

Arbitration file

FROM: MARY BUNTING
3 SEPTEMBER 2002

TO: ALISON COEY
WESLEY SHANNON
BILL SMITH o/r
PS/MINISTER LESLIE
PS/MINISTER HAUGHEY

AIDAN CASSIDY
PS/GERRY LOUGHRAN
WILL HAIRE
DENIS McCARTNEY
DAVID McNARRY
BRIAN BARRINGTON
EVELYN CUMMINS
DEREK WHEELER
STEPHEN GRIMASON

ARDOYNE ROAD ARBITRATION

Summary

Issue: Response to Arbitrators' Report on feedback received.

Timing: As soon as possible.

Recommendation: That Ministers write to arbitrators thanking them for their report and their contribution to the process and noting that the arbitration process is now complete.

Background

1. Ministers met with the arbitrators on 20 August to discuss their report on the arbitration process.
2. At that meeting the arbitrators indicated that they wished to forward their report to the various parties and to invite feedback from them.
3. Ministers explored of the arbitrators if they could assist them with the implementation of the process by working with both communities and the North Belfast Unit on the implementation of recommendations 2 and 3 of the report and on how to address the wider needs of both communities at this interface. The arbitrators indicated that, due to other commitments, they would not be able to offer much assistance in the short term but they agreed to explore, as part of the feedback process what facilitation arrangements might be provided.
4. The Arbitrators' report on feedback has now been received and this is attached.

Discussion

5. The report indicates that feedback has been invited from all parties. None of the North Belfast MLAs has responded. The only responses of any substance have been received from Father Aidan Troy and Rev Norman Hamilton (in a personal statement).
6. A number of points emerge from the feedback:
 - (i) The first recommendation concerning the minimal wall/fence at the immediate interface, does not appear to have found favour with either community, for different reasons.
 - (ii) Upper Ardoyne also appears to have difficulties with the proposed fencing behind houses on Hesketh Road.
 - (iii) At this stage, neither community has addressed the issue of how the implementation of recommendations (2) and (3) might be facilitated.
 - (iv) The continuing role of the arbitrators has been questioned by both communities. The arbitrators have told both communities that they had made it clear to Ministers that they did not expect to have any further involvement beyond the feedback process, which they saw as a final step in the arbitration.
7. I have been in touch with the arbitrators today by telephone and they have advised that they will forward to us any further feedback which they might receive. They have also confirmed that they will not be making any further contacts and that they now consider that their role in the process has come to an end.

Recommendation

8. The arbitrators have now fulfilled their role in this process as required by the terms of reference for the arbitration process and they have invited and made every effort to obtain feedback on their report.
9. It is recommended that Ministers write to the arbitrators thanking them for their valuable work they have undertaken throughout the arbitration process and recognising that the arbitration process is now complete. Draft letters to Sue and Steve Williams are attached.

Mary Bunting

MARY BUNTING

DRAFT

Sue Williams


Dear Sue

Thank you for sending us your report on feedback arising from your report on the Ardoyne Road Arbitration.

We are grateful to you for the work you have undertaken under the past few months in helping us to try to find a lasting solution to the community tensions and difficulties at the Ardoyne interface. We note that you have now fulfilled your role as required by the terms of reference for the arbitration process, which is now complete.

We recognise, as you have in your report, that there is a need for all the relevant groups and individuals to begin to create for themselves a clear, shared vision of a safe, healthy and attractive environment in which everyone can live together peacefully. We will continue to strive for this and thank you for the valuable contribution you have made in helping us to achieve that goal.

We wish you well in your future work.

RT HON DAVID TRIMBLE MP MLA
First Minister

MARK DURKAN MLA
Deputy First Minister