

**Office of the First Minister
and Deputy First Minister**

Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate
BELFAST BT4 3SR

**Department of
Social Development**

Churchill House
Victoria Square
BELFAST BT1 4SD

30 November 2001

LAUNCH OF NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, and the Department for Social Development would like to invite you to the launch of the North Belfast Community Action Project.

The Launch will take place from 9.15 am to 10.15am on Monday 3 December, at the Headquarters of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast.

If you are unable to attend in person, please feel free to nominate a member of your organisation to attend.

Mary Bunting

John Hunter

MARY BUNTING
Director Equality, OFMDFM

JOHN HUNTER
Permanent Secretary, DSD

FROM: MARY BUNTING
30 NOVEMBER 2001

PS/MR LOUGHRAN
PS/FIRST MINISTER
PS/DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

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REVISED DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROPOSED NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

1. The Vision

A vibrant and sustainable community in North Belfast which is influential in supporting peace-building.

2. Overall aim of project

To put in place a plan of short, medium, and long term actions to address social and community issues in North Belfast. It will focus in particular on building community capacity in those areas in which this is weak in addition to maintaining community activity where this is working well. The project will focus on producing early outcomes and practical assistance to local communities.

It will take account of the unique circumstances in North Belfast through a transparent and inclusive process and existing and planned programmes and structures including Peace II and Urban II.

The initiative will focus on developing practical action combining rigorous independent analysis with practical measures to support the development of community groups. A member of staff of the Belfast Regeneration Office North Team will be specifically designated to work with the project and provide an immediate outreach advisory service to areas of weak community

infrastructure to ensure that they can take full advantage of existing programmes including Peace 2.

3 **Timescale**

The overall work of the project will be completed within a six month period and short term actions will be implemented as necessary during this period..

4 **Critical assumptions**

The following critical assumptions have been made with respect to the project:

- The emphasis will be on building community capacity in those areas which lack an effective community infrastructure, in the hope that this would enable isolated communities to make a contribution to the process of peace-building.
- If the initiative is to advance peace building in North Belfast, this will best be achieved through an approach that seeks to identify and protect community activity that is positive and working well in addition to encouraging new initiatives in areas where little exists at present.
- It will be resourced and supported by Government but independent of Government.
- It will have an independent Chair and two independent Deputy Chairs.
- It will be underpinned by independent action conducted by researchers and community workers, preferably with experience of working in divided communities.

- The project will draw on the experience and expertise of the BRO North Team, Belfast City Council Community Services Department, North and West Health and Social Services Trust, the Housing Executive, Health Action Zone members, the Local Strategy Partnership and a range of community based organisations operating in North Belfast who are pivotal to the success of the project and the implementation of its findings.
- The review of the North Belfast Partnership Board has relevance to this exercise and it is assumed the review will be completed during the course of this project.

5. Terms of Reference

Taking into account the full range of support initiatives currently in place and drawing on experience which already exists:

To put in place a plan of short, medium, and long term actions to address social and community issues in North Belfast focusing in particular on building community capacity in those areas in which this is weak in addition to maintaining community activity where this is working well by:

- Providing an immediate outreach advisory service to ensure that all areas can take full advantage of existing programmes including Peace II
- Exploring the particular social and community problems being experienced within North Belfast and make recommendations to inform the policies and practices of Government and others.
- Auditing existing patterns of community infrastructure in North Belfast, including funding arrangements, staffing levels and other support needs.

- Describing linkages with existing programmes, policy makers and community based support structures.
- Developing a plan for an integrated programme of action in North Belfast aimed at Government and others.
- Identify and agree the particular roles and responsibilities of the various support agencies within North Belfast.

6. **Project Management and Administration**

a. **Chair and Deputy Chairs**

An independent Chair, and two independent Deputy Chairs will be appointed by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development. The Chair and Deputy Chairs will be responsible for the provision of a report and recommendations to these Ministers.

An agreed mechanism will be established for communication between these Ministers and the Chair and Deputy Chairs.

b. **Departmental responsibilities**

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department of Social Development will present a report on the findings of the project to the Executive which will agree priorities and recommendations for action.

Individual Ministers will be accountable for the delivery of recommendations accepted for implementation.

c. Advisory Forum

An Advisory Forum comprising six community representatives nominated by the six North Belfast MLAs will assist the Chair. The six North Belfast MLAs will also be ex-officio members of the Advisory Forum and will receive papers and reports.

The Advisory Forum will:

- provide advice and assistance to the project team;
- assist with engagement of and communication with relevant stakeholders;
- provide advice and assistance to the project team;
- provide comment and views on the of final report.

d. The Secretariat

The project will be supported through a small secretariat, led by a senior Government official assisted by two officials from the Department of Social Development and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister..

The functions of the Secretariat will be:

- To take forward the work of the project;
- To act as a point of contact for the researchers, community workers and other stakeholders.
- To provide information to community sector organisations in North Belfast with respect to the conduct of the project and any issues that may emerge during it.

NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

- To work with the researchers and community workers in drawing up a final report.

It is envisaged that Belfast City Council will be invited to nominate/second one of their Community Service Officers with particular knowledge of North Belfast for the duration of the project..

e. **Resources**

The project will be jointly funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development and these departments will be accountable for the management of the project's resources.

7. **Researchers**

Independent researchers, preferably with experience of working with divided communities may be appointed to assist with the project by Belfast Regeneration Office through a tender process.

Mary Bunting

MARY BUNTING
Head of Equality and Community Relations
☎ 22857

NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

The North Belfast Community Action Project is a joint initiative of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development.

The Project's vision is to create a vibrant and sustainable community in North Belfast which is influential in supporting peace-building.

- This Project aims to put in place a plan of short, medium, and long term actions to address social and community issues in North Belfast. It will focus in particular on building community capacity in those areas in which this is a weak in addition to maintaining community activity where this is working well. An outreach advisory service will be provided to help ensure that all areas can take full advantage of existing programmes including Peace II.
- The project will focus on producing early outcomes and practical assistance to local communities.
- The overall work of the project will be completed within a six month period and short term actions will be implemented as necessary during this period.
- It will be resourced and supported by Government but independent of Government.
- It will be underpinned by independent action conducted by researchers and community workers, with experience of working in divided communities.

The Project will be led by the Very Rev Dr John Dunlop and each of the six North Belfast MLAs will be invited to nominate community representatives to work with the Project team.

List of those invited to attend the Launch:

- North Belfast MLAs
- North Belfast City Councillors
- The Lord Mayor of Belfast
- The Chief Executives (or their representatives) of the following statutory agencies:
 - Belfast City Council;
 - North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust;
 - North Ireland Housing Executive
 - Belfast Education and Library Board;
 - The Catholic Council of Maintained Schools;
- representatives of the Churches;
- North Belfast Partnership Board
- representatives of the main umbrella community organisations from North Belfast
- representatives of Community Relations Council

Timetable

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|--------------|---|
| 09.15 | Arrival tea/coffee |
| 09.30 | Short speeches by <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Minister• Deputy First Minister• Minister for Social Development• The Very Reverend Dr John Dunlop |
| 10.15 | END |

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
FOR SENATOR BUNTING'S TALK ON NORTH BELFAST

Having spoken to Dr. Norman D. Johnston, the leader of the group, I went out to see the film. It would appear that there has been a significant amount of research carried out to date, but recent work by Norman Johnston (Community Development) and by Peter Hadden and colleagues (in 1998).

One of the views emerging from the Johnston's work is that the problems of North Belfast that have resulted from the Troubles are not new problems. Many of them have been emerging for the past 5-6 years and have already re-emerged. It is a view that there needs to be a long-term strategy for the whole of North Belfast, not a fragmented approach to the problems that have arisen.

The following are the members of the Equality Unit who have done specific research on the area:

- Dr. Norman Johnston, Community Development Centre (North Belfast) and
- Dr. Peter Hadden, and colleagues of the University of Ulster.

Relevant pieces of work from Johnston (publication is imminent for both) - by the way the following are also relevant:

- Johnston, Inter-communal violence in North Belfast,
- Johnston, Civil tactics

The CCU have been very active over the last number of years in researching and recording local people's experiences of violence and living in a violent area in North Belfast. They have carried out numerous pieces of research and produced a number of reports, on issues such as:

- Catholic and Protestant's perceptions of the causes, and their moral judgement of, the disorder that took place during Summer 2001
- community-based responses to the violence associated with the summer of 1998 marching season, and the establishment of a community mobile phone network to keep the lines of communication open within and between communities at times of heightened tensions;
- the nature and problems associated with living in interface areas;
- organising parades and managing public safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR MARY BUNTING'S TALK ON NORTH BELFAST

Having spoken to Neil Jarman to ascertain the levels of research carried out to date in North Belfast, it would appear that there has been relatively little **specific** social research carried out to date, bar recent work by himself (on inter-communal violence) and by Pete Shirlow and colleagues (on chill factors).

One of the views emerging from Neil Jarman's soon to be published report was that the problems of North Belfast that have evident of late are not new problems. Many of these have been simmering this past 5-6 years and have merely re-emerged. He was of the view that there needed to be some serious consideration given to the "bigger picture" – that is to say to a complete strategy for the **whole** of North Belfast, not a fragmented approach as has been the case to date.

The key players funded by OFMDFM Equality Unit who **have** done specific research on the area are:

- Dr Neil Jarman/North Belfast Community Development Centre (Neil is now at the Institute for Conflict Research in North Belfast) and
- Dr Pete Shirlow and colleagues of the University of Ulster.

Relevant pieces of work have included (publication is imminent for both) – key findings for both reports are appended:

- Jarman: Inter-communal violence in North Belfast;
- Shirlow: Chill factors

The CDC have been very active over the last number years in researching and recording local people's experiences of violence and living in interface areas in North Belfast. They have carried out numerous pieces of research and produced a number of reports, on issues such as:

- Catholic and Protestant's perceptions of the causes, and their actual experience of, the disorder that took place during Summer 1996;
- community-based responses to the violence associated with the summer of 1996 marching season, and the establishment of a community mobile phone network to keep the lines of communication open within and between communities at times of heightened tensions;
- the nature and problems associated with living in interface areas; and
- stewarding parades and managing public safety.

AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Potential areas for future research highlighted by Neil Jarman include:

- young people and drug-taking;
- status role of young people – social inclusion issues;
- young people and violence;
- teenage pregnancy; and primarily
- some sort of evaluation of attempts to address the problems in North Belfast – in terms of what did/not work, why it did/not work, etc?

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

JARMAN

SHIRLOW

- the distance to work and public or private facilities is less important than the location of such facilities
- people who live in highly segregated areas seek out “safe” places due to fear of entering an area dominated by the other religion
- 68% of Catholics and 58% of Protestants said that their job seeking was influenced by fear
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