

## **Together: Building a United Community**

**We will publish the new good relations strategy, “Together: Building a United Community”** within the next 2 weeks

**We will establish an All-Party Group** to consider parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and the past

**We have agreed a package** of significant and strategic actions including;

- The creation of **10,000 one year placements** in our new “**United Youth Programme**” offering young people in the NEETS category structured employment, work experience, volunteer and leisure opportunities along with a dedicated programme designed to foster good relations and a shared future
- **100 Shared Summer Schools / One or two week Summer Camps** to be held across NI by 2015 for post primary young people
- **4 Urban Village Regeneration projects** for large scale urban regeneration in targeted areas of deprivation
- **10 Shared Educational Campuses** to be commenced within 5 years
- DSD Minister will be tasked to bring forward proposals on **10 new Shared Neighbourhood Developments**. The proposal will be brought forward in the next 2 months
- Creation of a significant **Cross-Community Sports Programme**
- A 10-year **Programme to reduce and eventually remove all interface barriers**, working together with the local community

## **All-Party Group and Community Relations Strategy**

Good relations across all parts of our community are an essential ingredient of building a prosperous, peaceful and safe society which is enriched by diversity and is welcoming to all. Specifically, tackling the twin blights of sectarianism and racism in addition to other forms of intolerance is essential in shaping a shared and cohesive community that can move forward and collectively face the challenges of an ever-changing world.

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

However, we also recognise the difficulties that have prevented agreement from the five parties that comprise the Executive to publish the draft CSI strategy. We have agreed a proposed way forward that will involve the establishment of an all-party group. The all-party group will consider and make recommendations on matters, including parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and dealing with the past. It will be comprised of two nominees from each of the five political parties and Junior Ministers. We will appoint an independent chair from outside the political parties. The group will want to hear from the various stakeholders across the community as to how best to address the issues that cause community division.

Whilst recognising there are no easy answers we are committed to attempting to find long-term and sustainable solutions that are in the best interests of the community we serve.

At its first meeting the core group will determine which stakeholders shall be invited to join the working group and which other interested organisations should be asked to give evidence.

In parallel to the creation of this group, we will publish our community relations strategy within 2 weeks.

## **Project Detail**

Building on the responses to the draft strategy consultation and the new framework, the key strategic projects will focus on;

- Education
- Young People not in Education, Employment or Training
- Regeneration and deprivation
- Housing
- Learning from the Past

## **10,000 Young People through the “United Youth” Programme**

In Northern Ireland there are approximately 46,000 young people who do not have employment, are not involved in training schemes or in education.

There are 3 key objectives of the programme;

- Building better community relations
- Creating better citizens
- Giving employment experience and structured volunteer opportunities, supported by a stipend, for a potentially lost generation

This “United Youth” Programme is designed to target this youth group in order to;

- Divert them into constructive alternatives
- Create opportunities to take part in a range of activities that will aid their development and create better citizens on a shared basis
- Create strong and robust cross community bonds
- Create cross community trust and tackle misperceptions
- Give them training and experience in community and employment
- Help young people take on new challenges and learn new skills
- Facilitate them to meet new friends they would not have met otherwise
- Grow their confidence and CV
- Help the community
- Empower young people
- Help create responsible citizens
- Encourage volunteering

The *United Youth* Programme will build on other international examples.

The programme would provide 10,000 voluntary places, with each cycle lasting 1 year. The participants would be given an annual stipend. This will be designed to ensure existing benefits are not impacted. In addition each participant will be given a range of other incentives to participate in the programme.

The programme will include a number of elements that will potentially include;

- Work placement for part of the week
- Accredited volunteering each week with a recognised community based organisation or charity per week. Part of the community placement will be in a community not traditionally aligned to their own
- Good relations based activity (training, learning, sport, leisure etc) within a shared environment

The training and activities will include improving empathy, understanding and trust along with an emphasis on respect and responsibility. The programme will have tackling sectarianism and hate at the very heart of its design.

At the end of the programme each participant who has completed the programme will receive an accredited Diploma.

The scheme will be open initially to those;

- Between 16 and 24 years of age
- Who have not been in work, education or employment for a specified period of time to be agreed

### **100 Shared Summer Camps / Summer Schools**

As a step towards greater sharing in education, we will create 100 one or two week summer schools or summer camps across Northern Ireland.

The running of these camps will have to meet the following criteria;

- Schemes offer a range of activities including sports and leisure

- Activities are also designed around creating trust, empathy and greater understanding of each other
- Schemes must have a minimum of attendees from each community
- Schemes can be run in community settings, schools or away at camps (all safety and child protection requirements must be met)
- An open application process will apply to those groups and organisations wishing to run a scheme. Applications can be made collaboratively
- A group, school or organisation can run more than 1 scheme or camp

The relationships fostered over the summer will be followed up by in year activities.

### **Cross-community youth sports programme**

We will develop and roll out a cross-community Youth Sports Programme. We will initially pilot a Youth Sports Programme at urban and rural interface and contested space areas with a view to rolling it out across our society.

### **4 Urban Villages**

This project aims to use innovative urban village design to create and stabilise change within communities. The project will create 4 urban villages.

The aim is that each urban village will be designated a development zone and a local board created. The board will be tasked with coordinating and overseeing the planning and design of the urban village. The board will be given the powers to enable large scale urban village development in a coordinated and needs based way. Each urban village will have a community focus.

Each design should be based on;

- Creating community space
- Improving the area and its aesthetics
- Community focus

### **Shared Education Campuses**

Work on 10 shared education campuses will be commenced within the next 5 years, building on the project proposals for Lisanelly.

The first step will be an assessment and identification of potential options. Shared Education campuses have the potential to bring together a range of schools and aid sharing of classes, subjects and sports and extra curricular activities.

These campuses will be the pathfinder projects potentially leading on to a wider programme of shared education capital projects. The Campuses will also integrate community activities and resources and other services including statutory provision where appropriate.

### **Better Housing integration**

DSD Minister will be tasked to bring forward proposals on **10 new Shared Neighbourhood Developments**. The proposal will be brought forward in the next 2 months.

There will be an overarching review of housing to bring forward recommendations on how to enhance shared neighbourhoods.

### **Interface Barrier Project**

We will establish a 10 year Programme to reduce and eventually remove all interface barriers working together with the local community.

Taking down interface barriers is not something that can be achieved without engagement, consent and support with the people who live there. We must be sensitive to the views and perceptions of residents and balance this against the responsibility on us to create the conditions within which division and segregation can become resigned to the past.

Community confidence will only be built when assurances can be given that the intimidation and threat which led to the erection of barriers has been

removed. We are committed to finding alternative ways of reassuring communities that safety can be achieved without separation.

Removing interface barriers and other structures of division will send out an important message that our society is continuing on its journey to peace and reconciliation, but more importantly will bring community benefits. The elimination of these physical reminders is necessary in progressing as a community and facilitating the reconciliation that has been prevented for so long through division.

Through this Strategy, we will identify suitable assets within interface areas and at contested spaces that can be transformed from places of division and separation to places of sharing and mutual enjoyment.

Consideration will also be given to the transfer of unused public assets to the community where appropriate.

Within this context, we will also ensure that all government contracts for work at interface areas and areas of contested space contain a social clause insisting that the local population are able to avail of associated training and employment opportunities.

### Intervention

The key objective of the programme is to have no interface barriers by 2023. This is a 10 year plan.

### Key Principles

- Local communities should come together to produce a phased plan of how to reduce and eventually remove the barrier
- Maximum consensus should be achieved from both sides of the wall
- Community, family and property safety is a core issue and consideration for the plan

### **Interface Barrier Support Package**

Interface barriers will only be reduced and removed with local agreement and support. Local communities around the interface will be encouraged to come together and decide if they want to be part of this programme. If there is

agreement to become part of the programme then the area immediately surrounding the barrier will be able to avail of a range of support and help over a 10 year period, provided agreed targets are met throughout the period.

The support package is designed to encourage communities to come together and agree to take action. The package would include the following benefits;

- Community interface workers to support the putting together of the plan, ensure the implementation of key actions on the plan and to support the local community to create the conditions to reduce and remove the barrier over an agreed and specified time frame
- Establishment and funding support for an on-going community forum to implement and monitor the plan
- Capital improvement package which will be designed to change and improve the barrier while ensuring walkways and gates are included that can be used as part of phased opening
- Community capital and project grant specifically targeted at the local community in addition to the community interface workers