



## Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan Phase II (2011 – 2013) Draft Summary - July 2010



### 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of the draft **Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan** (PRAP, the Plan) which is being developed by the **Southern Partnership** (Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne Councils). The PRAP outlines how the Partnership aims to deliver Priority 1.1 (Building positive relations at the local level) of the Peace III Programme during the period from mid-2011 to the end of 2013.

Further information on the Partnership is available at [www.southernpartnership.com](http://www.southernpartnership.com)

The Partnership is currently seeking views on the draft Plan. A **consultation response form** is provided at the end of this document. Please return completed forms by Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August to [info@juniperconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@juniperconsulting.co.uk) or by post to: Juniper Consulting, City East, 68-72 Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 1GW.

### 2. PEACE III PROGRAMME

The overall objective of the Peace III Programme is to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. Building on the success and lessons of the Peace I (1995 – 99) and Peace II (2000-06) Programmes, the Peace III Programme has a continued and renewed emphasis on reconciliation and specifically focuses on acknowledging and dealing with the conflict, building positive relations and contributing towards a shared society.

These two objectives are grouped in two Priority areas, namely 'Reconciling Communities' and 'Contributing to a Shared Society'. Within Priority 1 'Reconciling Communities' there are two key areas:

- 1.1 Building positive relations at the local level;
- 1.2 Acknowledging and dealing with the past.

Building positive relations at a local level (Priority 1.1) is being delivered through local authority led partnership arrangements. The objective is:

*To challenge attitudes towards sectarianism and racism and to support conflict resolution and mediation at the local community level"*

This element of Priority 1 supports the implementation of strategic models of collaboration between the public, private and community sectors that focus on reconciliation, cultural diversity and equality. Under this partnership approach, the Priority aims to establish cross-border initiatives that will improve trust and tolerance and reduce levels of sectarianism and racism.

### 3. PEACE AND RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN – PHASE I

The Southern Partnership developed the **Beyond Tolerance** PRAP for the period 2008-2010 (subsequently extended to June 2011). The Plan sets out seven programmes which aim to promote attitudinal and behavioural change under the theme of reconciling communities. Further information is available at [www.southernpartnership.com](http://www.southernpartnership.com).

### 4. PEACE AND RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN – PHASE II

The draft PRAP has been informed by research, consultations and the findings of the interim evaluation of Beyond Tolerance. A **Statement of Need** for the cluster area has been developed from the information gathered. There are six key areas of need:

- We need to foster **mutual understanding of needs, trust and respect** between people from **different community backgrounds**;
- We need to foster **mutual understanding of needs, trust and respect** between people from **different nationalities and ethnic and racial groups**;
- We need to support the **development of skills** to work through difficult issues;
- We need to **develop community confidence and involvement** – providing opportunities for residents to have a voice;
- We need to work towards developing **an environment which enables and encourages contact and mobility**; and
- We need to ensure that the **work undertaken leaves a strong legacy** for future peace-building post-Peace III.

Leading on from the Statement of Need the draft PRAP sets out the Partnership's Vision, Aims, Objectives and Strategic Priorities for the period from 2011 to 2013.

#### VISION

- **By 2013**, the cluster area will have significantly developed social partnerships on a cross community and cross border basis, taking forward reconciliation work, with a growing understanding of respective communities needs, development of trust and where people from all backgrounds are more comfortable using facilities and services across the cluster area;
- **By 2015**, the cluster area will endeavour to have well-developed and sustained cross-border and cross-community partnerships and will strive for integrated service delivery from public, private and voluntary/community sector organisations - accessible by people from all backgrounds, rural and isolated

communities. It will aspire to be an area where issues of division and contention are increasingly mitigated.

## AIMS

- **Increased community cohesion** through attitudinal change - increased respect, trust and understanding within and between communities providing sustained relationships;
- Positive impact upon behavioural patterns resulting in the **reduced manifestation of sectarianism and racism in the community**; and
- **Good Relations embedded in the community at all levels** through an increased shared vision of an interdependent and fair society.

## OBJECTIVES

- To encourage further **engagement** between and within the community, statutory organisations and political representatives;
- To identify **tomorrow's leaders** and build their capacity today;
- To eliminate “gatekeeper” issues and **encourage active participation**;
- To work towards a new ‘normal’ which creates a **welcoming environment**; and
- To facilitate greater involvement of people from **BME communities** in civic, community and political life and increase community cohesion.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### PRIORITY ONE: INSPIRING CHANGE

This Priority is driven by the need to inspire, support and highlight activities which will bring about lasting change in relation to encouraging **civic engagement**, **inclusive participation** and the **resolution of issues** which concern all residents living in the Southern cluster.

In order to deliver our aims we recognise the need to **target our efforts towards where it is most needed** – areas of weak infrastructure and capacity, crime hotspots, areas of deprivation and interface areas. The greatest level of impact must be achieved within the given resources.

**Communities need strong and vocal leaders** and the voices of residents deserve to be heard. We understand that **leadership must be supported and nurtured** and we cannot limit ourselves to the confines of existing structures and groups – we are striving to **inspire tomorrows, as well as today's leaders**. Not everyone will wish to hold a leadership role. However, it is important that inclusive structures are in place to afford people with the opportunity to engage on issues which affect them and their families – and to have their views listened to, valued and respected. Inspiring

Change will explore the role which each of us can play in the realisation of peace and reconciliation at a local, cluster and cross-border level.

Inspiring Change incorporates two sub-priorities – **Investing in our Future** and **Engaging in Good Relations**. These are described as follows.

### Sub-Priority 1: Investing In Our Future

**Investing in our Future** is heavily focused upon **identifying, developing and supporting leadership skills and capacity within and between communities**. This will be undertaken using a strategic and targeted approach – utilising the knowledge of Council Officers and local people to highlight gaps in skills and representation and to identify residents with the interest, drive and vision to work in partnership with other communities, agencies and organisations to enhance and improve the quality of life for all residents in the cluster area.

This sub-priority aims to equip people to deal with pertinent community issues post-PEACE III. It will focus upon developing the skills, awareness and understanding of community, statutory and political leaders based upon empathy, respect and working towards the realisation of a collective vision. Ambassadors for change are required at all levels in our society and we need future leaders with strong political awareness, conflict management who are proactive in their support for democracy, equality and inclusion.

Young people are central to our future and, as such, particular efforts need to be made to invest in the rich resources that they possess. However, communities are made up of many individuals and it is important that development activities are set within the context and needs of the respective communities – in order that learning and relationship building may be maximised and sustained.

The gradual process of building knowledge, understanding and respect for one's own and other's culture and identity is central to this Priority and indeed the whole Plan. Evidence suggests that myth-busting and raising awareness of good relations issues is still required across the community, statutory and political arenas and there is a need to equip individuals with the skills to ensure that existing processes, structures and working methods promote transparency, representativeness, partnership and inclusion.

Skills development is not a stand-alone activity. Therefore, identified individuals, groups and organisations will be encouraged to build upon their experiences and disseminate their knowledge via signposting to other relevant Priorities in order to develop practical project-based work within their respective communities and/or workplace. We want individual learning to spread throughout communities, neighbourhoods and structures.

## Sub-Priority 2: Engaging in Good Relations

**The Engaging in Good Relations** sub-priority aims to provide the **opportunities to progress community engagement through partnership building within and between the community, statutory and political sectors.**

This sub-priority aims to build upon the successes of Phase I activity and complement the capacity building activities undertaken via Investing in our Future. It concerns the development and support of formal and informal mechanisms for contact, participative democracy and partnership – bespoke and reflective of the issues/geographic areas/individuals involved.

The initial groundwork conducted under the Phase I Community Engagement Priority illustrates the continued need to support infrastructural development in a number of geographical areas and amongst certain interest groups in order to promote inclusion and encourage representative participation. Activities need to support communities and organisations to work together.

Increasing residents' connectivity to information, advice and decision-makers is central to this theme and it is important that the engagement mechanisms developed under Phase I receive continued support in order to promote equality, accountability and civic responsibility.

Evidence from the Interim Evaluation of Beyond Tolerance illustrates the potential of the Good Relations Forums and Area Specific Mediation in increasing members' understanding of differing views, experiences and backgrounds. These mechanisms have illustrated that given a favourable environment and appropriate representation, sustainable relationships can be built and divisive issues such as bonfires, parades and the use of flags and emblems can be raised, compromise reached and tensions alleviated.

The outputs of this sub-priority will provide residents with the opportunity to voice their opinions on hard issues within a safe environment and provide community, statutory and political leaders with the democratic rationale and impetus for change - working towards putting the promotion of Good Relations at the core of community, statutory and political life.

## PRIORITY TWO: FUTURE FOUNDATIONS

**Future Foundations** is aimed at working towards a new "normal" which creates a safe, open and welcoming environment for all residents regardless of their religion, nationality or ethnic group. This Priority aims to open up minds and spaces – addressing both psychological and physical barriers to peace-building.

The activities conducted under this Priority will be targeted on areas where there is evidence of segregation and manifestations of sectarianism and racism – both in attitude and behaviour. It will explore issues such as developing and maintaining shared space and the wider long-term impact of territorialisation upon the sustainability/isolation of individuals, communities and services.

Future Foundations aims to increase inter-community, cross-community and cross-border respect and mobility in order to progress the cluster towards being an area that is at peace with itself and its neighbours.

In order to achieve this there needs to be acknowledgement that the status quo is unsustainable and that new ways of working and living need to be developed. Future Foundations will explore and develop opportunities for cross-border and cross-community learning, increasing engagement and sharing skills, venues and staffing resources on a long-term basis.

Civic and cultural pride is central to this priority and the need to promote positive and inclusive cultural celebrations and the establishment of protocols for displays of culture must be incorporated into activities. It is envisaged that grassroots partnership working between and within communities will help to establish wider need, the required facilities/resources and assist to eliminate issues of exclusion and perceived “ownership” of community venues and space.

### PRIORITY THREE: CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

**Challenge of Change** is dedicated to addressing issues around overt and covert racism with a particular emphasis on raising awareness of cultural diversity, myth-busting and increasing contact, integration and inclusion. This Priority will build upon the groundwork conducted in Phase I – promoting understanding and respect for cultural difference at various levels – community, statutory, business and political. As such there is linkage with aims of the Inspiring Change and Future Foundations Priorities.

It is anticipated that resources will be targeted at those areas/groups in most need (e.g. racist hate crime hotspots, potential perpetrators, community influencers/groups/representatives). Racism needs to be acknowledged as being an issue within the cluster and, like sectarianism, requires a collective vision and response.

It is important that preparatory work takes place in order to build the capacity of indigenous and BME communities to engage and work in partnership to explore and celebrate similarities and differences. It is anticipated that this will cumulate in the development of activities and processes aimed at increasing integration between indigenous and BME communities. Integration occurs on different levels – a feeling of belonging and acceptance, the development of friendships, knowing where to go for information and support and availing of equality of opportunity and access. These are all issues which the Priority aims to address.

The Interim Evaluation highlights the potential for developing further some of the Phase I activities (e.g. Racist Incidents Reporting Scheme, the provision of advice and support to BME communities, integration projects and networking activity). It is important to ensure that the Phase II Plan reflects the changing needs of BME communities and is balanced towards the needs of established racial and ethnic groups such as the Chinese community and members of the Travelling community – in addition to the indigenous population.



Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan  
Phase II (2011 – 2013)  
**CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM**



Please provide your comments in relation to the following key areas of the PRAP.

Statement of Need

Objectives

Priority 1 – Inspiring Change

Priority 2 – Future Foundations

Priority 3 – Challenge of Change

Other Comments

Optional Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation/Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time

Please return completed forms by Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August to  
[info@juniperconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@juniperconsulting.co.uk) or by post to: Juniper Consulting, City East,  
68-72 Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 1GW.