomes for participants and communities** including:

Phase 1

- Increased self-esteem, confidence and empowerment
- Improved educational outcomes and parenting skills
- Strengthened relationships (personal, professional and cross-community)
- Greater movement across/through contested spaces
- Collective cross-community learning and capacity building amongst community organisations
- Development of networks between organisations

Phase 2

- Collaboration between youth providers
- The use of media projects to successfully engage participants
- The success of early years interventions
- Intensive support to target vulnerable parents as a way of tackling social isolation on a cross-community basis

Value for Money

It is clear from the ongoing evaluation findings that the Contested Space/Interface Programme is **delivering both significant outcomes and value for money** for funders. Based on phase one costings, which had 12,490 participants and £2.58m million of funding (allocated at August 2014) this equates to an average cost per participant of around £206 or **approximately £70 per participant per year**.

Learning and Collaboration

In developing the Contested Space/Interface Programme the funders aimed to test out a variety of approaches to supporting communities to work together in contested space/ interface areas. It was also planned that the **learning from these pilots would have an influence on future developments in this area of work**.

To facilitate this, a **Shared Learning Forum** (consisting of all members of the projects) was established to capture learning, identify effective practice and make recommendations on ways to better improve delivery of shared services to interface communities. The first Shared Learning Forum took place in May 2012 and meetings are held every few months.

In December 2013 the **'Shaping a Generation' seminar** was organised to showcase the work of the nine projects. The event was held at the Stormont Hotel and was **attended by over 100 delegates** from government departments, public bodies, councils and voluntary and community organisations. The seminar provided an insight into how the projects are *successfully improving relations* between and across disadvantaged contested space/interface communities, and how they are *collaborating to support each other*, sharing the learning and building their capacity and experience. The seminar also focused on and *how projects can help to contribute to policy agendas* such as *Together: Building a United Community* and *Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities*.

In addition projects have also developed their own **range of resources** to promote and share the learning from the programme. These include DVDs, websites, toolkits and resource packs.

The common thread running through all of these projects is that they are working with a range of participants, from nursery school children, through young adults, to parents in interface areas blighted by poverty and sectarianism. The participants in the projects are those for whom the peace process has offered a limited legacy, not least in the poor level of public services available to them. What is obvious from the work of the overall programme is that participants have built strong relationships around common issues which impact on them collectively. They have established a level of interdependence in tackling problems which straddle interface areas and found a combined voice. **The key questions are: how are the lessons from this programme used to inform wider policy developments; and, where do the individual projects go from here?**

The most obvious read-across from the experience and learning gained in this programme is to the Government's strategic policy *Together: Building a United Community*. There are clear linkages to several of the headline actions identified in T:BUC: establishing 10 shared education campuses; the United Youth Programme; a programme of cross-community sporting events; removing interface barriers; rollout out of a 'buddy scheme' in nursery and primary schools; and shared summer schools. Yet, there could well be a lost opportunity in learning from the pilot work already completed through the Contested Space/Interface Programme. One simple example illustrates this. The United Youth Programme is currently consulting on a 'co-design' approach which builds a programme targeting 10,000 young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, training or employment. They will spend some £1.5m to pilot projects which will 'make a difference in terms of personal

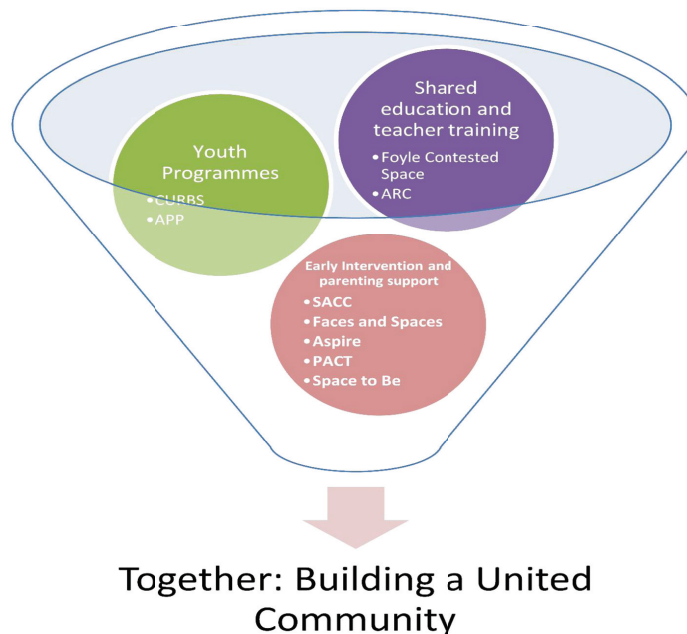
development, good relations, citizenship, employability, and benefit to communities and society'. But where is the learning from the Contested Space/Interface Programme which addresses a number of these themes? Why is there a need to pilot ideas for the United Youth Programme without first considering successful work from the Contested Space Programme? Other initiatives are also emerging such as Peace IV and the Shared Education Signature Project. There needs to be a way to connect the learning from Contested Space directly into these initiatives rather than starting from scratch.

Together: Building a United Community

The Director of the Good Relations Division in OFMDFM, Fergus McDevitt, has commented that: "There has been significant learning from the Contested Space/Interface Programme which helped in the design of the *Together: Building a United Community Strategy*. There is **real potential to scale-up some of the models which the programme pilot tested in difficult interface areas.**"

Together: Building a United Community's main commitments, how they align with ongoing work in the Contested Space/Interface Programme, and the experience and learning on offer are summarised in the diagram and table below.

'A very helpful model of change has emerged (from the Contested Space Programme) that could potentially inform future interventions involving interface areas and areas where there are contested spaces'
T:BUC (2013): 61



WHAT IS THE LEARNING FOR TOGETHER: BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY?

T:BUC Commitments	Where Contested Space fits	What we can offer?
Roll out a <i>'buddy scheme'</i> in publicly run nursery and primary schools	ARC	The experience of Holy Cross and Edenderry Nursery Schools in <i>operating a buddy scheme</i> and associated resources.
Primary and post-primary <i>anti-sectarianism resources</i> and ensure that <i>teachers are trained, equipped and supported</i> to deliver an effective anti-sectarianism module	ARC Foyle Contested Space	ARC involvement in training on the <i>CREDIT programme</i> . ARC <i>training resources pack</i> Foyle Contested Space on <i>primary and post-primary teachers experience</i> in tackling both sensitive and politically contentious issues
Enhance the quality and extent of <i>shared education provision</i> , thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience	Foyle Contested Space	Foyle Contested Space expertise in providing 'normalised' <i>shared education delivery</i> across 8 primary and post-primary schools.
Create 10 <i>Shared Educational Campuses</i>	Foyle Contested Space	Foyle Contested Space's wider network of experience in <i>Shared Education Programme</i> experience
<i>Improve attitudes amongst our young people</i> and build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations	Faces and Spaces SACC Spaces to Be	<i>Pre-school education</i> which explores diversity and work with parents on interdependence and inclusion <i>Early intervention, parenting skills and negotiation</i> of shared space in a polarised community <i>Alternative (complementary) model of cross-community work with children</i> through the informal medium of play
Develop an <i>inter-community youth programme</i> to tackle sectarianism	CURBS	<i>Collaborative network building between youth providers and statutory organisations</i> . Effective use of sports, arts and the media in cross-community work
Develop a <i>summer camps/summer schools</i> with a focus on sport and developmental activities	APP	APP's <i>partnering with Belfast Community Sports Development Network (BCSDN)</i> to deliver <i>multi-sports</i> as one of the options for structured activities. Also partnering with the 174Trust on their Game of 3 Halves event which promoted <i>cross-community relationship building through football/rugby/Gaelic</i> tournaments.
Develop significant programmes of <i>cross-community sporting events</i> which will focus in reconciliation through sport and be based at community level	APP	APP's <i>partnering with Belfast Community Sports Development Network (BCSDN)</i> to deliver <i>multi-sports</i> as one of the options for structured activities. Also partnering with the 174Trust on their Game of 3 Halves event which promoted <i>cross-community relationship building through football/rugby/Gaelic</i> tournaments.
Focus on a more <i>inter-generational approach</i> to building good relations	Aspire	<i>Targeted interventions to help parents and children</i> by external agencies with a focus on common needs
	PACT	<i>Intensive work with parents</i> who are highly vulnerable

Landscape Institute Northern Ireland

Landscape Institute Northern Ireland

Inquiry into Building a United Community:

Inquiry by Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.
Response of the **Landscape Institute Northern Ireland (LINI)**.

9 Oct 2014

The Landscape Institute is the chartered institute in the United Kingdom for Landscape Architects, incorporating Designers, Managers, and Scientists, concerned with conserving and enhancing the environment. The Landscape Institute promotes the highest standards in the practice of landscape planning, design, management and research, and represents members in private practice, at all levels of government and government agencies, in academic institutions and in commercial organisations.

The Landscape Institute is an educational charity and chartered body whose purpose is to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the benefit of the public. It champions well-designed and well-managed urban and rural landscape. The Landscape Institute's accreditation and professional procedures ensure that the designers, managers and scientists who make up the landscape architecture profession work to the highest standards. Its advocacy and education programmes promote the landscape architecture profession as one which focuses on design, environment and community in order to inspire great places where people want to live, work and visit. The Landscape Institute is committed to the principles of sustainable development by improving the quality of design of urban and rural environments and to the protection and enhancement of our physical and natural environments.

The Landscape Institute Northern Ireland branch (LINI) represents the professional membership within Northern Ireland and is particularly concerned with design, management and planning for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland.

NOTE:

As members of Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) we separately endorse and echo the comments and response prepared and submitted by that organization.

However we also include a number of further specific comments for consideration below.

Inquiry Terms of Reference

- 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;
- 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 might include:
 - seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers 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.
- 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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.

Landscape Institute Northern Ireland

LINI Key Messages

1 Expertise

Landscape Institute Northern Ireland welcomes this timely Inquiry by the committee which clearly recognises that considered shared space forms an essential component in delivering a peaceful democratic shared future.

As design professionals specialising in external spatial design, Chartered Landscape Architects work in all areas of the outdoor environment, indeed it is members of our profession who are responsible for the creation and delivery of many of Northern Ireland's most successful external environments and Shared Spaces.

Recent High Profile Landscape Architect led designs include:

- The Connswater Community Greenway, East Belfast
- Landscape Character Assessment NI
- FE McWilliams Sculpture Museum, NI
- Castle Gardens, Lisburn
- Omagh Town Centre.
- Belfast Streets Ahead.
- Custom House Square, Belfast
- Ebrington Barracks, Derry
- Belfast Waterfront.

LINI believe our chartered professionals are best placed to deliver the physical requirements of positive shared space through appropriate design development, consultation and community engage. Landscape Architecture is a cross cutting discipline focused on delivery of Green Infrastructure and sustainable places.

Our Institute has researched and published several valuable position papers in recent years which collectively focus on the benefits which good sustainable design and integrated spatial planning can deliver.

Recent examples include:

- Green Infrastructure (An Integrated approach to Land Use)
- Housing (Creating good living Environments)
- Landscape and Public Health
- Water – (Sustainable water management)

2 Resources

LINI believe that in Northern Ireland when compared to the rest of the UK our profession is seriously under represented within public sector which weakens our potential to adequately address the issues raised in the Inquiry.

We consider RPA an opportunity to reposition the profession to best assist with delivery of the majority of objectives set out within this Inquiry.

Landscape Institute Northern Ireland

We would welcome endorsement at central government level to ensure that the new local authorities secure the resources (personnel) to develop strategies which would phase out contested space and in turn deliver positive shared future for all society.

3 Education

LINI are aware that greater education is required regarding the benefits of good spatial design and shared space; we seek resources and support to educate these messages at all levels, from communities and schools, through to civil servants and elected representatives.

We believe there is a significant gap at tertiary education level in Northern Ireland, with no school currently specialising in external spatial design and addressing the issues raised in the Inquiry. Those wishing to become professionals in this field continue to travel to mainland UK, Republic of Ireland or elsewhere.

4 Policy Framework

LINI welcome the recent publication of 'Living Places' – (which our members were instrumental in preparing)

This forms an excellent starting point for the development and stewardship of our urban environments, however LINI are concerned that this document needs to form part of an overarching strategy and cultural attitude towards all our the Landscapes and Places.

LINI believe it is essential that a 'National Landscape Strategy' similar to the Republic of Ireland is developed for Northern Ireland in support of planning (designing), managing and conserving our spatial environments.

NOTE: In this context the LINI adopt the definition of 'Landscape' as referred to in the European Landscape Convention to which Northern Ireland is signatory.

"Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors;

This refers to 'All Landscapes' from small scale despoiled urban landscapes and spaces, through to large expanses of designated rural landscapes such as AONBs

With a coherent and strong framework in place in the form of a National Landscape Strategy, combined with education and resources for community engagement, we believe that we can deliver better shared living environments.

LINI is celebrating its 50th year as a profession in Northern Ireland and over the course of that period have witnessed a significant demise of our public sector membership mirroring general government attitude towards the provision, maintenance & durability of our landscapes and quality external space.

However in the lead up to Local Government reform resulting for the RPA process, we believe there is potential to address obvious gaps which exist within the current structures by building capacity and recognition within the new local authority regime.

As a profession we are working very hard towards this, highlighting not only the valuable work which our members undertake, but emphasising the essential contribution experienced Landscape professionals have and can bring to the new authorities.

Landscape Institute Northern Ireland

Currently Belfast City Council and Derry City Council are the only local authorities which directly employ Chartered Landscape Architects. The Landscape Institute strongly believe that each of the new authorities should seriously consider the value of directly employing /engaging at least one experienced professional to be a 'Head of Profession' with a remit to assist preparation of development plans; to writing procurement briefs; to assist with community / neighbourhood planning; to prepare open space audits; to identify improvement projects and strategies as part of a spatial planning approach; to assist planning official assess applications for 'Good design' standards; to encourage development of local green infrastructure; to enforce permissions; to assist with community and neighbourhood level engagement and ultimately assist the new local authorities become an intelligent client.

5 Shared Space through Collaboration

Landscape Architecture is a unique profession at the interface between people and natural systems. It is rooted in an understanding of how the environment works and what makes each place unique. A key feature of the profession is its ability to deliver a range of social, environmental and economic benefits at the same time. This represents an approach to development and placemaking which makes the most of our landscapes and townscapes.

LINI believe that our design professionals working with planning officials, communities and other stakeholders have the necessary skill set to assist with the mediation of the difficult challenges set within this Inquiry.

We would welcome an opportunity to present our position papers directly to the committee and discuss specifically scenarios and case studies which have involved our members in the successful design and delivery of shared space and breakdown social, religious and racial division both locally and internationally.

We would specifically like to discuss further how our members could be better placed to assist with the Committees Inquiry objectives, and how limited resources can be best distributed to contribute positively to the delivery of potential solutions to these complex challenges.

The Landscape Institute Northern Ireland branch would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry.

For further communication and future consultations, please contact:

The Chairman,
Landscape Institute Northern Ireland
c/o 559 Ormeau Road, Rosetta Belfast, BT7 3JA
www.landscapeinstitute.org/northernireland/
www.landscapeinstitute.org
Registered Charity No.: 1073396

Prepared for Landscape Institute Northern Ireland (LINI) by Pete Mullin CMLI (Landscape Institute Policy Consultant for Northern Ireland).

Linking Generations Northern Ireland



Response by Linking Generations Northern Ireland

Inquiry into Building a United Community

22nd September 2014

1. Background Information

1.1 Linking Generations Northern Ireland (LGNI) is an intergenerational initiative of the Beth Johnson Foundation. The Beth Johnson Foundation is a UK wide charity that works to make a positive impact on the lives of older people, to gain recognition for the valuable role that older people play in society and to challenge age discrimination and stereotyping. We are the only organisation solely advocating the development and promotion of intergenerational practice (IP) as a catalyst for social change in Northern Ireland.

1.2 Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities. Based on our experience and research, we encourage practitioners to focus on activities which promote greater understanding, closer relations and respect between age groups and provide opportunities to address shared problems.

We do this by:

- Developing and promoting opportunities to bring generations together and build capacity within communities to sustain this approach;
- Supporting the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to recognise all-age approaches and embedding them within their strategies, practices and policies;
- Encouraging, lobbying and influencing the government to provide support to all-age approaches to address ageism and age segregation in society.

1.3 LGNI have established themselves as the intergenerational experts in Northern Ireland and are the current organisation of choice when accessing training, support and advice in the development of intergenerational approaches.

1.4 Our vision:

Northern Ireland will be an age-friendly region: age groups will not be segregated and ageism will not exist; all-age approaches will be the norm.

2. Contribution to the Inquiry

2.1 We argue that the consistent emphases over the past forty or more years on working with children and young people should shift to an intergenerational approach. By this, we mean working with age groups together. It is well recognised through decades of development psychology and social psychology literature that children form their opinions, attitudes and behaviours primarily through their interactions and relationships with significant adults. We know that parental influence and neighbourhood influence are critical but yet our approach to tackling good relations problems has almost exclusively focussed on a single age category. The current TBUC strategy repeats this emphasis on working with children and young people. Whilst it mentions that intergenerational approaches are encouraged, the key messages continue to focus on children and young people as though they exist in some kind of bubble!

3. Recommendations based on our experience

3.1 Key findings of Phase 1 of the Review of Good Relations funding highlight the need to **recognise expertise and identify good practice in the field** (see 3.2 below). An appetite for **change is also identified alongside the need for greater collaboration and partnership** working (see 3.3 below). LGNI assert that the use of an all-age (intergenerational) approach has the potential to contribute to addressing these stumbling blocks.

3.2 *Recognising expertise and identifying good practice*

We have worked alongside Cooperation Ireland within their PEACE III funded schools based projects in the North West, Louth/Newry and Mourne and Lisburn/Castlereagh clusters to provide expertise in engaging generations together in good relations activity. The anecdotal feedback from this work and in particular, feedback from teachers, has indicated that the inclusion of adults from family and/or community in sessions in schools creates a range of positive outcomes: Reflections between generations can be a powerful experience as we recognise that we learn from each other; Ageist perceptions about young and old can be tackled through extended intergenerational contact; Schools are able to develop connections with families and communities in a new way and children may be more able to express less judgemental views at home. Unfortunately, most of these outcomes can still only be expressed as 'potential' but we are optimistic that an upcoming evaluation of the North West PEACE III clusters' programme 'Generations for Peace' will be forthcoming.

3.3 *Change and increased collaborative working*

LGNI have been working across NI since 2009 with support from Atlantic Philanthropies (which is ending in the next few months). One of the key things we have learned is that collaboration and partnership is a key feature of

intergenerational practice. Within neighbourhoods and through institutions, we categorise each other on the basis of age. Government, education and health care systems, academia, policy, community organisations, charities and lobbying groups all consistently segregate us on the basis of our age. A consequence of this is that intergenerational practice is necessarily a collaborative venture. Whilst we recognise that single age group work may be beneficial in tackling specific issues, we are calling for a sea-change in good relations practice: all-age lens. The use of the word 'lens' is to iterate that children live their lives in relation to other age groups, as do adults. One cannot be young, unless someone else is old and vice versa.

4. Key points

4.1 In seeking to build a united community, intergenerational (all-age) approaches should become a central feature of practice. This is in recognition that the continued emphasis within practice on working primarily with children and young people in isolation needs to be reconsidered.

4.2 We believe that the use of an indicator that seeks to measure the level of intergenerational engagement in good relations processes would be an excellent start. Placing a requirement for grantees to, at the very least, consider how they can incorporate an intergenerational element to their work would begin a process where we can tackle our intergenerationally transferred problems together.

4.3 We would be delighted to provide a delegation to the committee to answer questions and discuss the potential of intergenerational practice in supporting the building of a united community.

Response prepared by

Dr. Lynn Johnston (Regional Development Worker) lynn.johnston@bjf.org.uk

and

Ms. Vicki Titterington (Manager) vicki@bjf.org.uk

Additional comment

LGNI is seeking funding to enable us to support good relations practitioners across NI to consider incorporating an intergenerational element in to their work. We applied through the OFMDFM process in February 2014 for this current financial year and we have yet to receive a response. At recent events hosted to discuss the TBUC strategy and its delivery, practitioners have voiced concern that the perceived lack of collaboration within OFMDFM at Ministerial and elected representative level is not only hindering progress in communities, but projects a chaotic and uninspired leadership for these critical issues. We also feel that a long term approach to funding must be key as yearly funding does not promote a sustainable approach to the work.

National Union of Students - Union of Students in Ireland

Submission from NUS-USI to Inquiry into Building a United Community

(National Union of Students - Union of Students in Ireland)

31 July 2014

Summary

NUS-USI welcomes the creation of this Inquiry as it is absolutely vital that a shared future can be created in Northern Ireland. We see integrated education and having integrated services as essential to tackling all forms of societal division and being crucial in the delivery of a shared future.

NUS-USI does not wish to be considered to give oral evidence to the Inquiry and our written submission covers our thoughts on this subject.

NUS-USI objectives on a shared future:

- Children are educated together in integrated education
- Government ensures that all public space is shared space
- Government addresses segregated services and works to ensure all public services are delivered on an integrated basis
- Government must pro-actively work with communities and build good relations to enable the removal of all interface barriers as soon as possible
- The community and voluntary sectors could play a key role in delivering a shared future and government should re-instate the civic forum
- A sustainable deal on unresolved issues on a shared future like flags, parades and addressing the past must be delivered by the political parties as soon as possible

1. Shared space

- 1.1 NUS-USI believes that all public space should be shared space. This is essential to ensure that a united community can be created and to demonstrate that everyone is welcome everywhere around Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 It is essential that government creates a strategy and publicly demonstrates that all space should be shared space to ensure that a clear message is sent out that Northern Ireland is building a genuinely shared future.
- 1.3 Government should research and utilise international best practice on tackling societal division to ensure that a shared future can be delivered in the most effective way possible.

2. Integrated services

- 2.1 It is absolutely essential that government ensures that all public services are integrated so that any forms of division in relation to public services are addressed.
- 2.2 The cost of division in Northern Ireland is extremely significant and it is very important that government addresses this as quickly and effectively as possible.

-
- 2.3 Ensuring that services are integrated could help foster a sense of a united community and could help build good relations.

3. Benefits of a shared future

- 3.1 The benefits of a shared future could be extremely significant and could help boost our economy. Creating a shared future could help attract investment to Northern Ireland and potentially help create jobs.
- 3.2 To give Northern Ireland the best prospects for creating employment it is vital that it can be demonstrated that government is addressing societal division.
- 3.3 It is crucial that the strongest possible signal is sent out that Northern Ireland is open for business.
- 3.4 It is also essential that government pro-actively tackles all forms of discrimination to ensure that a clear message is sent out on this matter.
- 3.5 The societal benefits of a shared future could be extremely significant. To have a society where people live and work together could be key for Northern Ireland moving into the future. A key cornerstone of removing this division is ensuring that people are educated together.

4. Interface barriers

- 4.1 Government should put plans in place to create good relations to help facilitate the removal of interface barriers where they exist.
- 4.2 We need to see all interface barriers removed as soon as possible and it is extremely important that plans are created by government to deliver community support for the removal of these barriers.
- 4.3 Opening up the community and removing barriers could make access to services and employment opportunities even easier for people, and this could help create a more cohesive and shared society. Meaningful community building could be another significant benefit from them removal of interface barriers.
- 4.4 Government needs to be pro-active in doing the ground work around removing interface barriers as it is important that people can see the positive benefits that change could have.
- 4.5 It is also extremely important that funding for good relations work is focused to all of society and not just two sides of the community, because it is crucial that funding helps deliver racial equality, gender equality and equality for people who are LGBT and people who are disabled.
- 4.6 It is important that the community is in support of the removal of interface barriers before they are removed, and that is why government needs to invest and have clear and pro-active strategies to ensure community support for removing barriers.
- 4.7 Government must ensure that ambitious timetables and targets are set for the removal of all interface barriers and that the strategy is pro-active as well as being responsive to people's needs.

5. A shared future for all

- 5.1 Creating a shared future has to be about tackling racism, homophobia, sexism and sectarianism as well as other forms of prejudice. It must not simply be about tackling sectarianism.
- 5.2 A holistic approach to good relations must be taken and this must involve addressing all forms of inequality against everyone across society.

5.3 In terms of building a shared future, cross-border and international cooperation could deliver a significant and extremely positive impact for Northern Ireland. NUS-USI believes that Northern Ireland building further cross-border and international links and co-operation could be very beneficial for students and could increase student mobility and work placement options. This co-operation could also boost the economy through the potential for further business links which may deliver export opportunities, investment and create new jobs.

6. Integrated education

6.1 NUS-USI believes that in relation to education, the Together: Building a United Community strategy should focus on ensuring that children are educated together through integrated education.

6.2 Integrating education should be seen as the objective across our school system. The message that not delivering an integrated system might send out could be very damaging to Northern Ireland's future.

6.3 There could be significant negative ramifications for Northern Ireland's global profile if government continues to resource division through funding nonintegrated public services or non-integrated education, and does not make plans and set targets for delivering integrated services and integrated education as the way forward in the future.

7. Civic society and a shared future

7.1 Civic society has a significant role to play delivering a shared future and government should listen to their views and utilise elements of best practice from their work. NUS-USI believes that re-instating the civic forum could have significant benefits as regards the community and voluntary sectors and their potential inputs, and this could help in work towards delivering a shared future.

7.2 NUS-USI has a proud history of working towards delivering a shared future and also cross-border and UK-wide co-operation.

7.3 NUS-USI works in partnership with the Union of Students in Ireland, which is based in the Republic of Ireland, and with the National Union of Students across the rest of the UK and this partnership and collaboration can illustrate the benefits of UK-wide and cross-border co-operation.

8. Unresolved matters relating to a shared future

8.1 The political parties must deliver agreement on any outstanding issues in relation to a shared future as quickly as possible.

8.2 Party talks must re-commence as soon as possible and it could be extremely useful if the British and Irish governments as well as the international community play a role within the talks in relation to convening and chairing them.

8.3 Northern Ireland needs urgent agreement on parades, flags and addressing the past. Each of these issues, being unresolved, can pose very significant problems on a regular basis and can place the stability of the political institutions in jeopardy. It is incumbent on the parties in government to deliver consensus and sustainable solutions on these matters as swiftly as possible.

8.4 In addressing the legacy of the past it is extremely important that the needs of victims and survivors are met and that the process helps build and secure a shared future.

Newtownabbey Borough Council

Inquiry into Together Building A United Community Response from Good Relations Service Newtownabbey Borough Council

Organisation

This submission has been completed by the Good Relations Service on behalf of Newtownabbey Borough Council. The Council is committed to the promotion of good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group and aims to foster good relations between all those who live in, work in or visit the Borough. This commitment is further underpinned in the Council's Good Relations Strategy for 2012-2016 entitled "Living Well Together".

The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are to:

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;***

Response

Newtownabbey Borough Council welcomes the Government's commitment to good relations reflected in the Together Building A United Community Strategy. The examination of theory and practice relating to good relations needs to be grounded in the context of a society moving out of conflict towards a lasting shared future. A commitment to good relations and a shared society in Northern Ireland will have extensive benefits and gains at both a social and economic level and is both morally and financially more viable than the cost of division.

Consideration of best practice should include the implementation of international obligations and standards including a human rights framework. Existing Northern Ireland and UK wide standards and best practice around equality and race relations also needs to be implemented. Good relations needs to be mainstreamed across the various sectors controlled by government including education, justice, arts and leisure and social development to ensure it is centralised and of key consideration when making policy decisions based on creating a shared society.

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 including:

- Seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers 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.

Response

The challenge of removing interface barriers reflects the challenges of creating a shared society. The goal of increasing sharing around services, housing and education and increasing feelings of safety and security will create a more natural environment where interface barriers become redundant. In order to create a strong stable society the focus needs to go beyond thinking about 'two communities' and a culture of 'them and us', to thinking of Northern Ireland as one whole society.

Community Planning will provide a vehicle through which each new Council can formulate local plans to address the issue of interfaces. Each new Council area is diverse with different good relations issues which are specific to their Communities; therefore, Community Planning should ensure all voices are considered when planning and agreeing 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.

Good Relations indicators should include a wide range of both fiscal and social indicators to determine the success of the TBUC policy such as:

- Results of the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey as a baseline indicator of the general populace;
- Comparative costs of service delivery in a divided society (baseline indicator, Deloitte Report 2007);
- Levels of emergency policing required;
- Levels of territory marking;
- Levels of tourism and inward investment among others;

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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.

Response

There needs to be a strong cross departmental commitment to a peacebuilding plan. This needs to be open, sustainable, outcome focused with resourcing for peace building work both on the ground and at central and local government. Leadership from central government and a long term commitment to addressing contentious issues is required.

The Council's own Good Relations Strategy for 2012-2016 is focused on "Living Well Together" to be addressed through five key themes including leadership, hard issues (flags, bonfires, sectarianism, racism and prejudice), addressing diversity, equality and cultural identity, building shared and consensual spaces and building cross departmental work and internal good relations which complement the key themes identified in TBUC. The Council will continue to work in partnership at a local level to implement these themes.

It is vital that central government commits to resourcing and monitoring the outcomes of the TBUC Strategy on a cross departmental basis to allow delivery bodies to effect this change in their local areas.

It is vital that an ongoing and long term commitment is made to continue to resource the District Council Community Relations Programme (DCCRP) to support the newly amalgamated councils to effect real change at a local level and tackle sectarian and racism on the ground and promote services to build a united community. Councils are keenly aware of the needs of their local community and are a vital local service provider, a position that will be enhanced even further with the Community Planning process. Since the introduction of the DCCRP in 1991 the programme has changed beyond recognition and has played a vital support role in building community and race relations in Northern Ireland. Local councils have often found themselves at the forefront of these difficult issues and have pioneered programmes and agreements around bonfires, removal and reduction of territory markings and building community confidence, often in the absence of leadership and guidance from Central Government and their associated agencies. The District Council Community Relations Programme should be acknowledged and recognised as a key mechanism for the delivery of the aims and objectives of the Together Building A United Community strategy and as such a long term commitment should be given to resourcing this project with assurances that support will be available for both staffing and on the ground programming.

NIACRO



**Written Evidence to the
OFMDFM Committee Inquiry into
Building a United Community**

Date: 10/10/2014

PACT: 2014/39



working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

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Kathy O'Hanlon
Committee for the Office of the First Minister and the deputy First Minister
Room 285, Parliament Buildings,
Ballymiscaw, Stormont,
Belfast,
BT4 3XX

10th October 2014

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the OFMDFM Committee Inquiry into Building a United Community.

NIACRO is a voluntary organisation, working for over 40 years to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities. NIACRO provides services for and works with children and young people, with adults in the community, and with people in prison and their families, whilst working to influence others and apply all of our resources effectively.

NIACRO receives funding from, and works in partnership with, a range of statutory departments and agencies in Northern Ireland, including criminal justice, health, social services, housing and others.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Plan and would be happy to provide further information if that would be helpful.

We look forward to receiving the final document.

Yours sincerely

Pat Conway
Director of Operations and Public Affairs

Enc



NIACRO
Recognised by the HMRC as a charity XN 48280 Company Limited by Guarantee No. N.I 18121
Chairman: S McDowell; Chief Executive: O Lyner; Chairman Finance Committee: Patrick L Farry BSc FCCA



working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

NIACRO's submission to the Inquiry into Building a United Community

Introduction

NIACRO welcomes the opportunity to provide written evidence to the OFMDFM Committee's Inquiry into Building a United Community. We are a voluntary organisation, working for more than 40 years to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities. We provide services for children and young people, people in prison and their families, and adults in the community. The services we deliver inform our policy position and give us the insight needed to provide meaningful comment on policy and legislation. Our response has been developed by our work with people who offend, their families, and people and communities affected by offending behaviour.

NIACRO has been involved in contributing to the building of a united community throughout the life of the organisation. Whilst primarily concerned with the re-integration and resettlement of individuals in the criminal justice system through its work with people with a criminal record, people in prisons, young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system as well as families of those in the criminal justice system, NIACRO has also been concerned with conflict related matters.

Best practice and experience

With respect to the proposed Inquiry's terms of reference, NIACRO is basing its submission on the work carried out through its Base 2 project (working with individuals and families under threat in communities), the Challenge Hate Crime project (a partnership between NIPS and NIACRO, primarily developing a model of intervention with perpetrators of hate crime supported by local, national and international research) and the STEM project (Supporting Tenancies for people from Ethnic Minority backgrounds).

Base 2 has been in existence since 1990 and provides an emergency response service to those people and families under threat of physical violence and exclusion. Since its inception, this project has dealt with approximately 20,000 referrals. Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, it was hoped that the incidence of informal policing and intimidation would reduce and ultimately wither away. This has proven not to be the case and referral numbers for the past ten years have averaged 1000 per annum. Paramilitary style shootings and assaults as recorded by the PSNI are still significant in number and the level of threat experienced by individuals and families remains high.

However, the characteristics around alleged reason for threats have changed since the early 90s, and Base 2 has been recording hate related incidents since 2009/10. These are mostly concerned with sectarian, racist and sexual orientation hate incidents. It was this work that informed NIACRO's Challenge Hate Crime project.



working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

Challenge Hate Crime Project (CHC)

This project was a partnership between NIPS and NIACRO funded under the European Union’s Peace III Programme, managed by SEUPB. It ran from 2009 to 2012 and comprised of two elements: 1) developing an effective model of working with perpetrators of hate crime to reduce the likelihood of their re-offending and 2) research into hate crime in Northern Ireland. In terms of the practice, training manuals were produced for interventionists. The research which informed this practice included analysis of hate crime data in Northern Ireland, an attempt to define sectarianism, the stated views of political parties and drawing from national and international experience. A conference in autumn 2012, “Challenge Hate Crime: Deal with it”, brought together politicians, policy makers, representatives of the statutory criminal justice system, relevant NGOs as well as representatives from communities experiencing hate crime to discuss the key messages from the project. Twelve reports were produced and are available on the NIACRO website at www.niacro.org.uk. It was clear during the life of the programme that there were many resisters with respect to addressing hate crime in Northern Ireland and a summary of these is contained in the table below.

**Hate Crime – Audit of Resistors and Solutions
(Legislative, Structural and Attitudinal)**

	Resistors	Solution
Lack of Definition	No agreed definition of sectarianism	Working definition developed – incorporated into legislation or at least defined operationally
Legislation	No reference to sectarianism/ transgender Aggravated hostility, a two edged sword	Review and incorporate Consider whether aggravated hostility is a barrier
Government /Politicians	Lack of agreement in regards to sectarian hate crime Ambivalence/ ambiguity towards certain groups	Develop position with parties internally Achieve consensus Visible leadership Set up all party working group – develop executive strategy



working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

Society / Community	Denial / ambiguity / fear Tolerance of types of hate crime Lack of public outcry	Collective efforts to 'deal with it', eg. reinstate and develop Unite Against Hate Crime
Victim	Perception ignored	Perception accepted Increased level (amount) / depth (type) of self reporting Contribute to development of practice and involvement
Perpetrator	Denial / ambiguity / fear	Programme – Opportunity to acknowledge and address acts of hate crime
Intermediaries	Lack of experience dealing directly with topic of hate crime combined with working in criminal justice environment	Build on pilot and develop robust practice based on experience and drawing on practice/resources of others
Department / Agencies beyond Criminal Justice System	No focus on early intervention Denial / downplaying e.g. bullying in schools	Acknowledge behaviours at early stage and act
Criminal Justice System	Issues in regards to communication / understanding/ denial/ silos	Ministerial commitment to action plan leading to enhanced communication and reduction of hate crime

Although the CHC project has ended, work continues and NIACRO has a place on the European Radicalisation Awareness Network¹ promoted by European Commission as well as the European Network Of De-radicalisation (ENOD).

Supporting Tenancies of People from Ethnic Minority Backgrounds (STEM)

The STEM project has been in existence for approximately three months and is a housing floating support service. Influenced by the work of Base 2 and CHC, the STEM project is concerned with intervening where racist intimidation has occurred and seeks to prevent homelessness and maintain (people and families) their tenancies in the community. STEM also seeks to reduce the risk of

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/index_en.htm



working to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

incidents being perpetrated by engaging with key organisations that support minority ethnic groups. STEM works with district housing staff and broader communities to address the issue of hate crime and contributes to tension monitoring within the Belfast Council area.

Good relations

In our initial comments on the design of the Together: Building a United Community - United Youth Programme, we recommended that the Department needs to engage with young people in defining what good relations is and how they can embrace the concept. We believe that good relations can be incorporated in developing young people's skills and knowledge of wider societal structures and how we all contribute to a vibrant and healthy society.

Conclusion

Building a united community is a vast remit. It encompasses a wide range of stakeholders across all sectors. NIACRO, through the work outlined above, believes that it has a significant contribution to make to this Inquiry. It is work that has a continuing evolving dynamic. NIACRO would take the view that future work needs to be based on the resistors outlined in the above table and advocates that solutions can be found assuming that stakeholders acknowledge and develop their potential role.

NIACRO has framed its work within the context of reducing offending and improving communities with the consequent reduction in numbers of victims. We would take the view that not enough is understood about the typology and quantum of hate crime. Some of the suggestions we propose that would contribute to achieving the aims of this Inquiry are as follows:

- Developing information on hate crimes that defines "who is doing what to whom, where and why". There is an onus on the PSNI and other criminal justice agencies to collect these statistics upon which a future strategy may be based.
- Develop and implement a bespoke model of intervening with perpetrators of hate crime based on the work carried out by CHC. No such model exists within the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland which means that individuals may be sentenced without having their behaviour addressed (although we are aware some agencies, eg PBNI and YJA are attempting to develop practice).
- There should be a focus by all criminal justice agencies on reducing offending rates and reducing rates of recidivism requiring "tracking" of individual perpetrators.
- Review the current legislation with a view to naming hate crime without enhanced sentencing as this legislation in itself seems to be a barrier to identifying hate crime.
- Utilise the resources in communities identified in the CHC programme drawn from communities affected by hate crime.
- An adequately resourced strategy that states clearly the problem, the process, the outputs and outcomes.

NIAMH (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health)



Inquiry into Building a United Community

Niamh Written evidence submission in response to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building a United Community, July 2014

For further information please contact:

Nuala Dalcz, Director of External Affairs, 028 90328474, n.dalcz@niamhwellbeing.org

1. Introduction

Niamh (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health) would like to thank the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister for the opportunity to submit written evidence in relation to the Inquiry into Building a United Community. Niamh welcomes a joined up approach from all governmental departments to tackle sectarianism, division and good relations.

2. Niamh Background Information

Niamh, (the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health), is the largest and longest established independent charity focusing on mental health and wellbeing services in Northern Ireland.

Our Vision – Mental Health and Wellbeing for all

Our Values - We provide high quality, professional and innovative services
 We enable positive outcomes for the people who use our services
 We act with integrity and compassion
 We engage with and inspire each other
 We influence policy and public opinion

Niamh is structured as a group consisting of the corporate body and four service and programmatic elements Beacon, Inspire, Carecall and Journey Towards Healing.

- As a corporate, Niamh is committed to organisational development, research, advocacy, lobbying and income generation. It provides an evidence base to shape its services, policy messaging to help shape the sector and safeguard its service users and it promotes positive mental health and wellbeing in all its forms.
- Beacon provides support services to people with experience of mental illness through supported housing, day support and advocacy services.
- Carecall provides therapeutic support through employee assistance programmes, and specialist therapeutic services delivered in a wide variety of contexts.
- Inspire provides support for people with learning disabilities in four residential locations in Northern Ireland – Armagh, Antrim, Lisburn and Omagh

Niamh is uniquely placed to provide evidence to this inquiry through its Journey Towards Healing project, which works with disenfranchised communities, politicians, community leaders and international experts to focus of building resilience and community cohesion in a post conflict society.

Issues as defined in Terms of Reference

Issue 1

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;

Response 1

1a - an examination of theory and practice with regard to good relations, shared space and shared services

Niamh believes that the creation of greater 'shared spaces and services' in our communities to promote good relations and address the trauma related needs of Victims and Survivors is critical.

It is essential that people are enabled to come together to experience healing and treatment in a shared space environment. To truly create a more cohesive society and make an attitudinal and behavioural change, the trauma related services must;

- be much wider than PTSD
- focus on building resilience
- be accessible to all members of our shared society.

A shared space with wraparound services focusing on the psychological impact of sectarianism, the conflict and building resilience for the future is the only effective way of building a cohesive community and achieving the strategic objective of a united community. This demands not only the development of iconic projects through capital investment but also the development of relationships between and within communities, changing attitudes and behaviours at a local level and addressing deep held beliefs.

Shared Spaces and Services must be designed to move society beyond the management of conflict and on to transformation and reconciliation.

1b - consideration of best practice, both locally and internationally, in bringing divided communities together, and in developing shared space and shared services

Niamh is uniquely placed to provide evidence of best practice and experience both locally and nationally. Through its work in developing and delivering Journey Towards Healing it has reviewed research and engaged in constructive dialogue with a wide range of key stakeholders and influencers in community, local, national and international settings.

These groups include:

- Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA), The PSNI, Queens University Belfast, University of Ulster, Coiste Republican prisoners group, The Falls Community Council, EPIC & ACT Loyalist prisoners groups, Political parties locally and regionally, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, WAVE, Mediation Northern Ireland, Healing Through Remembering, The Causeway Institute

- Governmental agencies such as the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors and the Parades Commission.
- Emory University Atlanta, Harvard University Boston, Boston University, Tel Aviv University, Al Quds Jerusalem, Ben Gurion University Beersheba and Fairmont State University West Virginia.
- International experts such as:
 - Lois Clinton (a world wide expert on building resilience in conflict and post conflict zones and uses the TRIM and CRIM--Trauma Resiliency Model and Community Resiliency Model--now used in high conflict zones and post-conflict zones.)
 - Neal Christie (an expert in racism in a post conflict society)

Issue 2

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 might include:

- seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers 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.

Response 2

Northern Ireland society and its social interactions have been deeply disrupted because of the history of conflict. That history prevents much social engagement that would happen as normal in many other cultures. The traumatic component of this history impacts on the abilities of individuals and communities to engage, interact and build good relations– it is a barrier to accessing services and support. In this context Niamh has developed a number of programmes in a community shared space context that build resilience in this post conflict society. These structured programmes deal with the impact of our collective conflicted past in a psychologically informed way to build resilience and facilitate meaningful, long term reconciliation. Creating a society characterised by good relations and community integration where interface barriers are removed is impossible without taking the psychological impact of this history into account.

Issue 3

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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.

Response 3

It is essential that we build the capacity of grass roots communities and establish the community context necessary to allow political representatives to move forward on difficult issues with confidence. This requires 'single identity' discussion and capacity building initiatives and increased levels of cross community dialogue.

Niamh recommends:

the development of shared spaces with wraparound services focusing on the psychological impact of sectarianism, the trauma of conflict and building resilience.

Conclusion

We welcome this opportunity to provide written evidence on the inquiry and hope that our comments will help to shape positive policy and decision making that translate to activities that will benefit all communities in our shared society. We would wish to be considered to give further oral evidence to the committee.

4th September 2014

NICIE (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education)



26 September 2014

Kathy O'Hanlon
Committee for the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Room 285, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Dear Kathy,

I am pleased to submit the response of the Northern Ireland Council for Education (NICIE) to the Inquiry into Building a United Community.

I would request also that NICIE be given the opportunity to present to the Committee of the First and Deputy First Minister on this important topic.

I would also extend an invitation to the Committee to visit the Hazelwood Integrated Schools, located on the interface in North Belfast to experience first-hand the important work that can be achieved in building a united community through educating children together.

I look forward to your response to these requests.

Yours sincerely

Noreen Campbell
Chief Executive Officer



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**Submission from
NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION
to inquiry into building a united community**

No one is born hating one another because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

Nelson Mandela

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

submission to the inquiry into building a united community

NICIE welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into building a united community. We hold that the system of education which prevails is a legacy which no longer reflects the multi-cultural and pluralist Northern Ireland of the twenty first century. Our voice is one of the few that has made a lasting impact in transforming the lives of people and communities away from the sterile politics of sectarian mistrust and division to a reality of acceptance of difference and a celebration of diversity.

NICIE believes that a key strategy in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance involves the education of children together, irrespective of social/cultural background, religion, ability and on a daily basis, in an all-inclusive and mutually respectful *shared space*. Our schools are as direct result of *communities* acting together.

Our founding principles articulate a vision of a 'united community', with peace and reconciliation at its core. Where our schools are working along interface areas they provide examples of good practice in challenging fear and ignorance and in bringing communities together.

The benefits of integrated education are recognised widely and our schools have become a model for other societies dealing with division and conflict. Significantly, support and demand for integrated schooling remains consistently high (at around eighty per cent from various polls) but provision of places is in shortage with no new schools being established within the last three years.

NICIE would respectfully ask that the following recommendations be considered when the committee reports on 'building a united inquiry'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Northern Ireland Executive accepts its responsibilities as outlined in the Good Friday Agreement ‘...to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education... in the process of reconciliation and the creation of a culture of tolerance at every level of society.’

That the Department of Education be held accountable for the implementation of its statutory duty under Article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 ‘to encourage and facilitate integrated education’, as reaffirmed in the recent judicial review.

That, having accepted this responsibility through acceptance of an assembly motion on placing article 64 at the heart of educational planning, the minister now ensures that the choice of parents — and the rights of children — to secure a place at an integrated school is realised.

That a target be adopted for at least one third of all school places to be integrated and for there to be an integrated choice in every area.

That all pre-school education be officially re-designated as integrated.

That the new single authority be responsible for planning for educational provision on an area basis in full consultation with parents.

NICIE welcomes the opportunity to inform the executive's approach in the actions it takes to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance; and to make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy in uniting communities and community integration, including how communities are involved in decision making.

Context

Sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance thrive in a society where 'others' are seen as the cause of inequality, lack of opportunities, and injustices, and crucially where ignorance of and about fellow citizens becomes immortalised as myth and history. Sectarianism kills. Society stagnates.

The founders of integrated education believed that by educating children together it would be possible to challenge the inevitability of another generation condemned to the violence and hopelessness which had become the norm for so many in Northern Ireland. With reconciliation as one of its core principles, integrated education encapsulated a vision of a 'united community' and courageously took those first faltering steps over thirty years ago. Pioneer schools such as Lagan and Hazelwood were a direct result of communities acting together to build a type of school that would foster good relations in shared spaces, and in some cases along interface areas. We in the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) feel well placed to contribute to ongoing discussions on building a united community.

Education a force for change

The role of education as a powerful force in transforming societies, not least those emerging from years of conflict, has been recognised and accepted globally. It is now equally understood that an education system that fails to deliver to all its participants the opportunities to develop to their full potential is a flawed system. Underachievement, where measured in terms of academic grades, is a major cause for concern among certain sections of Northern Irish society, most notably protestant working class boys. Latest findings highlight the widening gap in literacy and numeracy between the highest and lowest achievers in our schools, placing Northern Ireland even lower in international league tables of performance. The challenges presented by an increasingly diverse range of pupils demand more than ever

an inclusive system of education. We in NICIE believe that an integrated school offers the best means of dismantling the barriers and mitigating the marginalisation which contributes to intolerance and disunity in society. The multi-cultural Northern Ireland of the twenty-first century requires an educational system which reflects diversity and which aims to be a world leader in enabling every child to overcome disadvantage.

The educational status quo

Over ninety per cent of our children are divided in that they attend single identity schools; this sense of separateness is further exacerbated on returning home where similarly high numbers live in segregated housing resulting in limited exposure to other traditions and identities. While some progress has been made in developing the concept of shared education — and we in NICIE laud any progress in bringing our young people closer together — the collaboration involved and envisaged is based on a premise which ‘accepts a religiously divided school system but tries to make the walls more porous by encouraging practical cooperation... It delivers educational benefits to its learners, promotes the effective use of resources and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion’ (Community Relations Commission, *Peace Monitoring Report 2013*). The integrated model is the optimum model of sharing where togetherness is the everyday norm and not the exception, where the entitlement to be educated together is the norm, not an added experience.

The NICIE model

There are sixty two integrated schools educating together 22,000 children of different backgrounds and beliefs.

The model of integrated education, with its emphasis on an all-ability, co-educational experience, has been developed as a contribution towards peace and reconciliation. As such, this model is much admired and sought after by many countries experiencing division and conflict. Educators from Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Israel, Turkey and others have visited our schools, shared experiences and developed similar initiatives in their own societies.

Bringing children of all faiths and no faiths together in a school community in a planned way

where they learn to understand and respect each other's difference is a key characteristic. Each child's identity and religious and cultural background is recognized and valued. Children are encouraged to take pride in and celebrate their own cultural and religious identities and to learn about and respect the diverse identities of their classmates. The planned integrated experience ensures that every child is equipped to live and work in an increasingly diverse world. The impact that attending an integrated school can have on wider society has also been documented: 'individuals who attend integrated schools are significantly more likely to have friends and neighbours from across the divide and these friendship networks translate into a more optimistic view of future community relations' (B.C. Hayes and I. McAllister, 'Education as a Mechanism for Conflict Resolution').

Research

Other research supports the 'individual change' theory which suggests that peace comes through the transformative change of a critical mass of individuals and the 'healthy relationships and connections' theory which suggests that peace emerges out of a process of breaking down isolation, polarisation, division, prejudice and stereotypes between and among groups. Our experience of integrating catholic and protestant children together shows that education can impact positively on identity, out group attitudes and forgiveness, and promote a less sectarian outlook. There is also evidence that it moderates children's political attitudes and creates cross community group friendships that can be carried forward into the community (McGlynn).

The benefits of integrated education are clearly understood by academics and formal educators as well as international political leaders. As President Obama said on a recent visit to Northern Ireland: 'Because issues like segregated schools and housing, lack of jobs and opportunity — symbols of history that are a source of pride for some and pain for others — these are not tangential to peace; they are essential to it. If towns remain divided — if catholics have their schools and buildings and protestants have theirs — if we can't see ourselves in one another — if fear or resentment are allowed to harden — that encourages division. It discourages cooperation. Ultimately peace is not just about politics it is about attitudes, about a sense of empathy.'

Public opinion

Public opinion polls show consistently high levels of support. A *Belfast Telegraph/Lucid Poll* (February 2013) found that seventy seven per cent of parents would support a request for their child's school to become integrated and sixty nine per cent agreed an integrated school was the best preparation for living in a diverse society. Business leaders and world leaders also share the view that a major step forward in unlocking the potential for Northern Irish society involves the ending of our segregated system of education, our 'benign apartheid'.

A more recent poll (*Belfast Telegraph/Lucid Poll*, June 2013) found more than two thirds surveyed believed that our education system perpetuates division in society. A similar number believed Northern Ireland politicians must prioritise the ending of the segregated system with over fifty per cent stating that politicians should set clear target dates for the complete desegregation of the system. In 2013, 700 children (16.5% of those who applied) were refused a place in an integrated school of their choice.

Seventy seven per cent polled thought that Northern Ireland's international image would be improved by having a single education system while eighty two per cent thought the international community should encourage our politicians to desegregate the system.

Clearly political support for the segregated educational status quo is out of step not just with international opinion but with the views of the electorate. This inquiry into building a united community should play an important part in persuading OFM/DFM to implement the structural change necessary in our education system to build a united community.

Recent developments

We in NICIE have been heartened by the recent judicial review finding initiated by Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh, which clarified Article 64 of the Education Reform Act (Northern Ireland) 1989 in stating the responsibility of government to 'encourage and facilitate Integrated education' and we welcomed the minister of education's support in the assembly for a motion to place Article 64 at the heart of educational planning.

Opportunities have been missed to tackle head-on the segregated system through area based planning, while the process of transformation remains difficult. Despite a background of financial restraint and concern about the cost of duplication of provision, the pace of change is

slow. The Peace Monitoring Report for 2013 noted that on current trends it would take another 499 years for all Northern Ireland schools to become integrated.

It is recognised that many schools in Northern Ireland offer genuine opportunities to pupils to meet and share learning experiences with those of a different background and early evaluations have shown that there are some positive benefits for those involved. Similarly policy documents such as *Community Relations, Equality and Diversity* (CRED) are important resources for advancing a more inclusive curriculum within schools.

NICIE wants to build on such good practice and in doing so has developed the Positive Partnership for Integration Initiative (PPInt). This initiative will provide the opportunity for those schools who wish to further develop their capacity to build partnerships to explore and celebrate diversity; to share and deepen good practice; to share learning resources; to validate their commitment to recognising and celebrating the diversity of their school community — in order to ‘help children and young people to learn, understand and respect one and other and their different customs and traditions, and prepare them to live together in harmony in adult life’ (CRED 2.1). This initiative will allow increasing numbers of schools to be recognised as being integrated in ethos. This initiative has the potential to move Northern Ireland beyond a segregated system of education to an integrated system which allows for a plurality of school types committed to collaboration and sharing.

NICIE contends that the development of such a system with a focus on educational strategies in the area of diversity, equality and promotion of community relations is one pre-requisite for creating the conditions in which inward investment, business confidence, increased employment, training opportunities and entrepreneurship will be enhanced and sustained in the context of contributing to ‘Together, Building a United Community’.

NICIE would also call on courageous (decisive) action to follow the recommendations in the international review panel on teacher education in Northern Ireland, one of which is to establish an inclusive centre of excellence to train our young teachers to help build a united and prosperous community.

Good practice at the interface

The Hazelwood schools in North Belfast offer an example of how children can experience first class education against a background of community division and conflict and how the schools can reach out into the communities and contribute to better community relations for the benefit of all who live in them.

Over 450 children attend Hazelwood integrated primary, fifty per cent of whom are entitled to free school meals, thirty per cent being identified as special needs, eight per cent being registered as having a disability. Over ten per cent are newcomer children. As in all integrated schools, religious and cultural events of all children are celebrated not just at assemblies but through curricular activities within the classroom. Families are encouraged to participate and, when feasible, so too are others from the local community. Issues of identity and difference are explored and discussed. In 2013, whole school celebrations were held to mark the Queen's Jubilee. Gaelic sports are offered, pupils are involved in projects with Irish medium schools, and the history of the protestant community and its links with the Irish language is also studied. Over the years, the school has been the location for regular faith worship of the Bahai community, is a centre for sporting and leisure classes in the evenings and weekends, and has acted as a centre for mediation when tensions have developed among local groups. It is ironic that Hazelwood integrated primary school serving as it does the children of divided North Belfast remains the only school in the world to be scarred with a 'peace' wall in its grounds.

The inquiry of this committee presents an opportunity to promote positive change. The education system has a significant role to play in shaping such change. We need to ensure that the long term process of building a peaceful united community is served not hindered by our educational system. Our system must shape the future we wish to see.

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People



Submission to the Committee for the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister

10 October 2014

Introduction

The office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) was created in accordance with 'The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order' (2003) to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people. The age remit of the office is children from birth up to 18 years, or 21 years of age if a child is care experienced or has a disability. NICCY references its work within the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other relevant child rights instruments.

Scope of NICCY submission

Recognising the wide ranging nature of the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, this submission will focus on '*recommendations to support and enhance policy and decision-making with regard to building a united community*', through consideration of the Executive's Strategy: 'Together: Building a United Community'.

General comments on Together, Building a United Community

The Commissioner welcomed the publication of Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) when it was published last year. Addressing the sectarian and racist divisions within our society is critical if we are collectively to flourish and overcome the divisions of our troubled past. Delays in the development of this strategy have caused concern, and we note that, while a draft document, Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI), was consulted on in 2010, many aspects of T:BUC were not contained in CSI and so were not consulted on. Moreover, there did not appear to be a process within government of working across departments and their agencies to ensure that the Strategy integrated with other initiatives and programmes, for example the NEETs .

However, since publication, NICCY is aware of considerable effort put in to engaging with stakeholders from within government as well as NGOs and the public in relation to taking forward some of this work.



Role of children and young people in addressing divisions

The Commissioner notes that the document recognises children and young people as a priority area and commits to directing resources towards particularly marginalised children and young people living in interface areas. However, the wording of the first shared aim focuses on the need to address negative attitudes on the part of 'our children and young people':

'To continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.'

This aim suggests that young people (or children and young people) have negative attitudes that are in some way responsible for the community divisions in Northern Ireland. This is consistent with the draft strategy, CSI, which also negatively stereotyped of children and young people.

The Commissioner believes that it is extremely problematic for this objective to remain unchanged within T:BUC, given that children and young people are the only part of Northern Ireland society that does not hold some level of blame for the past, as none were born before the 1994 ceasefire.

It is appropriate instead to recognise the important part children and young people play in building a new society, in which sectarian divisions and violence is less dominant. Indeed, children and young people are generally very passionate about the need to overcome the divisions within society, as can be seen the responses to a question in the 2007 Young Life and Times Survey in which they were asked to write about the type of society they wanted Northern Ireland to be in the future. (See Appendix 1)

Indeed, other parts of the Strategy recognise the huge contribution children and young people can make in the future, and the problems of young people being blamed for society's problems:

'This strategy does not view young people as a negative influence but instead recognised the potential they hold for the future...' (p34)

'However, we do recognise that society can at times vilify youth and blame them for community problems...' (p81)



It is critical that the first Shared Aim of the Strategy is rewritten to focus instead on the huge contribution make to society, and may make to overcoming the divisions of the past. However, it is also critical to recognise the responsibility of all within society to deal with the past, particularly those in political leadership. This cannot be delegated to the youngest and most disempowered.

Role of political leadership in addressing divisions

It is noticeable that there is little reference in T:BUC to the role of politicians in overcoming divisions, other than through departmental implementation of the Strategy. Instead of seeking to place responsibility on those who were not born before the ceasefires, political leaders must take responsibility for dealing with the past, through delivering effective governance, and fully meeting the commitments contained in the Belfast Agreement, and subsequent St Andrews Agreement. This includes reaching compromise in relation to highly divisive issues including parades and flags, and also working together in coalition to deliver effective governance for all the people of Northern Ireland.

In conclusion, children and young people are severely impacted by the continuing sectarian divisions, and have an important role to play in building a more tolerant and inclusive society. However, the key role for addressing our conflicted past lies with Northern Ireland's elected representatives, and it is their responsibility to deliver on the commitments made in the Belfast Agreement and St Andrews Agreement.



Appendix 1: Responses to question in 2007 Young Life and Times survey: 'What sort of society (do) you want Northern Ireland to be in the future.'

Methodology

The data utilised in this research emerged from the 2007 Young Life and Times survey, carried out by ARK, a joint project between the Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster. This survey records the attitudes and values of young people living in Northern Ireland. The edition of the survey used in this paper illustrates the views of young people who celebrated their 16th birthday in February 2007. A letter was sent to all eligible 16 year olds and of the 1,925 letters sent out, 627 responses were received. The data was collected between 10th August and 30th September 2007 using a questionnaire which was completed by respondents online, by telephone or on paper. The survey asked respondents a range of questions on a variety of issues including education, poverty, family and politics. The open-ended question to which respondents provided feedback read:

"The new Assembly has the potential to shape the future for our society. Please use the space below to say what sort of society you want Northern Ireland to be in the future."

The data was categorised by analyzing the words which appeared most frequently in the responses and then grouped accordingly under a number of headings.

Overview

In response to this question, some young people identified one specific suggestion which they felt would improve society in Northern Ireland whilst others identified two or more issues. The key issues which they felt should be addressed were peace, equality, safety, poverty, the economy and service provision.

The responses provided presented largely optimistic views about the future of society in Northern Ireland. 96% of young people surveyed conveyed that they hoped that Northern Ireland had a positive future regarding issues such as peace, safety and discrimination.

Analysis of responses

In responding to the question, 627 young people provided the following answers and feedback.



Peace

The most popular response received from the young people was “peace” with 23% of respondents highlighting that they would like to see a more peaceful society for Northern Ireland in the future. The words “peace” and “peaceful” were frequently placed alongside variations of the other most common responses such as “productive”, “safe” and “community”. This suggests that to these young people, peace does not only mean freedom from religious dispute and economic struggle, but also from racial tension.

“A peaceful and productive society, in which people of all religions and races can live successfully amongst each other”

“A peaceful one, where there is no more tension between the two communities and all past events are forgotten”

“A more peaceful community, as in no divides between Protestants and Catholics, e.g all schools made to be integrated so people are more open-minded”

“A peaceful society where young people can be taken as seriously as adults. People could feel safe to walk down any road without feeling threatened or in danger”

Discrimination and Equality

Another area frequently identified in the research was equality and specifically the presence of discrimination within society. 19% of respondents agreed that there should be “less discrimination” and 15% used the term “equality.” A number of respondents expressed a need for more cross-community schemes or initiatives to ensure that people from “both sides” (Protestant and Catholic communities) could live and work in the same areas. Eighteen young people expressed a concern that there should be a greater focus towards ensuring that civil rights are properly implemented in Northern Ireland. Other recurring responses included, “no prejudice”, “fair”, “multi-cultural”, “no boundaries”, “less segregation”, “respect” and “diverse.”

The majority of the responses relating to discrimination and equality were positive and indicated that they would like to see a more inclusive society in Northern Ireland. Only five respondents stated that “there should be less foreign workers.”



Safety

Safety was also a key concern for the young people who participated in the survey. 17% responded that they would like Northern Ireland to be a safer society. 11% stated that they felt that there should be less violence and that more needed to be done to ensure that crime rates in Northern Ireland are lowered. There was a particular concern regarding drugs with a significant number of young people linking crime rates with drugs.

"NI currently contains too much violence and disturbances. The amount of young offenders is on the increase as they have nothing to do and so turn to drink, drugs and violence. These issues should be tackled in order for people to feel safe in their homes."

"I would like society to be a safe for children and adults. Also to be free from drugs and paramilitaries as these cause fights and deaths."

Six young people suggested that the current justice system did not provide adequate sentences and punishments for those found guilty of committing a crime. Four young people stated that in the future they would like to live in a society where they could wear their favourite sports team's jersey without having to cover it up in certain areas.

"I want NI to be peaceful and I would like to be able to walk over the town in ANY football top (Rangers) without thinking I will get attacked."

There was a mixed response regarding the Police Service of Northern Ireland's (PSNI) role in building a better society in Northern Ireland. Some young people felt that there should be a greater police presence on the streets to prevent crime, whereas others felt that there should be less presence on the streets and that the PSNI should spend more time investigating "real" crimes.

"I would want NI to be a safe place to be and I feel the PSNI spend more time trying to round up teenagers than solving more dangerous crimes, I could go on... "

"I would like there to be more peace in more communities where Protestants and Catholics live together, for example no flags on the twelfth or marches where Catholics live."

"The younger generation should be more tolerant of other cultures and people with disabilities or who are disfigured. Also, flags such as Nationalist/Unionist should be



removed from streets as these can be intimidating and encourage extremist views on cultures.”

“A society free from sectarianism, free from flags on lampposts and paint on curbs. One where religion does not determine where you live, what school you go to and who your friends are.”

“A safe and clean environment that children can be brought up in. No more arguments or fights over religion, race etc. Hopefully for the society not to be divided by a bridge or flags. For there to be integration in estates between Protestants and Catholics”

“Equal rights for all people. To be able to go anywhere without feeling intimidated by flags and bunting etc.”

In this research only five young people directly mentioned the impact of flags and parades on society in Northern Ireland. The small number highlighting flags and parades would suggest that these were not significant issues in young people’s minds at the time of the survey in 2007.

Poverty

Five percent of young people expressed concern about poverty and homelessness levels in Northern Ireland and many said that they felt that a “classless” society would be better. The volume of responses which highlight poverty as a key issue suggests that some of the respondents may have been personally affected by poverty, or knew of others who had been affected.

“For our society it should be equal and there should be more help for families who suffer poverty”

“A “more happy” NI, so to speak. I know that there is not a lot of unhappiness in NI but I feel that people should be made more aware of the level of homelessness that actually is here...”

The Economy

A number of young people surveyed expressed concerns about the state of the economy in Northern Ireland. Eight percent of participants wanted Northern Ireland to be prosperous



and felt that there were not enough opportunities currently available for young people. Twenty-five young people hoped that the future of Northern Ireland would be “better for young people.”

“A society where there is enough jobs for young people and a better economy”

Fifteen young people felt that the reputation of Northern Ireland worldwide and within the UK could be improved. Eight of these young people felt that more should be done to promote tourism which should boost the economy.

“Northern Ireland should become a more inviting place, at the moment tourism is the main idea that people are promoting, but I believe that the tourism industry will not be a sustainable one if attractions are not put in place”

“A place with a better reputation than its current standing. Somewhere people can be that bit prouder to say “I’m from there.””

Provision of Services

Service provision across a number of sectors was addressed by the young people who took part in the survey. There were specific concerns from 16 young people that general services were not available for teenagers and in the future they would like to see more provision in place.

“I would like there to be more stuff for teenagers to do, as there is currently nothing in my area and many my age hang about in the street.”

There were a number of issues raised regarding educational provision. Thirteen young people suggested that there should be more integrated schools so that communities are encouraged to mix at a young age. Eleven young people felt that access to higher education was prohibitive for some due to rising costs. Two young people expressed the opinion that grammar schools should remain part of the education system in Northern Ireland. One participant requested that there should be more education about sexual identity and another proposed that:

“[There should be an] Education system which offers a wide range of subjects to cater for



all children, with consideration for different abilities and limitations.”

Health provision was another issue highlighted by a number of respondents. Fourteen young people felt that Northern Ireland needed better health provision.

“It will be a society where everyone has access to free and efficient health care.”

Five stated that care given to pensioners was inadequate. Two young people stated that they felt that abortion should not be allowed under any circumstances. Two young people felt that transport in Northern Ireland needed to be improved.

Atmosphere

A number of young people indicated that the atmosphere and attitudes in Northern Ireland needed to change. All of the young people who provided responses of this kind implied that they would like to see the general pervasive mood in Northern Ireland become more positive. Twenty-nine young people expressed a desire for society to be “more happy”, 22 felt that society should be “more friendly” and five used the term “more kind.” Other responses in this field include: “more relaxed”, “modern” and “mature.”

“Happy. Everybody gets on with everyone. Enjoyable.”

Environment

Fifteen young people stated that they would like to see Northern Ireland become more “clean” and in addition, six young people said that they felt that Northern Ireland should be more environmentally friendly. Two participants felt that there should be more protecting animals.

“An environmentally friendly society is very important which uses renewable energy. Cutting down on litter is essential and all animals and their habitats need to be protected.”

Other Responses

Some of the responses received did not fit neatly into a particular policy area. These addressed a range of issues.

Eight young people felt that Northern Ireland should remain part of Great Britain, three felt that there should be a United Ireland and four said that Northern Ireland should be an



independent country.

"Peaceful, united, independent society to feel safe in"

Four young people expressed concerns regarding the rates of child abuse in Northern Ireland and felt that these should be reduced. One simply stated that they wanted Northern Ireland to be "cool" and "Northern Ireland should be shaped according to God's law." Other miscellaneous comments suggested that Northern Ireland should be "co-operative", "have more Asian shops" and "socialism." Only one respondent claimed that "Northern Ireland won't get better."

Northern Ireland Environment Link



Inquiry into Building a United Community (Committee for the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister)

Comments by

Northern Ireland Environment Link

26th September 2014

Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the networking and forum body for non-statutory organisations concerned with the environment of Northern Ireland. Its 65 Full Members represent over 90,000 individuals, 262 subsidiary groups, have an annual turnover of £70 million and manage over 314,000 acres of land. Members are involved in environmental issues of all types and at all levels from the local community to the global environment. NIEL brings together a wide range of knowledge, experience and expertise which can be used to help develop policy, practice and implementation across a wide range of environmental fields.

These comments are made on behalf of Members, but some members may be providing independent comments as well. If you would like to discuss these comments further we would be delighted to do so.

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Summary:

- A significant body of research exists that demonstrates that the environment is a key factor in building community cohesion;
- We would suggest that natural shared spaces, green infrastructure and recognition of the services that flow to society from the environment ('ecosystem services') should be embedded in public policy;
- Heritage sites and buildings should be promoted as venues for shared experience – the public should be encouraged to explore and engage with shared heritage, providing a fresh perspective on the present;
- Environmental education is a key way of promoting the integration of young people across communities in shared green spaces and natural/built heritage sites around Northern Ireland;
- We recommend strategic investment in environmental enhancement to provide well-designed and maintained public spaces (with all the social and community benefits that they bring), for example, rolling out the ideas underpinning the Connswater Community Greenway across Belfast and NI;
- Better integration of land and transport planning across Northern Ireland will make steps towards dealing with social exclusion and providing better-functioning spaces.



1. Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building a United Community. By way of introduction, we would emphasise the very important role that the environment and heritage can play in the development of shared spaces and services, and ultimately in building a united community in NI. Enhancing the environment, in terms of public space, has been shown to have a positive impact on, for example, social cohesion and inclusion, with an associated reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour. When designed and maintained well, shared public spaces can bring communities together, provide meeting places, and foster the kind of social community building that can so easily get lost in our urban areas. Well-designed spaces and places shape the culture of an area and help to inform the identity of local communities. We recommend that **green infrastructure be promoted as a key mechanism for achieving multiple policy objectives across a wide range of Departments – not least because of its potential for bringing communities together.**

Specific elements of the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are dealt with below.

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.*
 - 2.1 Green shared space is recognised as a key factor in developing a **sense of community**¹ - it provides us with venues for **neighbourliness and social cohesion**. Access to open and green spaces gives us a valuable chance to socialise with neighbours and others with whom we would not otherwise come into contact. Well-designed and maintained shared green space in urban areas is known to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, contributing to the establishment of stable societies².
 - 2.2 In any attempt to build a more united community in Northern Ireland, our children are crucial. How children connect with the environment, and with other children in that context, can have profound implications for how they develop. Outdoor play and recreation helps to develop children's social skills (including, for example, dealing with confrontation, language and comprehension, physical ability)³. Increasing our networks of green areas to enable safe outdoor leisure time in shared cross-community spaces represents a significant positive investment in our young people and a shared future.
 - 2.3 Shared green spaces can also promote social cohesion by being used as venues for **social events** – food and music festivals have seen great success in places such as Botanic Gardens (Belfast), Ebrington Square (Derry-Londonderry), Oxford Island, Crawfordsburn Country Park, and many more.
 - 2.4 **People want to use green spaces and wild places**. There is evidence to demonstrate that the more people use public spaces, the more they are satisfied with them and value

¹ CABE Space. (2004). Manifesto for Better Public Spaces

² http://www.csd.org.uk/uploadedfiles/files/value_of_green_space_report.pdf

³ <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-public-space.pdf>;
http://www.edphis.org.uk/Report_on_Place_and_Children.pdf



them, leading to a developed sense of civic pride⁴. Furthermore, people are more likely to use shared spaces if they are 'natural' in character⁵.

- 2.5 'Green infrastructure' is a term used to describe green spaces, generally in urban environments, that are used to deliver solutions to social and environmental problems. Green infrastructure is incredibly valuable to society because of the services that it delivers (for example, shared recreation space with associated health and social benefits, safe active travel routes, and environmental benefits such as flood alleviation). We recommend that **green infrastructure be promoted as a key mechanism for achieving multiple policy objectives across a wide range of Departments – not least because of its potential for bringing communities together**. The Connswater Community Greenway (coordinated by the East Belfast Partnership) is an exemplar of what can be achieved – it is a great success story and has the potential to transform its surrounding area, changing how people move around portions of the city and utilise the shared space in their own neighbourhood. NIEL would recommend exploring ways in which this project could be replicated in other areas of Northern Ireland. Funding for the Connswater Community Greenway came from a wide range of sources, each recognising the great benefit of investing in such a scheme.
- 2.6 Heritage (the historic environment) and education can play an important role in shared space and building a united community⁶. The 'heritage perspective' can often change attitudes to the present day – when we gain an historic appreciation of how society functioned (well or otherwise) it can have a positive impact on how we view the society in which we live now. We have a very rich heritage environment in Northern Ireland – one that, looking beyond previous decades of trouble, can provide a **sense of shared heritage** – both natural and built/historic. We would strongly endorse the efforts of NIEA in producing their forward-looking Historic Environment Strategy, which makes that heritage central to the prosperity of our society.
- 2.7 Sustainable transport is an important issue for building cohesion in and across communities (and is linked to the idea of green infrastructure, explored above). Increasing sustainable and active travel has been shown to foster a sense of social inclusion – car ownership rates in Belfast suggest that many inner city families are very restricted in the spaces that they use, and suffer from social exclusion as a result. Furthermore, it has been shown that in areas of heavy traffic, sense of community can become eroded – people living in heavy traffic areas are more likely to consider the boundaries of their home as 'their territory', rather than reaching out into the broader neighbourhood. In planning for a united community in Northern Ireland, **it is important that spatial/land use planning and transport planning become more coordinated/integrated**.
- 2.8 We would emphasise the importance of initiatives such as the **NIEA Challenge Fund** in building sense of community and civic pride. One clear example of this is the 'Suffolk

⁴ CABE Space. (2010). Urban Green Nation: Building the Evidence Base

⁵ <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-public-space.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/p-t/putting-historic-environment-to-work.pdf>



Interface Pocket Plots' project. This project sought to develop cross-community plots on the interface zone between the Suffolk estate and Suffolk Crescent/Ladybrook area, and will eventually include a gardening and tool library, rainwater harvesting, a communal polytunnel and a pond. The project benefited from the Challenge Fund scheme in providing technical expertise.

There are many more examples of Challenge Fund projects working towards the enhancement of community cohesion. In the West Belfast Alleyways Project, local residents transformed their alleyways into attractive, safe and environmental friendly spaces for the local community. In Burrenbridge, a 2.5 acre community field was transformed into five zones with different uses addressing the needs of the local community – a garden for the elderly, a family recreation space, a community vegetable garden, a fruit garden, and a wildlife area. This new space will contribute to building a sense of community and neighbourliness within the local area.

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 might include:

Examining the role of communities in policy and decision making in relation to community integration.

- 3.1 We would emphasise the important opportunity for **Community Planning** in Local Government Reform. In the new two-tier planning system, structures will be in place whereby communities can become more involved in the development of the vision for their council area, and in its implementation. They can and should be part of decision making in the design of shared spaces and services that different communities can be comfortable with. We recommend that government grasps the opportunity presented by Community Planning, encouraging Local Councils to engage fully with the new processes in the planning system, which we hope will lead to the design of high quality spaces and places in Northern Ireland – something that will lead to greater community cohesion in the ways discussed above.

4. *Make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy and decision-making with regard to building a united community.*

NIEL recommends that:

- 4.1 The environment is recognised as a key factor in building community cohesion;
- 4.2 Natural shared spaces, green infrastructure and recognition of the services that flow to society from the environment ('ecosystem services') be embedded in public policy;
- 4.3 Heritage sites and buildings are promoted as shared spaces for all, and that the public are encouraged to explore and engage with shared heritage as a fresh perspective on the present;



- 4.4 Environmental education is recognised as a key way of promoting the integration of young people across communities in shared green spaces and natural/built heritage sites around Northern Ireland;
- 4.5 There should be strategic investment in environmental enhancement to provide well designed and maintained public spaces (with all the social and community benefits that they bring), for example, rolling out the ideas underpinning the Connswater Community Greenway across Belfast and NI;
- 4.6 There is better integration of land and transport planning across Northern Ireland, making steps towards dealing with social exclusion and providing better-functioning spaces.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

NI Housing Executive's Response to Inquiry into Together; Building a United Community

Introduction

The Housing Executive welcomes the opportunity to submit this response to the Committee of the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister as part of the consultation process relating to the Government's Together Building a United Community Strategy.

It is the Housing Executive's perception that the Inquiry seeks to undertake the following:

1. 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.
2. 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 might include:
 - Seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers to be removed;
 - Examining the role of communities in policy and decision making in relations 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.
3. 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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers.

The Housing Executive hopes that the following may assist the Committee in its undertakings and is happy to provide any follow-up information should this be required:

Response

1. **Explore perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations training 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.**

The Housing Executive's Community Cohesion Unit was established in 2004 to deliver the organisation's Good Relations Strategy including to deliver shared housing where it is 'practicable, desirable and safe'. The Strategy is delivered within five themes;

- Residential Segregation and Integration
- Flags, Emblems & Sectional Symbols
- Race Relations
- Interface Areas
- Communities in Transition
-

All Housing Executive good relations work is delivered under existing Housing Executive budgets with funding from the Department for Social Development rather than the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister's Good Relations budget.

Residential Segregation and Integration

Under the Residential Segregation and Integration theme the Housing Executive has adopted a twin track approach. The Shared New Build Programme under which every new build scheme is considered for its shared potential which, since 2006, has delivered 11 shared new build schemes. The unique feature of these schemes is a 'voluntary charter' where new tenants sign up to a set of principles and values to respect difference in their community.

The Housing Executive has also been actively promoting the concept of sharing within its existing housing estates which are still deeply segregated some 15 years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. NIHE estates are 90% single identity, with this figure rising to 94% in Belfast. In 2008, funded by the International Fund for Ireland, the Housing Executive designed and delivered the Shared Neighbourhood Programme with the aim of securing and protecting shared neighbourhoods across NI and producing a 'ripple effect' of sharing. Thirty estates agreed to participate in this Programme and it now includes around 60,000 people. The programme was the subject of a very positive evaluation and at DSD's request; it was mainstreamed in 2011 as the Shared Communities Programme. This programme developed a further 20 Housing Executive estates as shared communities.

The Housing Executive has now been tasked with delivering a further 10 shared new build schemes under the TBUC agenda and is establishing criteria for selection and delivery of these schemes in order to meet these required outcomes.

Flags, Emblems & Sectional Symbols

Political and sectarian displays are prevalent within Housing Executive estates and are a form of marking out territory e.g. murals, flags, curb painting, bonfires and paramilitary memorials. Significant transformation of these displays has been made by using proactive negotiations and a local mediative approach and Housing Executive funding of re-imaging initiatives through the Community Cohesion Unit works with both sides of the community, at the communities pace.

This practice has shown that re-imaging work can be the catalyst for physical, social and economic regeneration, but it can only be successful when the community are at the heart of taking such initiatives forward.

A new approach to bonfire funding and management has been very successful with a record number of communities transforming their traditional bonfire celebrations into more family friendly and more acceptable celebrations of culture.

Race Relations

Under this theme the Housing Executive works to tackle and, where possible, develop positive interventions to all forms of hate crime. Race, challenging racial harassment and violence, ethnicity, diverse nationalities, migration, Traveller and Gypsy families are all very important issues and key elements that inform the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy. We continue to develop our approach to these issues in the context of our Race Relations Strategy which was developed in line with the previous Race Equality Strategy and launched in 2005. It is the Housing Executive's intention to review this policy once the revised Race Equality Strategy is launched.

Interface Areas

This will be addressed under Theme 2.

Communities in Transition

Under this theme the Housing Executive currently develops intervention models for estates which are at risk of descending into inter or intra-community violence. We have a small budget which is used to support local estate based cohesion projects and these small scale; local good relations projects can have significant impact within communities.

Peace III

The Housing Executive successfully bid for £300,000 from Belfast City Council's Peace III funding which enabled us to deliver a further four shared communities in Belfast.

In addition, the Housing Executive, in partnership with the Rural Development Council and TIDES Training, successfully bid for £3.5m to deliver the very successful Building Relationships in Communities (BRIC) Programme.

Examples of Good Practice

BRIC Programme

This Peace III funded 4-year programme commenced in 2010 and was delivered under three main themes:

Changing Minds

A bespoke training programme, delivered by TIDES Training put Good Relations at the heart of the Housing Executive's policies and service delivery functions. The training was designed for staff in the Housing Executive to help the organisation achieve good relations outcomes out of all the work we undertake.

This training was delivered in a bottom up-top down approach and included the training of Board members, directors, policy staff and operational District staff. This training was also delivered to 88 estates across NI with a bursary of £5000 awarded upon completion of the course that allowed communities to deliver good relations projects in their areas.

Sharing Visions

This was intended to provide 2 interface communities with an interactive visioning tool to help communities visualise how their neighbourhoods could look without walls and barriers, to help them move forward and potentially removing sectarian barriers in their neighbourhoods.

This theme also conducted research into how 2 Urban Renewal Areas could be delivered in a manner that embeds community cohesion into the redevelopment process.

Crossing Borders

This research helped inform Housing Executive staff and partnering cross-border institutions on how to develop housing policy on a cross-border housing market delivery model in order to promote cross-border participation and integration in border housing market areas.

Programme Aims

The overall aim of the project was to build the institutional good relations capacity of the Housing Executive through a pilot service delivery model which aimed to empower staff to address the issues of Northern Ireland's segregated housing market.

Key outputs of the BRIC Programme

Description	
Changing Minds	
No of Courses delivered to NIHE staff	183
No of Mentoring Days	359
Reflective Practice Days	176
No of Beneficiaries	2775
No of NIHE staff trained	1669
Good Relations Plans established for estates	85
Residents/Community Associations participating in the Programme	87
Residents/Community Associations implementing GR projects	83
Residents/Community Associations trained in good relations	87
Community Change advocates trained	21
Murals re-imaged	7
Contentious memorials transformed	3

Practice around contentious memorials	1
Technical assessment of NIHE peace walls	1
EA on shared space	1
Community houses upgraded	17
Seminars	3
Sharing Visions	
Research report identifying 2 suitable interface areas for intervention	1
Suitable interface areas identified	2
3D visioning model developed	1
Crossing Borders	
Housing trends in border region research report	1
Cross-border steering housing committee established	1
Seminar	1

Shared Communities Programme

The Shared Communities Programme commenced in 2012 and was aimed at supporting and encouraging shared communities across Northern Ireland. The central purpose was 'To develop shared housing communities where people choose to live with others regardless of their religion or race, in a neighbourhood that is safe and welcoming to all, and threatening to no-one'. The programme focused on existing housing areas.

The Programme aims and objectives were:

- To establish a regional mechanism to provide an integrated and co-ordinated approach to support areas where diversity is welcomed
- To deliver 20 designated Shared Communities over a three year period to existing social housing areas identified through a selection process and community consultation
- To develop cohesive communities where people have a sense of belonging, where people from different backgrounds have similar life chances, where diversity is respected and where people from different backgrounds mix and do not have separate parallel lives
- To provide real opportunities for people who wish to live in shared communities
- To encourage shared communities to engage with their neighbouring estates to show best practice in shared housing
- To develop a community engaged in meaningful dialogue toward mutual understanding
- To draw out best practice to inform and influence the social policy framework and contribute to neighbourhood renewal and associated strategies and work towards any convergence of those strategies where added value can be achieved in doing so.

The Programme was a resounding success with 20 communities signing up to be shared communities. All of the communities underwent Good Relations training. All of them held joint events with communities from different backgrounds ranging from cultural to religious. All of them sought to understand their own culture before opening dialogue with those of different cultures. Taking part in the programme also provided the opportunity to develop community cohesion advocates who, in turn, are now mentoring other communities thus

achieving the 'ripple effect' objective of promoting sharing as the way forward and engaging with neighbouring estates to show best practice in shared housing. Various aspects of the programme in the form of employability training provided access to employment for some communities where unemployment levels were extremely high. Approximately 40,000 are now involved in the programme.

Sandy Row Re-imaging Project

The replacement of a highly contentious mural, depicting a gunman, at the entrance to Sandy Row provided a catalyst for growth in the area with 5 new shops opening in the weeks following the launch of the re-imaged mural.

Better Bonfires Initiative

The Housing Executive has a small fund to encourage communities to transform their traditional bonfire celebrations to more family friendly and more culturally acceptable celebrations. This programme has grown year on year with a record number of 32 applications to date this year. In order to deliver this initiative the Housing Executive works in partnership with local Councils and communities.

2. 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 might include:

- **Seeking views on what issues need to be addressed in order for interface barriers 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**

There are 88 peace walls in Belfast, mostly within or adjacent to Housing Executive estates. 20 of these are in Housing Executive ownership. There are a further four peace walls in Derry/Londonderry and 2 in Portadown. The Housing Executive is represented on the cross-statutory/community advisory group which is chaired by the Department of Justice and is assisted by funding for the International Fund for Ireland who support local community groups to work towards barrier removal/modification. The Housing Executive also works with and provides support to communities who wish to remove or re-image barriers. To this end, through the BRIC project, we have developed a visioning tool on 2 DOJ interfaces and all 20 NIHE peace lines and we are currently in discussions with a number of communities on how these structures can be re-imagined, re-designed or removed. Through the visioning tool process our architects have shown groups what their areas can look like with the barriers removed. We are currently working with interface communities in North Belfast to see if some of these plans can be realised. A consultation process to define the feasibility of providing a 3D Visioning tool for use by interface communities in Derry/Londonderry is currently underway.

The Housing Executive has also been tasked with delivering the Normalisation Programme/Aftercare Package on behalf of DOJ. Work is required to NIHE owned homes

and private properties to allow the remodelling of the peace wall and to afford residents immediately adjacent to the interface barriers adequate security protection to their homes in the event of attacks resulting from the barrier removal. Work includes the removal of steel grills fitted to windows overlooking the interface and replacing this with toughened glass. Other minor works may also be required such as the provision of protection to oil tanks and work required will be assessed and determined for each location. These measures will provide the properties with security protection yet transform the appearance away from a heavily fortified security environment. This transformation to a more normalised society will be accompanied by ongoing community relations work within the communities affected and it is hoped, will lead to a truly peaceful post conflict NI society. Spend this year for such works is estimated to be in the region of £50k. This will bring the total NIHE spend on interface modification in year 2014/15 to approx. £200k.

The Housing Executive is a member of the Interface Advisory Group, tasked with taking forward barrier removal to interface structures and will continue to play an active role is contributing to the TBUC aim of removing all interface structures by 2023.

A key point for TBUC on interfaces is the very real need for a comprehensive regeneration strategy for each of the barrier locations as the security structures themselves are not all that is keeping the communities apart. The roads, vacant properties, empty spaces, derelict commercial properties and general blight and dereliction all need to be addressed in order to effect a real change in people's behaviour at interface locations. This is why it is essential that a joined up regeneration plan is devised for each of the areas, with the community at the heart, driving forward the project.

3. 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 deliver the Executive's commitment on removing interface barriers

The Housing Executive believes that tackling sectarianism and racism should be at the heart of all public policy and delivery. Good relations should not just be a side issue but should be central to everything we do in the public service.

All good relations programmes should have the community at the very centre of it and all programmes must look at how the community can be the key catalyst for change in our post conflict society.

Regeneration must be a key driver in all good relations work, with projects providing a transformative outcome for the communities in which they operating in order to deliver real change for our society.

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister inquiry on Building a United Community

Summary

Introduction

The NIHRC advises the Committee:

(para 10) to consider the following relevant documents published by the NIHRC:

The Derry/Londonderry report on Upholding the Human Rights to Culture in Post Conflict Societies¹;
Parades and Protests in Northern Ireland²
The Display of Flags, Symbols and Emblems in Northern Ireland³; and,
'Dealing with Northern Ireland's Past: Towards a Transitional Justice Approach'⁴

(para 16) examine the mechanisms put in place by the OFMdFM, other NI Executive departments and public authorities to ensure the effective participation of rights holders in the processes of implementing T: BUC.

(para 20) that human rights should not have been reduced to 'principles' within T: BUC, they are binding legal obligations on the basis of which the NI Executive has corresponding duties. This should be addressed by the OFMdFM and the legality of human rights expressly acknowledged in any future legislation.

¹ http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/culture_report_final.pdf

² http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/110720_NIHRC_Parades_and_Protests_in_NI_REPORT_cover_inners_Single_Col_V3_LOW.pdf

³ http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/104020_NIHRC_The_Display_of_Flags_Single_Column_V7_Final_Low_Res.pdf

⁴ http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/NIHRC_Transitional_Justice_Report.pdf

(para 26) that T: BUC affords insufficient attention to the framework established by human rights law. Appropriate consideration of the relevant treaties and related soft law should therefore be evidenced by the OFMdfM, other NI Executive departments and public authorities responsible for the development and implementation of T: BUC.

(para 37) that the working definition of sectarianism in T: BUC conflates 'attitudes', with actions such as 'threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour'. It does not make clear that such actions may be prohibited by domestic law and subject to criminal sanctions. The Committee should seek to have this confusion addressed, taking into consideration the NI Executive's duty to prohibit sectarianism in accordance with human rights standards.

(para 43) that T: BUC does not sufficiently engage with the recommendations of the ICERD committee, nor does it reflect appropriately the definition of racism provided by the ECRI. The Committee should seek an assurance from the OFMdfM that this deficiency will be addressed.

(para 44) that any future legislation should ensure that a definition of sectarianism in domestic law is premised upon the ECRI definition of racism.

(para 54) to consider the relationship between the domestic concept of good relations and the framework of intercultural dialogue set out by the CoE and UN human rights treaty bodies. The Committee should recommend that the OFMdfM restate its position, acknowledging that T: BUC sits within this internationally accepted framework.

(para 55) that the OFMdfM, other NI Executive departments and public authorities responsible for the implementation of T: BUC should develop policies and programme for delivery that adopt the framework of intercultural dialogue and recognise its relation to the domestic concept of good relations.

(para 62) that the wording of the legal requirement to 'have regard to the desirability' to promote good relations is not fully in accordance with the obligation to take 'immediate and effective measures'.

(para 63) to recommend that domestic legislation be amended and strengthened to comply with human rights laws and standards. As a minimum, all public authorities should be required to take 'immediate and effective measures' to promote good relations.

(para 69) to recommend broadening the scope of application required by Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

(para 70) to recommend that the domestic duty to promote good relations be extended to six additional protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; sex; and sexual orientation.

(para 74) to assure itself that the proposed Equality and Good Relations Commission will be able to, and can, effectively carry out its functions. Any structural changes must be made with the express objective of increasing the protection and promotion of equality, non-discrimination, tolerance, mutual respect and understanding. There should be no retrogression from protections afforded by the existing structural arrangements of the ECNI and Community Relations Council.



NORTHERN
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The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister inquiry on Building a United Community

Introduction

1. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) pursuant to Section 69 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, reviews the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the protection of Human Rights.⁵ In accordance with this function the following statutory advice is submitted to Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) on its inquiry into 'Building a United Community.'
2. The NIHRC bases its advice on the full range of internationally accepted human rights standards, including the European Convention on Human Rights as incorporated by the Human Rights Act 1998 and the treaty obligations of the Council of Europe (CoE) and United Nations (UN) systems. The relevant international treaties in this context include:
 - the CoE European Convention on Human Rights, 1950 (ECHR)⁶;
 - the CoE Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM)⁷;
 - the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)⁸;
 - the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)⁹;
 - The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)¹⁰;
 - the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)¹¹;

⁵ Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 69(1).

⁶ Ratified by the UK in 1951.

⁷ Ratified by the UK in 1998.

⁸ Ratified by the UK in 1976.

⁹ Ratified by the UK in 1969.

¹⁰ Ratified by the UK in 1976.

- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)¹²;
 - the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)¹³;
 - the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.¹⁴
3. The Northern Ireland Executive (NI Executive) is subject to the obligations contained within these international treaties by virtue of the United Kingdom (UK) Government's ratification. In addition, the Northern Ireland Act 1998, section 26 (1) provides that 'if the Secretary of State considers that any action proposed to be taken by a Minister or Northern Ireland department would be incompatible with any international obligations... he may by order direct that the proposed action shall not be taken.'
 4. The NIHRC further recalls that the Northern Ireland Act 1998, section 24(1) states that 'a Minister or Northern Ireland department has no power to make, confirm or approve any subordinate legislation, or to do any act, so far as the legislation or act – (a) is incompatible with any of the Convention rights'.
 5. In addition to these treaty standards there exists a body of 'soft law' developed by the human rights bodies of the UN and CoE. These declarations and principles are non-binding but provide further guidance in respect of specific areas. The relevant standards in this context are:
 - UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;
 - UN Durban Declaration and Programme of Action;
 - UN Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 on combatting intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief;
 - UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance;
 - CoE Recommendation No. R(97)20 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on "Hate Speech";
 - CoE European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General Policy Recommendation 1 on Combatting Racism, Xenophobia, Antisemitism and Intolerance;
 - CoE ECRI General Policy Recommendation 2 on Specialised Bodies to Combat Racism, Xenophobia, Antisemitism and Intolerance at the National Level;

¹¹ Ratified by the UK in 1986.

¹² Ratified by the UK in 1991

¹³ Ratified by the UK in 2009

¹⁴ Ratified by the UK in 2007

- CoE ECRI General Policy Recommendation 7 on National Legislation to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination;
 - Yogyakarta Principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity 2007¹⁵
 - Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights.
6. The NIHRC notes the terms of reference for the Committee's inquiry. In particular, it recognises the stated purpose 'to inform the Executive's approach in the actions it takes to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance; and to make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy in uniting communities and community integration, including how communities are involved in decision making'. The NIHRC also recognises that the OFMdFM strategy 'Together: Building a United Community' (T: BUC) is the principal means through which the NI Executive seeks to address the issues under consideration by the Committee.
 7. The publication of T: BUC was welcomed by the NIHRC as a policy initiative aimed at improving community relations and the wider aim of building a united and shared society.¹⁶ The promotion of a respectful and tolerant society is a human rights obligation. A strategy that seeks to deliver this outcome requires careful consideration in the context of a post conflict society, but where some continue to advocate and use violence undermining the rule of law, and where continuing community divisions limit respect, protection and the fulfilment of human rights.
 8. T: BUC recognised that 'more work needs to be done to resolve the challenging legacy of our past and... committed to showing political leadership.' The strategy led to the establishment of an 'All-Party Group, with an independent chair to consider parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and the past.'¹⁷
 9. The work of the All-Party Group has not resulted in an agreement and matters remain to be addressed. However, the NIHRC did provide advice to the Group and **the Committee's attention is therefore drawn to the following relevant documents:**

¹⁵ The Principles were developed and unanimously adopted by a distinguished group of human rights experts, from diverse regions and backgrounds, including judges, academics, a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Special Procedures, members of treaty bodies, NGOs and others.

¹⁶ <http://www.nihrc.org/news/detail/chief-commissioner-responds-to-the-united-community-strategy>

¹⁷ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf> para. 1.48

**'The Derry/Londonderry report on Upholding the Human Rights to Culture in Post Conflict Societies'¹⁸;
**'Parades and Protests in Northern Ireland'¹⁹;
**'The Display of Flags, Symbols and Emblems in Northern Ireland'²⁰; and,
'Dealing with Northern Ireland's Past: Towards a Transitional Justice Approach'²¹******

Participation

10. Previous draft strategies – A Shared Future²² and the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration²³ – were the subject of public consultations. In the Foreword to T: BUC the First Minister and deputy First Minister state: 'In developing this Strategy we have listened carefully to the wide range of detailed views provided in response to the earlier consultations on our approach to good relations.'²⁴
11. The NIHRC recalls that the participation of rights holders is a core principle of human rights law and is recognised as a substantive right in many ratified treaties, including, inter alia, the CEDAW, Article 7, the CRC, Article 12, the FCNM, Article 15 and the UNCRPD, Article 19.
12. In the specific context of a post-conflict society and programmes aimed at peace building and reconciliation, the NIHRC notes that the experience accumulated by the UN highlights the importance of inclusivity. The UN Secretary General has stated that a:

successful peacebuilding process must be transformative and create space for a wider set of actors – including, but not limited to, representatives of women, young people, victims and marginalized communities; community and religious leaders; civil society actors... to participate in public decision-making on all aspects of post-conflict governance and recovery.²⁵
13. T: BUC contains public policy objectives which require the participation of rights holders to ensure their success. In 'recognition of the expertise and experience that resides within our community,'

¹⁸ http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/culture_report_final.pdf

¹⁹ http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/110720_NIHRC_Parades_and_Protests_in_NI_REPORT_cover_inners_Single_Col_V3_LOW.pdf

²⁰ http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/104020_NIHRC_The_Display_of_Flags_Single_Column_V7_Final_Low_Res.pdf

²¹ http://www.nihrc.org/uploads/publications/NIHRC_Transitional_Justice_Report.pdf

²² <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/asharedfuturepolicy2005.pdf>

²³ http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/reformatted_final_print_version_csi_-_26.07.10.pdf

²⁴ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf> p. 1.

²⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/SG%20report%20PB%202012.pdf>

the OFMdfM has committed to ensuring that the mechanisms for implementing the strategy' will also enable the participation of practitioners and groups at a local level.²⁶

14. The NIHRC recalls the ICCPR, Article 25, that

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives

15. The NIHRC therefore welcomes the Committee's inquiry as a mechanism to assist in the fulfilment of the positive obligation to enable the participation of rights holders in a dialogue surrounding T: BUC.

16. **The NIHRC advises that the Committee examine the mechanisms put in place by the OFMdfM, other NI Executive departments and public authorities to ensure the effective participation of rights holders in the processes of implementing T: BUC.**

Human rights as an 'underpinning principle'

17. The NIHRC notes that T: BUC outlines a vision of 'a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.'²⁷

18. 'Rights'²⁸ are identified as one of eleven 'principles' that will underpin the implementation of the Strategy and drive forward actions.

19. The OFMdfM is the lead department with responsibility for co-ordinating the application and monitoring of the NI Executive's compliance with human rights treaties. The NIHRC recognises the potential role of the Committee in scrutinising this aspect of devolved government.

20. **The NIHRC advises the Committee that the categorisation of human rights as a principle should not diminish their status as**

²⁶ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf> para. 1.14

²⁷ *ibid*, p.3.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.4.

binding legal obligations on the basis of which the NI Executive has corresponding duties. This issue should be addressed by the OFMdFM and the legality of human rights expressly acknowledged in any future legislation and implementation initiatives.

21. The NIHRC notes the limited references to human rights within T: BUC. The CRPD²⁹ is mentioned in cross referencing the NI Executive Strategy to improve the lives of disabled people – 2012 to 2015. Similarly, the CRC³⁰ is mentioned in cross referencing the NI Executive Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People 2006 – 2016.
22. Noting the T: BUC vision and, in particular, the commitment to 'equality of opportunity', the NIHRC recalls the ICCPR, Article 26, which states 'all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law'. This is an autonomous human right that,
- prohibits discrimination in law or in fact in any field regulated and protected by public authorities [and] is therefore concerned with the obligations imposed on States parties in regard to their legislation and the application thereof.³¹
23. Noting the T: BUC vision, and the commitment to good relations and reconciliation, the NIHRC recalls the FCNM, Article 6, which requires the NI Executive to take,
- effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory.
24. The Advisory Committee on the FCNM has commented that regional strategies which focus on mutual accommodation rather than mutual respect and understanding would raise 'serious concerns'.³² The Advisory Committee has stated that in Northern Ireland 'the concept of 'good relations' [has] apparently [developed] to substitute the concept of intercultural dialogue and integration of society.'³³

²⁹ *ibid*, para. 1.33

³⁰ *ibid*, para. 2.31

³¹ UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 18: Non-discrimination, para 12.

³² Advisory Committee on the FCNM, 'Third Opinion on the UK' (adopted 30 June 2011), para 125.

³³ *Ibid.*, para 126.

25. The NIHRC notes that Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 gives partial domestic force to the duty contained in the FCNM, Article 6.
26. The framework established by international human rights law sets the standards which domestic laws, policies and actions must meet to ensure respect for the human rights of all individuals. **The NIHRC advises the Committee that T: BUC affords insufficient attention to the framework established by human rights law. Appropriate consideration of the relevant treaties and related soft law should therefore be evidenced by the OFMdfM, other NI Executive departments and public authorities responsible for the development and implementation of T: BUC.**

Sectarianism

27. The NIHRC notes that the Committee's inquiry will explore 'perspectives on sectarianism, division and good relations.' It further notes that for the purposes of T: BUC 'sectarianism is defined as: threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour or attitudes towards a person by reason of that person's religious belief or political opinion; or to an individual as a member of such a group.'³⁴ In relation to the proposed draft legislation, the OFMdfM has committed to 'seek to find an appropriate consensus around a definition of sectarianism'.³⁵
28. The NIHRC observes that the T: BUC working definition of sectarianism includes both 'attitudes' and 'behaviours'. The latter may be prohibited in domestic law and in some circumstances subject to criminal prosecutions, including heightened sentencing under the Criminal Justice (No.2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 (the 2004 Order) for perpetrators of offences that have been aggravated by hostility.
29. T: BUC only recognises the fundamental relationship between sectarianism and criminal law legislation at one point by way of the Justice Act (NI) 2011. This is in specific regard to countering negative behaviours within a sporting context.³⁶
30. The ICCPR, Article 20(2) states;

³⁴ <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf> para. 1.36

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *ibid.*, para 5.28 The 2011 Act whilst using the term sectarianism does not provide a definition.

any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

31. The UN Human Rights Committee has confirmed that this requires domestic legislation, and that this form of restricting freedom of expression is compatible with Article 19.³⁷

32. The ICERD requires that positive measures be taken to eliminate incitement to, or acts of, discrimination. Article 4 requires the NI Executive to;

(a) declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;

(b) declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;

(c) not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.

33. The Rabat Plan of Action (RPA) on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence followed a series of expert workshops organised by the Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights. Implementation of the RPA is required under the UN Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 on 'Combatting intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief'.

34. The RPA recommends that the domestic legal framework on incitement should be guided by the ICCPR, Article 20, and that robust definitions of key terms should be included.³⁸

³⁷ UN Human Rights Committee, *General Comment 11: Prohibition of propaganda for war and inciting national, racial or religious hatred* (1983) at paras 1-2; UN Human Rights Committee, *General Comment 34: Freedom of Expression* (2011) CCPR/C/GC/34, at para 51

³⁸ Rabat Plan of Action (2012) Recommendation 2, page 4

35. The RPA also recognises that a legislative response is not the only answer to challenging hate speech, recommending complementary policy initiatives 'with a view to creating and strengthening a culture of peace, tolerance and mutual respect.'³⁹

36. The NIHRC notes that there is no express prohibition similar to Article 4 of ICERD, within the ECHR. However, the ECt.HR has recognised when considering Article 10, freedom of expression, that;

as a matter of principle it may be considered necessary in certain democratic societies to sanction or even prevent all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance (including religious intolerance), provided that any 'formalities', 'conditions', 'restrictions' or 'penalties' imposed are proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued.⁴⁰

37. **The NIHRC advises the Committee that the working definition of sectarianism in T: BUC conflates 'attitudes', with actions such as 'threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour'. It does not make clear that such actions may be prohibited by domestic law and subject to criminal sanctions. The Committee should seek to have this confusion addressed, taking into consideration the NI Executive's duty to prohibit sectarianism in accordance with human rights standards.**

38. The NIHRC recalls that during its examination of the UK in 2008 the ICERD Committee recognised efforts to combat sectarianism in Northern Ireland, but indicated concern that the situation 'is kept entirely outside the framework of protections against discrimination provided by the Convention and the Durban Programme of Action.'⁴¹ The Committee invited the UK Government, including the NI Executive, to

examine whether the legislative and policy framework for dealing with the situation in Northern Ireland could not benefit by being underpinned by the standards, duties and actions prescribed by the Convention and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.⁴²

³⁹ Rabat Plan of Action (2012) at para 24

⁴⁰ *Gunduz v. Turkey* (2005) 41 EHRR 5, at para 40

⁴¹ UN Doc ICERD/C/GBR/18-20, para 20.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/ICERD/docs/ICERD.C.GBR.CO.18-20.pdf>

⁴² *ibid*

39. Similarly, the CoE Advisory Committee on the FCNM found, when considering the previous proposed Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration⁴³, that the approach

to treat sectarianism as a distinct issue rather than as a form of racism problematic, as it allows sectarianism to fall outside the scope of accepted anti-discrimination and human rights protection standards.⁴⁴

40. In its 2011 concluding observations on the UK the ICERD Committee recommended that the State party:

examine whether the legislative and policy framework for dealing with the situation in Northern Ireland could not benefit by being underpinned by the standards, duties and actions prescribed by the Convention and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action on inter-sectionality between ethnic origin, religion and other forms of discrimination.

41. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) is a comprehensive framework for combating racial discrimination and related intolerances.⁴⁵ The DDPA was adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001.⁴⁶

The Declaration recognises that;

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance occur on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin and that victims can suffer multiple of aggravated forms of discrimination based on other grounds.⁴⁷

42. The NIHRC recalls that the ICERD does not provide a definition of racism. However, the CoE European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has defined racism as follows:

racism shall mean the belief that a ground such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic

⁴³ http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/reformatted_final_print_version_csi_-_26.07.10.pdf

⁴⁴ Third Opinion on the United Kingdom adopted on 30 June 2011, para 126.

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_fcnmdocs/PDF_3rd_OP_UK_en.pdf

⁴⁵ United Nations, *Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance*, 8 September 2001

⁴⁶ United Nations, *Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance*, 8 September 2001

⁴⁷ Durban Declaration (2001) at para 2

origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons, or the notion of superiority of a person or a group of persons.⁴⁸

43. **The NIHRC advises the Committee that T: BUC does not sufficiently engage with the recommendations of the ICERD Committee, nor does it reflect appropriately the definition of racism provided by the ECRI. The Committee should seek an assurance from the OFMdfM that this deficiency will be addressed.**
44. **In addition, the NIHRC advises the Committee that any future legislation should ensure that a definition of sectarianism in domestic law is premised upon the ECRI definition of racism.**

Good relations

45. The NIHRC notes that the Committee's inquiry seeks 'views on what good relations means'.
46. There is no statutory definition of 'good relations' in NI law. However, the NIHRC is cognisant of the working definition published by the Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI):
- the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms.⁴⁹
47. The UN General Assembly, through the adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations Resolution, has recognised that dialogue among rights holders enhances mutual understanding and respect and underpins the objective of promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and enrichment of common understanding of human rights.⁵⁰
48. Recalling the value of dialogue, the UN Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 6/37 on the Elimination of all forms of intolerance

⁴⁸ Council of Europe CRI(2003)8 ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 On National Legislation To Combat racism And Racial Discrimination Adopted On 13 December 2002.

⁴⁹ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: A guide for Public Authorities, p. 86. <http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>

⁵⁰ UN General Assembly, Global Agenda for Dialogue by the General Assembly, A/RES/56/6, 21 November 2001, Article 3

and of discrimination based on religion or belief.⁵¹ The Resolution emphasises:

that promoting tolerance and acceptance by the public of and its respect for diversity and combating all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion and belief are substantial elements in creating an environment conducive to the full enjoyment by all of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as enshrined in article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.⁵²

49. The CoE Faro Declaration encourages:

intercultural dialogue on the basis of universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation, tolerance and respect for the other, of preventing conflicts and of ensuring an integrated and cohesive society.⁵³

50. The UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace recognises peace as being:

a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.⁵⁴

51. Creating a culture of peace, therefore, requires:

Adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations.⁵¹

52. The CoE has also recognised the role of intercultural dialogue in strengthening democratic society, including in post conflict situations.⁵⁵

53. The Advisory Committee on the FCNM, as noted previously, has stated that in Northern Ireland 'the concept of "good relations" [has]

⁵¹ See also Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/54, Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

⁵² UN Human Rights Council, Resolution 6/37: Elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief, 14 December 2007, para 8

⁵³ Faro Declaration on the council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue (2005) DGIV/DC-FARO

⁵⁴ UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace, preamble

⁵⁵ Council of Europe, 'White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue Living together as equals in dignity' (2008) p.17 (Paper adopted by the Committee of Ministers)

apparently [developed] to substitute the concept of intercultural dialogue and integration of society.⁵⁶

54. The NIHRC considers that T: BUC does not engage with the comments of the FCNM. **The NIHRC advises the Committee to therefore consider the relationship between the domestic concept of good relations and the framework of intercultural dialogue set out by the CoE and UN human rights treaty bodies. The Committee should recommend that the OFMdfM restate its position, acknowledging that T: BUC sits within this internationally accepted framework.**
55. **The NIHRC further advises the Committee, that the OFMdfM, other NI Executive departments and public authorities responsible for the implementation of T: BUC should develop policies and programmes for delivery that adopt the framework of intercultural dialogue and recognise its relation to the domestic concept of good relations.**
56. The NIHRC recalls that the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75(2) requires designated public authorities 'without prejudice' to their obligations under Section 75(1), to 'have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.'⁵⁷ Specifically, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, requires local councils to ensure that 'various functions are carried out with due regard to the need to promote', *inter alia*, 'good relations between persons of different racial groups'.⁵⁸
57. Human rights laws and standards impose a duty on the NI Executive and public authorities to refrain from violating the rights of individuals in the first instance. However, there is also a positive obligation to take measures to prevent private persons or entities from committing acts that impair the enjoyment of the human rights of others.⁵⁹ Such preventive measures are of both a legislative and operational nature.
58. The FCNM, Article 6 states
- The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all

⁵⁶ Advisory Committee on the FCNM, 'Third Opinion on the UK' (adopted 30 June 2011), para 125.

⁵⁷ Northern Ireland Act, 1998, Section 75.

⁵⁸ Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order, Section 67.

⁵⁹ ICCPR, Article 2.

persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

59. The ICERD, Article 7, requires the adoption of immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups.
60. The CRC, Article 29 confirms that education shall be directed to: (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin
61. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Article 10, has similarly asked that governments educate the population at large by requiring that they: encourage and promote understanding of the importance of the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, inter alia, through educational and greater public awareness programmes.
62. The NIHRC notes that the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75 (2) broadly corresponds with the relevant human rights laws and standards. However, **the NIHRC advises the Committee that the wording of the legal requirement to 'have regard to the desirability' to promote good relations is not fully in accordance with the obligation to take 'immediate and effective measures'.**
63. **The NIHRC further advises the Committee to recommend that domestic legislation be amended and strengthened to comply with human rights laws and standards. As a minimum, all public authorities should be required to take 'immediate and effective measures' to promote good relations.**
64. The scope of the domestic good relations duty in Northern Ireland is restricted to three protected characteristics: 'religious belief, political opinion or racial group'. Elsewhere in the UK, however, the Equality Act 2010, Section 149(1) requires public authorities to 'foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected

characteristic and persons who do not share it'⁶⁰ This is a broader scope of application than Section 75 and encompasses eight protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.⁶¹

65. With respect to gender under the CEDAW, Article 5, the NI Executive must take steps to modify:

the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women

66. Furthermore, the CEDAW Committee has recognised the link between gender-based violence and 'traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles.⁶²

67. The UNCRPD, Article 8, requires the adoption of:

immediate, effective and appropriate measures: (a) to raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities; (b) to combat stereotypes, prejudices... relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life

68. The Yogyakarta Principles, referring to gender reassignment and sexual orientation, recommend taking all appropriate measures to eliminate stereotypes and prejudices regarding sexual orientation and gender identity that impact on the ability to enjoy both civil and political⁶³ and socio-economic rights.⁶⁴

The ICERD, Article 7, requires the promotion of understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups.

69. The NIHRC notes the good relations duty in England and Wales and the scope of application required by the Equality Act 2010, section 149(1), in addition to the positive obligations required by human rights

⁶⁰ The Equality Act 2010, Section 149.

⁶¹ Ibid, Section 149(7)

⁶² General Recommendation No. 19 (11th session, 1992) Violence against women

⁶³ Principle 5

⁶⁴ Principle 17

laws and standards. **The NIHRC advises that the Committee recommend broadening the scope of application required by Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.**

70. **The NIHRC further advises the Committee to recommend that the domestic duty to promote good relations be extended to six additional protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; sex; and sexual orientation.**

Equality and Good Relations Commission

71. The NIHRC notes that the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' (ICESCR Committee), General Comment 20, states that 'national legislation ... should provide for mechanisms and institutions that effectively address the individual and structural nature of the harm caused by discrimination in the field of economic, social and cultural rights' and that 'domestic legal guarantees of equality and non-discrimination should be interpreted by these institutions in ways which facilitate and promote the full protection of economic, social and cultural rights'.⁶⁵
72. The NIHRC further notes that the ECRI General Policy Recommendation 7 advises that public authorities should be obliged to promote equality and prevent discrimination when carrying out their functions.⁶⁶ The Explanatory Memorandum states that the promotion of equality could be achieved by placing public authorities, under the obligation to create and implement 'equality programmes' ... The domestic law should provide for the regular assessment of the equality programmes, the monitoring of their effects, as well as for effective implementation mechanisms and the possibility for legal enforcement of these programmes, notably through the national specialised body.⁶⁷
73. International human rights laws and standards do not require the establishment of an institution with responsibility for the promotion of good relations or intercultural dialogue and integration. However, they do for the purposes of monitoring and the legal enforcement of equality and non-discrimination laws. The NIHRC recognises the established domestic equality authority in Northern Ireland, the ECNI

⁶⁵ ICESCR Committee, General Comment 20: Non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights, para 40.

⁶⁶ ECRI General Policy Recommendation 7, para 8.

⁶⁷ An example of an equality programme is the nomination of a contact person for dealing with issues of racial discrimination and harassment or the organisation of staff training courses on discrimination. See ECRI General Policy Recommendation 7, Explanatory Memorandum, para 27. See further CoE ECRI General Policy Recommendation 2 on Specialised Bodies to Combat Racism, Xenophobia, Antisemitism and Intolerance at the National Level

and the Community Relations Council, both of which are sponsored by the OFMdfM.

74. **The Commission advises the Committee to assure itself that the proposed Equality and Good Relations Commission will be able to, and can, effectively carry out its functions. Any structural changes must be made with the express objective of increasing the protection and promotion of equality, non-discrimination, tolerance, mutual respect and understanding. There should be no retrogression from protections afforded by the existing structural arrangements of the ECNI and Community Relations Council.**

Northern Ireland Local Government Association



Together Building a United Community Inquiry Local Government Briefing for OFMdFM Committee Evidence Session 4th February 2015

INTRODUCTION

NILGA, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, is the representative body for district councils in Northern Ireland. NILGA represents and promotes the interests of local authorities and is supported by all the main political parties. Good Relations is a key issue for local government due to the huge impact it can have on local communities, equality of opportunity and social well-being. NILGA is pleased to be able to have an opportunity to give evidence to the OFMdFM Committee, as part of their Inquiry into Together: Building a United Community and we trust that our comments will be taken into account within the final Committee Report. For further information regarding this response, please contact Karen Smyth, Head of Policy at NILGA on (028) 9079 8972 or at k.smyth@nilga.org

NILGA has compiled the following briefing to provide a summary of common council views in relation to the Inquiry Terms of Reference, and has also included views from the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP), which is hosted by NILGA

GOOD RELATIONS

- **Theory, best practice, local and international practice**

Councils have been at the forefront of developing good practice at local level, and have been active in implementing local good relations strategies, focussing on tackling the key issues for their areas. A number of the councils have already written to the committee giving examples of this work and we can share detail on specific examples with Committee members on 4th February, should the Committee so wish. The Committee is also advised of the Quarterly and Annual reports provided to the Department in relation to good relations, giving a breakdown of activities.

Councils are keen to bring people together around shared agendas, on issues affecting society, such as poverty, employment, health issues, justice issues, culture and social development. A number of aspects of the new Local Government (NI) Act will assist in driving this approach (community planning and the partnership panel will be covered later in this briefing), but it is essential that there is a mainstreaming of good relations right across government and the sectors controlled by government, to ensure it is a key consideration when developing and implementing policy and strategy. Local communities must also be enabled to contribute effectively towards policy and decision-making, and again this necessary activity will be complemented by the new community planning regime. Development, collation, dissemination and learning from good practice require adequate and timely resources. Otherwise good relations units and the projects they fund will be unable to fully realise long term visions and must confine plans to the shorter term outcomes.

- **Monitoring**

Monitoring and evaluation measures must be robust and based upon well-researched evidence. Councils are keen to demonstrate value for money and accountability, with demonstrable outcomes. To achieve this, clear strategic leadership is required, with operational planning and review. Monitoring will also need to be effective in taking the wider definition of community and cultural identity into account, to ensure that all aspects of good relations including racism, sectarianism and LGBT issues are fully considered. Monitoring data should be disaggregated against this wider understanding of community so that it is clear which parts of our community need more targeted support which will enable progress towards equality of opportunity

The Local Government (NI) Act will set a new performance improvement regime in place, and it will be essential to develop a clear understanding of how the new requirements placed on councils will tie into ongoing work, such as good relations. Over time it is hoped that the Assembly government will develop a more outcomes-focussed performance framework, which councils can link into at local level.

- **Recommendations**

1. What is essential, particularly in the current circumstances - during what is a time of unprecedented change for councils - is to ensure that there is a high degree of certainty and stability in relation to the funding mechanism for good relations. Huge resources are required for this work, particularly for projects in relation to physical infrastructure. A long term strategy and associated implementation is required, in place of the annual funding process currently in place, which frequently results in late letters of offer and a high degree of uncertainty.

An additional concern is the current financial situation, which is resulting in substantial cuts across all departments, with a cumulative impact on councils.

2. It is vital that an ongoing and long term commitment is made to continue to resource the District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP) to support the new councils in effecting real change at local level. Councils have pioneered programmes and agreements in relation to bonfires, interfaces, territory markings and building community confidence, but it is clear that the recommendations within the recent NISRA evaluation of the DCGRP should be adopted by OFMdfM and incorporated in to strategy, policy and implementation. The DCGRP is the best tool to deliver effective intervention programmes which meet local needs.

3. Tackling sectarianism and racism needs to be at the core of all public policy and programming. The TBUC Strategy highlights diversity and integration as underpinning principles, and cultural expression as a priority area, but beyond the first few pages, the document seems to lose its focus on diversity and the definition of community seems to be limited to the two 'traditional' communities in NI. Initiatives such as capital projects, educational programmes, community projects and civic events should seek to define how they will build better relationships between people from different political racial and religious backgrounds. This will require a strong cross-departmental commitment to a peace-building plan.

4. A long term strategy is required, with the appropriate resources and a comprehensive inter-agency approach. Leadership from central government is vital, including a long term commitment to addressing contentious issues. This should include regular opportunities for Council Good Relations Officers to meet together with OFMdfM officials.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Local Government (NI) Act 2014 has introduced a number of new opportunities for councils that will also provide opportunities to build on the existing Good Relations practice. Articles 66 – 78 of the Act set out the requirements for councils and their partners in relation to community planning; Article 66 in particular enshrines the need to improve social well-being, including promoting equality of opportunity, having regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

This work is at an early stage. The 11 new councils have appointed staff to begin to gather evidence in preparation for their community plans, and these officers are meeting regularly to ensure that the developing experience is shared, with support from Community Places. The sector is currently waiting on confirmation of who the statutory partners are likely to be, and we are in the process of responding to a recently issued DOENI consultation in relation to the guidance for all participants in the community planning process. This draft guidance whole-heartedly incorporates Equality and Good Relations requirements throughout the proposed process, and it may be helpful for the Committee to consider this consultation as part of its current deliberations.

Councils are clear that there is need to mainstream Good Relations into Community Planning. To properly address the issues facing our society, including racism, sectarianism and other good relations issues, a united approach is needed – between council, government departments and agencies, voluntary and community sector partners and the business community. By using this new approach to rethink how significant policy areas and budgets intersect at central and local level, we can work together on the opportunities community planning presents for peace-building and reconciliation. A community plan that facilitates connectivity and mobility within and between neighbourhoods can succeed in connecting people across communities.

A particular opportunity exists within Community Planning, and also stemming from the proposed transfer of functions in relation to the relationship between councils, DSDNI and the NI Housing Executive. Community planning presents an opportunity to create more diverse and inclusive neighbourhoods, with the support of those living and working locally. While housing remains outside the remit of councils, the proposed strategies around shared housing, proposed in the TBUC document, could be well supported through the Community Planning process, and associated community engagement activity.

- **Community Engagement**

Community engagement will be a vital requirement of the Community Planning, and in some areas, has already commenced. Belfast City Council has carried out an online survey of residents, Mid Ulster Council has held a series of ‘town hall’ style meetings in different towns within the new area, and other engagement activities are underway in other areas.

The draft Community Planning Statutory Guidance makes clear that all sectors of the community must have the opportunity to participate from the early stages of the process and have their needs and views taken into account.

Community engagement will also be a vital part of the new development planning process, and councils will each be required to develop a Statement of Community Involvement at the very outset of the new development planning cycle.

- **Links between Community and Development Planning**

It is important to note that after 1st April 2015, councils will not only be responsible for leading the community planning process, but will also be responsible for creating a new suite of 11 development plans. Aside from the enhanced levels of community engagement that our citizens will experience, the new, much more dynamic, development plan system is linked through legislation to community planning. This link to the physical development of an area will be vitally important to ensuring visible change for local communities. This is an opportunity to ‘design out’ division, over time, as a long term aim – and it is an opportunity that should not be missed.

- **Partnership Panel**

Another new opportunity to work differently, introduced by the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 is the Political Partnership Panel, which held its first meeting on 2nd December 2014 and meets again on 3rd February. This Panel brings together local government representatives from each of the 11 (currently shadow) councils and NILGA, with NI Executive Ministers, to discuss critical issues affecting local government and to begin to plan a more joined-up approach to strategy, policy, funding and performance improvement. The Panel will provide a regional interface to consider how Community Planning is developing and take a strategic approach to dealing with cross-cutting issues, such as Good Relations.

CONCLUSION

To ensure Good Relations in Northern Ireland is effective, a number of key building blocks need to be in place. Some of these are in the gift of local government, such as effective community planning, development planning, local Good Relations strategies and implementation.

Some other building blocks are in the hands of the NI Executive and Government Departments, such as effective strategic leadership and commitment, cross-departmental working, and adequate, appropriate and timely funding

With the necessary strategic political leadership from the NI Executive and Assembly, regional central-local cross party working in the Political Partnership Panel, and joined up central-local working at council level through community planning, Northern Ireland will be well-placed to make significant strides towards building a united community, but in the short to medium term, a number of difficult conversations need to take place to overcome the ‘wicked issues’ experienced, particularly by communities at interfaces. This may require an additional legislative solution to ensure that delivery of interface intervention is expedited.

NILGA correspondence

Dear Mr Nesbitt

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to address the Committee this afternoon. At the meeting Mr Lyttle requested detail on the local government membership of the Political Partnership Panel. My apologies for not having this information to hand at the meeting. The Panel is currently attended by the following:

Council	Member	Party
Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council	Councillor Mandy Girvan	DUP
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council	Alderman Arnold Hatch	UUP
Belfast City Council	Councillor Paula Bradshaw	Alliance
Causeway Coast and Glens District Council	Councillor Joan Baird	UUP
Derry and Strabane District Council	Councillor Elisha McCallion	SF
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	Councillor Josephine Deehan	SDLP
Lisburn and Castlereagh District Council	Councillor Geraldine Rice	Alliance
Mid and East Antrim District Council	Councillor Gerardine Mulvenna	Alliance
Mid Ulster District Council	Councillor Tony Quinn	SDLP
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Councillor Stephen Burns	SF
North Down and Ards District Council	Councillor Eddie Thompson	DUP
NILGA	Councillor Sean McPeake	SF
NILGA	Councillor Evelyne Robinson	DUP
NILGA	Councillor Seamus Doyle	SDLP
NILGA	Councillor Mark Cosgrove	UUP
NILGA	Councillor Alan McDowell	Alliance

The NILGA Chief Executive, Mr Derek McCallan will be responding separately to Mr Spratt in relation to his query regarding lobbying meetings with OFMdFM ministers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you require any further information.

Regards

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5th February 2015

Dear Kathy,

Following on from evidence provided by NILGA's Head of Policy, on 4th February 2015, to the OFMDFM Committee, in regard to community planning, I am responding to a specific matter raised by Committee member Mr Jimmy Spratt MLA, related to meetings with OFMDFM ministers and officials. I'm delighted to provide this information. Please convey same to all those requiring it, with thanks.

As Chief Executive of NILGA, I made a presentation to the OFMDFM Committee as far back as 16th May 2012, at the Balmoral Show. This presentation centred on the need, as expressed by the representative body of Councils, for a more integrated approach to tailoring / disseminating policies, information, and funding, from European institutions, including the Committee of the Regions, and the various Department Generals responsible for European Structural Funds.

Follow up from this – as requested by the Committee and the Committee Chair – in 2012 and 2013 included preparing proposals for development with OFMDFM officials, together with a request to put these (better governance, integration and investment) proposals to Junior Ministers, mindful that they are of course scrutinised by the OFMDFM Committee.

Additional follow up activity involved evidence (both written and oral) to other Committees of the NI Assembly, including DARD and DETI, during 2013 but additionally, again, to the OFMDFM Committee, since the Junior Ministers have, as part of their portfolio, a policy influence on Social Cohesion and Strategic Migration, linked to Together Building a United Community, and which NILGA has a contractual / delivery role in through OFMDFM and Home Office operational requirements.

On the wider matter of "sweating the asset" of the EU and Councils having a better means to influence future Programmes for Government than they did last time, NILGA prepared evidence, developed proposals and an overall campaign, centring on better integration of effort, the two tiers of government pooling resources in the development of priorities, the implementation, the spending, and the evaluation of spending, of EU Structural and relevant non Structural Funds. A Programme for **Local** Government was created in 2013, with a view to ensuring that Councils could be part of the design and delivery of the next Programme for Government (which we and the new Councils eagerly await being party to when it is realised in 2016).

Apart from scrutiny committees, as CEO of NILGA I had a development meeting in relation to these issues with a senior OFMDFM official, Mr D McMahon, on 27th March 2014, and I, along with NILGA elected members met Junior Minister Jennifer McCann on 1st July 2014 and Junior Minister Jonathan Bell on 28th August 2014.

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Follow up letters to both ministers were sent on 28th August and 11th November 2014. Further meetings with OFMDFM officials have taken place on 6th November 2014 (Mr H Johnston) and 7th January 2015 (Mr J Reynolds), although these have regrettably been about only the absence of funding and resources around specific issues. Political meetings and political leadership will be sought, and NILGA is undeterred, as it is used to operating amidst financial anorexia.

The key emphases in such proposals, and meetings, is that Local Government is not as yet fully part of, or sufficiently challenged to be part of, a practical and political integration of effort in regard to putting NI's priorities into Europe, getting appropriate resources out of Europe, and managing those resources in an output driven, rather than institutional, manner. Benchmark work with Wales and Scotland has been put forward.

To show the corporate determination of the representative body, NILGA has, subsequently, applied for and won the "European Entrepreneurial Region of the Year" Award for April 2015 to March 2016, for all of Northern Ireland, as sponsored and judged by entrepreneurs and politicians who are part of the Committee of the Regions in the EU, having got material assistance from Invest NI and the support from the three MEPs. The Award is based upon an application which suggested that enterprise starts and finishes within local economies, enabled by local and regional government, and that the EU's institutions, national government, economic strategies, and the Small Business Act, can and should be more entrepreneurial and small business friendly, less bureaucratic and less risk averse. NILGA has no budget to deliver this, but has secured some private sector support and is committed to raising money through crowd funding to make it happen. With proposals now with Junior Ministers and as offered to the OFMDFM Committee specific to this material issue, it had been hoped that by now some joined up investment would have been forthcoming. However, austerity and processes have combined to prevent this happening to date.

NILGA is corporately and fervently of the view that it should have a policy and governance link to OFMDFM, in regard to the emerging Programme for Government, that the above mentioned Programme for Local Government can positively influence the new PfG, and that Junior Ministers and the OFMDFM Committee should work with the Association and member Councils, certainly after April 2015, to have effective scrutiny, advocacy, management, and accounting for the billions of euros paid into and taken back out of, the EU. Such governance and policy interaction is commonplace in, for example, the Netherlands and Wales. In parallel, our Head of Policy is fully engaged in the Reform of Local Government work, including the community planning activity which she, and the local government representatives, spoke in detail about on 4th February 2015.

This is a detailed account not just of when meetings occurred, but why, and I trust that all those receiving it will consider it constructively and as being in the mutual best interests of regional and local government – as well, of course, as the public we jointly serve.

Finally, as requested by the Committee, I confirm that the information requested about membership of the Partnership Panel for Local Government has been sent already to Ms. Jardine.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Derek McCallan
Chief Executive

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5 February 2015

Dear Karen,

The Committee would like to thank you for the briefings by NILGA representatives on Good Relations and Community Planning at its meeting of 4 February 2015, which Members found very informative.

As discussed during the session on Community Planning, the Committee would welcome further information on the membership of the Political Partnership Panel. Members also requested details of lobbying of OFMDFM by your Chief Executive and information on any meetings that took place with Ministers, when the meetings were held and what they related to.

I would be grateful for a response by 19 February 2015.

Yours sincerely

Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee

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Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership



Response to the Inquiry on *Together: Building a United Community*

Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership
September 2014

About NISMP

1. Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) aims to work across the spheres of government in Northern Ireland and with other key stakeholders to ensure that Northern Ireland is a welcoming place for new migrants. It seeks to support the retention and integration of people in a way that helps meet skills and labour needs to support future economic growth. It provides a regional advisory, developmental and consultative function, enabling our partners and stakeholders to develop an appropriate Northern Ireland migration policy structure. This will ensure that Northern Ireland's needs and concerns in respect of immigration are recognised within the constraints of UK wide strategy. This paper will speak to issues directly impacting Northern Ireland in the wider context of UK immigration policy. It has been approved by representatives on the Partnership. However this does not necessarily reflect the views of Partner Organisations, some of whom have not been canvassed.

General Comments

2. NISMP welcomes a community cohesion strategy for Northern Ireland in the form of Together: Building a United Community. In particular, we welcome the cross party, cross-departmental elements to the strategy, and the emphasis on local delivery on issues of good relations. The vision for the strategy is ambitious and comprehensive, and we welcome in particular the emphasis on diversity and the celebration of cultural expression without fear of hate and tolerance.

3. Unfortunately, while there are some references to diversity and racial equality in the document, it is still a strategy which is very much focused on the two 'traditional communities' in Northern Ireland. In spite of its vision, it feels at times like an exclusive document in practice. This is difficult for the strategy and its implementation, as well as its relationship to other strategies across government including Delivering Social Change and the Racial Equality Strategy. While these documents are in theory all linked together, even to the extent in some places that they are interdependent in terms of review and monitoring, there is little connectedness between them, and in some areas they are in direct contradiction.

4. This response will focus on the areas of work in which NISMP is directly involved – integration of migrant groups, and the incorporation of BME and migrant communities in the process of community planning at a local level. The response is divided into the following sections:

- A. Consistency in the TBUC vision of a diverse society;
- B. Relationship between TBUC and the Racial Equality Strategy;
- C. Links between TBUC, local government, good relations, and community planning;
and
- D. Measurement, process and indicators.

A. Moving beyond “Two Communities”: Making the strategy tie in with the vision of a diverse society

5. Northern Ireland has seen significant demographic changes in the past decade. In a region which had a BME population of less than 0.8% in 2011, ethnic minorities now make up 1.8% of Northern Ireland. Births to foreign born mothers have increased to 1 in 10, with that figure increasing to 1 in 5 in some parts of the region. Where previously people of Chinese ethnicity made up the largest number, now Polish and Lithuanian are the two most common first languages outside of English. Across Northern Ireland diversity is increasing, and has brought challenges as well as growth and opportunities. In its opening paragraph and stated vision, *Together: Building a United Community* (TBUC) acknowledges these changes in a summary of its vision:

6. A united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation – one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

7. The strategy highlights diversity and integration as underpinning principles, and cultural expression as a priority area. NISMP welcomes this approach to a dramatically changing society as it moves towards a more shared, safer and more cohesive community. However beyond the first few pages, the document appears to lose its focus on diversity and the definition of community seems to be limited to the two ‘traditional communities’ in NI.

8. As stated in our response to the good relations indicators review, NISMP would like to stress the importance of monitoring to take into account the wider definition of community and cultural identity so as not to limit good relations monitoring to relations between individuals identifying as Protestant or Catholic, British or Irish. While we recognise that the Racial Equality Strategy is a document focusing specifically on BME and migrant groups, we believe this is a separate but complementary issue to community relations/cohesion. The nature of community relations, community tensions and shared space is not limited to equality alone, and has much to do with recognition and acceptance of different identities. While certain elements of the document recognise this, it is not borne out in either the identified project priorities or review indicators. The Racial Equality Strategy does make reference to the full inclusion of BME groups in public life; however we believe it is essential for that to be reflected in the overall strategy for social cohesion in Northern Ireland – *Together: Building a United Community*. Additionally, the incorporation of other identities when looking at social cohesion and building a united community provides opportunities to have discussions about cultural, national, religious and ethnic identities in a more diverse, multi-faceted, and less threatening way than has previously been possible in the region given the historical tensions. The *Building a United Community* document does not go far enough in addressing these concerns, and as such it would be beneficial to be more clear about the diversity of the community, reflecting the rapidly changing demographics.

9. There are BME groups which have been in Northern Ireland since the 1960s – people living here who experienced the Troubles and lived with the consequences of community tensions – and who have done their part to work towards good relations. There is significant learning to be gleaned from some of these community groups and the models they have employed. Artsekta is an example of this – taking cultural events as a means to feature BME

and migrant community culture, while simultaneously featuring 'local' art and culture. By using this format to showcase Irish and Highland alongside traditional Polish cultural expression for example, cultural practice from 'traditional communities' reaches audiences it might not have reached otherwise. It is examples like this which are missing from the document and which we would advocate for the incorporation into future planning around social cohesion. Cultural events are often taken as an end themselves. With this approach the opportunities and learning which could be achieved out of them are lost. Looking at the programmes funded by delivering social change, it is not clear how groups which use diverse communities to explore social issues – for example the model created by the Belfast Friendship Club, Challenge for Change in Newry and Mourne as well as the examples of world cafe events and employability training in the Belfast Integration and Participation Project - would be prioritised in accessing funds through Delivering Social Change. With the restructuring of the minority ethnic fund there have been significant difficulties in the maintenance of some projects which have consistently demonstrated positive results in creating community cohesion and integration. The Social Investment Fund would be well invested in some of these community projects, but without direction and prioritisation from TBUC, it is difficult to see how that would happen. This is one example of an issue raised in the NISMP response to the Good Relations Indicators review – where the measurement may fail to capture the positive outcomes, resulting in these projects being undervalued with regard to their contribution to social cohesion.

10. Additionally, while the migrant and BME groups in NI are normally entitled to access many of the programmes outlined in TBUC, there should be some acknowledgement about some of the practical and cultural barriers which may inhibit them from doing so. There are areas where it could be beneficial to make a targeted approach to some of the more marginalised communities, and ensure they have an awareness of and access to the programmes on offer through Delivering Social Change and TBUC. Taking a targeted approach in some areas is consistent with both positive duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, as well as the acknowledgement of the need for proactive work outlined in the Racial Equality Strategy consultation document.

Key Recommendations:|

- 1. In the development of programmes to tackle sectarianism, there are opportunities to examine issues of exclusion and discrimination across the board. While there is reference to some Section 75 groups in the executive summary of TBUC, the reference to social discord and discrimination outside of sectarianism is barely referenced. In order to elicit real social change for all members of the community of Northern Ireland, it is important that the entire document reflect the commitment to diversity outlined in the vision of the strategy. Without strong leadership at a policy level, it is difficult for the vision of integration across community groups to trickle down as the programmes will glean their objectives from the strategy which supports them.**
- 2. There should be some targeted approaches to the programmes delivered under TBUC, such as the United Youth programme, aimed at young people from migrant communities. This is an opportunity to promote integration, improve equality of opportunity, and demonstrate a commitment to diversity.**

B. Connections between the Racial Equality Strategy and Together: Building a United Community

11. As stated in the previous section, there is incongruence between the message of the importance of diversity laid out in the introduction to TBUC and the rest of the document which seems quite restricted to being a 'two community' one. This chasm is also evident in the diversion between the protection of cultural expression in TBUC, and the hesitance to commit to the right to cultural expression as one of the six shared aims of the Racial Equality Strategy. While TBUC holds cultural expression up as a key tenet which is to be protected, the Racial Equality Strategy identifies cultural expression as a potential barrier to integration, even referencing the practice of female genital mutilation as a risk factor. This is extremely contradictory and damaging to the relationship between the two strategies. More importantly, there is a risk that a message is sent that the only cultures and diversity which are to be protected are the two majority communities in Northern Ireland.

12. During informal focus studies with members of the Belfast Friendship Club, anecdotes of attempts to work with neighbours and communities were met by several migrants with further and escalated harassment – and these were the stories of people with proficiency in English, and the support of strong networks they had built through the BFC and other migrant communities. The dramatic increase in racially motivated attacks in the past year demonstrates the centrality of race, ethnicity and migration to issues of social cohesion. The First Minister himself pointed out after tensions arose when one migrant was offered a house in East Belfast, that there are tensions within neighbourhoods about 'locals' which led to the attacks, rather than it being associated with the tenant's race. This shows the interconnectedness of issues of social housing, deprivation, resource constricted environments, and social cohesion. While this is acknowledged in the TBUC document, it is less so in the Racial Equality Strategy. The acknowledged link between sectarianism and racism is also important to consider in the joining up of these two strategies.

Key Recommendations

- 1. More should be done to ensure the interconnectedness between the Racial Equality Strategy and Together: Building a United Community. This should include improved representativeness of the Racial Equality Panel in Delivering Social Change and monitoring mechanisms of TBUC.**
- 2. Action should be directed from TBUC to ensure that the Racial Equality Strategy does not contradict the key priorities of TBUC, in particular the priority of cultural expression. By failing to acknowledge cultural expression as a priority in the RES, but making it a key priority in TBUC, it both confuses and lends the impression that the cultural expression of the traditional communities in Northern Ireland are the only ones protected.**
- 3. At the time of writing this strategy, racist attacks were on a downward trend. Since 2013, the number of racist attacks has increased by more than 100% in spite of immigration figures levelling out. It is important that any review of TBUC takes these changes into consideration, and incorporates anti-racism strategies across its initiatives with sufficient investment and resource.**

C. Links between local government, good relations and community planning

13. Many of the recent attacks against migrants and BME groups have been justified by saying they are not racially motivated, but rather motivated by keeping local areas local. This mentality is reinforced by the segregation within neighbourhoods and is an excellent example of the overlap between racism and sectarianism, and the need to look closely at working with communities to identify solutions to local issues which help people feel less threatened by diversifying communities. This is an issue which has been recognised by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and there is a lot of positive learning from the racial equality, good relations and migrant support work undertaken by NIHE.

14. There is a considerable body of anecdotal, academic and commissioned research which indicates the best practice of integration and social cohesion happening at a local level. NISMP welcomes the acknowledgement of this in the Building a United Community document, as well as the commitment to implementation of community relations strategies through the District Councils Good Relations Programme. Community planning provides a key opportunity through which the creation of more diverse and inclusive neighbourhoods might take place with the support of those individuals living and working locally. While housing remains outside of the remit of councils, the proposed strategies around shared housing proposed in TBUC would be well supported through direct working with the community planning process. This would provide the opportunity to incorporate shared learning from the Housing Executive, residents' associations, and local community groups into the implementation of the key commitments in TBUC such as shared housing and the removal of 'peace walls'.

Key Recommendations

- 1. As the process of community planning develops, Delivering Social Change and the commitments of TBUC should be channelled through these mechanisms. This should include resource and capacity building for individuals from BME and migrant backgrounds.***
- 2. There should be more coordinated actions using existing partnerships and joint working to roll out examples of best practice on a regional basis and support councils with less experience working with diverse populations.***
- 3. In considering the commitment to work with community groups and neighbourhoods to reduce 'chill factors' which lead to exclusion and intimidation in communities, it is important that the impact of this interpretation of localism has on BME and migrant groups. Without considering the needs of these groups in the development of shared and cohesive housing, tensions are likely to continue and racist attacks may continue to increase.***

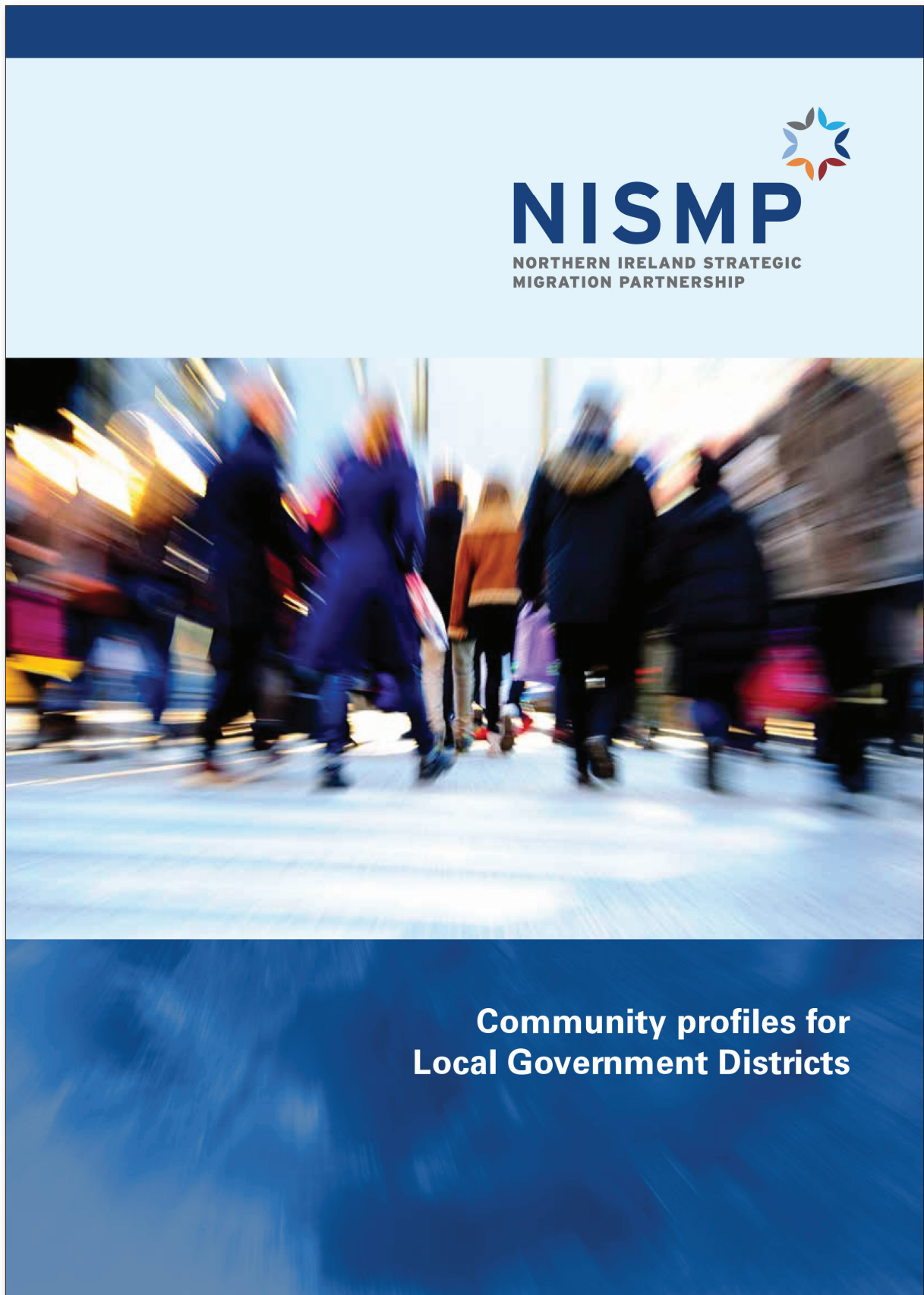
D. Measurement, process and indicators

15. NISMP submitted a response to the review of good relations indicators. We would like to take the opportunity to reinforce the comments put forward in that document here. We acknowledge the statement within the consultation document that good relations indicators relating to the forthcoming Racial Equality Strategy have been developed separately. While we welcome this, we believe that in the context of our changing demographics, consideration to the full interpretation of good relations duties should be given to each good relations indicator within this current review. It is therefore important that there are clear links between the aims and commitments outlined in the strategy and the indicators which are being used to monitor these. While we support the focus on outcome indicators, it is stated in the consultation document that the revised indicators will be used to monitor progress within TBUC at every level of implementation. We would therefore recommend that in order that these indicators may be used to both monitor implementation as well as to assess the contribution of TBUC activities in meeting the stated outcomes, a further set of input indicators is required. We would recommend that within each of the proposed indicators, data is disaggregated according to the ethnic background of respondents in order to more robustly assess the differential impact of interventions on various communities and thus better inform future related planning.

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NISMP Community Profiles extract



**Community profiles for
Local Government Districts**



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Foreword

Councils are embarking on a new era of enhanced powers, enabling effective local responses to meet local needs and aspirations. This ability to shape areas in ways which draw on the skills and experiences of communities is an opportunity which councils welcome and about which we are excited.



Reform in local government coincides with demographic changes resulting from inward migration. These changes have contributed new energy and talents to local areas, have helped sustain local businesses and driven demand for locally based services. While this is obviously a positive outcome, we must equally acknowledge the challenges it can bring, such as additional pressures on some services and potential issues with community safety and cohesion.

It is imperative therefore that the processes coordinated by local government, most notably community planning, the promotion of good relations and the local development plan, are informed by relevant data and statistics on population stocks and trends. The NISMP Community Profiles for Local Government support councils and other agencies to engage with, plan for and deliver to communities more effectively and efficiently. In turn this will enable us to maximise the potential that is inherent within our communities.

Alderman Geraldine Rice

Chair, NISMP



Minority Ethnic Demographics: Community Profiles for Local Government Districts

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	5
Northern Ireland	10
Antrim & Newtownabbey Local Government District	15
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Local Government District	20
Belfast Local Government District	26
Causeway Coast & Glens Local Government District	31
Derry & Strabane Local Government District	37
Fermanagh & Omagh Local Government District	43
Lisburn & Castlereagh Local Government District	48
Mid & East Antrim Local Government District	54
Mid-Ulster Local Government District	60
Newry, Mourne & Down Local Government District	66
North Down & Ards Local Government District	72



Introduction

Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership

The Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) is a cross-party partnership which works across the spheres of government and between the public, private and third sectors to ensure that Northern Ireland effectively welcomes, supports and integrates new migrants in a way which contributes to future economic growth and vibrant, cohesive communities.

The Partnership provides a regional advisory, developmental and consultative function, which enables our partners and stakeholders to cultivate an appropriate Northern Ireland migration policy structure and works to ensure that Northern Ireland's needs and concerns in respect of immigration are recognised within the parameters of related UK wide policy.

Community Profiles

What are the NISMP Community Profiles? What information do they provide? How are they useful in the context of local government?

The NISMP Migrant Community Profiles Pack for Councils 2015 will support Councils, councillors and staff to better understand the ethnic diversity within new local government district boundaries and to better engage with migrant and minority ethnic communities.

There are 12 profiles in total: one for each of the 11 councils and one for the whole of Northern Ireland. Each one maps the size and diversity of migrant and minority ethnic communities represented within its constituency boundaries. Using figures collated principally from NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency) data sets, the profiles give an indication of migration flows into and out of the area over time. This includes nationalities represented, the level of economic activity of migrant and minority ethnic communities, their needs in relation to public services and housing as well as levels of racist hate crime offences.

The profiles are intended to support councils in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in the execution of council duties. The detail they provide will assist councils in meeting these obligations in the development and implementation of the community plan, local development plans, community safety and good relations.

NB

All NISRA data sets are currently being configured against the 11 new council boundaries. Where available these data sets were used in the compilation of the NISMP Community Profiles. Where this data is not yet available, the NISRA technical guidance on production of official statistics for the 11 new local government districts has been used.

It is important to note that many nationals from A2 countries (Bulgaria and Romania) are not included in a number of these data sets as, until January 2014, transitional restrictions limited their access to the labour market with related limitations on access to health care and housing.

Migrant Demographics

How has migration contributed to population change in Northern Ireland over the last decade?

Improved political and social stability, increasing investor confidence and, most significantly, expansion of the European Union have resulted in a sharp increase in inward migration into Northern Ireland and a hitherto unknown diversity of nationalities and cultures represented within the general population. At its peak, between mid-2006 and mid-2007, estimates put the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland from outside the United Kingdom at 19,400, while 11,300 left to live outside the UK. The overall effect in this year was of population growth of 8,000 due to international migrants¹.

In recent years however, the flow of inward migration has slowed considerably, reversing in mid-2010 to mid-2011 to a net outflow of approximately 700 people who left to live outside the UK². The most recent data available shows that in mid-2011 to mid-2012 12,900 people came to live in Northern Ireland from outside the United Kingdom while 12,500 migrants left for destinations outside the UK, representing a net inflow of 400 international migrants for this period.

While migration flows have slowed considerably in recent years, many migrants have chosen to settle in Northern Ireland for the longer term, resulting in lasting changes to regional and local demographics. This is clearly illustrated by the 2011 census data and similar data sets which reveal the extent of the demographic and social change in the decade since the previous census:

- The number of Northern Ireland residents who were born outside either the UK or the Republic of Ireland has increased from 27,200 at the time of the 2001 census to 81,000 in 2011 (a rise of 53,800 people), representing 1.6% and 4.5% of the overall population respectively.
- 50,400 people over the age of three have a language other than English or Irish as their main language. Polish is, by a considerable margin, the most widely spoken language in Northern Ireland after English, with 17,700 people speaking it as their first language.
- In the year ending March 2014 there were 87,684 requests for interpreters made to the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts. This is a vast increase from the 1,850 requests that were made in 2005-06 when this data was first collected.
- 10% of babies born in Northern Ireland in 2012 were born to mothers who themselves were born outside the United Kingdom or Ireland. In 2001 this figure was 3%.

Overview of Findings

What is the size of the migrant population in Northern Ireland? How diverse is it? How does this differ across the region?

Each council profile builds a picture of the migrant communities represented in the council area. While this picture may have changed in the detail since the capture of the data used to compile the profiles, broad trends in migration patterns and nationalities represented within the area can be identified and used to support effective policy

¹ NISRA, 2008, 'Long-term International migration estimates for Northern Ireland (2006-7)'

² NISRA, August 2013, 'Long-term international migration estimates for Northern Ireland'.

making and service provision. The information within these profiles can be updated or supplemented through NISRA.

The main findings from the profiles are as follows:

Population Size and Diversity

- 4.5% of the population in NI was born outside the UK or RoI according to census data. At 6.4% Mid Ulster LGD has the highest percentage of residents born outside UK or RoI and Causeway Coast & Glens has the lowest at 2.8%.
- Of those who don't speak English or Irish as their main language, 26.5% cannot speak English or cannot speak it well. In Mid Ulster this rises to 33% while in Belfast the figure is lowest at 18%
- The three main languages spoken in Northern Ireland other than English or Irish are: Polish (spoken by 35% of those who have a main language other than English or Irish), Lithuanian (12%), and Portuguese (4.5%)
- The main reasons that people migrated to NI in 2013 were: Work (46%), Family (29%), Education (11%), Other (6%), Unknown (4%), Asylum seeker (3%)
- 10 % of births in NI were to foreign born mothers in 2012. Mid Ulster and Belfast recorded the highest rates at 15% and 14% respectively and Derry & Strabane and Causeway Coast & Glens the lowest at 5% and 6% respectively.

Economic Activity

- 7,800 National Insurance numbers (NINo) were issued to non-UK nationals resident in NI in 2012. 32% of these were issued in Belfast, 13% in Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon and 13% in Mid Ulster. At 3% North Down & Ards issued the lowest number of NINos to non-UK nationals and Antrim & Newtownabbey and Causeway Coast & Glens had the second lowest at 4% each.
- In Northern Ireland the most economically active residents aged between 16 and 74 according to language spoken are:
Malayalam (92%); Slovak (90%), Tagalog/Filipino (90%); Lithuanian (87%); Polish (84%); Latvian (85%); Hungarian (84%), Russian (82%); Portuguese (77.5%); English (66%); Irish (66%); Chinese (56%)

Public Services and Housing

- The number of requests to NI Health and Social Care Interpreting Service increased by 311% in between the years ending March 2007 and March 2014. The increases experienced in each of the Health and Social Care Trusts for this period are:
Belfast Trust: (590%); Northern Trust: (184%); South Eastern Trust: (532%); Southern Trust: (262%); Western Trust: (299%);
- There has been a 66% increase in newcomer pupils in NI since 2007. The highest increase was registered in Mid & East Antrim (119%) and the lowest in North Down & Ards (39%)
- Craigavon, Belfast, Dungannon and Newry are the NIHE districts which receive the most requests for social housing and homeless applications from migrant workers. Banbridge, Moyle, Larne and Strabane have least.

Community safety

In 2013 the councils which recorded the most offences with a racist motivation were Belfast (356), Derry & Strabane (56) and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon (54). Those with the least recorded offences were Causeway Coast & Glens (16), Fermanagh & Omagh (19) and North Down & Ards (19).

It is important to note, however, that there is a widely recognised underreporting of hate crimes throughout Northern Ireland.

Community Engagement

What responsibilities do councils have towards these new communities?

How can councils engage with migrant communities?

New council boundaries will require councillors and council officers to represent and work on behalf of a larger number of residents and households over an expanded geographical area. Community engagement within these new boundaries will require in the first instance a demographic analysis of the area in order to identify the range and sizes of communities, existing community representation and gaps in representation. The NISMP Community Profiles serve as a springboard for undertaking this analysis with respect to migrant communities.

Challenges of community engagement for councils

Local Government Reform will fundamentally alter the relationship between central and local government, creating an enhanced role for councils in the planning and delivery of local economic development, urban regeneration and public services within their area. The reform of council structures and the delivery of government functions are aimed at making the public sector more responsive to the needs of local communities and accountable to the electorate.

Councils are at the heart of this process, with an expanded remit granting them power over local economic and community development and the ability to shape the delivery of public services through the community planning function. In the execution of these duties councils are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across the nine Section 75 grounds and the promotion of good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. It is therefore incumbent on councils that they seek not only to address key inequalities in relation to outcomes but also that all processes which require community input are accessible to all. Councils must therefore ensure that community participation is actively facilitated with particular regard given to communities considered hard to reach through traditional models of engagement.

Councils are therefore challenged not only in identifying the minority ethnic communities within their expanded boundaries, but also in developing appropriate models of engagement with these communities.

NISMP can further support councils in demographic analysis, engagement and support of migrant communities by:

- » **Contributing to the understanding of future local government and wider public service needs through development of demographic forecasting models.**
- » **Identifying how migrant communities contribute to the local economy and forecasting future migration needs for the council in relation to economic growth.**
- » **Working with councils and community organisations to develop a toolkit for engagement with BME and migrant communities.**
- » **Monitoring migration patterns into and out of the council area, patterns of civic participation and resource demand.**
- » **Facilitating network development, information exchange and dissemination of good practice**
- » **Supporting the implementation of the Racial Equality Strategy through acting as a conduit for regional and local government discussions on local action and monitoring mechanisms.**

Northern Ireland

A. Migrant and minority ethnic communities: population size and diversity

The 2011 Census provides important information on the population of Northern Ireland. Compiled from Census data, Table 1 shows the place of birth for people resident in Northern Ireland.

Of the 1,810,863 people resident in Northern Ireland, 80,621 were born outside the UK or Ireland. This represents 4.5% of the population.³

Place of Birth	No. of Residents
Northern Ireland	1,608,853
United Kingdom (Other) + Channel Islands, Isle of Man	83,517
Republic of Ireland	37,872
Europe (outside UK and RoI)	47,207w
Africa	5,581
Middle East	1,071
Asia	16,222
North America and Caribbean	6,999
Central and South America	1,069
Oceania and Antarctica	2,468
Other	4
All Usual Residents	1,810,863

Table 2 shows the range of languages currently spoken as a main language within Northern Ireland⁴. **50,376 residents aged 3+ speak a language other than English or Irish as their main language. Of those whose main language is not English or Irish, 26.5% cannot speak English, or cannot speak it well⁵.**

First Language	No. of residents aged 3+	First Language	No. of residents aged 3+
English	1,681,171	Chinese	2,214
Polish	17,731	Tagalog/Filipino	1,895
Lithuanian	6,250	Latvian	1,273
Irish (Gaelic)	4,164	Russian	1,191
Portuguese	2,293	Malayalam	1,174
Slovak	2,257	Hungarian	1,008
		Other	13,090

³ www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/2011Census.html

⁴ www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk: Census 2011>Main Language

⁵ www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk: Census 2011>Main Language

B. Measuring migrant population stocks and flows within Northern Ireland

It is difficult to accurately measure migrant population flows in Northern Ireland mainly due to the freedom of movement accorded to EU citizens. The disparity in time periods covered by the various data sources used to approximate migration trends presents further complications in accurately calculating migration stocks and flows. Nevertheless these data sources can enable an approximation of trends related to migration.

Data sources most frequently used to compile estimates of migrant stocks and flows are:

1. Health card registrations from non-UK nationals;
2. Number of births to foreign-born mothers; and
3. National insurance number allocations to non-UK nationals.

B1. Health card registrations from non-UK nationals

The most recent trend in inward migration peaked in 2007. During this year 19,369 health card registrations from non-UK nationals were made in Northern Ireland, against 6,888 deregistrations (a net increase of 12,481 registrations). In 2013, the most recent year where complete data is available at the time of writing, the corresponding figures are 10,801 new registrations and 6,226 deregistrations (a net increase of 4,575 registrations)^{6,7}.

2013 data is available with regard to health card registrations against country of birth and reasons given for coming to the UK.

In 2013 the top three countries of birth for non UK-born health card registrations for Northern Ireland were⁸: Poland, Lithuania, Republic of Ireland.

In 2013 the top three reasons given for coming to the UK for Northern Ireland were⁹: Work (46%), Family (29%), Education (11%).

B2. Number of births to foreign born mothers

The proportion of children born in Northern Ireland whose mother was born outside the UK or Ireland has risen more than three fold over the last ten years. In 2001, 700 out of 22,000 births in Northern Ireland (3%) were to foreign-born mothers. This has risen to 2,459 out of 25,269 in 2012 (10%)¹⁰.

B3. National Insurance Number allocations to non-UK residents

National Insurance Numbers (NINo) can be used to gauge the number of migrant workers within a local government district. Using data sourced from the Department for Work and Pensions and compiled by NISRA, Table 3 and Figure 1 below show the numbers of NINo allocations to non-UK nationals in Northern Ireland between 2002 and 2012¹¹.

6 www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk (Home > Health and Social Care > Health Card Registrations from Abroad (administrative geographies))

7 www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk (Home > Health and Social Care > Health Card Deregistrations from Abroad (administrative geographies))

8 www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk (Home > Health and Social Care > Health Card Registrations from Abroad by Country of Birth, LGD2014)

9 www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk (Home > Health and Social Care > Health Card Registrations from Abroad: Reason to UK, LGD2014)

10 www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/births_deaths/births_2012.pdf p. 7 (provisional figures)

11 www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk (Population > Migration > National Insurance No. Allocations to non-UK Residents)

Fig 1: NI No Allocations to Non-UK Nationals resident within Northern Ireland

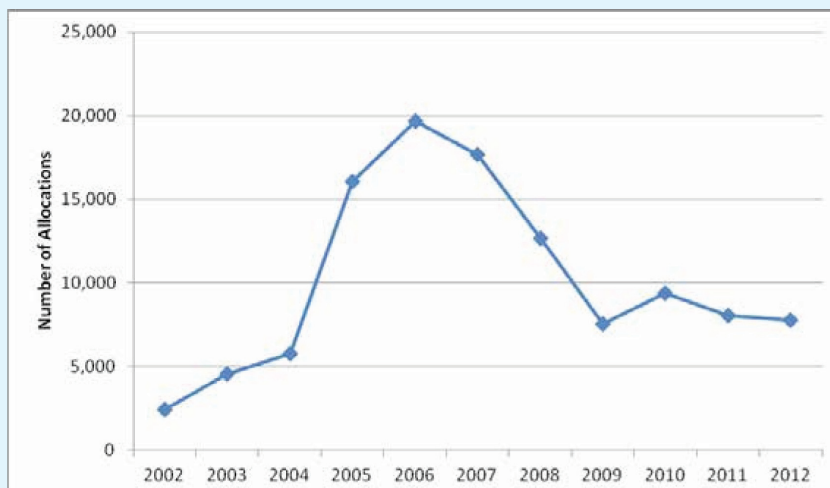


Table 3: NI No Allocations to Non-UK Nationals

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Northern Ireland	2,450	4,570	5,760	16,060	19,690	17,650	12,640	7,530	9,400	8,030	7,800

C. Public Services and Housing

C1. Health

The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS) provides a regional interpreting service for all Health and Social Care organisations.

From April 2006 to March 2014, the number of requests to NIHSCIS for interpreter services increased by 312% (see Table 4).

The most requested languages across Northern Ireland in year ending March 2014 were Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Chinese (Mandarin) and Slovak¹².

Table 4: Requests for interpreter services made to NIHSCIS

Year	No. of requests
April 2006- March 2007	21,283
April 2007- March 2008	31,284
April 2008- March 2009	35,103
April 2009- March 2010	42,516
April 2010- March 2011	51,734
April 2011- March 2012	63,868
April 2012 – March 2013	75,649
April 2013 – March 2014	87,684

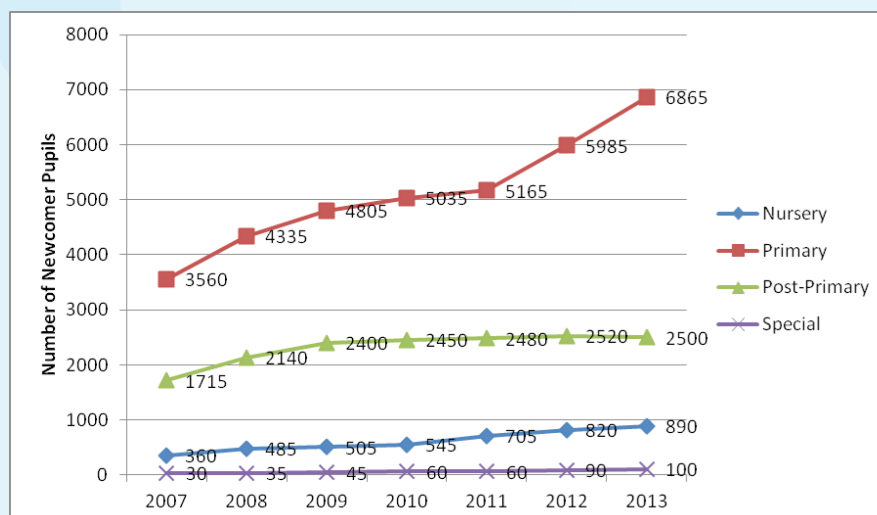
¹² Figures provided by NIHSCIS, Belfast HSCT

C2. Education

The term ‘newcomer’ pupil is defined by the Department of Education as referring to a pupil who has enrolled in a school but who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher.

Figure 2 shows the combined numbers of newcomer pupils in Northern Ireland enrolled in nursery, primary and post-primary schools. **Between 2007 and 2013 there has been an 82% increase in the number of newcomer pupils**¹³.

Figure 2: Number of Newcomer Pupils in Northern Ireland



C3. Housing

From 1st August 2011 to 31st July 2012, **NIHE District Offices** received 1,885 social housing applications and 760 homeless applications from migrant workers, and made social housing allocations to 275 migrant worker applicants. On 31st July 2012 they had 910 migrant worker tenants (all figures have been rounded to the nearest 5)¹⁴.

¹³ www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk Home>Children Education and Skills > Newcomers

¹⁴ Figures provided by NIHE

D. Economic Activity

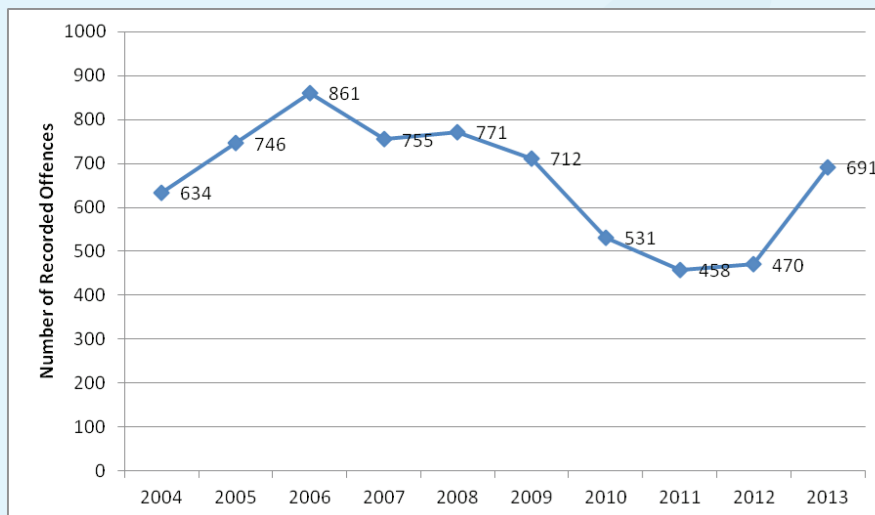
Table 5 shows the percentage of economically active residents aged between 16 and 74 according to their main language spoken¹⁵. Economically inactive residents will fall within one of the following categories: Retired; Student; Looking after home/family; Long-term sick/disabled; and Other.

Table 5: Economic activity by main language spoken in Northern Ireland							
	Percentage of economically active usual residents aged 16 to 74 against language spoken						
	English	Polish	Lithuanian	Irish	Portuguese	Slovak	Chinese
Northern Ireland	66%	86%	87%	66%	77.5%	90%	56.5%
	Percentage of economically active usual residents aged 16 to 74 against language spoken						
	Tagalog/ Filipino	Latvian	Russian	Malayalam	Hungarian	Other	
Northern Ireland	90%	85%	82%	92%	84%	72%	

E. Community Safety

The total number of offences recorded with a racist motivation within Northern Ireland from 2004 to 2013 is presented in Figure 3 below¹⁶. There is recognition in the NI Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland that many hate crimes and hate incidents go unreported.

Figure 3: Number of recorded offences with a racist motivation in Northern Ireland



15 www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk Census 2011 > Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion > Economic Activity by Main Language

16 www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk Home > Crime and Justice > Hate Crime Offences

Northern Ireland Women's European Platform

The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister Inquiry into Building a United Community

The purpose of the inquiry is to inform the Executive's approach in the actions it takes to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance; and to make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy in uniting communities and community integration, including how communities are involved in decision making. The Inquiry will also seek to make recommendations based on the evidence gathered.

This response by Northern Ireland Women's European Platform to the OFMDFM Committee is aimed to:

- Demonstrate the lack of commitment and actions in the peace process to address gender inequalities including the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy
- Promote the need for women in delivering peace in Northern Ireland
- Make recommendations to the Committee on how women can be contributors and implementers of the peace process

About Northern Ireland Women's European Platform

- Provides women in Northern Ireland with a platform to make their voices heard on domestic, European and international social, economic, cultural and political affairs
- Enables women to understand United Nations, European and domestic legislation, conventions and policies that focus or impact on women and to use them to advocate for equality
- Consults with women in preparing recommendations for discussion with government and institutions at domestic, European and international level
- Represents Northern Ireland women at European and international levels
- Jointly represents the UK on the European Women's Lobby with partners in England, Scotland and Wales, and works with sister organisations in Ireland and across Europe
- Secures opportunities for women's organisations to attend European and international events through its EWL and UN membership.

Summary

1. Northern Ireland's peace process which has historically failed to include women or represent women and girls' interests meaningfully. The resistance to this situation can be related to a number of factors such as:
 - the lack of political will to acknowledge and respond to the need to address gender inequalities during the peace negotiations where the focus was predominantly on the 'religious' divide;
 - the lack of understanding of international conventions, treaties and resolutions such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325¹ and its principles among policy makers, officials and political representatives;
 - an absence of leadership in ensuring that women's equality was a key factor in the establishment of new post conflict institutions

1 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDO...0/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>

2. Mechanisms previously set up to deal with the legacy of the conflict, such as

Healing Through Remembering and the Consultative Group on the Past, continue to be composed mainly of men with no recognition that women should be equally represented if peace is to be sustained.

3. Furthermore, new policies structures and legislation post conflict Northern Ireland have not drawn on the skills and expertise of the women who at a local community level have been the peace builders. The substantive inequalities which women in Northern Ireland continue to experience clearly demonstrates the need for it increasing women in politics and decision making roles. The top priorities of areas of inequalities are:
 - the risk of poverty
 - participation in politics
 - participation in decision making
 - participation in public life
 - equality and the overarching issue of caring
4. The evidence points to a failure of the peace process to acknowledge the full impact of the conflict on women and to ensure that women play an equal part in moving Northern Ireland from a post conflict to a peaceful society. The continuing failure to take significant and effective measures to ensure women's equal inclusion has major implications for social and economic development and for a sustainable peace.
5. There is a need both to protect women's rights and support the work of women's organisations in peace-building efforts. It is essential that postconflict reconstruction is seen through a gendered analysis if peace building is to be maintained.

Together: Building a United Community

6. Like so many successive policies the T:BUC Strategy has ignored the relationship between gender and conflict. While the Strategy at para. 1.26 makes reference to a new Gender Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland it gives no indication of what should be included in this Strategy in order to address the inequalities for women to building peace in Northern Ireland. This is a missed opportunity to include women and to address their interests.
7. While para. 1.27 recognises EU Funding for women, this is not sustainable. What are the plans by governments to ensure future funding of women's groups and organisations in order to maintain and develop peacebuilding. The 'invisibility' of women is also apparent in the distribution of resources since the peace process for example £110m which had been earmarked for a Northern Ireland stadium went to three sporting bodies – football, Gaelic football and rugby – all dominated by men. This represented a careful sharing out of resources between the religious groupings but no thought was given to the decision from a gender impact perspective.
8. The impact of the conflict on women's lives has not been adequately addressed or indeed sufficiently researched and understood. But research on the psychological impact of the conflict suggests a relationship between higher levels of mental illness in Northern Ireland and the conflict. For some time Northern Ireland has had high per head anti-depressant prescription items.² Those being prescribed include for children and adolescents.
9. The T:BUC strategy also suggests changes to the Equality Impact Assessments (EQUIAs) required under "section 75 statutory equality duty. These proposals as they stand undefined and contentious, both in the document and in law, risk undermining the gender equality duty.

2 Gray, AM and Horgan, G (2009) Figuring it Out: Looking Behind the Social Statistics in Northern Ireland. Belfast: ARK

10. Key Priority 1: Children and Young People: This is a 'catch all' action plan which does not make reference to the different needs between young girls/women and boys/men.
11. In the work of NIWEP and other agencies such as Youth Action NI the pessimism about women's representation and ability to influence decisions in peacebuilding is reinforced by the increasing disengagement of young women from politics, and the danger that young women will increasingly see this lack of participation as the norm.
12. Research has shown that the conflict had a profound effect on the lives of young women in Northern Ireland. However, the policy and resource focus continues to be predominantly on young men who are more likely to become engaged in violence. Young women saw politics in Northern Ireland as tribal and sectarian and saw little value even in voting. An in-depth study of 16-25 year old young women reported they were very disaffected by Northern Ireland politics and felt disengaged from the peace building process.³
13. Priority 2: Our Shared Community: In addition to the lack of women in electoral politics and the low numbers of women appointed to public bodies (only one woman in twelve members was appointed to the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation Board, established in 2011 to oversee the development of a peace centre at the former paramilitary prison), it has been argued that women are being increasingly marginalised within community organisations. This is endorsed by our partners in Womens Information Northern Ireland (WINI)
14. Ensuring women are part of the peace building 'space' through negotiations has also failed. The Haass / O'Sullivan talks, which began in the autumn of 2013, was tasked to deal with the legacy of the past and ongoing issues such as flags and parades. The draft report, published following the failure of the talks to reach agreement in December 2013, mentions gender only once, as one of a list of possible themes for consideration through a Commission on Identity, Culture and Tradition.
15. In a recent inquiry on the impact of the peace process on women held by the All Party Group on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 at the Northern Ireland Assembly the mood was deeply pessimistic amongst women in local communities, representatives from expert NGOs and representatives of statutory bodies working on gender issues. Time and again it was argued that without appropriate and robust intervention nothing will change with regard to women's representation and that, in fact, the picture will regress further.
16. While the commitment in the T:BUC Strategy identifies Community Safety (para. 3.22) as an issue it does not recognise any long term commitment in addressing the issue in post-conflict societies where domestic and sexual violence against women often increases or intensifies and there is anecdotal evidence that there has been an increase in incidences of domestic and sexual violence in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Good Friday/ Belfast agreement. While the gathering of informal testimonies from organisations, including the Women's Resource and Development Agency indicates this is linked to the conflict, no research has been carried out to properly assess this and there is no commitment within the T:BUC strategy to implement this assessment.
17. In the Community Safety section of the strategy there is a long term commitment to better parenting (para. 3.31). NIWEP wish to focus specifically on the lack of childcare policy and infrastructure as an overarching issue restricting women's participation, their ability to gain economic independence and contributing to persistently high levels of family poverty. While the NI Executive has produced a Brightstart Programme for affordable and integrated childcare Northern Ireland is unique in the UK in not having a childcare strategy.

3 Gray, AM and Neill, G (2011) Creating a Shared Society in Northern Ireland: Why we need to focus on gender equality, Youth and Society, 43,2, 466-485

Recommendations:

1. The efforts of women in peace building should be recognized and resourced to enable the commitments of the Good Friday Agreement in relationship to women to be met.
2. There should be a clear definition of Good relations. Good relations should be defined in law as it is in Great Britain as - “tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.” This would facilitate the use of international instruments such as the Convention on all forms of Discrimination against Women to assist with the interpretation of the statutory duty towards women. This would include the duty to have due regard to Violence against Women including the trafficking of women and children.
3. Good relations criteria should not be included in EQIAS in a way that undermines the gender equality legislation.
4. The childcare strategy and Gender Equality Strategy, which are referenced in the T:BUC strategy should be underpinned by the principles of UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security.
5. The strategy should have mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the principles across the strategy and to develop ways in which to make change to address gender inequalities.
6. To commit to ensuring gender issues are a priority and there is gender balance in those attending any future strategy discussions.
7. To ensure sustainable funding for the infrastructure of support organisations and high level policy and provision to address violence against women.
8. To develop an overarching strategy to adequately resource women’s groups and organisations in order to ensure the wealth of knowledge and expertise is supported to make a greater contribution to building and sustaining peace in Northern Ireland and elsewhere.

Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Response to Consultation; The Inquiry into Building a United Community on behalf of OFMDFM



**Northern Ireland Youth Forum
October 2014**



The Northern Ireland Youth Forum's (NIYF), Champions 4 Change Project welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry into Building a United Community on behalf of OFMDFM.

The NIYF aspires to supporting young people to effect change in their communities and we are strong advocates of young people as emerging leaders. The NIYF prides its self in involving young people in the policy making process and supporting young people to engage directly with decision makers at the very highest levels. Young people make up one third of the population of the North of Ireland and have a vital role to play in effecting social change.

We aim to support young people and to help build their self-confidence and belief in themselves, so that they can raise and discuss issues of importance to them. The NIYF's work is cross community in nature and focuses on social issues. We place equality, diversity, independence and interdependence central to our ethos. We believe that all young people should be listened to and respected and we place understanding and acceptance of cultural and political diversity at the forefront of our work. We work to achieve a situation of empowerment – where young people are proactive in the decision making process.

The NIYF, in partnership with BYTES manages a Big Lottery funded project entitled 'Champions 4 Change' (C4C). The C4C project encapsulates the t youth model of the NIYF:

- 1/ Personal Change – The belief in young people to affect personal change.
- 2/ Peer Change – The belief in young people to assist and support their peers
- 3/ Community Change – The belief in young people collectively to affect change at a community level.
- 4/ Societal Change – The belief in young people to bring about change in wider society; at local, national and international levels.

The C4C programme seeks to engage young people aged 16-20, who are in Need of Employment, Education or Training. It aims to develop their ability to make personal change and influence peer, community and societal change.

Methodology

As part of this process, C4C staff engaged with twenty-three young people from a diverse range of religious, political, academic and economic backgrounds - to discuss their views on the 'Together Building A United Community' strategy launched by OFMDFM in May 2013.

To facilitate discussion the young people were provided with the following information:

‘Together Building A United Community’

The Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is undertaking an Inquiry into Building a United Community

What is the Inquiry about?

The purpose of the inquiry is to inform the governments approach in the actions it takes to tackle sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance; and to make recommendations in order to support and enhance policy in uniting communities and community integration, including how communities are involved in decision-making. The Inquiry will also seek to make recommendations based on the evidence gathered.

What is it they want us to look at?

What is ‘Sectarianism’?
 What is meant by ‘Division’?
 What is meant by ‘Good Relations’?
 What is meant by ‘Shared Space’?
 What is meant by ‘Shared Services’?
 How can ‘Sectarianism’ be addressed?
 How can ‘Division’ be addressed?
 How can we promote ‘Good Relations’?
 How can we promote ‘Shared Space’ and ‘Shared Services’?
 What are the unique challenges of interfaces?
 How can we respond to the unique challenges of interfaces?
 What role do we each play in the above and what role do our communities play?

Background information

Essentially, you are being asked to consider the reasons for the ongoing difficulties that our communities experience in moving from a conflict society to a more peaceful society and to consider ways in which these difficulties can be overcome at both a community and governmental levels. At the heart of this inquiry is whether or not we can and should live together i.e. shared housing, recreational facilities, education etc... However, this does not mean that to achieve one you must agree with the other. Most venues within the city centre would be seen as shared spaces; pubs, shops, restaurants, cinema etc...however these can be maintained and indeed developed further without people having to be educated together or living next to each other.

Group Discussions Agenda

- 1/ Who or what is OFMDFM?
- 2/ What is the role of a government-sponsored committee?
- 3/What is this inquiry about? Why have it?
- 4/What is it they want us to look at?
- 5/Given the information you have discussed thus far, are we looking at the right things? Is there anything else? What do you see is the major problem in your area?

Before we commenced the process of getting the young people to discuss what they thought of the inquiry into the 'Together Building a United Community' strategy, we held informal discussions with them to improve their knowledge and understanding of who and what OFMDFM is, what government committees seek to do and what the original TBUC strategy said.

Summary of Group discussions

What is 'Sectarianism'? How can 'Sectarianism' be addressed?

The young people agreed that sectarianism can mean different things to different people in other places outside of the North of Ireland, however they defined it within their living experiences as; conflict between Catholics and Protestants. This conflict can be violent in its nature, but now is usually limited to verbal disagreements along Political/Religious lines. They gave examples of the flag protests following the removal of the Union Flag, The protests following the Orange Order not being allowed to march back from their 12th July commemorations past the Ardoyne shops and the riots that can break out at certain times of the year, particularly near interface areas. They felt that much of these differences are in relation to those who see themselves as British or Northern Irish and those who see themselves as Irish.

The majority of the young people felt that it was mostly adults who displayed sectarian views and they indicated that they wanted to "move away from all that" and "we don't care what people are or what they believe". Interestingly, when we explored the out workings of these statements they had very clear views. When asked; should the union flag fly above the city hall, or should it fly along side the tricolour or should no flag fly? They all had very clear and divergent views. Equally, when they were asked about "Should there be a United Ireland?" Their responses reflected their opinions on the flags issue. It would therefore seem that whilst many young people do not perceive themselves as sectarian, in that they would not engage in sectarian violence or verbal insults, they do hold similar views that often result in such violence. Given that they hold similar views to those who engage in sectarianism, they were then asked, "How can sectarianism be addressed?" The vast majority of the young people indicated that;

- Integrated and shared education has a role to play.
- Getting opportunities to meet and discuss controversial issues with each other
- Politicians should be careful as to what they say and how they say it.
- The media has a role to play.
- The youth sector has a role to play.

What does 'Division' mean? How can 'Division' be addressed?

Whilst all of the participants agreed that there are many divisions within communities and wider society e.g. housing estates (social housing), private housing developments (people from working class communities who can afford to buy their own house), middle class areas and upper class areas. They defined 'division' within this inquiry as meaning Catholics and Protestants living separately. However, like their description of housing division, they described areas where being a Catholic or a Protestant didn't seem to matter much, at least in terms of feeling divided. These tended to be large social housing estates where you have safety in numbers; private housing developments in close proximity to your original area of residence and middle/upper class areas where they didn't seem to care about the issues that divide people. Where they felt division affects most people was;

- In interface areas. They expressed the view that the fear you might have of the "other side" is nearly directly proportionate to the distance you live from an interface.
- Whilst many of them agreed that we should be aiming towards a society where people can live safely where they like, 'where' might also be with people who share the same political and religious views as yourself. This view was particularly expressed when the young people were discussing their expressed support for shared housing and they were asked "in such shared housing developments could you display your cultural, religious or indeed sporting identity safely"?

The young people identified the same issues that need to be considered as outlined within their discussions on sectarianism;

- Integrated and shared education has a role to play.
- Getting opportunities to meet and discuss controversial issues with each other
- Politicians should be careful as to what they say and how they say it.
- The media has a role to play.
- The Youth Work Sector.

Having discussions about how we respect people's right to be different and how we promote tolerance. It was suggested that;

- These could be undertaken in existing drop in centres in both Catholic and Protestant areas, interface projects, youth provision and schools.
- Some of the young people expressed the view that paramilitary's still exert too much influence on their communities. This leads to community fears to engage with the other community.
- Not forcing interface barriers to come down before people are ready for them to come down, but getting communities to justify why they need to stay up.

What is ‘Good Relations’? How can we promote ‘Good Relations’?

In answering the previous questions the young people felt that they were covering the same issues. They expressed the view that good relations was about respecting your neighbours and neighboring communities. This included people from minority backgrounds as well as different political opinions. Like their previous responses, they felt that education about differences and the opportunity to explore these was at the heart of developing and improving relationships. One of the young people summed up the groups views by saying, “making friends and keeping them, requires constant work. Sometimes you need to agree to have a different opinion on things and not try to get your mate to always agree with you. Relationships in our communities requires you to do the same thing”

What is ‘Shared Space’ and ‘Shared Services’? How can we promote ‘Shared Space’ and ‘Shared Services’?

Through brainstorming exercises the young people identified the following as examples of shared services; hospitals, cinemas, concerts, city centre shops, restaurants and pubs, some leisure centres, some public transport, the response from the fire or ambulance services and the services we receive from our councils.

Through the same exercise they identified; city centres, concerts, some council parks, further education colleges and universities and places where people work as shared space. The young people highlighted that what they had identified as shared spaces and services were shared because the issues that divided people are largely ignored and/or are unknown in these places. When we posed the question “when do you think people will be able to live together and openly share their culture, religious, sporting, political beliefs etc...” they replied “what’s the life expectancy of our current politicians”? (A reference to, things won’t change until we get rid of our current politicians) and “about 15 – 20 years” (This was the timespan chosen by all groups, despite meeting at different times and locations)

When we asked how could we promote both, the young people identified;

- Integrated and shared education has an important role to play in promoting the tolerance and respect necessary to allow people to share space and services.
- Political leadership that supports a shared society.
- Political progress can lead to greater opportunities for jobs and employment. This in turn can lead to greater use of shared space.
- Local councils should look at ways in which council facilities, such as leisure centres can be safely used by everyone
- The government should support trips for young people to visit different countries experiencing conflict or who have recently experienced conflict to learn from them.
- Communities need to be fully informed about the specific cost of

providing separate services and the urgent need to address duplication.

- Opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions about the issues that divide us (They specifically identified the youth work sector as having a role within this).

As noted above the participants were cautious as to the value of identifying shared space/services as indicators of progress, given the often-superficial contact that occurred within them.

What are the unique challenges of interfaces? How can we respond to the unique challenges of interfaces?

As previously mentioned the young people were unanimous in saying that Interface communities need to be fully included in the process to taking interface barriers down. They were aware from the discussions that took place during this part of the process that many interfaces bore the brunt of the violence in the past and that this has left a lasting impression on those who live close to them. Not least in the continued fear and mistrust of those living on the other side. However, the young people felt that sufficient time had progressed for there to be a need to be able to justify the maintenance of all of these barriers. They would suggest that an assessment is made of each interface barrier and that their continued existence would need to be supported by the views of local residents, community leaders and local politicians and a security assessment that supported the retention of them. One of the groups that were consulted with lived in close proximity to an interface. They were unanimous in their belief that the wall dividing them from the “other-side” could not come down for at least 15 – 20 years. In fact their fear at it coming down in the foreseeable future was palpable.

Conclusion

- The young people have a clear understanding as to the nature and causes of sectarianism. Although they would not perceive themselves as sectarian, they hold similar political views as to those that divide us.

The participants were clear in their beliefs that;

- Our education system, including the youth sector, has a role to play.
- There needs to be strong political leadership.
- Political leadership that supports a shared society.
- The media has a role to play to ensure that “Good News” stories are reported.
- Interfaces can only come down when communities are ready for it.
- Each interface should be kept under period review.
- Cross Community “Youth Zones” should be established.
- Young people should be encouraged to undertake international travel that promotes peace building and conflict resolution skills/awareness.

- The influence of paramilitary groups needs to be tackled.
- Local Councils need to proactively support Shared Space.
- The specific financial costs of division need to be highlighted.

Oakgrove Integrated College

Dear Clerk of the Committee -

Consultation on a United Community

I write on behalf of students and staff of Oakgrove Integrated College, Derry-Londonderry, to offer thoughts on the consultation.

For 22 years, this school has sought to encourage students and staff to learn together and to explore issues of division. We have felt strongly that there are initiatives within an integrated school setting which are impossible in any other school model. We feel strongly, therefore, that more effort needs to be made to find a genuinely integrated experience for a greater number of students in Northern Ireland/North of Ireland (NI).

It has been our experience that the work of the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust was unparalleled in terms of its ability to bring together young people across the entire range of schools in NI. Despite the claims that efforts were made to preserve the work, it is the experience of a number of schools that more should have been done to follow up the suggestions of the volunteers and staff. Students and staff in our school who witnessed the benefits of the Spirit of Enniskillen's work would argue that efforts now could be made to restart that scheme so that its good work is not lost. Spirit of Enniskillen provided a unique model of young people leading change, bringing about a transformation in attitudes through emotional rather than intellectual development.

If we are serious about building a united community, then we need to facilitate reconciliation. A wonderful model which we have used is the Theatre of Witness, which allows young people to explore issues in depth and to understand why conflict is still relevant, and the human cost.

We have seen over 22 years that young people can be change leaders and we believe that there is value in young people facilitating discussions of politicians in order to make progress on the issues which divide.

We are happy to help the committee by providing any further information should it be required.

With good wishes,

Yours faithfully,

John Harkin

John Harkin

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"If you ever get to the place where injustice doesn't bother you, you're dead." - Myles Horton

Participation and Practice of Rights

Together Building A United Community

OFMDFM Inquiry

A response from the Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) organisation.

committee.ofmdfm@niassembly.gov.uk

1. Introduction

1.1 The Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) organisation was established in 2006 by internationally renowned trade unionist and human rights activist Inez McCormack. PPR supports disadvantaged groups in Northern Ireland (NI) to make their socio-economic rights real and assert their right to participate in government decisions which affect their lives. PPR enables groups to challenge and change current government decision making practices which exclude them, and which lead to poor service delivery, entrenched inequalities and ineffective use of public money.

1.2 PPR's experience of working on issues relating to economic and social deprivation, with communities impacted by the conflict in Northern Ireland has run in parallel with increasing recognition at the international level of the importance of addressing socio-economic rights abuses and violations in post conflict societies. It is now accepted that the meaningful delivery of transitional justice must include economic and social rights as core to building sustainable peace. A recent publication from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which examines the relationship between transitional justice and socio-economic rights, notes the growing acceptance of this core relationship and recommends that;

"Awareness should be raised among stakeholders about the importance of including relevant violations of economic, social and cultural rights in transitional justice as well as about the latter's potential to deal with such violations"¹

1.3 Socio-economic rights violations and structural inequality were key factors in both the origins of the conflict, and the current unfinished peace. It is with this in mind that PPR wish to contribute to the OFMDFM Committee Inquiry into the Together Building a United Community strategy. It is PPR's intention to base this contribution on our experience of engaging with communities living around interfaces to use a human rights based approach to campaign on issues that mean the most to them, including housing, mental health services, unemployment, welfare and regeneration.

1.4 With specific reference to the Terms of Reference set by the Committee, PPR wish to make the following points.

2. Good Relations & Equality

2.1 The Terms of Reference for this Inquiry specifically make reference to the "examination of theory and practice with regard to good relations, shared space and shared services" as well as a "consideration of best practice, both locally and internationally, in bringing divided communities together" to develop same. PPR's experience can shed valuable insight on both of these aspects.

¹ (2014) UNOHCHR, *Transitional Justice and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, p.57

From the outset it is vital to note that the Together Building a United Community strategy acknowledges OFMDFM's vision as one of a united community as one which is based upon equality of opportunity;

*"Our vision is a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation - one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance."*²

2.2 Furthermore, the strategy recognises that the statutory duty contained in Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to have due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity is a higher legal duty than the duty to have regard to the promotion of good relations and that the latter should be done "without prejudice" to the former. The strategy states;

*"Therefore, in our decision making and policy implementation, we regard the promotion of equality of opportunity as an essential element in the building of good community relations and consider that good relations cannot and should not be built on a foundation of inequality."*³

2.3 However PPR's work supporting disadvantaged communities who experience inequalities across a range of indices highlights that despite the above commitments, the government approach to creating what is defined as 'a shared future' has been pursued at the expense of tackling these inequalities.

3. Case Study: Belfast City Centre Waiting List

3.1 Twice in the last five year, the United Nations has called for housing inequality impacting Catholics in North Belfast to be tackled. However, despite the Section 75 (1) statutory obligations opportunities to do so have been lost. One example was the pursuit of a 'shared space' agenda in relation to housing in the city centre, which further disadvantaged those impacted by housing inequality in North Belfast.

3.2 PPR's response to a 2011 Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) consultation regarding the creation of a Belfast City Centre Waiting List highlighted deep concerns with the approach taken by the NIHE in terms of both the failure to promote equality of opportunity and the failure to target objective need. The NIHE's proposals regarded the creation of a new Common Landlord Area which would be used to manage a waiting list of applicants specifically seeking housing in a new and defined Belfast City Centre area.⁴

3.3 The approach taken by the NIHE in this consultation inappropriately placed the policy objective of creating 'a shared future' over the legal requirement to have due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity which would include tackling religious inequality. The NIHE decided not to draw from the existing waiting list and not to allocate on the basis of objective need, for no other reason than this would involve the allocation of more homes to Catholics, on the basis that they were disproportionately represented as being in housing stress (63 offers would go to Catholics, 4 to Protestants and 25 going to undisclosed in the

²(2013) OFMDFM, *Together Building a United Community* <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf> p.3

³(2013) OFMDFM, *Together Building a United Community* <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf> p.15

⁴For further please see (2013) PPR, *Equality Can't Wait*, Chapter 4 http://issuu.com/ppr-org/docs/equality_can_t_wait

event of 100 units becoming available). This option, was rejected as it would not result in the desired 'shared city centre living space'.

3.4 Despite PPR (and others) identifying over fifteen misapplications of the statutory obligations in our response to this consultation and pointing to the clear need for a full Equality Impact Assessment, the policy was passed un-amended by the NIHE Board in January 2012.

3.5 PPR would encourage the Committee to ensure that the legal priority given to the promotion of equality of opportunity is reflected by the Inquiry in all considerations on the promotion of good relations and the creation of shared spaces.

3.6 PPR would seek to underline the necessity of tackling socio-economic inequalities and deprivation as a prerequisite to building good relations. A truly shared future for those who suffer some of the most chronic deprivation in Northern Ireland, including those living at interfaces, must be based on effectively tackling the inequalities that they experience – across housing, health, education, employment, etc. That segregation and division is a feature of life in certain areas of Northern Ireland, particularly interface areas is hardly surprising considering the history, and the continued presence, of conflict in these areas. Government figures released in 2010 by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) demonstrated that the top 20 most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland are still concentrated in North Belfast, West Belfast and Derry. The same measurement taken in 2005 showed the same profile, and highlighted government failure to address objective need in these areas.

Table 1

	Top 20 Most Deprived Areas 2005 (MDM)		Top 20 Most Deprived Areas 2010 (MDM)	
1	Whiterock_2	Belfast	Whiterock_2	Belfast
2	Shankill_2	Belfast	Whiterock_3	Belfast
3	Falls_2	Belfast	Falls_2	Belfast
4	Crumlin_2_Belfast	Belfast	Falls_3	Belfast
5	Whiterock_3	Belfast	New Lodge_1	Belfast
6	Falls_3	Belfast	Shankill_2	Belfast
7	Shankill_1	Belfast	Crumlin_2_Belfast	Belfast
8	New Lodge_2	Belfast	Falls_1	Belfast
9	New Lodge_1	Belfast	Ardoyne_3	Belfast
10	Ballymacarrett_3	Belfast	Creggan Central_1	Derry
11	Creggan Central_1	Derry	Upper Springfield_3	Belfast
12	Upper Springfield_3	Belfast	East	Strabane
13	Ardoyne_3	Belfast	Clonard_1	Belfast
14	Falls_1	Belfast	New Lodge_2	Belfast
15	New Lodge_3	Belfast	New Lodge_3	Belfast
16	Brandywell	Derry	Collin Glen_3	Lisburn
17	Duncairn_1	Belfast	Twinbrook_2	Lisburn
18	Woodvale_3	Belfast	Shankill_1	Belfast
19	Crumlin_1_Belfast	Belfast	Duncairn_1	Belfast
20	Ardoyne_2	Belfast	Upper Springfield_1	Belfast

3.7 Working with communities, even those traditionally viewed as “divided”, to design proposals which would effectively address such deprivation has been a key element of PPR’s work. The most significant example of this is the cross community Girdwood Residents Jury, the learning from which is detailed in the following case study, and is offered as a best practice example of bringing communities together.

4. Case Study: Girdwood Residents Jury

4.1 In 2008, PPR organised and convened the Girdwood Residents’ Jury to consider the planned regeneration of Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol in North Belfast (estimated cost £231 million). The Jury was composed of residents from the five wards immediately surrounding the 27 acre site (Ardoyne, Crumlin, New Lodge, Shankill and Waterworks), and were of diverse gender, religion, political opinion, marital and dependent status, and disability status. PPR carried out a development programme with them which involved considering both the potential of the Girdwood site and the human rights and equality obligations on government (both domestic and international) to ensure deprived communities felt the benefit of the public investment the regeneration would entail.

4.2 The group developed a set of human rights indicators capable of monitoring progress, or otherwise, in relation to the Equality Impact Assessment, development of proposals, budget and monitoring stages of the regeneration process. The aim was to monitor whether the responsible government departments, DSD (Department for Social Development) and OFMDFM (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister) were discharging their equality commitments in a way that fulfilled their legal obligations, promoted a targeted and effective use of public money, and produced tangible and measurable outcomes for the chronically deprived communities which surrounded the site.

4.3 The Girdwood Residents Jury achieved what many outsiders would consider impossible – agreement how money and land situated at a North Belfast interface should be used. Using international and domestic standards on equality and human rights, the diverse cross community group set down a framework for delivering the regeneration that would ensure that the deprivation and inequalities impacting all the areas would be tackled. They also developed progressive proposals (contained in the paper ‘The Girdwood Gamble’) aimed at creating ring fenced jobs and apprenticeships for those furthest from the labour market, including plans for skills development, and monitoring and evaluation. The powers to deliver these proposals lay in the equality provisions of s75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), and had been based on a Department of Finance and Personnel Pilot Project carried out in 2005 on the provision of ring fenced jobs for the long-term unemployed in government contracts. The Pilot Project was evaluated by the University of Ulster which concluded that it was effective, economical, effective, efficient, and did not breach any European legislation. Furthermore, the University noted that adopting such an approach to projects such as the new campus, “could make a significant impact to reducing unemployment and social welfare payments.”

4.4 These proposals were presented to officials in the DSD and OFMDFM with responsibility for the regeneration but were not accepted. The group in turn wrote to the First and Deputy First Minister with their proposals several times, who are ultimately accountable for human rights obligations. Finally, they received a response by the First and Deputy First Minister asking them not to continue writing to either the FM/DFM on this issue, and instead to engage with the civil servants.

4.5 Six years on, refined versions of these proposals have been adopted as a best practice model, including by Belfast City Council through its cross-community ratification of the REAL JOBS NOW motion and through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure’s

inclusion of equality based social clauses in procurement contracts for the redevelopment of Ravenhill, Windsor and Casement stadia. Outcomes have yet to be seen, and the people directly affected by unemployment who are working hard for their proper implementation continue their campaign. However the Girdwood Residents Jury is a practical example domestically of how human rights and equality can be a powerful tool to unite communities and encourage meaningful participation from across the political spectrum.

6. The Role of Communities

6.1 PPR would like to respond to the OFMDFM Committee's request for information on the issues to be addressed and the role of communities in policy and decision making in relation to community integration and particularly, the removal of interface barriers.

6.2 PPR's experience working in the most deprived areas of North Belfast over the last 8 years has been that the issues such as housing, jobs, and places for children to play are not simply ancillary to issues of division and segregation; rather they are priorities which are considered central to the delivery of the Good Friday Agreement. .

6.3 In 2010, in a project commissioned by Belfast City Council, PPR worked with a broad range of community organisations from interfaces in North and West Belfast to produce a toolkit entitled "Building Sustainable Communities: Urban Regeneration and Interface Communities". The toolkit outlines an evidenced based approach which maximises outcomes through the efficient and effective use of public monies. It was developed with the interface workers who identified a methodology for urban regeneration at interface areas based on equality standards. Most importantly, the toolkit promotes an approach which is based on the capacity and commitment of those who live within these communities, which was key to it attracting support. This document is available from Belfast City Council or on request from PPR.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Through active participation and a rights framework our groups have disproved the notion that communities cannot find solutions to so-called 'contentious' issues. However, we would caution against a model that attempts to engage communities in decision-making, which has a pre-determined end point – in this case the removal of interface barriers. As no doubt many other contributions will highlight – the people affected must decide when this is appropriate, and the top-down imposition of this as a priority to meet a government target will not aid this process.

7.2 A copy of Girdwood Gamble and a Factsheet on the REAL JOBS NOW motion is enclosed with this submission.

7.3. For more information, please contact Kate Ward, Policy and Research Support Officer at kate@pprproject.org.

October 2014

The Girdwood Gamble



Findings and Proposals
May 2009

Girdwood Residents' Jury

CONTENTS

Introduction p.3

Background p.7

Proposals on the Way Forward p.8

Residents’ Jury’s Monitoring Results..... p.10

Appendix One
List of Evidence Considered p.18

Appendix Two - Eight
Evidential Basis of Jury’s Findings p.19

Glossary of Terms

DSD	Department for Social Development
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
NBCAU	North Belfast Community Action Unit
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
PPR	Participation and the Practice of Rights Project

gam·blev. **gam·bled, gam·bling, gam·bles**v. *intr.*

1.

a. To bet on an uncertain outcome, as of a contest.

b. To play a game of chance for stakes.

2. To take a risk in the hope of gaining an advantage or a benefit.

3. To engage in reckless or hazardous behaviour



The Stakes

The regeneration of Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol is a £231 million investment into the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. This investment is the one off opportunity to begin changing the patterns of inequality and deprivation which have produced unacceptable realities for these communities.

Since the 1994 ceasefire, north Belfast rates of workless households have not reduced. Housing waiting lists and inequality have increased. Educational attainment in the most deprived wards has shown no sign of turning. Suicide rates have skyrocketed in the north Belfast parliamentary constituency, rising from being ranked 319th to the 11th highest in the UK. Our society has produced a 'lost generation' of young people aged between the ages of 16-25 who have seen no tangible improvement in their social and economic opportunities.

The Girdwood Gamble

Nobody has the right to gamble this one-off opportunity "on an uncertain outcome". To do so, without question, would be to engage in "reckless or hazardous behaviour".

Yet the Draft Masterplan for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol, and the Draft Equality Impact Assessment, are 'gambles'. They are gambles because the supposed benefits to the community are vague, ambiguous, undefined and uncertain. Available detailed statistics and evidence of best practice were not used. These could and should have been used to put solid building blocks in place which would have enabled proposals to be developed, measured, and monitored to ensure effective change in the current conditions of local communities.

Yesterday's Losses

In January 2008, a report by Regional Forecasts (a division of Oxford Economic Ltd) described Belfast's economy as follows:

"The Belfast economy is growing, investment in the city centre continues, house prices rise and increased traffic flow reflects the city's increasing desirability as a place to both live and work. However, many parts of Belfast remain 'untouched' by recent growth..."

Yet the objective of this public expenditure was precisely to 'touch' and 'change' the realities in the most disadvantaged communities to produce a more healthy and sustainable society. Our rights were breached, our futures and public monies were 'gambled' in a 'game' where evidence and analysis of past mistakes were either

ignored or simply weren't considered. Banks and developers did very well. We didn't. As a result, the gap between the prosperous and the poor has widened.

Communities, such as the Markets, Lower Ormeau and Donegall Pass in south Belfast, were losers in processes which, according to law and policy, were supposed to promise them a better and different future.

Evidence given to the Residents' Jury from Ken Humphries of the Church and Community Work Alliance, who worked for the Mornington Project (Lower Ormeau) on the Gasworks regeneration, showed how the employment 'benefits' for the community only delivered more of the same. He cited:

- *18 local people were trained and interviewed for the jobs in Halifax but only one got a job.*
- *There are currently 4500 people employed in the Gasworks out of which 12 come from the local community; 3 call centre workers, 7 cleaners, 1 tea lady and a shop assistant.*
- *None of the business incubation units employ people from the community.*

Yet government sponsored evaluations are calling this a "success". The official post project evaluation for the site (2007) states: *"This [the Gasworks] was a very successful development for Laganside and the Belfast City Council...All key performance indicators have been achieved and exceed (sic) beyond all expectations - even though they were revised upwards following the 1998 review."*

So we are entitled to ask - Who set the indicators? Why did they not include targets to change disadvantage, eg long-term unemployment and economic inactivity?

We have been told by the Minister for Social Development that regeneration projects, such as Girdwood, will learn the lessons of the past through applying learning from such evaluations.

Yet a Freedom of Information request told us that the Gasworks regeneration was the only regeneration project which helped inform the development of the Girdwood regeneration plan.

Michael McGimpsey, MLA for south Belfast, said of the Gasworks regeneration:

"...there are strong lessons to be learned, particularly by City Hall but also by Government Departments and agencies, that local communities effectively, in my view, were let down by a process that was supposed to be very much a partnership with the local community and ended up ignoring the local community."

If the Department uses the same key performance indicators and methodology on Girdwood, there will be the same outcomes. "Success" will again be defined as failing us.

"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Albert Einstein

Gambling Outlawed

In Northern Ireland there are laws and policies which outlaw these 'gambles' by public bodies:

- Section 75 of the NI Act (1998)
- the tackling of objective need re-affirmed in the St. Andrew's Agreement
- Equality Commission and the Central Procurement Directorate's 'Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement' (2008)
- Northern Ireland Practical Guide to the Green Book (2003)
- NI Executive's Budget and Programme for Government 2008-2011

The responsibility is on the Minister for Social Development to show how these are being effectively used. All of these outline how the government should spend the public's money to create sustainable social and economic development.

Legislative and policy tools have not been applied, or have been mis-applied in a tick-box fashion, and there is no evidence of learning from other regeneration projects which failed disadvantaged communities.

The Girdwood Draft Masterplan was based on a buoyant housing market to finance the plans. The housing market has collapsed. The developer driven model of regeneration has crumbled before our eyes in the UK and Ireland. The hard evidence is that public monies delivered massive returns for the developers and little or no returns for disadvantaged communities.

The economic recession gives us breathing space to ensure that any proposals brought forward promote effective economic and social sustainability through the promotion of equality and addressing of need. We need to ensure that the mistakes that have already been made are corrected for the future so as to guarantee the most effective and efficient expenditure of public resources.

Planning Not Gambling

In the following report you will see that:

- Residents have sought out and documented best practice examples of national and international regeneration initiatives in order to apply the lessons to north Belfast. They have brought in expertise from Maryland and New York (USA), Dublin, and Belfast to inform their proposals;
- Residents have taken national laws and policy tools and attempted to apply them to the Girdwood regeneration process in a constructive, modest and patient fashion;
- Residents have creatively engaged in the equality impact assessment process for Girdwood;
- Residents have developed human rights indicators and benchmarks, in line with international human rights standards and government obligations, in order to steadily and systematically ensure the effectiveness of the regeneration process.

You will find the results of the Residents' Jury's monitoring the performance of the Department for Social Development and North Belfast Community Action Unit in meeting human rights through the Girdwood regeneration to date in this report. It reveals how little the approach of government has changed, even in the face of this economic crisis.

No More Gambles

In the first section of this report, we list a series of concrete steps that should be explored immediately to ensure value for money, the promotion of equality and tackling objective need through the Girdwood regeneration.

These steps would generate training opportunities and a skills base within our community.

These steps would generate employment.

These steps would generate ownership of the regeneration among the surrounding communities.

These steps would deliver on the promise of the peace dividend that has, to date, passed the communities surrounding Girdwood by.

Nothing About Us, Without Us, Is For Us

We are entitled to receive commitments from government that the gambling which damaged our past is no longer allowed to damage our future.

We are entitled to be part of making and measuring change.

We are entitled to a respectful and serious engagement by the Department with our rigorous and detailed work to do that.

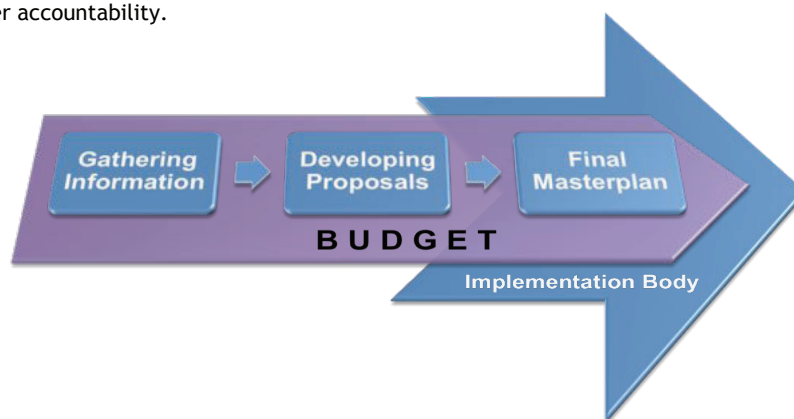
We are entitled to be shown how that engagement will influence and shape this 'one-off' opportunity to build a future different from our past.

That was the promise of peace. That was the promise of how we could begin to shape our future and rebuild our communities. We are trying to do our bit. It is long past time that government did theirs.

BACKGROUND

On the 28th May 2008 a Residents' Jury was convened in North Belfast to consider the regeneration of Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol. The Jury is composed of residents from the five wards surrounding the 27 acre site (Ardoyne, Crumlin, New Lodge, Shankill, Waterworks). They heard evidence and put questions to a wide range of local and international experts on equality, human rights and urban regeneration.

The Residents' Jury used the information from the Jury event to set human rights indicators to measure whether the regeneration fulfilled government's obligations under human rights law to improve their right and that of their communities to work, education, adequate housing and the highest attainable standard of health. The Girdwood regeneration is at a very early stage and is expected to take 10-15 years to complete, although this is very much dependent on financial circumstances. The Jury, therefore, wanted to focus on the regeneration process, *ie* how to ensure that the process itself ensures residents' participation, promotes equality, and that there is proper accountability.



The Jury launched their findings on the 30th October 2008 and have committed to monitoring the following parts of the early regeneration has been conducted by the NBCAU on behalf of the DSD. This has taken place through the Equality Impact Assessment process - which is a process public bodies go through to ensure that their actions promote equality.

The results of this monitoring are in the following pages.

PROPOSALS ON THE WAY FORWARD

1. Regeneration: Developing skills within the community

Substantial numbers of local people from the five wards surrounding Girdwood (New Lodge, Waterworks, Crumlin, Shankill, Ardoyne), and reflective of Section 75 groups (different age, gender, ability, religion, political opinion, sexual orientation, dependent status, marital status, race) should be trained to play an active role as data collectors and data analysts in the initial stages of the regeneration process in order to produce a baseline analysis of the nature and effect of inequality in the communities. This analysis would be used to assist in developing targeted proposals and, against which, to measure the success of proposals.

This would involve:

- allocating a budget for an accredited skills development programme including confidence building, research methodology and techniques, and analytical skills
- exploring possibilities with other government departments (for example the Department for Employment and Learning) of turning this process into a 'path to employment' programme for residents currently out of work

Examples of where a similar approach has worked elsewhere:

- Oakland Community Interviews (California, USA)
- SECO Pharmacy Suitability (Maryland, USA)

2. Regeneration: Developing effective and targeted proposals

Proposals must be targeted at the inequalities and needs in our community. No-one is better placed to explore these than residents themselves who have experience of previous governmental interventions which have both succeeded and failed. This would have to be carried out following the baseline analysis being conducted as above.

This would involve:

- allocating a budget for residents to be able to access training and technical assistance in urban planning with a view to producing effective proposals which have the capacity to promote equality and address need
- exploring possibilities with other government departments (for example the Department for Employment and Learning) of turning this process into a 'path to employment' programme for residents currently out of work

Examples of where a similar approach has worked elsewhere:

- Greenpoint Initiated Community Plan (NY, USA)
- South Bronx, Melrose (NY, USA)

3. Regeneration: Tackling long-term unemployment

In advance of the construction work, and in tandem with above processes, part of data collection would be taking an audit of the skills base within the surrounding communities and identifying obstacles to employment. Major training initiatives to enhance the skills base of those groups disproportionately affected by unemployment and economic inactivity in advance of any jobs on site would be required. This would also require targeted outreach. It would enable local people to be better placed to avail of procurement equality targets in advance of construction. Additionally once private sector investment has been secured, training should be carried out well in advance for the same reason as above.

This would involve:

- Gathering accurate information on employment statistics and carrying out a comprehensive skills audit in the surrounding communities as part of the data collection phase
- An outreach strategy to engage workless residents on barriers to employment and what elements need to be implemented to ensure training benefits the long-term unemployed
- Cross-departmental intervention with community based training and employment organisations to devise programmes which would develop the skills base of long term unemployed residents
- Effective and substantive measures to promote equality built into the procurement process

Examples of where a similar approach has worked elsewhere:

- Pilot Project on Utilising the Unemployed in Public Contracts (Sept 2005, Northern Ireland)
- West Belfast Greater Shankill Health Partnership

4. Regeneration: Ensuring Success

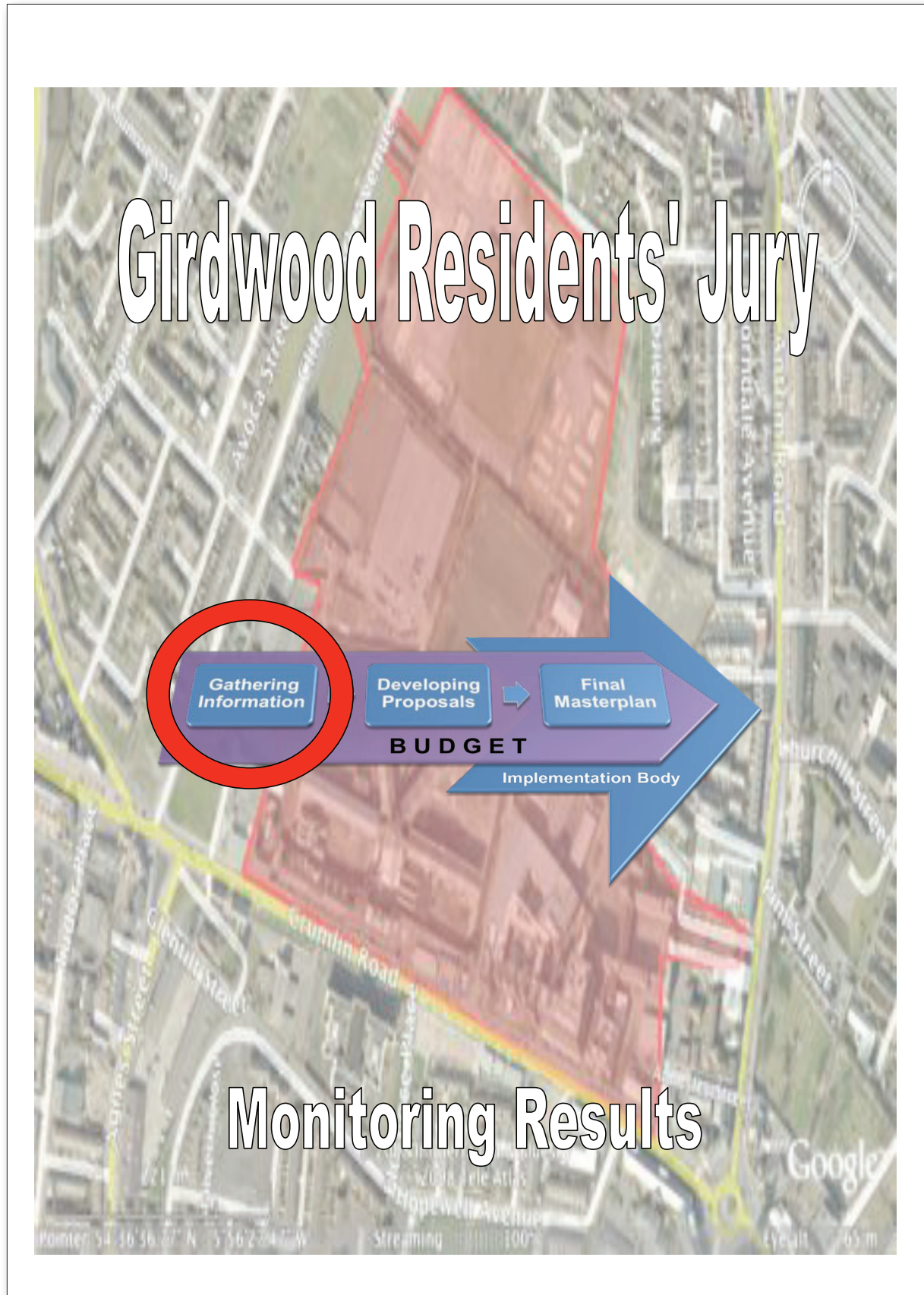
Local residents should be provided with the skills and knowledge to engage in monitoring the implementation and assisting in carrying out the evaluation of the Girdwood regeneration. As with the data collection/analysis and development of proposals, this would involve local people actively acting as ‘evaluators’ of the regeneration projects. Again, this is something which is often siphoned off at significant costs to private sector consultants. However if effective training was available, these skills would be created, and would reside, in the community.

This would involve:

- allocating a budget for residents to be able to access training and technical assistance in participatory monitoring and evaluation
- exploring possibilities with other government departments (for example the Department for Employment and Learning) of turning this process into a ‘path to employment’ programme for residents currently out of work

Examples of where a similar approach has worked elsewhere:

- National Neighborhood Indicators Project (Maryland, USA)
- Seven Towers Monitoring Group (Belfast)
- NeighborWorks/DLN Success Measures Project (USA)



Naming the groups experiencing inequality in north Belfast...

Has the indicator been met?

Yes
 No

The following table shows what groups were identified in the EQIA as experiencing inequality and therefore in need of concrete proposals to address their problems:

The Jury found that a lot of the information collected through public sector bodies and community groups

ISSUE	GROUPS IN EQIA
employment	none
education	none
health	none
housing	catholic/nationalist



in north Belfast was not used for the EQIA.

The failure to identify groups in need of positive action across all issues except housing means that proposals for Girdwood cannot be targeted to specifically address their long standing issues.

What must be done:

It is important to realise that this indicator is essential if proposals for the regeneration are to successfully target vulnerable groups in our areas in order to promote equality. The DSD must identify who these groups are in north Belfast in the final EQIA.

See Appendix Two for list of evidence considered when reaching this conclusion

A1
 Have the most vulnerable groups in north Belfast been named in the EQIA through the gathering of statistical information on inequality and deprivation?

Gathering people’s experience of inequality in north Belfast...

Has the indicator been met?

Yes



No

Interviews should have been carried out and focus groups with residents held to reveal the affects of disadvantage and inequality on residents’ lives and what the barriers are to overcoming these. This would then help to develop proposals to address the problems.

It is difficult to meet this indicator if residents experiencing inequality haven’t even been identified by the DSD (A1).

The DSD did carry out focus groups with the community, however they were not about developing targeted proposals, but were used to comment on existing ones - ones that had been develop without considering equality.

An indication of the outcomes of such a methodology is that despite widespread focus groups, no concrete or definite changes to the Masterplan are to be brought forward following the Draft EQIA other than possibly changing the design of the Arc Road. The DSD has not met this indicator.

What must be done:

Some of the focus groups carried out by the community groups and DSD have information relevant to this indicator. However only after groups have been identified (A1) can their experiences be collected properly. If carried out, it will give good insight into the effects of deprivation - but more importantly will show why government’s past attempts to tackle these problems have failed and what is required to tackle the problems.

See Appendix Three for list of evidence considered when reaching this conclusion

A2

Have the experiences of vulnerable groups living with deprivation and inequality been collected?

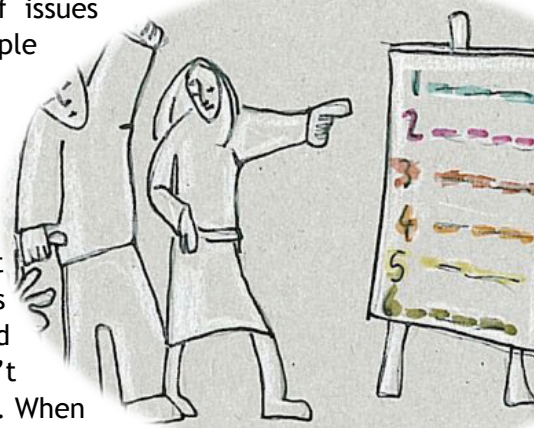
Prioritising issues important to people in north Belfast...

Has the indicator been met?

Yes No

There should be a list of issues and priorities which people experiencing inequality and deprivation say need to be addressed.

Again, however, it is extremely difficult to meet this indicator if those groups haven't been identified and their experiences haven't been gathered (A1 and A2). When vulnerable groups were involved in the process to date, they did not have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the development of proposals. Rather some were asked how proposals in the Draft Masterplan may or may not affect them. Proposals, issues, and priorities had already been developed elsewhere. This indicator was not met by the DSD.



What must be done:

Community organised EQIA focus groups involved vulnerable groups identifying and proposing issues. These, however, were not meaningfully included in the Draft EQIA. However this information is still of significant use. Once vulnerable groups have been identified (A1), there will be opportunities for vulnerable groups to name and prioritise issues. This should be done alongside indicator A2.

A3
Were identified vulnerable groups involved in naming and prioritising the issues which are most important to them?

See Appendix Four for list of evidence considered when reaching this conclusion

Making sure information is easy to understand...

Has the indicator been met?



Local residents should be able to understand the EQIA so that they can respond to it effectively.



The Jury found most of the information presented was full of technical language and very difficult to understand. This can be particularly challenging for people without experience with this sort of specialised language. More than that, the overall format, which does not link inequality with proposals, made the EQIA unclear.

Every practical attempt should be made to ensure local residents can meaningfully engage in the EQIA process. Making official documents clear is only a first step in this process.

What must be done:

This indicator is not simply about 'style'. If an EQIA clearly shows who experiences inequalities and how proposals are targeted, it goes a long way towards making it understandable. This, however, has not been done.

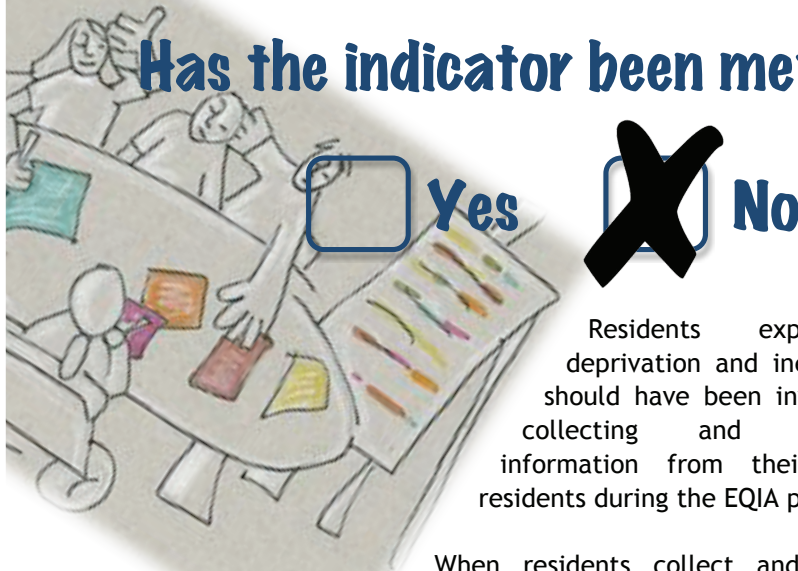
That being said, the Jury found that the information itself could have been presented in a more interesting and user-friendly format without compromising detail. While the quality and rigour of the document should not be compromised, the production of a summary document using clear language would make it more accessible.

See Appendix Five for list of evidence considered when reaching this conclusion

A4
Is the information on inequality and deprivation clear, accessible, and easily understood in the EQIA documents and in the consultation process?

Involving residents in gathering and analysing the information...

Has the indicator been met?



A5
Were residents from identified vulnerable groups involved in collecting and analysing the information during the EQIA process?

Residents experiencing deprivation and inequalities should have been involved in collecting and analysing information from their fellow residents during the EQIA process.

When residents collect and analyse information, it allows more accurate and extensive information to be gathered. This is because the information can be gathered from residents' neighbours and friends - people who are often defined as 'hard to reach'. This is invaluable access which government department's don't have. Additionally, by involving residents experiencing inequalities and deprivation in gathering information, a greater ownership of the regeneration scheme is created among the community.

Residents were involved in EQIA focus groups to provide information, but they were never given the opportunity to collect or analyse that information for themselves. The DSD did not meet this indicator.

What must be done:

As part of the Final EQIA, local residents must be recruited to collect information from other residents on how inequality affects their lives, and ways in which barriers can be removed through proposals for the Girdwood regeneration.

See Appendix Six for list of evidence considered when reaching this conclusion

Providing training and assistance to local residents...

Has the indicator been met?

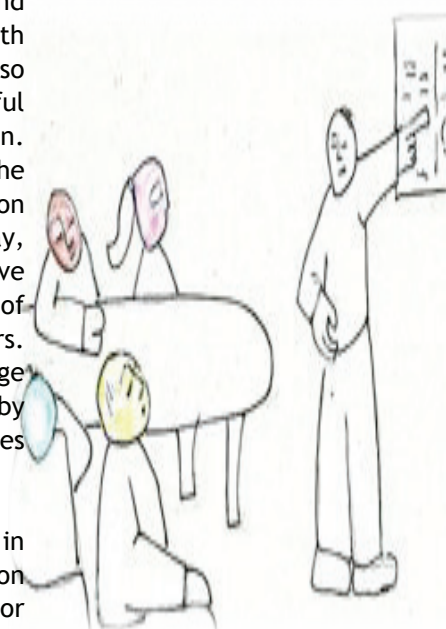
Yes



No

Residents experiencing inequalities and deprivation should be provided with independent training and assistance so that they can play a more meaningful role in decisions about regeneration. For the EQIA, this should relate to the collecting and analysing of information that is useful for the EQIA. In this way, more residents would become active participants in the process, instead of being treated merely as observers. They would be able to engage meaningfully in a process which - by law - should benefit the communities most in need.

Because residents were not involved in gathering and analysing information (A5), the DSD cannot meet an indicator which requires those same residents to be trained.



What must be done:

Once vulnerable groups have been identified and recruited (A5), these individuals would then need to receive training and assistance to equip them with the skills required to gather the experiences of local people living with inequality and deprivation.

A6
Was there training and assistance resourced and made accessible by government to enable vulnerable groups to provide, collect and analyse information during the EQIA process?

See Appendix Seven for list of evidence considered when reaching this conclusion

Making proposals based on local needs and inequalities...

Has the indicator been met?

Yes
 No

There should be evidence of how local deprivation and inequality is being tackled through the proposals for Girdwood. It is not enough to say ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’ or that certain proposals won’t affect different groups badly. All proposals should be targeted at specific inequalities and problems. They must be capable of being monitored for effectiveness. This will make sure our tax monies are spent efficiently and effectively.

As has already been mentioned, the draft EQIA does not include anywhere near enough evidence regarding local deprivation and inequalities to produce a proper understanding of the needs of our communities. How can inequalities be tackled if the same inequalities have not even been identified? The DSD did not meet this indicator.

What must be done:

It is critical that this indicator be met if public resources are to be spent in an effective and efficient way. All proposals for Girdwood must be targeted at tackling some inequality in the community. This requires developing alternative proposals as required by the EQIA process. The following method should be used to develop these proposals:

Specific Inequality (around health, employment, etc.)



Specific proposal to tackle inequality



Targets developed to test whether proposal is effective

A7
 Is the evidence regarding local deprivation and inequality being used by government to form proposals?

See Appendix Eight for list of evidence considered when reaching this conclusion

APPENDIX ONE

HOW DID THE JURY ARRIVE AT THESE FINDINGS?

The Residents' Jury deliberated on the following evidence when developing their findings:

- 1. The Draft Masterplan for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol**
- 2. The Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol**
- 3. Evidence Collecting Session with two officials from the North Belfast Community Action Unit (13th January 2009)**
- 4. Freedom of Information request to the DSD to reveal full details of all focus groups and meetings which took place in the community regarding the Draft EQIA (January 2009)**
- 5. Contact with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency**
- 6. Contact with Shankill Job Assist Centre and the Ashton Employment Club**
- 7. Analysing the Dunlop Report and work of the Girdwood Advisory Panel**
- 8. Analysing Draft EQIA submissions from the Committee on the Administration of Justice, Participation and the Practice of Rights Project, Lower Shankill Community Association, Cliftonville Antrim Road CEP, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Brucevale Residents, North Belfast Interface Network, Community Relations Council, North Belfast Partnership Board**
- 9. Equality Commission's 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment' (2005)**
- 10. Evidence Provided at the Girdwood Residents Jury (28th May 2008)**
- 11. PPR Report 'Unlocking the Potential: Human Rights, Equality and the Draft Masterplan for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol' (January 2008)**
- 12. PPR Report 'Changing the Patterns of the Past: Putting People First in the Regeneration of North Belfast' (August 2008)**

In the following pages we outline the evidence which the Girdwood Residents' Jury considered for each indicator.

APPENDIX TWO

A1. Have the most vulnerable groups in north Belfast been named in the EQIA through the gathering of statistical information on inequality and deprivation?

1. Analysing the Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol

According to legislation, information should have been collected regarding inequalities between the following groups in our community: Persons of different -

- Age
- Gender
- Religious Belief
- Dependent Status
- Marital Status
- Political Opinion
- Sexuality
- Race
- With / without disability

The Residents' Jury found that very little information was collected by the North Belfast Community Action Unit during the Draft Equality Impact Assessment to identify inequalities between the named groups under law. In the following table you will see what information was and was not collected which should have assisted in identifying groups experiencing inequality:

	EMPLOYMENT	HEALTH	EDUCATION	HOUSING
Age	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	P38-40
Gender	p.16 , 17, 25	p.25	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION
Religious Belief	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	p.38-40
Dependent Status	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	p.38-40
Marital Status	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	p.38-40
Political Opinion	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION
Sexuality	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION
With / without disability	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION
Race	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION	NO INFORMATION

The only group identified as experiencing inequality were catholics and nationalists in terms of being disproportionately affected by housing stress.

2. Evidence Collecting session with two officials from the North Belfast Community Action Unit

During an Evidence Collecting session with the NBCAU (13th January 2009), evidence provided by officials from the North Belfast Community Action Unit pointed to mitigating circumstances and explanations as to why statistical data on inequality was not presented:

- a. Statistics were not readily accessible. The NBCAU relied on NISRA and staff within the DSD for information on inequality and deprivation. According to the NCBAU, there were 'gaps in the statistical data', and in order to address these gaps the NBCAU: i) wrote out to over 500 groups, and ii) held focus groups with communities.

- b. The collection of data on inequality has been a long process including: the Dunlop Report, the MacKenzie Report, and included the work of the Advisory Panel
- c. It was not the appropriate stage of the regeneration process to identify groups to target through employment proposals:

“The Draft Masterplan actually makes it clear that there’s a need to provide training and employment opportunities for local people. Now the detail of that, of trying to address those at most at need, is then when we start to implement the Masterplan. So that’s a very relevant point [nb. this answer was provided in response to question by the Residents’ Jury asking how the statistics in the Draft EQIA relate to the proposals in the Masterplan] but its probably further down the line.” (emphasis added)

3. Equality Commission’s ‘Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment’

Schedule 9, para 4 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) states that equality schemes must conform with the Equality Commission’s Guide to the Statutory Duties, which outlines the mandatory aspects of the legislation for public bodies.

Annex 1, para 2.1 is quite clear in terms of what public bodies should do when there is insufficient data available on inequalities:

- *“Identify gaps in available information for equality categories and where more detailed data are needed take steps in order to have the optimum information on which to consult and base subsequent decisions;*
- *If necessary, commission new data (qualitative or quantitative). As outlined above co-operation within and between sectors should be considered...”*

Despite openly stating that there were “gaps in statistical data”, it does not appear that the Department for Social Development did not take any steps to commission new data. It is the Jury’s opinion that this would be essential in order to have “optimum information” on which to decide how £231 million would be spent by a public authority.

4. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

Through contact with the NISRA (19th January 2009), the Residents Jury were able to identify some statistics readily available in relation to Section 75 groups that were not included in the Draft EQIA:

- New Deal 25+ (2007) – Age (North Belfast Assembly Area)
- Higher Education Enrolments (2006/07) – Age and Gender (Across North Belfast Wards)
- Disability Living Allowance Recipients (2007) – Age and Gender (Across North Belfast Wards)
- Income Support Claimants (2007) – Age, Gender, Disability Status, with/without Dependents, marital status (Across North Belfast Wards)

Therefore, even without having to commission further research, or instruct statutory agencies or government departments to present data in certain fashions, there were statistics on inequality and employment, health, and education readily available through the internet. Despite this availability, these were not used in the Draft EQIA by the Department for Social Development.

5. Shankill Job Assist Centre and the Ashton Employment Club

The Residents Jury were aware that local community organisations, specifically those providing services, collected information on residents in relation to employment and health. In order to see what type of information was available from these sources and which could be of use to an EQIA, the Jury contacted the

Shankill Job Assist Centre and the Ashton Employment Club. The Jury found that these organisations collected information on the profile of service users' (such as age, gender, etc) which is submitted to the Department for Employment and Learning and could be gathered to assist in identifying inequalities between the named groups under the legislation.

Furthermore the Jury is aware that an abundance of information is collected when people fill in Jobs Seekers Allowance claims, housing benefit, etc. This information, specifically about north Belfast, should be extracted in order to name vulnerable groups in our community. While some of this data may not be available at Super Output Area level due to data protection, it should be available at Ward level. If we as a Jury can access this information through Freedom of Information requests, then this information should be sought and collected by the DSD as an essential part of this £231 million project.

6. The Dunlop Report and work of the Girdwood Advisory Panel

The NBCAU during our Jury session (13th January 2009) stated that the Dunlop Report and work of the Advisory Panel had assisted in gathering information to identify vulnerable groups. Having analysed these documents, the Residents' Jury is only able to locate Socio-Economic Profiles of the North Belfast Constituency. While Socio-Economic Profiles are a useful part of an EQIA, they do not dig deep enough to identify inequalities between groups, and this is precisely the purpose of an EQIA. Instead they tend to take a 'catch all' approach, and do not properly analyse which specific groups are experiencing inequality in our community. It is our understanding the EQIAs were brought into law precisely because this approach has not allowed groups in need of equality to be targeted.

7. Evidence Provided at the Girdwood Residents Jury (28th May 2008)

The Jury found it extremely alarming that the NBCAU during the Evidence Collecting session stated, in relation to identifying vulnerable groups in relation to employment, that the EQIA stage was not the appropriate stage of regeneration process to name groups who must be targeted. Rather the NBCAU stated that this is something which should be considered during the tender stage for construction.

It was helpful that the NBCAU have stated that they are aware of the failings of the Gasworks site, in particular failings around employment, however they do not seem to have addressed this in their current approach. As Joe McNeely (Central Baltimore Partnership) said at the Residents' Jury:

"We have learned over the years that a plan is not a worthy tool unless it has its implementation plan already in place and that includes concrete steps for achieving the human rights and social objectives. It is not enough to make general references to the deprivation of the community, there have to be specific mechanisms and time tables spelled out..." (p.54)

"Finally, what are the goals? What are the indicators that will be used to find out if we've achieved them? We can collect some baseline information right now but if it's not going to be these statistics then what are they? While, as Tim said [Tim Losty – Director of NBCAU], the statistics change over time, there needs to be some agreement about which set of cards we're playing with at the beginning so we know where the change went. (p.69)

NBCAU's statement about the chronology of identifying vulnerable groups is factually incorrect. The EQIA is precisely supposed to identify vulnerable groups.

APPENDIX THREE

A2. Have the experiences of vulnerable groups living with deprivation and inequality been collected?

As the DSD did not meet indicator A1, then fulfilling A2 is impossible. The identification of groups experiencing inequality is a necessary pre-requisite to engaging with them.

1. Equality Commission's 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment'

Annex 1, para 2.1 of the Guide states:

"Relevant, reliable and up-to-date information is essential. Statistics alone do not provide reasons or explanations for differences. Public authorities must therefore institute a system of information gathering across all nine equality categories to supplement available statistical and qualitative research."

2. Freedom of Information request to the DSD revealing details of all focus groups and meetings which took place in the community regarding the Draft EQIA

The methodology used by the DSD to engage with members of the communities, and community workers, was about verifying the current proposals in the Draft Masterplan. These proposals were developed in the absence of looking at any inequalities. This was therefore not about the experiences of vulnerable groups in our community with a view to developing targeted proposals, but about seeing if the proposals would 'do any harm' to our community.

This difference between these approaches was outlined to the NBCAU in advance of the 'focus groups' being carried out in the community during a meeting with the PPR Project on 8th August 2008. A 'focus group' format was presented to the Director of the NBCAU as a method of fulfilling statutory requirements, however this was turned down. Subsequently community groups, in conjunction with PPR Project, carried out eight focus groups across north Belfast using the community developed methodology which sought to extract qualitative evidence from residents to supplement and help understand statistical data.

3. Draft EQIA submissions from the Committee on the Administration of Justice, Participation and the Practice of Rights Project, Lower Shankill Community Association, Cliftonville Antrim Road CEP, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Brucevale Residents, North Belfast Interface Network, Community Relations Council, North Belfast Partnership Board

The Residents Jury also found alarming information when reading the Lower Shankill Community Association's response to the Draft EQIA, which would lead us to question the quality of the 'focus groups' carried out by the DSD:

"On page 53, we have been listed in the "formal consultation" section as having held a focus group on the Draft EQIA. This is not the case. We held an informal meeting with the North Belfast Community Action Unit at the Crumlin Road Gaol at which we discussed some issues, but this was not seen by us and should not be considered a focus group. At the meeting we explained the importance of consulting with local residents from the Lower Shankill."

And further:

"We submitted a copy of the Lower Shankill Community Audit (July 2006) as part of the initial consultation for the Draft EQIA. This was designed to provide additional information about our area that might not be available from other, official sources as well as to provide context on some of the issues in the Lower Shankill. It also makes recommendations based on residents' views for how to ensure the problems around

education, health and employment could be solved. This information does not seem to have been reflected at all in the content of the Draft EQIA.”

4. Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol

The Jury, when analysing the Draft EQIA and the Focus Group sessions received through Freedom of Information, also found selective use of evidence provided by groups. For example the Draft Masterplan makes proposals for high rise housing. The Draft EQIA cites a particular focus group with youth (under 16) as saying:

“A cross-community focus group of young people (under 16) expressed the view that residential accommodation was important and that apartments would be preferable to houses.” (p.42)

Yet the submission by community organisations and PPR based on focus groups with the following organisations: Women United, Girdwood Residents Jury Group (Disability), Brucevale residents, Manor Street, Ardoyne residents, CARCEP Youth Group, New Lodge residents, and Silver Threads, stated:

“The suitability of the housing in the areas was also an important issue – the Silver Threads group pointed out that high rise flats were unsuitable for families and the elderly. New Lodge group noted that high rise living adversely impacts vulnerable groups, and those with mental illness, as it compounds isolation and loneliness. New Lodge also noted that high rise accommodation has not proven suitable for families with children.”

These two groups – in particular the New Lodge residents – were particularly important as the Draft EQIA identified catholics and nationalists as experiencing inequality by being disproportionately represented on the social housing waiting list. Yet the DSD have omitted their experience of social housing high rise from consideration of available data and research. It is extremely concerning that high rise development is a proposal included in the Draft Masterplan without any analysis of the impact of this on residents, or suggestions of alternatives which could better promote equality.

Bruceale Residents response to the Draft EQIA outlined this point:

“The final EQIA needs to provide details of how housing inequality will be reduced and how equality of opportunity will be promoted between persons with dependants and persons without. We believe that this should include a breakdown for the construction of a targeted number of 2, 3, 4 bedroom homes for small and large families. These homes need to be provided as social housing units as the provision of private housing will not reduce these inequalities and as the EQIA already demonstrates in detail, existing inequality in housing will increase”

This selective citation of evidence which supported existing proposals in the Draft Masterplan and ignores the experiences of those who have actually experienced high rise accommodation again calls into question the weight given to particular evidence.

APPENDIX FOUR

A3. Were identified vulnerable groups involved in naming and prioritising the issues which are most important to them?

As the DSD did not meet A1 or A2, then meeting A3 is impossible as vulnerable groups, other than catholics or nationalists on the social housing waiting list, have not been identified in the Draft EQIA. However, residents were involved in direct meetings with the NBCAU during the EQIA process through the focus groups.

1. The Draft Masterplan for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol

The only engagement between the consultants who drew up the proposals in the Draft Masterplan and potential vulnerable groups were during official information and consultation sessions held across communities during the Masterplan development phase. This was not meaningful engagement with a view to establishing a process of ensuring social and economic inequalities were addressed and rights progressed, rather they were predominately 'report back' and 'information' sessions for residents.

2. Freedom of Information request to the DSD revealing details of all focus groups and meetings which took place in the community regarding the Draft EQIA;

3. The Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol

As described in both A1 and A2, the methodology used by the DSD to carry out EQIA focus groups did not include opportunities for groups experiencing inequality to prioritise issues they wanted to see addressed in the regeneration in a meaningful way. Indeed, where the DSD did actually identify an inequality – ie social housing for catholics and nationalists – it does not seem that any specific attempt was made to engage residents on the social housing waiting list to explore what would be required in terms of housing type. In contrast, as displayed in the previous section, their priorities were submitted to the DSD during the EQIA consultation but omitted from the Draft EQIA.

4. Evidence Provided at the Girdwood Residents' Jury (28th May 2008)

During the Residents Jury event, the Jury heard evidence from international regeneration experts on the necessity of meaningful resident participation in the design, delivery and evaluation stages of regeneration process. Ron Shiffman, and urban planner and founder of the Pratt Centre for Community Development (NY, USA) stated the importance of fulfilling this indicator:

"Let's remember that there isn't an architect or a planner that knows your community and your needs better than you know them, and what you need to do is make sure that when working with them that it is a two way educational process. They learn from you. You learn from them." (p.50)

This constructive dialogue and partnership cannot be progressed if a key partner in the regeneration process has effectively been excluded from prioritising their issues.

5. Draft EQIA submissions from the Committee on the Administration of Justice, Participation and the Practice of Rights Project, Lower Shankill Community Association, Cliftonville Antrim Road CEP, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Brucevale Residents, North Belfast Interface Network, Community Relations Council, North Belfast Partnership Board

An instance of where a community organisation provided first hand evidence of the issues affecting vulnerable groups was in the Lower Shankill Community Association response to the Draft EQIA. However, they stated:

"We submitted a copy of the Lower Shankill Community Audit (July 2006) as part of the initial consultation for the Draft EQIA. This was designed to provide additional information about our area that might not be available from other, official sources as well as to provide context on some of the issues in the Lower Shankill. It also makes recommendations based on residents' views for how to ensure the problems around

education, health and employment could be solved. This information does not seem to have been reflected at all in the content of the Draft EQIA.”

APPENDIX FIVE

A4. Is the information on inequality and deprivation clear, accessible and easily understood in the EQIA documents and in the consultation process?

The Residents Jury found the information presented in the Draft EQIA, and the format in which information was presented, to be extremely complex and difficult for residents not versed in the EQIA process to understand and follow.

1. Equality Commission's 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment'

- *"the accessibility of the language and the format of information must be considered to ensure that there are no barriers to the consultation process." Section 4 para 2 (c)*

Furthermore:

"5.13 Written papers which are made available to consultees should:

- *Use plain language and be jargon-free;*
- *Convey specialist information in as simple a format as possible. For example, there will be occasions when documents need to include fairly detailed statistics or very specialised information. It is crucial that such material is translated into language which non-experts can understand;*
- *Include an executive summary;"*

The Jury found that none of these were done in the Draft EQIA.

APPENDIX SIX

A5. Were residents from identified vulnerable groups involved in collecting and analysing the information during the EQIA process?

Again, without identification of vulnerable groups (A1), this indicator is impossible to fulfill.

The NBCAU and DSD were solely responsible for collecting and analyzing information during the EQIA process. While community groups along with the PPR Project held a eight focus groups with residents, the official analysis of this information, and its subsequent bearing on any of the regeneration proposals, were left entirely to the DSD.

1. Evidence Provided at the Girdwood Residents Jury (28th May 2008)

The importance of residents being involved in the collection and analysis of information on deprivation and inequality was highlighted by Ron Shiffman at the Residents' Jury event who, drawing on international best practice, stated:

“Reason is dependent on a rational, systemic analysis – a way of looking at things, looking at the charts, looking at the data and beginning to collect that data. But participation becomes crucial because what that data means is different to different people. How you interpret that data and what it really means comes out of a dialogue that engages people in the long run. Democracy is critically dependent on the participation of the people and the two are synergistic, they interrelate and they become really important.” (p.35)

“The result out of this effort is a much more informed and engaged civil society where process is as important, if not more important than the outcome because the process here often leads to what really becomes the development and the building of community.” (.36)

Joe McNeely, Director of the Central Baltimore Partnership (Maryland, USA) elaborated on the methodology required:

“We observe and collect data. We reflect on and analyse that data. The community alone needs an opportunity to analyse that data and then there needs to be a common analysis and reflection with other partners.” (p.54)

2. Equality Commission's 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment'

The Residents' Jury found that this participatory approach is compliant with Section 75 guidance:

Annex 1, para 2.1 of the Guide states:

“Relevant, reliable and up-to-date information is essential. Statistics alone do not provide reasons or explanations for differences. Public authorities must therefore institute a system of information gathering across all nine equality categories to supplement available statistical and qualitative research.”

Furthermore the same section of the Guidance instructs public bodies to:

“Use qualitative or evaluative research or information gathered by government and bodies such as voluntary, community and trade union organizations.”

APPENDIX SEVEN

A6. Was there training and assistance resourced and made accessible by government to enable vulnerable groups to provide, collect and analyse information during the EQIA process?

'Vulnerable' residents experiencing inequality were not identified (A1), and residents were not involved in the collection or analyzing of information which would impact the regeneration proposals (A5). Therefore, training and assistance was not offered, nevermind being resourced.

1. Evidence Provided at the Girdwood Residents Jury (28th May 2008)

Joe McNeely emphasized the importance of this role for residents:

"capacity building is crucial to participating in implementing and in accountability. These are skills that are not automatic for any of the parties, so we need the resources, time and the commitment at each stage to build the capacity of all of the partners. What are those particular skills? We need to call on those who want to take the process forward to make the investment in that kind of capacity building." (p.55)

Furthermore, Mr McNeely went on to cite a practical example of where this approach had proven successful and a best practice model:

"In Oakland, California they trained community residents to be expert interviewers of people in the community. They trained the same people to bring the tapes back from those interviews and to be the expert 'de-briefers' of the data. They then worked with people at the University on the analysis of the community, which was producing a highly textured analysis of it's own community. The side effect of that was all of those interviewers became community leaders around the issues that they had interviewed on and they were able to get an implementation of the plan, resources for self organised solutions to problems that people had identified in the process that built the capacity of people." (p.57)

Tim Losty, Director of the NBCAU, when referring to the importance of capacity building and community engagement stated that:

"...[during the] pre-concept stage, six public meetings and a series of individual meetings took place. We also provided briefings with our colleagues in the community empowerment partnerships. I think Joe [McNeely] was talking about building capacity in the community and that's what we have tried to do with the 13 CEP's over the last number of years." (p.66)

The Residents' Jury feel it is important to note that the CEPs were specifically funded as an intervention programme in north Belfast to assist in addressing social and economic need and deal with a vast array of dedicated programmes much broader than the Girdwood regeneration. There was no specific intervention to educate and train local residents to be meaningful participants in the design, delivery or evaluation stages of the Girdwood regeneration.

APPENDIX EIGHT

A7. Is the evidence regarding local deprivation and inequality being used by government to form proposals?

1. Evidence Provided at the Girdwood Residents Jury (28th May 2008)

Virginia Bras Gomes, Portuguese member of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights emphasised that for regenerations to be evaluated effectively, the link between inequality and regeneration proposals was essential:

“In order to ascertain how successful the proposals would be at targeting inequalities and deprivation in the area, they would have to be subject to an ongoing assessment on the part of the residents to monitor compliance with qualitative and quantitative targets.” (p.29)

Furthermore, Joe McNeely stressed that the inclusion of both inequality and deprivation statistics in any Masterplan which are targeted through detailed proposals is also essential:

“We have learned over the years that a plan is not a worthy tool unless it has its implementation plan already in place and that includes the concrete steps for achieving the human rights and social objectives. It is not enough to make general references to the deprivation of the community, there have to be specific mechanisms and time tables spelled out, which include piecing where the indicators are going to be in the future.” (p.54)

2. The Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol;

3. The Draft Masterplan for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol

Both the Masterplan and the Draft Equality Impact Assessment for Girdwood Barracks and Crumlin Road Gaol omit detailed analysis of inequality and deprivation, and subsequent targeted proposals to address the same.

REAL JOBS NOW

Factsheet

What is REAL JOBS NOW?

On 6th January 2014, Belfast City Council passed the **REAL JOBS NOW** motion with significant cross party support. It commits Belfast City Council to using its significant annual £40 million procurement budget to realise improved outcomes for communities by ringfencing fully paid jobs and apprenticeships for the long term unemployed.

The motion states:

"This Council recognises the increasing social and economic hardship experienced by people in our communities as a result of growing unemployment and cuts to welfare benefits. The Council accepts that it has a duty to use the powers available to it (including but not limited to planning, regulation and procurement powers), to generate positive outcomes for the most marginalised in our communities and hereby commits to including at every available opportunity a 'Real Jobs' clause in contracts tendered by the Council to procure goods, services and capital works. The 'Real Jobs' clause will guarantee ring fenced, fully paid jobs and apprenticeships for the long-term unemployed (12+ months)."

The campaign for REAL JOBS NOW was led by a group of unemployed people from across the City known as the **Right to Work; Right to Welfare (R2W) Group**¹ which is supported in its work by human rights organisation the **Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR)**². Over 1500 people from across Belfast, including over 50 community and voluntary organisations supported the campaign calling on Council to pass and implement REAL JOBS NOW social clauses. The campaign also received support from the (now former) United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Ms Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona who commented;

*"The important work being done by the Right to Work: Right to Welfare Group in Belfast, Northern Ireland to hold the government accountable ... is crucial and should be praised as a promising practice to be followed."*³

Belfast City Council is currently taking forward proposals to implement the REAL JOBS NOW social clause into Council policy. The R2W Group will be monitoring this process to ensure that meaningful implementation delivers the outcomes as envisaged by the motion and as required by communities.

¹ For further information on the R2W Group, please see <http://pprproject.org/right-to-work-right-to-welfare>

² The Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) organisation was established in 2006 by internationally renowned trade unionist and human rights activist Inez McCormack. PPR supports disadvantaged groups in Northern Ireland (NI) to make their socio-economic rights real and assert their right to participate in government decisions which affect their lives. PPR enables groups to challenge and change current government decision making practices which exclude them, and which lead to poor service delivery, entrenched inequalities and ineffective use of public money. Please see www.pprproject.org

³ To view the full message of support, please see http://pprproject.org/sites/default/files/Message%20of%20Support%20for%20Right%20to%20Work_M_Sepulveda%2015%20July%202013.pdf

Common Questions about REAL JOBS NOW answered:

Is it legal?

Yes. The ring-fencing of jobs for the long-term unemployed is permissible through both national and European legislation.

Articles 55 and 75 of **The Fair Employment and Treatment Order (1998)** allows all employers to make it a requirement that when filling a vacancy that applicants who have not been in employment for a specified period of time are treated more favourably than those who are in employment or have not been in employment for a shorter period of time. This means that reserving specific vacancies for unemployed persons or only recruiting from individuals who have not been in employment for a specified period is permissible under this legislation.

Section 75 of the **Northern Ireland Act (1998)** makes it an obligation for public authorities to pay due regard to the promotion of equality among the nine named groups in the legislation when carrying out all of their functions. This includes recruitment processes, procurement procedures, planning powers and all other responsibilities which Belfast City Council exercise.

The Local Government Best Value (Exclusion of Non Commercial Considerations) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012 removed restrictions on councils in relation to their public supply or work contracts which were previously in place under Article 19(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. Guidance issued with the legislation by the Department of the Environment (Local Government Circular NO.19/2012) encourages Councils to include social clauses that represent Best Value.

In terms of European Procurement Case Law, the **Beentjes (Gebroeders Beentjes B.V. v The State (Netherlands) (C31/87))** found that a contract condition that the Contractor must employ long-term unemployed persons can be compatible with the rules, so long as general EU Treaty principles are adhered to.

Has it been done before?

Using procurement expenditure to employ the unemployed has been done before in the public sector.

In 2003 the Department of Finance and Personnel commenced a cross- Departmental pilot project on utilising the unemployed in public sector procurement.

Companies bidding for 15 public sector construction and service contracts had to submit employment plans outlining how they intended to employ the unemployed in work on the contract, as well as any previous experience doing this type of work. Importantly, this contractual obligation to employ the unemployed also applied to any work carried out by sub-contractors on the contract. The employment plan also determined that if two bids were judged to be equal then whichever had the better employment plan would get the tender.

During a two-year period, 51 people commenced employment on various contracts involved in the pilot project, and as of June 2005, 46 were still in employment i.e. two years after the scheme commenced there was a 90% employment retention rate . The break down shows that 32 people were employed in the service sector and 19 in the construction sector. The job titles of people employed include a site supervisor, HGV drivers, a head chef and general labour operatives.

The NI Pilot project was compared with three similar UK projects, namely the Fusion 21 Project in Merseyside, the Community Benefits Pathfinder Project in Wales and Community Benefits in Procurement Programme in Scotland. Whilst 34 people had been employed on the Welsh Pathfinder project up to July 2005, 51 from the target group have been employed on the NI Project. The overall cost per job created on the NI Pilot project was one person employed for every £900,000 spend, although this figure could more accurately be calculated at £610,000⁴. This is less than half the cost of the much larger Fusion 21 Project in Merseyside (£1.5m spend per person employed).

The evaluation noted positive feedback from contractors:

“At the end of the evaluation period questionnaires were distributed to all the winning contractors and the client contract managers. The return rate of the survey was excellent with 63% of contractor questionnaires returned and an impressive 93% (14 out of 15) client questionnaires returned. Key results from the survey showed that on the contractor side 90% of respondents believed that the Pilot did not lead to an increase in direct costs while on the client side over 64% considered that the Pilot did not result in any significant increase in workload.”

The outcomes that were anticipated from the Pilot included:

- *reduced unemployment and social welfare payments:* while the pool of participants was too small to generate substantial impacts in terms of reduced social welfare payments, the Pilot project demonstrated that with some adjustments, roll-out across the full range of public procurement projects could make a significant impact to reducing unemployment and social welfare payments.
- *ensuring that the supply market is more responsive to the government's goals:* whilst contractors' responses have been varied, dependent mainly on the nature of the contract, there is evidence from both the interviews and the survey that contractors are supportive of government goals in relation to using public procurement to achieve social goals
- *improving the future career prospects for employees:* all those employed from the target group, including those who have left employment, will have gained confidence and experience as a result of their period of employment. This should therefore enhance their prospects of sustainable employment in the future
- *there have been no EU challenges:* the Pilot project was based upon a cautious interpretation of the public procurement rules then in place, and was designed to ensure minimal risk of challenge by contractors, or intervention by the EU Commission. Having proved that the Pilot Project is compliant with EU rules, and with clients and contractors more experienced in applying the procedures, the Pilot may be extended more widely without risk of challenge, so long as the procedures are applied correctly

In 2012, the **Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure** utilised in **£15m expenditure on Ravenhill Rugby** stadium to create 7 fully paid jobs and 4 fully paid apprenticeships for the long-term unemployed (12+ months). Work on this project has been completed, however no

⁴ “It should also be pointed out that the 51 people in NI were employed on only 10 of the contracts that started during the evaluation period. Four of the five contracts in which no one from the target group was employed had procedural problems which effectively ruled out the employment of anybody from the target group. The fifth relied mainly on specialist subcontractors. If these contracts were excluded from the assessment the cost per job is reduced to approximately one job per £610,000 spend.”

evaluation has been carried out to date. Nevertheless, the relevant contract language and clauses required to implement these constructive measures are available. It is also our understanding that DCAL were seeking to enhance the basic conditions in the Ravenhill contracts through both the Windsor Park and Casement Stadia projects.

Doesn't Belfast City Council provide jobs for the long-term unemployed through its procurement budget?

Belfast City Council, currently provides social clauses in procurement contracts which provide Steps to Work placements for unemployed people in projects tendered by the Council.⁵ However, research carried out across Belfast by the Right to Work: Right to Welfare Group in March 2013 indicates that only 5% of people actually got a job after participating in the Steps to Work scheme. DEL official statistics also indicate that across NI only 25% of those on the scheme find employment. It is clear that Steps to Work is not a viable option for anyone who is serious about tackling unemployment.

It is within both the powers and the obligations of the Council to aim for better.

As displayed from the above examples, much more could be done to provide real, fully paid jobs and apprenticeships for the long-term unemployed.

On Friday 3rd May 2013, at the invitation of the Lower Shankill Community Association and Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, PPR delivered a presentation on what could be achieved through procurement contracts in relation to the proposed Girdwood Hub. In attendance were Belfast City Council officials including officials from the Procurement Department. Belfast City Council officials suggested that the approach proposed by PPR – which involved the ring-fenced, fully paid employment and apprenticeships for the long term unemployed (12+ months) was possible.

From paperwork provided following this meeting, it is apparent that, on this occasion, Belfast City Council officials did not opt for the approach recommended by PPR and instead opted for the normal Steps to Work placements. For the Council to move to an approach capable of realising innovative, achievable and necessary outcomes for Belfast, the political will of Belfast City Councillors will be necessary.

⁵ <http://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MID=9957#A112856>

Playboard Northern Ireland



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10 October 2014

RE: PlayBoard NI Response into Building a United Community

PlayBoard is an independent charity and the lead organisation for the development and promotion of children and young people's play in Northern Ireland. Since our establishment in 1985, PlayBoard has been committed to supporting the child's right to play through a combination of: service delivery, service development; campaigning, lobbying; awareness raising and working in partnership with others to put play on the agenda of policy makers and resource providers. The organisation takes great pride in promoting best practice in Play, Playwork and play based School Age Childcare services.

PlayBoard's mission is to drive the play agenda, ensuring that at every level of decision making across society, the child's right to play is not only recognised but is made a reality within the lives of children, young people, families and communities. Children and young people's views, aspirations and perceptions of themselves and the environment in which they live, are at the heart of PlayBoard's work. Our vision is of a society where the right to play is realised.

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into Building a United Community. As an organisation we are fully supportive of the Executive's commitment to Building a United Community. We believe that play, and playwork in particular has a critical role in bringing children together through their natural and shared drive to play; something which is unfortunately all too often overlooked and underutilised by educational and local government establishments.

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Company Limited by Guarantee No. NI30225 - Inland Revenue Charity Number XR86639
Whilst PlayBoard's primary organisational focus is not on the area of community relations, our work over the past 30 years has included a considerable body of work aimed at using play as a positive vehicle for bringing communities together. In this submission we have focused on providing examples of how play-based programmes can work in practice to bring children together. We would urge that cognisance be given to the untapped potential of play to become one of the central lynchpins that attracts children, teachers and crucially parents to the idea of sharing services and spaces across and between communities.

Our experience in the practice of Building a United Community in schools, school age childcare sector and communities

Young children living in divided societies like Northern Ireland are inclined to develop particular cultural dispositions or habits reflective of their own ethnic group. These dispositions often manifest in relation to young children's preferences towards their own community's cultural events, symbols and practices. Children want to be with others who are of 'their own kind' and share their 'in-group preferences'. As a result they may develop negative dispositions towards those who are different from themselves and form 'out-group prejudices'.¹

Schools: Over the past two years PlayBoard has piloted and developed the implementation of our 'Spaces to Be' programme within the wider Contested Spaces programme. This pilot programme is jointly funded by OFMDFM and Atlantic Philanthropies and uses play to facilitate participating schools to address community and cultural barriers enabling respect for difference and inclusion of others within the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding strand of the statutory curriculum.

The 'Spaces to Be' programme is premised on PlayBoard's '[Spaces to Be – Mapping Identity and Belonging toolkit](#)', which was developed by PlayBoard through funding provided by Peace III. The resource builds on PlayBoard's many years of playwork and peace building experience, and practice of working with children, young people and communities across Northern Ireland. The toolkit is a practice based resource, which was developed with and for children and young people, to support them to explore issues of identity and belonging through a play based methodology.

¹ Connolly, P. (2009). *Developing Programmes to Promote Ethnic Diversity in Early Childhood: Lessons from Northern Ireland. Working Papers in Early Childhood Development, Number 52.* Bernard van Leer Foundation. PO Box 82334, 2508 EH, The Hague, The Netherlands.

Using a play methodology, the 'Spaces to Be' programme seeks to promote and improve the relationships between and across an interface/contested space communities. In its current incarnation, through a range of play-based activities, P5, P6 and P7 pupils from schools come together to understand and respect difference relating to religion, culture, gender and disability. The programme is underpinned by the [Playwork Principles](#), which puts children at the centre of their play experience. Playwork enables children to be free to: choose, personally direct and be intrinsically motivated, to play. Children determine and control the content and intent of their play, follow their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons.

The aim of the 'Spaces to Be' programme is to enhance children's capacity for positive development by giving them access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities. Through contact with the 'out-group' they become more inclined to develop mutual respect for the other group's cultural events, symbols and practices. This is achieved by using practical and playful exercises that support the school curriculum, and encourage children and young people to explore their understanding of difference. Moreover, the toolkit helps to promote the creation of innovative shared space and peace building and reconciliation through play.

As an organisation we are under no illusion that implementing a play programme within a school setting is challenging; and that implementing a contact based play intervention is even more challenging. However, it is our firm belief that the challenges are outweighed by both the innovative nature of play as a mechanism for contact and the potential impact it has to bring about better intergroup relations for future generations. We have learned through our experience of 'Spaces to Be' that Building a United Community is a journey that requires buy-in from schools, principals, teachers and parents who need to be 'empowered' to engage in a process that allows them to identify and confront problems and overcome barriers.

School Age Childcare: PlayBoard is also passionate about leading the development of the School Age Childcare sector, a sector which provides childcare and age appropriate play opportunities for children aged between 4 and 14 years. School Age Childcare settings provide a caring and safe environment, offering a range of active and stimulating play activities for children.

Crucially, due to the cross-community nature of most settings, School Age Childcare providers have the ability to provide for many children an opportunity to meet with, interact and engage with children from another community or cultural background on an almost daily basis. Given the largely segregated

nature of the education system the importance of School Age Childcare provision in helping to build a united community should not be underestimated.

The Executive recently launched 'Bright Start', the first stage of the Northern Ireland childcare strategy and this has seen the beginning of a much needed investment in the development and growth of School Age Childcare capacity across Northern Ireland. It is critical that this investment is protected and that the impact of providers in supporting cross-community contact is acknowledged by government.

Community: In addition to the work required within schools and the school age childcare sector, PlayBoard firmly believes that the development of shared spaces within communities is critical to building a shared future. It is our experience, that play and play areas can offer an excellent opportunity to initiate a process of changing societal perceptions of the 'other group' for both children and adults alike.

As PlayBoard's very successful CAN Peace III Partnership funded, Positive Play Programme 'CAN Play' demonstrated free-play practice can lead to the more effective utilisation of shared spaces and services across community boundaries. The impact of 'CAN Play' exceeded all expectations particularly in terms of developing play based opportunities for cross-community contact between children and adults, and in terms of using free play as a means of creating shared spaces which met the play needs of children whilst encouraging wider social and community interaction.

Our experience of 'CAN Play' highlights the critical importance of building in sustainability from the outset. In particular there is a need to acknowledge and recognise that Playworkers or trained volunteers capable of overseeing community-led play initiatives are critical to long term sustainability.

Concluding Comments

As a relatively new post-conflict society Northern Ireland has made progress, however for many children – know or known to them - it remains a divided society. At the heart of much of the division is the segregated schooling system, which enables the status quo of children having little or no contact with the other group, to remain. This leads us to strongly advocate that all future work charged within the realm of Building a United Community focuses on the need to promote respect for difference and inclusion of others from birth, through the early years, middle childhood and adolescence. We believe play is an excellent mechanism to make serious inroads into achieving a shared future of substance.

Furthermore, given the unique ability of play to bring children and young people together through a common, natural drive we would strongly advocate that the

Together Building a United Community Strategy recognises the importance of play within the school curriculum, school playground, school estate, the wider school age childcare sector and crucially within communities. PlayBoard cannot reiterate strongly enough the important role that we believe play has in paving the way for enabling 'sharing' whether that is within the confines of educational settings or community spaces.

Classroom settings offer an ideal setting for much of this work but outside of the 'formal' school day there are considerable benefits to be accrued from, for example shared school aged childcare within the workings of OFMDFM's Bright Start Strategy. Also with the advent of Community Planning there is an excellent opportunity to develop shared spaces to encourage community integration and to remove both physical and perceived interface barriers that divide our society.

We would urge that play is considered to be a priority for inclusion within any proposals relating to Building a United Community. We are not suggesting that play areas should be state of the art but rather they are so appealing to the local population that the utilisation of the space cannot be resisted. An example might be the [St Kilda Adventure Playground](#), Melbourne or the [BBC clip](#) on playwork in action from Wrexham.

There is little doubt that play is of considerable importance to childhoods and it is our hope that it can be effectively harnessed through this initiative and others to build a shared future for the coming generations.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline O'Loughlin
Chief Executive Officer

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Police Service of Northern Ireland 7th OCTOBER 2014

Response to the Inquiry on Together: Building a United Community

The PSNI welcomes the delivery of a Community Cohesion Strategy for Northern Ireland in the form of Together: Building a United Community. We note the objective of Departments working together to ensure that outcomes are delivered on the ground.

We welcome the commitment to creating a new, united, reconciled and shared society.¹

The PSNI welcomes the proposal for the establishment of an independent Equality and Good Relations Commission. The statutory basis of the commission and its role in providing advice to government alongside challenge is welcomed. It is important that in giving the Equality Commission a Good Relations function that we define what Good Relations are clearly in that statute.

In TBUC it states that "it is not intended to replace or subsume our work on racial equality and good relations. Rather it will compliment and provide the co-ordinated framework for aspects of its delivery"². It is however important that the overall strategy highlights the linkage between the various strategies and that its references to key outcomes are not just focused on the issues related to sectarianism but all areas of good relations.

PSNI Welcome the objective of achieving a consensus around the definition of sectarianism for the draft legislation for the Equality and Good Relations Commission. It would be important that this definition is clear in law to allow for its potential use in the future were the Assembly to consider amending the Criminal Justice (No 2) Northern Ireland Order 2004³ to include sectarianism

¹ Paragraph 1.9 - TBUC

² Paragraph 1.30 - TBUC

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2004/1991/contents>

Police Service of Northern Ireland
7th OCTOBER 2014

in the ambit of enhanced sentencing for offences aggravated by hate or hostility.

PSNI Welcome the highlighting of the role of PCSPs and DPCSPs in delivering safer, shared and confident communities at local level.⁴ This strategy will need to inform the work of the new District Councils under Community Planning provisions to address underlying community issues on a partnership basis to deliver locally the strategic outcomes. This will be especially important if the objective of removal of interface barriers is to be achieved.

While TBUC noted the decrease in hate crime at the time of publication we would highlight the increase in Hate Crime and incidents that has emerged over the past 12 months. The significant increase in hate crime noted both in terms of race hate and sectarian offences emphasises the warning in paragraph 4.10 that we must not be complacent on this issue.

The PSNI has provided a response separately on the consultation on the good relations indicators.

⁴ Para 3.24 TBUC

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Response to the OFMDFM Committee Inquiry on Together: Building a United Community – October 2014

1. As the Church and Society Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we are grateful for the opportunity to offer this relatively brief paper to the Committee, along with the offer to appear before you to expand on the points raised in this paper and on other issues in TBUC.

2. There is much in TBUC that is worthy of real commendation, In particular we note the emphasis on young people; the development of 10 shared educational campuses and the emphasis on raising the hopes and opportunities for NEETS, along with the aspiration to remove the physical barriers in interface areas over a ten year period.

3. We are also pleased with the explicit recognition in the TBUC Strategy of the huge importance of a forward looking cohesive society.

'The economic, political, cultural and social changes that have been taking place highlight that there is much for us all to be collectively proud of as a society. However, we know that this progress can only continue within the context of a united community. We cannot build a modern, well-equipped society in the absence of good relations, equality of opportunity and reconciliation. This Strategy sets out a vision for the kind of society we want to see and outlines the strategic framework that will shape action in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance.'

This restatement of key aims from the Belfast Agreement in 1998 is very welcome: There it was agreed that :

'we make a fresh start in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.'

4. As a church-based submission to your Committee we will confine ourselves at this juncture to offering comment from a macro and longer term perspective.

5. We invite the Committee to explore the implications of the Strategy NOT being implemented either in full or in part, for we sense that this might well turn out to be the case. What would the implications be for the economy of we were to remain a divided society? For political progress and development to a mature democracy? For the policing and justice systems? For communities already experiencing significant tension? For incoming communities and their ability to contribute to our future?

6. Community cohesion, reconciliation and trust over the 17 months since the publication of TBUC has scarcely been encouraging. The Haass talks floundered, and the Executive itself has been described recently by the First Minister as not fit for purpose. These are strong signals that the aims of TBUC are being constantly eroded and set aside in favour of other considerations.

7. This erosion is being accentuated by the very poor quality of public discourse, which seems increasingly to be fractious and ill tempered. For example, in May 2014 the Belfast Telegraph reported: ***Speaker William Hay has repeatedly warned MLAs against intemperate language ... He has also warned some remarks had been made which would not be allowed in any other parliamentary democracy.***

8. It is our view that aggressive public discourse mentors and encourages community tensions, by 'normalising' such language and the underlying attitudes. We therefore invite the Committee to comment in its inquiry report on the need for quality in all public debate (whether in the Assembly or on the media) as an essential contribution to the building of a reconciled and cohesive united community.

9. We also have significant concerns about the traction of the strategy at local community level since its publication in May 2013. The strategy largely focussed on the work that government departments and local

councils after the RPA would undertake – and this was very welcome. However, there was minimal focus on the contribution expected from wider civic society (except in the area of sport). One of the results of that weakness is that there is minimal understanding of the strategy by the populace as a whole, and therefore little commitment or even sustained interest in it. This weakness needs to be rectified as soon as possible.

10. In this regard, we note that TBUC commits the Executive to an ambitious programme of action. This has been slow to materialise and as a church we are conscious of the frustrations of many community groups, which have been keen to contribute to the implementation of the strategy. The lack of action is undermining confidence in the initiative and implies a lack of commitment on the part of the Executive.

11. Finally, it seems inevitable that the increasing austerity will severely damage the delivery of the strategy... exemplified in this recent DEL Committee hearing:

Committee for Employment and Learning

October Monitoring Round 2014: DEL Officials - 1 October 2014

The Chairperson:

Did you not even feel that there would have been any Executive support for bidding for the £0.5 million cut from the Together: Building a United Community budget?

Mr McMurray: Not in the current climate of moneys available.

12. It seems beyond doubt that if the aims of TBUC are not central to the thinking, decisions and working of the Executive as austerity bites, that they will be marginalised in favour of other competing policy and departmental needs. If this happens, and that seems likely, then some of the commitments made in the Belfast Agreement will continue not to be achieved. This would be a very serious development, and the Committee might wish to comment on this in its report.

13. Finally, we would suggest that the Committee itself publishes an annual review of progress on TBUC to ensure that there is proper independent monitoring of the strategy over and above the stated ministerial oversight.

14. We reiterate our willingness to give oral evidence to the Committee if invited.

***Submitted by Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton
(on behalf of the Church and Society Committee of the Presbyterian Church)***

9 October 2014

Rathfriland Resident

FAO:

Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister:

Inquiry into Building a United Community

The Community of Rathfriland, Co Down welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building a United Community.

Rathfriland is a farming town with a population of around 3000, that population has increased 30% in the last 10 years due to its convenient location and great schools. The influx has been mainly Catholics taking the former 70% Protestants /30% catholic demographic to its current 50/50 mix.

Driving through Rathfriland in the summer months you would conclude that it is a staunchly Loyalist town (see attached images). The flags and emblems are in fact unwanted by a huge majority of the residents. A recent survey we conducted illustrated that over 95% of the respondents want a shared environment in the town. The community is taking steps to deal with this at grass roots level. We hope to negotiate a 'town agreement' on flags and emblems and bring the whole community together to re-image the town, promote tourism and attract investment.

Rathfriland Regeneration Group was established in 1994, with the aid of various grants it has delivered the towns recreation centre, integrated pre-school, affordable housing and retail units. But has always remained non political. The group's 28 members are also a 50/50 mix. Though the group have steered clear of political and religious issues they realise that the town would financially prosper if it had a tourist friendly, inclusive appearance.

- We as a community have created a website as a starting point on a re-imaging process www.rathfriland.info
- The Rathfriland Regeneration Group has applied for an Arts Council – Building Peace through the Arts grant. This grant will be used to facilitate workshops with all groups within the community. Using creativity as a way of hearing people's voices. Facilitators will go into the schools, the lodges and the churches and try to listen to everybody in an effort to bring about a town agreement on the flags and emblems.
- The Rathfriland Regeneration group along with local volunteers are building a community Peace garden. An artist will use the community creativity from the workshops as inspiration for a high quality piece of art that will be the focal point of the community garden.
- Rathfriland lies between the A1 and the Mourne coastal route, it has great untapped tourist potential. An unsightly, disused water tower (built in 1977) sits in the remains of a medieval castle. This typifies how it's not utilising its tourist attractions and recognising its potential job opportunities and prosperous future.
- We seek to find ways to utilise the areas rich history in an attractive non hostile way that opens up the visitors market and truly makes Rathfriland 'The Pride of the Hill'. We are twinning the town with 'Armstrong' in British Columbia, Canada -where a Rathfriland woman was the first European to enter BC in 1862. There's a memorial to her in the Armstrong city park. <http://www.vernonmorningstar.com/news/278069981.html>

I personally hope that the community workshops and discussions reveal that most of the residents are happy to live in a mixed community, and that nobody wishes to threaten anybody else's identity or to challenge their religious beliefs.

We have spoken to all of South Down MLAs about our approach and they are watching with interest. Stormont has a responsibility to lead on the issues of the past and flags but communities like ours have to be very proactive and build a 'normal' society street by street. The past cannot be changed, it's time for a lot of forgiveness and enthusiasm for the future. Northern Ireland is not full of Unionists and Republicans pulling in separate directions - a united community is an attainable goal in small towns like ours.

I am writing this as a resident and a trader in Rathfriland, and not as a member of the Rathfriland Regeneration Group as they are a non-political charity.

9th October 2014





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