

REVIEW OF

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

POLICY

ANNEXES 1 TO 10

Report of the Review Team
January 2002

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POLICY

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

The Programme for Government ⁽¹⁾ set out the Executive's vision that Northern Ireland should become a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust, with the protection and vindication of human rights for all.

In working together to create a new future the Programme accepted that the Executive had to deal with very deep and painful divisions in our society after decades of division and conflict. It committed the Executive to continue to develop the capacity for compromise and respect, seeking to resolve conflict and creating new links and building trust.

As one of the actions identified, the Programme undertook by 2002 to review and put in place a cross-departmental strategy for the promotion of community relations, leading to measurable improvements in community relations, reducing the causes of conflict between communities.

Earlier this year ⁽²⁾ the Executive announced the establishment of this review and its terms of reference. It emphasised the need for people from all communities and backgrounds to work together and its commitment to tackling the divisions that remain in Northern Ireland society.

The terms of reference (Annex 1) required the review to consider the background to and development of existing community relations policy, to identify their aims and objectives and the policy instruments used to achieve these and to assess the impacts and achievements of current policy. It should consider whether the aims of community relations policy remained appropriate, whether changes were required to existing policy instruments and to consider and recommend a framework for monitoring and evaluating the impact on community relations of future policy.

In taking forward the Review the Executive made clear the importance of consulting with key stakeholders, particularly those working in local communities to improve community relations.

This working paper is part of the review process. It sets the context and background to current policies, briefly outlines the major policies and programmes and considers their impact, as well as assessing the current state of divisions within Northern Ireland society.

The paper identifies a series of **Key Issues** which should be considered as part of the review process, and seeks comments and views on these (and other relevant) issues by mid- October 2001.

SECTION 2

BACKGROUND TO PRESENT POLICY POSITION

The term “Community Relations” originated in the early 1960s in the United Kingdom as a response to the rise of immigration and subsequent pressures on British society. The approach moved from a concentration on integrating newcomers into British culture as rapidly as possible towards an appreciation of the importance of promoting equality of treatment, human rights and highlighting the distinction between different cultural and national groups.

Government policy in Northern Ireland reflected developments in Great Britain and in 1971 a Minister of Community Relations and a Community Relations Commission were established. The Ministry was responsible for advocating policies which would improve community relations and direct resources to areas of social and economic deprivation.

The Commission was broadly modelled on the Race Relations Board in Great Britain and was given a remit of supporting community relations-focused projects, encouraging education programmes and undertaking a number of research programmes.

The central focus of the Community Relations Commission was initiating a community development strategy within communities in order that they might eventually gain the confidence to ‘reach out’ to the other community. This is described in the Commission’s First Annual Report ⁽³⁾

“Our initial consideration of the problem led us to the conclusion that division in the community could not be considered in isolation from other social problems such as relative deprivation and breakdown of community structures. It seems too that the problems arising from division might more profitably be tackled obliquely in grappling with some of the underlying social problems. We therefore agreed at an early stage to make our

approach through community development.”

After the establishment of the new Power Sharing Executive in 1974 the Community Relations Commission was disbanded on the basis that the new Executive would fulfil the responsibilities previously undertaken by the Commission.

Following the demise of the Community Relations Commission and the subsequent introduction of Direct Rule, responsibility for community relations issues fell to the Department of Education (DENI), local Government and community and voluntary organisations.

Central Community Relations Unit

In the mid 1980s community relations re-emerged as a priority area for Government policy. A convergence of a number of factors led to this development:

- political developments, such as the Anglo Irish Agreement in 1985 which introduced a new dimension in the form of consultation with the Government of the Republic of Ireland, to policy decisions on Northern Ireland and pressure exerted on the United Kingdom Government through US lobby groups to tackle community relations;
- the establishment of the Cultural Traditions Group (an informal group of interested individuals from academic, media, education and art backgrounds) whose aim was to encourage the acceptance of cultural diversity in Northern Ireland society and:
- the completion of two separate reviews of existing policy, one internal Civil Service study carried out within the Central Secretariat and the second completed on behalf of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights. ⁽⁴⁾

Both reports were broadly similar in their analysis of community relations issues and led to the then Secretary of State announcing in 1987 a radical re-alignment of the structures for taking forward community relations policy and practice with the formation of the Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU). Community relations policy was to have 3 broad objectives:

- to ensure that there was full equality of opportunity and equity of treatment for everyone in Northern Ireland;
- to encourage greater contact between the different communities in Northern Ireland; and
- to encourage greater mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity.

The new Unit was given 3 functions:

- to provide a challenge mechanism within Government in relation to emerging policies which might have a differential impact on the different communities in Northern Ireland or an effect on relationships between them;
- to undertake a review role in relation to existing policies and programmes; and
- to undertake an innovation role to promote new programmes to encourage greater contact, mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity.

An inter-departmental committee was also established (chaired at Ministerial level) whose role was to act as an advisory mechanism for the Unit and to consider strategic policy-making in the field of community relations. The Unit renamed the Community Relations Unit (CRU) and part of OFMDFM following devolution, has responsibility for £5.5 million annual mainstream funding.

Community Relations Council

Following its establishment CCRU began a process of consultation with representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors to explore the possibilities for a new public agency for community relations. The Cultural Traditions Group was influential in these discussions and when Government announced the establishment of the new Community Relations Council (CRC) it was made clear that it would include the themes of both community relations and cultural traditions.

The decision to establish the CRC as independent of Government was based on the view that an 'arms length' approach would allow for wider engagement across Northern Ireland. CRC was established as an independent limited company with charitable status. The CRC is currently managed by a Council consisting of 24 members.

The Council's strategic aim is to help the people of Northern Ireland to recognise and counter the effects of communal division. It does this by:

- providing support for local groups and organisations;
- developing opportunities for cross communal understanding;
- increasing public awareness of community relations work; and
- encouraging constructive debate throughout NI.

The CRC receives funding from the CRU (currently £2.8 million per annum) and grant aid is allocated to:

- the Council's core expenditure;

- the Council's programme expenditure in grant aiding schemes;
- core funding of reconciliation bodies; and
- core funding of cultural traditions bodies.

In addition to support from CRU, the Council worked in the EU Peace Programme between 1995 and 1999 and was responsible for the EU Measure 'Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation'.

District Council Community Relations Programme

The need to develop community relations activities at a more local level was identified and considerable thought was given by CCRU as to how such a programme might be initiated, particularly at a period when there was considerable continuing tensions between some Councils and Government on closely associated issues. In developing the new programme, Government established a number of criteria to be met before Councils could participate in the new programme.

These included:

- that Councils must agree on a cross-party basis to participation in the scheme;
- Councils had to draw up a community relations policy statement;
- the policy statement and the programmes undertaken had to be agreed on a cross-party basis;
- Councils had to appoint a Community Relations Officer through public advertisement for their area.

- Projects had to include cross-community contact, mutual understanding or cultural diversity;

The aims of the District Council Community Relations Programme (DCCRP) established at its inception in 1989 remain. These are to:

- develop cross community contact and cooperation;
- promote greater mutual understanding;
- increase respect for cultural traditions.

Current funding of the Programme is £1.8 million per annum.

Educational Developments

A further main area of community relations development in the 1980s and 1990's related to policy in education. In 1982 DENI published a circular on 'Improvement of Community Relations: the contribution of schools' ⁽⁵⁾

This stated that:

“Every teacher, every school manager, Board member and trustee, and every educational administrator within the system, has a responsibility for helping children to learn to understand and respect each other, and their different customs and traditions, and of preparing them to live together in harmony in adult life.”

The Schools Cross Community Contact Scheme was established in 1987 to support greater contact between Catholic and Protestant young people and in 1988 funding was made available to voluntary reconciliation organisations and cultural traditions bodies which operated in support of community relations initiatives in schools. In the 1989 Education Reform Order

two cross-curricular community relations programmes were introduced: Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage. The Order also included measures to support the development of integrated education.

DENI's Strategic Plan for Education 1996-2000 identified community relations as one of four themes for priority action and identified the three main forms of action as:

- cross-community contact programmes involving young people;
- Education for Mutual Understanding within the NI curriculum; and
- support for the development of integrated education.

Since 1996, the Schools Community Relations Programme (formerly the Cross-Community Contact Scheme) has been administered by the Education and Library Boards. This Programme provides a valuable opportunity to develop and implement school EMU policies and extend classroom work in EMU by developing community relations through links between schools.

DENI also supported many voluntary reconciliation groups who were engaged in programmes which contribute to the improvement of community relations and which involved young people in Northern Ireland up to the age of 25. These groups work in a variety of ways: with individual schools in developing effective community relations programmes, or with organisations which might concentrate on staff development work with teachers.

Current mainstream Community Relations funding is £3.4 million per annum (excluding integrated education).

Integrated Education

A significant development in education in Northern Ireland over the past 20 years has been the creation of a number of integrated schools which are attended in roughly equal numbers by Protestant and Catholic children. In 1981 Lagan College opened as an independent school funded through charitable trust, foundations and voluntary fund raising. By 1989 around 1,400 pupils were enrolled in the 10 integrated schools (5 grant aided and 5 independent).

Since 1990, the Education Reform Order has placed a statutory duty on the Department of Education to “encourage and facilitate” the development of integrated education. This is defined as “the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils”. Under this legislation new integrated schools qualify for a recurrent grant immediately provided they meet the minimum criteria. Following a review of the viability criteria in late 2000, those for new primary schools were reduced and a review of the viability criteria for secondary schools is underway. In addition procedures are in place for transforming existing schools to integrated status.

Integrated schools are eligible for 100% funding for their running costs. In the case of new schools, grants for capital development are not available until viability has been established but the school can get assistance with their initial costs from the Integrated Education Fund.

At September 2000 there were 44 integrated schools of which 16 are secondary and 12 are transformed schools. Their aggregate enrolment is over 14,000 pupils, just over 4% of total pupil numbers. There is currently one independent integrated primary school.

Culture, Arts and Leisure

The Department of Education and, following devolution, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, has supported programmes and activities which incorporate community relations objectives, usually in the context of a wider social inclusion or community development framework. Examples include the support of community relations activities funded through the Arts Council, Sports Council and other funded bodies, the promotion of minority languages and efforts to tackle sectarianism in sport.

Housing

Housing issues have been closely interlinked with communal problems in Northern Ireland. The Cameron report into civil disturbances in 1969⁽⁶⁾ concluded that “Council housing policy was distorted for political ends”. The reform process which followed led to the establishment of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as the single, central comprehensive social housing agency. Supplying and improving public housing became a cornerstone of social progress. Housing in Northern Ireland was transformed from being one of inefficiency and policy abuse to one of the most effective, professional and proficient in Europe, unfitness of housing in Northern Ireland reducing from 27% in 1974 to 9% in 1984.

The improvement of public sector housing happened against a trend of increasing residential segregation, violence and the introduction of ‘peace lines’ to manage community conflict. This trend produced significant problems and complications for the NIHE and their analysis emphasised the structural complexity of the issue and the limits on a social housing agency to address the problems of sectarianism.

The Belfast Agreement ⁽⁷⁾ makes specific commitment to promoting integrated housing and to help people to have the right to freely choose a place of

residence and to live in peace. The subsequent Northern Ireland Act placed a duty on the NIHE, as on other public bodies, to promote good relations.

In 1999 the Housing Executive published a consultation paper 'Towards a Community Relations Strategy' ⁽⁸⁾ which set their analysis of the issues and scope for action. The document acknowledged the housing management aspect to violence and community segregation which included:

- intimidation and segregation are working against the Executive's policy of offering choice to applications;
- it has led to vacant dwellings in particular areas with significant cost;
- the levels of intimidation have produced major pressures on the Executive to secure re-housing; and
- it is becoming increasingly difficult in some areas to re-house mixed religious households.

The policy statement reaffirmed the Housing Executive's stance against violence and concentrated on four related areas: on the control of intimidation; addressing interface violence; treatment of symbols including murals, graffiti and kerb stone painting, and addressing segregated housing.

Against these developments, the NIHE estimates that around 70% of estates are segregated, although public surveys do suggest that around the same proportion of people would prefer to live in mixed housing.

The NIHE has recently developed its position and has adopted a wider, comprehensive approach which recognises that community relations covers a spectrum ranging from programmes designed to improve the personal safety of individual residents in all neighbourhoods, through to improving the relationship

between segregated estates and has developed a Community Relations – Community Safety Plan ⁽⁹⁾.

The Government Regional Strategic Framework ⁽¹⁰⁾ which was published for consultation in late 1998 set out the strategic planning context and priorities for the region over the next 25 years. One Guideline aims “ to foster development which contributes to community relations, recognises cultural diversity and reduces socio economic differentials”. The strategy adopts a dual approach which facilitates the development of integrated communities but recognises the desire for communities to live apart. Providing neutral spaces, accessible places of employment and safe public transport options were to be promoted.

SECTION 3

THE CHANGING CONTEXT

Introduction

The policies and delivery programmes briefly described earlier were first established in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Northern Ireland community remained involved in overt conflict and associated high levels of violence. The recent process of political development in Northern Ireland has produced significant political, social, legislative and policy changes in Northern Ireland of relevance to community relations. These include:

- the paramilitary cease-fires in the early to mid 1990s;
- the Belfast Agreement and the subsequent establishment of devolved government in Northern Ireland;
- the introduction of key legislation relating to equality and human rights;
- the development through the 1990s of Targeting Social Need as a key policy priority for the Government and its subsequent endorsement in the Belfast Agreement;
- the major involvement of the EU in Northern Ireland through its Structural Programme and particularly the establishment of the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, which included the introduction and development of District Partnerships at local level with a Peace and Reconciliation remit;
- the development of IFI community relations programmes.

The following paragraphs consider the relevance of these developments to the current review.

Political Developments

Since the present community relations policies, structures and programmes were established in the late 1980s there has been radical change in the political environment within which these operate. The ongoing peace process, covering the paramilitary cease fires, the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998 and its subsequent endorsement through a referendum led to the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1999.

The participants in the negotiation of the Belfast Agreement dedicated themselves to “the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all”.

The structure of the democratic institutions put in place, the safeguards built in to ensure that all sections of the community can participate and work together successfully and the emphasis on the explicit identification of Unionist and Nationalist ‘designation’ in the Assembly process reinforce the importance of shared government between different communities. Further, the provisions in the Agreement relating to issues such as release of prisoners, the promotion of language diversity and work with victims have particular significance for community relations.

Participants to the Agreement recognised the importance of developing reconciliation and mutual understanding and respect between and within communities and traditions in Northern Ireland. They noted “ an essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing.”

The provisions of the Belfast Agreement, translated through the 1998 Northern Ireland Act, led to the establishment of devolved Government and the publication by the Executive of its Programme for Government. This was

endorsed earlier this year by the Assembly and commits the Executive to addressing directly religious and political divisions in Northern Ireland, and seeks to create greater mutual understanding and respect for diversity among communities. Throughout, the Programme highlights the interconnectedness of community relations and the promotion of equality and human rights.

Legislative Developments

The period since the current policies were established has also seen significant developments in legislation which have major implications for community relations policies.

The Human Rights Act (1998) which came into force across the United Kingdom in 2000 requires public authorities to act in compliance with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (unless prevented from doing so by statutory rules). The Act seeks to uphold a series of rights covering social and political issues, a number of which have important community relations implications. These would include Article 9 on freedom of thought, conscience and religion covering acts of observance and religious holidays, Article 10 on freedom of expression and Article 14 on prohibition of discrimination.

The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 prohibits discrimination on racial grounds in employment and training, education and in the provision of goods, facilities and services. The term “racial grounds” is defined in the Order as colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins and specifically includes the grounds of belonging to the Irish Traveller community.

The Fair Employment Acts of 1976 and 1989 prohibited discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion in employment and training generally. The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 extends the scope of this protection to the provision of goods, facilities and services.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity. Without prejudice to these obligations on promoting equality of opportunity, a public authority is also required:

“in carrying out its functions to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group”.

In its Guidance ⁽¹¹⁾ the Equality Commission emphasises that the ‘good relations duty’ extends beyond the religious/political dimension of community relations and that consideration of the needs and interests of minority ethnic groups, including Irish Travellers is important in this context. The Guidance indicates that every public authority in Northern Ireland must now, as a universal rule of practice, take both factors properly into account in the way they carry out their functions relating to Northern Ireland.

Public authorities are each required to produce an Equality Scheme stating how they propose to fulfil these duties and schemes must be submitted to the Equality Commission for approval. In the development of their Equality Schemes Public Bodies must consult with those likely to be affected by their schemes. By June 2000 all public bodies were required to develop Equality Schemes demonstrating how they would build these new requirements into their policies and service provision. There is also a need for the bodies to conduct equality impact assessments of new and existing policies, and these should include an annex showing how the body will promote good relations.

New TSN

The New Targeting Social Need initiative, identified within the Belfast Agreement as one measure to achieve equality of opportunity, is an underpinning principle in the Programme for Government.

New TSN ⁽¹²⁾ operates in 3 linked ways, a special focus on the problems of unemployed people to increase their chances of finding a job, targeting other aspects of social need such as health, housing and education and a series of special initiatives attempting to meet the needs of people who are disadvantaged in several ways, to such an extent that they are unable to enjoy the full range of life opportunities which most people take for granted.

The policy aims to contribute to the reduction of inequalities among different sections of society. For example, evidence collected over a number of years shows that, compared with Protestants, Catholics in Northern Ireland are over-represented among the unemployed and that consequently they fare less well than Protestants in some socio-economic indicators such as income. Other groups, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds, may be multi-disadvantaged. The first 'Promoting Social Inclusion' initiative included consideration of the needs of Ethnic Minority People and of Travellers.

By consistently addressing the problems of people who are objectively shown to be in greatest social need, New TSN should over time contribute to the erosion of social inequalities.

EU Programmes

During the 1990s EU Programmes and funding support became an important driver for community relations action.

The Northern Ireland Single Programme (NISP) supported the economic and social development of Northern Ireland over the period of 1994-1999. The aim of the NISP was to promote economic and social cohesion and one sub programme (Physical and Social Environment Sub Programme) included a

specific measure on Community Relations designed to address issues of reconciliation between the main sections of the community in Northern Ireland. It sought to increase the level of cross-community contact, to encourage greater mutual understanding of and respect for different cultures and traditions in the region and to develop a body of information on community relations theory and practice. The total EU grant available was approximately £17 million.

Following the paramilitary cease-fires announced in 1994 the EU sought to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation through a special Peace Programme announced in 1995. One priority objective was to promote peace and reconciliation by encouraging grass roots and cross-community co-operation, as well as action to address specific difficulties faced by vulnerable groups and others at a disadvantage such as victims, children, young people and those previously caught up in violence including prisoners and ex-prisoners.

A specific measure on 'Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation' supported opportunities for enhanced cross-community contact, facilitated cross-community partnerships and developed innovative models for community reconciliation. Funding of £7 million supported this measure, which was delivered through the CRC. A further Sub Programme established District Partnerships in each of the 26 District Council areas. Each District Partnership comprised one-third elected members, one-third voluntary/community sector members and one-third other interest such as business, trade unions and statutory agencies. The specific role of the District Partnerships were:

- representing a voice of concern and the needs of all the different stakeholders in the area;
- supporting and developing a peace building vision; and
- becoming a positive model for wider community relations within the area.

Over £80 million in total was allocated to the District Partnership programme.

The second EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, which will cover the period 2001-2006, also contains a community relations measure 'Reconciliation for Sustainable Peace'. The main objective is to provide opportunities for civil society to promote reconciliation and peace-building efforts and to encourage communities in the areas which had previously experienced violence and polarisation to develop strategies and activities which promote reconciliation as a means to sustaining peace. Funding of around £12 million will be available for this measure over the period.

International Fund for Ireland

Since the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) was established in 1986, it has supported specific community relations projects. Following the establishment of the CCRU and the CRC, the Fund introduced a new Community Bridges Programme which sought to support activities which:

- developed the capacity of communities to address issues of conflict and division at interface areas in Northern Ireland;
- increased the capacity of local groups or communities to develop strategies tackling intimidation or sectarianism at a community or an organisational level;
- developed sustainable and meaningful cross-border partnerships;
- involved and empowered marginalised youth in community relations and/or cross-border work;
- involved local groups, particularly in areas designated as disadvantaged or which had experienced high degrees of violence and polarisation; and

- involved centre-based community relations and/or cross-border programmes.

Over the period 1996-2001 around £8 million was provided by the Fund to support the Community Bridges Programme.

Conclusions

The last decade of the 20th century has seen major political, structural and legislative changes in Northern Ireland which bear heavily on community relations issues. The changes include:

- the introduction of major new programmes and funding from the EU and the IFI explicitly linked to reconciliation and healing community divisions;
- the introduction of the New TSN initiative which requires all public bodies to tackle disadvantage by directing their efforts and resources towards individuals, groups and areas in greatest need;
- the political agreements which led to the establishment of the NI Assembly, the Executive and the publication of the Programme for Government with major commitments for action to reduce divisions in society; and
- the raft of legislation including Section 75 of the NI Act which requires public authorities to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between groups in Northern Ireland.

These developments emphasise not only the extending activities and widening appreciation of issues relating to community relations, but require the current Review to consider their implications for its recommendations on the policies, programmes and delivery mechanisms to reduce the divisions in our society

against these broader concepts of promoting cultural, religious and political pluralism.

SECTION 4

DIVISIONS IN SOCIETY: NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY

Introduction

The Programme for Government commits the Executive to improving community relations and tackling the divisions in Northern Ireland society. This section considers briefly available material on the extent of, and trends in, communal divisions over the past 10-15 years ⁽¹³⁾.

Attitudes between communities

Survey data on changes in community attitudes within Northern Ireland are now available, collected from the late 1980s through to the present. This material has been used to measure changes in the attitudes of communities towards each other and assess their perception of tolerance, prejudice and social distance.

The most recent analyses suggests that whilst there has been a general improvement in community relations attitudes between Protestants and Catholics since the 1980s, over the most recent period (1996 onwards) there are suggestions of a decrease in levels of tolerance and respect for diversity. There is also some evidence that the Protestant and Catholic communities have developed notably different attitudes on a range of issues associated with improving community relations. In general, Catholics seem more amenable to efforts to promote cross-community contact and are more confident that their rights and cultural traditions will be protected. This is contrasted to a perceived sense of mistrust and unease within the Protestant community.

Research on attitudes towards race relations in Northern Ireland and the nature and prevalence of racial prejudice has suggested that issues of race and ethnicity are significant. In terms of statements of general principle over 80% of

the population tend to express positive and liberal attitudes towards aspects of race relations. However, with more specific issues which might affect respondents more personally, racial attitudes tend to be significantly more negative. Around a quarter of all the subjects in the study indicated an unwillingness to accept various racial minorities as residents in their local area and over 2 out of 5 people said they were unwilling to accept ethnic minority members as close friends. The study suggested that racial prejudice appears to be twice as significant as sectarian prejudice in the attitudes of the population in Northern Ireland. Moreover, negative attitudes towards specific minority ethnic groups appear to have worsened over the past few years.

Community Relations at Grass Roots Level

Studies of the impact of community relations initiatives at local level indicate a more positive impact. Looking at such outcomes as a greater understanding of cultural diversity, increased willingness to engage in shared working and in an ability to influence wider political processes, the evidence indicates a substantial level of success for community relations interventions at local level.

Education

Whilst the number of integrated primary and secondary schools has been increasing steadily, and in 2000/2001 there were over 14,000 pupils in integrated education, this represented only 4 percent of the total enrolments in schools in Northern Ireland. Most of pupils in integrated schools were at secondary level (over 60%) but this still only represented just over 5½% of the numbers in secondary level education.

Housing

Some research has indicated progressively higher levels of residential segregation in Northern Ireland over the last 20 years with a majority of people

choosing to live in polarised districts. Predictably, segregation has increased most in areas experiencing high levels of violence.

The NIHE reports that currently over 70% of public sector housing estates are segregated (using a threshold of 10% present for either religion). The NIHE also reports a continuing trend in some mixed housing estates towards greater segregation. Compounding the problem over the last few years, such increasing segregation has been accompanied by an increase in sectarian related graffiti, flags, kerb painting and other manifestations of paramilitary association and cultural/political identity. Problems in estates on interface areas have been particularly severe: in 1999 the NIHE reported that 20 estates in 9 districts were significantly affected by interface violence. Intimidation has increased in highly contested areas and in an effort to tackle this, new peace walls have been erected and others strengthened in interface areas of our two main cities.

Crime

A number of indicators relating to community relations and divisions in society are available. These show:

- In terms of various paramilitary activities (deaths, shootings, bombing and incendiaries) incidents dropped to their minimum in the year after the ceasefire but have since then shown a progressive and continuing increase;
- Paramilitary policing of their own areas (manifesting itself in punishment attacks) has increased since the ceasefire and is now at higher levels than at the start of the 1990s;
- The last five years has seen a dramatic increase in the reporting of racist incidents to the police (up almost 8 fold from 1996 to 2000).

Conclusion

The evidence reviewed above does not suggest that significant progress has been made towards a more tolerant or inclusive society. Despite some positive evidence at grass roots level, and significant increase in the number of integrated schools and children attending them, the amount of sharing in our society in education, housing and personal relationships remains limited. Attitudes and tolerance between Protestant, Catholic and Ethnic Minority Communities continues to portray low levels of tolerance or appreciation of diversity, and measures of crime suggest increasing levels of sectarian violence.

SECTION 5

IMPLICATIONS AND ISSUES

Implications

The changing context of community relations raises important issues for current policies and programmes. A number of recent studies have drawn attention to the impact of the changed environment on the current status and structures of the policy instruments currently operated.

A recent evaluation of the CRC ⁽¹⁴⁾ considered the impact and cost effectiveness of the Council in delivering its community relations aims and objectives in the period 1998-2001. The study noted the rapidly changing environment in which the CRC operated and which had major implications for the Council and the activities supported by it. It reviewed the original rationale for establishing the Council as an independent and charitable organisation which reflected the view that Government was not best placed to engage grass roots constituencies in community relation activities. The review however concluded “that recent political dynamics had fundamentally altered the community relations environment and raises questions over the appropriateness of the current status of the Council”. Given the priority accorded to promoting community relations in the Programme for Government the review proposed that consideration should be given to changing the status of the CRC to that of an executive Non Departmental Body. Such a change, it was suggested, would strengthen the relationship between policy making and policy implementation and would give a clear focus to the direction and delivery of community relations policy in Northern Ireland.

A further evaluation of the District Council Community Relations Programme ⁽¹⁵⁾ also highlighted the changed context in which the Programme now operated. The review noted the profound implications of these changes for the Programme and concluded that whilst the original aims were appropriate for the

context at the time of its inception, the changes which have occurred indicated that its aims need to be radically reviewed and a greater emphasis placed on mainstreaming community relations. Options to develop a permanent locally-based community relations programme should be considered.

A recent report to the Department of Education ⁽¹⁶⁾ included consideration of the development of community relations policy in education. Whilst noting the extent of work in the area and acknowledging the difficult and sensitive nature of the work undertaken by many teachers and others in the education service, the review noted that community relations objectives must move from the periphery to the core of the education service. The Minister and the Department “each has a responsibility to promote mutual understanding and respect for diversity as a seminal purpose of the education service”. The report goes on to conclude:

“significant challenges face contemporary society in Northern Ireland and processes to promote social inclusion and accommodate cultural diversity must be developed.”

In its response the Department endorsed the over-riding principle to demonstrate leadership and commitment to the promotion of a culture of tolerance and respect for diversity. Following the report the Department is taking forward many of its recommendations to strengthen and widen the role and status of EMU and Cultural Heritage across the educational system and to meet its commitment to pluralism.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has also been reviewing its policies in relation to community relations and diversity. It has recently adopted a more strategic approach to cultural diversity following the Face-to-Face Report ⁽¹⁷⁾ which identified as a primary theme striving for:

“an increased understanding of, and for, the communities in Northern Ireland, which will moderate attitudes relating to difference and division, challenge stereotyping and encourage positive attitudes towards cultural diversity”.

The report recommended support for opportunities for expression, education, exploration, exchange and debate on cultural diversity, and proposed:

- the development and implementation of a cultural diversity policy;
- the establishment of an annual cultural diversity budget;
- the development of cultural diversity policies, posts and programmes for resource providers, community arts development organisations, voluntary groups and education centres; and
- the mainstreaming of cultural objectives in Government policy.

The Department has established a Cultural Diversity Branch which will lead on the implementation of these actions.

Issues for Consideration

The paper has outlined the background to and development of existing community relations policy, considered some of the wider factors affecting current community relations policy, and provided a brief assessment of the impact and achievements of current policy and practice set against the wider picture of divisions within society in Northern Ireland. Several key issues are raised by this assessment.

The Programme for Government sets out the Executive Committee's vision for "a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and the protection and vindication of the human rights of all". A policy to promote better community relations and tackle the divisions in Northern Ireland must agree as to the vision of what a community relations policy is trying to achieve.

Q1 What is the vision for community relations which the policy should strive to promote?

A shared community relations vision for the future for Northern Ireland is essential, but for policy, strategic approach and practice this vision must lead to a number of desired outcomes which can then become a set of aims and objectives for Government to deliver through its strategic approach.

Q2 What main aims or outcomes should the policy set if this vision is to be achieved?

The paper has outlined the current aims of community relations policy and the existing approaches or policy instruments used to meet these aims.

Q3 Are the current aims of community relations policy still appropriate in the light of the changed context in Northern Ireland?

Q4 Are the current approaches or policy instruments still appropriate?

The recently completed review of the Community Relations Council has highlighted the fundamental changes in the community relations environment and identified possible implications of these for the appropriateness of the current status of the Council.

Q5 What should the future role and status of the Community Relations Council be?

The evaluation of the District Council Community Relations Programme also emphasised the changed context within which this programme now operates and questioned whether the aims of the programme remain the most appropriate in the current context. It also recommended that options to develop a permanent, locally-based community relations programme should be considered.

Q6 What should be the future of the District Council Community Relations Programme.

Q7 What options are there to develop a permanent, locally-based community relations programme?

The divisions within society in Northern Ireland are clear, enduring and pervasive. It is of fundamental importance that the impact of future policy initiatives is assessed. The issue of how to measure the impact of policies and initiatives on community relations continues to be a problem. The recent evaluation of the CRC, whilst noting the

shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation approaches refuted the view that community relations cannot be measured and recommended accordingly.

Q8 How best can the impact on community relations of future policy be measured to allow appropriate monitoring and evaluation to take place?

An inter-departmental group chaired at ministerial level was originally set up to ensure the co-ordination of community relations action across departments. This group has not developed and there is little current cross-departmental co-operation in community relations work.

Q9 What are the most effective structures within Government in Northern Ireland to drive forward this work?

The review is required to recommend a cross-departmental strategy which tackles the divisions in society in Northern Ireland, which the Executive wish to have in place by 2002.

Q10 What other issues should feed into this strategy?

SECTION 6

WAY AHEAD

The terms of reference for the review stresses the importance of engaging with key stakeholders, including those working in local communities to improve community relations. This working paper is one stage in that engagement and the review team welcome comments and responses to the review and particularly to the key issues raised in this section. The closing date for comments and responses is 19 October 2001.

Responses to the Review of Community Relations Policy Working Paper should be made to:

Community Relations Reveiw
Room E5.06
Castle Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SR

- ◆ (Tel) 028 9052 2988
- ◆ (Fax) 028 9052 8376
- ◆ (e-mail) jeremy.harbison@ofmdfmni.gov.uk

- ◆ This document is available on the Community Relations Unit website at www.ccruni.gov.uk.
- ◆ Additional copies are also available by telephoning the above number.
- ◆ This document is available in alternative formats on request.

FOOTNOTES: REFERENCES

- (1) Northern Ireland Executive (2001). Programme for Government: Making a Difference. Belfast: OFMDFM.
- (2) OFMDFM (2001). Review of Community Relations Policy. News release, 30 April.
- (3) Community Relations Commission (1970). First Annual Report. Belfast.
- (4) Fitzduff, M and Frazer, H (1986). Improving Community Relations. Belfast: SACHR.
- (5) Department of Education (Northern Ireland) (1982). The Improvement of Community Relations: the Contribution of Schools. DENI Circular 1982/21.
- (6) Cameron Commission (1969). Report: Disturbances in Northern Ireland. Cmnd 532. Belfast: HMSO.
- (7) The Agreement (1998). Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations. Belfast.
- (8) Northern Ireland Housing Executive (1999). Towards a Community Relations Strategy – a consultation paper. Belfast.
- (9) Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2000). Community Relations and Community Safety: Implementation Paper. Belfast.
- (10) Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) (1998). Shaping Our Future: Draft Strategic Planning Framework for Northern Ireland. Belfast: HMSO.

- (11) Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2000). Guide to the Statutory Duties. Belfast.
- (12) OFMDFM (2000). Vision into Practice: First New TSN Annual Report. Belfast.
- (13) Research and statistical material provided by Equality Unit Research Branch, OFMDFM.
- (14) OFMDFM (2001). Evaluation of Community Relations Council. Community Relations Unit, Belfast.
- (15) OFMDFM (2000). Evaluation of the District Council Community Relations Programme. Community Relations Unit, Belfast.
- (16) Department of Education (Northern Ireland) (1999). Towards a Culture of Tolerance: Education for Diversity. Bangor.
- (17) Face-to-Face (2001). A Vision for Arts and Culture. Belfast:: Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the Community Relations Review are:

- to review the background to, and development of, existing community relations policy;
- to identify the aims and objectives of existing community relations policy and the policy instruments used to achieve them;
- to assess the impact and achievements of current policy;
- to examine, in the light of relevant developments, including the recently completed evaluations of the District Council Community Relations Programme and the Community Relations Council, whether the aims of community relations policy remain appropriate and whether changes are required to existing policy instruments;
- to consult with key stakeholders, particularly those working in local communities to improve community relations;
- to make recommendations on further policy aims and objectives; and
- to recommend a framework for monitoring and evaluating the impact on community relations of future policy, to fulfil the Programme for Government intention that improvements stemming from the new strategy should be measurable.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICY REVIEW

List of Meetings

1. Democratic Dialogue
2. Civic Forum
3. Future Ways
4. Department of Education
5. Department of Finance and Personnel
6. Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
7. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) – Machinery of Government
8. Protestant Unionist Loyalist Steering Group
9. Research and Evaluation Services
10. Department of Environment
11. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
12. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
13. Equality Commission - Single Equality Bill
14. Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
15. Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Examinations Assessment (NICCEA)
16. RUC – Senior Officers
17. OFMDFM – Economic Planning Unit (EPU): Will Haire
18. Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity (INCORE) – Clem McCartney
19. Co-operation Ireland
20. International Fund for Ireland – (Joe Hinds)
21. Human Rights Commission
22. Chief Executive, Community Relations Council
23. Inter Faith Forum
24. Committee of the Centre
25. Department of Regional Development
26. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
27. Department for Social Development
28. Research and Evaluation Services
29. Community Relations Council
30. Consultants – (Joanne Hughes and Patrick Quirk)
31. Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency (NISRA)
32. Department of Education – Vivian McIver, Inspectorate
33. Mediation Network
34. Belfast City Council (Senior Executives)
35. Counteract
36. OFMDFM EPU (Economists)
37. OFMDFM – Anti-Discrimination Division and Legal Services
38. Maurna Crozier - Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
39. INCORE
40. Democratic Dialogue Group

41. Lord Herman Ousley - Senior Civil Service Review
42. SDLP
43. Community Relations Review meeting – (Eamon McCartan, Chief Executive Designate, Mark Adair, Director EU Programme)
44. European Union Special Programmes Bodies
45. International Fund for Ireland – (Chris Todd and Sam Corbett)
46. Coleraine Borough Council
47. Youth Council
48. Business in Community
49. Community Relations Unit - District Council Community Relations Programme
50. Head of Civil Service
51. Northern Ireland Office
52. OFMDFM, Equality Directorate, (Mary Bunting and Chris Stewart)
53. OFMDFM - Targeting Social Needs Division
54. Alliance Party
55. NIPSA

LIST OF SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS

Community Relations Officers' Conference – 4 October

Church Groups – 8 October

Academic Workshop – 10 October

Western Forum – District Councils Conference 11 and 12 October

Community Relations Council – Core and EU Funded Community Relations Groups – 19 October

Chief Executives Forum – 23 October

Belfast Community/Voluntary Groups – NICVA – 23 October

Ethnic Minorities – 24 October

District Councils' Chief Executive's Workshop – 25 October

ECNI Round Table – 5 November

NISRA Session – 9 November

North West Community Relations Voluntary Sector's Workshop – 13 November

INPUTS TO REVIEW

- Eighty-Six Responses
 - 8 Departments
 - 19 Statutory Bodies
 - 15 District Councils
 - 5 Political (4 Assembly committees, Civic Forum)
 - 27 Voluntary/Community
 - 12 Individual
- Records of Seminars/Meetings
- INCORE Review
- RES Paper on Local Options
- Draft Chapters: Hargie and Dickson Book (see attached)
- OFMDFM Economists Report

RESEARCHING THE TROUBLES: SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVES ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONFLICT

Owen Hargie and David Dickson (Eds.)

CHAPTER TITLES AND CONTRIBUTORS (provisional)

Preface – Dennis McCoy

Editorial introduction – Owen Hargie and David Dickson

- Chapter 1: Social Attitudes and Community Relations
Joanne Hughes and Gillian Robinson
- Chapter 2: The Concept of a Learning Community in Effecting Change
Duncan Morrow
- Chapter 3: Cross-community Communication in the Workplace
David Dickson, Owen Hargie and Seanenne Rainey
- Chapter 4: Territoriality and Conflict: Spatial Integration and Social Segregation
Brendan Murtagh
- Chapter 5: Violence, Vigilance and Vigilantism: Community-based Responses to Social Disorder
Neil Jarman
- Chapter 6: The Role of Women in Community Development in NI
Valerie Morgan
- Chapter 7: Community Relations Work in NI: What is it achieving?
Fiona Bloomer
- Chapter 8: The Roots of Sectarianism in NI
John Brewer and Gareth Higgins
- Chapter 9: Children and the Troubles
Paul Connolly and Julie Neill
- Chapter 10: Education and Equality
Tony Gallagher

- Chapter 11: Communication and Relational Development among Young Adults
David Dickson, Owen Hargie and Seanenne Rainey
- Chapter 12: Contact, Attitudes and Conflict
Ed Cairns, Miles Hewstone and Ulrike Niens
- Chapter 13: Political leadership in transition: Protagonists and Pragmatists
Gillian Robinson and Cathy Gormley-Heenan
- Chapter 14: The Cost of the Troubles
Marie Smyth
- Chapter 15: The Management of Peace Processes: Trends and Implications
John Darby
- Conclusions

INCORE

**COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF PUBLIC POLICIES TOWARDS
IMPROVING INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

A paper prepared for the Review of Community Relations Policies

By

Clem McCartney

October 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The paper sets out to consider developments in policy and interventions related to improving community relations in other relevant jurisdictions. It has been prepared as a contribution to the Review of Community Relations Policy in Northern Ireland which was initiated by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister in early 2001.
 - 1.1. It concludes that throughout the world there is very limited experience in this field and only isolated examples of practice. It refers as much to the failure of government to promote community relations activities as to the work that has been done, and suggests reasons why governments find it difficult to act in this area. Northern Ireland does lead the way in the range of activity and the evaluation of the impact of this activity.
 - 1.2. By and large, governments only seem to become directly involved in supporting and even taking a more proactive role when there is some pressure to do so.
 - 1.3. Government policies may actually hinder the improvement of community relations.
 - 1.4. The approaches governments adopt will be influenced by its preferred form of inter-community relations: homogenisation, separate development, co-existence or pluralism.
 - 1.5. If government perceives a problem of racial or ethnic harmony it will often adopt an approach which is more structural than human relations.
 - 1.6. Structural changes on their own may not be sufficient to ensure inter-community harmony and may in fact exacerbate community tensions
 - 1.7. The improvement of inter-community relations cannot be achieved solely at the level of personal interaction and understanding, and attention must also be given to the structural matters which influence inter-community relations
 - 1.8. Governments are limited in the degree to which they can implement attitudinal change
 - 1.9. Many initiatives bring together people at the level of influence leaders and the elites but they do not increase the level of contact, communication and understanding at the level of the ordinary citizen.
 - 1.10. Government can in certain circumstances have an impact on inter-community relations by managing physical space and the spatial distribution of populations.
 - 1.11. Educational is one area where the government is in a position to impact throughout the population.
 - 1.12. Joint work on infrastructure is very visible and benefits a wide cross-section of

society and as such it is one area where specific action at one level can have an impact in the wider community

- 1.13. Public bodies and government agencies may themselves contribute to inter-community conflict if their performance does not take account of cultural sensitivities
- 1.14. The state can identify and initiate processes and mechanisms which review each communities understanding of itself and the other community.
- 1.15. The media is an important tool for communicating with the wider society and influencing attitudes to community relations.
- 1.16. The state may be hampered in its ability to intervene in situations of inter-community tension if it is unwilling to recognise the legitimacy of the representatives of one or more of the communities involved.
- 1.17. Some of the limitations in the role and actions of government can be filled by non governmental organisations
- 1.18. Community Relations Councils can provide a mechanism which bridges the gap between the state and the ethnic communities which make up the state.

ECONOMIC POLICY UNIT, OFMDFM**Public Expenditure Impact of a Polarised Society**

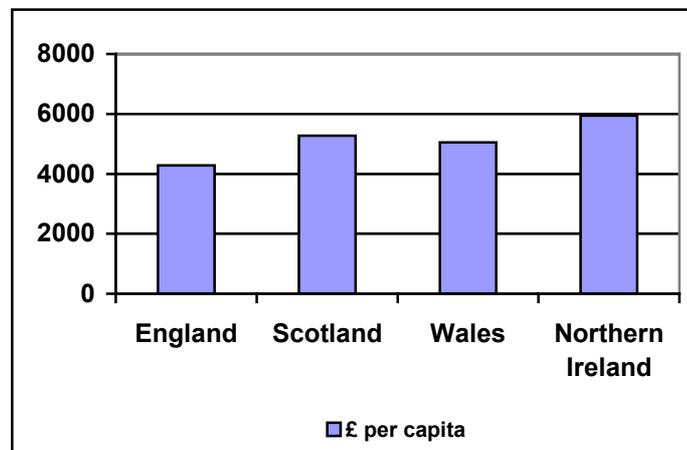
Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society. The most obvious expression of this division is the violence and civil unrest which have blighted the region since 1969. Prolonged periods of civil tension have created two distinct and separate communities in Northern Ireland. In certain areas this polarisation has become deeply entrenched, each community having its own separate education system, and in some instances separate public transport routes, community and health centres. A recent study of inter-community mobility by the University of Ulster found that 78% of Catholics and 77% of Protestants living in 'inter-face' areas of Belfast would not work in an area dominated by another religion. This social division, and the tensions and conflict that it causes, has reduced the cost effectiveness of public service provision to the province.

This paper aims to identify and, where possible, quantify the impact on Public Expenditure of providing public services to a polarised and separate community. The paper is presented in four sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the public expenditure system in Northern Ireland. The remaining sections outline the direct costs, additional costs and cost of duplication of public service provision in a divided society. Identifying and quantifying these costs proved a difficult exercise for departments, in many instances it was impossible to separate out the effects of a polarised society from the additional costs associated with social disadvantage, a phenomenon not particular to Northern Ireland.

Public Expenditure

Public Expenditure on a per capita basis is higher in Northern Ireland than in any other country in the United Kingdom (figure 1). Northern Ireland receives 3.79% of UK Public expenditure to provide services for its 2.84% share of the UK population.

Figure 1
**Identifiable Total Managed Expenditure Per Capita
1999-2000**



In 2000/01 the Northern Ireland Executive had the responsibility for allocating a budget of £5,438m across departmental expenditure areas. Northern Ireland also receives additional funding (some £1,258m in 2000/01) for reserved issues such as Policing, the Prison Service and Forensic Services. This budget is outside the control of the Executive and is administered by the Northern Ireland Office. This paper will focus on expenditure within the control of the Northern Ireland Executive.

HM Treasury allocates Public Expenditure to the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the principle of parity of public service provision in each region of the UK. Northern Ireland's relative need for public expenditure is higher than the UK average as its population profile contains many characteristics which increase the cost of public service provision, for example age structure, unemployment levels and deprivation.

This paper aims to identify areas of Public Expenditure within Northern Ireland which are a direct result of the region's polarised society and the associated tensions and conflicts. For ease of analysis, the costs are divided into three categories: direct costs, additional costs and the costs of duplicating services.

Direct Costs

The direct, and most obvious costs of a polarised community are those caused by civil unrest. The number of security incidents associated with civil unrest has declined dramatically since the height of the troubles in the early 1970s. In 1999/00 there were 24 bomb explosions and 131 shooting incidents in Northern Ireland, 878 people sustained injuries as a result of the security situation and 7 people lost their lives. These incidents impose a significant financial burden on local public finances. The majority of these direct costs are contained within the reserved budget of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), however additional departmental expenditure has been identified in the following areas:

Health and Social Services

The most tragic consequence of civil unrest is injury and loss of life. In 2000/01 there were 486 civilian injuries as a result of civil disturbances. This compares to 332,940 inpatient deaths and discharges for Northern Ireland in the same year. Given these statistics it could be inferred any cost to the HPSS would only be of a very marginal magnitude.

There is also likely to be a financial burden imposed on the Health service for the treatment of victims of the troubles who have long term disabilities. In addition, prolonged peace has brought out suppressed trauma in many people, which may be a significant and growing cost to the Health Service.

Transport

The Department of Regional Development (DRD) set aside £250,000 per year in their budget to repair damage caused to road surfaces during civil disturbances. Buses are often targeted during times of civil disturbances imposing additional costs on the department; trains are destroyed less frequently.

Education

Civil unrest impacts in the Department of Education's expenditure directly through damage to property. Civil disturbances, which are either targeted directly at schools or which occur within their immediate vicinity, can cause extensive disruption to teachers and pupils, resulting in additional services such as supply teachers being required.

In 1998, the department spent £4.7m repairing damage caused to schools by arson attacks during times of civil unrest. The department also estimates that approximately a quarter of its £1m annual vandalism bill is a direct result of the security situation. The estimated cost of current civil unrest at the Holycross and Wheatfield Schools is £1.7m, £1.25m of which was financed by the North Belfast Executive Initiative. Civil unrest in Shankhill is estimated to have cost the Belfast Education and Library Board £518,000 between 2000 and 2002 and disturbances in Omagh are estimated to have cost the Western Education and Library Board £600,000 between 1999 and 2000.

In addition, the Omagh tragedy in 1998 resulted in £398,307 extra expenditure by the department during the period 1998 to 2000. this expenditure was mainly for Psychological support, supply teachers and consultancy fees.

Housing

Public Housing is often located in the vicinity of conflict flash points and is frequently damaged during periods of unrest. This imposes additional maintenance costs on the Department of Social Development.

Duplicating Services

Northern Ireland society has evolved into two very distinct communities. In certain areas of Northern Ireland this polarisation has become particularly pronounced. A recent study carried out by the University of Ulster found incidents of women in Belfast forgoing postnatal care for their children because the clinic is located in an area dominated by another religion. This limited mobility has resulted in many services, which could otherwise have operated from a single location, being duplicated in each community. The paragraphs below highlight duplicated services within affected Northern Ireland departments.

Health and Social Services

When analysing services provided by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Community Health centres would be more likely to suffer duplication, given that they cover larger catchment areas which may not be containable within existing societal divides. North and West Belfast is usually cited as a Trust area which has to incur this type of duplication.

The Regional Development Partnership recently carried out a study into Health Facility Provision in North and West Belfast, which included a benchmarking exercise with health trusts in England. When benchmarked against Doncaster and Bradford, it was estimated that North and West Belfast requires two health facilities to service its population. There are currently nine facilities in the area. While this differential between service provision cannot be wholly attributed to a divided society, the paper found that in North and West Belfast people tended to use health facilities located in enumeration districts (EDs) where most of the population were co-religionists even when the facility was not the nearest in terms of distance.

Transport

A polarised society limits the mobility of its inhabitants. Bus routes within densely populated areas of the province are often designed to avoid passing through areas of differing religious affiliation, reducing the cost- effectiveness of the service.

Public Housing

Public housing, historically a contentious issue in Northern Ireland, has become highly segregated within the province. This segregation is currently causing problems of demand and supply for the Housing Executive. Demand for public housing is increasing from the Catholic community while demand from the Protestant community is declining. This results in waiting lists for public housing in Catholic areas while houses remain vacant in Protestant areas.

Training and Employment

In the majority of cases, job centres have a sufficiently large enough catchment area to avoid being associated with one particular community, however there are notable exceptions to this rule. T&EA have indicated that in the Shankhill, Falls, and Andersonstown areas of Belfast and in Derry/Londonderry there is duplication of Jobcentres to ensure accessibility for all members of the community.

Employment and Learning

A possible area of duplication in the Department of Employment and Learning is the two University Colleges offering Initial Teacher Training; Stranmillis and St. Mary's. These are both colleges of Queen's University Belfast. The additional costs imposed due to duplication of services are due to diseconomies of scale, as Northern Ireland would still require approximately the same number of teachers if there was a fully integrated education system in the province.

Culture, Arts and Leisure

The provision of library and sporting services in Northern Ireland may be duplicated in certain areas to allow access for all members of the community.

Additional Costs

The political unrest and polarised society creates an environment in which it is more expensive to provide public services. These additional costs arise due to the heightened security required in Northern Ireland, the poor image of the region and expenditure required to break down the social barriers between communities.

Community Relations

The Community Relations Unit within the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister was established to increase cross-community contact and co-operation and to encourage mutual respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. This unit, created as a direct response to the polarised and divided society, has an annual budget of approximately £6m.

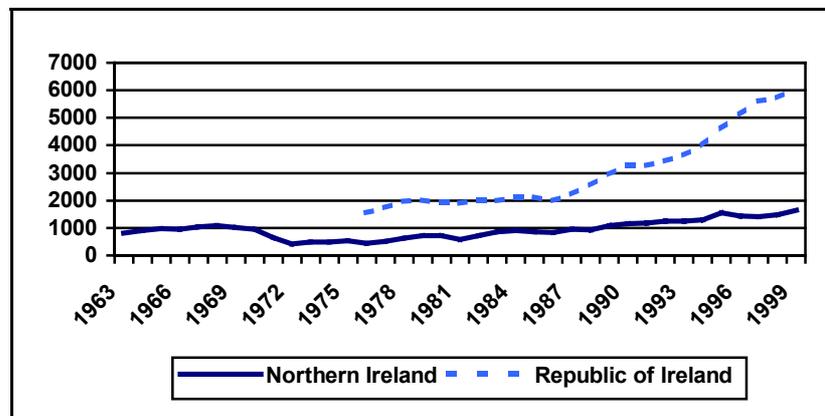
Tourism

The television images of violence and disruption in Northern Ireland have stunted the development of the Northern Ireland tourism industry. Figure 2 below shows how the number of visitors to the Republic of Ireland has accelerated since the late 1980s while the number of visitors to Northern Ireland experienced a sharp decline in the early 70s and has only recovered slowly. It has been suggested that the rapid growth in the South was not mirrored in Northern Ireland due to the poor image of the region.

Expenditure on tourism in Northern Ireland is significantly higher than in England. In 2000/01 the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) spent approximately £8.00 per capita promoting Tourism in the region

while within England equivalent expenditure by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Local Authorities amounts to £3.00 capita.

Figure 2
Visitor numbers in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
1963 - 1999



Industrial development

The Industrial Development Board (an agency within DETI) has a substantial budget for attracting mobile investment to Northern Ireland. This function is significantly hampered by the poor image of Northern Ireland abroad.

It is difficult to isolate what proportion of DETI expenditure is a direct result of a polarised and separate community, DETI estimate that approximately £25m of their annual budget is dedicated to compensating for Northern Ireland's poor image.

Culture Arts and Leisure

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has experienced loss of revenue from its attractions such as the Armagh Planetarium as a result of political unrest. This loss of revenue has resulted in the need for public expenditure to bridge financial deficits.

Education

The Department of Education has expanded some of services due to the pressures of community unrest. These services include counselling and

psychological services, community relations programmes, cross-community teacher contact schemes, teacher substitution for absences related to stress and additional youth programmes. While most of these costs are difficult to quantify, DE estimates that community relations programmes in schools cost £3.5m per annum while additional youth programmes cost £250,000 per annum.

Transport

Security has to be much tighter for passengers boarding boats and airplanes in Northern Ireland. Incoming cargo is checked more thoroughly than in many other countries. This imposes additional costs on the Department of Regional Development.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to establish the impact of Northern Ireland's polarised and separate community on Public Expenditure. There is no question that there are financial implications of providing public services to a divided society, however these implications are difficult to isolate and quantify. This paper categorised the costs of a polarised society under three headings: Direct costs, Costs of Duplication and Additional Costs.

The direct costs of a polarised society are the financial impact of civil strife. The majoring of these costs are contained within reserved expenditure areas and are therefore borne by the Northern Ireland Office, however a number of Northern Ireland departments are also face additional capital costs when property is damaged and services are disrupted.

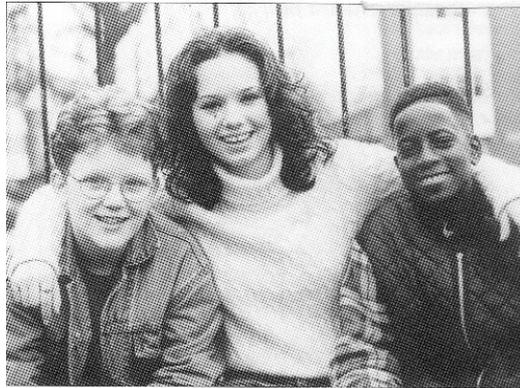
The cost of duplicating services within the two communities affects more departments. Inter-community mobility is low in some regions, particularly so in densely population, socially disadvantaged regions. People are unwilling to cross into areas perceived as dangerous to avail of public services, and in response these services have been duplicated in both communities. Services affected by this duplication include community Health Centres, Job Centres, Public Housing and Public Transport.

The divided community within Northern Ireland creates an environment where provision of public services is more expensive and additional community relations services are required. These additional costs span a large number of departments and range from programmes introduced to break down social barriers between communities to additional expenditure required to attract visitors to the region.

This exercise identified a lack of robust and comprehensive information within departments on the Public Expenditure costs of a polarised society and

suggests the need for a programme of research to identify and monitor such costs.

**Preferred Option for the Delivery of a Permanent, Locally-Based
Good Relations Programme**



Annex 7

**Research and Evaluation Services
8 January 2002**

A LOCALLY BASED COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMME

Background

1. In October 2001, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) commissioned Research and Evaluation Services (RES) to comment on the Working Paper prepared as part of the Review of Community Relations Policy. As part of this, we were asked to consider, with the Review Team, options to develop a permanent, locally based community relations programme. Preliminary details are outlined below:

The role of a locally based CR Programme

2. Fundamentally the role of such a programme would be two-fold:
 - **Ensure that organisations pay due regard to their statutory duty under Section 75 of the Ni Act to “promote good relations”.**
 - **Mainstream the principles of promoting “good relations”** within and across all of the organisations in the local area. In other words, get local organisations (in the statutory, voluntary and community sector) to consciously and critically review their policies and service to identify opportunities to promote better relations. Such reviews should enable the principles of good relations to become embedded in the “corporate bloodstream” of the organisations concerned and, consequently, be self-sustaining.

It is upon these latter two points that the design of the option is based.

**LSP Led and District Council
Delivered**

3. The key structures involved in this option would be:

- the Local Strategy Partnerships (LSP)
- the District Councils
- central Government

Roles and Responsibilities

4. Under this option the **LSPs** would be responsible for:

- making effective use of all local “intelligence” and creativity on key issues and co-ordinating with key stakeholders locally to assess needs and priorities across all aspects of the integrated local strategy (including a good relations dimension) – at a macro level;
- developing the local area strategy – including the good relations dimension;
- securing funding for the implementation of the integrated local strategy;
- formally accounting to SEUPB (under contract) for the achievements of the local area strategy – including the good relations dimension.

5. **District Councils** would be responsible for:

- mainstreaming the promotion of good relations within their own organisation as required under Section 75;

- identifying opportunities for the promotion of better relations across the local community in terms of the services for which the Council is directly responsible;
- identifying opportunities for the promotion of better relations across the community in terms of local services where Council is indirectly involved;
- consolidating these opportunities and the tactics to achieve them into a formal, costed plan;
- using the plan as the basis for bidding to the centre and the LSP as required for funding to undertake work to better promote good relations. (More details below under Funding);
- ensuring that the work undertaken was adequately evaluated;
- formally accounting for the achievements as regards the good relations dimension of the plan.

Funding Sources and Processes for the Promotion of Good Relations

6. Under this option, the funds available for the promotion of good relations at local level would come from three sources:

- **European Funds** – The LSPs would have access to the Peace II monies supplied by the EU. It is possible that District Councils could apply to the LSPs for a share of this. All applications for funding under this regime would be competitive (ie District Councils would compete for funds against other key stakeholders eg Education and Library Boards, Trusts etc could bid for such funds). However, given their strong track record in the area, we would strongly recommend that District Councils be considered as the “hub” as regards the promotion of good relations locally.

If this were to happen, District Councils would be well positioned to attract a significant proportion of whatever funds LSPs designed for these purposes.

- **Central Government Funds** – The district Councils would also be the only local stakeholder who could bid for central funds for the promotion of good relations. The total amount available for the promotion of good relations would equate to that previously assigned to the District Council Community Relations Programme in recent years.
- **Funds currently managed by the Community Relations Council (CRC)** – the recent evaluation of the CRC, concluded that the small grants programme, currently operated by the CRC should be delegated to a locally based programme. If this were to happen, such funds could either be added to the pot of central Government funding already available (ie as outlined above) or be ring-fenced and made available to District Councils as a small grant scheme. In our opinion, the first of these would be the preferred choice since it would leave each council free to decide whether they needed/wanted a small grant scheme locally (ie rather than lock all Councils into this choice by default).

Critical Success Factors

7. The success of this option depends on a number of factors:

- **LSPs becoming permanently established structures** – In order for the locally based relations programme to be permanent, the LSPs will have to exist beyond Peace II. Whilst this is anticipated and will be strongly encouraged it cannot be guaranteed at this point.

- **Guidance becoming available on the promotion of good relations –**
The SEUPB and the Equality Commission will need to develop guidance on this.
- **The effective assessment of good relations work and what represents best practice –** We understand that SEUPB will specify what it requires in terms of promotion of good relations in its contracts with the LSPs to whom it provides funding. In addition, we understand that in the guidance that SEUPB will issue, there will be information on how to assess good relations (ie meaningful performance indices etc).
- **The expertise of the existing CROs within Councils is harnessed effectively –** This option will be most effective if all LSPs take advantage of the wealth of local knowledge District Councils CROs have as regards good relations issues and priorities in their respective areas. This will involve the development of close links between LSPs and Councils. The guidance which SEUPB will issue on the development of integrated local strategies will strongly recommend that LSPs look within their own stakeholder networks for relevant expertise (ie and not source this from outside unless there is evident added value).
- **Careful transition planning and co-ordination** This option will require careful consideration in terms of the transition planning. The distinct roles for LSP and District Councils will take time to become established and “teething problems” are not inevitable.

Merits

8. This option has the following key merits:

- It would bring good relations into the mainstream of local organisations.

- It would create a climate where the status of good relations function could be elevated from a “bolt-on” activity (in peripheral departments in District Councils) to a core activity (eg within the CEOs’ office).
- Working with the LSP in this way would enable District Councils to readily access all key stakeholders locally. This would provide the greatest opportunity for synergy.
- Closer co-operation across local players creates the potential to:
 - eliminate duplication of effort
 - maximise impact through joint working
 - increase the number and scale of good relations projects. Consequently, players, including District Councils could bid for greater amounts of funding, operate more strategically and ultimately bring significantly increase
- There would not be an overt political dimension to the development of the good relations programme. This should enable a greater range of work to be undertaken in areas particularly in areas where certain types of good relations work have been stifled in the past.

9. Drawbacks

- District Councils may perceive that their role in promoting good relations would be diminished (ie because they would be working with LSPs and not autonomously). Clearly, however, given all the above, this is not the case).
- There is a risk that LSPs may not become permanently established. However, there is a “fall-back” position within this option in that in should

LSPs not become permanently established, the Central Government funds (including the funds for small grants) would still be available to District councils for the promotion of good relations. Consequently, this important work could still continue.

Preliminary Conclusion

In our opinion, this option is very attractive from a structural point of view in that it offers LSPs the opportunity to develop the overall strategy for the local area to which councils can make a very significant contribution. In addition, quality assurance standards can be agreed and enforced to ensure that the services delivered comply with requirements. Furthermore, central Government funding for the promotion of good relations will continue to be given to District Councils in the event of LSPs discontinuing.

(1) EVALUATION OF DCCRP

By

**Research and Evaluation Services
(Synopsis)**

(2) EVALUATION OF CRC

By

**Deloitte & Touche
(Executive Summary)**

SYNOPSIS

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS FROM A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

Overall, we recommend that the funding for the Programme is continued initially for the next three years and that the options to develop a permanent, locally-based, community relations programme are considered carefully.

We recommend that CRU reflects on the points made on this report, and in order to sustain momentum, provides a draft action plan for those recommendations which can now be taken forward pending decisions regarding the future delivery of the Programme. Councils and CRC should be consulted on the draft plan.

BACKGROUND

The Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) established the District Council Community Relations Programme (DCCRP) in 1989. The aims of the Programme were to:

- *develop cross community contact and co-operation*
- *promote greater mutual understanding*
- *increase respect for cultural traditions.*

In recent years, the Unit, now known as the Community Relations Unit (CRU), has invested around £1.7M per annum in the programme.

To date, the Programme has been delivered through local councils employing one or more Community Relations Officers (CRO) to assess needs and co-ordinate the delivery of local initiatives. Throughout the life of the Programme, all 26 Councils have had a CRO in post. At the time of writing, all but one Council has a CRO in post (in some cases there are two).

The Community Relations Council (CRC) was charged with providing professional advice and support to the CRO network.

Up to now, the Programme has been evaluated approximately every three years – once, in 1993 by Professor Colin Knox, again in 1996 by Capita Management Consultants and now in 2000 by Research and Evaluation Services.

Throughout the review, RES was conscious of two major considerations:

- The changed context within which the Programme now operates compared with when it first started 10 years ago
- The Programme has not been permanently established and requires to be renewed every three years.

Each of these has profound implications for the DCCRP, more significant, we believe, than any of the individual findings in relation to the formal terms of reference. We explain our thinking below.

The Modern Context For CR

The DCCRP was first established in 1989 when the NI community was still involved in overt conflict and high degrees of community polarisation. At that time, there were only a small number of organisations openly working in the CR field. In such circumstances, it was appropriate to establish a locally-based CR Programme which aimed to:

- *develop cross community contact and co-operation*
- *promote greater mutual understanding*
- *increase respect for cultural traditions.*

Since then, NI has moved into a peace building phase. In the last six years, we have witnessed significant political, social, legislative and policy changes across NI and within local Councils, including:

- The paramilitary cease-fires in the early to mid 1990s
- The Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement
- The establishment of devolved government for NI
- The introduction and development of District Partnerships each with a peace and reconciliation agenda
- The introduction of legislation on equality (Section 75 of the NI Act) which defines nine categories of people across which equality of opportunity is to be exercised including “people of different religious belief” and “people of different political opinion”. The additional duty within the new legislation for those public bodies to have regard to the promotion of “good relations” in their communities.
- The introduction of the Human Rights Act
- The imminent introduction of the Single Equality Act
- The existence of Land Tax
- The introduction of Community Safety Schemes and their CR-related implications
- The review of Community Development and the desire for a more holistic approach to planning service delivery and the desire to include CR in the considerations
- A growth in the number and experience of organisations overtly undertaking CR work
- An increase, over the years, in the availability of funds for undertaking CR work and, in particular, the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.
- A growing awareness of the need to mainstream CR principles within organisations has led to a fundamental change in the way in which it is recommended CR work is practice. We have seen a move away from a ‘contact models of CR’ (ie bringing people from different communities into contact with each other) towards models which integrate the principles of equity, diversity and inter-dependence into the fabric of the decision making processes within organisations.
- The recently announced review of local government in Northern Ireland.

Therefore, whilst the original aims of the Programme were appropriate for the context at the time of its inception, we consider that the sum of the changes which have been occurred in the recent past, call into question whether they remain the most appropriate aims in today’s context. In our opinion, Programme aims need to be radically reviewed and a greater emphasis placed on mainstreaming CR and on organisations working together, perhaps regionally, on issues of common concern.

In a peace-building context, we consider this approach offers the best possibility for the attainment and sustainability of positive CR outcomes. We would stress however, that if the aims of the Programme change then it naturally follows that the delivery mechanism too should be reviewed. In such circumstances, we would recommend that CRU consider a range of delivery options including the present arrangements.

The Temporary Nature of the Programme to Date

Up until now, the DCCRP has been funded on a three year cycle with funding being awarded subject to a positive evaluation towards the end of each three year period. In our opinion, this temporary arrangement is wholly unsuitable for the development of sustained community relations work. Fundamentally, progress in community relation depends on the:

- quality of the relationships and level of trust which can be established at community level
- a practitioner's understanding of local needs and
- his / her experience in dealing with such issues.

All of this can only be developed fully in an environment where there is stability and continuity of job tenure. The current arrangements mitigate against this and contribute to the high turnover among CROs which, itself has hampered the Programme's progress.

In our opinion, any future Programme requires permanent and increased funding to undertake the work required.

KEY FINDINGS IN RELATION TO EACH OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

We report below on the key findings in relation to each of the terms of reference:

- **Formally state the aims and objectives of the DCCRP and the activities undertaken in pursuit of these aims and objectives**

Aims : The aims of the Programme were extracted from CRU literature and are as stated above.

Activities : Based on a feedback from a sample of CROs, we found that since 1996:

- **High profile activities continue to dominate the Programme.**
- **New approaches are being used to increase contact and co-operation.**
- **Training and Progression** – Strong emphasis is now being placed on CR Awareness and training for elected members and Council staff.

- **Review the previous evaluations of the DCCRP**

We found that of the 58 recommendations made in previous evaluations:

- Overall, only 12% of the previous recommendations had been completely implemented
- Just over half (55%) had been partly implemented
- Almost one third (31%) had not yet been implemented.

It is also worth noting that the implementation of some of the earlier recommendations was constrained by the temporary nature of the Programme.

- **Review the relationship between the District Council Community Relations Officers, and the Community Relations Unit and the Community Relations Council.**

Whilst the working relationships between CROs and CRU and CRC work reasonably well, there are a number of areas where improvements would benefit all parties. These are listed in the report and include specific recommendations for Councils.

- **Address the strategic fit of the Programme with the Government's aims and objectives and its context within the responsibilities and work of District Councils**
- **Assess the implications of the New TSN and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act for the Programme**

In principle, the aims of the DCCRP are consistent and complementary to the Governments' aims and objectives as expressed in the policies and legislation above. However, the specific aims of the Programme itself may not be the most appropriate in today's context. Consequently, the work of the Programme is not as integrated as effectively as it might.

As regards New TSN, Councils should consider how community conflict and division underlies and exacerbates social exclusion. Following on from this, to develop inclusive approaches to promoting community harmony and encouraging acceptance and tolerance.

In relation to Section 75 of the NI Act, we believe there is room for improvement in two areas - the gathering of evidence regarding the issues which create division and the active promotion of good relations.

- **Assess the utility and value of a sample of Councils' Community Relations Development Plans and, if appropriate, make general recommendations for their future improvement.**

RES commends CROs for the increase in quality and standard of CRO plans compared with three years ago. We made a number of recommendations for improvement.

- **Review the training and other development needs of Community Relations Officers – in terms of the impact of these needs on the Programme.**

A range of knowledge and core competencies were identified. The Community Relations an Training and Learning Consortium (CRTLC) will help address these.

- **Assess the impact and value for money of the Programme**

Strengths

- Overall, the impact of the Programme has been positive at local levels and there is no doubt that much valuable work has been done. The positive impact of the Programme is evidenced by:
 - The improvements in cross community contact, mutual respect and understanding reported by the majority of participants of projects funded under the programme.
 - The improvements, since the last evaluation, in the quality of single-identity work
 - The impetus which the Programme has given for the establishment of community infrastructure
 - Significantly, the increased awareness within Councils of the need for and value of CR training for staff, elected members and among community leaders.

However, in our opinion, the impact and effectiveness of the Programme has been impaired by the following:

Weaknesses

- An inappropriate set of aims
- The temporary nature of the Programme
- The absence of a dedicated CRO Support Officer for almost a year
- Incomplete needs assessment
- An over reliance on high profile activities
- An adhoc approach to internal evaluation
- Lack of professional development
- Lack of understanding of the relationship between CR and current policy and legislative changes
- Attempts by Councils and CROs to work individually rather than collectively.

Executive Summary

1.1 Background

Deloitte & Touche were commissioned by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) on 10 January 2001 to undertake the triennial evaluation of the Community Relations Council (CRC). The aim of the evaluation is ‘to assess the impact and cost effectiveness of the CRC over the last three years (April 1998 – March 2001) and make recommendations about its continuation and future funding’.

The Community Relations Council was established in 1990 as an independent charity and a Council of 24 members drawn from across the community has management responsibility. The Community Relations Unit provides funding to CRC on a three yearly basis at a cost ranging between £2.5-£2.7 million per year. In addition, CRC was designated as an Intermediary Funding Body (IFB) under the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and it has allocated £7 million to community relations project under the ‘Promoting Pathways to Reconciliation’ measure.

1.2 Methodology

Our research report employed the following methods of investigation:

- literature and strategic document review;
- in-depth semi-structured interviews with key officials and representatives of CRC and CRU;
- in-depth semi-structured interviews with representative organisations involved with CRC in the mainstreaming of community relations (NIHE and CCETSW);
- focus group with Programme Directors (CRC);
- survey of CRC’s clients;
- analysis of CRC’s application database;
- file reviews of projects funded under CRC’s small grants programme; and
- review of evaluations conducted on core funded groups.

1.3 Addressing the Terms of Reference

- 1.3.1 Any assessment of the CRC over the past three years must be viewed against the rapidly evolving political environment which has included the signing of the Belfast Agreement, the creation of the new Assembly and the establishment of a cross-community Northern Ireland Executive. These developments have had implications for the evolution of the Council and the nature of activities supported by it. In spite of the

rapidly changing environment, the CRC has made a significant contribution to promoting community relations within Northern Ireland.

- 1.3.2 This evaluation provides both positive and negative findings with regard to the performance of the CRC over the last three years. The following section draws together key findings under the terms of reference set out by CRU and details a series of recommendations for future action. Recommendations need to be viewed in the context of the forthcoming review of Community Relations and Programme for Government commitments.
- 1.3.3 We would like to add that the CRC is made up of committed and dedicated staff with considerable expertise, skill and experience across the main areas of community relations in Northern Ireland. The recommendations made below stem directly and indirectly from recent social, political, legislative and environmental changes rather than from criticism of staff and Council members within the CRC.

1.4 Section I Status & Relationship Issues

Review the role of the CRC in promoting Community Relations aims and objectives and with regard to this role, its current status and relationship with the Community Relations Unit

- 1.41 The rationale for establishing the Community Relations Council as an independent and charitable organisation reflected the view that government was not best placed to engage grass roots constituencies in community relations activity. In such circumstances, the CRC represented an appropriate and novel channel through which community relations aims and objectives were promoted. The political dynamics of the past three years have fundamentally altered the community relations environment and raised questions over the appropriateness of the current status of the CRC.
- 1.42 Devolution has placed a greater emphasis on lines of accountability and the new Northern Ireland Executive has made explicit references, through the Programme for Government, to developing community relations policy. The language of the Programme for Government refers 'to addressing directly religious and political division, seeking to create greater mutual understanding and respect for diversity, supporting dialogue and understanding among our communities' and it also highlights the interconnectedness of community relations and equality.
- 1.43 The CRC has built considerable expertise around the issues highlighted in the Programme for Government and is well placed, subject to demonstrating impact, to continue with a central role in implementing community relations policy. The current accountability arrangements between CRU and CRC (Financial Memorandum Triennial Funding Agreements) are not, in our view, adequate within the newly developing

policy structures. There is a need to establish clearer and tighter links between any new policy and the delivery agent of the policy. Whilst we acknowledge that informal relations between CRC and CRU have ensured a consistency of approach, there is a need to re-examine the present status in view of Programme for Government commitments and devolution.

1.44 As a result of the last evaluation, the Financial Memorandum was strengthened to include additional stipulations with regard to performance measurement and this has resulted in the production of a series of performance indicators for CRC. A further strengthening of the memorandum is clearly a possible option for consideration. Given the priority accorded to promoting community relations in the Programme for Government however, community relations needs to be afforded the same strategic prominence as equality and human rights. As such, changes to the Financial Memorandum would not be sufficient. We are not suggesting that community relations should be put on a statutory footing, rather it should have an organisational profile and status equivalent to that of the Equality and Human Rights Commissions.

1.45 *CRU should consider changing the status of CRC to an executive Non Departmental Public Body. A change in status would considerably strengthen the relationship between policy making and policy implementation and it would also give a clearer focus to the direction and delivery of community relations policy in Northern Ireland.*

1.46 Some advantages and disadvantages of changing the status of CRC are summarised as follows:

Advantages.

- Ties CRC closer to the delivery of any new CR policy;
- Builds in greater control mechanisms in terms of performance measurement & accountability;
- Assists with policy planning (3 year funding cycle causes uncertainty);
- Secures status of organisation (3 year funding cycle is unsettling for staff);
- Provides a more strategic focus for the CRC;
- Enhances the importance of the CR function

Disadvantages

- A view was expressed that should CRC be accorded NDPB status certain constituencies might be reluctant to engage with it and also the Council would be unable to lever in additional resources.

1.5 Summary Review of Strategy Implementation, Grant Aiding and Monitoring and Evaluation

The following section summarises key findings with regard to issues set out in the terms of reference below. In addition to key findings, we provide a series of recommendations for consideration by CRU and CRC.

Assess the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the various activities undertaken by CRC in pursuance of its role and reach conclusions on their community relations impact and value for money.

Review the previous evaluation of the CRC and the action taken on its recommendations

1.51 General Findings: Implementing the Strategic Plan (1998-2001) & Organisational Changes

- the content of the strategic plan (1998-2001) was more operational than strategic and not sufficiently focused on community relations outcomes;
- the plan did not adequately reflect the range of activities undertaken by CRC (especially grant making) and targets within the plan were not quantified;
- in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, CRC has introduced organisational wide performance indicators and there has been a significant reduction in grant processing times;
- CRC needs to be more proactive with respect to dissemination and the dissemination of good practice;
- With minor exception, previous evaluation recommendations have been either fully or partially implemented;
- the establishment of the post of Deputy Chief Executive has provided the necessary assistance required to advance business planning within the CRC;
- there have been notable improvements in key business processes such as the streamlining of decision making and improvements with IT systems;

General Findings : Interpreting the Strategic Plan

- key constituencies within CRC appear not to have fully endorsed the content and direction of the plan; and
- links between the principles of EDI and grants awarded were not always clear;

- there were diverging and contradictory views on the relationship between community relations, equality and the future direction of mainstreaming.

Overall Recommendation

A significant number of the issues raised above would be addressed if the status of CRC changed to an NDPB. CRC should, however, ensure that the aims and objectives of any new strategic plan are measurable and reflect the ambit of CRC's activities.

1.6 Review of Grant Making

Our analysis of grant aiding reviewed the three main schemes supported and funded by CRU (Core Funding, Community & Cultural Diversity).

General Findings

- There is a lack of strategic direction to grant making and it was not afforded sufficient prominence in the Strategic Plan.

General Findings: Core Funded Groups

- Whilst the criteria for core funding was reviewed, the overall purpose for grant aiding core funded work was not explicit in terms of anticipated outcomes and overall impact;
- All core-funded groups were evaluated and CRC provided training on strategic planning to such groups;
- Core funded groups appear to be highly dependent on grant aid from CRC;
- CRC does not have exit strategies in place for core funded groups and there are significant blockages within the current system with respect to bringing on board new projects;
- A review of evaluations suggests that the measurement of impact is dependent on clearly identified criteria for project/programme achievement that reflect core funding objectives;
- Although some evaluations achieved a positive outcome, it was not clear from the methodology how these conclusions were arrived at.

General Findings: Community & Cultural Diversity Grant Schemes

- There has been an increase in the number of applications to both schemes during the period under review;
- The strategic importance of both programmes is not clear and there was a lack of consistency in applying community relations criteria.
- The average amounts of grant applied for in 1998 and 1999 were £1947 & £3335 (Community & Cultural Traditions) and the average size of grants awarded were £1447 & £1388 respectively.
- 45% and 55% (Community & Cultural Traditions) of grants approved went to areas with above average levels of social need.

- Monitoring and evaluation of awards is piecemeal, inconsistent and perceived by Programme Directors to be of little value.

1.7 Recommendations for Grant Making

We would recommend that CRC should review the purpose and function of grant making. The aims identified in any new strategy (2001-2004) should be used as criteria against which all funding decisions should be taken.

CRC should also give active consideration to streamlining the grant making process into a (i) core funding programme and (ii) a new Community Relations grant scheme. The amalgamation of the different grant schemes might diffuse tensions that exist between 'baronies' and ensure greater unity of purpose within the organisation.

We also believe that CRC should consider setting a 'floor' for applications to any new Community Relations Grant Scheme. We would recommend that the maximum grant size in any one year should remain at £10,000 and Programme Directors, in consultation with the Management Team, should be allowed to grant aid projects for 1, 2 and 3 years.

The setting of a 'floor' would reduce the administrative burden of staff and it would allow Programme Directors and Project Officers to spend more time contributing to strategic issues on community relations. The possibility of three-year funding would encourage innovation and the development of new practices. This approach would provide Programme Directors with an enhanced opportunity to seek core funding for projects which are adjudged to have been a success.

The funding floor and the possibility of additional monies for groups would also improve the return rate of monitoring data (the incentive to complete a monitoring return on 'one off' expenditure has been identified by Programme Directors as a problem).

We accept that there are a number of implications to the above recommendations, key amongst which relate to finding an appropriate mechanism for funding small, 'one off' projects. The District Council Community Relations Programme does provide an alternative arrangement for delivering small grants and we would suggest that CRC and CRU consider the implications and merits of devolving the small grant aiding function to DCCRP.

1.8 Measuring the Impact of Community Relations

The issue of how to measure the impact of community relations continues to dominate evaluations of the CRC. Our impact assessment review, whilst identifying accepted shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation, refutes the seemingly long held view that community relations cannot be measured. CRC

must, as a matter of urgency, address the measurement question and in so doing, it should focus on identifying and actively disseminating good practice.

General Recommendations on Measuring Impact

CRC should provide operational definitions of conceptual terms such as equity, diversity and interdependence.

All programme staff should receive training in monitoring and evaluation techniques.

General Recommendations for Monitoring

CRC should review present monitoring arrangements for small grant aided schemes and it should seek to develop a monitoring system which will be capable of tracking and monitoring the progress of projects against clearly identified performance measures.

Monitoring data should be collected on all project expenditure although CRC should ensure that monitoring data collected is proportionate to size of grant awarded.

General Recommendations for Evaluation

Given the amorphous nature of community relations goals, evaluations should be required to have a formative element that places emphasis on describing implementation issues that can impede or enhance the achievement of community relations objectives.

There should be some mechanism for disseminating more widely evidence of good practice emerging from the evaluations – for example a reference guide could be compiled for practitioners that highlights good practice under community relations themes (e.g. single identity work, contact work, mutual understanding work etc.) and provides contact details of project/programme managers who have undertaken such activity.

Core Funding

The terms of reference provided by CRC to evaluators should be explicit about the importance of defining the criteria by which assessment of community relations contribution is made and how these criteria are reached.

Small Grant Aid

We would recommend that Programme Directors develop a typology of grant aided projects which would be used to sample a series of projects for in-depth evaluative review

In addition to individual evaluations, we recommend the establishment of evaluation “learning sets”. Such sets could comprise grant recipients of similar projects who would come together to discuss the value of projects undertaken and some of the implementation issues that contributed towards achieving community relations goals. Not only might this provide a valuable learning experience for participants and assist in the development of community relations networks, but it would aid CRC in defining appropriate

measurement criteria for evaluating future projects. It would also provide an opportunity for CRC to encourage and assist groups towards the development of community relations activity.

1.9 Equality & Community Relations

On the issue of mainstreaming, there is a divergence of opinion within CRC on the definition and future direction of mainstreaming. The introduction of Section 75 and the emphasis on promoting good relations through mainstreaming raises questions about the role and relationship of community relations and equality. In terms of structures, there is a mismatch between how the CRC promotes mainstreaming and the internal structures that support such activity.

We would recommend that CRU provides policy guidance to CRC on the 'promoting good relations' element of Section 75.

We would recommend that CRU should fund a senior post within CRC dedicated exclusively to mainstreaming and policy developments.

We would also recommend that CRC engages with the Equality Commission on mainstreaming and the good relations component of the legislation.

1.10 Review of CRC's Grant Monitoring System

The research team was provided with a copy of the application database and it proved to be a valuable tool in terms of undertaking statistical analysis on application records. We do have some concerns about the completeness of information held and have made some recommendations for improvement in the main report.

Recommendation on Continuation of Funding

In view of all the above, we would recommend that funding should continue for a further 3 years and that CRU and CRC should give due consideration to the recommendations detailed above. Future funding, beyond 2004, will be related to the outcome of a government review of community relations policy and delivering community relations commitments as detailed in the Programme for Government.

ANNEX 9

DIVISIONS IN SOCIETY: NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY

Introduction

The Programme for Government commits the Executive to improving community relations and tackling the divisions in Northern Ireland society. This section considers briefly available material on the extent of, and trends in, communal divisions over the past 10-15 years ⁽¹³⁾.

Attitudes between communities

Survey data on changes in community attitudes within Northern Ireland are now available, collected from the late 1980s through to the present. This material has been used to measure changes in the attitudes of communities towards each other and assess their perception of tolerance, prejudice and social distance.

The most recent analyses suggests that whilst there has been a general improvement in community relations attitudes between Protestants and Catholics since the 1980s, over the most recent period (1996 onwards) there are suggestions of a decrease in levels of tolerance and respect for diversity. There is also some evidence that the Protestant and Catholic communities have developed notably different attitudes on a range of issues associated with improving community relations. In general, Catholics seem more amenable to efforts to promote cross-community contact and are more confident that their rights and cultural traditions will be protected. This is contrasted to a perceived sense of mistrust and unease within the Protestant community.

Research on attitudes towards race relations in Northern Ireland and the nature and prevalence of racial prejudice has suggested that issues of race and ethnicity are significant. In terms of statements of general principle over 80% of the population tend to express positive and liberal attitudes towards aspects of

race relations. However, with more specific issues which might affect respondents more personally, racial attitudes tend to be significantly more negative. Around a quarter of all the subjects in the study indicated an unwillingness to accept various racial minorities as residents in their local area and over 2 out of 5 people said they were unwilling to accept ethnic minority members as close friends. The study suggested that racial prejudice appears to be twice as significant as sectarian prejudice in the attitudes of the population in Northern Ireland. Moreover, negative attitudes towards specific minority ethnic groups appear to have worsened over the past few years.

Community Relations at Grass Roots Level

Studies of the impact of community relations initiatives at local level indicate a more positive impact. Looking at such outcomes as a greater understanding of cultural diversity, increased willingness to engage in shared working and in an ability to influence wider political processes, the evidence indicates a substantial level of success for community relations interventions at local level.

A recent study, however, surveyed the impact of fear on accessing places of work in interface areas in Belfast. The majority of respondents in both Catholic (68%) and Protestant (58%) areas reported that their job seeking is or has been influenced by fear.

Education

Whilst the number of integrated primary and secondary schools has been increasing steadily, and in 2000/2001 there were over 14,000 pupils in integrated education, this represented only 4 percent of the total enrolments in schools in Northern Ireland. Most of pupils in integrated schools were at secondary level (over 60%) but this still only represented just over 5½% of the numbers in secondary level education.

Housing

Some research has indicated progressively higher levels of residential segregation in Northern Ireland over the last 20 years with a majority of people choosing to live in polarised districts. Predictably, segregation has increased most in areas experiencing high levels of violence.

The NIHE reports that currently over 70% of public sector housing estates are segregated (using a threshold of 10% present for either religion). The NIHE also reports a continuing trend in some mixed housing estates towards greater segregation. Compounding the problem over the last few years, such increasing segregation has been accompanied by an increase in sectarian related graffiti, flags, kerb painting and other manifestations of paramilitary association and cultural/political identity. Problems in estates on interface areas have been particularly severe: in 1999 the NIHE reported that 20 estates in 9 districts were significantly affected by interface violence. Intimidation has increased in highly contested areas and in an effort to tackle this, new peace walls have been erected and others strengthened in interface areas of our two main cities. Since 1996 some 6,000 families have moved back from mixed estates to among their co-religionists because of intimidation.

Social Relationships

Recent research on cross-community friendship patterns shows that the pattern of inter-group friendships have remained virtually constant between 1968 and 1998. A study of households in Belfast interface areas reports that some 68% of young people aged 18-25 have never had a meaningful conversation with anyone of the other denomination. Cross-religious marriage is one key measure of relationship between the main communities in Northern Ireland. Recent research suggests that since 1989 the number of mixed marriages in Northern Ireland remains low but has slowly increased (from 6% to 9%) of all marriages surveyed.

Crime

A number of indicators relating to community relations and divisions in society are available. These show:

- In terms of various paramilitary activities (deaths, shootings, bombing and incendiaries) incidents dropped to their minimum in the year after the ceasefire but have since then shown a progressive and continuing increase;
- Paramilitary policing of their own areas (manifesting itself in punishment attacks) has increased since the ceasefire and is now at higher levels than at the start of the 1990s;
- The last five years has seen a dramatic increase in the reporting of racist incidents to the police (up almost 8 fold from 1996 to 2000).

Conclusion

The evidence reviewed above does not suggest that significant progress has been made towards a more tolerant or inclusive society. Despite some positive evidence at grass roots level, and significant increase in the number of integrated schools and children attending them, the amount of sharing in our society in education, housing and personal relationships remains limited. Attitudes and tolerance between Protestant, Catholic and Ethnic Minority Communities continues to portray low levels of tolerance or appreciation of diversity, and measures of crime suggest increasing levels of sectarian violence.

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS POLICY

1. The Programme for Government commits the Executive to developing a cross-departmental strategy that will improve community relations leading to measurable improvements in community relations and to a reduction in the areas of conflict between communities. This paper considers how the impact of any new community relations strategy can be measured.

2. The Review Team recommend that community relations policy should commit to an over-arching goal of a cohesive but pluralistic society, underpinned by three principles of Equality, Diversity and Inter-dependence. The aims and outcomes proposed to promote better relations in Northern Ireland are:
 - to facilitate the development of integrated/shared communities where people wish to learn, live, work and play together;

 - to encourage communication, tolerance and trust in areas where communities are living apart;

 - to promote respect, encouragement and celebration of different cultures, faiths and traditions;

 - to eliminate sectarianism and racism and to enable individuals to live without fear or intimidation; and

 - to shape policies, practices and institutions to enable trust and good relations to grow.

Acceptance of these aims and outcomes would suggest the following policy objectives for the new strategy:

- promoting sharing/integration
 - reducing fear
 - improving relations
 - mainstreaming better relations
 - promoting inter-dependence
 - reducing prejudice and increasing tolerance
 - decreasing sectarianism and racism
 - reducing social distance between differing communities
 - increasing social capital within (bonding) and between (bridging) communities.
3. The question of which communities should be the focus of intervention also needs addressed. While interest historically has been principally on the two main religious communities and may well remain so, any new community relations policy will almost certainly have a role in relation to ethnic minorities, and possibly other Section 75 groups. Finally, intra-community friction has in the recent past had a major dysfunctional influence within particular localities and should also arguably be a component of any future strategy.
4. Accepting that the development of indicators and targets is dependant on the roll out of a coherent, agreed strategy with associated aims and objectives, what are the performance indicators and targets which are likely to be required to capture resulting change? The measurement of the impact of any new CR strategy will, of course, not be straightforward. The programme will be multi-faceted with a correspondingly wide range of aims and objectives which might change over time. During the life of the strategy there may be political or other developments in society with the potential, both positive and negative, to outweigh any impact of a CR programme. Furthermore, it is not

necessarily the case that where measurable change is found that it can be unambiguously attributed to CR activity.

5. The initial proposal, notwithstanding the caveats in previous paragraphs, is to monitor change in Community Relations at three levels. First, at macro level the Executive should plan to routinely monitor attitudes using social survey data. There is already a wealth of data which has been gathered systematically since 1989 on attitudinal information. This has been collected through the NI Social Attitudes Survey and its successor, the NI Life and Times Survey and using other survey instruments such as the NI Omnibus and Community Attitudes to Law and Order. The range of questions included in these surveys should be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with any new CR strategy and there should be a firm commitment to the maintenance of monitoring over the life of the strategy.
6. Other macro level indicators should include periodic assessment of the degree of residential segregation and integration. While residential integration of itself is not sufficient to support a hypothesis of improved community relations, increased segregation is likely to be indicative of tensions within neighbourhoods. Relevant data will be available from decennial censuses.
7. It should also be possible to measure the extent of integration in workforces. The Equality Commission and formerly the FEC have robust data going back over ten years on the extent to which enterprises have mixed workforces. Legislation requires the continued annual collection of such data. It would be relatively simple to assess change over time in the number of enterprises with more religiously balanced workforces.
8. The macro indicators, while providing some crude barometer readings on aspects of the socio-economic infrastructure, do not constitute

unambiguous indicators of the state of community relations and there are difficulties in separating the effects of community relations policies from other influences at political, social and community level.

However, they do provide broad contextual data which may be helpful in understanding the wider CR environment.

9. At a meso (lower) level a number of indicators might be suggested which get nearer to the behavioural dimensions of community relations. None of these is without difficulty in terms of interpretation but taken together may be considered to provide some insights into the dynamics of community relations. Among the suggested indicators are:

- (i) The proportion of children attending integrated schools; or the proportion of children attending integrated schools or in schools where a majority of children are of a different religion. ⁽¹⁾
- (ii) The number of sectarian (or racist) incidents recorded by the police. ⁽²⁾
- (iii) Police Service (person days?) devoted to sectarian situations/disputed parades (others?) ⁽³⁾
- (iv) Qualitative research systematically revisiting the work by Connolly and Keegan (2000) and others on racial intolerance etc to test if things have improved or deteriorated, or if new issues have arisen.
- (v) Revisit Shirlow's (2001) work on fear of travel due to sectarianism.
- (vi) Use of survey and other data to develop systematic measures of social distance and "bonding" and "bridging" social capital

(Putman 2000).⁽⁴⁾

(vii) Changes in the number of SPED cases dealt with by the NIHE.

(viii) The number, length and height of peace walls in Belfast.

(ix) Changes in the numbers of mixed marriages contracted.⁽⁵⁾

10. Finally, there will continue to be a role for monitoring and evaluation at a project or programme (micro) level. A vast range of activities is embraced within CR programmes and it is important to learn lessons from them. While this is unlikely to provide the kind of high level information which the Terms of Reference imply, there are nevertheless learning opportunities which, through systematic research, can and should be fed back to policy makers and practitioners in order to improve CR practice, reduce waste and increase value for money. Periodic review of the findings of project level evaluations could in turn inform meso and macro level evaluations.

11. **Conclusion**

There will be methodological and technical difficulties in finding reliable and robust indicators of the impact of a new community relations strategy. However, there are macro and meso level indicators which can provide evidence of attitudinal and behavioural change from which inferences about the state of community relations can be drawn. In addition, through systematic monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes useful information can be obtained in terms of good CR practice. When the parameters of the new CR strategy are clarified, the recommendation is for a list of indicators to be developed and assessed in terms of their value for monitoring the strategy.

Footnotes – Comments on meso level indicators

- (1) Whilst a change in the numbers attending integrated schools might indicate some improvement in community relations, it might also just indicate an improvement in the image of those schools as seats of learning. Similarly, a run of bad exam results could start a downward trend in enrolments, without being an indication of a deterioration in community relations. If this indicator is to be used, it should be set in this wider context.
- (2) This indicator could be heavily influenced by changes in police behaviour.
- (3) The profile of disputed parades may also be a function of wider political struggles and not necessarily a good indicator of community relations.
- (4) Indicators in this area might focus on the level of social capital between communities. This might suggest developing an existing measure of social distance scale or a short scale of social capital for use in population surveys. This could build on work on Social Capital which is being undertaken within the Voluntary Activity Unit of the Department of Social Development.
- (5) This could be a possible indicator of mixing and integration. However, there is some evidence that “mixed” relationships between members of different communities are less likely to be sanctified by marriage. Recording the number of mixed marriages would undercount such mixed relationships.

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