

North Belfast Community Action Project

Enterprise House, 55 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8FE

Tel No: 028 90 726019

Mr Stephen Nicholl
Lower North Belfast Community Council
21 York Road
BELFAST
BT15 3GU

31 January 2002

Dear Mr Nicholl

ADVISORY FORUM MEETING – MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2002

In preparation for the next meeting of the Advisory Forum which is scheduled to take place on Monday 4th February at 6.00 pm, please see enclosed the following papers:-

- Agenda
- Draft Note of First Meeting of the Advisory Forum – Monday 21 January 2002 (AF1/2002)
- Community Consultation Discussion Proposals (AF2/2002)
- Advisory Forum Report: Research Strategy (AF3/2002)

Yours sincerely


DECLAN McGEOWN
Secretary

cc Mr Fred Cobain MLA

Enc

SECOND MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM

MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2002

18.00hrs – 19.30hrs

ENTERPRISE HOUSE

AGENDA

- 1. Agree Note of previous meeting (AF1/2002)**
- 2. Community Consultation Discussion Proposals (AF2/2002)**
- 3. Advisory Forum Report: Research Strategy (AF3/2002)**
- 4. Any Other Business**
- 5. Close of meeting**

DRAFT NOTE OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ADVISORY FORUM
MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2002
ENTERPRISE HOUSE

Present:

Project Team

Rev John Dunlop
Monsignor Tom Toner
Mr Roy Adams

Forum Members

Mr Michael Atcheson
Mr Mark Coulter
Mrs Marion Kane
Cllr Tommy Kirkham
Cllr Stephen Nicholl
Ms Kathy Stanton

In attendance

Mr Danny McNeill
Mr Derek Wheeler
Mr Declan McGeown (Secretary)

Introduction

The first meeting of the Advisory Forum took place on Monday 21 January 2002.

Following brief introductions, Forum members were invited to offer their views on both the Terms of Reference for the Project and the proposed Forum Procedures. Expectations of Forum members were also discussed, as were the proposed arrangements for consulting with community groups.

A summary of the key points to emerge is set out in the following paragraphs:

(i) Terms of Reference

Forum members were advised that, while the overall work of the Project is to be completed within a six-month period, it is intended that, in addition to carrying out a series of short to medium term actions, a long-term plan for North Belfast would be developed which would contain priorities and recommendations for action by Government and others. The Team also stressed the importance of this exercise, citing it as an opportunity to develop a plan of action that will make a real difference for the people of the North Belfast area.

(ii) Forum Procedures

Forum members thought that, while they could contact the Secretariat at any time in the period between meetings, further consideration should be given to arranging meetings of the Forum at more regular intervals than one month. The Team agreed to consider this.

(iii) Expectations of Forum Members

Points put forward in this exchange of views were:

- a) it was important to create both an awareness and acceptance of the cultural differences between communities.
- b) it was important to look at building trust and confidence, both within communities and across communities, and that 'single-identity' work was necessary before some communities could begin to embark on this process.
- c) a support framework needed to be in place to facilitate capacity building.
- d) it was important to look at ways to "address" conflict, instead of merely "managing" it.
- e) politicians and paramilitaries in the area needed to send out a message that they wished to commit to a mutual pact of understanding with their counterparts in the other communities.
- f) resources needed to be made available in such a way as to ensure that communities on both sides of the interfaces could build their individual capacities in a sustainable way.

(iv) Consultation arrangements with community groups

- a) Forum members agreed in principle to the proposed arrangements to consult with communities.
- b) For such arrangements to be successful, it was recommended that those best placed to comment on their areas be invited to attend.
- c) Members recommended that objectives for the consultation events should be understood clearly beforehand.
- d) Newtownabbey had already engaged in a similar process and it was agreed that it would be useful to obtain a copy of the procedures that were used along with the resultant report of the event.

North Belfast Community Action Project

- e) Forum members agreed to generate awareness of the planned consultation events within their area.

DECLAN MCGEOWN

January 2002

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DISCUSSION PROPOSALS

1. At the first Meeting of the Advisory Forum, on 21st January in Enterprise House, members were advised that the Team was planning to run a series of Community Consultation events. Forum members were advised of the proposed arrangements to consult with communities and Forum members agreed in principle to these arrangements.
2. The Project Team has further developed these arrangements as documented below:
 - a) A series of consultation events (approximately 15) to take place in North Belfast. Arrangements will also be made to meet with the Principals of the Secondary Schools in the area to determine the most appropriate way to consult with young people;
 - b) The Key Umbrella/Resource Organisations in North Belfast to suggest/agree venues and encourage attendance by people in the local community;
 - c) Each morning or afternoon event to last 2-3 hours;
 - d) The Project Team have already agreed a number of preliminary dates of events as follows:
 - 19th Feb, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm & 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
 - 21st Feb, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm & 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
 - 25th Feb, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm & 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
 - 27th Feb, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm & 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
 - 5th Mar, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm & 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm.

Further dates will be arranged in due course.

North Belfast Community Action Project

3. Focus and facilitation for these events will be provided by Carmah Communications and will be based around the following suggested key themes which will be discussed and agreed with the Advisory Forum on 4th February:
 - Community Development: How well is it resourced?
 - Social and Economic Issues: Impact on the Community
 - Levels of Service Provision
 - Interface Issues
 - Citizenship: towards a tolerant society
 - Leadership within Communities.
4. Advertisements will be placed in the key newspapers informing the public of this series of events, providing a list of dates and venues for those wishing to attend, and advising of the key themes. There will also be contact arrangements given for groups or individuals to put their views in writing (either by letter or e-mail).
5. A report on the Community Consultation process will be provided to members by mid March.

The Project Team is keen to get your views on this proposal and looks forward to discussing this further with you on 4th February.

PROJECT SECRETARIAT

30 JANUARY 2002

ADVISORY FORUM REPORT: RESEARCH STRATEGY

Background

1. A strategy for collating research on North Belfast to inform our Report has been developed and agreed by the Project Team. The purpose of this paper is to advise Forum members on the content of this strategy, which includes both primary and secondary research. In preparing our strategy we have assumed that the report on the proposed consultation events will also inform our Report, particularly from the point of view of gaining an insight into the perceptions and realities of the area.
2. Suggestions for other pieces of research to consider are welcome from Forum members.

Primary Research

3. Primary Research is that research which we will need to commission for the purposes of the Report and at this stage we envisage the need for four pieces of work to be carried out:

(i) Socio-economic profile of the area

While information exists on the socio-economic profile of North Belfast, the data is not as comprehensive as we would wish. As well as a reliance upon 1991 Census figures, a number of studies measure deprivation using the Robson indicator. This indicator, however, has now been superseded by the Noble work. Peter Shirlow has therefore been asked to prepare an up-to-date socio-economic profile of the area which will contain information down to street level and focus on the particular characteristics of North Belfast.

(ii) Territoriality

Peter Shirlow's work entitled "***Spaces and Fear***" has been well received by many commentators. OFMDFM, the body responsible for commissioning this work, has asked Peter to produce an abridged version of the report for publication. We understand

North Belfast Community Action Project

however that this may take several weeks to produce and we have therefore asked Peter to prepare a summarised version of his report to focus exclusively on the territorial issues that exist in North Belfast.

(iii) Community Capacity

Research will be commissioned to review and identify approaches to community capacity building. Such research will examine the key characteristics of the community development process within North Belfast and include models of good practice.

(iv) Criminality

In order to get an appreciation of the extent of criminal activity currently going on in North Belfast, we propose to commission a report from the Northern Ireland Office that would also include input by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Secondary Research

4. Some examples of secondary research, which we propose to use, are:

(i) Investment

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment publishes an annual report on the level of industrial investment in Northern Ireland. It is our intention to extract information from this report to gain an appreciation of the levels of investment in North Belfast.

(ii) Young People

The Belfast Interface Project carried out interviews in 1997 with groups of young people in interface areas of Belfast and it would be our intention to refer to this study and other studies carried out on young people in our Report.

SECRETARIAT

31 January 2002