

FROM: DEREK WHEELER
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PS/FIRST MINISTER
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**SUMMER 2002 INTERFACE PROGRAMME – NORTH BELFAST
SPECIAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH 2002.**

Summary This submission informs Ministers about the arrangements to launch this approved short-term interface programme.

Issue: Potential conflicts at interfaces in North Belfast will be addressed by this short-term programme of support for community and other groups to provide and organise diversionary projects, especially for youths.

Timescale: Immediate.

Background

1. My submission of 7 June refers. With the support of your Ministers, the June Monitoring Round allocated £250k for the initiative.
2. We have now satisfactorily completed consultations with the agencies funding traditional summer schemes in the area. These agencies include Belfast City Council, BELB, BRO and a number of others. Most of these traditional schemes operate in July. Due to the late start of our programme we will be operating in August and beyond, neatly minimising much of the potential overlap.
3. During the period of its work, the North Belfast Community Action Project initiated a number of short term and innovative community support measures that demonstrated community groups in North Belfast could work together for mutual benefit. To maintain that successful momentum

and to be in a position to address potentially serious interface issues in North Belfast over the summer, the Unit is launching the initiative next week. A copy of the text of the press advert is attached.

4. The new initiative will operate as precursor to any response to the Dunlop report and will provide the Unit with further experience in supporting community capacity building. The primary focus of the initiative is to support established community groups, churches and other voluntary groups to work together in consortia or partnerships. A lead partner will provide key coordination, planning and administrative support and in this way each consortium can achieve economies of scale and plan more ambitious activities. Lead partners provide the accountability for the financial support going to their consortium.
5. We will keep in close touch with the other agencies that already run some summer schemes. BELB, BCC and PSNI have kindly agreed to provide in-kind support for consortia, especially in terms of training volunteers on important issues like child protection regulations. All the agencies including BRO North have kindly shared details of their applications and handling procedures and have agreed to meet together in September to review the arrangements made this summer and to begin planning for next year.
6. The North Belfast initiative could not be extended this year to other hot spots in the city such as Short Strand/Lower Newtownards Rd. The Unit is relying on the fruits of six months of intensive work in North Belfast to carry this off in such a short time scale, but no similar preparation has been made in other parts of the city. Subject to Ministers' agreement the Unit could explore with the agencies operating the traditional summer scheme in those areas, the prospects for handling additional resources targeted on the hot spots. However it should be noted that the Secretary of State has recently allocated £30k to BELB for emergency summer schemes

7. In two meetings with community groups this week we have secured eager acceptance of the initiative. Additional consultation will also take place with church representatives in the area. Some areas of North Belfast will have good schemes proposed in short order but other less capable areas will need support and encouragement to shape their proposals. We have appointed Venture International to support the Unit in providing such help by way of workshops and directly with individual communities as needed. Arrangements are being made to ensure there is equal opportunity of participation by communities.

REPORTS

8. The Unit will provide Ministers with reports on progress on 22nd July and each week thereafter.

Recommendation

9. Ministers are asked to note the arrangements made to launch the North Belfast initiative next week.

Derek Wheeler

DEREK WHEELER

NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITY ACTION UNIT

**SPECIAL INTERVENTION
PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH - 2002**

Community, church and voluntary groups with experience of working with youths and young adults up to age 25 are invited to consider participating in a special programme that will operate in North Belfast over the next few months.

Funding and other resources are available to provide support for eligible groups working together in partnership and to develop suitable programmes of activities. Meetings have taken place in the area and this community-based consultation has indicated there is a high level of interest in the Special Intervention Programme.

To find out more information on the criteria for the programme and how to participate, please contact the North Belfast Community Action Unit on 90726014 or by e-mail to secretariat@northbelfastcommunityactionproject.org.