

TOGETHER: BUILDING A UNITED COMMUNITY
MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the Together: Building a United Community Strategy. This Strategy represents a key building block in the implementation of the Programme for Government 2011-2015 and reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and building a united and shared society.

Over the past decade our society has been transformed. We have witnessed changes that many, if not most of us, would have had difficulty imagining possible not so long ago.

There are many reasons to be proud of what has been achieved to date, as well as optimistic about the future.

Peace is now firmly established with stable political structures that are delivering for local people. This stability allows us the space to begin to shape the kind of society that we all want to see, one which ensures that our past is never repeated, and which lays the foundation for peace and prosperity for future generations.

We have seen many momentous events over the past century and we believe that this point in time has the potential to be equally significant. We are mindful of our responsibilities and the opportunity we have now to lay the foundations for a transformed and more shared society in the future. We do not underestimate the challenges that remain and our journey is not yet complete. However we believe that this Strategy offers a clear and coherent vision for building a better future.

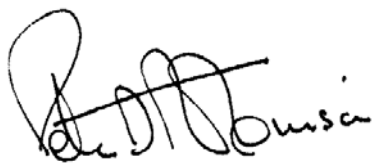
In developing this Strategy we have listened carefully to the wide range of detailed views provided in response to the earlier consultations on our approach to good relations. The interest shown throughout the 2010 consultation process indicates the importance of the many issues that this Strategy is seeking to address. We recognise that it is now time to move from policy development to implementation and action. That is why we have already announced major new cross-community initiatives around education, housing, sport, youth volunteering and interface barriers.

The Together: Building a United Community Strategy outlines a vision based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation. It provides the framework for government action in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance while seeking to address division, hate and separation.


This is an Executive Strategy which places responsibilities on all government departments. However government cannot achieve the shared vision alone; everyone has a role to play. The title of the Strategy acknowledges the reality that it is only through government, community groups, and individuals working together that a new and united community can truly be formed. It is only by working together that we will achieve our aspirations and bring our shared vision to a reality in people's everyday lives.

We recognise and value the range of important and often challenging work that has been taken forward by individuals and groups at local level to build a more united and shared society. This Strategy aims to build on what has gone before, and provide the framework for best practice to be developed and shared. Throughout society from local community level to the Executive, we have seen people coming together, and often working together, to build a better future. It is this type of approach which is at the heart of this Strategy.

This Strategy represents a clear choice to move away from division, and instead establish a new, reconciled and shared society.



Rt Hon Peter D. Robinson MLA
First Minister



Martin McGuinness MLA
deputy First Minister

Together: Building a United Community

Executive Summary

The *Together: Building a United Community* Strategy outlines a vision of **“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.”**

The Strategy reflects the Executive’s commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. This strategy represents a major change in the way that good relations will be delivered across government. Departments will be expected to work together to ensure that outcomes are delivered on the ground. This will mean that funding is directed in the most appropriate manner through the most appropriate bodies on the basis of the themes in this strategy.

A key action of the strategy will therefore be the establishment of an independent and statutorily-based organisation to provide advice to government and to challenge all levels of government in terms of its performance in improving good relations. The Equality Commission already fulfils a similar role in terms of monitoring public authorities against the statutory duties in Section 75 of the NI Act 1998. We will therefore establish an Equality and Good Relations Commission to change their roles and responsibilities to include good relations, this will incorporate the existing role and new good relations role. This will place significant functions currently under CRC on a statutory basis.

This change has the potential for significant impact on the Community Relations Council. In line with the Management Statement for the Community Relations Council, OFMdfM will use the next planned review of the organisation to inform the detailed arrangements for future funding.

Whilst the main focus of this document is on improving community relations, these issues are not considered in isolation. To tackle issues of inequality we must improve equality of opportunity; by improving equality of opportunity for all, we make positive strides to

address better community relations. Likewise, by tackling sectarianism, prejudice and hate we can contribute positively to removing and reducing the motivation for discrimination.

Underpinning Principles

The following principles will underpin the implementation of the Strategy and drive forward actions – at both a central and local Government level:

- Cohesion
- Diversity
- Fairness
- Inclusion
- Integration
- Interdependence
- Respect
- Responsibilities
- Rights
- Sharing
- Tolerance

Key Priorities

The Strategy outlines how Government, community and individuals will work together to build a united community and achieve change against the following key priorities:

1. Our children and young people;
2. Our shared community;
3. Our safe community; and
4. Our cultural expression.

Shared Aims

Each of these four key priorities will be supported by the following shared aims:

Our Children and Young People

Shared Aim: *to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.*

Commitments

This Strategy includes a range of commitments that, over the longer term, will lead to sustainable improvements in good relations here. Each of the four key priorities also has a set of tangible and practical commitments.

For our children and young people, we will:

- Create 10,000 one year placements in a new “United Youth” programme;
- Develop a Summer Camps/Summer Schools pilot programme with a focus on sport and developmental activities initially consisting of 100 summer school/camp projects to be run throughout summer 2015;
- Roll out a “buddy scheme” in publicly run nursery and primary schools;
- Develop, in partnership with the relevant agencies and Departments age-appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarianism resources and ensure that teachers are trained, equipped and supported to deliver an effective anti-sectarianism module;
- Ensure that our approach to youth intervention becomes a year round programme.
- Create ten Shared Educational Campuses; and
- Build on the legacy of the Olympic Games, and, work across all sport to develop significant programmes of cross-community sporting events which will focus on reconciliation through sport and be based at community level.

Our Shared Community

Shared Aim: to create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

In moving from contested spaces to shared spaces, we will:

- Ensure that all government contracts for work at interface areas and areas of contested space contain a social clause that provides training and employment opportunities and that members of the local population will be able to apply for these opportunities. This social return on investment will be modelled on the Strategic Investment Board’s Social Clauses Toolkit, but will reflect the relative size and amount of the investment taking place;
- Enhance Good relations scrutiny by placing it on a statutory basis with the creation of a new “Equality and Good Relations Commission”, which will build on and

incorporate the existing Equality Commission and the policy and advisory work of the Community Relations Council;

- Introduce an enhanced good relations section for Equality Impact Assessments for all policies across government;
- Create 4 Urban Villages;
- Create 10 new Shared Neighbourhood Development; and
- Have an overarching review of housing to bring forward recommendations on how to enhance shared neighbourhoods.

Our Safe Community

Shared Aim: to create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.

In building a safer community, we will:

- Create a 10-year Programme to reduce, and remove by 2023, all interface barriers;
- Create an Interface Barrier Support Package;
- Work to build a culture where people feel comfortable to report when they have been the victim of intimidation or harassment;
- Ensure that the monitoring of the Community Safety Strategy forms a component of the delivery and implementation architecture of this Strategy; and
- Review the Good Relations Indicators to reflect the ongoing importance of safety as an influence on good relations outcomes.

Our Cultural Expression

Shared Aim: to create a community, which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.

In dealing with issues around cultural expression, we will:

- Establish an All Party Group, with an independent chair, to consider and make recommendations on matters including parades and protests; flags; symbols, emblems and related matters; and the past;

- Use the restructured District Council Good Relations Programme to examine ways in which culture can be celebrated in a shared and mutually inclusive way. Options for joint activities, shared learning and respect of diversity will be key features of district council led cultural events;
- Develop, through the Arts Council, options around a new annual shared community relations/Cultural Awareness week, to encourage cultural celebration and exploration for cultures and identities; and
- Encourage the continued use of the arts and sports as a means of improving good relations.

In order to support the achievement of the four shared aims we will put in place a range of measures to aid implementation.

In Designing Strategy Implementation, we will:

- Establish a Panel comprising all Ministers from the Executive in addition to senior representatives from a range of statutory agencies and community partners;
- Ensure that each Minister reports against the actions and targets attributed to his or her department and show how and to what extent departmental policies are achieving the objectives aligned to this strategy;
- Develop detailed action plans to include key aims, targets and milestones. Resources and responsible departments/agencies will be assigned to each target;
- Establish thematic subgroups under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel to reflect the key priorities of this Strategy; and
- Ensure that the membership of both the Ministerial Panel and associated subgroups will seek to reflect the range of sectors across our community who can contribute to building good relations here.

In Enhancing Policy Advice & Challenge to Government, we will:

- Amend the remit, roles and responsibilities of the existing Equality Commission into an Equality and Good Relations Commission; and

- Develop an augmented impact assessment that assesses the extent to which policies and other interventions contribute to meeting the objectives of this overarching Strategy.

In improving Funding Delivery, we will:

- Ensure that funding is directed in a way that secures sustainability of the infrastructure that has been established at a local level and that continues to develop the capacity of individuals and organisations working to build good relations across our society.

In Enhancing Local Council Delivery, we will:

- Use the findings and recommendations from the evaluation of the District Council Good Relations Programme to help inform an enhanced delivery model that reflects the strategic priorities of this Strategy; and
- Ensure that good relations considerations are mainstreamed into the revised arrangements under the Review of Public Administration.

In Monitoring & Evaluating Implementation, we will:

- Review and consult on the Good Relations indicators by the end 2013.

Headline Actions

A range of strategic headline actions are identified throughout the Strategy. These headline actions provide innovative approaches to building a united, shared and reconciled community and comprehensively demonstrate the Executive's commitment to realising change across the key priorities within this strategy.

We are committed to:

- Establishing ten new shared education campuses;
- Getting 10,000 young people, not in education, employment or training, a place on the new United Youth volunteering programme;
- Establishing ten new shared housing schemes;
- Developing four urban village schemes;
- Developing a significant programme of cross-community sporting events;
- Removing interface barriers by 2023; and
- Pilot 100 shared summer schools by 2015.

These are just some of the strategic actions we have committed to in the Strategy. This is an ambitious programme, and one that sets out our vision for a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our society has come a long way in recent years and has been transformed in many respects. For well over a decade, we have been on a journey from conflict and division to peace and there are many tangible signs of the progress we have made as a community. We have seen Northern Ireland become somewhere investors consider a viable business base; where tourists want to visit; where significant inward immigration has led to the creation of a diverse, multicultural society and one in which the vast majority of our young people can grow up in a peaceful environment.
- 1.2 The economic, political, cultural and social changes that have been taking place highlight that there is much for us all to be collectively proud of as a society. However, we know that this progress can only continue within the context of a united community. We cannot build a modern, well-equipped society in the absence of good relations, equality of opportunity and reconciliation. This Strategy sets out a vision for the kind of society we want to see and outlines the strategic framework that will shape action in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance.

Vision

- 1.3 Building a united community and improving community relations is a clear commitment within the Programme for Government and the public consultation emphasised that this is a commitment that is shared across society.
- 1.4 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. This Strategy reflects the Executive's

commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared community.

- 1.5 As an Executive, we believe firmly in the potential of our people and we are committed to making our society a better place for all – regardless of background, political opinion, religious belief or race. We acknowledge that leadership at a political level is a vital ingredient in driving this change. However, we also recognise that achieving the vision set out in this Strategy is not solely the responsibility of the Executive - and work by everyone to achieve it must continue and intensify - including individuals, groups and agencies at a local level.
- 1.6 We must now take the opportunity to harness this collective commitment, effort and vision; and this Strategy provides the framework to do that by aiming to build:

Our Vision:

“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.”

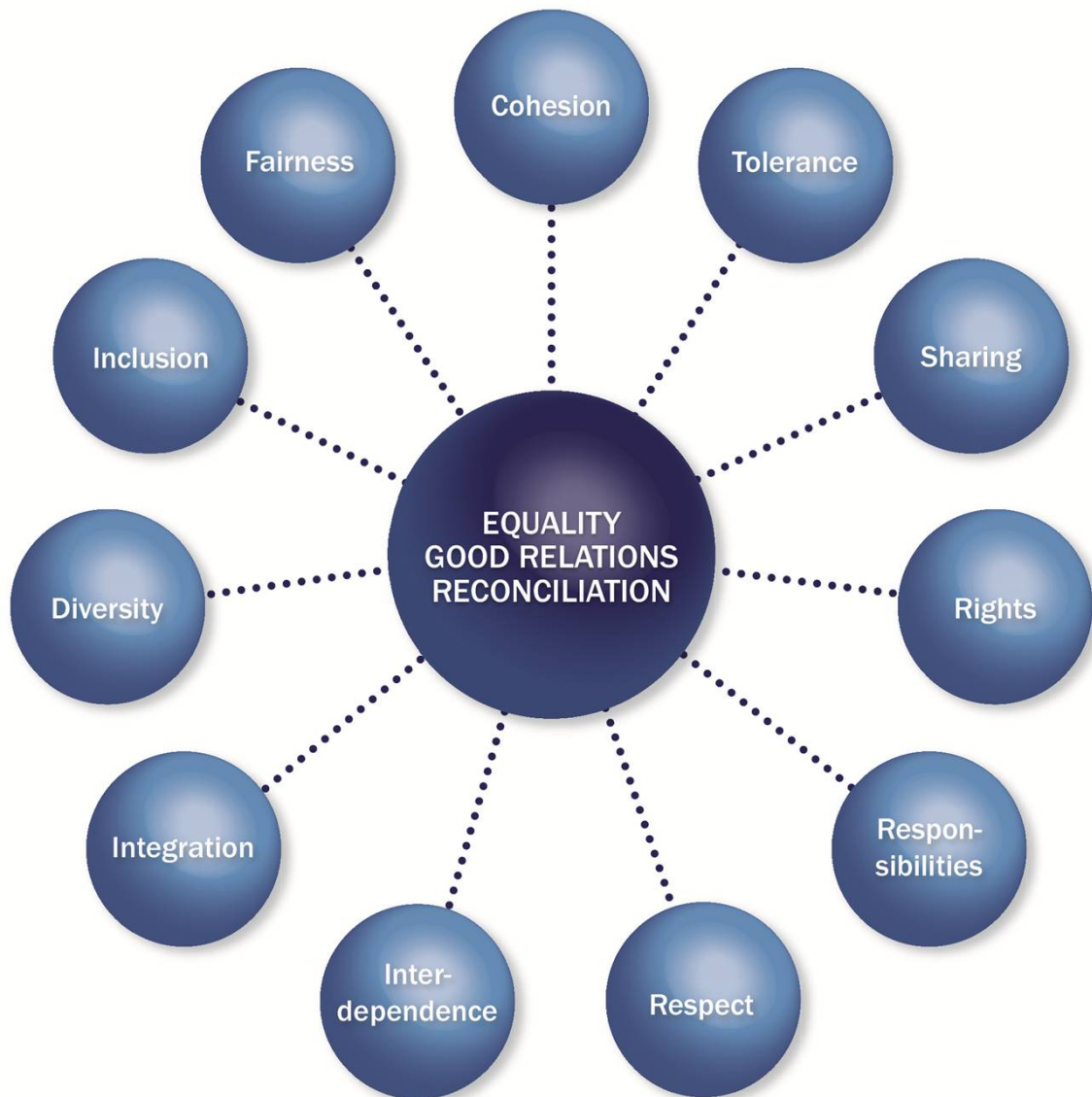
- 1.7 We want this vision to be one in which everyone can share and to which everyone can contribute positively. As outlined in the remainder of this Strategy, this vision must be relevant to all aspects of life and be one in which all sections of our society can see their role in achieving. In practice, this vision must translate through our schools, our neighbourhoods and our workplaces. It requires a systemic and strategic response across political, economic, civic and social life – and at a political, community and individual level.
- 1.8 Our community is becoming increasingly diverse and this diversity brings both new challenges and opportunities. Achieving the vision of a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation,

allows for a society to be at ease with its diversity. Within this context, we recognise that cultural identity and expression can have significant community relations impacts both between the two main traditions here and within the context of increasing diversity. We also recognise that some people may adopt multiple identities or indeed choose, or perceive themselves to have a shared or mixed identity.

- 1.9 This Strategy is not about managing division or allowing our history of segregation to continue. We are committed to creating a new, united, reconciled and shared society and we believe the vision outlined in this Strategy highlights the ambition that we all share. Later sections of this document outline a clear mechanism for delivery that will enhance the accountability of government to the community and enable the community's voice to be at the centre of strategic decision-making. This will provide the platform for us to continue to address the deep-rooted issues that have perpetuated segregation and resulted in some people living separate lives.
- 1.10 For our people and neighbourhoods to begin to see the real tangible benefits of better community relations, the desire to address division, intolerance, hate and separation must permeate everything we do. These benefits are both economic, such as increased tourism and investment opportunities, as well as social, such as an improved quality of life for everyone.
- 1.11 Continuing to shape our community for the future should be based on a number of principles that will not only guide what we do as an Executive, but will also provide a framework whereby local people and local groups can continue to work together in a collective effort. We acknowledge and value the wealth of experience and expertise that has been built up over years and now resides in community leaders, organisations and agencies. This Strategy will provide the framework for this good practice to be developed and built upon over the coming years.
- 1.12 The consultation highlighted that there needs to be closer linkages between political activity and the work going on at a local level. We believe that the underpinning principles of this Strategy outlined below provide a set of shared

values that will link political leadership with individual and community effort and motivation.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES



1.13 These principles will underpin the implementation of this Strategy and drive forward actions – at both a central and local government level. Corporately, these principles will tie together the various strands of activity including government interventions, community and agency engagement and work led by individuals. We recognise that there is a responsibility on the Executive to show political leadership in building a united community and improving community relations. We take this

responsibility seriously and will continue to show the necessary leadership in creating a better society for everyone.

- 1.14 The mechanisms for implementing this Strategy at a political and departmental level are outlined in chapter 6 of this document. In recognition of the expertise and experience that resides within our community, these mechanisms will also enable the participation of practitioners and groups at a local level.

The Scope of this Strategy

Good Relations and Equality

- 1.15 There are clear statutory duties for all public bodies under s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act in relation to good relations and equality. Under Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, all public authorities shall in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, marital status, age or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

- 1.16 Section 75 (2) of the legislation states that without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

- 1.17 In practice, this means that all of our policy making and legislative actions must take into account the Section 75 duties in their entirety. Whilst the main focus of this document is on improving community relations, we cannot look at these issues in isolation. To tackle issues of inequality we must improve equality of opportunity;

by improving equality of opportunity for all, we make positive strides to address better community relations. Likewise, by tackling sectarianism, prejudice and hate we can contribute positively to removing and reducing the motivation for discrimination. Therefore, in our decision making and policy implementation, we regard the promotion of equality of opportunity as an essential element in the building of good community relations and consider that good relations cannot and should not be built on a foundation of inequality.

- 1.18 We do not under-estimate the importance of tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity; social inclusion; and reconciliation for and amongst all sections of our community. Our commitment to addressing these issues is reflected in separate policies and action plans that include a focus on the specific needs of some of the most vulnerable groups in society. These are detailed in the remainder of this chapter.

Children and Young People

- 1.19 Through the ten year Children and Young People's Strategy, we are seeking to tackle the issues that impact most on the lives of the youngest in our society. The Child Poverty Act 2010 required the Executive to lay a Child Poverty Strategy before the Assembly while the Act also places a statutory duty to produce an annual report describing the progress to meeting the target to eradicate child poverty by 2020. The Delivering Social Change framework is the main vehicle for delivery of the strategy.
- 1.20 To meet this statutory obligation, OFMDFM co-ordinated the Executive's agreement to the Improving Children's Life Chances Strategy. The Strategy was laid before the Assembly in March 2011 and sets out the priority action areas proposed by the Executive to address the issue of child poverty.

Childcare

- 1.21 Research indicates that prejudicial attitudes and behaviours can manifest early in childhood. It is important that everyone recognises the importance of good relations, and supports positive behaviours, across all forms of childcare settings, whether within the family or the wider community, and across all aspects of early years and school age provision.

Victims and Survivors

- 1.22 The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has been working to address the range of issues impacting on victims and survivors of the conflict, through the 10-year Victims and Survivors Strategy published in 2009. A major development in the implementation of the Strategy has come with the establishment of the Victims and Survivors Service on 2 April 2012. The service will introduce an individual needs based approach to the provision of services. A Victims and Survivors Forum has also been established by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in June 2012. We will ensure that these two bodies, together with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, support and progress the objectives outlined in the Victims and Survivors Strategy.

Older People

- 1.23 Tackling the social exclusion of older people is a continued focus for us and in recognition of this, in November 2011 Claire Keatinge was appointed as the first Commissioner for Older People. Additionally, OFMDFM will also publish a draft Active Ageing Strategy for consultation in autumn 2013.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People

- 1.24 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have and do play a role in building good relations across our community. This was highlighted extensively throughout the public consultation when a number of individuals and representatives of

lesbian, gay and bisexual groups, and transgender people, spoke of the need to apply good relations principles more widely across all s75 groupings.

- 1.25 The specific needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people were articulated clearly in the course of the public consultation on the draft Strategy for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, which included the commitment to publish the Sexual Orientation Strategy. We remain committed to publishing a Sexual Orientation Strategy this year, which will be informed by a full public consultation. The intention is that the Strategy and associated action plans will address the issues that impact on the daily lives of LGBT people.

Gender

- 1.26 This Strategy is for the benefit of all individuals, regardless of gender, including transgender people, and does not take away from the importance of actions to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of gender. A review of the 2006-2016 Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plans was initiated in February 2013. It aims to deliver a revised strategy and action plan by autumn 2013.
- 1.27 Women have made, and continue to make, an important contribution to the political process and have been a named beneficiary group under successive EU-funded PEACE Programmes (1995 to present). The Government remains committed to ensuring the right of women to full and equal political participation and will continue to work towards increasing women's representation in public and political life.

Racial Equality

- 1.28 By the end of 2013, following a full public consultation we will be developing and publishing a new Racial Equality Strategy to replace "A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010" which was endorsed by the Assembly on 3 July 2007.
- 1.29 Like the current Racial Equality Strategy, the new document will establish a framework that will allow us:

- To tackle racial inequalities in Northern Ireland and to open up opportunity for all;
 - To eradicate racism and hate crime; and
 - Together with this Strategy, to initiate actions to promote good race relations.
- 1.30 This Strategy is not intended to replace or subsume our work on racial equality and good race relations. Rather it will complement and provide the co-ordinated framework for aspects of its delivery. Chapter 6 outlines how interventions to promote racial equality and good race relations will be co-ordinated and driven forward within the delivery architecture established under this Strategy.
- 1.31 The new Racial Equality Strategy will take full account of recent developments, including the unprecedented inward migration we have seen in recent years and the challenges and opportunities that this presents. It will have a strong implementation mechanism to ensure that it makes a difference to the lives of members of minority ethnic communities and that it contributes appropriately to achieving the overarching vision of this Strategy.
- 1.32 We have launched a refreshed Minority Ethnic Development Fund following the recommendations of an evaluation of the Fund. It, too, has a significant contribution to make to achieve our shared vision.

Disability

- 1.33 The Executive's response to the Promoting Social Inclusion Disability Report and the implementation of the UN Disability Convention will be delivered within the context of a new disability Strategy.
- 1.34 The Strategy entitled "A Strategy to improve the lives of disabled people – 2012 to 2015" sets out the key priorities that we believe will be crucial in addressing the barriers that disabled people face and currently hinders their full participation in society. The purpose of the Strategy is to set out a high level policy framework and more importantly to set the strategic direction across specific areas of policy here.

1.35 This Strategy does not seek to replace these other strategies and action plans or to negate the need for discrete interventions for specific groups of people in our community. However, it must be viewed within the wider context of the equality of opportunity duties outlined in section 75(1) and in particular the sector specific strategies and action plans aimed at ensuring equality of opportunity for specified groups.

Definition of Sectarianism

1.36 We believe that we cannot build a united community unless the fundamental issues of division and intolerance are specifically tackled. This cannot be achieved without tackling the underlying prejudices and behaviours caused by sectarianism. For the purposes of this Strategy, sectarianism is defined as: threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour or attitudes towards a person by reason of that person's religious belief or political opinion; or to an individual as a member of such a group. In relation to the draft legislation to establish the Equality and Good Relations Commission we will seek to find an appropriate consensus around a definition of sectarianism, based on this Strategy, to be included in that legislation.

The Scale of the Challenge

1.37 There is no doubt that much progress has been made over recent years and research consistently demonstrates that there is a strong desire across our community to continue working towards a more shared and positive future.

1.38 Findings from the 2010 NI Life and Times survey showed that 95% of Protestant respondents respected the Catholic community's culture and traditions 'a little' or 'a lot' and 91% of Catholics respected the Protestant community's culture and traditions 'a little' or 'a lot'. In addition according to the same survey 82% of respondents stated that they would prefer to live in a mixed neighbourhood while 87% believed that better relations will come about through more mixing.

- 1.39 Our society has seen a number of significant milestones in achieving positive change. In particular, local decision making and accountability through the Executive and Assembly have created stability and provided new opportunities for our society as a whole.
- 1.40 As well as these advances by political parties, a remarkable depth and value of work to advance good relations within our community has been taken forward over many years by individuals, groups and agencies at a local level. This work has been supported from a range of funding sources including OFMDFM through the District Councils Good Relations Programme and the Community Relations Council, along with European Peace Programmes, and programmes such as The Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland. This Strategy sets out how we can build on the work and relationships that have been established as a result of this investment to help continue to shape a united community and improve community relations.
- 1.41 However, in bringing forward this Strategy, we recognise that there is no room for complacency, and we must all face up to the difficult issues that stand in the way of further progress. Despite the undoubted advances that have been made, we know that intolerance, including sectarianism and racism, continues to exist. Such attitudes can blight our society and damage relationships between individuals, groups and neighbourhoods. It is therefore imperative that we continue to challenge this where it continues to exist.
- 1.42 Some of our areas continue to be overshadowed by the physical reminders of the past, with residents living segregated lives as a result of dividing structures. These structures can come in a number of forms but their impact is exactly the same. The table below illustrates the challenge that continues to face many sections of our community in this regard.

<p>The Department of Justice is responsible for 54 interface structures, 41 walls or fences and 13 gates.</p>

Area	Walls/Fences	Gates
East Belfast	4	
West Belfast	12	6
North Belfast	15	5
Derry City	4	2
Craigavon	6	

Of the 54 structures, 9 have been erected since 1998 (8 fences and 1 gate), although none have been erected since 2008.

- 1.43 Our people, whether they live in rural or urban settings, may not always live in the shadow of physical structures of division; but nevertheless can often live separately from their neighbours as a result of attitudes and mindsets that have been established over many years.
- 1.44 We recognise the positive contribution that our young people are making within the community and we want to nurture this and empower them to become the leaders of tomorrow. However, we also acknowledge that some of our young people feel disaffected from wider society and a small number demonstrate this in a negative way.
- 1.45 In addition, the expression of cultural identity has sometimes been divisive, instead of something to be welcomed and celebrated, while some of our neighbours from minority ethnic backgrounds have been treated in an unacceptable way.
- 1.46 We do not under-estimate the scale of these challenges and the range of issues that impact on people and the places where they live and interact. However, we are committed to continuing to bring about positive change in people's lives and realising tangible improvements in areas where there is the feeling that they have missed out on the benefits of peace.

The Past

- 1.47 One of the particular challenges facing us as a society is the need to deal with our past. Our history has left a legacy of hurt and division that we must address in building a better future and achieving the reconciliation that will enable us to continue to progress towards a united community. We acknowledge that there is much in our past that continues to impact on our present, and the past can also provide important lessons and insights to help shape our future.
- 1.48 We recognise that more work needs to be done to resolve the challenging legacy of our past and we are committed to showing political leadership. **As a result of this Strategy, we will establish an All-Party Group, with an independent chair** to consider parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and the past.

Commitment:

As a result of this Strategy, we will establish an All-Party Group, with an independent chair, to consider parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems and related matters; and the past.

- 1.49 Although this Strategy is not designed to provide an answer to all of the issues raised by our past, we believe that it does play a part in setting a framework for how we might collectively deal with those issues from our history that impact on us today and prevent us from achieving our vision of a united, shared and reconciled community.
- 1.50 One way the Executive has agreed to deal with the past is through addressing the legacy of the past and those most affected by it. The interim Comprehensive Needs Assessment of the Victims and Survivors' sector offers a helpful framework within which to consider the complexities of the past and funding is now being directed to meet individual and family needs within each category of identified need:
- a. Health and wellbeing;

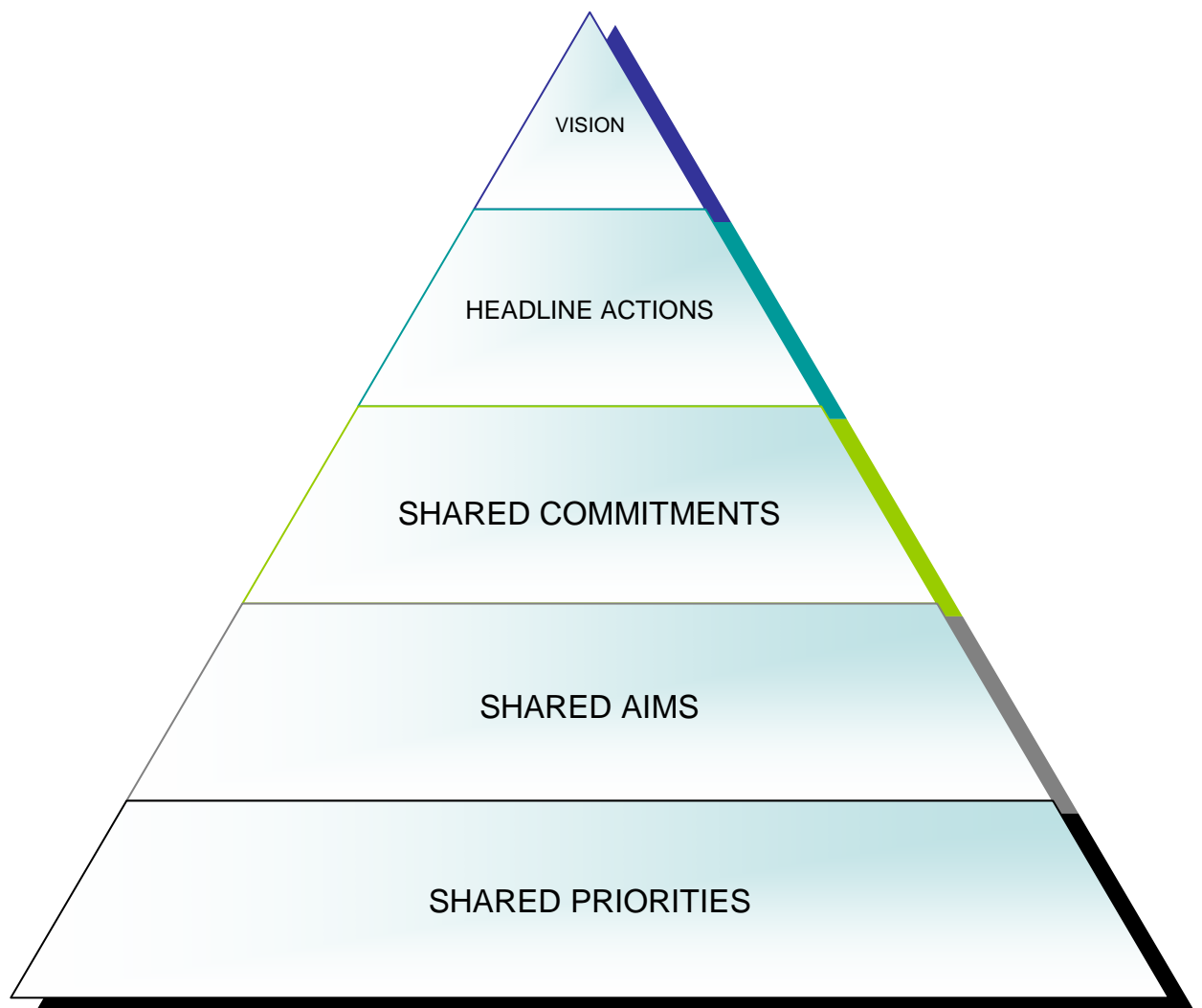
- b. Social support;
- c. Individual financial needs;
- d. Truth, justice and acknowledgement;
- e. Welfare support;
- f. Trans-generational; and
- g. Personal and professional development

The seven areas of need identified above underpin the 2013-15 Victim support Programme administered by the Victims and Survivors Service.

- 1.51 Whilst acknowledging the continued impact of our past, this Strategy, is about setting out our aspirations for the future, addressing the challenges and playing our part in laying the building blocks for a better society for everyone.
- 1.52 The Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre (PBCRC) is an example of how we are looking to the future and continuing to transform our society.

Our Commitment

- 1.53 Despite the scale of the challenge facing us, this Strategy evidences our commitment to tackling the real and complex issues that continue to prevent us from enjoying the full benefits of a truly united and shared community.
- 1.54 Throughout the remaining chapters, we will outline:
 - key priorities that will drive action across Government;
 - shared aims in achieving our vision for the future;
 - commitments to bring about continued change across our community; and
 - strategic headline actions that will contribute to achieving our vision.



1.55 Collectively, Government, community and individuals will work together to build a united community and achieve change against the following key priorities.

1.56 Each of these key priorities will be supported by the following shared aims:

KEY PRIORITIES

1. Our children and young people.
2. Our shared community.
3. Our safe community.
4. Our cultural expression.

Our Children and Young People.

Shared Aim: to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.

Our Shared Community.

Shared Aim: to create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

Our Safe Community.

Shared Aim: to create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.

Our Cultural Expression.

Shared Aim: to create a community which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity, and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.

1.57 In turn, a range of strategic headline actions are identified throughout the Strategy. These headline actions provide innovative approaches to building a united, shared and reconciled community and compositely demonstrate the Executive's

commitment to realising change across the key priorities within this Strategy. The headline actions that we will take forward as a result of this Strategy are summarised below.

HEADLINE ACTIONS

Our Children and Young People

For our children and young people, we will:

- Create 10,000 one year placements in a new “United Youth” programme;
- Develop a Summer Camps/Summer Schools pilot programme with a focus on sport and developmental activities initially consisting of 100 summer school/camp projects to be run throughout summer 2015;
- Roll out a “buddy scheme” in publicly run nursery and primary schools;
- Develop, in partnership with the relevant agencies and Departments age-appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarianism resources and ensure that teachers are trained, equipped and supported to deliver an effective anti-sectarianism module;
- Ensure that our approach to youth intervention becomes a year round programme.
- Create ten Shared Educational Campuses; and
- Build on the legacy of the Olympic Games, and, work across all sport to develop significant programmes of cross-community sporting events which will focus on reconciliation through sport and be based at community level.

Our Shared Community

In moving from contested spaces to shared spaces, we will:

- Ensure that all government contracts for work at interface areas and areas of contested space contain a social clause that provides training and employment opportunities and that members of the local population will be able to apply for these opportunities. This social return on investment will be modelled on the Strategic Investment Board's Social Clauses Toolkit, but will reflect the relative size and amount of the investment taking place;
- Enhance Good relations scrutiny by placing it on a statutory basis with the creation of a new "Equality and Good Relations Commission", which will build on and incorporate the existing Equality Commission and the policy and advisory work of the Community Relations Council;
- Introduce an enhanced good relations section for Equality Impact Assessments for all policies across government;
- Create 4 Urban Villages;
- Create 10 new Shared Neighbourhood Development; and
- Have an overarching review of housing to bring forward recommendations on how to enhance shared neighbourhoods.

Our Safe Community

In building a safer community, we will:

- Create a 10-year Programme to reduce, and remove by 2023, all interface barriers;
- Create an Interface Barrier Support Package;
- Work to build a culture where people feel comfortable to report when they have been the victim of intimidation or harassment;
- Ensure that the monitoring of the Community Safety Strategy forms a component of the delivery and implementation architecture of this Strategy; and
- Review the Good Relations Indicators to reflect the ongoing importance of safety as an influence on good relations outcomes.

Our Cultural Expression

In dealing with issues around cultural expression, we will:

- Establish an All Party Group, with an independent chair, to consider and make recommendations on matters including parades and protests; flags; symbols, emblems and related matters; and the past;
- Use the restructured District Council Good Relations Programme to examine ways in which culture can be celebrated in a shared and mutually inclusive way. Options for joint activities, shared learning and respect of diversity will be key features of district council led cultural events;
- Develop, through the Arts Council, options around a new annual shared community relations/Cultural Awareness week, to encourage cultural celebration and exploration for cultures and identities; and
- Encourage the continued use of the arts and sports as a means of improving good relations.

1.58 In support of these headline strategic interventions, we make a range of commitments throughout the Strategy that over the longer-term will lead to sustainable improvements in good relations. This is not intended to be a closed list, and suggestions for actions received through the Ministerial Panel will be considered in the context of the overall aims of this Strategy. The commitments are summarised below:

For our children and young people, we will:

- Enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience;
- Develop an approach to summer interventions that fuses short and medium-term interventions with those of a longer-term, more strategic nature;
- Review practice across all strands of good relations activity, including those projects particular to young people;
- Develop an inter-community youth programme to tackle sectarianism;
- Support inter-generational approaches to building good relations;
- Establish a Good Relations Children and Young People's Subgroup to consider the specific role of young people in building good relations; and
- Develop a youth volunteering programme that builds the capacity of our young people, prepares them for leadership and improves community relations.

In moving from contested spaces to shared spaces, we will:

- Support initiatives and schemes that use sport as a tool for building good relations by opening up sporting facilities to all sections of the community;
- Work with community organisations to encourage increasing openness and accessibility with regard to community facilities and to reduce chill factors and fears preventing open access;
- ensure that District Council Good Relations Action Plans display close linkages with the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships;
- Commission more detailed research to assess the current extent of shared service delivery and identify opportunities to enhance shared provision;
- Develop an enhanced EQIA template to ensure that future policy and/or spending commitments are screened for alignment with this Strategy;
- Work with the local community to identify suitable assets within interface areas and at contested spaces to enable transformation;
- Work to ensure that good relations principles are a core component of regeneration and town/city centre management; and
- Seek to create communities of 'good neighbours' and ensure that there is greater choice open to those who wish to live in a mixed area.

In building a safer community, we will:

- Work to build a culture where people feel comfortable to report when they have been the victim of intimidation or harassment;
- Ensure that the monitoring of the Community Safety Strategy forms a component of the delivery and implementation architecture of this Strategy; and
- Review the Good Relations Indicators to reflect the ongoing importance of safety as an influence on good relations outcomes.

In dealing with issues around cultural expression, we will:

- Work in Government and with people to achieve our objective of removing all threatening and divisive symbols that are being used in a way to cause intimidation, or to glorify violence, hate or prejudice; and
- Encourage the continued use of the arts and sports as means of improving good relations.

1.59 We know that these commitments alone cannot make a real impact without having effective and robust implementation mechanisms in place. Chapter 6 of this strategy outlines how we will ensure that action across government is targeted and co-ordinated in a more strategic, coherent way. To achieve this, we have made the following commitments.

In Designing Strategy Implementation, we will:

- Establish a Panel comprising all Ministers from the Executive in addition to senior representatives from a range of statutory agencies and community partners;
- Ensure that each Minister reports against the actions and targets attributed to his or her department and show how and to what extent departmental policies are achieving the objectives aligned to this strategy;
- Develop detailed action plans to include key aims, targets and milestones. Resources and responsible Departments/agencies will be assigned to each target;
- Establish thematic subgroups under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel to reflect the key priorities of this Strategy; and
- Ensure that the membership of both the Ministerial Panel and associated subgroups will seek to reflect the range of sectors across our community who can contribute to building good relations here.

In Enhancing Policy Advice & Challenge to Government, we will:

- Amend the remit, roles and responsibilities of the existing Equality Commission into an Equality and Good Relations Commission; and
- Develop an augmented impact assessment that assesses the extent to which policies and other interventions contribute to meeting the objectives of this overarching Strategy.

In improving Funding Delivery, we will:

- Ensure that funding is directed in a way that secures sustainability of the infrastructure that has been established at a local level and that continues to develop the capacity of individuals and organisations working to build good relations across our society.

In Enhancing Local Council Delivery, we will:

- Use the findings and recommendations from the evaluation of the District Council Good Relations Programme to help inform an enhanced delivery model that reflects the strategic priorities of this Strategy; and
- Ensure that good relations considerations are mainstreamed into the revised arrangements under the Review of Public Administration.

In Monitoring & Evaluating Implementation, we will:

- Review and consult on the Good Relations indicators by the end of 2013.

2. Children and Young People

Key Priority 1 – Our Children and Young People

Shared Aim: to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.

- 2.1 Through this Strategy, we not only want to tackle the issues that have contributed to preventing the scale of progress in moving on as a society, but our task is also to create and nurture a culture where everyone can play their part in building an open, fair and united community.
- 2.2 Everyone has a role to play and none more so than our children and young people who have often led the way in ground breaking community relations initiatives. Through this Strategy, we will renew our focus on our younger generation and recognise the positive contribution that they are already making within the community. We are ambitious in our vision – we want to build good relations amongst our children and young people and equip them for a future in which the cycle of sectarianism and intolerance is broken.

The Scale of the Challenge

- 2.3 Over a third of our population is under the age of 25, and they contribute richly to the fabric of our society. Like any other section of our community, children and young people are by no means a homogeneous group and their needs, circumstances and ambitions vary according to their experiences. This Strategy recognises this and acknowledges that interventions must take into account the context in which our young people live and grow up.
- 2.4 The range of research in this area demonstrates the challenges that remain, as well as highlighting some of the difficulties that young people continue to face.

- 2.5 According to the Young Life and Times Survey 2011, 31% of young people said they rarely or never socialise with people from a different religious community while 22% said they had no close friends from the other main religious community.
- 2.6 The make-up and demography of our society can mean that some people, including our young people, can grow up without substantive opportunities to meet someone from a different tradition, cultural background or political opinion. The segregation in housing and our education system, physical divisions and invisible lines of separation that exist in both urban and rural settings can all act as barriers to meaningful sharing experiences amongst our children and young people. These are issues that are considered in further detail in chapter 3.
- 2.7 Research also highlights some of the concerns that young people continue to experience in their everyday lives. For example, 17% of pupils in years 8-12 worry about being threatened by paramilitaries while 15% of young people worry about being called names or harassed because of their religion (Young Person's Behaviour and Attitude Survey 2010).
- 2.8 At the same time, research provides evidence of a clear willingness and desire among young people to live in a more united community. The Young Life and Times Survey 2007 showed that 49% of young people agree that most people would like to have more friends of a different religion but never have the opportunity. In addition according to the 2011 Young Life and Times Survey 64% of young people would prefer to live in a mixed religion neighbourhood and 51% would prefer to go to a mixed religion school.
- 2.9 These statistics demonstrate that many of our young people want to see us moving towards a more shared, reconciled and united community. This Strategy does not view young people as a negative influence but instead recognises the potential they hold for our future. However, we recognise that some young people become involved in anti-social behaviour. As a society we must collectively face up to the underlying issues that lead to this type of behaviour, including levels of

disengagement so that we can reconnect with this group of young people and prevent others from becoming disaffected.

- 2.10 We must also recognise the negative impact of anti-social behaviour particularly on the residents across many of our interface areas. Anti-social behaviour undoubtedly heightens the community safety concerns of residents and can impact on the choices that people make in living out their everyday lives. Community safety issues are considered in more detail within chapter 4.
- 2.11 Considerable resources are already deployed in addressing sectarianism and challenging those negative behaviours and attitudes that can manifest themselves in violence. Youth projects and organisations across many areas are involved in diversionary schemes and preventative initiatives that engage young people throughout the year. A case study highlighting one such example is shown below.

Lower Castlereagh Community Group

In 2011, Lower Castlereagh Community Group (LCCG) was awarded £1,500 from the Summer Intervention Fund for work with a group of at risk young adults from the Mount Ward within East Belfast. The project aimed to provide alternatives to anti-social and interface activity for young adults who normally congregated at interface areas. The project sought to demonstrate to the young adults that there are better and more productive ways to be social, and in a way that both serves the individual and the community well.

LCCG used local young adults who have been previously involved in transforming local difficult issues such as bonfires and interfaces, as peer mentors for the programme. Each of the participants was mentored by an older person where they engaged in one-to-one conversations on their involvement in conflict at interfaces or with the Police. Some of the young adults became part of the programme as a result of a Youth Justice referral for previous interface involvement. The mentoring approach used by LCCG enabled a safe space to be created in which the young people could have open and honest conversations with their mentor.

The funding was used for activities during times of tension over summer period months

where the group did a collective workshop on the ramifications of being involved in interface conflict as well as the mentoring aspect. They also undertook some group building activities.

Strategic Interventions

2.12 The case study highlights the merit of building on longer-term, strategic interventions to bring about positive outcomes with and for our young people. We know that short-term approaches alone are not enough to address the range of issues that face young people within our community. In response to this, in 2011, the Executive and other key stakeholders commissioned a review of all initiatives where funding is used to support summer interventions involving diversionary activity with young people in areas of highest tension.

2.13 Under the delivery architecture of this Strategy, we will establish a new working group to replace the existing North Belfast Working Group. This group's terms of reference will outline how the group will monitor the tensions across our community throughout the year and ensure that appropriate planning coincides with those times when tensions can be at their highest. Summer interventions will be just one issue for consideration by that group and the findings and recommendations of the review report will inform an action plan for future years.

Commitment:

- Under the delivery architecture of this Strategy, we will establish a new working group to co-ordinate and target interventions in a more strategic way with our young people at heightened times of tension.

2.14 OFMDFM, the Department of Justice and other agencies already invest in programmes that work with our young people at key times of the year. Work has been ongoing for some time now to look at ways in which these bodies can deliver programmes in a more joined-up way - ensuring the right interventions are being provided for the right people at the right time.

- 2.15 To adequately meet the challenge, we will build on the work already undertaken, to develop an approach that fuses short and medium-term interventions with those of a longer-term, more strategic nature. This means ensuring that resources are deployed when and where they are most needed and particularly at those times of the year when community tensions are at their highest.
- 2.16 At present, interventions with our young people who live in areas where heightened tensions can be likely at key times of the year are largely limited to the summer months. We acknowledge that a more strategic approach is required and to this end we will work with the relevant agencies and Departments to develop a year-round youth intervention programme.
- 2.17 A new consolidated youth intervention programme will bring together a range of existing programmes and specifically target young people in those areas where community tensions can be most prevalent. The programme will merge short-term diversionary aspects with longer-term relationship-building with young people through the delivery of good relations workshops.
- 2.18 A year round approach to youth intervention will provide much needed focus and energy on the issues facing our young people who live within areas of particular community tension, and will play a significant role in diminishing violence and building a united community.
- 2.19 Within this Programme, we will specifically consider options for using sport as a good relations tool and build on the energy and focus that has been generated as a result of the Olympic Games. We recognise that sport is a powerful tool in bringing people together. We know that sport can play a central role in breaking down divisions in society and can provide a mechanism to encourage sharing, learning, and friendship; as well as, healthy competition across all parts of our society.
- 2.20 We will pilot a Youth Sports Programme at urban and rural interface and contested space areas with a view to rolling it out across our community. The programme will

contain a significant good relations element and will involve young people drawn from all sections of our community. The programme will be aimed at 11-16 year olds and will involve local sports clubs, boxing clubs, gyms etc. partnering up and providing cross-community sporting activities and facilities. The programme will also provide a vehicle for engagement with other stakeholders, including the PSNI, District Councils and local community organisations.

- 2.21 In return for participating, the clubs will have the opportunity to access additional funds to improve equipment, facilities and premises. Any work undertaken to improve the physical premises must be based on the Strategic Investment Board's Investment Strategy NI¹. We will ensure that all government contracts for work at interface areas and areas of contested space contain a social clause that provides training and employment opportunities and that members of the local population will be able to apply for these opportunities.
- 2.22 Coupled with this strategic approach, we will also develop and roll-out a pilot Summer Schools Programme consisting of 100 summer school projects in summer 2015. The Programme will provide a range of opportunities for post primary children to come together for academic and leisure purposes. This is part of the shared education agenda and looks at the range of development needs for these young people, delivered on a cross-community basis.
- 2.23 Through the pilot programme, we will:
- Examine the best way to engage youth in the programme;
 - Make use of sporting initiatives as a good relations tool;
 - Explore possible linkages with the Childcare Strategy and Executive Childcare fund;
 - Explore opportunities for parental involvement in the programme; and
 - Identify roles for voluntary and community sector organisations.

¹ The percentage should be based on the guidance contained in *Delivering social benefits through public procurement: A Toolkit 2010*. Over time, public procurement work undertaken as a result of this Strategy should seek to build on and exceed the targets set by the Toolkit.

Headline Actions

- We will create 10,000 one year placements in a new “United Youth” programme;
- We will develop a Summer Camps/Summer Schools pilot programme with a focus on sport and developmental activities initially consisting of 100 summer school/camp projects to be run throughout summer 2015; and
- Building on the legacy of the Olympic Games, and working across all sports, we will develop significant programmes for cross-community sporting events which will focus on reconciliation through sport and be based at community level.

2.24 Research demonstrates that alienation among young people is closely correlated to issues of deprivation, high levels of poverty and low educational attainment.

2.25 In order to build good relations, we cannot ignore the underlying issues that cause some of our young people to become disengaged from their community. The Childhood in Transition Report² points to a number of specific factors that influence the present day lives of the youngest in our community as a result of their direct or indirect exposure to the past conflict and the sectarianism that continues to exist. Our Strategy to build a united community recognises and addresses this. Educational outcomes vary between males and females and Catholic and Protestant, but the gap is by far widest between disadvantaged pupils and their more advantaged peers, as measured by entitlement to Free School Meals.

2.26 Research conducted by the Prince’s Trust in Great Britain³ highlights how young people who are not in education, employment or training are significantly more likely to feel isolated, while almost half of young people on Jobseekers’ Allowance do not feel part of their community. These findings are illustrative of a growing problem and clearly show that there is a need for a more systemic and strategic approach to tackling the issues facing our young people.

² Childhood in Transition Report: Experiencing Marginalisation and Conflict in Northern Ireland. McAlister, Scraton & Haydon, QUB, 2009

³ Young People and Their Communities. Prince’s Trust, 2010

- 2.27 In recognition of this challenge, the Northern Ireland Executive has already published Pathways to Success, its Strategy to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Strategy aims to deliver a three tier package of measures aimed at preventing young people falling into the NEET category in the first place; helping young people in the 16-18 age group, especially those facing barriers; and assisting unemployed young people aged 18-24 more generally.
- 2.28 The aspiration is that, by 2020, every young person will not only have an opportunity to access education, training or other preparation for employment but, to the extent that they are able, also avail of that opportunity. Implementation of the associated action plan will benefit all in society here, not least the young people who find themselves in this situation.
- 2.29 Motivation is essential for our young people and we should draw on the skills and expertise of the business community and other partners in creating greater opportunities for young people to become involved in a positive way. Through the delivery architecture for this Strategy, as outlined in chapter 6, we will work to ensure that all sections of our community, including the business sector, can play their role in building a shared, reconciled and united community.
- 2.30 In light of the complex issues facing our young people, this Strategy must be viewed within the wider family of policies and interventions that aim to improve their life chances.
- 2.31 The principles, outcomes and pledges within the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People 2006 – 2016, and our obligations to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, underpin securing a shared and inclusive society for our children and young people.
- 2.32 The creation of **10,000 one year placements** in our new “**United Youth Programme**” will offer 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.

2.33 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; and
- 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; and
- Encourage volunteering.

2.34 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; and
- Good relations based activity (training, learning, sport, leisure etc) within a shared environment.

2.35 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; and
- Who have not been in work, education or employment for a specified period of time to be agreed.

2.36 The Social Investment Fund, which is being taken forward within the context of the Delivering Social Change framework, aims to reduce poverty, unemployment and physical deterioration through area based interventions of significant scale which will be delivered in partnership with the community. Delivering economic and social improvements within areas through investment and employment will require helping communities to build their skills, develop strategic plans and utilise physical, infrastructure and natural assets in areas that have been under exploited for many years.

2.37 Bringing about such tangible improvements at a community level will undoubtedly result in positive outcomes for the young people within these areas and go some way to preventing the alienation that can be associated with negative behaviours and poor community relations outcomes.

The Role of Children and Young People in Building a United Community

2.38 Many young people contribute in a very positive way in influencing their local community for the better and shaping a new society, in which they can live, learn, play and socialise together. This Strategy will build on this and we will work to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to contribute to building community relations and tackling intolerance and prejudice.

2.39 We recognise the range of innovative projects that are ongoing to tackle sectarianism and racism amongst our young people. **We are committed to reviewing practice across all strands of good relations activity, including those projects particular to young people. We will use the findings from this audit of activity to develop an inter-community youth programme to tackle sectarianism.**

Commitment:

We will review practice across all strands of good relations activity, including those projects particular to young people. We will use the findings from this audit of activity to develop an inter-community youth programme to tackle sectarianism.

2.40 We know that the negative portrayal of young people can marginalise greater numbers even further from their community. Through this Strategy, we want to ensure that all young people can benefit from the opportunities presented by a united, diverse and reconciled community.

2.41 Through this Strategy, we want to ensure that young people have a say in how sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance are tackled and how their community can become a better place in which to grow up in.

2.42 Civic leadership and the desire for more meaningful political engagement emerged as key priorities for our young people during the consultation. **Under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel, we will establish a Good Relations Children and**

Young People’s Subgroup. This subgroup will consider the specific role of young people in building good relations and will look to develop a youth volunteering programme that builds the capacity of our young people, prepares them for leadership and improves community relations. This group will complement the ongoing work within the Delivering Social Change Framework (outlined in chapter 6) and will also provide the opportunity for youth organisations to be involved.

Commitment:

Under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel, we will establish a Good Relations Children and Young People’s Subgroup. This subgroup will consider the specific role of young people in building good relations and will look to develop a youth volunteering programme that builds the capacity of our young people, prepares them for leadership and improves community relations.

Early Years

- 2.43 We recognise that the early years in a child’s life are the most formative and it is at this early stage that children can establish opinions, mindsets and attitudes that shape their behaviours for the rest of their lives. Through this Strategy we will start to build the foundations for our children at an early stage and recognise the critical role of parents and grandparents within the home before a child enters nursery or school.
- 2.44 From an early age, children must be encouraged to explore difference and to learn what it means to live as part of an interdependent, inclusive society. Research shows that sectarian and racist attitudes and behaviours can manifest in childhood and it is therefore not an option to wait until adolescence to intervene.
- 2.45 In this regard, nursery and primary school education have a key role to play. The Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education already includes good relations aspects and much work has already taken place in educating young children in

practical ways that will support good relations. The Good Relations Ministerial Panel will seek to encourage, monitor and further this work.

- 2.46 The Department of Education's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) Policy places a requirement on statutory early years' providers to contribute to improving relations between communities. Non-statutory early years' providers are "*strongly encouraged*" to adopt the policy. Much work has also been undertaken through the Early Years Organisation's Respecting Difference Media Initiative and the Sesame Tree Programme with regards to good relations.
- 2.47 Projects supported under the Contested Spaces Programme, jointly funded by OFMDFM and The Atlantic Philanthropies, highlight the positive impact of building relationships between children from an early age. Projects such as that outlined in the case study below also evidence the importance of working with parents to break down divisions and build a united, shared and reconciled community.

Aspire Primary Schools Partnership

The Aspire Primary Schools Partnership in North Belfast is funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and The Atlantic Philanthropies as part of the Contested Space / Interface Programme.

Based around the Limestone Road / Tigers Bay and the Newington Avenue / New Lodge areas of North Belfast the aims of the Partnership are to break the cycle of low aspirations and low achievement in one of the most deprived parts of Belfast. This, it is hoped, will lead to both parents and children aspiring to better outcomes for themselves.

The Partnership is led by Holy Family and Currie Primary Schools and includes Barnardos, Parents Advice Centre and Parent and Infant Programme (PIP) as partners. The key aims of the Partnership are:

- to raise the aspirations and expectations of parents and children within the target area;
- to improve educational outcomes for children engaged in the programme;
- to increase parental engagement and skills in supporting their children's learning;
- to improve the behaviour of children;

- to increase the willingness of parents to make and sustain connections with parents from other communities; and
- to ensure prevention and early intervention support services are available for both children and parents to deal with adversity that may limit their ability to achieve their potential.

Funded over three years the Aspire Partnership is an example of innovative inter-community work to help raise expectations and educational outcomes as well as provide sustained cross-community connections in an environment of early intervention and support.

2.48 The learning taken from the evaluation of the projects carried out under the Contested Spaces Programme has highlighted the benefits of working with young children and the positive impact that early years contact can have in building good relations. To this end, we will explore opportunities through the Childcare Strategy, the Executive Childcare Fund, and EU Peace funding to support community led and jointly run nursery and childcare facilities at interface areas or in areas where there are contested spaces.

2.49 In light of this, and to further enhance community relations, we will roll out a “buddy scheme” in all publicly funded nursery and primary schools. This scheme will involve pairing a child from one section of the community, with a child from a different community or ethnic background. As part of this initiative, nursery and primary schools from all sections of our community will pair up and provide the framework for the “buddy scheme”.

Headline Actions:

- We will explore opportunities through the Childcare Strategy, the Executive Childcare Fund, and EU Peace funding to support community led and jointly run nursery and childcare facilities at interface areas or in areas where there are contested spaces; and
- We will roll out a “buddy scheme” in publicly run nursery and primary schools.

Inter-Generational Impacts

- 2.50 Although our younger generations are living in a more peaceful society than their parents and grandparents, we know that the legacy of the conflict here continues to impact on their everyday lives. It would be naive of us to ignore that the challenges presented by our past can often have a negative influence on the present. Romanticisation of our past runs the risk of preventing progress rather than empowering our young people to challenge the attitudes and behaviours that have held our society back for too long.
- 2.51 **Through this Strategy, we will focus on a more inter-generational approach to building good relations.** Rather than working exclusively with young people - which infers that prejudice and intolerance are the preserve of the younger generation – we will support initiatives that use inter-generational techniques. The Aspire Primary Schools Partnership is exemplary of what can be achieved when a more inter-generational approach is adopted to building relationships. This approach recognises the importance of parents and other family members as key influencers in the lives of our children and young people. We believe that this, harnessed with the activity of statutory and community youth provision can be a powerful tool in building good relations.

Commitment:

Through this Strategy, we will focus on a more inter-generational approach to building good relations.

Education

- 2.52 Education undoubtedly plays a crucial role in shaping our children's lives in the present and equipping them for the future. While there is already a significant level of collaboration and sharing within and between education sectors, the segregated nature of our education provision means that the majority of our children and young people of school age continue to be educated within a single-identity setting

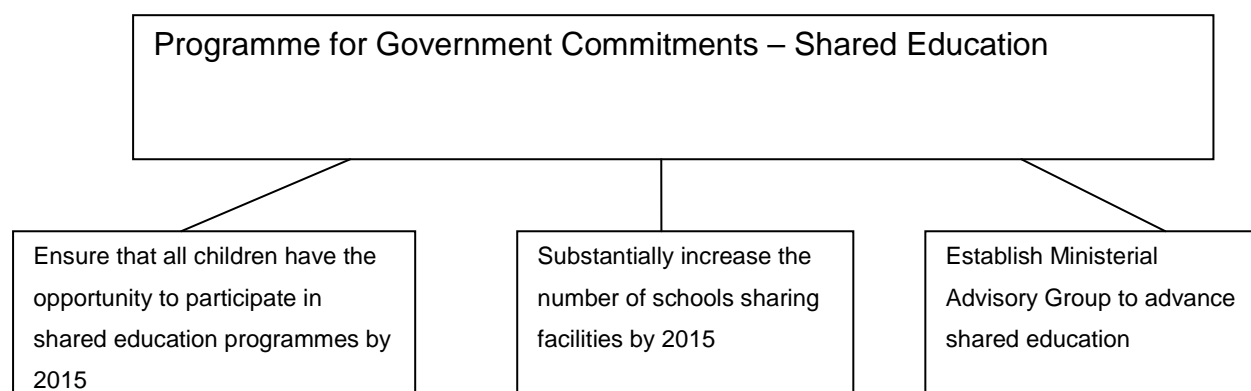
thus limiting meaningful exposure to other traditions or identities within the school environment. In addition, some of our post-primary schools have levels of social segregation. Greater social mixing can contribute to greater tolerance, and, through raised expectations, improve educational performance for our most deprived pupils.

- 2.53 We believe that creating more opportunities for socially-mixed, shared education, with a view to achieving a full shared education system in Northern Ireland, is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of inter-generational educational underachievement unemployment, and sectarianism; and improving good relations amongst and for our young people. This must also be considered within the context of the increasing diversity of our society, which is reflected within the school environment. **Through this Strategy, we will enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience. We will create 10 Shared Educational Campuses based on the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus model.**
- 2.54 The Department of Education emphasised that in progressing shared education, delivery of educational benefits to children and young people must be the overarching priority, recognise the importance of parental choice, which is protected in legislation, as well as addressing equality and good relations. The benefits of a more shared education system include: raising educational standards, particularly for disadvantaged pupils; greater choice and greater opportunity; protecting local provision, especially where schools are under stress; allowing for stabilisation of enrolment numbers; making it easier for a wider choice of subjects to be sustained; and providing wider choice for pupils in terms of leisure, cultural and sporting activities.
- 2.55 Our commitment to building a more shared learning environment for our young people is reflected in the Programme for Government which commits to ensuring that by 2015 all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes; and to substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities.

It is important that this process addresses social and sectarian division and results in a more shared school system.

2.56 Our commitment to the expansion of shared educational opportunities will contribute positively to the development of education policy, particularly in terms of improving outcomes for pupils, especially those from our most disadvantaged areas and those who face barriers to learning.

2.57 Area Planning provides the opportunity to consider all potential options to maximise the accessibility of high quality education in local areas. Realistic, innovative and creative solutions may be considered and may include options that increase sharing of education provision and infrastructure in line with commitments in the Programme for Government.



2.58 In July 2012, the Education Minister fulfilled the Programme for Government commitment by establishing a Ministerial Advisory Group to advance shared education. The Advisory Group was comprised of Professor Paul Connolly, Dawn Purvis and PJ O’Grady. They presented their report to the Education Minister on 22nd April 2013.

2.59 The Ministerial Advisory Group engaged in a widespread consultation exercise with key stakeholders across the region; as well as directly seeking the views of parents, children and young people. The Advisory Group has made 20 recommendations around shared education and its potential to provide a

framework for creating a world class educational system here. The recommendations are now with the Department of Education for consideration.

- 2.60 Through this Strategy, we aim to provide more opportunities for sharing within teacher training, which will build on those initiatives already underway involving the two teacher training colleges here. The Department for Employment and Learning has already initiated a two-stage Study of the Teacher Education infrastructure in Northern Ireland.
- 2.61 Through this Strategy, we aim to provide more shared opportunities within teacher training. We are also committed to ensuring that the shared values of this Strategy are woven through the design and delivery of education for all school age children and young people.
- 2.62 School facilities provide an exciting opportunity as potential shared spaces that can be better utilised by the wider community. Through the Ministerial Panel, we will consider how opportunities for schools to be “opened up” for use by the community can be identified at an early planning stage. The proposed Lisanelly Shared Education Campus is a key commitment within our Programme for Government and provides a valuable model for how shared learning opportunities could be structured. A Working Group has also been established to develop guidance which will support schools to make their facilities available for wider community use.
- 2.63 We believe that building good relations, tackling intolerance and challenging prejudice can be embedded through the ethos of schools and is already an integral part of the curriculum. In addition to current work in this area this Strategy proposes that the PfG commitment to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015 seeks to reinforce opportunities to contribute to the shared vision of building a united community.
- 2.64 For such programmes to be most effective, the teaching of theoretical principles and case studies should be accompanied by practical applications and opportunities for interaction. The programmes should also encourage existing

opportunities afforded by the curriculum to discuss cultural diversity and ensure that children from a minority ethnic background are included and integrated. Our past also presents educational opportunities for our young people to learn more about our history. Such opportunities will increase understanding and help nurture relationships amongst our youth that are built on mutual respect and reconciliation.

- 2.65 Through the Ministerial Panel, we will work in partnership with the relevant agencies and Departments to develop age appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarianism resources and ensure that teachers are trained, equipped and supported to deliver an effective anti-sectarianism module.

Headline Actions:

- We will work in partnership with the relevant agencies and Departments to develop age appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarianism resources and ensure that teachers are trained, equipped and supported to deliver an effective anti-sectarianism module; and
- We will create 10 Shared Educational Campuses.

- 2.66 We recognise that our teaching and youth service staff have a challenging task and we value their commitment and dedication to improving the lives of our children and young people. Teachers and youth workers play a central role in shaping the attitudes of our young people and in this way are key influencers of their mindsets and opinions. However, the issues that feed prejudice and intolerance and undermine good community relations can present significant challenges for teachers and youth workers.

- 2.67 It is therefore important that educators have the necessary continuous training and development to ensure that they are best equipped to play their part in addressing these issues adequately. Through its Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education policy, the Department of Education is seeking to build capacity amongst educators to ensure they have the necessary skills to address these

issues. The Department will also engage with teacher education institutions on improving training and development of this work.

- 2.68 Teaching community relations and addressing issues of intolerance and prejudice will require a systemic approach throughout the education system. As well as continuous staff training and development, this includes sharing of learning from those teachers who have experience of tackling challenging issues and strategic partnerships with other key influencers who could input to a programme (e.g. PSNI, policymakers, community workers). A dedicated website, containing best practice examples and resources, has been established to support this work.
- 2.69 Following a number of pilot projects across the Further Education Sector, commissioned by the Department for Employment and Learning, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) published An Evaluation of Cultural Diversity in Colleges of Further Education – Phase two - to assess the progress of the six Further Education (FE) Colleges on implementing recommendations from previous “Chill Factor”, Racism and Homophobia in FE research reports. The report found that a culture of respect, tolerance and valuing difference was evidenced within each college. The report also illustrated that provision for cultural diversity within colleges had improved significantly since the pilot projects, and that colleges have made good or better progress in responding to and implementing recommendations from the Chill Factor, Racism and Homophobia reports. These findings will continue to be used to inform future Cultural Diversity / Good Relations policy and good practice throughout the FE sector.

3. From Contested Spaces to Shared Spaces

Key Priority 2 – Our Shared Community

Shared Aim: In moving from contested spaces to shared spaces, we aim to create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

- 3.1 The Executive is committed to addressing all barriers that prevent or interfere with shared space, and ensuring that all individuals can live, learn, work and play wherever they choose.
- 3.2 The maintenance and protection of shared space is a cross-cutting responsibility for the entire Northern Ireland Executive, other public bodies and civic society.
- 3.3 Shared space need not be neutral space; it is not about pursuing some sense of sanitised territory that denies the ability of people to celebrate their culture. The challenge is to ensure that shared space remains open, on the basis of equality of opportunity to ensure that all sections of society can have access on, and treatment to it without denying the ability of others to do likewise.

The Scale of the Challenge

- 3.4 According to Department of Justice figures, in 2011 there were 59 peace lines (41 walls or fences and 18 gates). This has since been reduced to 54, with a reduction of 5 in the number of gates. In addition, 2012 research by the Institute of Conflict Research for Belfast Interface Project identified 99 different security barriers or defensive architecture across Belfast.
- 3.5 Shirlow and Murtagh (2008) estimated that the majority of the population live in areas that are, at minimum, 80% either Catholic or Protestant – 67% of Catholics and 73% of Protestants live in such areas.

- 3.6 However this reality seems to contradict the wishes and aspirations of the vast majority of people. This is illustrated by findings from the 2010 NI Life and Times Survey which demonstrated that 82% of respondents would prefer to live in a mixed neighbourhood and 87% believed that better relations will come about through more mixing.
- 3.7 Taking down interface barriers is not something that can be achieved without engagement with, consent and support of 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.
- 3.8 Recent findings from the Attitudes to Peace Walls Survey, commissioned by OFMDFM give an insight into the views of both residents living at interface areas and the general population as a whole. These are summarised below.

Key findings: General Population	Key findings: Peace Wall Residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76% would like to see the walls come down now or in the near future. • 78% believe that segregation of communities is common even where there are no peace walls. • 64% believe that peace walls should be a big priority for the Northern Ireland government. • 38% believe that peace walls are necessary because of the potential for violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58% would like to see the walls come down now or sometime in the future. • 69% maintain that the peace walls are still necessary because of the potential for violence. • 63% would like to know more about initiatives and discussions on the peace walls.

- 3.9 Perceptions around safety and division can have a significant impact on the physical geography of our towns and cities. Physical structures of division and separation provide reminders that our society has still a way to go before we achieve our vision of a truly open, shared and united community.
- 3.10 However, we must not view the development of shared spaces solely within the context of our towns and cities. We must take a much wider view and embrace the opportunities there are to develop and enhance the concept of shared spaces in terms of schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods and leisure facilities. Through this Strategy, we will do this by promoting shared housing, shared workplaces and shared spaces where people can come together to socialise and interact.
- 3.11 Segregation is not unique to the urban environment and many of our rural towns and villages are divided not by walls or fences – but by an invisible line in the road or a local landmark. Where physical barriers exist, the people living on either side are divided in all aspects of life. They live apart, they socialise apart, and their children go to school apart. In rural settings, division can also be played out through patterns of avoidance where people choose not to go to another part of the town to avail of services or go shopping, or even to go to another town entirely.
- 3.12 The concept of interfaces and contested spaces is by no means confined to housing estates, working class areas or rural locations. Over time, some town centres have become divided or contested and we acknowledge that this is a significant challenge to be addressed through this Strategy. We believe that there is an imperative on all of us to ensure that our towns and villages are truly open and shared spaces where everyone is comfortable, safe and welcomed.
- 3.13 Interfaces are by no means static and can change over time. The Beyond Belfast Report points to a number of possible locations where interfaces and contested spaces can emerge:
- Intersection of middle-class residential areas and working-class areas;
 - Suburban residential areas;

- Parks and other open spaces;
- Shopping centres and town centres; and
- Around schools.

- 3.14 Separation is a state of mind as well as a specific local or physical issue. It does not always equate to tension and violence and does not always involve physical interface structures. To achieve our shared vision based on shared values of inclusion, integration, interdependence, cohesion and sharing we must continue to work to change the landscape of our society.
- 3.15 Flags and symbols that are used in a way to cause intimidation, or to glorify violence, hate or prejudice can present a barrier to the development of truly shared public spaces across our community. These issues are considered in more detail in chapter 5.

Our Commitment

- 3.16 The Executive is committed to safety and open access to public space everywhere across our community. Historically, this has not always been the case, with evidence that fear or perceptions of safety affect basic choices. Issues around safety and how they link to community relations are explored in more detail in the next chapter.
- 3.17 Interfaces and contested spaces come in various forms – each requiring a specific and tailored response. The results of the Omnibus Survey carried out as part of the public consultation highlighted a high degree of support for the provision and expansion of safe and shared space (91%). Through this Strategy, we are committed to improving existing shared spaces and developing new shared spaces within a variety of contexts and not only within what would be traditionally viewed as interface areas.
- 3.18 We recognise that issues relating to contested space can be particularly complex within a rural setting and we are committed to working with rural organisations in

developing an approach to tackling the barriers that prevent greater sharing in a rural context.

- 3.19 Within a rural context, we recognise that community facilities have taken on a particular significance as part of the life of the community. Often, these facilities can be attached to “single-identity” organisations and are important meeting places and venues for social events within the community. **We will work with these organisations to encourage increasing openness and accessibility and to reduce chill factors and fears preventing open access.** Through this Strategy, we want to encourage greater accessibility and sharing of community facilities across all sections of our community.

Commitment:

We will work with rural community organisations to encourage increasing openness and accessibility and to reduce chill factors and fears that prevent open access.

Sport

- 3.20 Sport can be an integrating factor amongst people and sporting facilities can be an important aspect of social and leisure life. Some sporting facilities have already become exemplars of good practice in terms of creating shared spaces. Careful planning, alongside programmes to increase understanding and tackling misconceptions, can be used to ensure that spaces are safe and welcoming for all.
- 3.21 This Strategy will seek to support initiatives and schemes such as the one outlined in the case study below that use sport as a tool for building good relations and open up sporting facilities to all sections of the community.

Commitment:

This Strategy will seek to support initiatives and schemes, such as the Game of Three Halves, that use sport as a tool for building good relations and open up sporting facilities to all sections of the community.

Game of Three Halves

The Game of 3 Halves is a partnership model supported by Ulster Rugby, the Irish Football Association, the Ulster Council of the Gaelic Athletic Association and PeacePlayers International – Northern Ireland; all partners with a wealth of experience of using sport as a hook to create safe spaces or educational workshops to promote respect for diversity.

The basic concept underpinning the project is to use the power of sport to promote respect for diversity and support the development of positive community relations.

The GO3H brings children and young people from different backgrounds together to explore culture and identity through participating in three sports from our rich sporting heritage. The young people play on integrated teams and over the course of the event rotate through a series of 'stations'.

As well as providing, for some, the opportunity to play a 'new' sport for the first time, the GO3H represents a safe space within which participants can explore issues of sectarianism, prejudice and racism and have challenging conversations with members of another section of the community who will be teammates and with whom positive relationships have been established.

Community Safety

3.22 We recognise that the establishment of physical structures between sections of our community has been motivated, in some cases, by community safety considerations. We will, therefore, work to confront and eliminate all behaviour which results in legitimate fear, mistrust and suspicion. We recognise that until this is done, there will continue to be legitimate concerns about the risks entailed in a comprehensive Community Safety Strategy to bring changes to interfaces – as is evidenced by the findings from the Attitudes to Peace Walls Survey. Similar

motivations can also result in patterns of avoidance within a rural context. For this reason, we are convinced of the need to link this priority with the necessity to promote community safety and to address the underlying issues that lead to local residents' fears.

- 3.23 Addressing safety concerns with people living in areas marked by segregation is critical to building the confidence of the community and showing respect for the legitimacy of people's fears. We recognise that this cannot happen overnight but we are convinced of the benefit there will be for all sections of the community in the long run. The new Community Safety Strategy, *'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities'* is a key policy lever in this regard as it sets the framework for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and tackling fear of crime and building confidence. The overall aim of the Community Safety Strategy is to help build safer communities, with lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour; shared communities, where each person's rights are respected in a shared and cohesive community; and confident communities, where people feel safe and have confidence in the agencies that serve them.
- 3.24 Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs) will play a central role in delivering safer, shared and confident communities at local level. PCSPs will consult and engage with local communities, to identify and prioritise local issues of concern and deliver solutions to them which will help make local communities feel safer.
- 3.25 In terms of identifying the close correlation between community safety and community relations issues, the District Council Good Relations Programme will be required to ensure that close linkages are made at a District Council level with the PCSPs. This relationship should be reflected through the Good Relations Action Plans submitted by District Councils.

Commitment:

In terms of identifying the close correlation between community safety and community relations issues, the District Council Good Relations Programme will be required to ensure that close linkages are made at a District Council level with the PCSPs.

Strategic Approach

3.26 For us to be serious about taking down the barriers across our society, we must match our words and vision with strategic action and joined-up working. The benefit of a more coherent approach has already been seen in a number of interventions at interface areas, one of which is illustrated in the case study below.

Alexandra Park

Since the 1994 ceasefire, the number of barriers in our local community has grown. One example of this is the peace wall that was erected in Alexandra Park in North Belfast in order to help prevent sectarian rioting between the communities living within the Newington Street and Tigers Bay areas. While its original intent was to increase physical security, the resultant three metre high fence became a symbol of continued sectarian segregation, physically dividing one of Belfast's public parks into Catholic and Protestant zones.

In an effort to improve relations in the area, local community groups have engaged for several years in cross-community dialogue which has helped to build trust and confidence, and foster an environment in which local solutions can be developed and agreed. This engagement resulted in the launch of a 'peace gate' within the Alexandra peace wall, representing a major first step in opening an interface barrier, and encouraging greater interaction between the two neighbouring sections of the community. This engagement has been further enhanced to enable an extension of opening hours to include weekends.

This example demonstrates what can be achieved when all sections of the local community come together in partnership to develop agreed local solutions to what are sensitive and challenging issues.

- 3.27 The issues that have perpetuated division are complex and interconnected; and community confidence can best be built when community safety, community relations and community development issues are considered and addressed in a co-ordinated way.
- 3.28 From the evaluation work already carried out under the Contested Spaces Programme, jointly funded by OFMDFM and The Atlantic Philanthropies, a very helpful model of change has emerged that could potentially inform future interventions involving interface areas and areas where there are contested spaces.
- 3.29 The model of change identifies the range of common interface issues that include:
- Poverty;
 - Social deprivation;
 - Local educational attainment;
 - Sectarian division;
 - Weak infrastructure; and
 - Issues affecting young people.
- 3.30 The Contested Spaces Programme is an example of how these can be tackled in a co-ordinated way through projects that focus on:
- Shared education;
 - Parenting skills;
 - Early years interventions;
 - Youth engagement;
 - Good relations work; and
 - Local initiatives.
- 3.31 The long term outcomes of such a programme include:
- Greater reconciliation;
 - Better educational outcomes;
 - Collaborative working;
 - Better parenting; and

- Better quality of life for those living in interface areas.

Our Commitment

- 3.32 On interfaces specifically, our commitment to tackling interface issues is reflected in the Programme for Government, which commits to actively seek local agreement to reduce the number of peace walls. 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.
- 3.33 The type of approach we are seeking to support is one where crime and fear of crime is “designed out” or reduced. That might be by the approach of community based PSNI, or the provision of better lighting, or redesigning physical structures etc. The aim is to create areas that are for the community as a whole and which the community feel safe using or passing through. We recognise that change may take time and could be incremental. It will also require the full and active participation of all relevant Departments and statutory agencies.
- 3.34 The Executive’s framework for action will seek to build on existing structures:
- First, at a **governmental level**, to ensure that there is an appropriate level of support and engagement within relevant government Departments, within key statutory agencies, and in the police and other agencies responsible for safety and security; and
 - Second, developing **local approaches** based on the need for inclusivity, involving community representatives and local residents, and recognising the need to take account of the local context. In other words one size does not fit all. The approach to individual interfaces needs to be flexible.

- 3.35 As a result of this Strategy, an Inter-agency Group, established in pursuit of the Programme for Government commitment to tackle interface issues, will provide updates to the Ministerial Panel on progress against the Programme for Government targets. This group will form an integral part of the overall delivery structures outlined in chapter 6 and will respond to any request for the transformation of an interface structure coming from engagement with the community. It will look to draw together the separate strands of activity that are ongoing and currently being taken forward by a number of Departments, Agencies and community organisations as well as looking at new opportunities. It will include the development of action plans for individual areas. We believe that this will lead to a more strategic approach to how interventions are designed and resources allocated. This work will also complement the work we will be commissioning in relation to youth interventions and vice versa.
- 3.36 We remain committed to building community confidence and working with local representatives to address the underlying issues, attitudes and mindsets that have the potential to perpetuate division. The current PfG commits to the development of 21 action plans for interface structures outlining the steps needed to make progress. **We believe that together with people in the local community, we can reduce the number of physical interface structures with a view to their elimination by 2023.**

Headline Actions:

- We will create a 10-year Programme to reduce, and remove by 2023, all interface barriers; and
- We will create an Interface Barrier Support Package.

- 3.37 Removing interface barriers and other structures of division will send out an important message that our society is continuing on its journey from conflict and segregation 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.

- 3.38 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. The key objective of the programme is to have no interface barriers by 2023. This is a 10 year plan.
- 3.39 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.
- 3.40 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; and
 - Community capital and project grant specifically targeted at the local community in addition to the community interface workers.

Shared Services

- 3.41 We believe that everyone in our society can benefit from more co-ordinated and shared service delivery models. In working towards our vision of a united community, we are convinced that by developing opportunities for shared service provision and by enhancing those opportunities already available, we can change the dynamic of our society by facilitating reconciliation and promoting greater sharing between all sections of our community.
- 3.42 In areas within our community, people of all ages can play out their lives separately without having the opportunity to go to other areas or to meet people from backgrounds different to their own. We know that for some people, the willingness to travel to other areas and avail of services beyond their own doorstep is inhibited by fear and safety concerns or by the perception that services in a particular area are exclusively for the benefit of one section of the community.
- 3.43 Through this Strategy, we aim to build a community where everyone feels they can move around without fear of intimidation or prejudice, and where options for availing of services are not limited by physical or psychological barriers.
- 3.44 We are committed to ensuring that good relations considerations lie at the heart of the planning of new service delivery models so that we can encourage greater sharing and maximise opportunities for reconciliation.
- 3.45 Within a challenging economic environment, we know too that our society can reap economic benefits from promoting greater sharing of services and we are committed to examining how best we can achieve this. **As a result of this Strategy, we will commission more detailed research that will assess the current extent of shared service delivery and identify opportunities to enhance shared provision.** This will be particularly helpful in informing ongoing policy development and expenditure decisions.

- 3.46 All future policy and/or spending commitments should also be screened to determine whether they promote sharing, further entrench division or are essentially neutral. This should happen within an enhanced s.75 (2) section of the current EQIA process and will require development of the existing EQIA template, rather than a separate and potentially duplicating piece of work.

Commitments:

As a result of this Strategy, we will commission more detailed research that will assess the current extent of shared service delivery and identify opportunities to enhance shared provision; and

All future policy and/or spending commitments should also be screened to determine whether they promote sharing, further entrench division or are essentially neutral.

Regeneration

- 3.47 Government policies on planning and urban regeneration have significant potential to remove barriers to shared space and to maximise the accessibility of all areas within our community. Our society will not only benefit from the economic advantages of maximising shared space but will also reap the rewards that come with a more diverse, enriched environment.
- 3.48 An important part of building community confidence will involve the regeneration of interface areas. We believe that people living within the shadow of a physical divide or those who avoid a particular area due to an invisible barrier, need to see the positive and practical benefits of sharing.
- 3.49 Removing barriers, increasing sharing and facilitating reconciliation not only bring immense benefits for relationships on an individual and local community level but can also bring economic benefits to wider society.

3.50 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.

Commitment:

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.

3.51 The potential for regeneration in contested areas may come in the form of small pieces of derelict land that can be developed in conjunction with community organisations and with input from the local community. Consideration may also be given to the transfer of unused public assets to the community where appropriate.

3.52 Within this context, we will ensure that all government contracts for work at interface areas and areas of contested space contain a social clause that provides training and employment opportunities and that members of the local population will be able to apply for these opportunities. This social return on investment will be modelled on the Strategic Investment Board's Social Clauses Toolkit, but will reflect the relative size and amount of the investment taking place.

3.53 **4 Urban Village Regeneration projects** will be undertaken, for large scale urban regeneration in targeted areas of deprivation. This project aims to use innovative urban village design to create and stabilise change within communities. 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; and
- Community focus.

Headline Action:

We will ensure that all government contracts for work at interface areas and areas of contested space contain a social clause that provides training and employment opportunities, and that members of the local population will be able to apply for these opportunities.

- 3.54 We acknowledge that many individuals, agencies and community groups living in areas where there are issues of contested space have been working over many years. It is important that none of this work is lost but that all of the learning is shared not only with other areas but also with statutory bodies and agencies. One area that has demonstrated what can be achieved when communities work together is Suffolk/Lenadoon.

Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group

The work of the Suffolk Lenadoon Interface Group (SLIG) demonstrates what can be achieved when communities work together. The origins of the Group date from the late 1990s when people from the neighbouring Suffolk (Protestant/Unionist) and Lenadoon (Catholic/Nationalist) communities of West Belfast began meeting informally. SLIG was subsequently formally established to address the range of issues arising at the community level associated with the Suffolk Lenadoon interface.

The Stewartstown Road – a major arterial route through West Belfast – separates Suffolk and Lenadoon estates and represents a dividing line/interface between the two communities. Relationships between the two communities have been difficult for many years and the Stewartstown Road has been the main interface where outbreaks of sectarian violence have taken place.

SLIG's work has allowed for the establishment of strong relationships between the Lenadoon and Suffolk communities, relations which were practically nonexistent 15 years ago. The group has taken practical action to address shared social issues and promote dialogue between the local communities. Major initiatives include the Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project, an award winning social economy

development which includes office and retail accommodation; Sparkles Daycare Ltd, a cross community childcare facility; and a range of youth, health, sports and community programmes.

While challenges remain, in the last few years local community relations have come a long way. SLIG's work has played a pivotal role in this and resulted in some significant improvements in community relations in the interface area. The Group's ultimate aim is to establish a shared and better future to benefit everyone in the area, particularly future generations.

3.55 There are many aspects that underpin the provision and expansion of shared spaces and we recognise that there are already some examples of how careful and early planning can have positive results.

Mobility and Connectivity

3.56 Mobility is another contributing factor in creating more shared spaces within our society. The newly constructed Peace Bridge across the River Foyle is an example of how the physical environment can be used to expand opportunities for interaction and change behavioural patterns in relation to shopping, work and leisure.

Peace Bridge

The new Peace Bridge in Derry/Londonderry, which was secured through a European grant of £14 million, is another milestone in the work to build a shared and better future for all.

Stretching across the Foyle, and serving as a link between the former Ebrington Barracks site on the Waterside and the Guildhall Square on the Cityside, the Bridge will encourage the creation of a larger and more shared city.

The Bridge will be the focus for not only major regeneration of the area, but the symbolic

union of what was once a divided city. It will serve as a significant catalyst for change, a symbol of a new beginning in Derry/Londonderry, and create a lasting legacy for future generations.

3.57 In this regard, through the Ministerial Panel, **we will work to ensure that good relations principles are a core component of regeneration and town/city centre management.** Good relations, equality of opportunity, reconciliation, mobility and connectivity as central design principles provide the framework for a more shared, open, inclusive society.

Commitment:

We will work to ensure that good relations principles are a core component of regeneration and town/city centre management.

3.58 Accessible transport that connects people and areas is also an important component of building a more united community. We are committed to taking forward a new approach to regional transportation which recognises that we need to design transport networks which bring communities together and ensure equitable access to key services and facilities. We also recognise the tremendous opportunities that are offered by the proposed Local Transport Plans and the introduction of a Rapid Transit System. The proposals for Belfast Rapid Transit will facilitate cross city services, enabling better access to and between East Belfast, West Belfast, Titanic Quarter and the city centre for everyone. This has the potential to reduce barriers between communities, promote greater integration and build a more cohesive city. A new railway station in Derry/Londonderry, the feasibility of which is currently being explored, has the potential to link the Waterside to the Cityside of Derry/Londonderry.

3.59 We believe that transport that links sections of the community that would otherwise live separately is central to a more inclusive, shared and integrated society.

Greater mobility coupled with enhanced shared spaces and incentives to share will lead to a more vibrant community, which is open to all. The Executive's disability strategy – A Strategy to improve the lives of people with disabilities 2012-15 – includes proposals to address the accessible transport needs of disabled people. These proposals include awareness training for staff, concessionary fares scheme and a commitment to undertake research to examine options for improving the provision of travel training schemes.

- 3.60 We must also recognise that, often, people from a minority ethnic background can feel excluded from some spaces within our community. We must work to address this to ensure that our united community is one in which diversity is welcomed and embraced.

Shared Workplaces

- 3.61 The work environment for many people is the key place where they have the opportunity to interact and build friendships with people from a different background. In this way, shared workplaces can provide the most common backdrop to building good community relations and increasing understanding of other cultural identities and political opinions.

Housing

- 3.62 Life and Times Surveys have consistently shown significant preferences for mixed religion neighbourhoods. Despite this, the majority of social housing estates remain segregated in terms of religion. Evidence from the Department for Social Development suggests that when people are given the choice, the vast majority will choose to go on a waiting list in a single identity area in keeping with their own perceived identity.
- 3.63 Housing should be openly accessible to all and those making decisions on where to live should be able to do so free from the risk of intimidation or threat. In practice however, segregation through fear in housing represents a significant barrier to

creating a more cohesive community and achieving our vision of a society where people can live, learn, work and socialise together.

- 3.64 Housing alone cannot address the segregation that exists in our society. We need to work in partnership with other Departments and statutory agencies to improve the training, employment and educational opportunities for people in these areas. Such communities are more sustainable and are the type of communities that will attract people to live there side by side. In this way, we can change the dynamic of our community and create the conditions for greater sharing and integration.
- 3.65 Both the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Associations ask their tenants to sign up to a voluntary 'Good Neighbour' charter - thereby encouraging support for good relations programmes in their estates and housing schemes. **Through this Strategy, we will seek to create communities of 'good neighbours' and ensure that there is greater choice open to those who wish to live in a mixed area.**

Commitment:

Through this Strategy, we will seek to create communities of 'good neighbours' and ensure that there is greater choice open to those who wish to live in a mixed area.

The Shared Neighbourhood Programme

In 2008, the Housing Executive started work on the Shared Neighbourhood Programme (SNP) and through its 3 year delivery, was able to support and protect 30 existing shared neighbourhoods across NI. The pilot project was externally evaluated and found to be a major success. So much so that the Housing Executive, through support from DSD, mainstreamed the programme and are working across 20 further estates over the next two years.

One of the neighbourhoods included in the pilot scheme was Drumcarran, a small

housing estate on the outskirts of Enniskillen which is home to a mixed and diverse community of 200 families.

The estate joined the SNP in October 2010, providing the community with recognition for its shared status and providing resources to promote the shared living ethos to others. Having lived as a shared community for more than twenty years, the community wanted to take ownership of the shared agenda in their area and to help advance it to others more widely.

Shared neighbourhoods are not utopias and the communities have to work hard to sustain their shared status. Like many other estates, Drumcarran had suffered from crime-related and serious anti-social behaviour problems. Some of these issues were often dealt with without the involvement of the police.

However, things began to change after the formation in 2006 of the Drumcarran Community Association which embraced the ethos of a shared and better future and the group began to deal with the long-term issues in a constructive way. The Association built strong relationships with the Housing Executive, PSNI and other external agencies.

Changes in the policing approach and stronger community cohesion helped the community deal with anti-social behaviour and these improvements encouraged the community association to continue with their cohesion work.

The Shared Neighbourhood Programme supported the community association to carry out a community survey and key findings were issued to all residents. The group then produced a good relations action plan and delivered projects that demonstrated their commitment to good relations.

From the outset the association realised that it needed to bring people together and to organise community events. According to those involved, there was a real sense of community but it needed support and encouragement and everyone needed to play their part in the work required.

The group achieved a real breakthrough when the young people on the estate approached them about creating a football team. Charlie McClintock from the group said:

"We invited the young people to talk to the committee. They appointed a spokesperson and made a presentation about who they were and what they wanted and the committee agreed to support them – Drumcarran United or the Drummers as they've become known, was born," he says.

"We work very hard at being a shared neighbourhood. We produce a monthly newsletter, hold an annual Christmas party for the children on the estate and organise an annual community day. We make sure we display what the association has done in the last year and what we hope to continue doing in the future."

A Welcome Pack, which includes good neighbourhood agreements and community safety leaflets, is given to all new residents and the association asks them if they would like the community association to welcome them personally to the area.

Other plans for the area include working with a local artist and local young people to create a unique bus shelter. It was one thing that was always vandalised but, by involving the children and their parents, the association hopes they will take pride both in it and in their community generally. There is also a plan to create a small play area for the children which would be developed and maintained by the community.

Representatives from the community association now sit on the Housing Executive's Housing Community Network Forum. Through Supporting Communities NI, they now also sit with neighbouring estate, Cavanaleck, on a newly formed joint interagency group to galvanise the ties between the two areas and further strengthen their commitment to good relations. The group are in no doubt that embracing and celebrating their shared status have helped this community make their estate a better place to live for everyone, regardless of what community background they may be from.

3.66 The concept of choice is an important one and we must acknowledge that people's choices may depend on familial links and community connections. This Strategy is

not about forcing people to live in a certain way or in a certain area but rather to improve the choices that are available by tackling the barriers that prevent individuals from opting to live in a shared housing area.

- 3.67 We recognise that public housing provision is not the only lever for encouraging greater shared housing. We need to consider mixed housing in its widest context. Single tenure estates of social housing alone can often lead to further segregation. We want to develop more social and affordable housing alongside each other so that people have greater choice and flexibility about where they live and who they live beside.
- 3.68 As housing provision issues are so deeply ingrained, and because changing patterns can only be achieved over time and as part of a wider review of service provision and community safety, the Department for Social Development in partnership with the Housing Executive have already undertaken a dual approach to increase shared social housing provision through the new build development programme and the Shared Neighbourhood Programme in existing estates.
- 3.69 A recent external independent evaluation of the Shared Neighbourhood Programme has found that whilst the Shared Neighbourhood Programme is just one of the many possible responses to the issue of segregated housing, it is perhaps the response with the greatest potential to make the most difference. More importantly, the Shared Neighbourhood Programme was credited as providing a practical means for communities to move from just co-existence towards real integration. DSD's new Shared Communities Programme, which will be delivered by the Housing Executive in 20 existing estates, will continue the structure and key outputs of the SNP whilst adopting the recommendations from the evaluation.
- 3.70 The DSD Minister has been 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.

3.71 There will also be 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.

Headline Actions:

- We will initiate 10 new shared neighbourhood developments;
and
- We will create 4 urban villages.

4. Building a Safer Community

Key Priority 3 - Our Safe Community

Shared Aim: we aim to create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.

- 4.1 As the previous chapter outlined, we know that building a truly united community can only be possible when people feel safe and secure in all neighbourhoods and spaces within our community. Safety concerns are perhaps the most powerful influencers in terms of where people choose to live, learn, socialise, work and visit. However, these concerns are not limited only to interface areas and those sections of our community where there are contested spaces.

The Scale of the Challenge

- 4.2 Over recent years much progress has been made towards building a safer community. Despite there being a peak in the number of sectarian incidents in 2009/10, the overall trend has been one of slow decline. The number of sectarian incidents fell by 93 (6.5 per cent) between 2010/11 and 2011/12. At 1,344, this is the lowest level of sectarian motivated incidents recorded since the series began in 2005/06. The number of sectarian crimes also fell, from 995 in 2010/11 to 885 in 2011/12 (11.1 per cent), the lowest level of sectarian crime since the data series began in 2005/06.
- 4.3 In addition in 2011/12 the number of racially motivated incidents continued to fall below the baseline, with a 17% reduction from the previous period. Likewise homophobic hate incidents and crimes remain below that measured at the baseline.

- 4.4 Nevertheless, as in other areas there remain challenges and we cannot afford to become complacent. For example, transfer requests to the Housing Executive due to intimidation were up by almost a quarter (23%) in 2011/12 compared to the previous year while the recorded figure is more than twice that recorded at baseline. This example alone highlights the significant influence that perceptions around safety can have on people's life choices.
- 4.5 Addressing fears and lack of trust within and between sections of our society is fundamental to building a shared, reconciled and united community, and empowering people to build relationships that will transcend barriers and tackle segregation. We can only build a community where people can live, learn, work, socialise and play together when people feel safe and secure. Community safety is fundamental to the range of issues considered within this Strategy – our young people can only flourish in a society where they feel safe; barriers can only come down when people feel secure, and cultural expression will be respected when people feel more confident and it is done in a responsible way.

Safety for All

- 4.6 Safety is a primary concern for all sections of our community. This Strategy recognises the role that everyone plays in achieving our shared vision. However, everyone can only play a full part in building a united community when they are safe, secure and do not feel threatened by intolerance or prejudice.
- 4.7 Our society has become an increasingly diverse place – made up of people from many different backgrounds and cultures. Lack of trust and feelings of fear within and between sections of our community can also negatively impact on people from minority ethnic backgrounds and others who may not represent either of the two main traditions here. In situations of territoriality and intimidation, these are often the people who can feel most afraid and threatened. People with disabilities too have reported their fears of intimidation and threats. The Executive's disability strategy includes proposals for tackling crime of this nature against people with disabilities.

- 4.8 Changes in the make-up of our society have had consequences for the demographics of some of our local areas. The changing dynamics at a community level mean that those people who are new to our community and people from minority ethnic backgrounds who have been here for some time can experience threats to their safety.
- 4.9 This can manifest itself in intimidatory graffiti and in some cases in violence and attacks on people's homes. Regardless of the circumstances, such intolerance and prejudice must not be tolerated as we seek to build a better future for everyone. If we are to truly build a society where cultural diversity is embraced, we must ensure the safety of everyone who makes up the fabric of that diversity.
- 4.10 PSNI statistics show that racist incidents and crimes have been on a general downward trend over the last two years from 2010/11 to 2011/12. Whilst this decrease is to be welcomed, we are aware that under-reporting of all forms of hate crime remains an issue. We must not become complacent despite the progress that has been made and we need to work together to ensure that we reduce the harm caused by hate crime.
- 4.11 We must ensure that our community reaches out at the earliest possible stage to ensure that visitors and those who choose to live here are welcomed and protected from any form of prejudice, intolerance or hate crime. We must work together both in Government and with community and statutory partners to build trust and increase understanding of the range of cultural backgrounds that exist here. We believe that an approach based on intercultural dialogue can help facilitate greater integration and build a more united community.
- 4.12 Both individually and collectively, we have a responsibility to challenge the intolerant attitudes and behaviours that are manifested in destructive ways within our community. We value the positive work that has been taken forward by many groups and organisations (such as that outlined in the case study below) by way of facilitating intercultural dialogue and addressing racism and other forms of

intolerance. Through this Strategy, we will encourage and build on these initiatives by way of tackling the destructive influences that lead to violence and intolerance.

Unite Against Hate

The Unite Against Hate campaign was developed and launched in 2009 as a multi-agency response to the growing issue of hate crime, with the aim of reducing the number of incidents, and challenging the underlying attitudes which lead to such incidents in the first place.

The campaign addressed all six hate crime categories recorded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) - sectarian, racist, homophobic, faith/religion, disability and transphobic - and was effective in mobilising support from a range of local celebrities, sporting organisations and others. The Gaelic Athletic Association, Irish Football Association and Ulster Rugby in particular have taken on a leading role in raising awareness and encouraging debate around hate crime and intolerance.

Since its launch, the campaign has gathered strong momentum, generating a high level of public awareness of the negative and destructive impact that intolerance and prejudice have on local society. The partnership approach that was taken by the organisations involved in the campaign has also brought a much-needed, co-ordinated multi-agency response to the problem of hate crime in Northern Ireland.

The operation and direction of the campaign is currently under review. It is hoped that the next phase of the campaign will broaden and deepen its reach, and build on the achievements to date.

4.13 Although higher rates of reporting have an impact on statistics, the increase in reporting levels is to be welcomed and encouraged. However we recognise that there continues to be a need to encourage the reporting of hate crime incidents and this represents a significant challenge to dealing with the issue. We also

recognise that some victims of hate crime are unwilling to report incidents for a range of reasons.

- 4.14 Through this Strategy, we will work to build a culture where people feel comfortable to report when they have been the victim of intimidation or harassment. We must work to increase the level of reporting so that we can prevent this kind of behaviour from being repeated and going unpunished.

Commitment:

We will work to build a culture where people feel comfortable to report when they have been the victim of intimidation or harassment.

- 4.15 The Community Safety Strategy sets out the strategic approach to tackling hate crime. As in other areas, inter-agency co-operation will be essential. At a Council level, PCSPs will target local problems faced and include hate crime in their action plans for the area accordingly.

Safety of our Young People

- 4.16 Young people have real concerns when it comes to safety within the community. Creating an environment where the youngest and those who are the most vulnerable in our society feel safe is important in empowering them to continue to play a positive role and to engage with their peers from other sections of the community.
- 4.17 The public consultation highlighted the commitment there is amongst our young people to building a better future and it is clear that they want to continue to play their role in shaping our community. However, we do recognise that society can at times vilify youth and blame them for community problems. There are some young people who become disengaged or who may engage in anti-social behaviour and we have explored these issues earlier in the document.

- 4.18 We must work together to re-engage with these young people and address these issues, urging them to contribute positively while also ensuring that we build relationships with those who are not involved in this negative activity. The PSNI has an important role within the context of its frontline service delivery, in building relationships with young people and working with them to increase community safety.
- 4.19 For more than a decade, our society has been moving from conflict to peace and we acknowledge the progress that has been made. However, we recognise that there continue to be negative and destructive elements within our society. These influences do not have the best interests of our community at heart and can often prey on the youngest and most vulnerable.
- 4.20 We must work to strengthen the peace that we have built over time and ensure that the negative elements of our society are prevented from undermining our vision of a united community. We recognise the very real challenges facing our young people who grow up within this context and, through this Strategy we will seek to ensure that they are empowered to become positive peer leaders.
- 4.21 We can only do this by continuing to show leadership and working strategically within Government and alongside our community partners in building trust and increasing safety for and between our young people.

Safety and Tackling Segregation

- 4.22 We are committed to tackling not only the physical structures of division but also the attitudes and behaviours that can have a significant impact on the segregation within our society. Community safety concerns continue to dominate some of the most divided parts of our society and these were explored in more detail within the preceding chapter. We know that this will take time and work but we are not prepared to let the scale of the challenge prevent us from taking action. We believe that through an approach that combines community development, good relations

and community safety, we can bring about real positive and lasting change in these areas.

- 4.23 Building capacity across our community and developing the all important social capital within our society requires continued investment by not only Government but also our community partners. This investment in building relationships and community infrastructure is vital in ensuring that individuals, groups and organisations seeking to tackle segregation are well equipped to do so.
- 4.24 The physical structures at interface areas remind us of the very real fears that people live with on a daily basis and we cannot ignore these in dealing with the issue of community safety. However we must also acknowledge that patterns of avoidance within a more rural context can also be influenced by safety concerns and perceptions of insecurity.
- 4.25 We cannot effectively address the segregation that pervades our community without adequately tackling the real fears and concerns of people in terms of their safety. Safety is the cornerstone of each of the priorities of this Strategy. Without safety, we cannot create shared spaces; and insecurity will only continue to perpetuate segregation and division.
- 4.26 We recognise that perceptions of safety are not only influenced by physical attacks and intimidation but can be influenced by imagery and displays of cultural expression where these are motivated by a desire to intimidate. Our commitment to working with people to remove threatening symbols where these are used to intimidate is an important step towards increasing perceptions of safety in those areas most affected. This is outlined further in the next chapter.

Safety of Property

- 4.27 Attacks on symbolic premises can often be carried out as a result of sectarian or racist motivations. In recent years the level of attacks against symbolic premises has decreased sharply, from 129 in 2009/10 to 56 in 2011/12. Overall progress is

being made and we must continue to build on this good progress and ensure that these attacks are eradicated.

- 4.28 Symbolic premises, monuments or cultural properties can hold particular significance for sections of our community. When attacks are carried out on these premises, this not only causes physical damage but also can have a detrimental impact on relationships. Attacks on such properties are crimes and an appropriate policing response is required to ensure that such manifestations of intolerance and prejudice are eliminated.
- 4.29 Building a safer community can only be achieved when done within the context of the same principles of respect, responsibility and tolerance that underpin other aspects of this Strategy. Increasing understanding and tackling mistrust are key to promoting a culture of mutual respect and preventing attacks on those properties that hold specific importance to one aspect of our society more than another.

Monitoring and Implementation

- 4.30 Statutory agencies including the PSNI, voluntary and community groups and District Councils all play a key role in building a safer community. The establishment of PCSPs links together these organisations and requires them to pro-actively engage with local communities to identify their concerns around community safety and to address those concerns through practical actions. We believe this interagency approach is required in order to adequately address the range of issues that influence and impact on community safety.
- 4.31 The Ministerial Panel set up to oversee and drive forward the implementation of this Strategy will consider those aspects of community safety which relate to the strategic objectives of this chapter. The existing Regional Steering Group on Community Safety (which has nearly all Departments as well as other organisations represented) currently co-ordinates work on community safety overall. This will be integrated within the delivery framework for this Strategy, which is outlined in chapter 6.

- 4.32 Tension monitoring is a very valuable tool in identifying where potential or escalating problems exist at a local level. We believe that further consideration should be given as to how tension monitoring can be used within the context of an interagency approach to community safety. This could also be an important reference to inform the work in reducing interfaces and promoting shared spaces.
- 4.33 Alongside this Strategy, we are also committed to reviewing the Good Relations Indicators to reflect the ongoing importance of safety as an influence on good relations outcomes.

Commitments:

The Ministerial Panel set up to oversee and drive forward the implementation of this Strategy will consider those aspects of community safety which relate to the strategic objectives of this chapter; and

We will review the Good Relations Indicators to reflect the ongoing importance of safety as an influence on good relations outcomes.

Community Safety and Good Relations

- 4.34 In order to be effective in building a united community, a broader perspective must be taken to community relations. Community relations must be viewed within the context of community safety and vice versa. In practice, this must mean that there is more joined-up working between those operating in both fields – whether that is at central Government, at local council level or within the community.

5. Cultural Expression and Diversity

Key Priority 4 – Our Cultural Expression

Shared Aim: To create a community, which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.

- 5.1 Public celebrations are an important part of cultural life throughout the world, especially where they allow the whole population to mark a sense of belonging and place. Furthermore, within every society, the celebration of different connections, memories and traditions by parts of the whole society at different times in the calendar forms an important part of the public life of the entire community.
- 5.2 Cultural identities can also be powerful influences in our individual lives and in some cases, shape how we view ourselves and other people. Our belief systems, values and perceptions are shaped by our cultural background.
- 5.3 As we move towards achieving our vision of a united community, we are committed to developing an open and tolerant society in which everyone is free to mark and celebrate their identity, or indeed identities, in a peaceful and respectful manner.

The Scale of the Challenge

- 5.4 Through this Strategy, we are committed to nurturing an environment where cultural expression can encourage us not only to identify and celebrate our differences but also our commonalities. We believe that progress has already been made in this regard. In 2010, 66% of respondents to the NI Life and Times survey felt they could definitely be open about their own cultural identity in their local neighbourhood. A further 24% said they probably could.

- 5.5 Despite these positive indications, other findings demonstrate that there remain issues to be resolved. For example more than 4 in 10 people are less willing to shop in areas where flags and murals are on display (NILT, 2010); while 81% of people do not support the flying of flags in their own neighbourhood (NILT, 2010).
- 5.6 In addition, in 2010 21% of respondents reported being annoyed by republican emblems and 25% reported being annoyed by loyalist emblems. 13% were intimidated by republican emblems and 14% were intimidated by loyalist emblems.
- 5.7 Addressing these challenges will require a new emphasis on both tolerance and respect and an active willingness on behalf of all those involved in celebrating their tradition to acknowledge that we live in a society that is diverse in its make-up. Respect and tolerance are important principles in any democratic society. These principles apply to both those involved in celebrating their traditions and those who are not active participants. It is vital that cultural expression is peaceful.
- 5.8 Opportunities to share our traditions in an open way are important in building understanding, breaking down suspicion and deepening the cultural diversity that enriches the entire community.
- 5.9 The ability to choose your cultural identity or identities and the private and public expression of your cultural identity is protected in a range of national and international jurisprudence. It is therefore important that cultural identity choices are protected, recognised and valued within the context of this Strategy. However, cultural identity and expression of that identity must be exercised in accordance with the shared principles of this Strategy as outlined in chapter 1. It is only on this basis that mutual respect and trust can be built.
- 5.10 The image that our community presents is vitally important to the overall vibrancy and life of our society. Responsible expression of the range of cultural identities represented within our community, when exercised in accordance with this Strategy's underpinning values, can only add to the richness and diversity from which our society will benefit.

5.11 Our commitment to building a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and the promotion of reconciliation, is about shaping a society where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced. We firmly believe that the increasing diversity of our society strengthens us as a community and offers exciting opportunities for our future. The fabric of our society is made up of many diverse parts – representing different cultural backgrounds and identities. Within the context of an increasingly diverse community, we must learn that expression of one cultural view is not a direct or indirect threat to the expression of another.

Our Commitment

5.12 Through this Strategy, we are committed to creating the space for this diversity to be celebrated and ensuring that our community is enhanced by the richness of an intercultural approach.

5.13 We recognise that tolerance and respect are vital to building a community where cultural expression can be celebrated and embraced. This tolerance and mutual respect can be built through increasing understanding of the range of cultural traditions that exist here and encouraging a change in attitudes that will lead to a wider perspective on cultural expression.

5.14 We believe that increasing understanding of differing views and perspectives is vital to strengthening our community's capacity to embrace and celebrate diversity. A deeper understanding of cultural identity and its expression will help to break down the elements of mistrust that have developed within and between sections of the community. Through this increased understanding we believe that we can create a more united community, where cultural diversity can be embraced rather than treated with suspicion, and celebrated rather than feared.

Community Celebration

- 5.15 Cultural expression can be a cohesive influence in terms of bringing all sections of the community together in a celebratory way. The increasing diversity of our community brings with it so many opportunities for us to celebrate our collective and intricate identity as a society and to broaden our experience.
- 5.16 The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has an important role to play in ensuring that good relations principles are mainstreamed through its departmental role and remit. The Intercultural Arts Strategy was launched in May 2012, recognising the changing face of society here and its increasing cultural diversity. The Strategy emphasises the need to promote cultural pluralism, to develop good relations and tackle racism within and between all sections of our community. The document has six strategic themes, all of which help deliver the Executive's Programme for Government.
- 5.17 The Arts Council will invest an initial £300,000 over the next three years in promoting cultural diversity, using the arts to help develop good relations. Community and voluntary groups will be able to apply for funding to support arts-based projects that will benefit their community and increase access to the arts for minority ethnic groups. The programme will also help individual ethnic minority artists to develop their professional practice and undertake relevant training in order to increase their opportunities to engage in collaborative work within and across communities.
- 5.18 This Strategy is not about ensuring that all community celebrations are neutral but rather about increasing the confidence of all sections of our society and ensuring that community celebrations are carried out in accordance with the underpinning values and principles of this Strategy.
- 5.19 We believe that festivals and other similar events, when facilitated in accordance with the underlying principles of this Strategy, can be used in a way that increases

understanding between and amongst all sections of the community and breaks down barriers that have been caused by ignorance, misperception or fear.

- 5.20 The Community Festivals Fund (CFF) recognises the potential contribution that festivals can make to communities, to the local economy and wider Government policy priorities. Community festivals are about participation, involvement, and the creation of a sense of identity and are important in contributing to the social well-being of a community; and in this respect the CFF enables community organisations to celebrate their cultural identity and to strengthen community relations.
- 5.21 The CFF helps fund new festivals and helps established festivals develop further. The range of festivals being supported offers something for all sections of the community, with increased reports of cross community support and involvement of ethnic minorities. The CFF continues to promote social inclusion and improve community spirit.
- 5.22 In association with the work of District Councils **we will help inform and shape a new annual community relations/Cultural Awareness week.** We propose that a much more positive attitude should be taken to looking at all aspects of our culture and heritage, particularly where there are significant shared aspects of our cultural expression.
- 5.23 **We propose that, through the Arts Council, options should be developed for consultation around a new shared community relations/Cultural Awareness week.** This proposal should look at the sorts of events and activities that could be supported.

Headline Actions:

- We will help inform and shape a new annual community relations/Cultural Awareness week using the District Council Good Relations Programme as a vehicle for delivery; and
- Options for consultation will be developed around a shared community relations/Cultural Awareness week and we will support the Arts Council to deliver a programme of activity.

Other Forms of Cultural Expression

5.24 We recognise that cultural expressions and identity can be manifested through a range of media, such as music, language, the arts, literature and the sports in which we participate. The case study below, on Draw Down the Walls, recognises the important work that has already been going on at a local level using these areas of interest to bring people together and to build a more united community.

Through this Strategy, we will encourage the continued use of the arts and sports as means of improving good relations.

Draw Down the Walls

Draw Down the Walls is a North Belfast based cross-interface community relations initiative with the vision of 'creating the conditions to imagine a city without barriers'. Working within what has historically been one of the most divided and contested areas of the city, the project has developed the approach of utilising art as an engagement tool to explore mutual understanding and promote dialogue between local communities separated by contested interface barriers.

It was initially developed by a partnership of local community groups in order to build and foster improved community relations in the area, and engage with those hard to reach groups which had previously not been attracted to, or involved in traditional dialogue techniques. Developed by the North Belfast Interface Network in partnership with Golden Thread Gallery, the project quickly expanded to include the Lower Shankill

Community Association and the three organisations are now equal partners in the project. The project also includes other groups from across North Belfast in specific areas of work and programme activity.

The project started out with an initial focus on localised single identity issues, but has now developed a fully cross-interface and cross-community approach which seeks to address contentious issues and build relationships through activities and initiatives such as temporary artworks, talks and workshops, and participatory arts events which use interface walls as a starting point for further discussion and dialogue.

While the project is ongoing and continues to develop it is hoped that it will ultimately help encourage and bring about the circumstances where local communities feel secure enough to allow for the drawing down and removal of interface walls.

The project is funded by Belfast City Council Culture Arts Tourism & Leisure under its Development & Outreach fund.

Commitment:

We will encourage the continued use of the arts and sports as means of improving good relations.

5.25 The same principles of respect, tolerance and inclusion apply to all the choices we make as to how we express our cultural identity or identities. We welcome the enriching effect that diversity can bring and recognise that a rich cultural heritage can open up opportunities for all of us to have new experiences.

5.26 We recognise that sport in particular can be a vehicle for building good relations, particularly amongst our young people. Many people from differing backgrounds would otherwise not have the opportunity to meet, outside of a sporting context. In this way, sport can unite people under a common purpose and build relationships as a result of mutual interest.

- 5.27 Over the past decade, and in line with Sport Matters, DCAL has been taking forward a Safety at Sports Grounds initiative, with the support of both SportNI and the Department of Justice (DOJ). One of the central aims of this initiative is to help owners and operators of major sports grounds (primarily Soccer, Rugby and Gaelic) make their venues and games safer and more welcoming for the entire community; and to combat problems of public disorder, sectarianism and racism that can arise in and around some major matches. This will be partially addressed by the new cross-community 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.
- 5.28 The introduction of complementary criminal law legislation by way of the Justice Act (NI) 2011 through the NI Assembly has also been a very positive development in countering negative behaviour within a sporting context. This legislation outlaws certain forms of dangerous and disorderly conduct amongst spectators including racist, sectarian or indecent chanting at major games, and stirring up sectarian, racist or other forms of hatred at regulated Association Football matches.
- 5.29 We have referenced in other parts of this document how our past can continue to have an influence on our present and how we choose to deal with it can potentially impact on our future as a society. Our most recent past is only one aspect of an intricate and complex history that has shaped the identity of many within our community today.
- 5.30 The decade we have just entered will include a number of potentially sensitive anniversaries which we cannot ignore within the context of this Strategy. The events of our past will inevitably have economic and social impacts for us now and the way in which these events are marked will also have a significant influence on our continued journey towards a united community.
- 5.31 Our vision of building a united community does not mean that we do not each have differing personal experiences. Each of us has grown up with our own personal history, but much wider than that, we have been exposed to conditions and an

environment, that in some cases lead to differing interpretations, and our experience may influence our understanding of past events and circumstances.

- 5.32 The sense of history that we have all grown up with has played a large part in shaping who we are today. Our collective histories shape us as a community. The importance therefore of addressing how we approach a decade of remembrance is central to building a more mature debate around our collective identity.
- 5.33 The Executive acknowledges that the issue of responsible remembrance is undoubtedly an important one within the context of the commitment to building a united community. When framed in a positive and reflective way, remembrance can open up opportunities for debate, discussion and exploration of what can be challenging but constructive issues. The potential for this discussion to facilitate constructive relationships and generate mature debate is important.
- 5.34 The decade of commemoration presents an opportunity to celebrate our shared differences in a way which will position Northern Ireland as a powerful example in conflict resolution and transformation on the world stage. The legacy of the ensuing 10 years should be such that we attract even greater positive worldwide interest, increased visitors and further stimulate the economy.
- 5.35 Within the context of an inclusive, tolerant and respectful community, we believe that exploring our past can be enormously helpful in building a better future. We know that we still live today with the history we learned within the school and home environment but often we have not had wider exposure to other interpretations or understandings.
- 5.36 Unravelling the intricacies of what is undoubtedly a complex past can help us increase our understanding of differing interpretations of the same event, identify those areas where our histories intertwine and, in a sense, become a shared history. This will help us develop a capacity to commemorate in a way that heals and not hurts, in a non-triumphalist manner, which promotes reconciliation as

distinct from deepening division. The value of a storytelling approach can be particularly powerful in this regard.

- 5.37 The region's creative and cultural industries can play a key role in capturing the imagination and telling the stories and different interpretations behind significant events from the past. The creative infrastructure and resources supported by DCAL – e.g. museums, libraries, arts venues and organisations etc. - can help to discover and share the stories of the people and places across the region and examine historical events from the distant and more recent past.
- 5.38 The Public Records Office NI (PRONI) has recently confirmed its participation in the shaping of Exhibition Space and Archive at the Peace building and Conflict Resolution Centre, Maze/Long Kesh. PRONI will provide advice and guidance in the development of a community archive which will complement the official archive held at its Titanic Quarter premises.
- 5.39 Collaborations between museums and communities can provide a vital role in understanding our shared history, heritage and culture. Museums can help to address issues of social inclusion and cohesion and support the cultural rights and expressions of people and communities in our society. They can be catalysts for bringing communities together both physically and through formal and informal opportunities to explore the complexities of history and culture.
- 5.40 We believe that it is important to generate a culture of maturity in dealing with the issues arising from our shared history and in turn this will be valuable in building a culture of respect, tolerance and reconciliation. In recognition of this, the Executive has endorsed the following principles as a framework within which all remembrance of commemorative anniversaries should take place:
- educational focus
 - reflection
 - inclusivity

- tolerance
- respect
- responsibility
- interdependence

- 5.41 The Executive statement of 15 March 2012 outlined the intent to mark significant anniversaries throughout the decade in an inclusive way and in a manner that will also help our society to benefit economically and continue its transformation into a vibrant, diverse and enriching place to visit.
- 5.42 A three stranded approach was agreed consisting of a wider communications programme, a series of events, and an education programme. DCAL and DETI are working closely together to deliver on these three strands with a view to engaging both the business and arts communities in celebrating the decade of centenaries and embracing the use of different types of media.
- 5.43 Commemoration within this framework does not mean leaving our individual identities behind and forgetting the traditions that many of us have grown up with, but building understanding and respect so that we move towards a greater appreciation of the differing perspectives and diverse narratives that make us who we are. In this way, we can begin to formulate a shared identity for our community.
- 5.44 We are conscious that over the next number of years, all sections of our society will have to consider the challenges and opportunities presented by our history. We believe that at an individual, community and political level, we can all learn from our past and help shape a future society that will be well equipped to celebrate difference.
- 5.45 We recognise that there remain difficult and contentious issues in our society. In order to take forward work on these issues, we will establish an All Party Group which will have an independent Chair from outside the political parties. The All

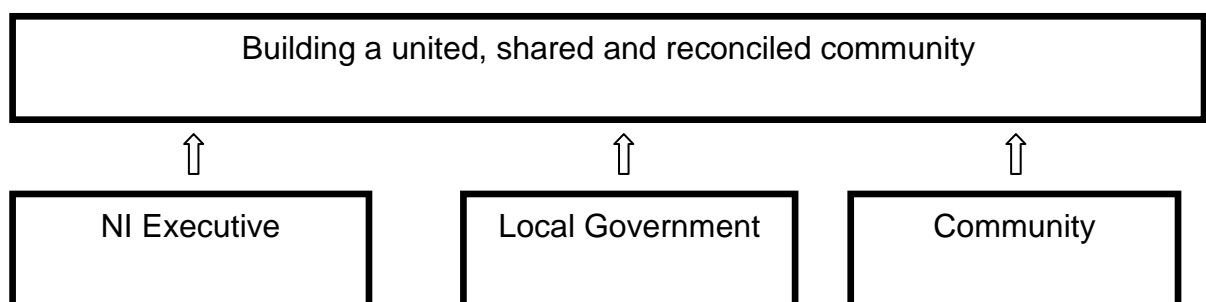
Party Group will consider and make recommendations on matters including parades and protests; flags, symbols, emblems and related matters; and the Past. The Group will report to the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The Group will establish mechanisms to hear from the various stakeholders across our community as to how best to address these difficult and contentious issues.

6 Implementation of the Strategy

6.1 Achieving our shared vision of a united community based on reconciliation, equality of opportunity and the desirability of good relations requires the collective commitment and effort of everyone. We acknowledge that continued political leadership is crucial to the effective implementation of this Strategy but much wider than this is the need to have a collaborative approach across our society and economy. All parts of Government must work alongside statutory, voluntary, community and private sector partners to achieve the shared vision and aims of this Strategy.

Political Leadership

6.2 The Executive is committed to meeting the aims and objectives that are outlined in this Strategy. OFMDFM remains committed to continuing to provide leadership and drive forward this important agenda in order to achieve positive good relations outcomes and build a united, shared and reconciled community. However, we recognise that OFMDFM cannot achieve this alone. The actions required to achieve real, meaningful and positive change across our society demand the commitment of all Government Departments, statutory agencies, district councils, and the community as a whole.



- 6.3 Our commitment to this Strategy is clearly outlined in the Executive's Programme for Government. A number of its key commitments contribute to achieving the shared vision of this Strategy. The need to work together to tackle the range of issues and challenges facing our society is clear.

Ministerial Panel

- 6.4 As a means of harnessing the collective commitment across Government, we will establish a Panel comprising all Ministers from the Executive in addition to senior representatives from a range of statutory agencies and community partners. The establishment of the Panel will reflect the collaborative leadership that we believe is essential to achieving the vision of this Strategy. To reinforce this commitment, the Panel will be chaired by Ministers from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Commitments:

We will establish a Panel comprising all Ministers from the Executive in addition to senior representatives from a range of statutory agencies, local government and community partners; and

Each Minister will be required to report against the actions and targets attributed to his or her department and show how, and to what extent, departmental policies are achieving the objectives aligned to this strategy. Similar requirements will be placed on local government.

- 6.5 Many of the challenges outlined within this Strategy require a cross-departmental approach and cannot be adequately addressed by one department or agency working in isolation. The Ministerial Panel will be an important mechanism for co-ordinating action on those issues that cut across the responsibilities of more than one department.

- 6.6 The primary role of the Ministerial Panel will be to oversee the delivery of this Strategy, set the strategic direction on how to achieve good relations across our community and to identify key areas for action. **Each Minister will be required to report against the actions and targets attributed to his or her department and show how, and to what extent, departmental policies are achieving the objectives aligned to this strategy.**
- 6.7 Building a united community based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and the promotion of reconciliation is not only important for a society moving from conflict and division but is vital to shaping a modern, diverse and sustainable community which is equipped for the future. To reinforce the importance of this Strategy, good relations principles must be mainstreamed into everything that we in government do. The Ministerial Panel will play an important role in driving this forward.
- 6.8 This means ensuring that the vision of building a united community must be taken into account in the development of policy and in the allocation of resources. The Ministerial Panel will be crucial in ensuring that the objectives of this Strategy are achieved and that resources are targeted and aligned more effectively and efficiently.
- 6.9 The action planning process will be taken forward on a cyclical basis to coincide with the comprehensive spending review. Action plans will include key aims, targets and milestones. Resources and responsible Departments/agencies will be assigned to each target.
- 6.10 To reflect our commitment to collaborative working, the membership of the Ministerial Panel will also include high level representation from statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector. **Thematic subgroups will also be established under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel to reflect the key priorities of this Strategy** (see fig.1 on page 112). The membership of each of these subgroups will comprise representation from statutory organisations alongside community representatives and key stakeholder groups.

Commitments:

Action plans will include key aims, targets and milestones. Resources and responsible Departments/agencies will be assigned to each target.

Thematic subgroups will also be established under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel to reflect the key priorities of this Strategy.

The membership of both the Ministerial Panel and associated subgroups will seek to reflect the range of sectors across our community who can contribute to building good relations.

- 6.11 The membership of the Panel and its subgroups will reflect the unique body of expertise, research and knowledge that has been built up here as a result of significant investment in peace building and conflict transformation over recent years. This aspect of the membership will be helpful in considering good practice that has emerged both here and internationally; and informing the overall work agenda and strategic direction of the delivery architecture as a whole.

Good Relations Project Board

- 6.12 This project board will comprise senior officials from all Government Departments who will act as senior responsible officers for the various aspects of the Strategy's delivery. The project board will operate under the strategic direction of the Ministerial Panel and will report to that Panel on delivery and performance. Design teams have been established, with the relevant departments and their officials, and these will draw up the detailed proposals for the costs and implementation of the various strategic actions in the Programme. In the first instance, these design teams will concentrate on the seven key actions announced alongside the Strategy.

Delivering Social Change

- 6.13 When launching the Programme for Government 2011-15 on 12 March 2012 the First Minister and the deputy First Minister emphasised the Delivering Social Change (DSC) framework through which Ministers will work together to tackle poverty and social exclusion. The Framework seeks to co-ordinate key actions between Government Departments in order to deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages, improve children and young people's health, well-being and life opportunities and break the long-term cycle of multi-generational problems.
- 6.14 Delivering Social Change complements and adds extra focus to the much larger social and economic policies and programmes which operate against poverty. It also complements the Economic Strategy with a broad and integrated approach to tackling poverty that will ensure that more people join and/or remain in the labour force.
- 6.15 The Delivering Social Change framework is designed to assist the delivery of the Programme for Government, by finding new ways to ensure effective cross-Departmental working. The framework's initial focus has been on the needs of children and families to ensure the most urgent and significant problems in our society are addressed; problems such as poor educational outcomes, poor physical and mental health, economic inactivity, social exclusion and disadvantage.
- 6.16 In line with the framework's initial focus Ministers have agreed a Children and Young Persons Early Action Document which identifies key priorities to be taken forward over the coming years under the Delivering Social Change programme.
- 6.17 As well as the work around early action the Executive felt that it was critical that Departments came together to deliver a number of immediate actions. On 10 October 2012, the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced, under Delivering Social Change, the development of six significant signature

programmes totalling £26 million to be taken forward by lead Departments. These Programmes focus on immediate actions to tackle issues such as improving literacy and numeracy levels, family support and pathways to employment for young people.

- 6.18 Although Delivering Social Change has initially focussed on the needs of children and young people and families through the six Signature Programmes, its longer term objective is to lay the basis for sustained social improvement for all our vulnerable groups.
- 6.19 For the purposes of this Strategy, specific delivery architecture has been established in recognition of the importance of continuing to make progress in advancing good relations here.

Community Engagement

- 6.20 We recognise that Government alone cannot achieve the shared vision we outlined in chapter one. Political leadership coupled with community effort and responsibility is vital to the effective implementation of this Strategy. We believe that this document sets out a very positive vision for a better future – one that all of us can collectively share in and contribute to. The case studies woven throughout this Strategy are testimony to the depth of the work that is ongoing on a community basis. This emphasises the importance of community involvement and the wider benefits that flow from working collectively to build a united community.
- 6.21 The shared values of responsibility and respect should be adopted at an individual level as well as on a collective basis right across society. Individuals, groups and society as a whole have a role and responsibility in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance.
- 6.22 There are many situations where people within the local community are best placed to shape the context in which they live. Through this Strategy, we want to empower individuals and groups to contribute in a positive way and to provide the

important community leadership that can bring real change to people's lives and to wider society. This Strategy provides the impetus for individual and community change that will help achieve our shared vision of a united community based on equality of opportunity and desirability of good relations.

- 6.23 The involvement of community partners in the implementation of this Strategy is important to effective delivery of positive change at a local level. A united community cannot be achieved solely by Government or those directly involved in peace building, although both have a vital part to play. This Strategy recognises that the voluntary and community sector, statutory agencies and the business community, and cultural and sporting organisations all have a unique role in tackling the challenges that hinder us from achieving a more united community. Each sector brings with it a distinct experience, skill set and motivation. We believe that this diversity in approach represents a collective and inclusive perspective on achieving the shared vision and aims of this Strategy. For this reason, **the membership of both the Ministerial Panel and associated subgroups will seek to reflect the range of sectors across our community who can contribute to building good relations here.**
- 6.24 In recognition of the need to engage in a more structured way with those groups and individuals who work tirelessly within our community, formalised and structured stakeholder engagement will form an integral part of the work of the organisation undertaking the independent challenge function.

Delivery of Policy Advice and Challenge to Government

- 6.25 For this Strategy to be as robust and effective as possible, we recognise the need for an independent and statutorily-based organisation to provide advice to Government and to challenge all levels of Government in terms of its performance in improving good relations here.
- 6.26 We also believe that a strong, independent voice on community relations is important in stimulating public debate and in providing developmental support to

those groups and individuals across our society who play their part in contributing to the vision of this Strategy. The presence of a regional delivery body is a valuable link with District Councils and local organisations and projects. In this way, the implementation of this Strategy can be monitored and developed at all levels of delivery.

6.27 The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland already fulfils a role in terms of monitoring public authorities' performance against the statutory duties outlined in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. For us to be serious about shaping a better future here and delivering good relations, we must ensure that Government is equally challenged in terms of its duties in promoting good relations.

6.28 We believe that the best way to do this is through an Equality and Good Relations Commission that will act as an independent, statutorily-based organisation that provides policy advice and a challenge to Government. In order to achieve this **we will amend the remit, roles and responsibilities of the existing Equality Commission and incorporate the following functions into an Equality and Good Relations Commission:**

- Advice and challenge to Government;
- Research and evaluation on good relations issues;
- Scrutiny;
- Scrutiny of and challenge to District Council Good Relations Delivery Programme; and
- Regional advisory role to individuals and groups working on good relations issues.

6.29 In practice, these augmented functions will result in the Equality and Good Relations Commission fulfilling the following statutory duties:

- To challenge and scrutinise Government in its progress towards meeting the commitments and aims of this Strategy;

- To scrutinise and provide advice on action plans arising from this Strategy;
- To enforce and investigate as appropriate where there is a failure to comply with section 75(2);
- To promote good relations across all sections of the community and support the development of best practice across the public service and the private sector;
- To commission appropriate research in order to inform the implementation and delivery of this Strategy;
- To carry out an assessment of progress against the objectives of this strategy and produce a report to the Assembly every two years;
- To provide advice and scrutiny to the Ministerial Panel in the development of the District Council Good Relations Programme;
- To challenge District Councils in respect of their performance against Good Relations Action Plans;
- To submit an annual work plan to OFMDFM and report on progress against agreed targets;
- To facilitate the sharing of best practice on a North-South, East-West, European and international level; and
- To connect actions to promote good relations at a regional, sub-regional and localised level.

6.30 The Commission will be instrumental in monitoring Government's performance in how all policies and spending decisions are proofed for good relations impacts. To this end, **an augmented impact assessment will be developed that assesses the extent to which policies and other interventions contribute to meeting the objectives of this overarching Strategy.**

Headline Actions:

- We will amend the remit, roles and responsibilities of the existing Equality Commission and incorporate additional functions into an Equality and Good Relations Commission; and
- An augmented impact assessment will be developed that assesses the extent to which policies and other interventions contribute to meeting the objectives of this overarching Strategy.

6.31 The role of the Equality and Good Relations Commission within the wider Strategy delivery architecture is illustrated in fig.1. (p112). The Commission will act independently but will be represented on the Ministerial Panel to reflect its challenge and advice function.

District Council Good Relations Programme

6.32 We believe that there is value in achieving local solutions to local issues and the District Council Good Relations Programme is an important vehicle for promoting reconciliation and building a united community. We recognise that a significant amount of work has been done over recent years as a result of the Programme; and through this Strategy we aim to build on the progress that has been made.

6.33 Good Relations Officers are well placed to engage on a local level and to build the important relationships with community organisations that facilitate collaborative solutions to the issues that impact most on our community. This Strategy provides the platform for these relationships to be enhanced and for good practice and learning to be disseminated in a more strategic way.

6.34 The District Council Good Relations Programme is an important link between the high level strategic priorities outlined through this Strategy and delivery of community relations activity locally. To ensure that the Programme is as effective as possible, OFMDFM commissioned, in 2012, an evaluation of the existing scheme, which will help inform the future design and format of the Programme.

The findings and recommendations from this evaluation will help inform an enhanced delivery model that reflects the strategic priorities of this Strategy.

- 6.35 We are keen to ensure consistency of delivery across all Council areas and it is vital that responsibility for achieving positive good relations outcomes is reinforced within the revised structural arrangements under the Review of Public Administration. As a result of this Strategy, **we will ensure that good relations considerations are mainstreamed into the revised arrangements** and the Equality and Good Relations Commission will have a scrutiny role to play in achieving this.

Commitments:

The findings and recommendations from this evaluation will help inform an enhanced District Council Programme that reflects the strategic priorities of this Strategy.

We will ensure that good relations considerations are mainstreamed into the revised arrangements under the Review of Public Administration.

- 6.36 We believe that we have a unique opportunity to shape the delivery of good relations work at a local level through the District Council Good Relations Programme and to ensure that the strategic direction of this document is translated at a local community level through focused Good Relations Action Plans that also contribute to the higher level strategic outcomes of this Strategy.
- 6.37 In this regard, the revised District Council Good Relations Programme will be structured in the following way:
- The Ministerial Panel will issue centralised guidance on completing Action Plans and will require District Councils to complete action plans that meet the strategic priorities of this Strategy but that allow a degree of flexibility to respond to localised issues;

- robustness of the Action Plans will be assessed in terms of meeting the headline actions and commitments of this Strategy; and
- progress against Action Plans will be monitored against the revised Good Relations indicators.

6.38 The Equality and Good Relations Commission will provide advice and guidance to District Councils and will fulfil a role in terms of developing and assessing the effectiveness of the overall Programme.

Funding of Good Relations Activity

- 6.39 Adequately resourcing good relations activity is critical to the effective implementation of this Strategy's objectives. Over more than a decade, there has been significant investment in peace building and conflict transformation work. The case studies throughout this document not only highlight the value in supporting such activity but also emphasise the need to ensure that the good practice is not lost as time passes.
- 6.40 We are working within the context of constrained resources and a likely reduction in European and other sources of international funding support. The projects that have been established as a result have formed one aspect of the knowledge, skills and experience base that now exists within our community.
- 6.41 As we look to the future, we must ensure that this good practice is supported, sustained and shared. In order to build a united community we must work to enhance the existing expertise and relationships that have been established – within the context of a more efficient and strategic approach to the allocation of funding.
- 6.42 Sitting alongside the Ministerial Panel will be a funding coordination group to ensure the strategic targeting of good relations funding activity in line with the priorities outlined in this Strategy, action plan and the strategic priorities from the

Ministerial Panel. This group will comprise representation from organisations involved in funding delivery within the good relations arena.

- 6.43 Future funding arrangements must be both strategic and flexible to respond to the differing levels of capacity amongst organisations working to build a united community. **Through the implementation of this Strategy, we will ensure that funding is directed in a way that secures sustainability of the infrastructure that has been established at a local level and that continues to develop the capacity of individuals and organisations working to build good relations across our society.**

Commitments:

We will ensure that funding is directed in a way that secures sustainability of the infrastructure that has been established at a local level and that continues to develop the capacity of individuals and organisations working to build good relations across our society; and

We will ensure that the objectives/targets/actions of this Strategy are reflected in the funding priorities of the Peace IV Programme and that Peace IV funds are used to support the overall aim of building a united community.

- 6.44 We recognise that there will be instances where emerging situations require responsive and flexible interventions. The development of future funding arrangements will look at the need for a range of funding interventions to meet the requirements of differing situations and levels of capacity.

Delivery of Community Relations Funding

- 6.45 Government Departments will continue to have designated funding schemes that contribute to meeting the objectives of this Strategy. These existing Programmes are important in terms of responding to community relations issues within the

particular remits of specific Departments. Within the context of the implementation of this Strategy, we will ensure that the objectives of new and existing programmes are aligned with the objectives of this Strategy. We also recognise that funding needs to move from an annual cycle to ensure that it can be delivered in a timely and more strategic way.

- 6.46 Specific and targeted resource allocation to tackle the key priorities of this Strategy will be crucial in aligning resources with where the good relations needs are. To ensure that the provision of policy advice is separated from the delivery of funding, we will consider the options for the future delivery of funding, taking consideration of the review of effectiveness of funding. One option we are considering is the tendering of funding delivery, potentially on a thematic basis.
- 6.47 Responsibility for the delivery of funding currently resides largely with the Community Relations Council. There are a range of options for the future delivery of community relations funding and it is vital that we establish structures and mechanisms that can target funding to where it is most needed and in a way that best meets emerging community relations need. In order to ensure that we have a robust evidence base for the way forward, OFMDFM will commission a comprehensive review of the structure, delivery and impact of existing funding delivery mechanisms. The findings from this review will be used to determine and shape the future funding delivery model.
- 6.48 The Equality and Good Relations Commission will play a role in terms of evaluating the impact of the range of funding streams and this rolling programme of evaluation will inform the future allocation and structure of policy and funding interventions.

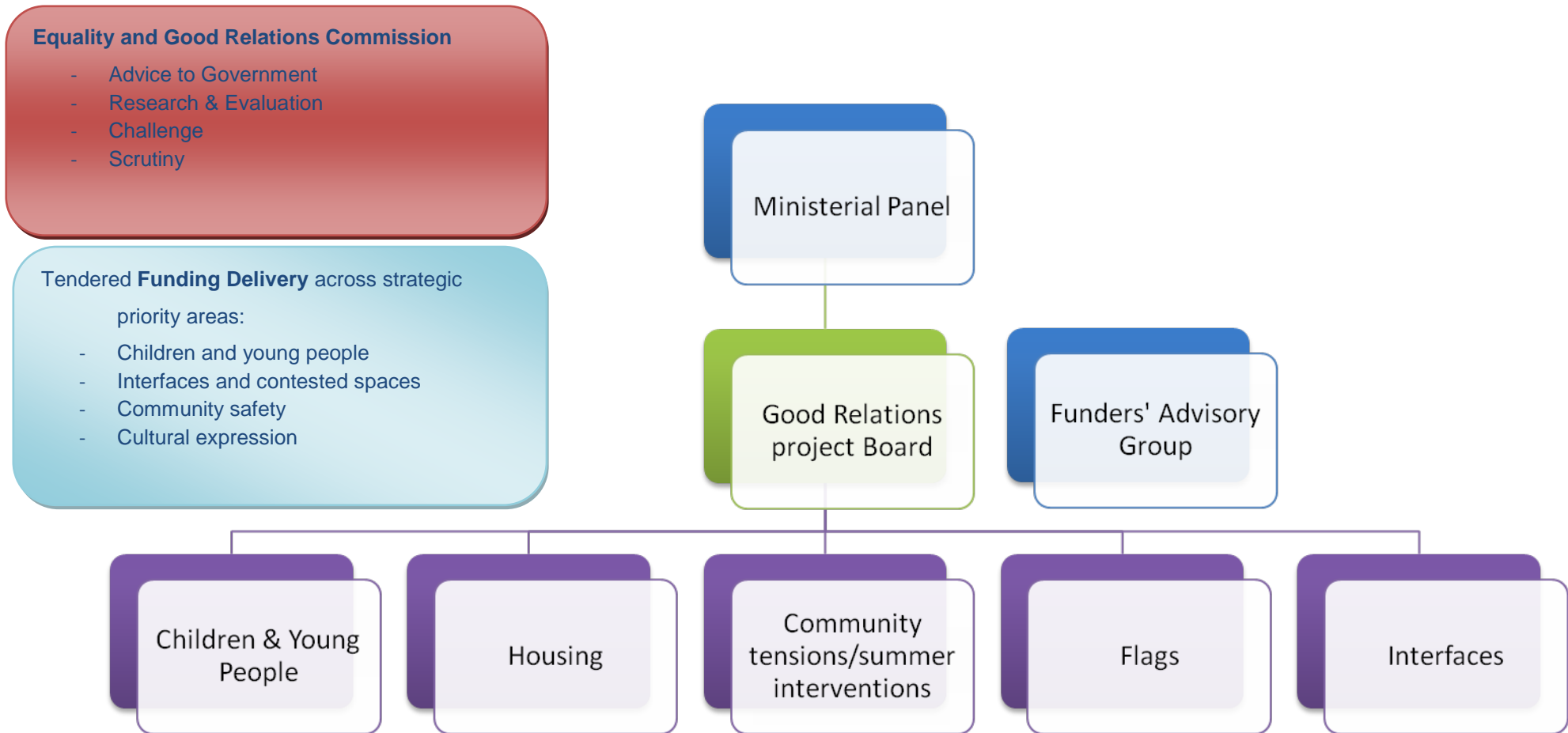


FIGURE 1

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 7.1 We introduced this Strategy by outlining our shared vision of “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.”
- 7.2 We firmly believe that collectively we can achieve this goal but we know that it will take time. Throughout each section of this document, we have set out a number of shared aims that we want to achieve in the longer-term. These are supported by shorter-medium term objectives.
- 7.3 The time we have allocated to achieving these is not a reflection of their relative importance to building a united community but rather an indication of how long we believe it will take to achieve. We believe that all of the shared aims outlined in this Strategy are fundamental building blocks to achieving our shared vision. However, we are realistic to know that we will face challenges along the way.
- 7.4 Setting out objectives for the future is not enough on its own. This Strategy and the actions flowing from it must be supported by clear mechanisms for monitoring progress and measuring impact. We know that people want to see real, meaningful change at both a local and at a wider societal level. We can only really know how far we have come as a community when we have clear ways of measuring how effective this Strategy is and how people’s lives have changed for the better as a result.
- 7.5 It is vital that all of the work taken forward by the Ministerial Panel is underpinned by a robust evidence base. The Equality and Good

Relations Commission will play a key role in ensuring that the Panel has the most relevant information and research to both inform its work and to monitor progress. To facilitate this, we will work with the Equality and Good Relations Commission to identify adequate resourcing requirements to support a robust programme of research and evaluation.

- 7.6 The Equality and Good Relations Commission will be tasked with monitoring the effectiveness and impact of this Strategy and will be expected to draw upon the wide range of data and research that exists.
- 7.7 The existing Good Relations indicators are a starting point but there is a need to review these in light of the shared aims and objectives of this Strategy. **The Good Relations indicators will be reviewed and consulted upon by the end of 2013.** The review of the indicators will also take into account the inputs and views received during the consultation on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration.

Commitments:

We will review and consult on revised Good Relations indicators which will be reviewed by the end of 2013.

We will work to map out the trends and patterns that have emerged as a result of investment in community relations activity from sources such as Peace funding and the International Fund for Ireland. This will also help to identify the gaps in provision and to highlight where further investment is required.

- 7.8 The revised set of indicators will be used to inform and monitor the activities of the thematic subgroups established under the Ministerial Panel and will help measure progress against each of the strategic priorities of this document. Progress reports against the Action Plan will

be produced on a six monthly basis and will be presented to the Ministerial Panel.

- 7.9 Similarly, the revised indicators will be used to monitor progress at every level of implementation. The District Council Good Relations Action Plans will be measured against the revised indicators and in this way delivery of the Strategy can be monitored much more effectively.
- 7.10 Although the Good Relations indicators are a useful reference point in terms of tracking our progress in building a united community, there are other very helpful sources of information that help paint a more complete picture. We believe that to adequately assess our progress as a society, we must consider both qualitative and quantitative analysis and use these datasets in a meaningful way to shape policy direction and the allocation of resources.
- 7.11 The Good Relations indicators, along with other information gained through Good Relations Audits at a District Council level, academic studies and other surveys commissioned by Government will be supplemented by the Equality and Good Relations Commission developing a pool of information that is meaningful, relevant and measurable.
- 7.12 The EGRC must also work to ensure that Government Departments and agencies are sharing information and data to help inform good relations policy. The sharing of this information is critical to measuring the effectiveness of our interventions to build a united community across all aspects of life.
- 7.13 As part of mainstreaming the principles of this Strategy into everything we do across Government, it will also be important to ensure that questions relating to improved community relations are built into new survey designs.

- 7.14 Over more than a decade, our society has benefited from significant investment in community relations activity. This has come from a variety of national and international sources. Within the context of a constrained economic environment, it is vital that we assess the impact of this investment and ensure that the learning that has been built up over time is not lost.
- 7.15 To this end, we will work to map out the trends and patterns that have emerged as a result of investment in community relations activity from sources such as Peace funding and the International Fund for Ireland. This will also help to identify the gaps in provision and to highlight where further investment is required. The findings from these evaluations will be valuable in highlighting how best to shape a sustainability plan for our community in terms of preparing for the future.