

From: DANNY McNEILL
21 December 2001

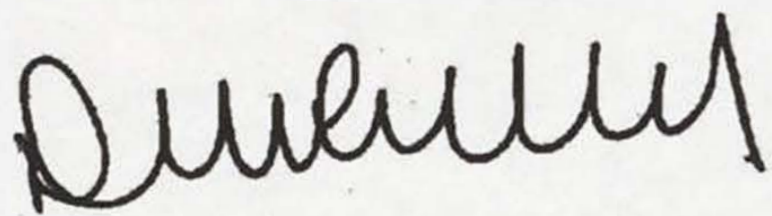
cc Sandra Buchan

Derek Wheeler

I attach a draft note on the Advisory Forum.

I would like this to go to the Team before 7 January so that we could agree it before meeting the Forum.

Any comments on the draft are welcome.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D G McNeill', with a stylized, cursive script.

D G McNEILL

DRAFT

NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT - ADVISORY FORUM – DISCUSSION NOTE

1. The terms of reference of the Action Project included specific provision for the establishment of an Advisory Forum.
2. The role of that Forum is also set out in the terms of reference as:

“Advisory Forum

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

The Advisory Forum will:

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

3. While the Project Team was not involved in drawing up the Forum’s remit the Team welcomes the establishment of such a Forum and the Team regards it as a potentially helpful mechanism to enable the Team to carry out its consultations. In addition to the Forum the Team will adopt a comprehensive and broad based approach to consultations – including with

local communities, with key opinion formers, with statutory agencies and with Government. The Team regards consulting and listening to all of these stakeholders as essential if it is to achieve its aim of producing a plan to address the social and community issues impacting on North Belfast.

4. While the Team has no desire to be prescriptive about how the Forum should work we offer the following as suggestions for how we can engage with the Forum constructively and to our mutual benefit:

- the Team should meet with the Forum once per month;
- that should not inhibit Forum members from raising issues, should they arise at other times, with the Team or the Team's staff;
- the monthly meetings will be a "formal" part of the process but the Team hopes that meetings etc can be conducted in an informal and open way;
- the relationship between the Team and the Forum is consultative and the Team would like business to be conducted in such a way that individual members feel able to put forward views on any issue without recourse to formal mechanisms such as recorded voting.
- a short written record of business conducted will be made available after each meeting. This will not be a detailed account of discussions but will be a record of key business issues discussed.

5. The Team would like to discuss this paper with Forum members at our first meeting.

JOHN DUNLOP

TOM TONER

ROY ADAMS