

For **Everyone**

Alliance

THE ALLIANCE PARTY BLUEPRINT FOR AN EXECUTIVE STRATEGY
TO BUILD A SHARED AND BETTER FUTURE.

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Foreword by David Ford MLA, Alliance Party Leader



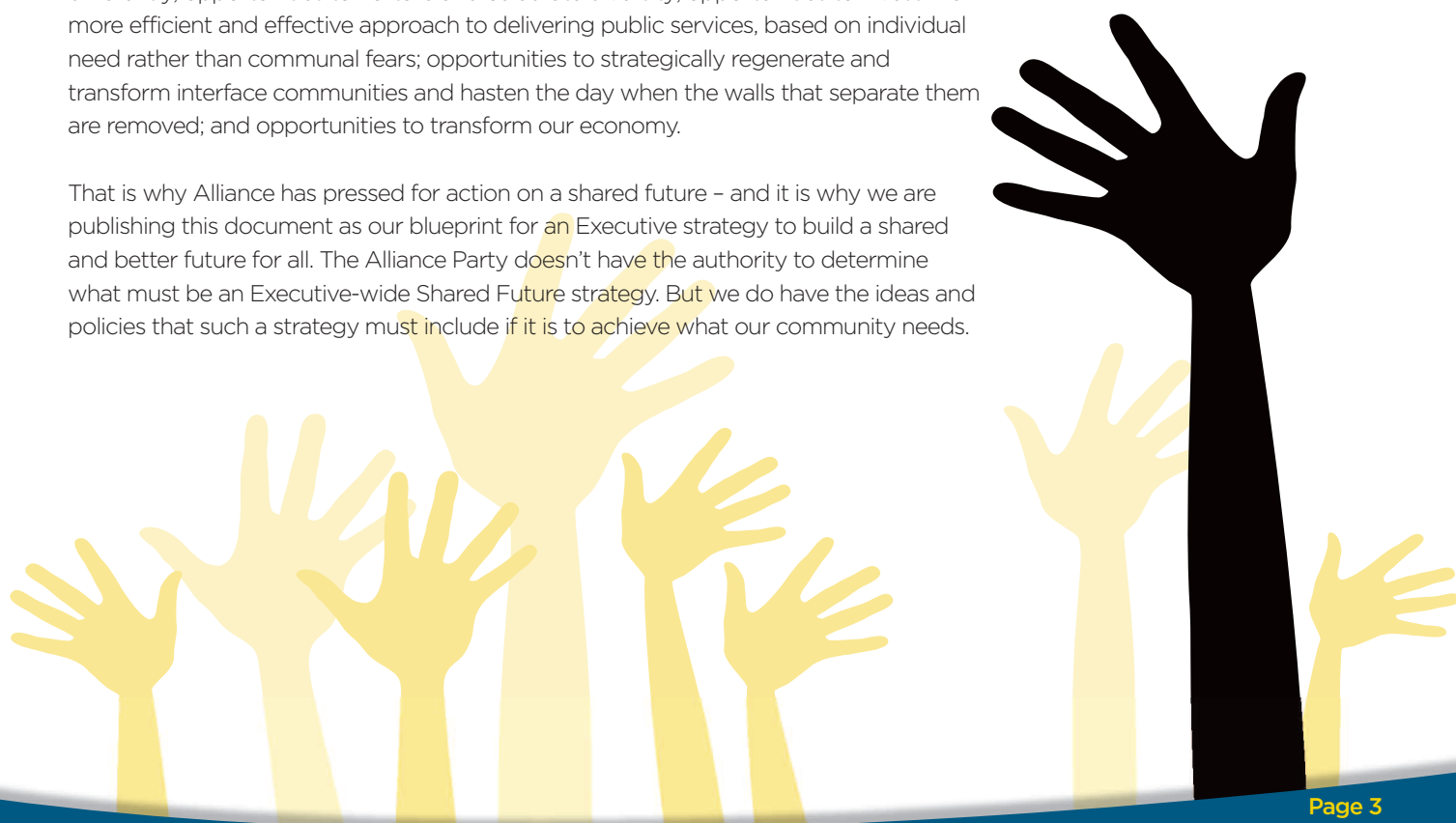
This document reflects my party's conviction that the work of building a shared society is the single biggest challenge facing Northern Ireland and should be the central overarching priority for the Executive. Quite simply, we won't achieve what we want for Northern Ireland – economically and socially – if we don't address this critical issue.

But it won't be addressed by tinkering at the edges, or trying to simply manage the symptoms of the problem. For the first time in many generations we have an opportunity to move beyond that approach, to tackle the underlying pattern of segregation, exclusion, discrimination and threat. The ending of violence has given us an opportunity to tackle the underlying divisions of our society; history will not forgive us if we squander it. I want Northern Ireland to become a truly shared society where nowhere is out of bounds to anyone because of their creed, colour, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

For two decades Northern Ireland received huge international support to ease our transition from hostility to peace. Across the world we have proclaimed that our peace process is a model for others to follow. And yet almost nineteen years after the ceasefires of 1994, fifteen years after the Good Friday Agreement, eight years after the publication of the first 'shared future' strategy under Direct Rule, a meaningful, strategic approach to tackling our pervasive divisions has yet to be developed under, and embedded into, our devolved political structures.

We can wait no longer. The potential for unresolved issues to cause real damage to peoples' lives and to our future cannot be exaggerated. Every day that passes we miss opportunities: opportunities to bring our children together and shape their future differently; opportunities to nurture and celebrate diversity; opportunities to invest in a more efficient and effective approach to delivering public services, based on individual need rather than communal fears; opportunities to strategically regenerate and transform interface communities and hasten the day when the walls that separate them are removed; and opportunities to transform our economy.

That is why Alliance has pressed for action on a shared future – and it is why we are publishing this document as our blueprint for an Executive strategy to build a shared and better future for all. The Alliance Party doesn't have the authority to determine what must be an Executive-wide Shared Future strategy. But we do have the ideas and policies that such a strategy must include if it is to achieve what our community needs.



This document is not about rhetoric, spin, or empty gestures. It is about detailed analysis and effective action. That's the kind of substance a shared future strategy requires – analysis of the problems and policies and agreement on actions by which we will tackle them.

We now need the support of other parties and civic society, combined with funding and political leadership, to make it happen and we are keen to engage with others.

The time for looking backwards is past; so too is the time for being content at ending the worst of the violence. Now is the time to stretch ourselves to do more than we have done before, to act rather than talk. In short, it's time to deliver. This blueprint offers the opportunity and the means to do so.



David Ford Alliance Leader

Executive Summary

Our collective vision and understanding of a shared future is of:

A shared and integrated society free from intimidation and discrimination and fear, where every member is safe, has opportunities to contribute and participate and is treated fairly and with respect; a truly civic society, underpinned by the shared values of equality, respect for diversity, and a celebration of our interdependence.

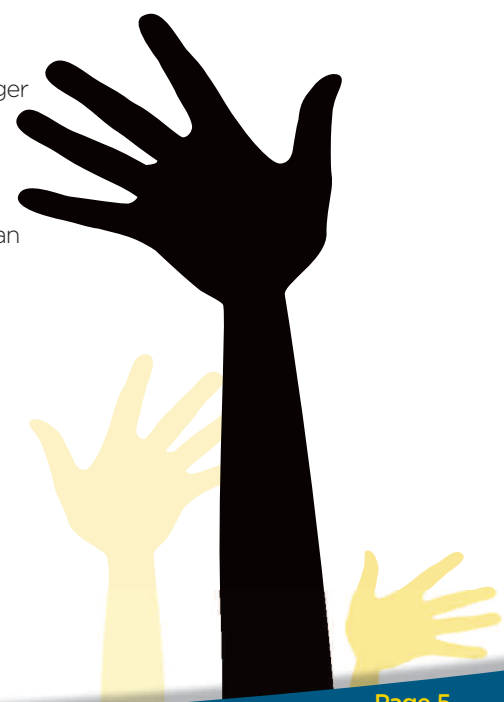
In order to achieve this vision it will be necessary to take the steps detailed under the headings below and throughout the remainder of this document.

In parallel with this strategy, there is a commitment to produce a revised Racial Equality Strategy, a Sexual Orientation Strategy and a Single Equality Act. It is understood that the good relations duty should extend to all Section 75 categories.

Economics of a Shared Future

There is also an inextricable relationship between the creation of a shared future and the economic transformation of Northern Ireland. Any strategy for a shared future must recognise that continued divisions limit Northern Ireland's potential, and that the promotion of good relations will bring opportunities for enhanced economic and social progress. The Executive must put in place the mechanisms, policies and programmes to address the economic, social and financial aspects of division and to assist in the creation of a shared future.

- ✓ A practical and costed plan to tackle the financial and other cost implications of divisions within the next and following Programmes for Government and Budgets.
- ✓ All major policies will be proofed for their potential impact on sharing versus separation through Shared Future Policy Proofing.
- ✓ All Departments will conduct formal audits of their budgets and publish their assessment of the impact of societal division.
- ✓ All Departments will be obliged to actively encourage de-segregation and to promote cohesion, sharing and integration within their policies and spending plans.
- ✓ Shared future considerations will be fully integrated into all future departmental economic and social policies and programmes, including the next Economic Strategy.
- ✓ Resources will be made available to enable investments in resources support longer term reduction in hostility and the normalisation of sharing, either through the provision of shared goods, facilities and services to meet demand or to provide support and security for those making the choice to mix, share or integrate.
- ✓ New leisure, educational, health, social and community facilities will be built with an explicit objective to ensuring optimal and open public use.
- ✓ A comprehensive study will be commissioned into labour mobility in Northern Ireland, and provide further recommendations for action.
- ✓ There will be a comprehensive and pro-active focus on area planning and sustainable schools, and full appreciation of the financial and economic benefits, alongside the social and educational aspects, of shared and integrated options.



Children and Young People

Too many people grow up without meeting or getting to know someone from outside their own tradition, cultural background or political opinion. It is vital that policy is directed to support a shared future in which every young person has worthwhile opportunities to engage with others from as early as possible we cannot delay intervention until adolescence.

Children growing up within divided societies continues to perpetuate division, this must be addressed, by getting to the roots of the problem facing our children and young people with real and meaningful action, not just papering over the cracks, tackling issues early on not relying on last minute intervention.

A range of measures will be undertaken to provide real opportunities for children and young people and promote a shared future, including:

- ✓ Developing an inter-departmental strategy to tackle youth alienation, sectarianism and racism, alongside detailed action plans developed in partnership with young people and youth providers.
- ✓ Taking a long-term strategic approach to working with young people outside school hours to promote a shared society.

A Shared Approach to Education

The Belfast Agreement promised “initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education.” Yet our education provision still remains highly segregated with the vast majority of children and young people still educated within a single-identity setting.

Shared education also offers a viable and necessary alternative which has been tragically underdeveloped over decades in Northern Ireland. Shared education can deliver a range of financial, social and educational benefits, including:

- ✓ Reducing the cost of maintaining around 85,000 empty school places.
- ✓ Directing funding towards pupils rather than the maintenance of the school estate.
- ✓ Allowing children to develop their own identity.
- ✓ Making it easier to standardise the quality of education and therefore to address inequalities.

With these benefits in mind the Executive will:

- ✓ Set a minimum target for 20% of children being educated in integrated schools by 2020.
- ✓ Make the process for schools transforming to integrated status easier.
- ✓ All future new school builds should be integrated, bar in exceptional cases.
- ✓ Introduce a Shared and Integrated Education Bill.
- ✓ Revise duty on Department of Education to encourage integrated education and extend to Education and Skills Authority.
- ✓ The potential for greater rationalisation and sharing within teacher training will be explored.

Sharing the Spaces in which We Live, Work and Play

Public Space

All public space in Northern Ireland should be open and shared, however, evidence shows that fear affects our basic choices such as where people live, what they wear and where they access basic public services. It is essential that we actively seek to create and foster shared neighbourhoods, workplaces and public amenities.

The Executive must work towards safe and open access to all public space in Northern Ireland, no-one should be afraid to go anywhere. It is important to recognise that sharing space does not mean neutral space, rather a place where everyone can celebrate their identities in a vibrant, inclusive manner.

In order to achieve this vision the Executive will:

- ✓ Demonstrate that future public investment will demonstrate that assets can be shared and open to everyone.
- ✓ Bring forward new procedures to ensure that regional planning policies and area plans take account of issues of access.

There will be an aspiration to the removal of all interface barriers over time, in collaboration and partnership with local communities. This approach should allow the setting of baseline targets for a minimal reduction of 20% in the number of interface structures over the next ten years, with a further 30% removed within fifteen years.

Housing

All housing – as well as the streets and all public space within every residential area – must be accessible and welcoming to all, irrespective of background, without any risk of intimidation or threat. In practice, however, segregation in housing continues to represent a significant barrier to the growth of a more united community.

People's decisions over where they live should be made based on location of the provision not on fear of living elsewhere. We must work to remove 'fear' as factor within peoples housing choices.

The Executive will therefore commit to the following actions:

- ✓ Setting and delivering a target through proactive and inter-Departmental programmes, that by 2025 all evidence of threat, intimidation and exclusive claims to territorial monopoly by any group or cause will be eliminated in Northern Ireland and mixed and shared housing must be considered normal throughout the region and at all levels of income.
- ✓ Commissioning a landmark "Shared Housing Review" of housing provision in Northern Ireland undertaken by a commission of experts to produce detailed recommendations by 2014.

Flags

The Belfast Agreement settled the deeply divisive question of nationality. This has profound implications to the question of flag flying in Northern Ireland. In particular, it insists:

- 1 In matters of state sovereignty, Northern Ireland is and remains part of the United Kingdom, until or unless people decide otherwise.
- 2 In matters of nationality and culture we have divided and overlapping identities.
- 3 In matters of esteem all must be treated with dignity and in a spirit of equality.

With this in mind the Executive must:

- ✓ Agree that the Union Flag is flown over public and civic buildings in Northern Ireland on designated days as defined by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- ✓ Carry out a consultation on the possibility of developing shared symbols for Northern Ireland.

Whilst this will effectively deal with the official display of National symbols, there should be zero tolerance of paramilitary symbols, there is no place in a normal society to celebrate a culture of violence and intimidation.

The inappropriate use of national symbols is also an issue. People have the right to display any legal symbol from their home. It must be recognised that this does not extend to street furniture.

There is a need for work between Government and statutory agencies to regulate the display of flags and to take enforcement when it is required. A number of steps could be taken to this including:

- ✓ All flags/emblems on the public highway should be subject to clear regulation by statutory authorities.
- ✓ All permanent emblems should be subject to planning consent.
- ✓ Flags and other celebratory material could be displayed in a regulated, time bound manner by application.
- ✓ This approach would sit consistently with the idea that all space in Northern Ireland is shared and cannot be claimed by anyone permanently or exclusively.

A Shared Culture

We are committed to a vibrant, lively society where everyone is free to celebrate their identity or identities whilst respecting the rights of others

The Executive will lead a new conversation and take actions to ensure culture is a source of enrichment for all.

To ensure this process develops the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure should:

- ✓ Develop a framework of principles for inter-cultural dialogue and diversity so spending decisions are informed by shared future considerations, this must be passed to all DCAL's arm's length bodies.

Parades

The Executive will establish a working group on parades and protests which involve all political parties and representatives of civic society with terms of reference which:

- ✓ Complies with all appropriate Human Rights requirements.
- ✓ Is compliant with the requirements to provide and protect shared space in all parts of Northern Ireland.
- ✓ Includes recommendations on mediation and arbitration.
- ✓ Establishes a mechanism for binding arbitration in disputed cases which commands full political support.
- ✓ Regulates and assigns responsibility for the behaviour of all those participating in parades and protests including agreement on penalties and consequences for future participation.
- ✓ Produces a draft code of conduct for parades and protests.

Pending any Agreement on an alternative, the parties will give their support to the Parades Commission.

Dealing with the Past

In order to complete the process of reconciliation and to build a shared future we must resolve the issues and address the hurt that remains in society as a result of the past.

In order to deal with the past and its legacy it is essential the Executive will engage with the British and Irish Governments to agree terms for a cross-party talks process, aimed at reaching agreement on arrangements for dealing with the past. This will take account of the Commission for Victims and Survivors' Report on Dealing with the Past

Delivering a Shared Future – Implementation of the Strategy

The Executive will establish a Shared Future Ministerial Panel, comprising all members of the Executive, and attended by senior representatives from a range of statutory agencies and community partners.

The Executive will also develop the work of the Community Relations Council into a dedicated, standing, regional Shared Future Council

Within the Review of Public Administration, Councils will be required to consider the potential good relations consequences of all investments as part of the process of community planning. Councils will develop 'Shared Future Plans' to demonstrate how their interventions are fair, open and effective in both addressing emergent community tensions and their longer-term causes.



Introduction – the Vision, Context, Approach and Way Forward

The peace process has provided an historic opportunity to build a shared future. To date, Northern Ireland has seen a significant reduction in the use of violence for political ends, and the establishment of devolved political institutions. More and more people have expressed support for shared and integrated services and facilities.

Yet despite this, Northern Ireland still remains characterised by deep divisions, persistent sectarianism and other forms of prejudice, and scarred by segregation.

Peace must be more than just the absence of violence; it must be the presence of reconciliation and the creation of a cohesive and shared society.

Devolution presents a golden opportunity for us to take ownership and responsibility for delivering a radically different future for Northern Ireland, characterised by a community that is reconciled, confident and united – rather than divided, segregated and nervous. Six years on from the restoration of devolution, we cannot afford either further delay or to adopt a minimalist approach to tackling division. Instead, we need to act now, and to act radically with a robust and far-reaching policy framework involving all of our government departments and agencies.

Our Vision

Our collective vision and understanding of a shared future is of:

A shared and integrated society free from intimidation and discrimination and fear, where every member is safe, has opportunities to contribute and participate and is treated fairly and with respect; a truly civic society, underpinned by the shared values of equality, respect for diversity, and a celebration of our interdependence.

Our Context

We recognise that history has left a legacy of deep injury and division that we must address if we are to build a better future. Violence and bitterness in the past continues to impact on many people in the present. The past can also provide important lessons and insights to help shape our future.

Over the years many individuals and organisations have taken forward remarkable work to advance good relations in this society. This work has been supported from a range of funding sources, including public investment through the Community Relations Council and District Council programmes, alongside generous international financial support from the EU Peace Programmes, Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland.

Significant elements of civil society are now organised on a cross-community basis. Most workplaces are integrated, assisted through top-down regulation, and this now has widespread public support. There is evidence of substantial and consistent public support for shared education, housing and leisure pursuits¹. But this aspiration for shared provision is still frustrated, sometimes due to embedded habits or lack of facilities, but too often as a result of fears over security. We know that the dedication and commitment of so many people has made our society a much better place – but there is still much work to do.

Despite the undoubted advances that have been made, sectarianism and racism continue to blight our society and to prevent normal relationships between individuals, groups and neighbourhoods.

Prejudice and violence continue to be real challenges in other fields, including against women, against those who are disabled, or lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Northern Ireland remains characterised by claims to exclusive territory and public space marked out through the use of exclusive communal symbols.

Achieving the vision set out above will require us to tackle deep-rooted issues that have perpetuated segregation, division and intolerance, and caused many people to live separate lives. For as long as we see each other as enemies, cultural identity and expression will have significant impact on good relations.

We utterly reject the notion of parallel and hostile communities, the so-called ‘separate, but equal’ doctrine. There is no such thing as ‘benign apartheid’. Apartheid is a principle of exclusion, discrimination and hostility and is irreconcilable with human rights and democracy.

Yet many urban areas continue to be overshadowed by the physical reminders of the past – with residents living segregated lives in the shadow of dividing structures. People in rural communities also often live separately from their neighbours as a result of experiences, attitudes and behaviours that have been established over generations.²

In addition to the unarguable case that only a shared future is compatible with humanity and democracy, the powerful economic, financial, social and environmental reasons for advancing a shared future are almost as important. This strategy is not only a strategy for peace; it is a gateway to a serious policy addressing the barriers to economic growth and transformation, to tackling poverty and distress and to the creation of jobs. Critical aspects of our economy – such as investment, the attraction and retention of talent and creativity and the expansion of tourism – will not develop unless there is a long-term commitment to an open and shared society. The financial cost of accommodating division is pernicious and deeply embedded in our sectarian system. A shared future would help to address the financial costs of divisions and allow scarce resources to be more efficiently invested in goods, facilities and services for the entire community. Above all, deprivation, which crosses the community divide, cannot be addressed while maintaining hostility and enmity which drains resources and deters investment and growth. There is a very clear correlation between those areas that have suffered most from division and segregation and those that are lowest in terms of a range of health, education and economic indicators.

¹ The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey has demonstrated preference for at least “mixing” within education with 86% expressing a preference for a least “a bit more” mixing within education, 86% within housing and 88% within leisure pursuits. Results available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Community_Relations/index.html

² Bell, Jarman and Harvey, (2010) “Beyond Belfast”. Available at <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/master-beyond-report-web1.pdf>

While separation has generally not been the formal policy of the state, there is no doubt that we have preferred to adapt to the consequences of violence and division rather than address their causes. To a considerable extent, sectarianism has become institutionalised in Northern Ireland society and its public policy.

The clearest example of this is the institutionalised sectarianism of Assembly designations and the related 'cross-community' voting system. The language of the 'two communities' is widespread within public policy, with many policy initiatives based on the premise of 'our area' and 'your area' where minorities are treated as unwelcome interlopers and are not perceived to be safe. There is therefore substantial duplication in the provision of goods, facilities and services by both the public and private sectors. New so-called 'peace walls' were erected between the 1994 cease-fires and the devolution of justice in 2010, and we continue to see disorder and hatred expressed at 'flashpoints' of cultural contention.

Sectarianism is not just something that is practised between Catholics and Protestants, but is multidimensional and multidirectional. It exists when preconceived generalisations or assumptions are made about others. Prejudice literally means that people are pre-judged. This includes the pigeon-holing of others into fixed identities, while ignoring existing cross-community relationships and the desire of others not to be associated with either of the two largest communal identities. Sectarianism embodies the notion that life is fate that each of us is born into an unchanging identity and is defined and limited for ever by that identity.

Public policy grounded on an assumption of 'two communities' never accurately reflected reality in Northern Ireland. While the population of Northern Ireland has been deeply politically divided on grounds of ethno-nationalist identity, we do not believe that this overrides our common humanity nor determines that the future must look like the past.

The language of 'two communities' or 'both communities' always ignored people who either could not, or would not, be simply labelled as unionists or nationalists, Protestants or Catholics. Some come from mixed marriages, are part of ethnic minorities, or simply choose not to be described in such terms, preferring a more complex, multicultural and pluralist self-identification. Many Protestants and Catholics, and unionists and nationalists, often have more in common with people across the perceived 'divide' than they do with each other. Above all, violence in support of the 'two communities' idea has forced generations of people into choices about security which have embedded hatred and condemned others to silence and marginalisation.

Our community is becoming increasingly diverse. The old simplicity that there are two sorts of people here, where Protestant = British = Unionist, or Catholic = Irish = Nationalist, can no longer be the basis of progress³. The emerging vision of a united community, based on both equality and good relations, allows for a society at ease with its diversity. We recognise within this context that some people may adopt multiple identities. The increase in the numbers of people describing themselves as 'Northern Irish' in the 2011 Census is indicative of this rapid change.

³ The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey shows that the number of people identifying with these traditional labels is becoming smaller, in 2010, 34% of people identified themselves as Unionist, 20% as Nationalist and 45% as neither, this is compared with 2005 when 40% of people identified themselves as Unionists, 22% as Nationalist and 35% as neither. Results available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Political_Attitudes/UNINATID.html

The arrival of new minorities has changed the visible face of our towns and cities and brought new opportunities and challenges. The emergence of other identities, such as the vibrant Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, which cut across the traditional divide, has marked a clear and positive shift in attitudes, and the importance of change to address issues of disability now shapes public policy and expectations. Society stands to benefit in a situation where people can hold open, mixed and multiple identities, can experience different cultures and express their individual creatively. We now have a new opportunity which we cannot afford to miss.

Our Approach

We recognise and respect each person as being of equal worth; each individual citizen is a foundation stone of democratic society.

We acknowledge that people identify with and belong to religious, ethnic, cultural and regional communities. These however are not permanent or stable, but are open and fluid. People can have open, mixed and multiple identities. They can belong to many groups, have a complex identity, and have loyalties to different structures and levels of government.

Each person is different. Citizens have different needs. When equality ignores difference, uniformity of treatment leads to injustice and inequality. Equal treatment requires full account to be taken of legitimate difference.

Decisions binding all members of society are made through democratic and purely political means. Every citizen has the right to seek to change the law but all citizens must accept the rule of law. Human rights are an important tool in formalising our commitment to freedom and justice for all, and are rooted in the central values of democracy. Our political institutions are built and depend upon the foundation stones of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Society needs to have a common sense of purpose and membership, as well as being respectful of diversity. Political institutions are tasked with maximising and protecting the freedom of every citizen, while recognising their mutual interdependence and fostering a common sense of belonging and shared identity among them.

Locally, the concept of 'community relations' has been traditionally applied to relations between Protestants and Catholics. The more recent concept of 'good relations' however has a wider reach extending under the formal terms of Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act to "different religious belief, political opinion or racial group".⁴

However, this good relations obligation is limited in a number of aspects. First, it is mechanistic and compliance driven. Building relations must be about more than meeting obligations; it must be understood and developed as something that it is beneficial for society.

Second, it does not extend to all of the Section 75(1)⁵ categories. There are issues that affect certain sections of society than cannot be understood or addressed through a narrow prism of equality. There are issues of relations between people from different sections that go beyond mere equality that must be addressed.

⁴ Northern Ireland Act (1998) Sect 75 (2).

⁵ Northern Ireland Act (1998) Sect 75 (1).

Third, good relations to some may only extend to improving relations between groups of people that may remain fundamentally separate. The degree of separation, and the associated costs and lost opportunities, need not be challenged or overcome.

Alliance believes that Northern Ireland must aim beyond a narrow conception of 'Good Relations' to a society which is:

- ✓ **Cohesive** – we work together for the common good through the democratic process, on the principles of human rights and equality.
- ✓ **Shared** – all members of society belong and participate in public life, sharing public resources equitably.
- ✓ **Integrated** – all parts of society co-operate together to create a greater whole.

In the face of the legacy of bereavement, injury and division in this society we believe that this requires us to emphasise our commitment to reconciliation and prioritise:

- ✓ The development of a shared vision of an interdependent society.
- ✓ Acknowledging and dealing with the past.
- ✓ Building positive relationships across established and new divisions.
- ✓ Tackling the legacy of sectarianism in our cultures and attitudes.
- ✓ Acting to ensure that sectarianism and prejudice play no part in social, economic and political life.⁶

Moving beyond 'Good Relations' versus 'Equality'?

Too much time and energy has been wasted on arguments about whether 'equality' is more important than 'good relations'. We reject this distinction. Commitments and policies on 'equality' and 'good relations' must be applied to reinforce each other rather than set in opposition. There is a clear relationship between the two. Any society which intimidates or generates fear among some of its citizens or systematically excludes or discriminates against them cannot be equal. In turn, a shared society cannot be delivered without equality. Therefore to achieve equality we must insist on inclusion and to achieve inclusion we must insist on equality.

Equality arguments must not be used to undermine good relations and good relations arguments must not be made to undermine equality. Good relations must not be an excuse to ignore or deny significant issues of injustice or exclusion. Rather than having a hierarchical relationship between the two, they are interdependent. A hierarchy between equality and good relations must be avoided as it too often masks the maintenance of a de facto hostile and parallel reality, in which there is a shared out future, rather than a shared future.

⁶ Hamber and Kelly, (2004) "Reconciliation: a working definition".

Our Way Forward

The response to the public consultation on the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration in 2010 underlined the desire across society to achieve a better future, and illustrated the disillusion with political leadership on these issues. The consultation also highlighted the need for a clear, positive and shared vision for the future as well as a road map for its achievement.

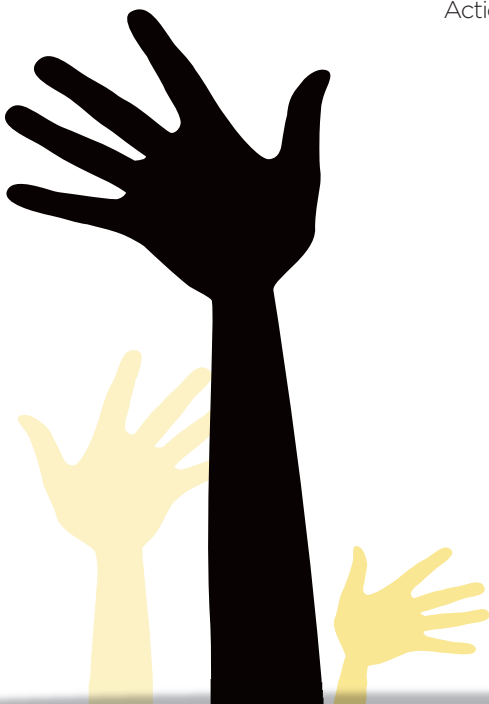
This Strategy only represents one aspect of the Executive's commitments to promote equality and a shared future. We have a clear understanding our good relations extends to all of the Section 75 categories, including race and sexual orientation.

In parallel to this Strategy, we are committed to the publication of a refreshed Racial Equality Strategy and a Sexual Orientation Strategy, which underline's our commitment to address all divisions in our society seriously and with measures which are specifically designed to ensure real progress in each case. We are also committed to a Single Equality Act for Northern Ireland.

It is no longer sustainable for divisions in this society and their manifestations to be managed but never tackled. The peace process has presented a historic opportunity to create a lasting transformation of our divided society into a shared and integrated society. This will require a systemic and strategic approach across political, economic, civic and social life – and at a political, community and individual level.

We must now take the opportunity to harness this collective commitment, effort and vision. It will require committed leadership, comprehensive policy and a commitment of up-front resources. We do not under-estimate the scale of the challenges and the range of issues that impact on people and the places where they live and interact. But we are resolved to bringing about positive change in people's lives and realising tangible improvements for areas and for people who may feel they have missed out on the benefits of peace. We recognise that more work needs to be done to resolve our challenging legacy. This strategy cannot – and is not designed to – provide an answer to all of the issues raised by the past but it does play a part in setting a framework for how we might collectively deal with the issues that impact on us today.

We set out how we intend to achieve these objectives in the following Chapters and Action Plan.



Economics of a Shared Future

The social benefits of building a shared future for everyone in Northern Ireland are obvious. But there is also an inextricable relationship between the creation of a shared future and the economic transformation of Northern Ireland. Indeed, a united and safe community built on the rule of law is a necessity for the establishment of a successful economy.

The Economic Strategy presents this vision for 2030:

“An economy characterised by a sustainable and growing private sector, where a greater number of firms compete in global markets and there is growing employment and prosperity for all.”

The creation of a shared future is a critical condition for realising this economic vision.

We must break the vicious cycle where the increased prosperity we need in order to assist in breaking down divisions is itself hampered by the existence of those divisions. Divisions and violence increases the costs of doing business, segments markets, impedes full labour market mobility, and deters investment decisions. Moreover, the on-going financial costs of managing a divided society create opportunity costs that restrict the ability of the Executive to invest in public services or the transformation of the economy.

Any strategy for a shared future must recognise that continued divisions limit Northern Ireland’s potential, and that the promotion of good relations will bring opportunities for enhanced economic and social progress. The Executive must put in place the mechanisms, policies and programmes to address the economic, social and financial aspects of division and to assist in the creation of a shared future.

Financial Costs of Division

Maintaining a divided society results in significant, wasteful and unsustainable distortions in how public expenditure and resources are allocated. These distortions present a considerable opportunity cost against further investment in shared public services or more ambitious investment in transforming the economy.

The costs of a divided society are apparent in four respects: direct costs, indirect costs, hidden costs and opportunity costs.

Direct Costs

First, there are the direct costs of policing riots, other civil disturbances and parades, the distortions to policing and criminal justice that arise from the security threat, and the costs to a wide range of agencies in repairing damaged buildings and facilities and of managing the prison service. These distortions – based upon the costs in comparable regions – could be as much as £500m per annum in terms of an upper estimate.⁷ While these direct costs may be smaller than the indirect costs that come from duplication, they are often a reflection of the practice of simply managing divisions, rather than seeking sustainable solutions. A key outcome of this strategy is to change the dynamics of society to reduce and remove these costs.

⁷ Deloitte, Research into the financial cost of the divide, April 2007, Section 7.7.

Indirect Costs

Second, there are the indirect costs of providing duplicate goods, facilities and services for separate sections of the community, either implicitly or explicitly. This duplication includes prisons, schools, GP surgeries, job centres, community centres, leisure centres and even bus stops and bus routes. These costs are borne not just by the public sector, but by the private sector too.

One of the most significant areas of duplication is in our education system, where delivery is substantially distorted by division. The vast majority of schools serve one or other side of the community, often on an exclusive basis. This is compounded by the existence of a number of different educational sectors: controlled; voluntary; Catholic-maintained; Irish-medium; and integrated.

As demonstrated by the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA), expenditure per capita on education in Northern Ireland is significantly ahead of the UK average and all other UK regions.⁸ While this is to an extent a reflection of the higher number of single-sex schools, a more rural character, and a higher school age population, these are also factors in places such as Scotland and Wales with lower levels of expenditure. Therefore, it primarily reflects the segregated nature of our education system

Due to segregation, Northern Ireland has a greater number of small schools. Small schools cost disproportionately more to maintain per pupil, and budget allocations are inevitably skewed towards buildings at the expense of investment in pupils and teachers.

Across the education sector, there is a slow awakening to the problems of over provision of facilities and massive surplus of school places, especially with falling enrolment. Current issues include:

- ✓ Almost 85,000 empty school places.
- ✓ Falling school enrolment, notwithstanding the short term demographic blip.
- ✓ Inefficiencies in school estate leading to excessive maintenance and running costs.
- ✓ Inefficiencies in school support services e.g., school transport, catering and cleaning.

As a result of these problems and a failure to move towards a shared system, not only do we have the highest level of spending on education per capita of any part of the UK, we also spend less per pupil than anywhere else. Education funding is being eaten up through over-administration and the over provision of partially empty buildings. Budgets are becoming skewed and with too much money locked up in capital, the pressure for cuts falls on teachers, pupils, transport, support and special needs.

The additional burden of segregated education could be potentially as much as £300m per year.⁹ This is what we mean when we say that a shared future will not only bring social benefits, but also economic benefits, with the potential to use resources more efficiently and effectively. In the immediate term, the potential for collaboration between schools and across sectors could realise up to £80m per annum.

⁸ HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA). Available at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pesa2011_section4.htm

⁹ See generally Oxford Economics, (2010) "Developing the case for integrate education". Available at <http://www.ief.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Economic-case.pdf>

The duplication within our education system doesn't end at the classroom. Northern Ireland also has five different providers of teacher training. These specialist training colleges, by nature of their duplication, are not financially viable. Yet, rather than address the issue of unnecessary duplication, they have been allowed to diversify into other areas apart from teacher training in order to maintain their financial viability, with further premiums being paid by the Department for Employment and Learning in recognition of their small size. This inefficiency is compounded in the context of a local surplus of qualified teachers and an increasingly competitive job market.

Inefficiency and wastage through duplication is not limited to our education system. Recent research has shown how segregation and often hidden community problems in rural areas also distort the provision of development programmes, and increase opportunity costs.¹⁰ While it is almost impossible to disaggregate the effects of segregation from other factors such as deprivation, poverty and morbidity in explaining higher health costs per capita in Northern Ireland, this research has indicated that some facilities are disproportionately accessed on the basis of religious background. Duplication in the provision of job centres and social security offices provide other examples of inefficiencies within our public services delivery model.

Hidden Costs

If the direct and indirect costs provide the first and second areas of additional expenditure linked to our divided society, the third area is hidden factors. Clear examples of this are the costs related to housing and planning. In housing residential segregation creates significant cost pressures for the housing sector. Demographic imbalances and senses of territoriality create considerable inefficiencies. This comes on top of the direct costs of interfaces, buffer zones and security adaption of properties. There are also opportunity costs from the underdevelopment of blighted or segregated land, such as derelict houses in North Belfast that can't be used due to perceptions of territoriality.

Planning of residential housing in the Greater Belfast area on a segregated basis leads to additional public transport costs, such as the spatial orientation of bus routes, and even the over provision of bus stops in certain areas to, in effect, service different parts of the community.

In addition divisions contribute to the size of the carbon footprint in Northern Ireland – which is the largest in the United Kingdom. This may be due in part to barriers to efficient mobility, such as people having to travel further to work in specific areas. Divisions therefore contribute to the economic and financial impact of environmental degradation and the cost of addressing environmental problems.

Other hidden costs arise from the clear relationship between division and deprivation. This is seen in the strong correlation between those areas that feature the highest rates of deprivation and those areas that exhibit the highest levels of residential segregation. Division and deprivation are locked into a vicious, reinforcing circle.

Divisions impact on employment prospects, levels of education and training and correlate with deprivation. They limit people's opportunities to mix with one another and to develop to their full potential.

Alongside investment in anti-poverty measures, education, training and up-skilling initiatives, employment programmes, better public health and improved public transport, a comprehensive shared future strategy can break this lock.

¹⁰ Bell, Jarman and Harvey, (2010) "Beyond Belfast". Available at <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/master-beyond-report-web1.pdf>

Opportunity Costs

Finally there are the opportunity costs of a weakened economy, lost inward investment and unfulfilled tourism potential. Nobody who witnessed the impact of the flag protests on the economy of Belfast City Centre in 2012 can be under any doubt of the consequences of division and violence for all of our futures. In a global recession, these additional costs impact directly on the service industry, on visitor numbers from abroad, on our ability to attract highly skilled labour, either from abroad or from among those who have left Northern Ireland to study, and on our prospects as a location for significant foreign direct investment.

The Northern Ireland economy is still structurally dependent on the public sector to a significant degree and performing well below its potential capacity. Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) by the Treasury indicate that Northern Ireland is paying a much higher premium than other regions to attract investment and to account for its disadvantages.¹¹ This cost could be as much as £144m per year.

Over the past decades, violence and division have constrained the ability of the Northern Ireland economy to adapt to changing global, European, national and local economic circumstances and to restructure. Numerous structural difficulties within the local economy have been exacerbated by local divisions and in turn these divisions, and associated political violence, have constrained efforts of the government and the private sector to recover.

The structural problems in the Northern Ireland economy include:

- ✓ Gross Value Added (GVA) which is only 80% of the UK average, indicating a significant productivity gap. This is mirrored in terms of Northern Ireland's regional GVA in the context of the European Union.
- ✓ Reliance on significant financial subvention from UK Treasury, on a greater pro rata scale than any other region.
- ✓ A private sector that is too small, resulting in a public sector share of GDP at approximately 70%.
- ✓ Regularly higher levels of unemployment than the UK average over the past four decades.
- ✓ Consistently highest level of economic inactivity within the UK.
- ✓ Low levels of labour market participation.
- ✓ Weak profile in skills with too many people with low or no qualifications.
- ✓ Reliance on public sector assistance to attract and sustain employment.

Violence and division and the symbols of that division, have acted as a major deterrent to both internal and external investors. It can first influence decisions over whether to invest at all, and then decisions over which areas to locate such investments. It has similarly impacted on our ability to attract and retain talent and to encourage entrepreneurs reflected, for example, in the lower percentage of international students in our universities.

¹¹ HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA). Available at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pesa2011_section4.htm

Tourism has also suffered, with the sector providing a lower share of GDP than in other comparable neighbouring regions. Research has shown tourism revenue in Northern Ireland has flat-lined since 1976, but grown rapidly in the Republic of Ireland by comparison. There are similar conditions and potential opportunities in any comparison between both parts of the island of Ireland. Divisions and violence have been the main difference, and must account for a large part of the divergent development and costs to the Northern Ireland economy. In particular, even recent images of civil unrest and riots deter tourism.

Labour mobility is critical to an efficient economy. However divisions and segregation affect labour mobility and therefore employment levels. Many people are reluctant to work in certain areas or to cross-interfaces as a result of perceived or actual chill factors. Limitations on mobility are related to levels of deprivation. The organisation of public transport is also a contributory factor.

Fair Employment legislation has led to a mixed/integrated workforce. However, integration is less evident within smaller employers that fall below the formal monitoring. Furthermore, it is possible that the achievement of fair representation overall in some large businesses or organisations may mask segmentation of workers from different backgrounds at different locations.

If employment is not to be concentrated entirely in neutralised business parks or in identified shared areas, we must work with local communities to remove intimidation, increase mobility and access. Anything which inhibits the movement of workers inhibits the development of our economy. Increased connectivity will open up options for individuals to consider working beyond the area in which they live and enhance opportunities to meet and co-operate across geographical and social divisions.

There are also additional costs of doing business in a divided Northern Ireland that are borne by the private sector, as some businesses have to adjust their service delivery models to take account of segmented markets.

By contrast, there is considerable evidence that open, diverse and tolerant societies are much more successful in attracting and sustaining skilled workers and creative talent. This is likely to become an even greater feature in the future as globalisation further consolidates, and skilled labour becomes even more mobile.¹²

Quantifying the Cost of Division

This issue was explored by Jeremy Harbison in the background paper provided to OFMDFM in January 2002 which was the precursor for a new policy on community relations – a new policy that eventually became ‘A Shared Future’. When ‘A Shared Future’ was finally published in March 2005, under Direct Rule, it recognised that there was a strong financial and economic imperative to build a shared future, declaring that the concept of ‘separate but equal’ was socially and economically unsustainable.

In 2005, ‘A Shared Future’ agreed that:

- ✓ Separate but equal was not an option.
- ✓ Parallel living and the provision of parallel services are unsustainable, both morally and economically.
- ✓ Policy that simply adapts to segregation, rather than challenging it, results in inefficient resource allocations.

¹² Richard Florida, (2005) “The Flight of the Creative Class. The New Global Competition for Talent”.

Within the first shared future action plan, launched in April 2006 under Direct Rule, OFMDFM was committed to commissioning detailed research into the cost of the division. This led to the Deloitte Report, finalised in April 2007, just before the restoration of devolution.¹³ Its terms of reference were to:

- ✓ Identify and quantify the broad range of costs arising from/attribution to the divisions in Northern Ireland.
- ✓ Examine the pattern and scale of public expenditure in Northern Ireland in response to this division.
- ✓ Assess the efficiency or otherwise of the current system of service delivery.

Despite indicating some potentially significant savings, the Deloitte report was effectively suppressed by OFMDFM after devolution, and it was stressed that it would not form a basis for policy. The report only became public as a result of a Freedom of Information request.

We have estimated that the cost of division amounts to £1 billion every year. This figure has been substantially validated by the Deloitte Report (2007) which placed an upper estimate of the costs of division at potentially £1.5 billion per annum.¹⁴ However, given that this includes an estimate of what does not happen rather than merely the cost of what currently takes place, it must remain necessarily somewhat uncertain. But importantly, these estimated distortions represent up to 14% of the annual Northern Ireland budget of £11.5m.

The financial costs of division are an unjustifiable burden at the best of times, but become even greater at times of financial difficulties. By contrast, there are significant savings to be found through investing to save from the creation of a cohesive, shared and integrated society. There is a duty and responsibility upon government to re-orientate our economy from being the inward looking and associated with conflict to a globally open and welcoming place for business and investment.

The Way Forward

It is essential that the Executive and Assembly acknowledge the financial and other cost implications of divisions in Northern Ireland, and commit to addressing them. The savings will be redirected into reforming public services and rebalancing the local economy.

¹³ Deloitte, Research into the financial cost of the divide, April 2007.

¹⁴ Deloitte, (2007) "Research into the financial cost of the Northern Ireland divide". Available at: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/segreat/docs/deloitte0407.pdf>

The Executive must therefore take the following actions:

- ✓ Acknowledge the financial and other cost implications of division in Northern Ireland, and commit to presenting a practical and costed plan to tackle these issues within the next and following Programmes for Government and Budgets.
- ✓ Building on the initiatives taken within the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Justice, all major policies will be proofed for their potential impact on sharing versus separation through Shared Future Policy Proofing.
- ✓ All Departments will conduct formal audits of their budgets and publish their assessment of the impact of societal division.
- ✓ All Departments will be obliged to actively encourage de-segregation and to promote cohesion, sharing and integration within their policies and spending plans. Proposals which are communally confined must undergo a cost benefit analysis alongside an integrated alternative.
- ✓ Shared future considerations will be fully integrated into all future Departmental economic and social policies and programmes, including the next Economic Strategy.
- ✓ Accept that there may need to be further short term and medium term investments in resources to support longer term reduction in hostility and the normalisation of sharing, either through the provision of shared goods, facilities and services to meet demand or to provide support and security for those making the choice to mix, share or integrate.
- ✓ Ensure that public sector agencies build new leisure, educational, health, social and community facilities with an explicit objective to ensuring sharing, without any impact of intimidation. Best practice must also be developed regarding the design of the urban environment, in order to maximise cross-community integration.
- ✓ The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will fully research the extent and consequences for service provision of segregation and isolation within the countryside, building on the Rural Action Plan.
- ✓ The Department for Employment and Learning will initiate a comprehensive study into labour mobility in Northern Ireland, and provide further recommendations for action.
- ✓ The Department of Education will more pro-actively pursue its policies on area planning and sustainable schools, and more effectively link these two aspects of policy together, and fully appreciate the financial and economic benefits, alongside the social and educational aspects, of shared and integrated options
- ✓ The Department for the Environment will recognise that segregation contributes to Northern Ireland's carbon footprint, and ensure that it is addressed as part of efforts to meet carbon reduction targets.
- ✓ The Department of Health, Social Services, and Public Safety will audit the use of its health and social services facilities for different relative uses by different sections of the community, and explore the options for increased sharing.
- ✓ The Department for Regional Development will explore the costs involved in providing public transport within the context of residential segregation. It will also recognise its responsibilities, through its strategic planning function, to ensure that opportunities for interconnection, cross-regional and cross city travel and integrated planning for school transport are fully realised in regional planning documents, including the current revision of the Regional Development Strategy.
- ✓ The Department of Social Development will pro-actively promote and develop mixed housing and must view it as the default model for the provision of social housing. Urban Planning and Regeneration principles will be reviewed to ensure a strong emphasis on shared space and integrated land use. Community Development Strategy and Resource planning will prioritise inter-community activity.



A Shared Future for our Children and Young People

As the 'Childhood in Transition' Report¹⁵ points out, direct or indirect exposure to the legacy of conflict and "pervasive" sectarianism continues to shape young lives. Too many young people grow up without meeting or getting to know someone from outside their own tradition, cultural background or political opinion. The legacy of the conflict and the romanticisation of brutal violence continue to impact on the everyday lives of those born since the ceasefires.¹⁶

Residential patterns, the splintered education system, the physical divisions in some urban settings and the invisible cultural separations in many other areas, continue to act as real barriers. Unless we act swiftly, we will miss this historic opportunity to break the cycle of sectarianism and intolerance.

Alienation among young people is deepened where long-term deprivation, systemic sectarianism and low educational attainment combine to generate a spiral of multiple deprivation.

The Executive now has in place both a Strategy for Child Poverty and a Strategy for Those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs), entitled 'Pathways to Success'.

Alongside this Shared Future strategy, we will therefore also support the delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy and the NEETs Strategy as well as a strong commitment to improving educational attainment for all. The priority of all Executive policies in relation to children and young people must be to promote measurable progress in tackling these three issues over the next five years.

It is therefore vital that policy for children and young people is directed to support the emergence of a shared future in which every young person has worthwhile opportunities to engage with others, explore differences and participate in constructive and creative activity. This requires decisive political leadership and the development of a strong policy framework in which children and young people are supported.

¹⁵ McAlister, Scraton and Haydon, (2009) "Childhood in transition". Available at http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Childhood_in_Transition_1.pdf

¹⁶ Bell, Hansson and McCaffery, (2010) "The Troubles aren't history yet". Available at <http://www.publicachievement.com/PublicAchievement/files/90/908687b0-cfeb-46f7-8098-d3ab650d4f8d.pdf>

Early Years

Research shows that sectarian and racist attitudes and behaviours can manifest in childhood; we cannot delay intervention until adolescence. From an early age children must be encouraged and enabled to explore difference and to learn what it means to live as part of an interdependent, inclusive society. We have a duty to provide our children with the opportunity to live and learn in a culture that is open, fair and tolerant, where violence and threat on grounds of difference is regarded as unthinkable.

Measurable good relations priorities will be explicitly incorporated into the early-years curriculum.

The Executive will bring forward an Early Years Strategy that includes specific commitments to promote tolerance and inclusion as important steps in reducing racism and sectarianism in later years, including options for work with parents and carers.

Support for Youth Work and Young People

The current arrangements for addressing sectarianism and racism in the area of young people have been unfocussed and too reliant on last minute intervention. While many youth projects and organisations are involved in diversionary schemes and preventative initiatives that engage young people throughout the year, too many schemes are short-term in nature, and focussed on addressing symptoms rather than causes.

Responsibility for supporting young people in government is currently divided between a wide variety of Departments. Over the years many ground-breaking initiatives have been developed in youth work, often with the support of the International Fund for Ireland and the EU PEACE Programmes. To date however, models of good practice in single organisations (for example Spirit of Enniskillen, Youth Comm, Youth Action, Youth Initiatives, 1825 Project, Corpus Christi Youth Centre, Lurgan Town Project, Community Relations in Schools, Public Achievement) have not been fully integrated into changed practice across the system.

Building on this approach, the Executive will take the following actions:

- ✓ In consultation with young people and youth service providers, complete a review of existing anti-sectarian and anti-racist youth work and identify best practice and make recommendations for replicating such practice within six months. This must include proposals on developing the JEDI process and integrating anti-prejudice experiences for young people within all statutory youth services.
- ✓ Recognising that the current CRED (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity) policy developed in 2010 is too narrowly focussed on the formal content of curriculum and insufficiently supported to nurture a shared society and that its introduction also resulted in the elimination of Departmental resources for existing work to support inter-community engagement among young people. The Department of Education must bring forward a new resources plan to support active engagement of all 12-18 year olds on issues of sectarianism, racism and discrimination.
- ✓ Urgently review the Social Investment Fund to ensure that all measures supported by it maximise progress towards a shared society and tackle the interplay between violence, division and poverty among children and young people.
- ✓ Introduce shared future proofing to ensure that all children and youth programmes funded by the Executive include measures to promote a shared future and do not reinforce sectarian divisions or embed the influence of paramilitary organisations.
- ✓ In addition to mainstreaming the commitments within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensure that the recommendations of this strategy relating to children and young people are mainstreamed within the Children and Young People's 10 Year Strategy and Action Plan.
- ✓ Ensure delivery of 'Pathways to Success'¹⁷, the Executive's Strategy for those Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEETs) and the Youth Employment Scheme. Addressing barriers to labour market participation, mentoring, and providing opportunities are critical if we are to give young people a stake in their society.
- ✓ Review and overhaul the strategy underpinning the Contested Spaces Programme, currently jointly funded by OFMDFM and Atlantic Philanthropies, to ensure that the generous funding achieves measurable progress on sharing in interface areas, supports the establishment of a sustainable and long term network of childcare provision and youth programmes and is not merely treated as a further pot of additional funding for short term projects.
- ✓ Through consultation with young people and youth providers, develop an inter-departmental strategy to tackle youth alienation, sectarianism and racism in areas of multiple deprivation, including a detailed short, medium and long-term action plan and a clear commitment of resources.
- ✓ Replace any remaining short-term summer intervention strategies with a long-term strategic approach to working with young people outside school hours to promote a shared society. This must include proposals for involving parents and local communities alongside young people.
- ✓ Establish and resource a targeted inter-community volunteering programme for 16-25 year olds.
- ✓ Implement the Executive's Community Safety Strategy to tackle the anti-social behaviour and sectarianism that fuels fear among interface communities.

¹⁷ <http://www.delni.gov.uk/pathways-to-success-consultation-document.pdf>

A Shared Approach to Education

In 1998, the people of Northern Ireland were promised “initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education”¹⁸ by all of the signatories of the Belfast Agreement. Yet the highly segregated nature of our education provision means that the vast majority of children and young people of school age are still educated within a single-identity setting – with little or no exposure to people with other traditions or identities. During its relatively short history, the integrated school movement has demonstrated that children can successfully mix through schooling and that the benefits of that experience stays with them in later life. Shared education also offers a viable and necessary alternative which has been tragically underdeveloped over decades in Northern Ireland.

Shared education can deliver a range of financial, social and educational benefits, including:

- ✓ Reducing the cost of maintaining around 85,000 empty school places.
- ✓ Enabling funding to be directed toward pupils rather than sustaining a divided school estate.
- ✓ Improving sustainability and making it easier to fund the modernisation of the school estate.
- ✓ Achieving financial savings as a result of mainstreaming community relations work in schools.
- ✓ Delivering further savings in administration and management costs through the development of an Educational and Skills Authority.
- ✓ Establishing better opportunities for local interaction with the community and business.
- ✓ Building a system of education that better reflects a society in which more and more people are defining themselves differently, taking into account the growing number of ethnic minority families and an increased number of mixed marriages and mixed relationships.
- ✓ Enabling children and young people to experience a wider mix of relationships and friendships both inside and outside school.
- ✓ Allowing children to develop their own identity as opposed to developing an identity as a result of their schooling.
- ✓ Maximising contact between children from different backgrounds, which would help to address the wider pressures of a divided society in the future.
- ✓ Making it easier to standardise the quality of education and therefore to address inequalities.
- ✓ Protecting local provision, especially where separate schools are under pressure.
- ✓ Allowing for stabilisation of enrolment numbers.
- ✓ Making it easier for a wider choice of subjects to be sustained.
- ✓ Providing a wider choice for pupils in terms of leisure, cultural and sporting activities.

¹⁸ Belfast Agreement (1998), Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity, Section 12. Available at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#rights>

Creating more opportunities for shared and integrated education, with a view to a single overarching education system in Northern Ireland – is a crucial part of improving good relations amongst and for our young people, breaking the cycle of sectarianism and ensuring that the environment of our schools reflects the increasing diversity of our society.

Shared education can be delivered through a range of different models, only some of which are already operated within Northern Ireland. In terms of schools, the models include integrated schools, federations/confederations of schools, shared campuses, mergers/amalgamations, community schools and shared faith schools. There are also further options for shared learning, ranging from shared classes to individual projects. Area learning communities also offer formal opportunities for shared learning on a cross-sectoral basis. In addition, there are examples of what can be described as mixed enrolments, whereby schools within particular sectors without an explicit shared or integrated ethos draw students from a range of different backgrounds.

It must be accepted that for the foreseeable future, there will remain a number of different education sectors. The creation of a single, overarching, shared education system can encompass these different sectors provided that there is effective collaboration between schools on a cross-sectoral basis. Within that system there must be a menu of options, all of which may be pursued, but all of which must work towards integrating the education of our children and young people.

We must commit to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes and to substantially increase the number of schools which share facilities. It is vital that this process addresses sectarian divisions and results in a less segregated and more integrated school system.

We welcome the commitment in the Programme for Government that, by 2015, all children will have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes. That commitment must however be viewed as a modest beginning – we must go much further and faster.

The Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education established in the Programme for Government must work closely with the Ministerial Panel for this Strategy to bring forward recommendations on progressing and accelerating the shared education agenda.

Ultimately, all children should grow up in a shared and integrated education system to which all belong equally and in which all identify with others.



In order to expand the provision of integrated education, the Executive will take the following actions:

- ✓ Take actions to achieve a minimum target of 20% of children being educated in integrated schools and 40% in mixed schools by 2020.
- ✓ All future new-build schools should be integrated unless an exceptional case for single-identity provision is made. As far as possible, new schools must be sited to service mixed catchment areas.
- ✓ In fulfilment of obligations undertaken in the Belfast Agreement, bring forward legislation to place a revised duty on the Department of Education to encourage the development of integrated education and extend this duty to the proposed Education and Skills Authority.
- ✓ Review procedures to make the process for schools transforming to integrated status easier.
- ✓ Ensure that where rationalisation of the school estate is required due to falling enrolments in a particular area, options for collaboration on a shared basis are considered.
- ✓ Reform and relax the criteria for the creation and maintenance integrated schools, giving recognition to those children of mixed, other or no religious background, rather than only measuring sufficient balance through those children who are designated as Protestant or Catholic.
- ✓ Give formal recognition to the contribution being made to the process of reconciliation by schools with a mixed enrolment but not formal integrated status.
- ✓ Introduce a Shared and Integrated Education Bill, to provide a clear framework and system of support for the implementation of relevant parts of this Strategy and ensure that the desire from the public for integrated and mixed education is followed through by the next Assembly.

Education, of course, is about much more than the enrolment of children and young people, and the provision of school buildings. Shared education requires a commitment to ensuring that the values of this strategy are woven through the design and delivery of education for all school age children and young people.

Building good relations, tackling intolerance and challenging prejudice must be embedded through the ethos of schools and made much more an integral part of the curriculum. Rather than placing an over-reliance on the teaching of citizenship, a much more focused programme of activity must be developed as part of the curriculum. Such a programme would support the underpinning principles of this strategy and contribute to the shared vision of building a united, cohesive community, built on equality of opportunity and good relations.

For such a programme to be most effective, the teaching of theoretical principles and case studies will be accompanied by practical applications and opportunities for interaction. The programme will also encourage discussion around cultural diversity and ensure that children from a minority ethnic background are included and integrated. Our past also presents educational opportunities for young people to learn about our history. Such opportunities will increase understanding and help nurture relationships amongst our youth that are built on mutual respect and reconciliation.

Teacher training

Teaching community relations and addressing issues of intolerance and prejudice will require a systemic approach throughout the education system. It is important that teaching staff have the necessary continuous training and development to ensure that they are equipped to play their part in addressing the issues that feed prejudice and intolerance and undermine good relations. This should include sharing of learning from those teachers who have experience of tackling challenging issues and strategic partnerships with other key influencers who could have input into a programme.

A shared education system must include a shared environment for the training of new teachers and their continuing professional development. Aside from the benefits that this would bring to the development of shared education, the context of declining school enrolments and over-supply of teachers makes the rationalisation of the current system of five different teacher training providers essential. Ultimately, any professionally trained and practising teacher must be eligible and appropriately trained to work in any school, irrespective of its ethos.

The current two-stage review of the teacher training system being taken forward by the Minister for Employment and Learning must continue. The first stage is exploring the financial sustainability of the teacher training colleges, while the second stage will examine with all of the providers the options for the development of a rationalised shared or integrated system.

- ✓ The Department for Employment and Learning will examine the potential for greater rationalisation and sharing within teacher training, accepting that an integrated approach to teacher training would be more in keeping with the demands of a diverse society.

Sharing the Spaces in which We Live, Work and Play

Public Space

In principle, all public space in Northern Ireland is common, open and shared. In practice however, sustained violence and intimidation over many years has prevented us from translating the principle of equality of access to public services into genuine sharing. There is clear evidence that fear affects basic choices, such as where people live, what they wear, where they access services and how culture and threat is experienced.

The right to freedom of movement, which is central to international and European human rights law and is embedded within the European Union, is meaningless unless our civic amenities, schools, workplaces and the public areas of neighbourhoods are open and free of intimidation.

We must break any pattern of choice which is determined by fear and intimidation. We must do so by actively fostering shared neighbourhoods, shared workplaces and shared public amenities and meeting places where people can come together to socialise and interact in freedom.

Separate but equal is neither achievable nor desirable. It leads to the exclusion of others, and the reinforcement of a 'them versus us' mentality. Those who rationalise it are often in denial or complacent about the threat and exclusion which sustain it and are usually unable to acknowledge many of the economic and social inequalities and abuses which are its inevitable outcomes.

We recognise and acknowledge that many individuals, agencies and community groups have been working over many years in relation to issues of contested space. Much of this work was fostered and supported through international donors who have established an important body of knowledge here. It is important that none of this work is lost, but that all of the learning is shared with other areas and statutory bodies.

Building on this work, the Executive will commit to safe and open access to public space everywhere in Northern Ireland. Anything less is a denial of rights and equality and a submission of the inevitability of hatred, intimidation and fear. No democracy can accept such an outcome. By tackling all physical, social and political manifestations of intimidation and by ensuring that equal citizenship is upheld at all times, we will create a community where all public spaces and thoroughfares are safe, shared and welcoming to all sections of the community.

Shared Space does not mean neutral space. We must not aim to create sanitised territory that denies the ability of anyone to celebrate important aspects of their identity or culture. Rather, we must work to ensure that public space is a vibrant place for all ideas and identities.

We recognise that most celebrations are enjoyed by only some in any society and that diversity of view and origin is the lifeblood of democracy. We are therefore keen to ensure that the peaceful celebration of cultural and popular distinctiveness is not suppressed, but that it is encouraged as a contribution to the rich mix of our cultural life.

If public spaces are to be vibrant places for all identities and ideas, measures will be required to ensure that they are not used to promote violence or exclusion, whether explicitly or implicitly, and are managed in such a way as to uphold the human rights and equality of all. No single organisation, group or single identity owns or controls any part of public space. Displays of allegiance, celebration and belonging must be encouraged but they must not be mistaken for a claim of permanent ownership by some and against others, which denies or devalues the human rights of others to display their own culture peacefully or to receive and access public services.

Marking out territory as a permanent possession of one part of the community runs contrary to our vision of a community where every space is a shared space. This is most stark with the frequent misuse of national and other flags to mark out territory with the associated consequences of fear and intimidation that flow from this.

After decades of violence and centuries of conflict, change in the pattern of living and learning together may take even longer. But it will not happen without leadership, policy, resources and commitment. Only sustained leadership and action over many years across government departments in support of the efforts of many in communities and organisations can secure the goal.

The maintenance and protection of shared space is a cross-cutting responsibility for the entire Executive, other public bodies and civic society. All must act decisively to address any barriers that prevent or interfere with sharing public space, and ensuring that every individual can live and learn, work and play wherever they choose.

The Scale of the Challenge

Fear and intimidation continue to impact on basic choices in Northern Ireland. In some communities people travel out of their way to avail of basic services or to go shopping because of concerns about safety or a sense of discomfort around others.

According to the Life and Times Survey (2010), 54% of people do not believe that our town centres are safe and welcoming places for people of all walks of life.¹⁹ In addition, the location of services within an area densely populated by members of another section of the community is the most frequent reason given for failing to access a service.

Although 18 years have passed since the ceasefires of 1994, there has been little progress in changing the pattern of separated residential living in social and affordable housing. According to the Housing Executive 90% of housing estates are dominated by people from one side of the sectarian divide or another (NIHE, Annual Report 2011).²⁰ Meanwhile, 87% of people do not believe that Northern Ireland is a place free from displays of sectarian aggression (NILT, 2010).²¹

¹⁹ NI Life and Times Survey, (2010). Available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Political_Attitudes/UNINATID.html

²⁰ Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Annual Report 2011. Available at http://www.nihe.gov.uk/annual_report_2010-2011.pdf

²¹ NI Life and Times Survey, (2010). Available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Political_Attitudes/UNINATID.html

The results of the Omnibus Survey carried out as part of the public consultation on Cohesion, Sharing and Integration highlighted a high degree of support (91%) for the provision and expansion of safe and shared space.²² Furthermore, in the 2010 Life and Times Survey 82% indicated a preference for living in mixed areas.²³ Yet the statistics on perceptions and realities of division are a stark reminder that the peace process has not brought change in equal measure to all parts of this community. Given that 87% of respondents to the Life and Times Survey of 2010 believed that better relations will come about through more mixing this is not a matter over which we can afford to be complacent.²⁴

Interfaces stand as a monument to hostility and intimidation in our society. According to the Community Relations Council, there are up to 82 segregation or separation barriers in the Belfast area.²⁵ Separation kept in place by fear is not unique to the urban environment. Many rural communities and smaller towns and villages are divided by invisible exclusions, sometimes as simple as a line in the road or a local landmark which is taken for granted as 'normal' or honoured by deeply ingrained habits of avoidance and denial.²⁶

These artificial divisions prevent dynamic development, deter investment and combine with poverty to produce a toxic mix of division, exclusion and disadvantage. Notions of equality and human rights are meaningless if people are prevented from moving from one place to another on the basis of perceived background and areas close to the boundaries are perceived to be controlled or 'defended' by paramilitaries. While there is evidence of developing interest in change, progress in removing barriers which separate people of different backgrounds remains painfully slow.

People living close to interfaces have endured a higher level of violence and poverty than the rest of the society. Despite political progress, many people still believe that they would be placed at significant personal and community risk should the walls be removed.²⁷ Worse still, we are not yet in a position to assure them that this assessment is inaccurate. Some 18 years since the ceasefires and 14 years since the Belfast Agreement it is time to bring an end to any vestiges of hatred and hostility which are used to justify maintaining such intolerable structures.

Planning in a Shared Society

Economic activity depends on a safe environment where nobody is at risk. Investment and the attraction of talent are critical to our future. The opportunity of political stability is a chance to address not only the immediate problem of violence but to tackle the underlying divisions and hostilities which have made peace so vulnerable and undermined economic and social development. It is essential that decisions about major long term infrastructure and investment to maximise the opportunity for wide access, including issues of public transport and cost which affect those on lower incomes.

²² Wallace Consulting, (2011) "Consultation Analysis on CSI". Available at http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/final_web_version_-_csi_analysis_report_-_pdf_112_mb_.pdf

²³ NI Life and Times Survey, (2010). Available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Political_Attributes/UNINATID.html

²⁴ NI Life and Times Survey, (2010). Available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Political_Attributes/UNINATID.html

²⁵ Jarman, (2009) "Security and Segregation: Interface Barriers in Belfast". Available at <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/shared-space-neil-jarmon.pdf>

²⁶ Bell, Jarman and Harvey, (2010) "Beyond Belfast", Report from RCN/NICRC. Available at: <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/fs/doc/master-beyond-report-web1.pdf>

²⁷ Byrne, Gormley Heenan, Robinson, (2012) "Attitudes to Peace Walls".

The Executive will therefore commit to the following actions:

- ✓ The Department of Finance and Personnel will ensure that all public investment in future can demonstrate that public assets can be shared and open to all to support the aims and objectives of this strategy.
- ✓ The Department of Regional Development, the Department of Social Development and the Department of the Environment will bring forward new procedures to ensure that regional planning policies and strategic and local area plans take full account of issues of access and accessibility to shared resources in towns, villages and cities.
- ✓ The Department of the Environment, in order to follow best practise in design of urban environment to maximise cross community mixing, will develop a Policy Planning Statement in this regard.
- ✓ The Department of Social Development will develop measures to assess the use of public space and report to the Assembly on an annual basis on progress.

Through the Review of Public Administration, District Councils will be responsible for integrating good relations assessment into their community planning. Good work has already been undertaken within the PEACE III Partnerships and the lessons of this approach will be researched and applied in future activity. The Executive will ensure that these issues are explicitly addressed during the community planning process and clearly identified in draft community plans, both before they are subject to public consultation and at the time of adoption.

Public thoroughfares and access routes are the arteries of our social and economic life. They must be kept clear of any permanent claims to political or territorial ownership, except where those have been approved through the planning process. Planning approval for permanent local symbols must require them to be free of any risk of intimidation or threat towards any identifiable group or persons.

Contested space can be particularly complex within a rural setting. Over many generations some facilities attached to 'single-identity' organisations have taken on particular community significance and are important meeting places and venues for social events. We must work with these organisations to ensure that distinctiveness does not equate to discrimination and to encourage increasing openness and accessibility, removing undesirable chill factors and fears. Future public investment must seek to maximise the accessibility of community amenities and to ensure that services are shared and open to all.

A New Approach to Interfaces

By the end of this decade half a century will have passed since the first interface structure went up in Belfast and a quarter of a century will have passed since the ceasefires of 1994. We must continue to emphasise that these structures are temporary with no place in a democratic society in the long run, that they must be removed as soon as the conditions – including community confidence – allow it, and that the Executive must work strategically with others to bring about those conditions.



The establishment of the Interface Working Group – and latterly the Interface Community Partners Group within the Community Relations Council, and the development of a formal Inter-Agency Partnership on Interfaces led by the Department of Justice – provide opportunities to build on the significant and longstanding community-level efforts towards change, many of which have been supported by the International Fund for Ireland or the EU PEACE Programme. We must recognise the work of local community workers in establishing meaningful communication, developing active proposals and in engaging communities in preparation for change. In 2011, local communities and Groundwork NI working in conjunction with statutory agencies achieved a major breakthrough in Alexandra Park in North Belfast. Over many years the Belfast Interface Project has been calling for a comprehensive strategy to regenerate interface areas and to provide pathways towards an end to isolation. The Executive's current Programme for Government commits it to "Actively seek local agreement to reduce the number of "peace walls", and the task now is for the Executive to build on this commitment and the activities already underway, taking the removal of interfaces as seriously as our commitment to political progress and the ending of violence.

We recognise that interfaces cannot be eliminated through policy statements alone. Community resistance to the removal of interface structures is based on fear, whether such fears are based on perceptions or experience. Until all threat and perception of threat is addressed, there will continue to be legitimate concerns about the risks involved in removing interface structures. The Executive's approach must therefore be to tackle those threats and fears. Alongside a comprehensive strategy to regenerate interface areas and to end isolation, an appropriate system for assessing the real risks to people living in interface areas must be established. Where risks are identified, urgent strategies should be put in place to address them, whether through designing out crime and anti-social behaviour, or by a swift policing response. Where it is clear and evidenced that risks are reducing, steps should be taken, with active support and involvement of the community, towards normalisation, with interface structures being reduced or removed.

We believe that such an approach should allow us to set baseline targets for a minimum reduction of 20% in the number of interface structures over the next ten years, with 30% removed within fifteen years.

The Department of Justice, other departments and statutory agencies must continue the work they have begun with community organisations and political and community leaders to confront and eliminate all behaviour which results in fear, mistrust and suspicion. This should be done on a case by case basis, within a general commitment to remove the real or perceived need to rely on physical barriers for safety. Proposals will be developed in relation to each specific area. The Partnership Plans which the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships will develop, reflecting policing and community safety issues in their local areas, provide another opportunity to develop local strategies tailored to local needs.

However, if the benefits of these various working groups and partnerships are to be maximised, we must ensure that they work in a co-ordinated way.

The Executive will therefore commit to the following actions:

- ✓ An aspiration to the removal of all interface barriers over time, in collaboration and partnership with local communities.
- ✓ An Executive-wide commitment that no new interface structures or barriers will be built except where threat to life cannot be countered in any other manner.

- ✓ The establishment of an overarching statistical and qualitative monitoring process to assess, on an on-going basis, levels of violence and threat in areas adjacent to interface structures; local perceptions of safety; and local attitudes to interface structures, and desire for change. The results of this monitoring should be made available to all of the relevant agencies and organisations, and used as the basis for co-ordinated initiatives with shared objectives. This monitoring in areas adjacent to interface structures will assess on an on-going basis: levels of violence and threat; local perceptions of safety; and local attitudes to interfaces and desire for change.
- ✓ The inclusion in regional, city and area-based regeneration strategies of explicit measures to integrate interface areas into the development of our cities through transport, economic development and the provision of public amenities.
- ✓ The development of a regional shared housing strategy which eliminates fear and intimidation in housing choice and delivers social and affordable housing in areas free from permanent political allegiance to any party, group or identity.
- ✓ The commitment and effective co-ordination of the financial resources necessary to deliver on these actions.

Community Safety

As noted above, safety, risk and fear are all factors in determining how communities perceive themselves, and their neighbours.

Led by the Department of Justice, the Executive has agreed a 2012-2017 Community Safety Strategy, called 'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities'. The strategy includes over 70 commitments reflecting the issues that communities told the Department of Justice they want to see tackled. The Executive recognises that these issues cannot be tackled by the Department of Justice alone.

Rather, the Strategy is designed to guide the work of a range of Executive Departments, local government, the voluntary and community sector and local communities. The work of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs), will be particularly important, providing new opportunities for statutory agencies, local political leaders, voluntary and community groups and local communities to work together to build safer neighbourhoods.

The Strategy aims to 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.
- ✓ Confident Communities, where people feel safe and have confidence in the agencies that serve them.

It recognises that these three themes are closely interlinked and support each other – building safer communities by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, requiring communities to have confidence in the police and justice agencies that work on their behalf. For communities living in interface areas, feelings of confidence and safety are closely linked to their willingness to move towards greater sharing with neighbouring communities. The Community Safety Strategy recognises that these communities have particular and specific community safety needs and set out in detail the Executive's approach to addressing these.

Hate Crime

As recognised in the Executive's Community Safety Strategy, the growing diversity of our community over recent years has presented many cultural, economic and social benefits. When wrongly perceived however, growing diversity can also bring challenges; including changes within communities can lead to increased tensions, which can sometime manifest themselves in prejudice, hostility and hatred, often based on sectarian or racist grounds. Other forms of prejudice exist in our society and manifest in homophobia or transphobia, against those with a disability or on religious grounds.

Crimes motivated by prejudice or hostility because of a person's actual or perceived identity are hate crimes. Recognising the devastating effect that hate crimes can have on victims and those who fear becoming victims, the Executive is committed to working in partnership with others to deliver across a range of fronts:

- ✓ Raising awareness of hate crime and challenging attitudes towards it.
- ✓ Encouraging reporting.
- ✓ Supporting victims in a way which demonstrates care and sensitivity to their needs.
- ✓ Ensuring that perpetrators of hate crimes are brought to justice and face the full weight of the law.

Shared Workplaces

Considerable progress has been made in opening up workplaces as shared places. The work environment is for many people the only place where there are opportunities to interact and build friendships with people from a different background. However a recent report by Trademark illustrates that sectarian and racist bullying continues to be a daily experience for an unacceptably large number of people.²⁸ Furthermore, as identified earlier, there are also barriers to labour mobility and accordingly an efficient labour market.

Progress in this area must now look to developing good practice and extending the application of law. With this in mind the Executive, working with the Equality Commission, will:

- ✓ Ensure that proactive measures are taken to assess and act against physical manifestations of intimidation on routes to employment and major arterial routes, including permanent political symbolism, evidence of paramilitary activity or allegations of direct personal harassment.
- ✓ Address barriers to labour mobility and to an efficient labour market.
- ✓ Develop proactive policies and support the implementation in practice of active Good Relations strategies and programmes in all bodies subject to Section 75.
- ✓ Work with employers to review their internal procedures for ensuring equality and good relations in the workplace and encourage the development of models of good practice building on existing work developed by trade unions and employers.

²⁸ Trademark, (2012) "Sectarianism in the Workplace". Available at <http://www.trademarkbelfast.com/downloads/sect.pdf>

Housing

All housing – as well as the streets and all public space within every residential area – must be accessible and welcoming to all, irrespective of background, without any risk of intimidation or threat. In practice, however, segregation through fear in housing continues to represent a significant barrier to the growth of a more united community.

Choices around housing are among the most significant in the life of every person, family and community. Sectarian discrimination and exclusion in the distribution of public housing was critical in generating the sense of injustice which drove the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Since then, the Housing Executive has worked hard to eliminate inequality in housing through the introduction of the points based system for allocations.

Nonetheless, in the context of violence and polarisation, efforts to establish general equality in allocations took place in the face of separation driven by widespread sectarian intimidation. Worse still, paramilitary organisations emerged in housing estates across Northern Ireland claiming a right to ‘defend’ particular areas and making their presence felt in a variety of invisible and visible ways.

The majority of social housing estates remain deeply segregated in terms of religion. Based on the 2001 Census, 91% of all Belfast NIHE estates were highly polarised, defined as having more than 80% of one section of community or less than 20% of one section of the community in an estate.²⁹

Private housing is also segregated to a considerable extent. Sometimes this segregation emerges informally, but at times it is driven by the use of flags or symbols that are used by others in an attempt to claim control over territory.

In combination, this leads to a strong majority of people in Northern Ireland living in areas that also have a strong majority of people from a similar background.

Issues of safety and fear continue to impact negatively on choices and accessibility. Yet, Life and Times Surveys have consistently shown significant preferences for mixed religion neighbourhoods, in 2010 83% of people stated they would prefer to live in a mixed religion neighbourhood.³⁰ Changing the pattern of fear and division in housing is a priority if we are to achieve the vision of a shared society.

Recognising this, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has taken some positive action to promote shared housing. Its Shared Future Programme has promoted 30 Shared Future Housing areas, backed up by community charters. This initiative has benefitted from external financial support from the IFI.

²⁹ Shuttleworth and Lloyd, (2009) “Mapping Segregation in Belfast”. Available at http://www.nihe.gov.uk/mapping_seggregation_in_northern_ireland_-_northern_ireland_housing_executive_estates_outside_belfast.pdf

³⁰ NI Life and Times Survey, (2010). Available at http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Political_Attitudes/UNINATID.html

At the same time, there are fundamental problems with the approach taken by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. While it recognises that everyone has the right to a choice of decent and affordable housing, including integrated housing, it has also suggested that people have the choice to live in either single identity or mixed neighbourhoods. While there are societal reasons that have led to de facto segregation in housing, it is wrong to offer single identity housing as a formal individual choice if it implies any right to 'get away from others' who are without rights in a given area. This option can only be provided through the exclusion of residents from other backgrounds in order to maintain a 'single identity'. This mindset must be challenged and overcome.

We must work to ensure that decisions about where to live are made solely on the nature and location of the provision, rather than on fears about the personal consequences of political, religious or racial identity. The pattern of fear and anxiety around housing choice has never been confronted, let alone addressed, by government. We must commit to tackling the issues that prevent people from feeling comfortable living in certain areas. We must dismiss the accusation that such action amounts to 'social engineering'; the sobering reality is that the current pattern of housing is actively engineered through intimidation and exclusion and that government and public authority has proved unequal to the challenge.

The Executive will therefore commit to the following actions:

- ✓ Setting and delivering a target through proactive and inter-Departmental programmes, that by 2025 all evidence of threat, intimidation and exclusive claims to territorial monopoly by any group or cause will be eliminated in Northern Ireland and mixed and shared housing must be considered normal throughout the region and at all levels of income.
- ✓ Measuring residents' attitudes, experiences and patterns of movement in order to assess progress.

As in other areas of a shared future strategy, a cross-departmental approach will be required. Changes in housing patterns will automatically require changes in the pattern of service provision, education, community development and transport. Beyond government, the private sector can also be a powerful agent for change. Because these issues are so important, the implications so radical and the scale of change required so comprehensive, the Executive will establish:

- ✓ A landmark 'Shared Housing Review' of residential segregation and equality of housing provision in Northern Ireland. This should be undertaken by a commission of international and local reputation and expertise and be tasked to produce detailed practical recommendations for government and community action by 2014.

The first key underlying principle for this process is that there should be equality of access and allocation on the basis of need (on an individual rather than group basis) and that all housing should automatically be considered as shared/mixed/integrated in theory even if not in practice. Any exclusive claims to territory will not be tolerated.

The second key principle is that shared housing will be actively promoted and facilitated.

The review must not utilise quotas, as to do so would be a breach of the principle of equality of access/allocation on the basis of need. Rather, its recommendations will be aimed at allowing and encouraging sharing to grow, with government providing all necessary support to overcome any barriers to sharing and protection to address any threats.

Arising from this, it may emerge that some areas marketed as shared and integrated have a preponderance of residents from one particular identity or background. However, provided it is understood that all areas are shared and neither explicit or implicit barriers to sharing can be detected, there is the potential for natural and free housing choice to provide mixed housing over a relatively short period of time.

Specifically, the Shared Housing Review will include recommendations on:

- ✓ Actions over the next 25 years to eliminate discrimination and exclusion and to encourage the development of shared neighbourhoods and housing which is genuinely mixed.
- ✓ How to ensure that a commitment to promote and facilitate mixed housing can be translated for a formal duty for housing authorities.
- ✓ Any legislative instruments required to produce and underpin change.
- ✓ Structural and behavioural changes in public agencies required to manage change in housing, including removing the de facto marketing of some housing as single identity.
- ✓ How to design new housing developments to maximise the potential for sharing.
- ✓ How to best market new housing developments as shared.
- ✓ Steps to ensure the protection of minorities and action to eliminate hate crime directed against resident minorities.
- ✓ Changes required from agencies responsible for policing, community safety, local government, education, social amenities and community development required to support changes.
- ✓ Training and support for housing managers and other relevant professionals.
- ✓ The use of symbols and cultural displays to ensure that the human rights of all are upheld.
- ✓ Recommendations on monitoring and evaluating change over a 25 year period.

While the primary focus of the report is discrimination on the basis of race, religion or political opinion, the commission will be encouraged to bring forward recommendations which ensure that it also applies to all other areas of potential exclusion.

Flags

In 1998, the Belfast Agreement settled the deeply divisive question of nationality in Northern Ireland, by acknowledging that:

- ✓ There are deep divisions over this issue.
- ✓ That, under the agreed principle of consent, the majority currently wish to remain within the United Kingdom.
- ✓ This can only be changed by an agree democratic vote carried out across the island of Ireland in two jurisdictions.

The signatories agreed:

“That while a substantial section of the people in Northern Ireland share the legitimate wish of a majority of the people of the island of Ireland for a united Ireland, the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, freely exercised and legitimate, is to maintain the Union and, accordingly, that Northern Ireland’s status as part of the United Kingdom reflects and relies upon that wish; and that it would be wrong to make any change in the status of Northern Ireland save with the consent of a majority of its people.”³¹

In another part of the Belfast Agreement, the signatories agreed that, within British sovereignty, the people of the North were British, Irish and both recognising:

“the birth right of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland.”³²

The signatories also agreed to the doctrine of parity of esteem between British and Irish and declared:

“The power of the sovereign government with jurisdiction there shall be exercised with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people in the diversity of their identities and traditions and shall be founded on the principles of full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, social and cultural rights, of freedom from discrimination for all citizens, and of parity of esteem and of just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos, and aspirations of both communities;”³³

This has profound implications to the question of flag flying in Northern Ireland. In particular, it insists:

- ✓ In matters of state sovereignty, Northern Ireland is and remains part of the United Kingdom until or unless the people decide otherwise.
- ✓ In matters of nationality and culture we have divided and overlapping identities.
- ✓ In matters of esteem all must be treated with dignity and in a spirit of equality.



³¹ Belfast Agreement (1998), Constitutional Issues, Section 1(iii). Available at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#rights>

³² Belfast Agreement (1998), Constitutional Issues, Section 1(vi). Available at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#rights>

³³ Belfast Agreement (1998), Constitutional Issues, Section 1(v). Available at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#rights>

With this in mind, the Executive will:

- ✓ Agree that the Union Flag is flown over public and civic buildings in Northern Ireland on designated days as defined by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- ✓ Ensure that a common policy on the flying of flags for District Councils is legislated for in advance of the implementation of the Review of Public Administration.
- ✓ Consult on the possibility of developing shared symbols for Northern Ireland which recognise the principles of the Agreement.

Disputed symbols and the misuse of flags are a symptom of a much wider problem of sectarianism and paramilitarism in this society, but they remain a discrete problem requiring the attention of the authorities.

There are two types of flags, which may require different solutions. The first is the erection of paramilitary flags. The second is the inappropriate use of national flags, which are often illegally erected (although the flags themselves may not be illegal).

Flags and emblems are used in a negative way to intimidate in order to exclude sections of the community and mark out territory. This threatening and divisive use of cultural expression is not something that can be tolerated in a society that is seeking to move forward and become more inclusive to all.

This is unwelcoming to people who live in the area, those coming into the area, with these displays running contrary to the concept of shared space. Everywhere in Northern Ireland is shared space and must be maintained as such – where everyone can feel comfortable and welcomed. Removing the intimidatory symbols within the community that hinder the creation of shared spaces is an important step in promoting reconciliation and tackling division but also in improving the environment for those who live and grow up within those areas.

Furthermore, there are also critical social, financial and economic imperatives to addressing the abuse and misuse of symbols. These consequences are explored in greater detail in an earlier chapter.

Disputes over unregulated flags can be a source of tension. Often they are placed close to churches, schools or interfaces. Flags are often imposed upon communities without demonstrable support. Sometimes support is given by some grudgingly in response to actual or perceived intimidation. It is often easier to go along than to speak out. People often feel disempowered and intimidated from speaking out, though this is beginning to change.

It is not just people from a different communal background to that associated with the flag that have difficulties, but indeed people from the same perceived background. The latter may be confident in their identity without flags, or object to what is nominally being done in their name.

We accept that there is a sense of impunity and powerless in terms of the manner of how flags are imposed upon communities without an effective response.

Paramilitary Symbols

With respect to the paramilitary symbols, there will be zero-tolerance. There must be no place in any normal society for the celebration of a culture of violence and intimidation.

It is clearly established that the public display of paramilitary flags is a criminal offence under the Terrorism Act (2000).

To date, the authorities have had an inconsistent approach to (a.) the removal of paramilitary flags; and (b.) the prosecution of those displaying them.

While the public bodies may wish to engage in dialogue to remove these symbols in the first instance, in order to minimise the dangers to public order, there are risks to this approach.

Although short-term relief of the immediate problem can be achieved, the status of certain individuals may be built up, at the expense of more legitimate community and political voices which do not associate with violence. There is a problem relating to self-appointed community brokers.

When dialogue fails, there must be an expectation of enforcement. While it is not realistic to expect every paramilitary symbol to be removed at once, there is an expectation that paramilitary symbols will be tackled in a strategic manner, starting with defending neutral town centres and arterial routes.

It is only in rare cases that the police have taken action to remove paramilitary flags. Furthermore, only in a very few cases have prosecutions been taken. However, the successful achievement of convictions has demonstrated that this route is a viable course of action.

The approach of the Roads Service and Housing Executive – the agencies whose property is most frequently targeted – has not been proactive. Outside the context of negotiation (which in itself implies having to cede something in return), they have not taken action, using the fears of attacks upon their workers as a reason for inaction.

Unofficial Display of National or Other Flags

The inappropriate use of national symbols is also a major issue.

We recognise that people are entitled to display any legal symbol from their own residences, whether that is owned, or privately or publically rented.

However, the street furniture in Northern Ireland is not available as a free for all. The use of such symbols in certain contexts is not a celebration of culture, but of sectarian territorial control. The message behind such symbols then becomes not one of unity and inclusivity but one of exclusion, and intimidation.

While these flags are not overtly paramilitary, there are often regarded by the public as nevertheless paramilitary given the understanding of what organisations lie behind the displays.

There is a need for the public sector to more adequately deal with such displays. A solution through direct use of the criminal law may not be readily available.

But there are a number of approaches that could be taken through the civil law to deal with the problem more effectively.

As in relation to paramilitary flags, there is arguably a case that agencies, such as the Roads Service and the Housing Executive have a duty under existing equality law, (specifically the Fair Employment and Treatment Order) to ensure that they deliver their goods, facilities and services in a neutral, non-discriminatory manner. Allowing their property to carry sectarian symbols would be a breach of this commitment. This is an extension of the principles that an employer has a responsibility to ensure that the workplace is kept free from such symbols. The enforcement of this responsibility has contributed to the creation of a shared workplace. The same logic extends to the, albeit, more difficult area of shared public space.

Way Forward

This Strategy is not about sanitising our society and creating an environment where people cannot express a cultural identity. Instead, we believe that it is important that we agree processes to facilitate cultural expression in a way that shows and promotes respect.

Maintaining spaces for all is vital to building a united community. This is not about making all areas neutral but rather it is about ensuring that areas are welcoming to all cultures and ethnic groups by removing those things that are used to threaten or intimidate. The economic benefits of maintaining shared space open to everyone are also clear.

Political leadership on these issues is essential. We will build confidence at a community level so that people can become more engaged and feel part of a wider process to build a united community. We believe that as a society we can all work together to enhance our collective understanding of cultural identity and what the expression of that means for the entire community.

We are also convinced of the need for collaborative working amongst Government and statutory agencies, to regulate the display of flags and to take enforcement action when and where required.

Since 2005, an inter-agency protocol on addressing flags has been in place. However, progress has been limited. The system is regarded as being deficient in a number of respects.

In all circumstances, there must be an expectation of enforcement against any paramilitary flags.

With respect to all other flags and symbols, consideration will be given to the provision of regulated displays on public property.

Technically, planning permission is already required. Already, there are exemptions for political parties with respect to posters either side of elections. This approach could be developed further.

A possible model could be shaped as follows:

- ✓ All flags or emblems on public property and on the public highway should be subject to clear regulation by statutory authorities.
- ✓ All permanent emblems on public property should be subject to planning consent. No permanent mural or emblem should promote any paramilitary activity or organisation.
- ✓ Flags and other celebratory material may normally be displayed for two weeks around a celebratory event by application.
- ✓ Applicants would need to give notified details of an accountable person, and post a bond.
- ✓ Extension beyond two weeks is subject to further application and agreement, with safeguards in place against consecutive proposals under different guises.
- ✓ Removal of flags and emblems after the agreed period should be the responsibility of those who erect them.
- ✓ In the event that they are not removed voluntarily, government would act to take them down, with costs covered by the value of the bond.

This approach would be consistent with the concept of shared that is not claimed permanently and exclusively.

A Shared Culture

The idea of 'culture' is enormously important in human life. It is also one of the most abused and misunderstood concepts in politics and society in Northern Ireland.

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998) recognised:

"The birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland."

This unique formulation establishes that, in every imaginable future, Northern Ireland will be a place of peaceful interaction between people of different 'national' identities and of people who identify with different aspects of two nationalities. Whatever we choose as our constitutional destiny, the six counties of Northern Ireland are to be a place of mutual acceptance, of cultural diversity, of inter-cultural engagement and of welcome for people with different historic experiences. It also allows people to choose, explicitly allowing for uncertainty and change about the future. Each person and each time can make their own decisions.

We are committed to supporting and promoting a vibrant, lively and open society where everyone is free to celebrate their identity or identities in a peaceful society, while fully respecting the lives and rights of others. We believe that the Agreement provides Northern Ireland with a remarkable opportunity to develop as a place of tolerance, engagement and creativity in the future. But to do so, we must break with the narrow approach to culture which has characterised Northern Ireland for too long.

The Executive will lead a new and inclusive conversation and take robust action to ensure that culture becomes a source of enrichment for all, rather than a byword for sectarianism and violence. In recent years minority ethnic communities, and many previously invisible minorities, have made some of the most important contributions to the cultural wealth of our society, to the benefit of all.

Towards an Open, Welcoming and Respectful Society

If Northern Ireland is to become an outward and forward looking region, the fostering of a culture of creativity, exploration and engagement must become our hallmark.

Historically, however, public discussions of 'culture' are too-often merely shorthand for contention over symbols and rituals associated with deep underlying conflict and violence. It applies especially to expressions of national, cultural and religious identity, which arise when they are associated with exclusion and violence such as:

- ✓ Claims to ownership or control of particular territories.
- ✓ A wish or perceived wish by political and cultural organisations to dominate or exclude others.
- ✓ Claims to monopoly political sovereignty which deny or seek to eliminate all reference or public appearance to the political and cultural allegiances of others.

Such claims to control or acts of domination must have no place in any part of our society, subject as it is to the rule of law and the equal citizenship of every individual member.

The Council of Europe, of which both the UK and Ireland are full members, has made clear that intercultural dialogue, building on universal norms, is the key to managing diversity. The framework on inter-cultural dialogue is binding on all member states. It holds out the vision of an integrated society of diverse individual citizens, each of whom sees others as his/her fellow citizens. It reads:

“Europe’s increasing cultural diversity – rooted in the history of our continent and enhanced by globalisation – in a democratic manner has become a priority in recent years. How shall we respond to diversity? What is our vision of the society of the future? Is it a society of segregated communities, marked at best by the coexistence of majorities and minorities with differentiated rights and responsibilities, loosely bound together by mutual ignorance and stereotypes? Or is it a vibrant and open society without discrimination, benefiting us all, marked by the inclusion of all residents in full respect of their human rights? The Council of Europe believes that respect for, and promotion of, cultural diversity on the basis of the values on which the organisation is built are essential conditions for the development of societies based on solidarity.”

We fully subscribe to this approach and believe that it should be the cornerstone of all cultural policy in Northern Ireland.

Arising from the framework, the Council of Europe proposes that governments take action to ensure that:

- ✓ Democratic citizenship and participation should be strengthened.
- ✓ Intercultural competences should be taught and learned.
- ✓ Spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened.
- ✓ Inter-cultural dialogue should be taken to the international level.

In taking this forward, the Executive will take the following actions:

- ✓ The Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) will develop a framework of principles for inter-cultural dialogue and diversity to ensure that spending decisions inform a shared future rather than the formalisation of traditional hostile identities. This should be regarded as critical guidance to all DCAL arm’s length bodies including sports, arts and museums.
- ✓ An action plan will be developed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in consultation with the Department of Education (DE) and agreed by the Executive, to ensure that the Council of Europe framework is prioritised for implementation within the next Comprehensive Spending Review period in Northern Ireland.
- ✓ Any future EU PEACE IV programme will ensure that these principles explicitly inform the priorities and outcome of the programme.

Beyond a Culture of Antagonism and Contention

Expressions and celebrations of our allegiances and history are important parts of any community. We will maximise the opportunity for all people to freely express their cultural identity in a peaceful, generous and respectful manner and in a way that does not seek to assert domination.

Northern Ireland continues to be convulsed by violence and the threat of violence as a result of claims of cultural opposition. Parades and protests, violent and politically antagonistic murals, the flying of flags or display of emblems to claim territory or to goad opponents and attacks on property which has deep symbolic value and creates terror among whole groups of people, continue to generate injury, fear and hatred. Too often this is justified as necessary for the defence of 'culture' or as an expression of tradition. We know from experience that this contention has led directly to deep and unacceptable violence, including street rioting, the expulsion of people from their homes, the breakdown of relationships in public institutions, such as local Councils, and even to the emergence of paramilitarism as a response to perceived threat.

In developing a society where everyone is free to live, work and travel across the whole community, we have a strong preference for pluralism and tolerance, not absence and neutrality. However, in accepting this principle, we recognise need to ensure that policy remains consistent with our obligation to ensure that human rights, equality and good relations are upheld. In this plural society where the sovereignty of the state has been contested, contention over cultural display has left deep fears and created difficulties in agreeing the balance to be struck between tolerance and respect and the need to minimise offence and ensure that all displays are genuinely peaceful in intent and outcome.

Regular disputes over contentious parades and protest, and the violence which breaks out around them on a frequent basis has enormous economic and social costs, not least for the communities in which they happen. The costs of paramilitary displays, the burning of churches or Orange Halls, claims of territorial control and the display of symbols (including accusations of 'betrayal' against all those who would regulate such matters) have less visible or measurable, but may be even more pernicious. Taken together the message of hatred which they convey underpins the need of many to live separately, undermines attempts to create shared space, shared services and shared institutions and leaves deep trauma across the entire community.

We are committed to encouraging and facilitating a positive approach to community celebration and inter-community dialogue. The work of community relations agencies and community organisations to develop positive alternatives has been very encouraging. The evaluation of the Re-Imaging Communities Scheme highlights the success of an interagency approach to tackling what are seen as the visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism. Building pride in the community can increase a sense of community responsibility and respect for the area which translates into a celebration of cultural complexity.

Schemes to develop and promote positive change will be continued through PEACE IV and Executive support.

Regulating Parades and Protests

Most parades and processions in Northern Ireland are entirely peaceful and pass off without any controversy.

However, disputes relating to parading are in effect both a symptom of much wider community relations problems and are also a contributory factor towards them. Disagreements reflect much wider divisions within society and in particular associated claims and counter-claims over territory.

Some parades continue to create the most serious street protests and disputes across Northern Ireland. Over many years parades and protests have resulted in rioting, intimidation and injury, as well as significant local disruption and economic costs.

In virtually every democracy around the world, parades and demonstrations are regulated. Northern Ireland should be no different in this regard. Indeed the on-going controversies around parades and counter-protests make our obligation to have an agreed and workable framework in place even more critical.

Most parades are already uncontroversial. But to date there has not been agreement on how to address disputed parades.

In the absence of a willingness to agree or compromise, the Parades Commission has performed a vital role in arbitrating disputed parades and protests.

This situation will only change if the Executive, as part of its duty to govern a shared future, agrees a future approach to parades and protests which upholds the rights of all and reduces the violence and threat associated with these events.

With this in mind the Executive will:

- ✓ Establish a process on parades and protests which involves all political parties and representatives of civic society.
- ✓ Agree the terms of reference of this group to produce a workable framework for the regulation of parades and protests which:
 - Complies with all appropriate Human Rights requirements.
 - Is compliant with the requirements to provide and protect shared space in all parts of Northern Ireland.
 - Includes recommendations on mediation and arbitration.
 - Establishes a mechanism for binding arbitration in disputed cases which commands full political support.
 - Regulates and assigns responsibility for the behaviour of all those participating in parades and protests including agreement on penalties and consequences for future participation.
 - Produces a draft code of conduct for parades and protests.
 - Consideration should be given to the norms and best practice used in other societies for the regulation of parades and protests, including the posting of bonds and the allocation of associated policing costs.



Any replacement to the Parades Commission should only be considered if it is regarded as a better alternative and one that is capable of achieving and sustaining a greater level of cross-community support.

The inter-party working group on Parading to report by September 2013, with a view to having any legislation in place for the summer of 2014.

In the interim all parties are committed to support the lawful regulatory agencies for Parades and protests until such time as an alternative can be agreed.

Once decisions are made by a lawful authority, it is incumbent on everyone, including those who disagree with a decision, to abide by the decisions that have been made. This onus is particularly important on all relevant political and community leaders. Unambiguous support for the rule of law is of paramount importance in order to uphold democracy and to ensure equality of treatment for all.

Regulation of Bonfires

Over the years, a number of District Councils have sought better mechanisms to ensure that sectarian and paramilitary manifestations, environmental concerns and safety issues at commemorative bonfires are addressed. In order to improve on this work, the Executive will:

- ✓ Review current practice in bonfire regulation in Northern Ireland.
- ✓ Bring forward proposals for future development.
- ✓ Establish a sustainable funding model for future intervention, ensuring that costs fall on those holding events rather than on the public purse.

Commemoration and Legacy

Violence and brutality in the past has left an almost unbearable mark on the present, yet how we choose to deal with this legacy will impact on our future as a society.

The Executive is opposed to the memorialisation of paramilitary violence through permanent memorials and will work towards a collective memorial to all those who died, were bereaved and were injured, as a result of violence in Northern Ireland, celebrating the success of peace.

We are conscious that over the next number of years all sections of our society will have to consider the challenges presented by our history. We believe at an individual, community and political level, we can all learn from our intricate past and help shape a future society that will be well equipped to celebrate difference.

Ultimately, the commemorations of the next decade offer an opportunity to explore our past in an open, shared and inclusive way that can be enormously helpful in building a better future. In doing so, we can maximise social and economic benefit for Northern Ireland.

The Executive is committed to an approach which promotes marking events peacefully and a culture of open dialogue and engagement.

It is therefore important that both Governments are involved in marking events throughout the period and not just those aspects of most relevance to their own jurisdiction.

Working together, the British and Irish Governments – along with the Northern Ireland Assembly, local councils and other interested groups – can set the tone for how events are marked and ensure that certain principles apply. Those principles include placing events in an inclusive and shared framework and looking to the wider history and context of the time in these islands and across Europe, rather than allowing celebrations to fragment into a series of, at best, exclusive and, at worst, divisive events marking each centenary.

Handled correctly, these events present us with a unique opportunity to commemorate centenaries important to many people in a way that can deliver a transition to a new era of a shared society, where the focus shifts increasingly towards healing divisions, building cohesion and integration and addressing our joint economic challenges.

Arts, Language and Sport

Other forms of cultural expression – including art, language and sport – have sometimes been matters of significant contention. We welcome the enriching effect that diversity of art, language and sporting activity can bring. We will bring forward agreements on language diversity for Northern Ireland designed to encourage the participation of all in our rich cultural heritage rather than cultural competition through language.

The arts can provide a safe space for people to explore issues relating to cultural expression in a managed way that may not be possible in a different environment.

We also acknowledge that community festivals have often been used to reinforce stereotypes of sections of our community and we do not believe that this is helpful in building a more inter-cultural society. We remain convinced that festivals and other similar events can be used in a way that increases understanding between and amongst sections of the community and breaks down barriers that have been caused by ignorance and fear.

In future, public support for festivals and cultural activity will reflect our commitment to pluralism and tolerance and will be shaped by our obligations under human rights, equality and good relations.

We also recognise that sport in particular can be a vehicle for building good relations – particularly amongst our young people. We will continue to encourage the considerable efforts of sporting organisations to reach to the whole community. We will encourage sporting organisations to examine areas where there has been contention in the past and to encourage co-operation and participation at grassroots level.

The Executive will:

- ✓ Support initiatives that use sport as a tool for building good relations and open up sporting facilities to all sections of the community.
- ✓ Support festivals and public celebrations to maximise their reach and attractiveness to the whole community. Where public bodies contribute to events and activities, we will encourage the distribution of public events throughout our cities and towns so as to encourage mobility and interaction. District Councils and the police will develop access and connectivity plans as part of equality and good relations planning to mitigate against chill factors or intimidation preventing proper access or use.

A Shared Way to Deal with Our Past

Dealing with our past and its legacy is a complicated and multifaceted issue. Deep individual and collective hurt remains within our society. Competing demands for truth, justice and accountability remain unaddressed.

Some people believe that focusing on the past is counterproductive, keeps wounds open, and that society must move on. We believe however that addressing the past and its legacy in a comprehensive and holistic manner is fundamental to the process of reconciliation and building a shared future.

In a legal sense, responsibility for dealing with the past rests formally with the British Government, and to a certain extent the Irish Government. But there is a moral and practical onus on the political parties in Northern Ireland to reach a consensus on how this is to be achieved. It is not acceptable for local parties to simply leave this to others.

There are a number of factors impeding any wider truth and reconciliation process.

The first impediment is the lack of consensus on who is a victim. This delays the progress in addressing the needs of victims.

A second impediment is the competing demands for truth, in the sense of knowledge of what happened to loved ones, and justice, in the traditional sense.

A third impediment is the debate over whether it is possible to reach any sense of objective 'truth'. Given Northern Ireland's contested history, any such attempts are likely to be heavily contested.

A fourth impediment is the fear that powerful interests will wish to protect their secrets. Notably, with paramilitary prisoners released, it is difficult to see what measures could be put in place to ensure that paramilitary organisations co-operate with any such process. Such fears regarding a lack of willingness to provide full disclosure may also apply to both the British and Irish states difficulties with 'Troubles'-related inquiries point to the difficulties in this regard.

Finally, there is the considerable impediment of constrained resources. Society, and its public representatives, have to make to a choice between how much is invested in dealing with the past and how much is invested in building the future.

The political parties represented in the Executive must commit themselves to overcoming these impediments, and the British and Irish governments must commit themselves to facilitating and participating fully in this process. The starting point for that process should be the Commission for Victims and Survivors' Report on Dealing with the Past³⁴. That report, submitted to the Secretary of State and the First and deputy First Minister under Article 6, Section 4 of the 2006 Order empowers the Commission to advise on matters concerning the interests of victims and survivors, presents a non-partisan and objective basis upon which discussions should be taken forward.

³⁴ http://www.cvsni.org/images/stories/dealing_past/dealing_with_the_past_final_28.06.10.pdf

In their report the Commissioners spoke of their “almost daily contact with individuals and families who carry deep hurts and suffer debilitating conditions as a consequence of the violent conflict that dominated our society for so long. Most of these people are suffering in relative silence. Many feel hopeless about their situation and a significant number carry the additional hurt of believing that their suffering is pointless because, at its heart, our society has not changed and is incapable of change”. Any strategy aimed at building a shared future should both address these victims’ needs and be capable of delivering the change that they desired, but feared would remain beyond our reach.

The Executive will therefore commit themselves to implementing or supporting, as appropriate, the following actions:

- ✓ Agreeing that dealing with the past is necessary if we are to build a shared future.
- ✓ Agreeing that the main ingredients for dealing with the past are reviewing historical cases with a view to holding people to account before courts and where this is not possible recovering information for families and examining issues arising from the conflict which have had a critical importance for our society.
- ✓ Engaging with the British and Irish governments to agree terms for a cross-party talks process, aimed at reaching agreement on arrangements for dealing with the Past. The process will allow for contributions from civic leaders, the community and voluntary sector, victims and survivors, and specialist advisers.
- ✓ Considering, as part of that talks process, the option of establishing a new agency to subsume the Historical Enquiries Team and the part of the Police Ombudsman’s Office which deals with legacy cases. Such an agency would review investigations, seek to recover information for families and examine the truth behind a number of events and issues of critical importance to the various sections of our community.
- ✓ Having the outcome of that talks process placed before the Northern Ireland Assembly, Northern Ireland Executive, Parliament and Dáil Éireann for validation and, as appropriate, to enable the passing of legislation.
- ✓ Agreeing to work to the principle that all who are in need, arising from the conflict, will receive help and therefore to address recommendations from the Commission for Victims and Survivors in relation to improved financial support to address the needs of the seriously injured and the bereaved; and on the impact of conflict related trauma on the mental health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

Delivering a Shared Future – Implementation of the Strategy

Executive Leadership

The whole Executive must be committed to the delivery and implementation of this strategy. While OFMDFM will lead and drive forward this important agenda, the actions required to achieve real, meaningful and positive change within our community demand the commitment of all Government departments, statutory agencies and the community.

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. A way must therefore be found to harness the collective commitment across Government, and beyond it.

The Executive must therefore commit to:

- ✓ Establishing a Shared Future Ministerial Panel, comprising all members of the Executive, and attended by senior representatives from a range of statutory agencies and community partners. The panel will meet monthly and will be chaired by the First Minister and deputy First Minister. It will be an important mechanism for co-ordinating action on those issues that cut across the responsibilities of more than one department.

The Ministerial Panel will give direction on actions and targets laid and monitor progress towards agreed goals. To reinforce the importance of this strategy, good relations principles must be mainstreamed into every aspect of government. Each Minister will report against the actions and targets set for their department and provide demonstrable evidence for progress towards reconciliation and building a united community.

The priority given to ensuring a shared and better future will be demonstrated by the degree to which it is taken into account in the development of policy and in the allocation of resources. The Ministerial Panel will be crucial for ensuring that the objectives of this strategy are mainstreamed throughout departmental policy development and resource decisions. The action planning process will also help identify where efforts and resources can be targeted more effectively and efficiently.

The action planning process will be taken forward on a three or four year cycle 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.

To reflect the commitment to collaborative working, representatives of the Community Relations Council or any successor body, the Equality Commission, the Housing Executive and PSNI will be invited to attend the meetings of the Ministerial Panel as observers, with invitations being extended to other bodies when appropriate. Thematic working groups may also be established under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel to reflect key priorities. Working groups will be convened by an agreed lead Department and membership defined by topic and urgency.

A Steering Group comprising senior officials from all Government Departments will support the Ministerial Panel and facilitate the implementation of the strategy. The Officials Steering Group will co-ordinate the cross-departmental alignment of activities and allocation of resources to ensure that working practices are more effective, strategic and targeted. This steering group will operate under the strategic direction of the Ministerial Panel and will report to that panel on delivery and performance.

A Regional Champion for a Shared Future

A shared future in Northern Ireland is a journey into a different future. Government alone cannot build a shared future. Much of the work must be done at local level, by people taking small steps to make a safer and better future for their communities. Community organisations and voluntary effort have been crucial to progress in the past. Indeed too often, the task of 'solving' the crisis of division in Northern Ireland has relied on heroic voluntary community effort. That work, undertaken without certainty of success, tackled issues which many institutions lacked either the confidence or capacity to address.

Responses to previous proposals have shown strong support for a regional delivery body for a community relations policy that would provide advice to Government and fulfil an independent challenge function. While many organisations have played important roles, the Community Relations Council (CRC) has taken a lead in developing community relations practice and knowledge. Alongside a role in distributing and managing financial support for local inter-community action, the Council has played a vital role as an independent, locally rooted voice championing equity, diversity and interdependence and a shared future. It has promoted evidence-based research, improving the quality of inter-community work and developing policy ideas. The knowledge developed in communities with the support of the Council and the work it has supported is an important asset which must be cherished and extended, not squandered.

Within this strategy, responsibility for delivering the overarching goals is not devolved to the community sector, but is the responsibility of society as a whole, led by the Executive. The work of CRC has demonstrated the merit of having an independent regional institution, connected directly to community activity on the ground and with the ear of government. The tasks carried out by the CRC to date, including policy advocacy, independent advice, the delivery of innovative action and support for voluntary and community action, remain crucial to the success of this strategy.

Many difficult issues require sensitive but difficult dialogue before action can be formulated. This necessitates an independent broker, capable of convening all parties into discussion and offering robust, evidence-based and non-partisan advice on the basis of clear values and principles. A regional body will also prevent any 'Balkanisation' of policy and practices.

The status and functions of the Community Relations Council will be reviewed to ensure that its achievements and expertise are fully embedded in any successor organisation, while ensuring that we revise organisational structure to ensure that it is fit for purpose for a further 10 years at least.

The Executive must commit to the following actions:

- ✓ Developing the work of the Community Relations Council into a dedicated, standing, regional Shared Future Council.
- ✓ Remitting the Shared Future Council to fund community and voluntary organisations; provide training and development; develop and promote good practice guidance; increase public awareness of and encourage debate on community relations; provide a challenge function to the Executive and district councils; commission and conduct research; encourage innovation and embed institutional learning.
- ✓ Produce an objective annual report, based on all available evidence, measuring progress towards all targets in this strategy and making public comment on successes and areas for improvement.

Building a Shared Future at District Council Level

Local issues vary and it is important that action to tackle emergent problems is relevant, innovate and effective. It is therefore vital that District Councils are proactively involved in promoting an open and shared society.

In recent years District Councils have been critical partners in the EU PEACE Programme and the District Council Good Relations Programme. Through this work they have often developed sophisticated models of relationship, engaging elected members, local communities and social partners. Much of this work is of a high quality and has developed enormously over the years. We must build on the progress that has been made.

The Executive must therefore act to ensure that:

- ✓ In future, good relations work in District Councils must be a mixture of policy and practice. Councils will be encouraged to apply the principles of interdependence, equality and respect for diversity to all of their activity. Within the Review of Public Administration, Councils will be required to consider the potential good relations consequences of all investments as part of the process of community planning. Councils will develop 'Shared Future Plans' to demonstrate how their interventions are fair, open and effective in both addressing emergent community tensions and their longer-term causes.

Within these wider plans, Good Relations Officers are well placed to engage on a local level and 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.

Funding of Good Relations Activity

Adequately resourcing good relations activity is critical to the effective implementation of this strategy's objectives. Reports over many years highlight the value in supporting such activity, but also emphasise the need to ensure that the good practice is not lost as time passes. Over more than a decade there has been significant international investment in peace building and conflict transformation work. 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. It is worth noting at present that the level of funding given to the Community Relations Council is by the standards of other public bodies very small.

This strategy will be carried forward in the context of a difficult financial climate. But as is set out in detail previously, investments in building a shared future stand to deliver significant savings for Northern Ireland, through addressing the different aspects of the costs of a divided society. Building a shared future is an example of investing to save. Strategic, long-term and sustainable investments must be made now, and steps taken to ensure that their effects are multiplied through the sharing and replication of good practice.

The Executive must therefore act to ensure that:

- ✓ Programmes aimed at building a shared future are recognised as 'investing to save'.
- ✓ Resources for shared future programmes will be prioritised within Departmental budgets and future spending reviews.
- ✓ Besides the direct investments in good relations work, other expenditures are redirected to support sharing of goods, facilities and services over the present frequently segregated pattern of delivery.
- ✓ The Ministerial Panel consults regularly with independent funders to ensure maximum co-ordination and value in their approaches.
- ✓ Future funding arrangements are both strategic and flexible to respond to the differing levels of capacity amongst organisations working to build a united community.
- ✓ 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 a united community.

Action Plan

(This list of actions is indicative and dependent upon a shared future strategy being adopted by the Executive early in 2013)

Economics of a Shared Future

- 1 A practical and costed plan with targets and outcomes to tackle the financial and other cost implications of divisions within the next and following Programmes for Government and Budgets.

Department(s) OFMDFM/All Departments

Timetable Programme for Government 2015 onwards
Comprehensive Spending Review 2015/16 onwards
- 2 All major policies will be proofed for their potential impact on sharing versus separation through Shared Future Policy Proofing.

Department(s) All departments following example set by DOJ and DEL
Co-ordinated by DFP

Timetable 2013
- 3 All Departments will conduct formal audits of their budgets and publish their assessment of the impact of societal division.

Department(s) All departments

Timetable 2013
- 4 A statutory obligation will be introduced to actively encourage de-segregation and to promote cohesion, sharing and integration within all policies and spending plans.

Department(s) All departments

Timetable OFMDFM to introduce primary legislation in 2014
- 5 Shared future considerations will be fully integrated into all future departmental economic and social policies and programmes, including the next Economic Strategy.

Department(s) All departments

Timetable 2013
- 6 Resources will be made available to support longer term reduction in hostility and the normalisation of sharing.

Department(s) All departments.
DFP to lead

Timetable Comprehensive Spending Review 2015 onwards
- 7 New leisure, educational, health, social and community facilities will be built with an explicit objective of ensuring optimal and open public use, without any impact of intimidation.

Department(s) All departments supported by the Strategic Investment Board

Timetable 2013 onwards
- 8 Research will be carried out into the extent of segregation within rural areas and the corresponding consequences for service provision.

Department(s) DARD

Timetable Starting in 2013 and completed by 2014

9 A comprehensive study will be commissioned into labour mobility in, and provide further recommendations for action.

Department(s) DEL

Timetable 2013

10 The area planning process for schools is to be revised to ensure that full account is taken of the financial and economic benefits, alongside the social and educational aspects, of shared and integrated options.

Department(s) DE

Timetable 2013

11 The impact of segregation will be researched and addressed as part of efforts to meet carbon reduction targets.

Department(s) DoE

Timetable 2013

12 There will be an audit of the use of health and social services facilities by different sections of the community, and an examination of options for increased sharing.

Department(s) DHSSPS

Timetable Starting 2013 and completed by 2014

12 There will be an examination of the additional cost involved in providing public transport within the context of residential segregation.

Department(s) DRD

Timetable 2013

14 Mixed housing will be pro-actively promoted and developed and will be viewed as the default model for the provision of social housing.

Department(s) DSD

Timetable 2013 onwards

15 Urban Planning and Regeneration principles will be reviewed to ensure a strong emphasis on shared space and integrated land use.

Department(s) DSD/DOE

Timetable 2013/14

A Shared Future for our Children and Young People

- 16** Measurable good relations priorities will be explicitly incorporated into the early-years curriculum.

Department(s) DE

Timetable 2014

- 17** An Early Years Strategy will be developed that includes specific commitments to promote tolerance and inclusion as important steps in reducing racism and sectarianism in later years, including options for work with parents and carers.

Department(s) DE/OFMDFM

Timetable 2014

- 18** A review will commence of existing anti-sectarian and anti-racist youth work with identification of best practice.

Department(s) DE

Timetable 2014

- 19** A new resources plan to support active engagement of all 12-18 year olds on issues of sectarianism, racism and discrimination.

Department(s) DE/OFMDFM

Timetable 2014

- 20** Urgent review of the Social Investment Fund to ensure that all measures supported by it maximise progress towards a shared society, and tackle the interplay between violence, division and poverty among children and young people.

Department(s) OFMDFM

Timetable 2013

- 21** Ensure that all children and youth programmes funded by the Executive include measures to promote a shared future, and do not reinforce sectarian divisions or embed the influence of paramilitary organisations.

Department(s) DE/OFMDFM/DEL/DOJ

Timetable 2013

- 22** In addition to mainstreaming the commitments within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, actions from this strategy relating to children and young people will be mainstreamed within the Children and Young People's 10 Year Strategy and Action Plan.

Department(s) OFMDFM plus Ministerial Working Group

Timetable 2016 onwards after end of the current strategy

- 23** Ensure delivery of "Pathways to Success", the Executive's Strategy for those Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEETs), and the Youth Employment Scheme, addressing barriers to labour market participation, mentoring, and providing job opportunities.

Department(s) DEL and other Departments

Timetable 2013 onwards

- 24** Review and overhaul the strategy underpinning the Contested Spaces Programme, currently jointly funded by OFMDFM and Atlantic Philanthropies, to ensure that the generous funding achieves measurable progress on sharing in interface areas, supports the establishment of a sustainable and long term network of childcare provision and youth programmes, and is not merely treated as a further pot of additional funding for short term projects.

Department(s) OFMDFM/DE

Timetable 2013/14

- 25** Develop an inter-departmental strategy to tackle youth alienation, sectarianism and racism in areas of multiple deprivation.
- Department(s)** Lead by DE
Including DOJ/OFMDFM
- Timetable** Starting in 2013 and to be completed by 2014
- 26** Replace any remaining short-term summer intervention strategies with a long-term strategic approach to working with young people outside school hours to promote a shared society.
- Department(s)** DE/DOJ/OFMDFM/DSD
- Timetable** Completed by 2014
- 27** Establish and resource a targeted inter-community volunteering programme for 16-25 year olds.
- Department(s)** DE
- Timetable** 2014
- 28** Implement the Executive's Community Safety Strategy measures to tackle the anti-social behaviour and sectarianism that fuels fear among interface communities.
- Department(s)** DOJ and relevant departments
- Timetable** 2013-2017
- 29** A minimum target of 20% of children to be educated in integrated schools and 40% in mixed schools.
- Department(s)** DE
- Timetable** 2013-2020
- 30** All future new-build schools to be integrated unless an exceptional case for single-identity provision is made. As far as possible, new schools must be sited to service mixed catchment areas.
- Department(s)** DE
- Timetable** 2013 onwards
- 31** A revised duty on the Department of Education to encourage the development of integrated education will be introduced in legislation and extended to the proposed Education and Skills Authority.
- Department(s)** DE
- Timetable** 2013/14 through passage of ESA Bill
- 32** The process for schools who wish to transform to integrated status will be reviewed in order to make it easier.
- Department(s)** DE
- Timetable** 2013 start for completion in 2014
- 33** Ensure that where rationalisation of the school estate is required due to falling enrolments, options for collaboration on a shared basis are considered.
- Department(s)** DE
- Timetable** 2013 onwards
- 34** The criteria for the creation and maintenance of integrated schools will be reviewed, giving recognition to those children of mixed, other or no religious background rather than only measuring sufficient balance through those children who are designated as Protestant or Catholic.
- Department(s)** DE
- Timetable** 2013 onwards

35 Give formal recognition to schools with a mixed enrolment but do not hold formal integrated status.

Department(s) DE

Timetable 2013

36 Introduce a Shared and Integrated Education Bill to give statutory effect to the outcomes of actions 30 to 36.

Department(s) DE

Timetable 2015

37 Proposals for greater rationalisation and sharing within teacher training will be implemented.

Department(s) DEL

Timetable 2014/15

Sharing the Spaces in which We Live, Work and Play

38 Further to Action 7, All public investment in future will demonstrate that public assets can be shared and open to all to support the aims and objectives of this strategy.

Department(s) DFP and all others

Timetable 2013 onwards

39 New procedures will be brought forward to ensure that regional planning policies and strategic and local area plans take full account of issues of access and accessibility to shared resources in towns, villages and cities.

Department(s) DRD/DSD/DOE

Timetable 2014

40 A Planning Policy Statement will be developed to encourage best practice in design of urban environment to maximise cross community mixing.

Department(s) DOE

Timetable 2014

41 Measures will be developed to assess the use of public space and a report will be presented to the Assembly on an annual basis on progress.

Department(s) DSD

Timetable 2014 onwards

42 A good relations assessment will be introduced into community planning partnerships.

Department(s) DOE/Councils

Timetable 2013 onwards through Local Government Bill

43 Develop a comprehensive strategy to regenerate interface areas and to end isolation.

Department(s) OFMDFM to lead Inter-ministerial Group

Timetable 2014

44 Baseline targets set for a minimum reduction of 20% in the number of interface structures over the next ten years, with 30% removed within fifteen years.

Department(s) DOJ

Timetable 2023/2028

45 An Executive-wide commitment to agree that no new interface structures or barriers will be built except where threat to life cannot be countered in any other manner.

Department(s) All Executive Ministers

Timetable 2013

46 The establishment of an overarching statistical and qualitative monitoring process to assess, on an ongoing basis, levels of violence and threat in areas adjacent to interface structures; local perceptions of safety; and local attitudes to interface structures, and desire for change.

Department(s) DOJ/OFMDFM/PSNI

Timetable 2014

47 The inclusion in regional, city and area-based regeneration strategies of explicit measures to integrate interface areas into the development of our cities through transport, economic development and the provision of public amenities.

Department(s) DRD/DSD

Timetable 2013 onwards

48 Ensure that proactive measures are taken to assess and act against physical manifestations of intimidation on routes to employment and major arterial routes, including permanent political symbolism, evidence of paramilitary activity or allegations of direct personal harassment.

Department(s) DRD/PSNI/District Councils

Timetable 2014

49 Develop proactive policies and support the implementation in practice of active Good Relations strategies and programmes in all bodies subject to Section 75.

Department(s) OFMDFM

Timetable 2013 onwards

50 Work with employers to review their internal procedures for ensuring equality and good relations in the workplace and encourage the development of models of good practice building on existing work developed by trade unions and employers.

Department(s) OFMDFM/DEL/Equality Commission

Timetable 2013 onwards

51 Setting and delivering a target through proactive and inter-Departmental programmes, that by 2025 all evidence of threat, intimidation and exclusive claims to territorial monopoly by any group or cause will be eliminated in Northern Ireland and mixed and shared housing must be considered normal throughout the region and at all levels of income.

Department(s) DSD Lead with support from all departments

Timetable Agreement by 2013

Target by 2025

52 A landmark "Shared Housing Review" of residential segregation and equality of housing provision in Northern Ireland.

Department(s) DSD and others

Timetable 2013-14

53 Arising from Action 52, the development of a regional shared housing strategy which eliminates fear and intimidation in housing choice, and delivers social and affordable housing in areas free from permanent political allegiance to any party, group or identity.

Department(s) DSD

Timetable To be completed by 2015

54 Arising from Action 53, all housing will automatically be considered as shared/mixed/integrated and allocation will be firmly on the basis of need.

Department(s) DSD

Timetable 2016

55 Agree to a policy that the Union Flag as the sovereign state flag is flown over public and civic buildings across Northern Ireland on designated days as defined by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

This would be legislated for in advance of the implementation of the Review of Public Administration for Councils.

Department(s) Assembly Commission/Secretary of State for Northern Ireland/
DOE

Timetable The 2000 Flags Regulations Order would be amended by late 2013 to update the designated days policy on Parliament Buildings to reflect those defined by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
A flag policy for local Council would be legislated for in the Local Government Bill during 2013/14.

56 Consult on the possibility of developing shared symbols for Northern Ireland which recognise the principles of the Agreement.

Department(s) OFMDFM

Timetable 2014

57 Introduce a new flags protocol.

Department(s) OFMDFM and others

Timetable 2015

A Shared Culture

59 Develop a framework of principles for inter-cultural dialogue and diversity to ensure that spending decisions inform a shared future rather than the formalisation of traditional hostile identities.

Department(s) DCAL

Timetable 2013

59 Develop an action plan to ensure that the Council of Europe framework is prioritised for implementation within the next Comprehensive Spending Review period in Northern Ireland.

Department(s) DCAL/DE

Timetable 2015

60 Establish a process on parades and protests which involves all political parties and representatives of civic society with a terms of reference which:

- Complies with all appropriate Human Rights requirements;
- Is compliant with the requirements to provide and protect shared space in all parts of Northern Ireland;
- Includes recommendations on mediation and arbitration;
- Establishes a mechanism for binding arbitration in disputed cases which commands full political support;
- Regulates and assigns responsibility for the behaviour of all those participating in parades and protests including agreement on penalties and consequences for future participation; and
- Produces a draft code of conduct for parades and protests.

Department(s) OFMDFM-led

Timetable Completed and changes implemented by 2014

61 Review current practice in bonfire regulation in Northern Ireland and bring forward future proposals to establish a sustainable funding model for future bonfire intervention.

Department(s) OFMDFM

Timetable 2014

62 Every effort will be made to ensure that culturally sensitive centenary events are shared and inclusive.

Department(s) British Government/Irish Government/Councils/DCAL/DETI

Timetable 2013 onwards

63 Special support will be given to initiatives that use sport as a tool for building good relations and open up sporting facilities to all sections of the community.

Department(s) DCAL/District Councils

Timetable 2013

64 Special support will be given to festivals and public celebrations to maximise their reach and attractiveness to the whole community.

Department(s) DCAL/Councils

Timetable 2013

A Shared Way to Deal with Our Past

65 Engagement to agree terms for a cross-party talks process, aimed at reaching agreement on arrangements for dealing with the Past.

Department(s) NI Political Parties/British Govt/Irish Govt/ Executive

Timetable Legislation passed by 2015

66 Establishing a new agency to subsume the Historical Enquiries Team and that part of the Police Ombudsman's Office which deals with legacy cases.

Department(s) DOJ

Timetable 2015

67 The recommendations from the Commission for Victims and Survivors in relation to improved financial support to address the needs of the seriously injured and the bereaved will be addressed; as will the impact of conflict related trauma on the mental health and wellbeing of victims and survivors.

Department(s) DHSSPS/OFMDFM

Timetable 2014

Delivering a Shared Future – Implementation of the Strategy

- 68** Establish a Shared Future Ministerial Panel, comprising all members of the Executive, and attended by senior representatives from a range of statutory agencies and community partners.
- Department(s)** Executive, lead by OFMDFM
- Timetable** 2013
- 69** Develop the work of the Community Relations Council into a dedicated, standing, regional Shared Future Council which funds community and voluntary organisations; provides training and development; develops and promotes good practice guidance; increases public awareness of, and encourages debate on community relations; provides a challenge function to the Executive and district councils; commissions and conducts research; encourages innovation and helps embed institutional learning.
- Department(s)** OFMDFM
- Timetable** 2014
- 70** Produce an objective annual report, based on all available evidence, measuring progress towards all targets in this strategy and making public comment on successes and areas for improvement.
- Department(s)** OFMDFM
- Timetable** 2013 onwards
- 71** Councils will develop ‘Shared Future Plans’, to demonstrate how their interventions are fair, open and effective in both addressing emergent community tensions and their longer-term causes.
- Department(s)** Councils
- Timetable** 2015 after the Review of Public Administration changes are made
- 72** Programmes aimed at building a shared future will be recognised as “investing to save”.
- Department(s)** DFP/All departments
- Timetable** 2013
- 73** Resources for shared future programmes will be prioritised within Departmental budgets and future spending reviews.
- Department(s)** DFP/All departments
- Timetable** 2015 for the next Comprehensive Spending Review Period
- 74** Expenditures will be redirected to support sharing of goods, facilities and services over the present frequently segregated pattern of delivery.
- Department(s)** DFP/All departments
- Timetable** 2015 for the next Comprehensive Spending Review Period
- 75** The Ministerial Panel will consult regularly with independent funders to ensure maximum co-ordination and value in their approaches.
- Department(s)** OFMDFM in the lead/All departments
- Timetable** 2013

76 Future funding arrangements will be both strategic and flexible to respond to the differing levels of capacity amongst organisations working to build a united community.

Department(s) DFP/All departments

Timetable 2015 for the next Comprehensive Spending Review Period

77 Funding will be 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 a united community.

Department(s) All departments

Timetable 2015 for the next Comprehensive Spending Review Period



For **Everyone**

THE ALLIANCE PARTY BLUEPRINT FOR A SHARED FUTURE

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