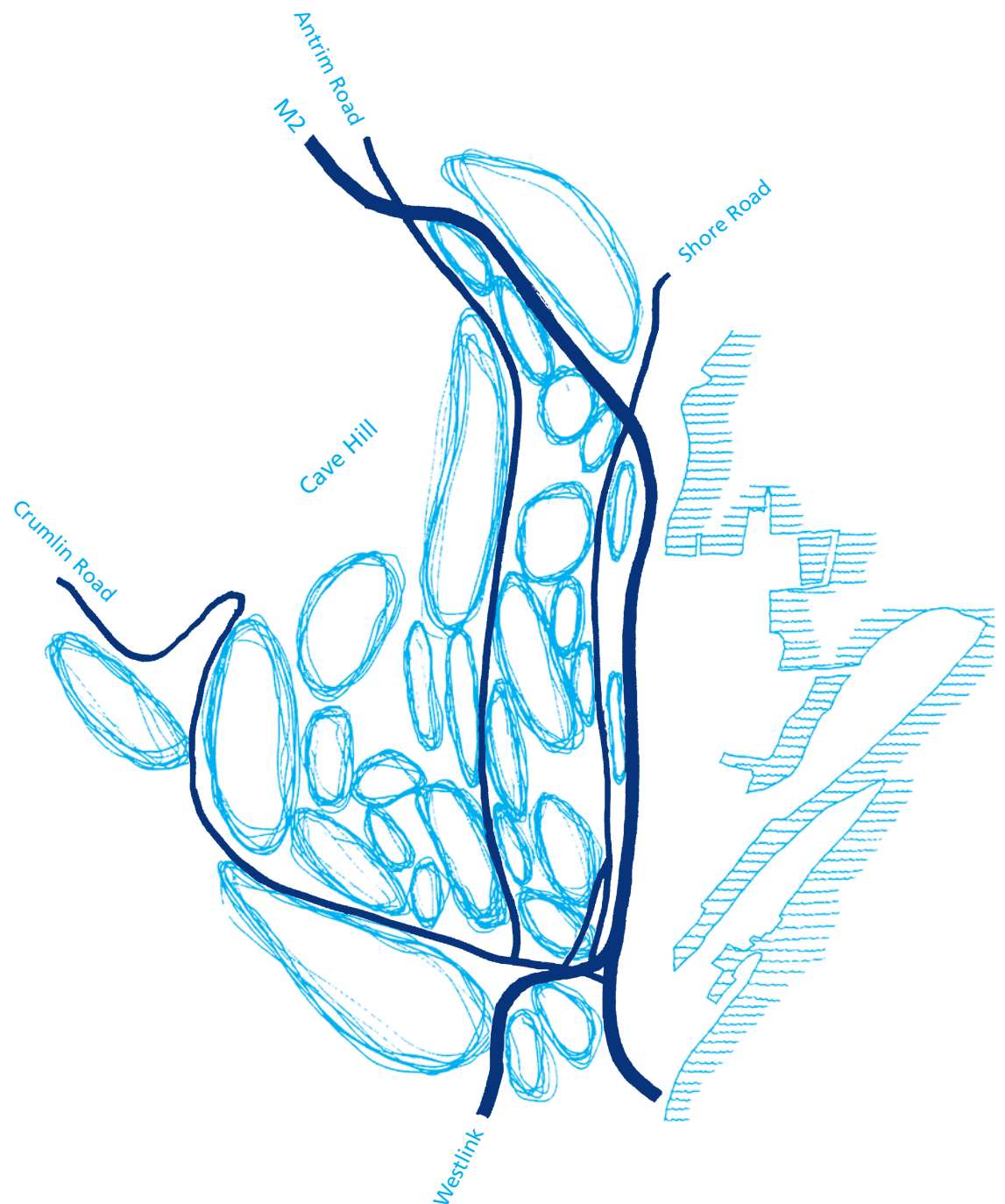


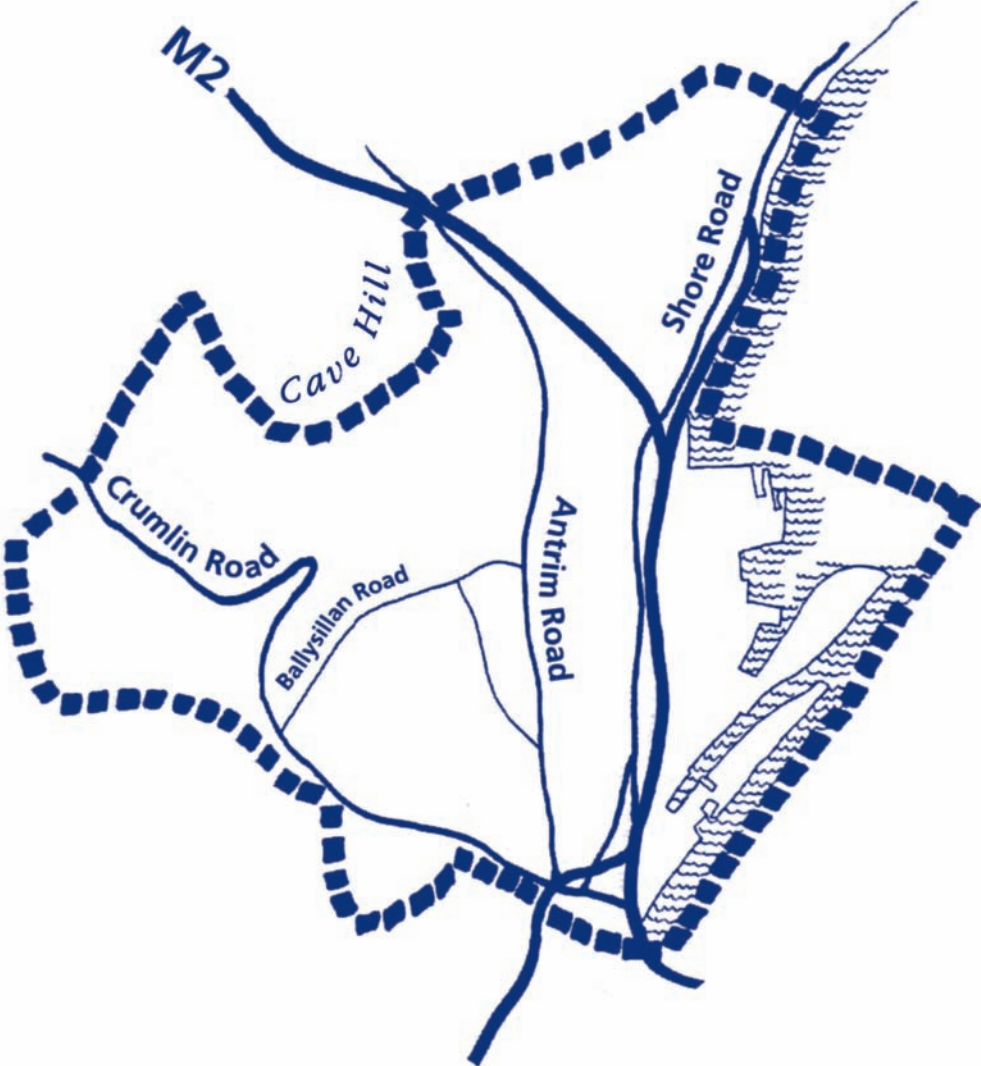
North Belfast Community Action Project

Report of the Project Team

May 2002



North Belfast
Parliamentary Constituency



Foreword	05
Executive Summary	09
Part I Analysis of the Issues	17
1 Introduction	19
2 Socio-Economic Profile	25
3 Territoriality	35
4 Sectarianism and Interfaces	39
5 Political Leadership	45
6 Community Capacity in North Belfast	47
7 Youth	49
8 Health Issues	53
Part II Summary of Analysis	59
Part III Action Initiated by the Project	65
Part IV Recommended Further Action	69
1 Dedicated High Level Unit for North Belfast	71
2 Community Capacity Building	75
3 A New Development Site for North Belfast	81
4 Centre for Citizenship	85
5 Health	89
6 Education	91
7 New Approaches	95
Appendices	99
A Public Meetings Report	
B List of Consultations	
C Example of Community Development through E-technology	



FOREWORD

FOREWORD



Left to right

Roy Adams

Rev Dr John Dunlop

Monsignor Tom Toner

To the First Minister, the Deputy First Minister and the Minister for Social Development

Dear Ministers

You called the three of us together last December, with the support of the six North Belfast Members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Frazer Agnew, Mr Fred Cobain, Mr Nigel Dodds, Mr Billy Hutchinson, Mr Gerry Kelly and Mr Alban Maginness. You gave us a task which we have found demanding from beginning to end. Nevertheless, we are conscious that however demanding we have found the challenge it pales into insignificance compared with the problems which many people face on a day-to-day basis in North Belfast.

In the Report we have described in some detail the conditions under which many people have to live. While statistics are illuminating, there is no substitute for visiting some of the most troubled areas and hearing and seeing at first hand what it is like to live there. We have been touched and moved by what we have heard. In some of the interface areas there is not only physical dereliction, there is social decay, ill-health, uncertainty, violence and a considerable amount of fear. The stories which we have listened to tell of conflict, anger and stress.

Yet it must be said that North Belfast also includes some of the most pleasant and convenient parts of Belfast in which to live as well as some of the best schools and social amenities in Northern Ireland. Even within the most troubled communities there is a high degree of energy and a deep desire for a peaceful future.

Many people give voluntarily of their time to help in many community projects in order to improve the quality of life of people of all ages who live in their neighbourhoods. We applaud such people, but we have heard from them of the temporary nature of much of the assistance for the projects in which they are involved and in the course of our consultations we met many people who, within days, were on the point of losing their jobs when the funding finished.

While we were asked to address social and community issues, especially that of community capacity, we want to acknowledge the importance of representative democracy and the work of the MP, MLAs and Councillors who, we are convinced, work hard in the interests of the people they represent.

Sectarianism is widespread in Northern Ireland crossing social, religious and political barriers. It diminishes all of us who are affected by it and makes us less than we ought to be. Nowhere are its debilitating effects more keenly felt than in the sharp verbal and physical exchanges

which are so characteristic of the interface areas. Those who have not lived in these areas need to be careful about rushing to judgment in condemnation of their fellow citizens who have lived through the worst effects of the 'Troubles' and currently have to endure what is unacceptable.

We have found that North Belfast is a patchwork of small communities in which people have an intense sense of belonging. In a peaceful world such diversity could be a cause of enrichment. The trouble is there is such suspicion and fear that this patchwork quilt is not stitched together but is constantly being torn apart. The American Sociologist of Religion, Robert Bellah, wrote that as well as the physical universe needing attention, so also does the social universe because it is damaged "... not only by war, genocide and political oppression. It is also damaged by the destruction of the subtle ties that bind human beings to one another, leaving them frightened and alone."

Those subtle ties are in urgent need of restoration in North Belfast. Major attitudinal change is essential if there is going to be a future different from the past.

While we have tried to describe what we have found without apportioning blame for specific incidents, it cannot be the case that extensive rioting, intimidation, drug dealing, violence, attacks on the Police and social instability have any acceptable place in a peaceful present or a decent future.

We cannot overstate the significance of this problem or its potential to destabilise other parts of Belfast and Northern Ireland. We have been told that the situation in some areas is getting worse. While assistance is necessary from outside the area, such assistance must help local people, at all levels, to have the confidence and generosity of spirit to constructively tackle their local problems which are often the result of the breakdown of relationships and therefore of trust. Everyone has a responsibility to play a constructive part in this matter. Co-operation is essential otherwise the additional assistance we are calling for will be wasted.

North Belfast has the capacity to absorb resources, destroy people, impoverish children and destabilise other parts of Northern Ireland. The price of failure to address and resolve the issues is high and is made up of direct and indirect costs.

The direct costs include: the enormous cost of policing; the high cost of caring for an increasingly unhealthy population; and the costs of intensive social support across several agencies.

The indirect costs include: a diminished sense of self-worth; sapping of confidence; lost opportunities; resistance to economic development; recurring cycles of violence and disorder; the waste of human potential; and damage to the image of Belfast and Northern Ireland.

The decline in North Belfast cannot be arrested unless it is considered a priority case for intensive care over a number of years. We are not suggesting that it be provided with an expensive life-support machine forever but it does need intensive attention so that it can get up on its feet and walk with confidence into the future. The additional assistance which this Report calls for must be targeted and used for shaping a vibrant, sustainable and therefore different future which will be marked by confidence, tolerance and co-operation at all levels.

It is very important that the North Belfast communities can see that action is planned as a result of the Report and that the capacity of malign influences to continue to promote hopelessness is curbed by Government's clear determination to act.

FOREWORD

To that end the Team would like to see Government agree the following:

a commitment to recognise that North Belfast needs urgent special treatment;

a recognition that improvement must be based on sustainability, partnership and a joined-up approach by Government and others;

a commitment to create a dedicated unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister working, through a Departmental Steering Group, with the Department for Social Development to lead a plan of action aimed at improving life for the communities in North Belfast;

additional ear-marked funding of £3million per year ideally for a 5 year period (or at minimum a 3 year period with a review before the end of 3 years) to facilitate community capacity building and to encourage communities to engage in partnership working with agencies and one another;

the creation, through this dedicated unit, of arrangements to facilitate a greater degree of integration in Government and Agency work in North Belfast;

this unit to take the lead in co-ordinating a Government response to interface issues;

additional resources to address health and education issues;

support for projects to lift the spirit and morale of communities in North Belfast; and

support in principle for major physical redevelopment projects.

We alone are responsible for the contents of this Report but we want to record our thanks to all those who contributed to our work, especially the Advisory Forum nominated by the North Belfast Members of the Legislative Assembly and the members of the small, hard-working Secretariat who were seconded to the Project. We appreciate the trouble many people took to attend the public consultations and others who made verbal and written submissions. Many people who made contributions about the needs of their areas will find much of that material in the appendices. This will provide a challenge for what needs to be done following the presentation of this Report in the pursuit of the creation of a potentially beautiful patchwork quilt, which is North Belfast.

We thank you for the privilege of being asked to address an urgent and important problem and we commend this Report.



JOHN DUNLOP



ROY ADAMS



TOM TONER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Belfast Community Action Project ("the Project") is a joint initiative of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development, with the co-operation of the six North Belfast Members of the Legislative Assembly. It was officially launched on 3 December 2001.

The Project's vision is the eventual creation of a vibrant and sustainable community in North Belfast that is influential in supporting peace building.

The Project's area of study covers the communities within the boundary of the Belfast North Parliamentary Constituency area which stretches from the Shankill to Rathcoole.

We were guided by the following Terms of Reference:

"To put in place a plan of short, medium and long-term actions to address social and community issues in North Belfast. It will focus in particular on building community capacity in those areas in which this is weak in addition to maintaining community activity where this is working well. The project will focus on producing early outcomes and practical assistance to local communities."

In the Report we have described in some detail the conditions under which many people have to live. While statistics are illuminating, there is no substitute for visiting some of the most troubled areas and hearing and seeing at first hand what it is like to live there. We have been touched and moved by what we have heard. In some of the interface areas there is not only physical dereliction, there is social decay, ill-health, uncertainty, violence and a considerable amount of fear. The stories to which we have listened tell of conflict, anger and stress.

Yet, it must be said, North Belfast also includes some of the most pleasant and convenient parts of Belfast in which to live and contains some of the best schools and social amenities in Northern Ireland. Even within the most troubled communities there is a high degree of energy and a deep desire for a peaceful future.

Analysis

Our analysis of the issues facing North Belfast is based upon consultations, presentations, research and actions already taken on the ground. From our analysis we have concluded the following:

North Belfast is a patchwork of small communities, often separated by walls and 'peacelines', in which people have an intense sense of belonging. The issue of territoriality - particularly acute in the context of housing - has become a highly emotive subject and it has damaged already fragile relations between the two communities. Because of fear, people are not prepared to travel through some areas and find it difficult to access shops, jobs, post offices, health centres, leisure facilities and schools.

Territoriality is arguably the most contentious issue in North Belfast and reflects itself in overcrowding in Catholic/Nationalist areas and vacant spaces in some Protestant/Unionist areas.

The rapidly changing population profile of the area, with a young and growing Catholic population, compared to an ageing and declining Protestant population, is a source of concern to Protestants, who see themselves being 'squeezed out' of the area. Housing conditions in the Protestant communities of North Belfast are substantially worse than those in Catholic areas. The Catholic community, on the other hand, feel that their need for housing is not being taken seriously and that they are trapped behind 'walls of fear' even though there may be available space within Protestant areas. The North Belfast Housing Strategy is based upon the premise that the demands of both communities can be met within the timescale of the Strategy without any territorial shift.

Sectarianism is widespread in Northern Ireland and crosses social, religious and political barriers. It finds its most destructive form in interfaces particularly when the two communities are so closely jammed together that avoidance is impossible and where markers of distinction in the form of flags, murals, election posters and street names become sources of conflict. Such sectarianism diminishes all of us who are affected by it.

It is clear, both from the experiences of people living and working in North Belfast and from the Police figures, that the issue of sectarian interface violence remains a serious and recurrent problem across the area. The primary responsibility for dealing with public disorder and sectarian violence in interface areas, when it breaks out, should rest with the Police. However the responsibility for the improvement of community relationships lies with the communities themselves and their leaders as well as with the Police and the elected political representatives. Building relationships between the Police and local communities and between the communities and their leaders will increase feelings of safety and assist in defusing potential riot situations.

There is a lack of understanding and consequential mistrust of 'the other side'. 'Segregated living' has become part of North Belfast's spatial and social fabric with many residents now feeling that they need to live among those who share their identity and outlook. This is particularly relevant in interface areas where the problem of sectarianism is seen in its most destructive form. Innovative approaches to break down divisions in the area are required.

Reporting details of life in North Belfast presents a challenge to the media. When communities feel that their convictions have not been explained, and the underlying issues have not been sympathetically explored, they are left with the feeling that they have not been heard and their alienation deepens.

In social and economic terms some parts of North Belfast are prosperous while others suffer from multiple disadvantage, with even the relatively affluent areas containing pockets of deprivation. The area has the capacity to absorb resources, destroy people, impoverish children and destabilise other parts of Northern Ireland and for that reason there is a need for urgent special treatment.

North Belfast has suffered from a serious lack of investment over recent decades. The division and polarisation which existed and still exists, discourages inward investment. There is a need to overcome division and restructure the local economy to provide lasting job opportunities together with the basic skills necessary to access employment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall educational standards in the area are low, notwithstanding the existence of a number of very good schools and a perceptible improvement in the performance of some of the other schools. Parental and communal support for mainstream education is often low and there are areas where pre-school provision is grossly inadequate.

North Belfast has some of the poorest health and social care indices in Northern Ireland, with high incidences of cancer, asthma, bronchitis and other diseases, partly because of the high level of deprivation and relatively poor housing. Our Report draws attention to the problems of substance abuse and mental health which are prevalent throughout the area as well as suicides among young people. These health problems have been exacerbated by the fact that, in the last 30 years, North Belfast has experienced the highest levels of 'Troubles-related' deaths and injuries of any area in Northern Ireland and continues to host bitter internecine and sectarian conflict.

There is little chance of improving people's standard of living and overall quality of life, in a sustainable way, without their collaborative participation in planning processes. This requires community capacity building, leading to empowerment.

For the purposes of our work we define community capacity as **"the ability and will of people who live in a locality to act collectively for their common good"**. The level of capacity is varied within and across the two communities and is generally weaker in Protestant areas. Each community suffers in different ways from multiple deprivation. Common to all communities is the complexity of searching/applying for grant assistance and the lack of sustainable funding for community projects.

Community groups feel isolated when they encounter problems because they do not have networks that they trust and respect through which to access support. There is a need to develop community leadership competencies, networking mechanisms and sustainable funding arrangements.

Youth in North Belfast represent a tremendous asset and source of creative potential for the community. In the context of prevailing conditions, this asset is often seen as a liability as some young people are involved in public disorder. The youth-related problems of North Belfast in many cases arise because of scarcity of resources and facilities and the resultant boredom, rather than any inherent malice on the part of the young people. Although there are great differences in the abilities of young people it is evident that all are affected by a lack of opportunity. The problem locally referred to as 'recreational rioting' located around interface areas, needs to be addressed.

There is a need to convince young people that they have a future in the area. Positive influences and role models are needed to inspire and motivate young people so that they can channel their energies away from anti-social behaviour and develop self-esteem. We have often been told of the desire for parenting classes and Parent/Teacher Liaison Officers.

The Churches have a long history of sustained work in North Belfast and that work has largely gone unrecognised. Many Churches have maintained a high standard of community work,

particularly through the provision of youth organisations, often without interruption throughout the years of the 'Troubles'. To continue this community work these Churches need appropriate funding to be made available and also help in discovering and accessing funding.

The six members of the local Assembly belong to six different political parties, which illustrates the diverse character of party political support. Dialogue between the communities and political leaders is vital for the future stability of North Belfast.

Paramilitaries exert influence (and in parts, control) over some areas in North Belfast. They are regarded by some people as protectors of their communities. There are some associated with them who try to exercise constructive leadership and have worked to improve their communities and in some cases to build relationships across the divides. However, there are others who exercise a malign influence and are barriers to progress.

Criminality associated with protection rackets and drug dealing depletes the financial, social and human assets of the community, impairs the quality of life and destroys the spirit of enterprise. There is a need for everyone with influence to redouble their efforts to convince communities - including paramilitaries on all sides - that violence, division, conflict and instability are seriously inhibiting progress in North Belfast.

There is no sense of a strategic or shared vision for North Belfast and therefore no 'big picture' to which individual communities can be directed for hope and inspiration. There is a need to develop a long-term integrated strategy for community development in the area.

No single department or agency working on its own can deliver sustainable improvement. A dedicated delivery mechanism which has both the authority and the capacity to address North Belfast's specific problems and to develop an appropriate and realistic development programme for the area is needed. It is clear that any improvement must be based on sustainability, partnership and a joined-up approach by Government and others.

There is a real need for a large-scale physical regeneration project to lift the spirits of the community and provide a contrast to some of the worst environmental features in the area.

Action Initiated by the Project

We welcomed the opportunity for our Project to engage positively with the North Belfast community on a wide range of practical actions that gave us valuable, first-hand experience of the key issues of the area. In particular we appreciated our direct engagement with the voluntary sector, which we believe has a significant role to play in the area.

We were also involved, in the latter stages of the Project, in some very key strategic work which was only possible through the trust developed with the community groups. The Project was able to build on this trust by promoting, encouraging and supporting the communities in their efforts to address the key issues of funding and dealing with interface tensions. During the course of our Project we committed almost £100,000 to early action projects. In encouraging new

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

approaches by the communities, we endeavoured to ensure that they fully understood the need for cooperation, acceptance of responsibility and accountability.

We believe that a major challenge for North Belfast is how to take the risk of getting to know the 'other' community through meeting and sharing experience and knowledge. Throughout the course of this Project, we have detected among all the key organisations a definite willingness to engage and a genuine enthusiasm for bringing about real change.

Recommended Further Action

In the final part of our Report we have drawn up a list of areas on which we would like to see further action. It includes action to:

- enable Government to respond in a more 'joined-up' way;
- address interface issues;
- boost community capacity;
- improve the economic, social and cultural life in North Belfast; and
- improve health and education in the area.

Specifically our recommendations for action are:

- a. to set up a **dedicated senior level Unit** working with the full authority of Government, located in the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister but working closely, through a Departmental Steering Group, with the Department for Social Development. The functions of the Unit will be to build **community capacity**, develop a **long-term strategy** for North Belfast, encourage **partnerships** and also take responsibility for addressing issues in **interface areas**;
- b. to create a **Community Capacity Building Programme** which should be a major function of the dedicated Unit. This programme should be special to North Belfast. It should be adequately resourced with staff and additional funding and given sufficient time to make a difference, with community groups able to access assistance in ways relevant to their areas of need;
- c. to make available **£3million additional funding per year** for community capacity building (under a new concept of **Community Empowerment Partnerships**) ideally for a **5 year period** (but at minimum, 3 years with a review before the end of the 3 years) for this Programme. These partnerships will involve and service smaller community groups within the partnership;
- d. to encourage Government to develop a **major site** involving mixed-usage to serve as a symbol of hope and economic regeneration for North Belfast;
- e. to develop a **Centre for Citizenship**, located in North Belfast to promote learning about citizenship and related concepts including the rights and the obligations that accompany them;

- f. that the **North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust's bid for almost £11million of Executive Programme Funds** is accepted to enable the Trust to invest in two new Health and Well-being Centres for North Belfast as well as the redevelopment of an existing site. This will enable the Trust to establish a dedicated service drawing together all the relevant strands of service provision with the capacity and specialist skills to respond appropriately to the levels of need of residents in North Belfast;
- g. that **additional resources** be made available to schools to boost the key links between school and home; support be given to the Department of Education's proposal to extend its **Youth Work in Schools Initiative**; for schools in North Belfast to participate in the **pilot scheme** created by the Department of Education for the 14-16 age group (Key Stage 4); and Belfast and North Eastern Education and Library Boards to review the level of **support for voluntary youth organisations**;
- h. to develop **e-technology** in the area to create an environment whereby homes in North Belfast are able to communicate in a non-confrontational manner both on an 'intra' and 'inter' community basis via the Internet; and
- i. for North Belfast to aim to become a **Music Action Zone** within which we would envisage a new **School for Percussion** to offer fresh opportunity, especially for disadvantaged people as a means of cross-community contact.



PART I - ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUES



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

An Introduction to North Belfast

1. North Belfast is located in one of the most attractive environmental settings in the city with views across Belfast Lough, the natural resource of the north foreshore and the wooded parkland on the side of Cave Hill. The area is situated within twenty minutes drive of 30% of Northern Ireland's main market area and only five minutes drive from the City Centre. Indeed, much of the area's strengths rest on its wider strategic connection to roads, employment opportunities and natural resources. Major improvements have been made in the supply and condition of social housing (although much of this investment has been diminished by the broader physical neglect of the area). There are significant resources of energy and social capital upon which sustainable development could be based. There is a plentiful supply of physical opportunities, labour and natural resources within North Belfast. The area's proximity to the M2, M3 and Westlink can allow for economic and physical development opportunities to emerge in the area.
2. Despite this, in social and economic terms, North Belfast suffers from major disadvantage as summarised below:
 - a. even the relatively prosperous areas contain pockets of deprivation;
 - b. the area has suffered a high level of out-migration since the beginning of the 'Troubles';
 - c. it has high levels of unemployment and a high dependence on less well paid categories of employment;
 - d. while the area has some of the best schools, educational levels are generally below the Northern Ireland averages;
 - e. it has many serious health problems; and
 - f. it has secured little benefit from the continuing development of the Belfast economy.
3. These are problems which other areas experience, so what is it that sets North Belfast apart from other parts of Northern Ireland?
4. North Belfast has not been able to establish a clear single identity and is made up of many small, often isolated, communities. The area is highly segregated along sectarian lines and has suffered more as a result of sectarian violence than any other part of Northern Ireland. Such incidents of violence and the effects of having many interfaces/peace walls in and on the margins of the area have resulted in population movement leading to smaller communities which are under attack, feel insecure and are highly polarised. Demographic shifts of population indicate that the Catholic population is younger and growing. The Protestant population is older, diminishing and less well organised with many of the younger families having moved out of the city. While some communities, particularly in Catholic areas have been able to organise themselves more effectively, the size and demographic make-up of others has meant that the scope for community and economic development for the area as a whole is limited. There is also a marked tendency for each community to look after its own interest and as a result there is no cohesion and no holistic approach to the area.

5. Fear is an everyday reality with people being careful about where they walk, shop, socialise, work and travel lest they be physically or verbally attacked. For example out of a total of 136 houses in Belfast vacated due to social unrest between July 2001 and March 2002, 131 were in North Belfast.
6. The area's poor social and economic conditions are reflected in and exacerbated by the physical condition of North Belfast. The area contains some of the worst environmental features in the city including high rates of dereliction, redundant industrial land and areas blighted by sectarianism and peacelines. While the area contains a large number of open spaces, many of these sites contain derelict places and buildings. According to the land capacity study, carried out by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, North Belfast contains more undeveloped, vacant and derelict land than any other district. The area has 61% of all undeveloped land and 37% of all vacant and derelict land in Belfast.
7. As a direct result of its highly diverse and segregated nature, the area has failed to benefit fully from many of the initiatives aimed at economic development and urban renewal, with the statutory agencies being widely perceived by local communities as not having supported, nor invested in, the social, infrastructural, economic or educational development of North Belfast. Without doubt the image of the area has contributed to North Belfast's inability to attract sufficient resources in terms of public/private/community and voluntary input to the area and its subsequent decline.
8. Community organisations, agencies and departments have been working in North Belfast to try to ameliorate the area's problems. There is merit in the work that each organisation carries out. This includes co-ordinated initiatives but no one organisation has been able to adopt an all-encompassing approach to tackling the problems of the area.
9. This is why a vision for North Belfast is essential. It will necessarily be a shared ambition, simply stated to which everyone in the area can aspire. Acting as a source of inspiration this vision should provide the context for investment along with a sense of hope and direction.
10. This Report and the actions within it hope to contribute to that vision and to establish a sustainable process which can boost community confidence and help develop a wider-based strategy for the development of North Belfast.

Background to the Project

11. The North Belfast Community Action Project ("the Project") is a joint initiative of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development, with the co-operation of the six North Belfast Members of the Legislative Assembly and was officially launched on 3 December 2001. The Project's vision is the eventual creation of a vibrant and sustainable community in North Belfast that is influential in supporting peace building.
12. The Project's area of study covers the communities within the boundary of the Belfast North Parliamentary Constituency area from the Shankill to Rathcoole.

INTRODUCTION

Terms of Reference

13. In the time made available to this study we were guided by the following Terms of Reference:

"To put in place a plan of short, medium and long-term actions to address social and community issues in North Belfast. It will focus in particular on building community capacity in those areas in which this is weak in addition to maintaining community activity where this is working well. The project will focus on producing early outcomes and practical assistance to local communities" by:

- a. providing an immediate outreach advisory service to ensure that all areas can take full advantage of existing programmes including PEACE II;
- b. exploring the particular social and community problems being experienced within North Belfast and making recommendations to inform the policies and practices of Government and others;
- c. auditing existing patterns of community infrastructure in North Belfast, including funding arrangements, staffing levels and other support needs;
- d. describing linkages with existing programmes, policy makers and community-based support structures;
- e. developing a plan for an integrated programme of action in North Belfast aimed at Government and others; and
- f. identifying and agreeing the particular roles and responsibilities of the various support agencies within North Belfast.

Our Approach

14. Determined to make use of local energies to address local issues, we attempted to ensure that the views of anyone with an interest in North Belfast were considered.
15. We engaged in a series of public consultations across North Belfast designed to give people an opportunity to describe and discuss the important issues facing them. In all, 16 public meetings took place along with 4 school events. A separate event was also organised for the Churches. The key points to emerge from the 16 public meetings have been included at Appendix A.
16. We also engaged in regular meetings with an Advisory Forum of representatives of the North Belfast Members of the Legislative Assembly and listened to presentations from Statutory Agencies, Community Groups, the Police and members of the Private Sector. Government Ministers were also consulted for their views. A full list is included at Appendix B.
17. Written submissions on the issues in North Belfast were invited. Many were received and have been used to inform our study.

18. We commissioned research on Community Capacity Building and Criminality and also a political commentary on North Belfast as part of this Project.
19. In addition the Project has carried out a number of pieces of action-based activity which have also informed our Report. Details of such activity have been included in Part III.

Scope of Consultations and Research

20. The approach to completing any project is conditioned by the time and resources available to undertake the task. The Project had to be completed within a six-month period. A longer time-frame might have enabled a more comprehensive exploration of the area and allowed more primary research to be taken forward, but we are satisfied that the consultations and research we have carried out offer sufficient insight into the particular social and community problems currently being experienced in North Belfast.

Guiding Principles

21. Our Report is based upon the consultations, presentations, research and action on the ground. We have also been conscious of the need to analyse and comment upon the issues as we see them. We have been guided by the view, which we formed early on in our deliberations, that any programme of action which we might recommend has to be guided by the following principles:
 - a. there is no single or "quick fix" solution;
 - b. action needs to be sustained over a considerable period;
 - c. action cannot be left to one agency or be focused on one aspect; and
 - d. dialogue, partnership working and a non-coercive approach are fundamental to success.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

ELECTORAL WARDS IN NORTH BELFAST PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY



Population

22. The North Belfast Community Action Project covered 19 local Government wards within the Belfast North Parliamentary Constituency area, encompassing 14 wards within the Belfast City Council area and 5 wards within the Newtownabbey Borough Council area.
23. In 1991 the total population of the area was 85,105, 24% of the total population of Belfast and Newtownabbey Local Government Districts and 5% of the total Northern Ireland population. By 1999 population within the area had increased to 86,005 (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, (NISRA) 1999) an increase of just over 1% in comparison to an increase of 3.5% for Belfast and Newtownabbey Local Government Districts as a whole. We are aware that the NISRA population estimate for the Parliamentary Constituency of Belfast North is 91,508 (2000), but to show the population of each ward we have had to use the population estimates provided by NISRA in 1999, as the 2000 figures for wards are not yet available.
24. Just over half of the wards in the area have seen a population decline since 1991. These include: Bellevue, Cliftonville, Coole, Castlevue, Cavehill, Dunanney, Duncairn, Fortwilliam, Whitehouse and Woodvale.

Ward	Population 1991	Population 1999	% Increase/Decrease 1991-2000
Abbey	2,553	2,704	+05.9
Ardoyne	6,337	7,534	+18.9
Ballysillan	4,874	4,998	+02.5
Bellevue	5,033	4,771	-05.2
Castlevue	5,416	4,981	-08.0
Cavehill	6,080	5,629	-07.4
Chichester Park	5,827	6,162	+05.7
Cliftonville	5,857	5,280	-09.9
Coole	2,488	2,264	-09.0
Crumlin	3,876	4,027	+03.9
Dunanney	2,152	2,023	-06.0
Duncairn	4,060	3,987	-01.8
Fortwilliam	5,112	4,770	-06.7
Legoniel	5,577	5,703	+02.3
New Lodge	6,370	6,467	+01.5
Valley	2,311	2,549	+10.3
Water Works	5,759	6,869	+19.3
Whitehouse	1,943	1,865	-04.0
Woodvale	3,480	3,422	-01.7
TOTAL	85,105	86,005	+01.1

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Age Profile

25. A profile by age of population shows that North Belfast has proportionately more people under 15 years and over 60 years of age, than the Belfast average. Certain wards, including Ardoyne, Legoniel, New Lodge and Water Works, display a particularly high population of young people, with between 30% and 40% of the population below the age of 20.

Area	0-15 yrs %	16-59 yrs %	60 yrs & Over %
North Belfast	24.4	54.8	20.7
Belfast	23.4	56.4	20.2
Newtownabbey	22.3	59.6	18.1
Northern Ireland	24.3	58.4	17.3

Unemployment

26. A total of 2,766 people (January 2002 figures) aged 16-59 years old were unemployed within the area. Some of the highest levels of unemployment in Belfast were found within North Belfast with 315 (8.5%) unemployed within the wards of New Lodge, 307 (7.7%) in Water Works and 301 (7.1%) in Ardoyne. Proportionately the highest level of unemployment in North Belfast (over 9%) is in the Crumlin ward.

Ward	Local Government District	Population 16-59	Unemployment 2002	% Pop ⁿ Unemployed
Abbey	Newtownabbey	1,518	32	2.1
Ardoyne	Belfast	4,143	301	7.3
Ballysillan	Belfast	2,723	151	5.5
Bellevue	Belfast	2,600	116	4.5
Castleview	Belfast	2,640	137	5.2
Cavehill	Belfast	3,037	84	2.8
Chichester Park	Belfast	3,606	149	4.1
Cliftonville	Belfast	2,889	148	5.1
Coole	Newtownabbey	1,192	75	6.3
Crumlin	Belfast	2,046	187	9.1
Dunanney	Newtownabbey	1,196	74	6.2
Duncairn	Belfast	2,113	159	7.5
Fortwilliam	Belfast	2,565	82	3.2
Legoniel	Belfast	3,123	175	5.6
New Lodge	Belfast	3,703	315	8.5
Valley	Newtownabbey	1,395	79	5.7
Water Works	Belfast	4,011	307	7.7
Whitehouse	Newtownabbey	966	44	4.6
Woodvale	Belfast	1,687	151	9.0
TOTAL		47,153	2,766	5.9

- 27. The percentage of the economically active population (16-59 years old) who are unemployed stands at 5.9% for North Belfast. This figure is higher than the averages for Belfast (4.2%) and Newtownabbey (3.9%). The Northern Ireland figure for the same period is 4.9%.
- 28. The level of long-term unemployment (those unemployed for more than one year) has dropped significantly since 1992. In 1992, in 16 of 19 wards 40% of those unemployed were classified as long-term unemployed. This pattern in 2002 has now changed, with a higher proportion of people being unemployed for under one year. Of all the North Belfast wards only three are classified as having a long-term unemployment problem. These are Ballysillan, Crumlin and Woodvale. The Northern Ireland figure for long-term unemployment in January 2002 stood at 29.6%.
- 29. There is no immediate correlation between unemployment levels or deprivation and population decline. Of the ten wards with population decline, two wards are in areas of high unemployment (over 7%) however Cavehill and Fortwilliam are also included and they have unemployment rates of fewer than 4%. Some of the most deprived areas, and they fall into the most deprived in Northern Ireland as a whole, have experienced high population increases. A number of wards are estimated to have seen a dramatic increase in population: Water Works (19.3%), Ardoyne (18.9%) and Valley (10.7%).

Claiming Benefits

	Attendance Allowance May 2001	Disability Living Allowance May 2001	Incapacity Benefit Nov 2000	Income Support Sept 2000	Job Seekers Allowance Sept 2000
% of Belfast & N'abbey	26.6%	27.6%	28.8%	29.2%	26.7%
% of NI	6.7%	7.4%	6.9%	8.1%	7.2%

- 30. The highest number of benefits claimed in North Belfast is 13,628 for Income Support followed by Disability Living Allowance (9,867). North Belfast, with 24% of the resident population, claims approximately 28% of all the benefits in Belfast and Newtownabbey Local Government Districts.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Deprivation

31. Ten wards within the North Belfast area are ranked in the 20% most deprived in Northern Ireland and six are ranked in the top 5% most deprived. These wards include Crumlin, which with a ranking of 1, is the most deprived ward in Northern Ireland. By way of contrast North Belfast does have two wards, Cavehill (496) and Abbey (447) ranked in the 40% least deprived of the 566 electoral wards in Northern Ireland.

Ward Name	Rank of Multiple Deprivation compared with Northern Ireland as a whole
Abbey	447
Ardoyne	12
Ballysillan	82
Bellevue	176
Castleview	254
Cavehill	496
Chichester Park	193
Cliftonville	134
Coole	90
Crumlin	1
Dunanney	60
Duncairn	19
Fortwilliam	295
Legoniel	86
New Lodge	8
Valley	136
Water Works	16
Whitehouse	106
Woodvale	7

Housing Conditions (Source: North Belfast Housing Strategy)

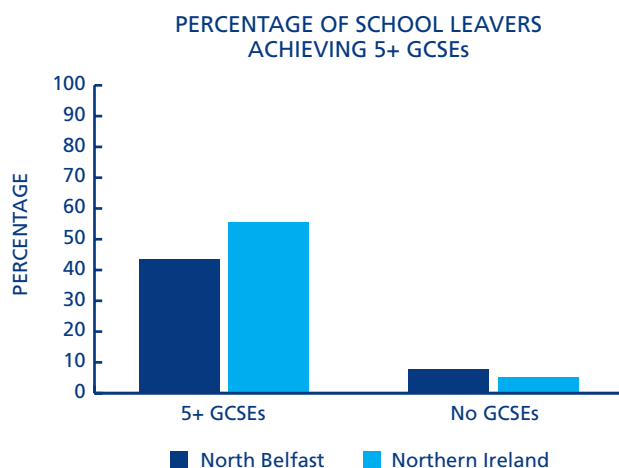
32. North Belfast has a higher rate of housing unfitness (9.4%) than Northern Ireland generally (7.3%). Housing conditions in the Protestant communities of North Belfast are generally worse than those in Catholic areas. Thus, Protestant households are 30% more likely to live in unfit houses, 36% more likely to live without basic amenities and have costs of necessary repairs 51% higher than Catholic households.

Housing Supply (Source: North Belfast Housing Strategy)

- 33. There are approximately 26,000 dwellings in North Belfast and at any one time some 6% are vacant. Vacancies are concentrated in Protestant neighbourhoods. There is a typical annual supply of around 720 units for letting each year and 900 "urgent need" cases pointing to a shortfall. Private sector new build supply has been weak, averaging 50 new houses for sale per annum over the past five years. In contrast, the Housing Executive estimates that between 1991 and 1996 private renting in North Belfast expanded by around 100 dwellings per annum. In the course of the consultation exercise, concerns were expressed about the poor condition of much of the private rented stock (25% are unfit) and the associated management standards.

Education

- 34. North Belfast has a number of very good schools and a perceptible improvement in the performance of some of the other schools. In 1999/2000 there were a total of 25,079 school leavers in Northern Ireland, 1,202 of whom came from the North Belfast area. The following graph indicates that the area had a lower percentage (43%) of school leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs compared to the Northern Ireland average of 55%.



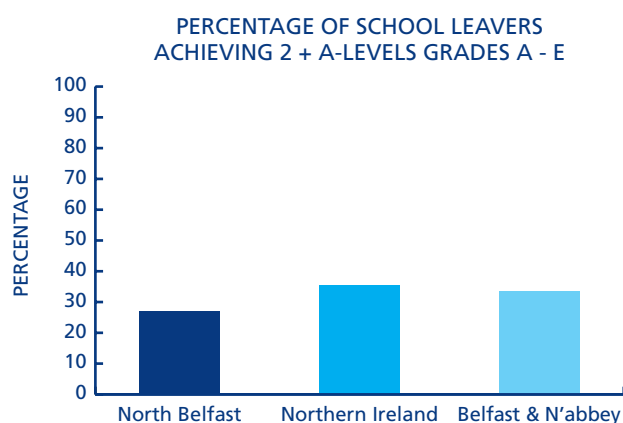
- 35. Fifteen of the wards that make up North Belfast have a lower percentage of school leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs. However, 4 wards have a higher percentage of school leavers achieving 5+ GCSEs than the Northern Ireland average.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

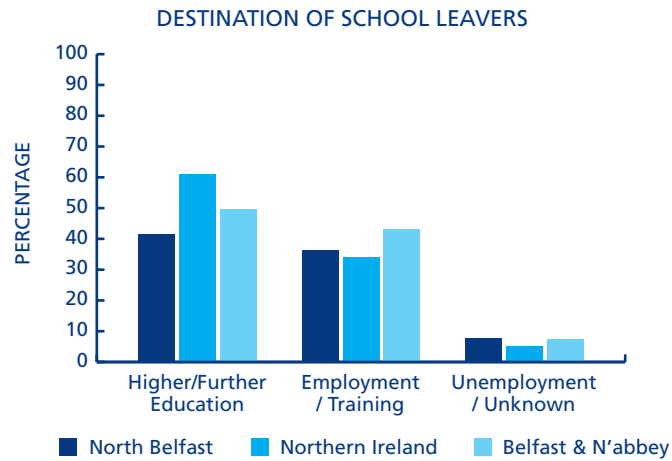
Ward Name (1992)	Number of School Leavers	Number of Pupils Achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A-C	%
Crumlin	59	10	16.95
Duncairn	43	8	18.60
Coole	38	11	28.95
Woodvale	58	17	29.31
New Lodge	85	26	30.59
Ardoyne	102	32	31.37
Ballysillan	74	25	33.78
Water Works	114	39	34.21
Dunanney	34	12	35.29
Castleview	66	24	36.36
Valley	29	11	37.93
Whitehouse	18	7	38.89
Legoniel	73	29	39.73
Bellevue	51	26	50.98
Abbey	29	16	55.17
NI	25,079	13,899	55.42
Cliftonville	77	43	55.84
Chichester Park	87	59	67.82
Fortwilliam	66	49	74.24
Cavehill	99	78	78.79

36. Almost 8% of school leavers leave with no GCSEs, around 3% higher than the average figure for Northern Ireland.

37. At 27.2%, North Belfast has a much lower percentage of its school leavers achieving 2 or more A-levels at Grades A-E compared to the Northern Ireland overall at 35.6%. The average figure for Newtownabbey and Belfast stands at 33.6%.

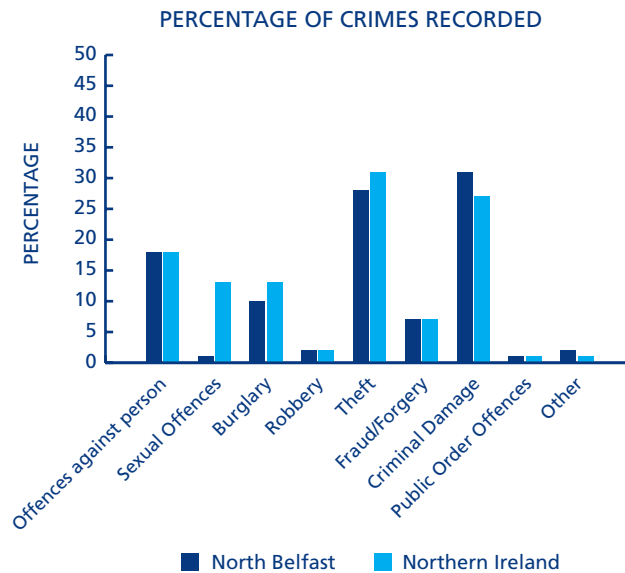


38. The percentage of school leavers in the North Belfast area continuing on to higher and further education is 41.3%, significantly lower than the Northern Ireland average of 61.0%.



Crime

39. In 2000/2001 a total of 10,248 crimes were recorded in the North Belfast area¹ an increase of 11% since 1998/1999 (9,232) but a smaller increase of 2% since 1999/2000 (10,047). This represented 8% of all recorded crime in Northern Ireland.



¹References made to North Belfast area relate to the areas covered by the Sub Divisions of North Queen Street, Antrim Road and Tennent Street.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

40. The pattern of crime in North Belfast followed that of Northern Ireland overall. However, in the North Belfast area the most common form of crime was criminal damage, 31%. This figure was 4% higher than the overall recorded incidents for Northern Ireland. This was offset by lower percentages of crime recorded for sexual offences, burglary and theft than for Northern Ireland.
41. The recorded crime figures for the area taken as a percentage of Northern Ireland show that:
 - a. 14% of all public order offences are recorded in North Belfast;
 - b. 10% of all robberies in Northern Ireland are recorded in the area;
 - c. 9% of all criminal damage crimes recorded happen in North Belfast; and
 - d. 10% of drug related offences are recorded in the area.

Security Situation Statistics

42. Of all deaths occurring in the North Belfast area in 2000/2001, 44% were as a result of the security situation. This was a marked increase from previous years where no deaths were recorded in 1999/2000 and 7% in 1998/1999.
43. Just over a quarter (27%) of all shooting incidents in Northern Ireland in 2000/2001 occurred in the area. The number of incidents in North Belfast has almost quadrupled since 1998/1999 growing from 23 to 88.
44. Fifteen percent of all bombing incidents happened in the area, growing from 7 in 1998/1999 to 27 in 2000/2001².
45. In terms of recorded paramilitary-style assaults a total of 14 were recorded for the area in 2000/2001 representing 9% of all such attacks in Northern Ireland.

Conclusion

46. It is clear to us from the few facts quoted above that North Belfast suffers from areas of high deprivation, low educational attainment and, while "ordinary crime" impacts on the area in much the same way as other areas, the violence and instability associated with communal strife impacts more severely on North Belfast than on other areas and has increased in recent times.

²An individual bombing incident may involve one or more explosive devices. Incident reports include explosions and defusings. Incidents involving hoax devices, petrol bombings or incendiaries are excluded.

TERRITORIALITY

TERRITORIALITY

47. North Belfast is divided into a large number of distinct communities most of which - particularly those in the more deprived areas - are regarded either as exclusively Protestant/Unionist or Catholic/Nationalist territory. There are few mixed working class areas in North Belfast. The boundaries, or interfaces, between these oppositional communities are the fracture zones where hostility and antipathy are maintained and renewed through violence and disorder. In his *'Mapping the Spaces of Fear'* work Shirlow comments that residents in disadvantaged areas in North Belfast have restricted access to jobs, shops and leisure facilities and have generally less freedom of movement as a consequence of where they live. This is evident in the *'Spaces of Fear'* work, where the majority of respondents in each community felt safe when walking through their own area during the day but more people felt either unsafe, frightened or were not even prepared to walk through their local area when dark for fear of being attacked by the 'other' community. We, from our consultations, agree that those perceptions are strongly held.
48. The fear factor is significant and at certain times of the year restrictions on movement are more acute because of verbal abuse and actual or potential violence. At times of strife the two communities in North Belfast are not prepared, or find it difficult, to share the majority of nearby services and facilities. Each community will avoid the nearest shop, bus stop, pub, or leisure centre in favour of avoiding sectarian interaction and the possibility of violence. Shirlow's research shows that almost 90% of those living in predominantly Protestant or Catholic areas would not use a leisure facility dominated by those from 'the other side', with almost 75% of people responding that they had not used leisure facilities dominated by the other religion since leaving school. Flags and murals which demarcate territory and define an area as a safe "comfort zone" for some people, simultaneously appear to create a "chill factor" for people from the other part of the community. Efforts to deal with this need to be encouraged.
49. Shirlow's research also demonstrates that stronger and more sectarian attitudes were found within those aged between 18 and 55. No one within this group undertook, by choice, any form of inter-community linkage or visit to areas dominated by the 'other' side due to fear of attack by the 'other' community. There were no observable differences in attitude that could be related to gender. For this group the experience of residential segregation was channeled via a framework of exclusive and sectarian representation and ideological 'tradition'. Sectarianism was viewed, not as a repressive relationship, but as an expression of self or community. We shall deal with this issue of sectarianism in the next section.
50. With the changing demographics of the area, where there now exists a younger and growing Catholic community with an ageing Protestant community, a fear is prevalent that the shift in territorial identity is one-directional – Protestant areas are changing to become Catholic areas. Nationalists are therefore seen to be gaining ground whilst the Unionists are falling behind. In these circumstances local communities tell us that it is increasingly important to defend the boundaries from attack.
51. This aspect of territoriality is a highly emotive subject in North Belfast and it has damaged already fragile relations between the two communities in the area. Protestants/Unionists feel strongly that there is a desire on the part of Catholics/Nationalists to move the Protestant

working class out of the city. They see the Housing Executive as being compliant with this strategy. In particular, violence directed towards the Protestant community is often interpreted as an active attempt to encourage this community to either move out or further back to provide space on which to house the 'other community'. The Catholic community on the other hand feel that their need for housing is not being taken seriously and they are trapped behind 'walls of fear' even though there may be available space within Protestant areas.

52. The North Belfast Housing Strategy published by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive showed:
 - a. demand for housing in North Belfast dropped from 2,087 applicants in 1988 to 1,640 applicants in 2000 and has remained fairly stable since then;
 - b. currently, Catholic households make up about half of the population of North Belfast overall but approximately three-quarters of the Waiting List for houses;
 - c. the composition of the Waiting List indicates that as of March 2000 some 60% of Catholic applicants (727) are classified as "urgent need" compared to 36% of Protestant applicants (153). The Waiting List has fallen in both communities though much more so for Protestants (-39%) than Catholics (-12%);
 - d. like Northern Ireland generally, single person households are the most dominant on the Waiting List. North Belfast stands out, however, in the comparative under-representation of elderly applicants and an over-representation of family applicants;
 - e. family household types make up 43% of those in urgent need in North Belfast, with single person households accounting for a further one-third and elderly households making up one-fifth of the urgent need cases; and
 - f. waiting time variations reflect the lower stock turnover in Catholic areas and point towards the need for increased new build supply.
53. The overall conclusion of the Housing Strategy is clear and should provide reassurance for local communities. The Housing Executive does not believe that the situation in North Belfast is at the stage where it should propose that existing community boundaries should be breached to enable housing to be provided for one side. The Housing Executive is confident that through the acquisition of additional land, much can be achieved in the short to medium term regardless of the issue of territoriality. The North Belfast Housing Strategy is based upon the premise that the demands of both communities can be met within the timescale of the Strategy without any territorial shift. Furthermore if conditions in the area were to improve or if additional land currently being used for other purposes were to be made available, progress could be made at an even faster rate in relation to reducing the waiting time for families in urgent need in North Belfast.
54. We do not believe that there can be integration of the two communities unless the relationships between them can be improved. To demand change of the territorial boundaries without working to improve relationships and trust would be experienced as a threat. This improvement of relationships is an essential element in creating a peaceful North Belfast which can accommodate diversity.



SECTARIANISM AND INTERFACES

SECTARIANISM AND INTERFACES

55. The notion of two communities, two cultures, two nations, two identities or two tribes, has dominated perceptions, practices and processes in Northern Ireland for years. The effectively unknown 'other' is always present to be invoked and confronted as a source of fear and a threat rather than as someone to be engaged with and understood.
56. In Northern Ireland sectarianism is a harsh word expressing a harsh reality and often hurled as an accusing, condemning weapon. Between the extremes of accusation and avoidance, people have painfully few tools for getting to grips with the problem in a constructive way.
57. Sectarianism, it is argued, may be seen as a good thing which has become diseased. The good thing has to do with the affirmation of personal and communal identity. It becomes diseased however, when we become dependent upon our hostility to other people in defining ourselves. In this case our positive understanding of ourselves becomes deformed into what Marc Gopin calls "oppositional identity". Sectarianism is a system of distorted and destructive patterns of relating, which is generated and sustained by antagonised religious and political division (Liechty and Clegg). The systematic nature of sectarianism means that just the occasional act of violence in one localised area will be sufficient to maintain nervousness or fear across the whole community and to keep the system of antagonised division in place.
58. People can avoid the most violent consequences of sectarianism throughout Northern Ireland, if they live in areas where they do not have to come into contact with the 'other' or where polite conversations with the 'other' carefully avoid contentious areas of dispute. However, sectarianism finds its most destructive form in interfaces particularly if the two communities are so closely jammed together that avoidance is impossible and where markers of distinction in the form of flags, murals, election posters and street names become sources of conflict. This is the situation in North Belfast. Here, interfaces vary in their form, style and visibility. Some are marked by little more than a turn in the road, a local landmark, a shop or even a park. These may be invisible to those unfamiliar with the area although local people will know exactly where the significant boundaries lie. North Belfast has many such interfaces, 12 of which are peace walls. (Jarman – "*Managing Disorder*")
59. The key interface areas include:
 - a. Cliftonpark Avenue - the interface between Lower Oldpark and Manor Street;
 - b. Alliance Avenue - the interface between Glenbryn and Alliance/Ardoyne;
 - c. The interfaces between Torrens and Wyndham Street/Oldpark Avenue/Oldpark Road;
 - d. The interface between Westland and Little America;
 - e. Duncairn Gardens - the interface between Tiger's Bay and New Lodge;
 - f. Limestone Road - the interface between Tiger's Bay and Parkside/Newington; and
 - g. The interfaces between White City/Graymount and Whitewell.
60. For people living in interface communities, barriers can provide a sense of security and reassurance against attack (although often they are also the focus of violence). They may also provide some psychological security and help to create a stronger feeling of communal identity and solidarity. At the same time they reaffirm a physical claim to possession of specific territory.

61. According to Jarman, residents in interface areas have often defended their need for a barrier or peace-line by claiming that it would provide them with a degree of security against attack from the other side. Such barriers give interface areas a distinctive physical appearance which is often reinforced by the frequent presence of bricked up, or derelict buildings, vacant wasteland, graffiti and vandalism. By their very nature therefore, interface areas tend to be regarded as less desirable places to live and are often seen as places to house dysfunctional families. This exacerbates an already difficult situation.
62. Many interface communities in North Belfast lack local shops which means that even access to basic daily requirements can be problematic. As noted in the previous section residents have to decide whether to make a possibly dangerous journey into the 'others' territory or make a longer, safer journey to access shops.
63. Reporting details of life in North Belfast presents a challenge to the media. Television pictures in brief news reports inevitably fail to communicate the complexity of a situation. When communities feel that their convictions have not been explained and the underlying issues have not been sympathetically explored, they are left with the feeling that they have not been heard and their alienation deepens.
64. The barriers and interface areas in general, are also a significant location of tension and interface communities are frequently the subjects of persistent and recurrent violence. It is clear, both from the experiences of people living and working in North Belfast and from the Police figures, that the issue of sectarian interface violence remains a considerable, serious and recurrent problem across the area. There is no single cause that can be used to explain the persistence of ongoing sectarian disturbances but there are a number of interlocking and layered factors that have to be taken into account in seeking to try to understand the problem.
65. Some of these factors are localised issues. Others are related to the broader political debate and even to the deeper social and historical basis of Northern Ireland's society. It is the complex interplay between local and national dimensions, between contemporary activities and historical events and between social processes and political practices, which makes the problem of sectarianism and sectarian violence in interface areas so persistent and difficult to address. We have been told frequently, by people on both sides of the community, that they believe that riots are being initiated or exploited by paramilitary organisations or people associated with these organisations.
66. Anecdotal evidence from people living in a range of communities suggests that the persistence of localised low-level disruption and disorder is as great now as at any time in the recent past. It also appears difficult to get a clear indication of the scale of such ongoing disorder, as the Police do not generally isolate statistics for sectarian incidents. Nevertheless, they have produced figures for a specific range of incidents relating to public disorder and similar problems such as criminal damage, assault and riot and these can reveal something of the ongoing problems in key interface areas.

SECTARIANISM AND INTERFACES

67. In a four-year period from 1996-1999 the Police have recorded 1,444 cases of criminal damage, 409 cases of assault and 316 cases of riot, a total of 2,169 incidents in seven small interface areas across North Belfast.
68. The figures also show that there has been a considerable variation in the number of incidents. Some of the long established interfaces, which have been difficult areas for some years now, appear to have less trouble than some more recently identified interface areas.
69. It is also interesting to note that there are no clear patterns to emerge, the number of incidents goes up and down in different areas in different years.
70. Although there is a rise in the number of incidents through the Spring leading to a peak in July and a steady decline after the end of the 'marching season', the violence and public disorder now tends to continue throughout the year in each of these areas. Also, while some of the violence can be linked to flashpoint events such as parades, or a football match, trouble frequently breaks out with no more obvious a trigger than perhaps a very localised incident involving children or young people.
71. One increasingly worrying feature of the recent disturbances on the interfaces has been the prominent involvement of young people in such activities. This violence can all too easily begin with little more than abusive banter among relatively young children but may readily escalate to involve stone throwing and the participation of older youths and adults in more serious full-scale rioting. These violent exchanges have generated the designation of a new social activity 'recreational rioting', an issue touched upon in a later section on 'Youth'.
72. Local residents, members of community groups and political activists have taken an interest in trying to address outbreaks of local disorder or the potential for disorder. Over recent years people in many areas across North Belfast have spent considerable time through the summer, monitoring activity at interfaces and in some cases organising regular patrols by groups of people around their home area throughout the night. Such stressful and time-consuming activity is usually organised without the knowledge or involvement of the Police, often because of the poor relationships between them and feelings of mutual suspicion and mistrust. However, local people often feel that they know their area better than the Police and can be more effective in keeping local people or youths away from potential trouble spots.
73. The primary responsibility for dealing with public disorder and sectarian violence in interface areas when it breaks out should rest with the Police. They have a variety of standard emergency policing responses to such problems. However, none of these responses are any more than a short-term measure. Mobile patrols are often not effective in acting as deterrents, static patrols may themselves become a target for hostility and often the appearance of Mobile Support Units from outside the area have also provoked anger and hostility from local communities. Furthermore, each of these options is expensive in terms of Police resources and means that less attention can be given to day-to-day crime and other Police activities. To keep significant numbers of Police officers on standby may be necessary but is a waste of scarce resources.

74. Between June 2001 and April 2002, 603 Police Officers were injured in North Belfast. Officers suffer from high degrees of stress when they are asked to police riot situations in which they are attacked from both sides.
75. Evidence from people living in a range of communities suggests that they would like the Police to take prompt and decisive action to prevent potential riot situations escalating and that the Police should take quick action to arrest troublemakers when riots occur and vigorously prosecute them. People may be deterred from rioting if it is seen as a hazardous rather than a recreational pursuit.
76. Building relationships between the Police and local communities and their leaders will increase the feelings of safety and will assist in defusing potential riot situations. The responsibility for building and sustaining relationships lies with both the Police and the communities.
77. Without doubt sectarianism and the resulting sectarian violence, particularly on the interfaces, has an obvious destructive impact on parts of North Belfast. Much of the tension in interface crises results in a misinterpretation of the other side's actions. We have learned from people who have successfully reduced conflict at interface areas how important it is to have good arrangements for dialogue across the interfaces. Words and actions which intensify such antagonised division need to be curtailed and substituted with discourse and activity which encourage understanding and build trust. Those who are Church, political or community leaders have a particular responsibility in this regard.
78. We are aware of action which is being taken to address interface crises. Often quite modest measures such as the agreed and facilitated issue and use of mobile phones can prevent trouble, although such work is often stressful and time-consuming. We also support the recent announcement by Government to increase the use of CCTV cameras and as a Project we have supported actions aimed at reducing interface tensions.
79. However these are individual responses. Funded, sustained, proactive as well as reactive action is still required. Much of this Report focuses on action to develop communities to enable them to deal with interface issues and avoid crises. When a crisis arises there must be a concerted and co-ordinated action to address the specific and particular problems of the crisis in that interface. Such action needs to be developed in partnership with the Statutory Agencies, Community Groups and Churches, as well as the Police working with and supporting local people and local initiatives. Government must take the lead in developing a co-ordinated approach to meet any crisis which may arise.
80. While there are similarities between interface areas each crisis can arise in distinct social and community environments. They therefore need specifically targeted responses. There is no universal model which can be applied. The availability of a menu of action, to include encouraging and facilitating dialogue, improving security measures and environmental improvements, is required. This menu of action needs to be co-ordinated and we will recommend action on that front later in the Report.



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

81. Political representation in North Belfast, where the six members of the local Assembly belong to six different political parties, illustrates the diverse character of party political support. The divisions within the community ensure that it is a closely contested area with party political loyalties running within communities as well as between them. As a Team we recognise the importance of representative democracy and the work done by elected representatives for the people of the area.
82. Exercising political leadership which moves people from conflict to a new situation is difficult in such a contested environment. Negotiating a new future is a matter of extreme difficulty in a society which has endured such a high degree of violence and division. A sophisticated understanding of these dilemmas is essential if political leaders and policymakers are to lead people to a future of peace and stability. Elected representatives need to provide leadership which can rise above the intense emotion experienced within some communities.
83. Since the problems in North Belfast express themselves most publicly in street violence and attacks on people's homes, strong positive creative leadership with a shared vision for problem solving and peace building is urgently needed. We have said throughout our Report that dialogue between the communities is vital for the future stability of North Belfast. Without decisive positive influence by politicians and all other people of influence on all sides in North Belfast, attitudinal changes cannot be achieved. We have also noted that behaviour at grass roots level is influenced by the words and actions of political leaders. Without constructive dialogue between the elected representatives, progress will not be possible. Instability and friction at the higher levels in Government has undoubtedly a clear negative effect at street level. When the politicians of the area fail to work together and when discourse consists of apportioning blame, the outcome is increased tension leading to violence on the streets with paramilitaries stepping in to exploit the situation.
84. Paramilitarism is an issue which was raised in some of our consultations. While some people believed that paramilitary organisations were necessary to protect their communities they did not wish them to control their communities. There was no tolerance for protection rackets and drug dealing which depletes the energy, enterprise and quality of life within communities. Some people with paramilitary backgrounds have worked hard to improve their communities and to build relationships across the divides. However there are others who exercise a malign influence and are barriers to progress. Everyone with influence should redouble their efforts to convince communities, including paramilitaries on all sides, that violence, division, conflict and instability are seriously inhibiting progress in North Belfast.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY IN NORTH BELFAST

COMMUNITY CAPACITY IN NORTH BELFAST

85. ***"Community capacity is the ability and will of people who live in a locality to act collectively for their common good."*** This has been a key issue in our deliberations.
86. No detailed empirical evidence is currently available to provide a statistical comparison of community capacity, partly because of the dynamic nature of the community composition in North Belfast and also because of the various studies and reviews defining the geographic area of North Belfast differently. Therefore data cannot be used comparatively or cumulatively.
87. Nevertheless, it appears to us and to other commentators who have studied North Belfast, that the level of community capacity is varied within and across the two communities and is generally weaker in Protestant areas. However comparative data is required as a guide to policy making and as a means of measuring progress with initiatives and investments agreed for improving community capacity. The evidence on community infrastructure points to the conclusion that both communities suffer from deprivation and disadvantage with the severest problems arising in and around the interfaces. Each community suffers in different ways, at different levels. Common to all communities in North Belfast is the complexity of searching/applying for assistance and the lack of sustainable funding for community projects. In the course of our consultations we met many people who were at the point of losing funding for key positions and projects.
88. It is evident that there is little chance of improving people's standard of living and overall quality of life, in a sustainable way, without their collaborative participation in planning processes. This requires community capacity building, leading to empowerment and a situation where people have the ability to improve their lives. For this reason we believe that sustained investment in community capacity building is essential for any long-term development in North Belfast. This investment must be additional to what is currently available.
89. Our approach is influenced by principles of community development, which emphasises the core elements of leadership, empowerment, participation and partnerships.
90. We believe that any recommended capacity building approaches must be capable of creating additional community leaders and people of positive influence able to support the development of vibrant communities living at peace with one another. According to the Centre for the Study of Conflict 'community leadership is especially important for future reconciliation work in Northern Ireland'. North Belfast needs leaders who are committed to a partnership approach. We believe that with additional help North Belfast has the capacity to increase the number of such leaders.
91. We will suggest, later in the Report, action to develop a strategic framework for taking long-term, sustained action to build community capacity. In this regard we are strongly influenced by approaches which emphasise the inherent strengths that lie within communities and the need to draw on these whilst redressing neglect and under-investment.

YOUTH

YOUTH

92. Almost one-quarter of the total population of North Belfast is made up of young people between the ages of 5 and 19. This represents a tremendous asset and source of creative potential for the community. In the context of conditions prevailing in North Belfast however, this asset is often seen as a liability because some young people are involved in public disorder. It is widely acknowledged that the youth-related problems of North Belfast in many cases arise because of scarcity of resources and facilities and the resultant boredom, rather than any inherent malice on the part of the young people.
93. Many young people themselves recognise this problem. Some of the best written submissions we have received have been produced by young people under the auspices of their schools. They highlight a range of issues which contribute to a threatening, uncomfortable environment which offers little hope. For some of these young people, school is a safe, structured environment which contrasts totally with the insecurity and frequent violence of their neighbourhood.
94. There are also young people who are not so eloquent or able to express themselves. Truancy contributes to this which is a problem for some schools. For this and other reasons School Principals have highlighted the importance of funding for Parent/Teacher Liaison Officers. Many pupils leave school at sixteen with virtually no qualifications and little prospect of finding work. Some may feel alienated. For others there is little or no parental guidance and in some cases parents themselves engage in rioting or anti-social behaviour. For such young people it is easy to drift into a daily routine of hanging around at the physical margins of the community, getting involved in so-called 'recreational rioting', joining paramilitary groups or becoming involved in substance abuse.
95. A dichotomy therefore exists whereby young people in North Belfast feel depressed by their environment and engage in activity which intensifies their problems yet nevertheless they have a strong attachment to their community. They fear leaving it even when they know there are many opportunities and resources available elsewhere. They need encouragement to take a step outside their daily routines, to discover their talents and to serve their community.
96. To help ameliorate these problems, groups in many areas have sought out funding to provide summer schemes and activities for their children, both to complement and to extend similar programmes run by statutory bodies. The Belfast Education and Library Board for example, have offered their summer interface programme every year from 1997, grant-aiding groups to finance schemes in recognition that young people in interface areas are particularly at risk of exposure to violence over this period. Many groups use this money each year to take children out of the area to places of safety or for diversionary purposes over times of anticipated tension and conflict.
97. However, more needs to be done. Young people in North Belfast must be offered positive alternatives, whether that be through sport, arts, leisure or by involvement in their community. The challenge is to engage young people, who are not actively and positively involved in community life, in programmes which will develop both their commitment to

the community and their capacity to make a positive contribution. Their voices need to be heard. These young people may have rejected or been rejected by mainstream facilities and services or they may lack the resources or confidence to use them effectively.

98. Positive influences and role models are needed to inspire and motivate young people so that they can channel their energies away from anti-social behaviour.
99. The adult community should also become more involved in stating clear standards of behaviour, modelling these standards, monitoring and enforcing them while at the same time encouraging, supporting and recognising young people's struggles to become active and contributing members of the community.
100. There is a need for a co-operative partnership between those institutions which guide the education and training of young people, particularly those at risk of dropping out of school or failing to achieve formal qualifications. These include primary and secondary schools, recognised training organisations and Belfast Institute for Higher and Further Education. The involvement of employers with these institutions can also make the education and training provision more relevant to the real life expectations of young people.
101. The potential of the Churches to make a positive contribution to engaging with young people and to bringing peace to the streets should also be encouraged. The Churches have a long history of sustained work in North Belfast and that work has largely gone unrecognised. Many Churches have maintained a high standard of community work, particularly through the provision of youth organisations, often without interruption, throughout the years of the 'Troubles'. To continue this work these Churches need appropriate funding to be made available and Churches need help in discovering and accessing alternative funding. Church-based groups drawn from the communities, are highly accountable to project, congregational and wider Church structures and they have a proven record of commitment given the amount of volunteer-based activity that is carried on, usually without external funding.
102. Many schemes exist to recognise and accredit young people's achievements through their normal participation in the opportunities that youth workers offer. In doing so these schemes aim to enhance young people's experience of youth work. Such schemes include the 'Duke of Edinburgh Award', 'President's Award' and the 'Youth Achievement Awards'.
103. While there is undoubtedly a need for increased resources to target youth and educational issues, the Department of Education's 'Youth Work in Schools Initiative' for North Belfast should contribute towards addressing some of the problems. The Department is intending to bid for additional funding to extend the programme to all secondary schools in the area.
104. We were also encouraged by the "Communities in School Project" which is a good example of a multi-disciplinary approach for the delivery of core services to young people and families with schools acting as the focal point.

YOUTH

105. A 'centre for citizenship' is another possible method of addressing the problems currently facing young people. This concept, which we will discuss in more detail later in the Report aims to give young people and adults, self-esteem and self worth as well as the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society. Such an approach could help them to become informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens aware of duties and rights. It could also promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, making them more knowledgeable and self-confident, thereby encouraging young people to play a helpful part in their school and community.

HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH ISSUES

106. The population served by the North and West Belfast Health & Social Services Trust has some of the poorest health and social care indices with high incidences of cancer, asthma, bronchitis and other diseases. Seventeen out of the 20 wards in North Belfast are in the 25% most health deprived wards in Northern Ireland. Ten out of 20 wards in the area are in the 25% of wards in Northern Ireland with the highest ratios for cancer. These are all causally linked to the levels of deprivation experienced by this population. Overlaid upon both is the fact that North and West Belfast in the last 30 years experienced the highest levels of 'Troubles' related death and injury of any area in Northern Ireland and continues to host bitter internecine and sectarian conflict. The following sections detail the major health issues facing North Belfast.

Substance Abuse

107. Substance abuse in North Belfast is both a personal health and community well-being issue. It is a problem that affects the security and health of communities, especially those already living in segregated, highly deprived areas constantly subject to the threat of attack. Various means of coping are adopted, including alcohol and prescribed and illicit drugs, which are used to 'self-medicate', 'blot out' and control feelings of anxiety as well as to provide temporary relief from the pressures of daily life.
108. Previous data has outlined that the Eastern Health & Social Services Board area, which includes North Belfast, has the highest prevalence of drug use in Northern Ireland. Additional data indicates that the North & West Trust area has the most significant drug misuse patterns. In relation to the North & West area, in 1997 the number of registered drug users represented 30% of all within the Eastern Health and Social Services Board and 13.5% of the Northern Ireland total.
109. According to the findings from the North Belfast Partnership report '*Tackling Drug Misuse within the Community*' and the recently published RADICAL (Responses to Alcohol and Drugs in Communities and Lives) report '*Blotting It Out*', drug misuse appears to affect a broad range of age groups across both genders, but is seen to be most prevalent among males and females, aged between 13 and 25 years of age. One comment we have heard repeatedly is that intervention and co-operation between the Police and statutory bodies is required to address these serious issues.
110. Comparison of North Belfast drugs/substance related crime figures with regional figures indicated that a high percentage of drug-related crime is concentrated in the North Belfast area. In 1997/98, the Eastern Health and Social Services Board represented 30.2% of arrests for drug offences and 10.3% overall for Northern Ireland. In 1998/99, 8.2% of drug related arrests in Northern Ireland were made in the North Belfast area. Furthermore, there appears to be a significant level of concentrated, localised street dealing, especially within open public areas while the availability of alcohol for young people in the home, off-licences and licensed premises was regarded as a major factor in the misuse of alcohol.

111. Existing statutory provision in the area of prevention, while perceived to be important, was generally regarded as limited in the level of support provided with 76% of respondents disagreeing with the statement that policing techniques for drug misuse were effective in North Belfast, while 43% felt that education programmes were ineffective and only 14% felt that existing education programmes were effective.
112. The sheer scale and depth of the drugs/substance misuse problem within North Belfast has meant that no single body is in a position to single-handedly control or rectify the situation. Indeed research has identified an element of individual groups or agencies stating that without further commitment and assistance, then the problem is likely to increase further. Numerous attempts have been made already at creating partnership structures which co-ordinate drugs/substance misuse interventions with varying degrees of success. Given the fact that a huge wealth of information, intelligence and experience exists in local communities, the real challenge is how best to exploit this resource. In so doing we must ensure that ordinary people living in communities as well as community activists are involved. This would help minimise the influence of those paramilitaries who are involved in drug dealing.

Mental Health

113. Northern Ireland as a whole has experienced much higher levels of mental health problems than other regions of the United Kingdom. Much of this has been attributed to the effects of over 30 years of civil unrest and sectarian tension. North Belfast has been particularly affected by the 'Troubles'. *'The Cost of the Troubles Study'* (1997) highlighted that over 500 people in North Belfast died due to the 'Troubles'. This research also found that 5 of the 10 council wards listed as having the highest number of deaths due to the 'Troubles' are located in North Belfast.
114. Research carried out by the University of Ulster, Jordanstown in North and West Belfast, *'A Primary Care Needs Assessment'* (December 2000) showed that there is a significantly higher incidence of mental illness in the Trust area with 29% of male respondents and 35% of female respondents identified as suffering from borderline or more severe psychiatric disorders. These figures compare with 17% of men and 21% of women in Great Britain.
115. The existence of conflict and division has hindered the delivery of mainstream social policies in an area of greatest need as well as inhibiting local development. A *'Social Audit'* carried out in 1998 highlighted this area of need, citing issues such as bereavement, stress, depression, fear and the 'Troubles' as being of particular significance to the population of North Belfast. Feelings of powerlessness, a lack of confidence and trust, fear of moving out of one's own area and problems of sectarian division were also expressed. Most recent studies such as the *'Mapping the Spaces of Fear'* study (1999), using case studies from North Belfast, highlighted that despite the existence of the cease-fires since 1994, few improvements have developed in community relations in interface areas.

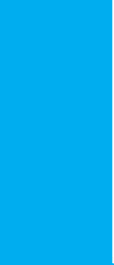
HEALTH ISSUES

116. Since the initial cease-fires in 1994 a marked increase in referrals was reported by statutory and voluntary mental health services, for example by the WAVE Trauma Centre. WAVE reported an 80% increase in activity for the period 1995/96. This was perceived as relating to people feeling that the cease-fire had provided space and permission to express their distress. The effects of the 'Troubles' on young people in particular is highlighted in the increasing evidence of behavioural disturbance among young people who require residential care and child and adolescent mental health services which are presently weak and require to be strengthened within the area.
117. A number of significant studies recently undertaken have identified that North Belfast has pronounced patterns of need, which, combined with ongoing tensions within the community, historic experience of violence, and weak community infrastructure, represent an environment which inevitably produces high stress levels. During the public consultations we were told many times of the mental health issues existing in North Belfast. The Mater and Royal Victoria Hospitals reported that approximately 800 people presented with deliberate self-harm last year.
118. The Community Trust and the Mater Hospital provide the statutory mental health services in North and West Belfast. They are focused primarily on supporting those individuals with severe mental illness, for example schizophrenia, bi-polar disorders and major depressive illness among others. There are approximately 600-800 people resident in North Belfast on the Trust's caseloads at any one time and an average of 50-60 new referrals per month. Such an unbearable workload is shared by 12 Community Psychiatric Nurses, 5 Mental Health Social Workers and 1 Clinical Psychologist and often leads to a situation where demand for treatment cannot be adequately met. There is also a 25-place day hospital on the Antrim Road and a 50-place day-care centre located at the Everton Complex. This leaves little if any capacity to offer support to people with anxiety and stress disorders, minor depressions and other related illnesses.
119. The latest equity analysis of investment by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board in mental health services recorded an under-investment of £2.92million in mental health services in North and West Belfast. Inevitably, a considerable burden falls on the voluntary and community sector in North Belfast to support people with a wide range of mental well-being problems. The following are some examples that we have come across, however many more exist: New Life Counselling; WAVE; Survivors of Trauma; Shankill Stress and Trauma Centre; Tar Isteach Counselling; and Community Action on Mental Health.
120. Many of these are voluntary/community projects which have been funded short-term through the Community Fund, Children in Need, PEACE I, Victims Fund and Belfast Regeneration Office. Many are presently in need of urgent funding and some are in danger of folding in the short-term unless assistance is secured.

Suicides

121. Suicide has become one of the major public health issues over the last decade. Completed suicide ranks in the top ten causes of death in many countries and it is estimated that world-wide, 400,000 people kill themselves annually.
122. In Northern Ireland in 1998, the number of deaths by suicide was only one less than deaths in a road traffic accident (General Registry Office, 2000). By 2000 the number of suicides in Northern Ireland rose to 163 from 121 in 1999. There were 22 "undetermined deaths" during 2000 and it would appear that more young people died by suicide during this period than by road traffic accidents. In the North and West Belfast Trust area suicide rates in the area are around 33% higher than the rest of the UK. In the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001 there were 433 presentations to the Mater Hospital casualty department, following an instance of deliberate self-harm.
123. Particularly worrying is the trend of male suicides where there has been a four-fold increase in the suicide rate in Ireland since 1990 (AWARE, 1998). The figures for Northern Ireland for 1999 show a 6:1 male: female ratio. It is unsurprising that young people in North Belfast perceive their future as bleak and report increased feelings of anger, hopelessness and poor outlook on life and that the problem of suicide has therefore come to the fore in the area.
124. The North and West Belfast Trust and the Mater Hospital Trust have been actively involved in the development of services to reduce the prevalence and incidence of suicide in the area. These developments have included advice giving, clinical interventions, training to healthcare professionals and teachers, community workers and parents. The Mater Hospital has also secured funding from Belfast Regeneration Office to carry out research into local factors that may indicate a propensity toward suicide. However much more work needs to be done if the number of suicides in the area is to decrease.

In Part I of the Report we have analysed some of the key issues which we have learned about in our consultations, presentations, research and actions already taken on the ground. In the next part of the Report we draw out a summary of these key issues.



PART II - SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

125. North Belfast is a patchwork of small communities, often separated by walls and 'peacelines', in which people have an intense sense of belonging. The issue of territoriality - particularly acute in the context of housing - has become a highly emotive subject and it has damaged already fragile relations between the two communities. Because of fear, people are not prepared to travel through some areas and find it difficult to access shops, jobs, post offices, health centres, leisure facilities and schools.
126. Territoriality is arguably the most contentious issue in North Belfast and reflects itself in overcrowding in Catholic/Nationalist areas and vacant spaces in some Protestant/Unionist areas. The rapidly changing population profile of the area, with a young and growing Catholic population, compared to an ageing and declining Protestant population, is a source of concern to Protestants who see themselves being 'squeezed out' of the area. Housing conditions in the Protestant communities of North Belfast are substantially worse than those in Catholic areas. The Catholic community, on the other hand, feel that their need for housing is not being taken seriously and that they are trapped behind 'walls of fear' even though there may be available space within Protestant areas. The North Belfast Housing Strategy is based upon the premise that the demands of both communities can be met within the timescale of the Strategy without any territorial shift.
127. 'Sectarianism' is widespread in Northern Ireland and crosses social, religious and political barriers. It finds its most destructive form in interfaces particularly when the two communities are so closely jammed together that avoidance is impossible and where markers of distinction in the form of flags, murals, election posters and street names become sources of conflict. Such sectarianism diminishes all of us who are affected by it.
128. It is clear, both from the experiences of people living and working in North Belfast and from the Police figures, that the issue of sectarian interface violence remains a considerable, serious and recurrent problem across the area. Building relationships between the Police and local communities and between the communities and their leaders will increase feelings of safety and assist in defusing potential riot situations.
129. There is a lack of understanding and consequential mistrust of 'the other side'. 'Segregated living' has become part of North Belfast's spatial and social fabric with many residents now feeling that they need to live among those who share their identity and outlook. This is particularly relevant in these interface areas where the problem of sectarianism is seen in its most destructive form. Innovative approaches to break down divisions in the area are required.
130. Reporting details of life in North Belfast presents a challenge to the media. When communities feel that their convictions have not been explained, and the underlying issues have not been sympathetically explored, they are left with the feeling that they have not been heard and their alienation deepens.
131. In social and economic terms some parts of North Belfast are prosperous while others suffer from multiple disadvantage, with even the relatively affluent wards containing pockets of major deprivation. The area has the capacity to absorb resources, destroy people, impoverish children and destabilise other parts of Northern Ireland and for that reason there is a need for urgent special treatment.

132. North Belfast has suffered from a serious lack of investment over recent decades. The division and polarisation which existed and still exists, discourages inward investment. There is a need to overcome division and restructure the local economy to provide lasting job opportunities together with the basic skills necessary to access employment.
133. Overall educational standards in the area are low, notwithstanding the existence of a number of very good schools and a perceptible improvement in the performance of some of the other schools. Parental and communal support for mainstream education is often low and there are areas where pre-school provision is grossly inadequate.
134. North Belfast has some of the poorest health and social care indices in Northern Ireland, with high incidences of cancer, asthma, bronchitis and other diseases, partly because of the high level of deprivation and relatively poor housing. Problems associated with substance abuse and mental health are prevalent throughout the area as well as suicides among young people. These health problems have been exacerbated by the fact that, in the last 30 years, North Belfast has experienced the highest levels of 'Troubles' related deaths and injuries of any area in Northern Ireland and continues to host bitter internecine and sectarian conflict. Additional funding to address these issues needs to be made available.
135. For the purposes of our work we define community capacity as **"the ability and will of people who live in a locality to act collectively for their common good"**. The level of capacity is varied within and across the two communities and is generally weaker in Protestant areas. Each community suffers in different ways from multiple deprivation. Common to all communities is the complexity of searching/applying for grant assistance and the lack of sustainable funding for community projects.
136. There is little chance of improving people's standard of living and overall quality of life, in a sustainable way, without their collaborative participation in planning processes. This requires community capacity building, leading to empowerment. There is therefore a need for a long-term programme designed to meet local needs and which is flexible enough to cope with the various levels of development that exist between communities.
137. Community groups feel isolated when they encounter problems, because they do not have networks that they trust and respect through which to access support. There is a need to develop community leadership competencies, networking mechanisms and sustainable funding arrangements.
138. Youth in North Belfast represent a tremendous asset and source of creative potential for the community. However, resources and facilities for young people are generally viewed as being inadequate and there appears to be a fear of going into the 'others' community to access the opportunities which exist. An all-too-familiar by-product is the problem locally referred to as 'recreational rioting' which often expresses itself around interface areas. Additional funds need to be made available particularly to schools to address the problems and the concerns identified by young people. Such problems and concerns are often expressed in words like "boredom", "despair" and "hopelessness".

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

139. Young people need to be convinced that they have a future in the area. Positive influences and role models are needed to inspire and motivate young people so that they can channel their energies away from anti-social behaviour and develop self-esteem. We have often been told of the desire for parenting classes and Parent/Teacher Liaison Officers. Funding for Parent/Teacher Liaison Officers and Educational Welfare Officers and the promotion of parenting skills will help address some of these problems.
140. The Churches have a long history of sustained community work in North Belfast and that work has largely gone unrecognised. Many Churches have maintained a high standard of community work, particularly through the provision of youth organisations, often without interruption throughout the years of the 'Troubles'. To continue this community work these Churches need appropriate funding to be made available and also help in discovering and accessing funding.
141. The six members of the local Assembly belong to six different political parties, which illustrates the diverse character of party political support. Dialogue between the communities and political leaders is vital for the future stability of North Belfast. Creative, political leadership with a shared vision for problem solving and peace building is urgently needed. Without decisive positive influence by the politicians on all sides in North Belfast attitudinal changes cannot be achieved.
142. Paramilitaries exert influence (and in parts, control) over some areas in North Belfast. They are regarded by some people as protectors of their communities. There are those associated with them who try to exercise constructive leadership and have worked to improve their communities and in some cases to build relationships across the divides. However, there are others who exercise a malign influence and are barriers to progress.
143. Criminality associated with protection rackets and drug dealing depletes the financial, social and human assets of the community, impairs the quality of life and destroys the spirit of enterprise. There is a need for everyone with influence to redouble their efforts to convince communities including paramilitaries on all sides - that violence, division, conflict and instability are seriously inhibiting progress in North Belfast.
144. There is no sense of a strategic or shared vision for North Belfast and therefore no 'big picture' to which individual communities can be directed for hope and inspiration. There is a need to develop a long-term integrated strategy for community development in the area involving as wide a range of stakeholders and interested parties as possible and should necessarily include political representatives, statutory bodies, voluntary bodies and business interests.
145. No single department or agency working on its own can deliver sustainable improvement. A dedicated delivery mechanism which has both the authority and the capacity to address North Belfast's specific problems and to develop an appropriate and realistic development programme for the area is needed.

146. There is a real need for a large-scale physical regeneration project to lift the spirits of the community and provide a contrast to some of the worst environmental features in the area. The very establishment of such a site would serve as both a symbol of hope and a focal point for the area. The community could identify with the site and become involved in its development thus creating a sense of acceptability and ownership within the local area.

Based on this analysis we have already taken some action to encourage development and improvement and that action is described in Part III.



PART III - ACTION INITIATED BY THE PROJECT

ACTION INITIATED BY THE PROJECT

147. We welcomed the opportunity for the Project to engage positively with the North Belfast community and voluntary sector. This gave us valuable, first-hand experience of the key issues and enabled us to initiate a range of practical actions during the Project period. The engagement also created a good foundation for more strategic proposals as the Project progressed. Both types of actions are described in the following paragraphs.

Completed Action

148. In the course of our work, which included the provision of an outreach advisory service, we have provided funding assistance in the following instances:

- a. technical assistance for capacity building measures in specific areas which includes support for the development of: an action plan identifying short, medium and long-term goals; an agreed approach to a representative community forum; pilot programmes addressing the self-confidence, self-esteem, health and well-being of local people, particularly women; and mediation measures for dealing with interface tensions;
- b. sponsorship of a series of information workshops on PEACE II programmes and measures. These workshops gave groups a clearer understanding of PEACE II and helped them to develop confidence in developing project proposals;
- c. bringing together a range of community development training providers and community representatives to increase awareness of the training opportunities available to local people and groups;
- d. supporting the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action to run a series of training and advice giving workshops and also the provision of the "Grant Tracker" CD-ROM to 13 community organisations; and
- e. bringing together youth service providers to prepare a more co-ordinated response to Summer Scheme provision.

Ongoing Work

149. In the later stages of our work we were also able to bring together some groups in interface areas on a cross-community basis to explore pressing issues. In encouraging new approaches by the communities, we emphasised that co-operation, acceptance of responsibility and accountability be key elements.

150. Four areas of support are described below. We have made arrangements to ensure that this work will continue to completion, after our Report is presented.

a. **Support for community development activity in areas which are weak**

Groups from each side of the community are working to develop consortia bids to PEACE II, Measure 2.7 - 'Weak Community Infrastructure'. It is anticipated that technical support through the Project will result in two consortia bids - one from each side of the community - both of which are co-sponsored by the other side of the community. In addition, smaller bids may be submitted independently from areas directly affected by interface violence.

b. Support for community relations work

A series of meetings are underway to support a range of community groups to collectively develop a joint North Belfast community relations bid with technical assistance being offered through the Project. A joint working group will consider a range of options and develop a bid that best meets the needs of the communities of North Belfast.

c. Support for peace building

Initial discussions have taken place to explore the possibility of a North Belfast Peace Building Network. The nature and sensitivity of this kind of work dictates that the pace will be slow but hopefully steady.

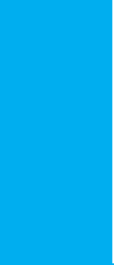
d. Support for the development of the proposed Community Capacity Building Programme

As previously stated, the primary responsibility of the Project was to address community capacity in North Belfast. We saw clearly that the means of doing this would be to recommend that a programme be established offering direct support to communities which also encourages innovation, new initiatives and collaborative approaches. We recognised too the importance of strengthening community leadership. We have therefore initiated action to support and underpin all of the work that has been possible through the Project and to deliver practical assistance to develop a sustained and determined programme to build the capacity of community leadership to assist with the implementation of the proposed North Belfast Community Capacity Building Programme. We have done this through funding an initial piece of work whereby key community activists have been asked to assist in the proposed Programme's design and development.

Summary

151. In total our Project has committed almost £100,000 to carry out these actions. This element of our work also underlined the importance of developing trust and a willingness to engage with both sides of the community in an objective, transparent and constructive manner, isolating no one. A major challenge for the people of North Belfast is to take the risk of getting to know the 'other' community through meeting and sharing experience and knowledge. This is a difficult task given the political instability and the very real issues that affect people living in North Belfast, particularly at the interface areas. However we think that it is vital. Throughout the course of this Project, we detected everywhere a huge desire for peace, a willingness to engage and a genuine enthusiasm for bringing about real change.

In Part IV we set out and recommend further actions.



PART IV - RECOMMENDED FURTHER ACTION

RECOMMENDED FURTHER ACTION

152. As outlined earlier in our Report it is clear that North Belfast requires urgent special treatment as further neglect of the area has the potential to inhibit progress in Northern Ireland as a whole. The area needs a shared and integrated focus by Government, Public Agencies and the community to enable it to recover.
153. Much of the work of departments and agencies responds to the needs of North Belfast as these departments and agencies see them.
154. Some initiatives are co-ordinated but there is much more to do in terms of alignment and integration of policies and actions in order that they impact more positively in a geographical area of great social and economic need.
155. We have therefore drawn up the following list of areas on which we believe action is required. It includes action to:
 - a. enable Government to respond in a more 'joined up' way;
 - b. address interface issues;
 - c. boost community capacity;
 - d. improve the economic, social and cultural life in North Belfast; and
 - e. improve health and education in the area.

DEDICATED HIGH LEVEL UNIT FOR
NORTH BELFAST

DEDICATED HIGH LEVEL UNIT FOR NORTH BELFAST

156. During the period of our study we have become familiar with the substantial amount of work already being carried out in the area by Government Departments, Statutory Agencies, local Councils, the community sector and elected representatives alike. All have roles to play in improving the life of communities in North Belfast.
157. However, work in the area has not been carried out in the context of an overall vision or strategy for North Belfast. Some initiatives, such as the Health Action Zone, facilitate collaboration but work between the various Departments and between Government and local councils needs to be better integrated for things to improve. It is clear to us that this absence of an integrated vision and the need to have a co-ordinated and targeted approach to the multi-faceted nature of the problems impacting on the North Belfast communities, requires attention by Government at the highest level. No single department or agency working on its own can deliver sustainable improvement.
158. We see a need therefore for the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Office to take a lead in developing an effective and sustained response to the problems of the area which will complement the work already being carried out. Our recommended approach is for Government to set up a dedicated, well-resourced unit working with the full authority of Government and led by a senior civil servant. The unit should focus on addressing the problems of North Belfast including issues around the interfaces. The unit should also have a key responsibility of community outreach and should work to initiate and facilitate the development of partnerships.
159. The unit should derive its authority from and be accountable to the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister but, in recognition of the vital role which the Minister for Social Development plays in social and urban development, the unit should be guided by a Departmental Steering Group of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development. This, in turn, should be required to report periodically to the Executive.
160. We recognise that developments for North Belfast cannot be taken forward in isolation from wider developments in the city. Belfast Regeneration Office will need to continue to address major strategic issues on a city-wide basis but this will need to be carried out in close co-ordination with the new unit. In addition to this the North Belfast Partnership Board must ensure that decisions on the implementation of its Review are taken forward effectively. This is doubly important in the light of decisions by the Department for Social Development to make arrangements for the North Belfast Partnership Board to manage URBAN II (a European Funding Programme) in North Belfast. We are also aware of the good work that Business in the Community has done to support community projects in North Belfast and we would encourage them to assess the scope for their active involvement in any new developments for the area.
161. The work of the unit will require significant resources and political support from the highest levels. We also regard it as important that the administrative cost of this unit should be met without reducing the resources for the community capacity building as detailed opposite.

162. Specifically the 4 main functions of the unit should be:

a. **Community Capacity Building**

We recommend that the unit should have the lead role in the key area of boosting the development of community capacity for North Belfast. We envisage the need for an annual budget of £3million over a period of ideally 5 years (but a minimum of 3 years with a review before the end of the 3 years) specifically for this work. This area will be explored in much greater detail in the following section.

b. **Strategic Role**

North Belfast needs an overarching strategy which should embrace not only the persistent and recurrent sectarian interface violence but also the many other problems which derive from the uniquely complex nature of the area. To develop a strategy that would be effective will require the involvement of as wide a range of stakeholders and interested parties as possible and should necessarily include political and community representatives, statutory and voluntary bodies, Churches and business interests. We recommend that this unit should take the lead in developing such a strategy.

c. **Building Partnerships**

"Partnering" may have become a hackneyed word, but it has been found to be the *only* mechanism through which community-based regeneration strategies can be made to work. We see the need for partnerships to be built within communities, between communities and between the communities and statutory agencies. This demands the creation of mutual obligation and trust, both of which are difficult qualities to make work in North Belfast where there is a legacy of mis-trust and separate or "single-identity" development.

Finding a way to address the issues for North Belfast on a multi-agency partnership basis should be a key function of the unit. Indeed building effective partnerships asks questions of statutory organisations in terms of service delivery, transparency and relevance of their work to local people. The advantage of working in partnership is that it offers an opportunity to focus a diverse range of bodies on a single issue and thereby improve co-ordination of resource provision and reduce inefficiencies. Such partnerships should also be a means of bringing statutory agencies closer to the ground and improving relationships with people dealing with difficult social problems.

Partnerships require consensus but all need to accept that actions can only proceed from decisions.

It has long been demonstrated that the best decisions partnerships can make are those which best further the common cause. This is especially difficult to achieve in fragmented communities but people in North Belfast should understand that self-interest is best pursued through common interest. For example, the making of a case for further investment in North Belfast is best pursued if it is done on a collective basis.

DEDICATED HIGH LEVEL UNIT FOR NORTH BELFAST

d. **Addressing Interface Issues**

Interface issues need to be addressed in a co-ordinated way, in the first place to promote developments which can avert crisis events but also in a way which can help deal with these should they arise. We recommend that this should be an area of responsibility for the unit. We recognise that there is no universal model which can be applied and that each interface is different but a menu of action to include cross-community dialogue, improved security and environmental features is required.

A focal point within Government is needed but to achieve any improvement all of the key players need to be involved, including the Police Service of Northern Ireland, North and West Belfast Health Trust, community groups, Churches, parents and schools. We recommend that the unit take the lead in encouraging the key players to work together to deal with interface issues.

Ambitions should not be set unrealistically to begin with because time needs to pass for dissipation of the anger which goes with interface conflict. People need to agree to engage well before they can agree to co-operate, let alone agree to live peaceably side-by-side.

However, local communities should be encouraged to have a longer-term view and local vision of where they wish to be. In this context it may be helpful to have at least the outline of a 'community charter' defining the rights that each person and community wishes to enjoy. For example:

- i. the right to peaceful enjoyment of one's own home;
- ii. the right of access to schools, shops and other services without physical, oral or other form of intimidation; and
- iii. the right to affiliate with people from the 'other' community without threat.

Acceptance of such rights carries with it duties and responsibilities from one person or group to another. These principles are in line with our recommendation about the role of citizenship as a creative and educating force.

Our recommendation is to set up a dedicated senior level Unit working with the full authority of Government, located in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister but working closely, through a Departmental Steering Group, with the Department for Social Development. The functions of the Unit will be to build community capacity, develop a long-term strategy for North Belfast, encourage partnerships and also take responsibility for addressing issues in interface areas.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

163. Much work is required across North Belfast to develop community capacity. To be truly effective, work should be carried out by all relevant interests on a comprehensive, integrated basis.
164. However all our deliberations suggest that, even with major changes in a number of areas, there is little chance of improving the quality of people's lives without their active engagement in the process as citizens and as members and leaders in community groups.
165. For this reason we believe that sustained additional investment in community capacity building that engages and empowers local people is essential to any long-term development and transformation in North Belfast. We advocate additional funding because North Belfast communities, for reasons already identified, have not developed in capacity terms to the level of other communities in Northern Ireland.

Audit

166. We know also that communities in North Belfast have developed to different levels. In the time available to us we have not been able to engage in a detailed audit of the levels of community capacity of different communities. However we have heard from many sources that it is generally weaker in Protestant areas. This is a research gap which should be filled. It must be done openly and with community participation and we recommend that Government commit early to this task. It should not delay the implementation of the Programme we recommend below but it should inform the way in which the Programme is developed and implemented to ensure that it is responsive to community need.

Community Capacity Building Programme for North Belfast

167. We propose the development of a new Community Capacity Building Programme for North Belfast. The Programme should be long-term, designed to meet local needs and flexible enough to cope with the various stages of capacity development evident within and across the communities of North Belfast. It must be particular to North Belfast and be additional to resources available from other programmes. The availability of any new special funds should not exclude North Belfast from accessing funds available throughout Northern Ireland, for example from European Funds or Community Relations Funds. Indeed one of the aims of the new Programme is to enable North Belfast to access more funds so that it can get on its feet.
168. We recommend that the programme should be based on a new concept which we refer to as "**Community Empowerment Partnerships**". These partnerships should ensure that, where practical, community development work is focused on capacity building aimed at social, economic and community development, planned and executed within and between local communities. The **Community Empowerment Partnerships** should be based on a lead partner or consortium with the capacity to undertake an agreed programme of work under a 3-year, renewable, Service Level Agreement. This should provide for long-term community capacity building support across North Belfast through approved organisations.

169. Illustrative examples of the outputs which could flow from the successful implementation of a Service Level Agreement include:
- a. improved knowledge, understanding and experience of:
 - grant regimes and funding criteria for community development projects,
 - preparing and pursuing grant applications, and
 - preparing business plans;
 - b. community leaders trained in:
 - the principles and practice of leadership,
 - efficient, transparent running of community-based organisations, and
 - dealing with the media and public relations especially in terms of community advocacy;
 - c. people and groups at interfaces assisted to engage in dialogue and achieve progress towards peaceful co-existence;
 - d. the creation of an information exchange network between community groups; and
 - e. the publication of local best practice in initiatives/projects aimed at community capacity building.

Budgets

170. The **Community Empowerment Partnerships** should be given an indicative budget based on a strategic bid supplemented by a business plan. Core funding should be provided from a £3million **Community Empowerment Fund**. By a Community Empowerment Fund we mean a fund dedicated to North Belfast to support community and voluntary sector involvement in planning and developing processes.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Selection Criteria

171. Selection criteria for **Community Empowerment Partnerships** to submit bids for Service Level Agreements through the **Community Empowerment Fund** should include:
- a. a detailed needs analysis;
 - b. the support of other voluntary and community organisations in the area;
 - c. willingness and potential to penetrate into hard-to-reach or excluded groups;
 - d. adherence to Equality and New Targeting Social Need obligations;
 - e. measures proposed to ensure financial accountability to Government and the local community;
 - f. measures to ensure that the wider community is kept informed and involved in the overall community development process;
 - g. openness and transparency of decision making;
 - h. arrangements to promote collaboration, networking and partnership within and across community boundaries;
 - i. ability to organise, manage and/or deliver community capacity building programmes;
 - j. willingness and ability to handle interface issues in a constructive way;
 - k. clear management and reporting structures with an identified lead organisation to act as the main contractor;
 - l. clear legal standing of the lead organisation and the consortium partners;
 - m. arrangements for reporting regularly on progress against an agreed strategy and 3-year business plan with objectives and targets for activity levels, financial performance, outputs and outcomes;
 - n. definite proposals and timetables for capacity building programmes to be undertaken in the first year;
 - o. willingness, at least at a professional level, to work across the two communities, participating in networks and shared learning events; and
 - p. arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.

Technical Assistance

172. Selection of bids for Service Level Agreements through this **Community Empowerment Fund** should be made against clearly established criteria and include an initial expression-of-interest phase followed by full bids. Technical assistance should be made available for each potential consortium partner who may require support for capacity building and also for the preparation of bids under these funds. Examples of the type of activity which could receive assistance by the Unit in the preparation of bids could include:
- a. carrying out a community needs analysis;
 - b. auditing the competencies of individuals and groups in a community;
 - c. envisioning a future for the community and an outline development strategy; and
 - d. the creation of a partnership to realise the above objectives.

173. Allowances should be made for **Community Empowerment Partnerships** that might require support for capacity building as a first step to developing proposals. The selection process should be open and transparent. The selection criteria and any weighting should be made known in advance and be used to inform the development of bids.

Community Capacity Building Network

174. There is also a need for a network reference group, with representatives from both communities, for the Unit to consult with on the development and subsequent implementation of the Community Capacity Building Programme. Action should be taken to facilitate the development of an effective network of community umbrella organisations across North Belfast, the genesis of which has already been facilitated through the work of this Project. Such a network could promote partnership working across the area and in particular make it easier for **Community Empowerment Partnerships** to work together.

Improving Skills and Competencies

175. Furthermore the capacity building process will need to be underpinned by a recognised competency framework. A number of models have been developed including the Good Group Guide and the Achieving Better Community Development framework. The most up-to-date competency framework and one that appears to have the support of the community sector, is the Community Development Work National Occupational Standards.
176. These Standards can be applied within programmes either as guidelines for programme design and content or as part of an accredited learning process. The Standards can also be developed alongside other concepts of which we have learned over the last few months. For example, techniques for building individual and community self-confidence such as that of the Pacific Institute which also proposes to teach individuals and organisations how to work better together; or approaches to creative thinking proposed by the Edward de Bono Foundation who are promoting the development of an International Centre in North Belfast to develop lateral approaches to creative and constructive thinking; or again, approaches to partnering to achieve "win-win" relationships between actual or intended partners, developed by John Carlisle and Associates and presented at the Conference which we organised in April 2002.

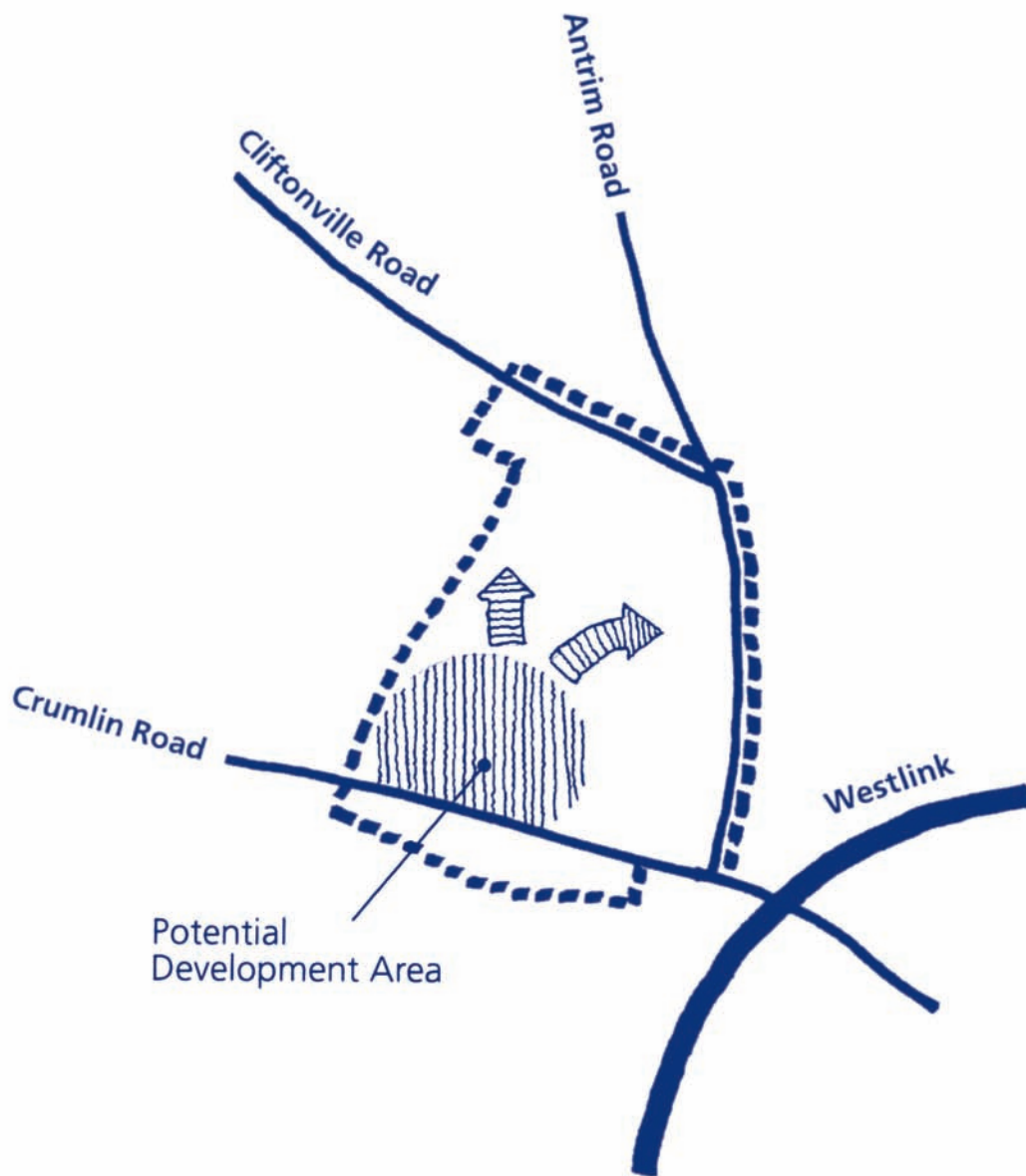
Our recommendation is to create a Community Capacity Building Programme which should be a major function of the dedicated Unit. This programme should be special to North Belfast. It should be adequately resourced with staff and additional funding and given sufficient time to make a difference, with community groups able to access assistance in ways relevant to their areas of need.

We further recommend that £3million additional funding per year be made available for community capacity building (under a new concept of Community Empowerment Partnerships) ideally for a 5 year period (but at minimum, 3 years with a review before the end of 3 years) for this Programme. These partnerships will involve and service smaller community groups within the partnership.



A NEW DEVELOPMENT SITE FOR
NORTH BELFAST

A NEW DEVELOPMENT SITE FOR NORTH BELFAST



177. During our consultations it became clear that there is a real need for a large-scale physical regeneration project to be developed in an easily accessible location in North Belfast. Such a project is needed to generate investment, increase economic opportunity, improve the environment and to lift the spirits of the community. The very establishment of such a site would serve as both a symbol of hope and a focal point for the area. The community could identify with the site and become involved in its development through a public/private partnership thus creating a sense of acceptability and ownership within the local area. Taking into account the issues around territoriality, as outlined in earlier sections, this site should recognise the political/religious sensitivities of the area with residents and stakeholders in agreement that any potential development should be created and maintained as a neutral space.
178. The First Minister and Deputy First Minister have signalled their desire for some prisons and army bases to become symbols of peace and prosperity and the engine of economic and social regeneration in local areas. The former Crumlin Road Jail (along with Girdwood Barracks, if the security situation could improve to allow it to be made available) has the potential to meet a wide range of needs for the communities of North Belfast (see *Map opposite*). The Jail site is spacious and can accommodate a variety of uses. We acknowledge that aspects of the Crumlin Road Jail are Grade A listed, but would urge that this listing be reconsidered.
179. The Belfast Regeneration Office, in September 2001, commissioned an economic appraisal for the Crumlin Road Jail site to firstly establish whether it should acquire the site and secondly to examine the potential for redevelopment of that site, in the context of the wider regeneration of the Crumlin Road and surrounding area. The findings of the appraisal were that acquisition of this site should proceed - that has now happened at no cost - and that the potential for redevelopment existed at an estimated cost in excess of £30million. We strongly recommend that Government should proceed to prepare a feasibility study for a comprehensive development project on this site, taking account of the opportunity to integrate adjacent developments such as the Court House, the Mater Hospital and St Malachy's College.
180. We support the view, therefore, that there should be an agreed plan for multi-use facilities on this site with the involvement of all interested parties. The site should involve mixed usage, with housing, education, recreational, retail, other commercial and industrial space, all being included. A landscape scheme between the Jail and the Court House, designed to achieve a calming of traffic movement as well as an important civic space, should also be considered. We know that the Court House is in private hands but we believe it could be included in some of these plans.
181. There is also a need for Government to address the problems associated with the existing poor business infrastructure and to stimulate a greater level of economic activity by actively encouraging small business development. The Department for Employment and Learning is devoting specific resources to make people aware of new employment opportunities and improve their capability to access new jobs. There is also a need to engage with Invest NI

A NEW DEVELOPMENT SITE FOR NORTH BELFAST

with a view to establishing a specific programme to deal with issues relevant to North Belfast's businesses. Provision could be made, for example, for the site to provide a focal point for the incubation of arts and craft as well as for the clustering of small "creative sector" businesses.

182. In the following sections we will be making recommendations for health and education. We have also made recommendations which should contribute to 'raising the spirits' of the North Belfast community. While such recommendations are for projects which could be located in any part of North Belfast, some of these could also be located in any large-scale physical regeneration project. Such projects include the creation of a Centre for Citizenship, an e-technology community based network facility and a Music Action Zone.

Our recommendation is to encourage Government to develop a major site involving mixed-usage to serve as a symbol of hope and economic regeneration for North Belfast.

CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP

CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP

183. We have been told many times during the consultation process that many of the key problems of North Belfast are related to people, especially the young, becoming involved in 'recreational rioting' at interface areas and the use of illegal drugs leading to organised crime related activities, joy-riding and vandalism. We have also been told of the lack of facilities in some communities and the fear of going into the 'other's' community to access opportunities and resources. As a result many people, young and old, may feel that they have no part to play in the community.
184. In an effort to begin to address these problems we need to engage people in programmes which will develop themselves, their commitment to the community, their capacity to make a positive contribution and their ability to reflect critically and constructively with others on the behaviour they see around them. The ability to identify aspects of issues facing society; an understanding of concepts - such as fairness, rights and duties; the capacity to engage effectively in dialogue with others on issues of shared concern; all these have to be learned if people are to become active rather than passive participants in their own futures and in the development of society as a whole. This whole concept of "Citizenship", as it is often referred to, aims to give people the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and understanding to play an effective role in society. It could be directed primarily at the young but open to all. Citizenship gives people a sense of identity beyond what is intensively local.
185. We appreciate that citizenship is already included in the school curriculum. However we believe that there is also value in extending this concept to people who have left school especially those living in North Belfast where there is a high level of intolerance. In our consultations we have learned that the problems of the area have left many adults with little knowledge of their community obligations and responsibilities and with a lack of basic citizenship skills.
186. We therefore recommend the establishment of a **Centre for Citizenship** in North Belfast. We commend the value of locating this Centre in North Belfast though it should not be confined only to those who live in the area.
187. One possible location could be the proposed development site, mentioned in the previous section, which, due to its neutrality, would be ideal. There is a poetic symmetry in a former place of rectitude becoming a centre for learning and free thinking. The Centre could become a place of "lifelong learning" for both communities of all ages, developing empowered people using their experiences and sharing them with others. We do not feel that it is within our remit to identify a body to take this forward but have some assurance that it would interest a college/university. Courses up to graduate level could be made available. Course material could also be made accessible to community centres and schools. The Centre could be associated with Queen's University, Belfast or the University of Ulster or the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education. One development model could be that of a dedicated community management development consortium similar to the model of the Rural College in Draperstown.

188. The key principles on which the Centre should be based are, a location in North Belfast, an outreach capacity to the communities and a willingness to engage with people who are excluded or marginalised.
189. We recognise that this would require significant funding and a period of consultation/dialogue with communities and education professionals. Nonetheless we believe the concept has great promise and would like to see it developed.

Our recommendation is to develop a Centre for Citizenship, located in North Belfast to promote learning about citizenship and related concepts including the rights and the obligations that accompany them.



HEALTH

HEALTH

190. There is a need to meet existing demand for community health and social services to produce positive changes in the health and well-being of communities in North Belfast. We have seen already that the area experiences some of the poorest indices of health and social well-being of any community in Northern Ireland. Despite the delivery of the full range of community health and social services to the area, these particular indices have remained unchanged and are unacceptably high in the North and West Belfast Trust. Furthermore the consequences of the conflict in social, psychological and economic terms are disproportionately high for the population and this fact has profound implications on the delivery of services in the area with higher levels of need to be met, as well as the need to provide dual services to deeply divided communities.
191. There is therefore a need to reconfigure service delivery to deliver person-centered, multi-disciplinary services to the area. Through our consultation process we have been made aware of the North & West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust proposal for the delivery of all of the community health and social services in the area. The Trust proposes to reconfigure the delivery of all of the community health and social services which it provides, along a "Life Events" model. This means that as events occur in an individual's life they will be able to access all of the Trust's services which they need easily, from a single source and that the services will be effective, efficient and integrated.
192. To enable this process to happen the Trust has prepared a bid for Executive Programme Funds to develop a long-term strategy for the re-design of its estate to enable it to deliver services which are person centered, meet need and address health inequalities. The Trust proposes to replace a significant portion of its existing estate and the first phase of this process is the development of two new Health and Well-being Centres, strategically located in North Belfast and the redevelopment of an existing site, to enable the population to have equitable access to the full range of Trust services.
193. It is clear that long-term action as set out in the Trust's bid is required to address the particular complexities of North Belfast along with its acute health problems.

Our recommendation is that the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust's bid for almost £11million of Executive Programme Funds is accepted to enable the Trust to invest in two new Health and Well-being Centres for North Belfast as well as the redevelopment of an existing site. This will enable the Trust to establish a dedicated service drawing together all the relevant strands of service provision with the capacity and specialist skills to respond appropriately to the levels of need of residents in North Belfast.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION

194. Overall educational standards in the area are low, notwithstanding the existence of a number of very good schools and a perceptible improvement in the performance of some of the other schools. Parental and communal support for mainstream education is also low and there are areas where pre-school provision is grossly inadequate.
195. Additional funds are therefore required to address the problems and the concerns identified by young people, which are often expressed in words like "boredom", "despair" and "hopelessness".

Home-School Links

196. We recommend that additional resources be directed to improving the vital link between schools and the home and to encourage more positive relationships between schools, pupils and parents. This action should include:
 - a. additional funding of more Parent/Teacher Liaison Officers and Education Welfare Officers;
 - b. schools to make their recreational and educational facilities available to young people and the community during evenings and weekends;
 - c. action to promote parenting skills;
 - d. providing homework clubs;
 - e. providing more counselling services for young people;
 - f. enhancing the normal extra curricular activities such as dance and drama; and
 - g. carrying out a review of pre-school provision.
197. We recommend that the Department of Education and the Belfast Education and Library Board consider providing additional resources in these areas.

Youth Work in Schools Initiative

198. During our consultations young people also expressed the concern that there was a lack of understanding between communities. It makes sense therefore that concentrated efforts should be made to underpin dialogue in a structured way through schools with renewed emphasis on Education for Mutual Understanding.
199. We have seen the benefits of the "North Belfast Youth Work in Schools" Initiative which is a Department of Education initiative, supported and managed through the Belfast Education and Library Board Youth Services. The main purpose of the Initiative is to enhance school support structures for vulnerable young people and so contribute to the rebuilding of relationships between schools and the local community within the local catchment area. The Initiative was originally provided for 4 schools in the area but the Department have made it clear to us that for the initiative to have a real impact in the area, it should be extended to 3 other post-primary schools. The Department estimates that resources of approximately £150,000 would be required to fund any such extension. We support the allocation of additional resources for this extension.

Pilot Scheme for 14 -16 Age Group (Key Stage 4)

200. In response to representations from schools we have also learned that the curriculum requirements are considered to be too constraining to allow schools to provide appropriate courses for many of their pupils. The Department of Education introduced a pilot scheme in September 2000 giving approval to schools to opt out of some of these curriculum requirements in order to free up time for schools to provide work-related courses for groups of pupils in the 14-16 age group (Key Stage 4). Typically such courses involve a combination of school work (for at least 60% of the school year), further study or training in a further education college or a recognised training organisation and often also a work placement, usually for one day per week. The courses have been individually designed by the schools to meet their pupils' interests and aptitudes and parental agreement to participation is obtained in advance. We regard this approach as ideally suited to many of the schools and young people in North Belfast.
201. In the 2001/02 school year over 50 post-primary schools took part in the pilot across Northern Ireland and some of these were in North Belfast. The closing date for applications for the pilot commencing in September 2002 has not yet passed and we urge North Belfast schools to participate in this scheme.

Voluntary Youth Work

202. We also recommend that the Belfast and North Eastern Education and Library Boards should review the extent to which they could enhance the level of support given to the voluntary youth organisations in North Belfast to ensure that each can play a full part in the delivery of alternatives for young people.

Our recommendation is that additional resources be made available to schools to boost the key links between school and home; support be given to the Department of Education's proposal to extend its Youth Work in Schools Initiative; for schools in North Belfast to participate in the pilot scheme created by the Department of Education for the 14 -16 age group (Key Stage 4); and Belfast and North Eastern Education and Library Boards to review the level of support for voluntary youth organisations.



NEW APPROACHES

NEW APPROACHES

203. As we have seen earlier in the Report, North Belfast suffers from pervasive social distress and disadvantage which has resulted in a lack of "neutral territory" or "meeting ground" for residents of the area. During our consultations we have learned of projects which we believe could assist in addressing this particular problem while at the same time helping to raise morale, deal with despair and encourage interaction and dialogue in an informal atmosphere. Such projects which have merit, are mentioned below.

E-technology Community Based Network facility

204. The aim of Government is to create universal access to Internet technology by 2005. The opportunities in e-technology are yet to be fully explored, but already we have learned how its use would benefit North Belfast particularly in breaking down division in the area.
205. Extension of broadband cabling networks could provide a means of developing 'intra' and cross-community dialogue through the use of 'shared virtual space' whereby houses and communities can be linked through an information dissemination service which could include a local radio/television station. Such a network could improve cross-community communications in a non-threatening way. It could also help facilitate the development of small businesses by providing a range of relatively low-cost services, for example software rental and printing facilities.
206. We are aware of a number of potential deliverers of this concept in the area, for example the Flax Trust and Learndirect. We do not regard it as our remit to assess the capabilities of such proposals. Nonetheless we have been impressed by both and have included details of the Flax Trust Initiative at Appendix C as an exemplar.

Our recommendation is to develop e-technology in the area to create an environment whereby homes in North Belfast are able to communicate in a non-confrontational manner both on an 'intra' and 'inter' community basis via the Internet.

Music Action Zone

207. We have also learned during our consultations of the importance of the medium of music in uniting people in a non-confrontational manner. For example, the National Foundation for Youth Music provides music-making opportunities for children and young people up to the age of 18 who live mainly in areas of social and economic need. The Foundation plans to develop new strategies in order to continue championing music-making opportunities that are easily accessible to children and young people.
208. One such strategy is the designation of Music Action Zones, which focus teaching and investment on people in deprived areas. We understand that such an initiative is currently being developed in England with possible extension to Scotland and Wales. We recommend that action be initiated to introduce a similar 'concept' for the communities of North Belfast.

209. Within this Music Action Zone consideration should be given to the development of a specific School for Percussion in North Belfast.

210. Percussion is an easily learned form of music. We have been impressed by the apparent success of the internationally known School for Percussion in Sao Paolo, Brazil (Meninas do Morumbi) which has benefited over 2,000 disadvantaged children. We are also aware of the short-term funded programmes available to promote the performing arts in schools implemented by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and by Belfast Education & Library Board and reinforce the idea of percussion as a stimulating, creative activity.

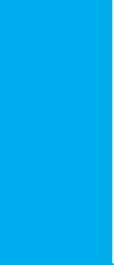
Our recommendation is that North Belfast should aim to become a Music Action Zone within which we would envisage a new School for Percussion to offer fresh opportunity, especially for disadvantaged people as a means of cross-community contact.



APPENDICES



APPENDIX A - PUBLIC MEETINGS REPORT



VENUE	PAGE
White City Community Centre	3
Wolfhill Centre	5
Concorde Community Centre	7
Ardoyne Youth Centre	9
Loughside Recreation Centre	11
Elim Christian Centre	13
Ashton Centre	15
Manor Street Community Centre	17
Seaview Presbyterian Church	19
Torr Heath Community Centre	21
Parkside Community House	23
Mountcollyer Complex	25
Hazelwood Integrated College	27
Rush Park Centre	29
Willowgrove Centre	30
Spectrum Centre	32

POINTS RAISED DURING THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

In this Appendix we have given an outline summary of the points which were raised with us at the public consultations. Some of it is repetitive but that is the nature of public meetings. We should stress that these comments are what people have said to us and we have tried to reflect the language of the meetings. We did not seek to establish a consensus at the meetings nor have we attempted to change or endorse what was said.

We felt that it was important to those who attended these meetings that their perceptions should be made available to those who may be charged with implementing the recommendations outlined in our Report.

We include these points grouped into subject headings and in the order in which we organised the meetings.

VENUE	DATE	AREAS COVERED
White City Community Centre	19.02.02	White City, Graymount and Shore Crescent
Wolfhill Centre	19.02.02	Ligoniel
Concorde Community Centre	21.02.02	Glenbryn, Alliance, Wheatfield, Hesketh, Cambrai Street and Twaddell
Ardoyne Youth Centre	21.02.02	Ardoyne, Bone and Ballybone
Loughside Recreation Centre	25.02.02	Mount Vernon, Lowwood and Parkmount
Elim Christian Centre	25.02.02	Grove, Alexandra and Gainsborough
Ashton Centre	27.02.02	New Lodge
Manor Street Community Centre	27.02.02	Manor Street, Cliftonville and Wyndham Street
Seaview Presbyterian Church	04.03.02	Skegoneill, Mid-Skegoneill and Northwood
Torr Heath Community Centre	05.03.02	Torrens, Westland, Sunningdale and Lower Oldpark
Parkside Community House	05.03.02	Parkside, Newington, Little Americas and Glandore
Mountcollyer Complex	11.03.02	Duncairn, Limestone, Tiger's Bay and Mountcollyer
Hazelwood Integrated College	11.03.02	Bawnmore, Longlands, Whitewell, Fairyknowe and Greencastle
Rush Park Centre	12.03.02	Rathcoole
Willowgrove Centre	12.03.02	Silverstream, Benview, Tynedale and Glenbank
Spectrum Centre	16.04.02	Shankill

Developing Communities

- Shrinking isolated community that feels under constant threat
- Difficult to develop and confidence low
- Need to tackle apathy
- Needs practical help to assist people on ground
- Small communities could come together to bid for funding even across the religious divide

Social and Economic Issues

- Need to access health facilities outside the community
- General lack of employment in the area
- No secure play area for children
- Community centre run on voluntary basis - needs paid youth worker
- Buses not considered safe
- Stress affects all
- Good families move out and problem families move in
- Very little contact with community workers from 'other' side

Public Services

- Baby clinic needed in community centre
- Stress major problem affecting ability to work
- Housing Executive using area as a 'dumping ground'
- Lack of employment opportunities in the area
- Can't access library facilities and no mobile in the area
- Police don't go into the areas where there is violence
- Poor cleansing operations
- No secure play areas for children
- Speed ramps requested 10 years ago and still not in place
- No facilities in terms of taxis, take-aways, shops, social life options
- Local planning needs to be good to ensure problems not repeated in the future

Youth

- Police harassment is fundamental problem - no respect from youth
- Nothing to do in the area
- Feel hemmed in because of attacks
- Could renovate waste land
- WAVE programme should continue as youth very interested

WHITE CITY COMMUNITY CENTRE (Whitewell Road)

- Youth perceive themselves as protecting their community
- Young people are traumatised and intimidated resulting in school grades dropping as well as attendance levels
- Youth need leadership from within and outside families
- Level of harassment, conflict and hatred at all-time high

Interface Issues

- Media misrepresentation
- Misallocation and lack of police resources. Police do not understand the area
- Access problems
- Mistrust of gestures towards cross-community work
- Feeling of complete lack of basic human rights
- Need greater security - CCTV cameras and gates

Developing Leadership

- Trained leaders and youth workers needed
- Parental discipline needed for children

Tolerance

- Last hope for peace
- All would leave homes tomorrow - war zone and bleak future
- Parental participation needed

Developing Communities

- Need to break down barriers across the religious divide
- Cross-community initiatives only serve to 'skim' the surface
- Apathy is a major problem
- Confidence low amongst ordinary people - fear of the unknown
- Cross community groups that bring people together because of a common interest seem to work best
- Responsibility on schools to teach respect
- Proper consultation is required on issues that affect the community

Social and Economic Issues

- Area needs industrial investment
- Future housing needs to be well planned
- Not sufficient retail capacity
- Only leisure facility is Ballysillan Leisure Centre - considered as a Protestant centre
- Lack of academic attainment, low skills base, low confidence

Public Services

- One bus route recently removed - was vital for health service access
- High percentage of low income families who are dependent on public transport
- Cars attacked at traffic light junction with Crumlin Road
- No faith in police
- No accountability with public services - street cleansing not being done effectively
- Sewers not able to cope with number of houses
- Poor lighting
- Agencies seem to have the attitude that they can get away with poor service provision in North Belfast

Youth

- Community feels hemmed in
- No leisure facility
- Tendency to underestimate role youth can play in helping communities get back on their feet
- Need to teach youth leadership skills
- Soft drugs abuse problem
- Low educational attainment in the area
- Mental health of children an issue - High numbers of young male suicides
- Unstructured cross-community approach is not helpful

WOLFHILL CENTRE (Ligoniel Road)

Interface Issues

- Problem needs to be nipped in the bud or it will spiral out of control
- Media misrepresentation
- Areas being deliberately run down - grey areas
- Sectarianism is fundamental issue

Developing Leadership

- Dismayed by lack of leadership
- Need to work at grass roots and at top level
- Need to have programmes to encourage young people to put something back into community and to have pride in surroundings

Tolerance

- Generation problem - older people impose views on younger people
- Need to strip people of their current identities - let them form their own ideas

Developing Communities

- Fear and isolation are wide spread
- Shrinking community and encroachment by Nationalists
- Apathy not a problem due to the fact the school protest has united the community
- Community safety is currently most important issue
- Road re-alignment is a priority
- Funding, training and people resources needed
- Government agencies need to work more closely with local people
- Current lack of trust because Government agencies have failed to listen and to act on the suggestions of local people
- Local people are engaged in an outreach programme with youth
- Poor image - media has not helped. What community sees as protecting itself has been portrayed as sectarianism
- People who claim to represent the community need to have a mandate to do so and also need to be accountable
- Perception that Everton Complex is for Nationalists

Social and Economic Issues

- Feeling that people can't use any of the local services because they are all in Nationalist areas - play park and Everton Centre
- Very high unemployment
- Should be a local skills audit and local people should then get the chance to do the work in the locality
- Don't feel safe to walk or take buses
- Increasing drug and alcohol problems
- Stress major problem
- Community need to be involved in planning
- Agencies need to be more pro-active in finding solutions; secondments from agencies could help
- Desperate community needs short term results

Public Services

- People have to leave the area to access services
- Local people could provide some public services more cost effectively
- Should develop Community Transport Scheme
- No adult education in the area
- No employment and benefits advice centre in the area
- Lack of faith in police
- Perception that area being deliberately run down
- Street lighting poor

CONCORDE COMMUNITY CENTRE (Alliance Road)

Youth

- Serious drugs abuse problem
- Drugs awareness programme in place but need one full time worker
- Serious lack of employment opportunities
- Feeling that mention of the area in the address section of an application form automatically excludes the applicant from employment
- Lack of recreational facilities for 16-18 age group
- Transport and access problem to nearby leisure centre
- Young people need to be consulted/listened to. Adults need to interact with youth in meaningful way
- Youth need to be put in the position of being able to give something back to the community
- Threatening environment to live in
- High levels of stress, anxiety and lack of motivation
- Need for counselling services
- Children feel isolated and traumatised as a result of Holy Cross dispute
- No relationship with police

Interface Issues

- No meaningful foresight at top levels in planning
- No freedom to express cultural identity
- Not enough CCTV cameras
- Residents feel vulnerable
- Community feels need to protect itself
- Media bias in favour of Nationalists

Developing Leadership

- Co-ordinated leadership needed
- Leadership has been attacked and disenfranchised by Government
- Joined up Government needs to become a reality and set an example
- Parents have huge responsibility

Tolerance

- Need to be able to express cultural opinion
- Parity of esteem is needed
- Parades Commission rulings perceived to be unfair

Developing Communities

- Strong and vibrant community
- Feeling that people at grass roots level don't get the chance to influence change but simply get 'dumped upon'
- 55% of population under the age of 25 - youth clubs can't cater for demand from youth
- 500 people on A1 housing priority list
- People leaving the area to find houses creates instability in the community
- Frustration within the community due to on-going attacks
- Development plans need to involve community at early stage
- Funding allocation often seen as politically motivated
- Too much 'red tape' in application process
- Perception that if the community is successful in helping itself, it will stop receipt of funding
- Too many community groups competing for funding

Social and Economic Issues

- Lack of facilities and amenities and shortage of green areas
- Considered safer to stay in area and use pubs and clubs
- Prescription drugs, solvent and alcohol abuse and joyriding are problems
- People 'living on top of one another' compounds problems
- Nowhere for community to expand
- High unemployment

Public Services

- Distrust of all public services
- Children need to have sense of ownership of facilities developed for them
- Need to work better with groups on ground
- Should be greater regulation of community groups in general
- Social services removed at first sign of trouble
- No easily accessible leisure centre
- Training only accessible outside the area
- Lack of faith in police

Youth

- Lack of self-esteem and no aspirations
- Not enough to do - boredom factor
- Anti-social behaviour is a way of rebelling against a system that they perceive has failed them

ARDOYNE YOUTH CENTRE (Flax Street)

- IT facilities in huge demand
- No significant commercial investment so no jobs
- Need for training in life skills, mentoring programmes and parenting skills
- Special youth needs not being catered for
- Young people should have a platform to speak

Interface Issues

- Living in Interfaces affects mental health
- Media relations bad - only interested in bad news
- No relationship with police
- Increase of 33% in population in last 5 years
- Housing allocation not on a 'need' basis
- Access problems
- Low motivation amongst males
- Young people scared to engage in work placements outside the area
- Former cross-community programmes have not worked well
- Misguided fear amongst Protestant communities that ethnic cleansing is taking place

Developing Leadership

- Religious leadership is important
- Parents need to give more encouragement
- Political leaders need to represent the whole community
- Political leaders need to set an example

Tolerance

- Need for equality of housing
- Joined up Government needs to set an example
- MPs need to represent entire area
- Young people need to have their say and be nurtured

Developing Communities

- Great deal of apathy in the community
- Community lacks organisation
- No sense of law and order any more
- Need more community policing
- Lack of parental control

Social and Economic Issues

- Ageing population
- Lack of facilities and amenities especially for children
- Law and order major problem in area
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Housing Executive and politicians working hand in hand to split communities
- Need to enforce tenancy agreements - evicted if not taking care of properties
- High levels of unemployment in area

Public Services

- Area neglected by residents and Government
- Illegal dumping taking place
- Agencies don't look at permanent solutions to problems
- Redevelopment of Loughside Recreation Centre will be welcomed
- Children on quads - need facility for these
- Difficulty in getting children to attend schools - poor attainment levels
- Lack of training for those between the ages of 16-18
- Police need to build better relationship with young people
- Threat of closure of Greencastle and York Road police station big concern
- Undesirable people housed ahead of people who have lived there all their lives
- No community groups or residents associations to represent people
- Public transport - doesn't cater adequately for pensioners
- Closest Training and Employment Office is in Rathcoole

Youth

- Discriminated against in application forms
- Inward investment not helping - locals not being recruited
- Demand for computer/IT classes
- Young people at a local level need to be communicated with

LOUGHSIDE RECREATION CENTRE (Shore Road)

- 16-18 age group roam the streets - low levels of educational attainment
- No significant drugs awareness programme
- 'Joyriding' big problem
- Schools involvement with community is minimal
- Youth should be offered arts-based, vocational orientated qualifications
- Lack of counselling/youth work
- No relationship with police
- Kids loitering on street corners, intimidating pensioner age group

Interface Issues

- Privatised landlords - no sense of responsibility to local community
- Increasing number of "anti-social" families moving in
- Community being "squeezed" under threat by nationalist area
- Media bias
- Inter-generational programmes needed
- Feeling of isolation in community
- Paramilitaries offer internal protection; also responsible for drugs abuse
- Council services are not adequate
- Community neglected because close to affluent areas
- Support/Assistance required with application forms for funding e.g. PEACE II forms

Developing Communities

- No real community - people only get involved when there is trouble
- High youth population
- Very low morale
- Promises by statutory agencies but little delivered
- Lack of paid community workers in area
- Imbalance of resources in area - seen as wealthy - pockets of poverty
- Need forum of local churches to facilitate co-operation
- Need advice on how to apply for funding

Social and Economic Issues

- Very isolated
- In state of environmental and economic decline
- Need better local infrastructure to attract people into area
- Shops declining through neglect - can't access shops through fear of attack
- Lack of employment - people moving out
- Stadium development at Fortwilliam Roundabout would lift the area

Public Services

- Police do little to intervene - under resourced - need more police; police are rude
- No crèche facilities in the area
- Some churches do not apply for Lottery funding for ethical reasons

Youth

- Alexandra Park has huge potential for development
- Local Churches should open their facilities for youth
- Establishment of Christian Youth Forum needed
- Elim Christian Centre - needs full time workers, relies on volunteers
- Skills classes for young people needed
- Grove Leisure Centre - concerns going to be knocked down and re-built in Nationalist community
- Educational problems - low achievement - low self esteem, low motivational levels
- Additional training inaccessible

ELIM CHRISTIAN CENTRE (Alexandra Park Avenue)

Interface Issues

- Paramilitaries protecting the community
- Paramilitaries referred to as 'mafia' - main source of drugs for the area
- Media Bias - media can play an integral role in tolerance
- Way of applying for funding needs to be radically changed
- Matching Fund/Partnership funding highlighted as a good, long-term approach
- Nationalist community "got their act together better"
- Paramilitary involvement must be kept to a minimum
- Pooling of resources across communities needed

Developing Leadership

- Need to empower the local community
- Church needs to facilitate co-operation/tolerance
- Politicians need to set the example to work with the people on the ground

Tolerance

- Feeling by group that it will take a great deal of time to become a more tolerant society
- Huge amount of distrust in local Protestant community

Developing Communities

- Tight knit community
- Developed from need to be independent from Government
- Community under attack
- Approximately 18 active community groups, no core funding for anyone who works in community groups
- Need paid youth workers
- Lack of housing for community
- Feeling housing issue currently another form of political gerrymandering
- Communication broken down between New Lodge and Tiger's Bay

Social and Economic Issues

- Training schemes - skills training needed
- Local investment/businesses in the area must employ local people
- Refused proper leisure facilities for last 30 years. No leisure facilities in Nationalist areas
- High use of prescription drugs
- People depressed by lack of opportunities and green areas
- Accessing doctors - can be difficult on interface
- Mental Health - increasing number of suicides - Adult Mental Health workers needed for North Belfast
- Children are traumatised by violence
- Private landlords - need regulated - charge excessive rent
- High levels of unemployment
- Media not representing situation as it is

Public Services

- Lack of funding and services
- Unless mindsets of statutory agencies and civil servants change - nothing will change
- Agencies not prepared to deal with problems of the community
- Need better transport to access jobs
- Schools should have wings dedicated to teaching trades
- Police response time is inadequate
- North Belfast one of the worst areas for cleansing

ASHTON CENTRE (Churchill Street)

Youth

- 80% of local community is under the age of 25
- Standards/qualifications for youth workers need to be monitored - some too inexperienced
- Young people need to be consulted
- Establishment of a youth forum is needed
- Need more low cost crèche facilities
- 88% of local community on social benefits
- IT programmes full and large waiting lists, a need for more
- Young people have no real relationship with the church - does not reach out to help community

Interface Issues

- Political leaders root cause of the interface issues
- Communities need to establish their own sense of identity
- Short term measures do not actually 'cure' the problems
- Personal safety fears
- Public do not know that "behind the scenes violence" takes place every day
- Lighting should be improved
- CCTV perceived as an invasion of privacy

Developing Leadership

- Youth lack supervision, do not look up to political leadership
- Apathy
- Difficulty controlling children
- Do not look to church for leadership
- Lacking an effective community forum
- MLAs should be more in touch and work on the ground

Developing Communities

- Very fragmented community
- Related directly to private landlords - flats attract transient people
- Lack of facilities for children
- Community centre but no paid workers
- Parenting issues - need parenting skills training
- Need for money and investment in the community - services and statutory agencies, outreach workers
- Need core funding for workers
- Applications for funding too complicated
- Need consortiums of groups to work together
- Need basic skills and IT training
- In depth research needed to find out what training people want

Social and Economic Issues

- Fear in the area
- Older people need more security
- Lack of respect in society for authority
- 70% of young people leave school with no academic qualifications
- Highest number of teenage pregnancies in Eastern Health and Social Services Board area
- Highest number of young people up in front of the Probation Board
- Children twice as likely to be hospitalised as in rest of UK
- Low life expectancy
- Drugs, solvent and alcohol abuse big problems
- Need outreach workers from statutory agencies
- No leisure facilities in Nationalist areas
- Housing is neglected - anti social families being rehoused in area
- High levels of unemployment - need to encourage local enterprise
- Need confidence-building courses
- Areas that are economically poorer don't get recognition that they need

Public Services

- Lack of employment
- Poor cleansing service - area looks run down
- Need health workers in the community
- Statutory agencies should be made responsible for core funding

MANOR STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE (Manor Street)

- Community workers should be funded for period of 10 years - long term solution
- Need initiatives to help reduce number of teenage pregnancies
- If local authorities had to raise taxes for policing - this would be good

Youth

- Kids aren't born bad, learn the behaviour from adults
- High levels of domestic violence
- No forum for young people
- Anti-education culture; need to instil core values
- Lack of parental responsibility/discipline
- No counselling service
- Community feels abandoned by Belfast Education and Library Board
- Need for recreational facilities - Water Works could be converted into a leisure centre
- No green areas for playing
- Low self esteem/ambition
- Big minority do not attend school/need to revise curriculum
- Schools could be opened in the evenings for community activities
- Regular attacks on buses, fire brigade

Interface Issues

- Most people do not want to live in a segregated community
- Need help in how to reach out to the other side
- Housing Executive use area as a "dumping ground" for undesirable/anti-social/problem families
- Lack of long-term planning strategy
- A general lack of personal safety/security

Developing Leadership

- Complete breakdown in community infrastructure
- Security fallen down, police presence is lacking
- Community policing should be restored
- Leadership needed in the deprived areas of the community
- Lack links with religious leaders
- Community do not feel part of anything
- Politicians let local area down
- Call for politicians to lead by example
- Media bias

Developing Communities

- Lack of premises for community groups
- Community Centre run by volunteers
- Lack of information to community
- Community work aimed at youth
- Need funding - residents need educated in funding application process

Social and Economic Issues

- Joyriding, underage drinking and car hijackings are major problems
- Area lacks political leadership
- Lack of confidence in Protestant community
- Protestant story not being told
- Media is being controlled
- Loyalist divisions brought into school
- Property speculators - buying property, bricking it up for 2 years to get grants
- Need to be able to identify who private landlords are
- Families relocating to Glengormley to access cheaper housing

Public Services

- Skips ought to be provided for residents
- Dog dirt - major problem - fining not imposed
- Lack of faith in police; no community police
- Police haven't powers to arrest children who are causing problems
- Threatened closure of York Road Police Station
- Sport - good way of engaging youth
- Lack of prospects for people in the area
- Very poor public transport

Youth

- Do not want to go to youth groups
- Need to consult with/listen to youth
- Give young people a sense of ownership/responsibility/identity
- Can no longer rely on volunteers
- Young people not encouraged to realise potential
- Parents need to be held accountable
- Need to make sure kids attend school

SEAVIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (Shore Road)

- Lack motivational levels
- Drugs increasing problem in local area
- Lack of respect amongst young people/taunting pensioners
- Need Truant Officer
- Laws against underage drinking need to be enforced

Interface Issues

- Rioting takes place during June and July around Alexandra Park
- People who don't live on interface are not so badly affected
- Rioters come from outside area
- Cross community work ongoing between women
- Taxis won't cross the interface
- Local businesses will not locate near an interface
- Protestants being driven out of the area

Developing Leadership

- Lack of respect towards Church
- High level dysfunctional families in local community
- One parent families get disproportionate funding compared to married couple with same number of children

Developing Communities

- Lack of money to fund workers
- Community centres are run by volunteers
- Need more facilities for children
- Money needs to be fed through to groups on the ground
- Need advice on completing application forms to get funding
- Need to set up quality, skills related training schemes

Social and Economic Issues

- Cliftonpark Avenue - became a buffer zone at the interface area
- Children suffered attacks using local park
- Lack of community involvement in planning
- High unemployment in the area
- System needs to be more flexible to allow unemployed people to do voluntary work
- Media bias
- People from outside given preference over local people for housing
- Houses in Protestant areas not big enough
- Need more bungalows for pensioners in area
- Boys who attended Boys Model have to be taxied to school

Public Services

- Lack of Street Cleaners
- Inaction of police
- More police on foot patrols would be greater deterrent
- Public Transport very poor
- Need more thought to be given to planning

Youth

- Short-term/ad hoc funding major problem
- Closest leisure centre is Ballysillan
- Increase in anti-social behaviour
- Drugs problem
- Low education attainment level
- No local crèche facility
- Big class sizes
- Community should work closely with schools to set up after school homework classes

TORR HEATH COMMUNITY CENTRE (Torrens Road)

- Parents shape youth - need parenting skills classes
- Access to further education needs to be improved and include life skills, personal development, confidence building
- Vocational/trade skills required
- Fear to step out of area

Interface Issues

- Orchestrated violence
- Fear of attacks/riots is wide spread
- Situation is getting worse
- No relationship with the police
- Police bias/discrimination against this community
- Community police are needed
- Torrens has no CCTV coverage
- Wall/fencing needs to be reinforced and lighting improved

Developing Leadership

- Need qualified, full time community leaders
- Need articulate people to act as spokesperson for community
- Need community forum in place
- Politicians let the community down
- Need more interaction with schools and communities
- Mentoring scheme recommended
- Bureaucracy hindering people
- Media and British government "de-humanise" Protestant community

Developing Communities

- Community organisations finding it hard to recruit new volunteers and young people
- North Belfast is moving against the general trend of more integration
- Need communication between two communities
- Need time without attacks to build trust
- Peace initiative needs to be youth led

Social and Economic Issues

- Housing major priority for the area
- Major problem getting houses vested by Housing Executive
- People have to live in hostels for up to 2 years
- Homeless can't get housing benefit until 18
- Should be compulsory Landlords Charter
- Vacant houses used as drinking dens
- High unemployment in area
- Lack of investment in area
- 15 thrift shops give an indication of poverty
- Young people don't want to join training courses
- Have to use Valley Leisure Centre or Ballysillan - would not use Grove Baths - all in Loyalist areas
- Need to clean up area

Public Services

- Problems on Limestone Road, inadequate street cleaning
- Police not effective
- Local people stand on street corners at night to protect the area
- Public Transport is very poor. No bus services go directly up the Limestone Road or to Royal Victoria Hospital

Youth

- Water Works sports development is good
- No facilities for young people
- Youth club restricted opening hours due to lack of staff
- No full-time worker in place
- Park lacks facilities, swings removed
- Need consultation at grassroots level

PARKSIDE COMMUNITY HOUSE (Clanchatten Street)

- Lack of motivation and self-esteem
- Low education attainment
- Need alternatives to academic qualifications for example IT, vocational training
- Training needs to take place within community
- Lack of sleep due to all-night attacks/riots
- Prescribed drugs - huge problem amongst youth
- No trust/faith in police/bias against community
- Police and army harassment/taunting a huge problem
- An increasing problem - joyriders
- Glue sniffing major problem
- Limited crèche facilities
- IT classes are particularly important
- Need to host activities in a neutral venue
- Street lighting needs improved

Interface Issues

- Under constant/regular attack
- Better security on housing needed
- Feeling of isolation/entrapment
- Good homes going to waste in area
- Derelict old factory is a problem
- Paramilitaries are relied upon to protect area
- No medical centre within own community

Developing Leadership

- Community leader responsibility/accountability can lead to own community harassing you
- Fear of misrepresenting the community
- Offering the hands of friendship/talking and listening with residents
- Need a youth forum/committee
- Religious leaders removed from issues at local level

Developing Communities

- Small shrinking community
- Older population
- Lack of information in the community
- No local spokesperson
- Need paid community workers - versed in what entitled to/to represent community
- Unionist people don't have the individuals to put forward for groups
- Only select few prepared to get involved in community

Social and Economic Issues

- No family health centre facilities in community
- Need to offer young teenagers parenting skills classes
- Anyone who was upwardly mobile left the area
- Employment based at Mallusk - no direct bus service
- Yorkgate shopping centre - difficult to access
- Lack facilities for young people
- Problem getting leadership in the community

Public Services

- Drugs, drink and suicide are big problems
- Quad facility would be welcome development
- Lack of faith in police
- Media - do not truly represent what is going on
- Housing on interface areas is totally run down
- Housing Executive plan to get rid of Protestant community in the area
- Lack of consultation with community

Youth

- People need to be developed within the area
- Lack of community workers
- Children from area are being bussed to other schools
- Ardoyne looking at ways to put each house in the area on the internet or community television station - good idea
- New computer suite in Mountcollyer Complex, not enough funding to run it

MOUNTCOLLYER COMPLEX (Limestone Road)

Interface Issues

- No empty houses in Nationalist/Republican areas of North Belfast
- A lot of empty houses within the Loyalist/Unionists areas of North Belfast - people leaving the area
- Problems are getting worse
- Not everyone in the area can read
- Lack of communication
- Police ineffective
- Riots are organised via the internet

Developing Communities

- Identity and village atmosphere lost
- Last 6-8 years seen more definition of community territories
- Internal intimidation from members of own community on increase
- Area comes under Belfast, Newtownabbey - need co-ordinated approach
- Community workers, working in isolation
- On electoral basis, classed with Castle area which skews measurement of need
- People don't know who is responsible for their community
- Need to develop people to develop community

Social and Economic Issues

- Lack of facilities for younger and older people
- Need multi-purpose building in each area
- Need volunteers to work with children
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Mental health of young people is a concern
- Private landlords - need to be regulated
- Jobsclub - was good - funding ran out
- Companies should be made to employ a certain percentage of staff from local area

Public Services

- People try to address police treatment through proper channels but hit brick wall
- Kids go out of area to get educated
- Fewer buses now travel the length of the Whitewell
- Need increase in transport services
- Very poor, street cleansing service
- Dog fouling a big problem

Youth

- Need for football pitches
- Recreational Park - has deteriorated now dangerous for children to play in
- Youth consultation/participation needed
- Increasing problem of prescribed drugs
- Parents need trained and informed about drugs

HAZELWOOD INTEGRATED COLLEGE (Whitewell Road)

- Youth experience isolation
- Integrated education not the solution
- Children control the communities
- No leadership in place for young people to look up to

Interface Issues

- Peace Wall construction on Serpentine Road a problem in itself - created the interface
- Housing Executive spending money on refurbishing properties but not making new houses available
- A strong feeling that CCTV should be put in place
- Street Lighting not sufficient
- Traffic Calming measures needed
- No Day Care centre or Family centre
- Media focus on the bad news
- Need for an active, properly resourced police force
- Cross-community activity not possible until internal community issues are resolved

Developing Communities

- Difficulty in getting Rathcoole accepted as part of North Belfast
- Community need to make itself as attractive as possible to inward investment
- Attempt to become more independent and self sufficient

Social and Economic Issues

- Feeling that Catholic community is getting a better deal
- Want to encourage a community mix
- Some houses are poorly equipped; some areas better serviced than others
- Contractors not reliable
- Local people have skills, but access to employment outside area is difficult
- Employers should give youth the opportunity to earn before taking on another trainee
- Need to make jobs more permanent

Public Services

- Very poor bus service
- Problems in accessing areas, other than Mallusk, from Rathcoole

Youth

- Recreational facilities could be improved
- Skate board parks an option
- Youth groups only cater for children up to 12 years of age
- Communication gap between generations and between local industry and youth
- No incentive to keep 16/17 year olds in area
- Have no work experience when they do apply for jobs

Interface Issues

- Abbey Centre forms a physical barrier in community
- Needs to be a change in attitude, a respect for traditions
- Women tend to be main influence in community

Developing Leadership

- Church leadership diminished
- Political leadership, instability at Stormont results in instability on the street
- Inability to look forward, pessimistic attitude
- Community do not feel comfortable in approaching politicians
- Youth need to join organisation with moral attitudes

WILLOWGROVE CENTRE (Crumlin Road)

Developing Communities

- Community feels isolated
- Approximately 50-60% people in the area originally came from the Shankill
- Government doesn't recognise areas of need that exist off main Crumlin Road
- 2 years funding not adequate - need minimum 5 years to have an impact

Social and Economic Issues

- 3 out of every 10 families would move out of the area if they had a choice
- High percentage of community dependent on benefits
- Media bias
- No community spokesperson
- Holy Cross issue has hardened attitudes
- Needs in both communities same - but communities remain territorial
- Fringe areas between communities used to be mixed - not any more
- Need employment in area
- No bank in the area
- Car thieves steal cars on nightly basis
- Courts not giving adequate punishment for the crime
- Drug abuse major problem
- Need parent education programmes
- No intervention from statutory agencies in relation to drugs
- Lot of teenagers in debt
- Underage drinking big problem
- Lack of parental control

Public Services

- Facilities for youth need to be developed in consultation with young people
- Inadequate provision for teenagers who become pregnant to pursue further education
- Insufficient crèche facilities
- No family centre in area
- No provision for recycling; poor level street cleansing
- Policing ineffective
- No domestic violence officer for the area
- Police response time very long

Youth

- Good youth facilities in area
- Facility needed for older age group - 16+
- Problem with short term, ad hoc funding
- Inconsistency in the funding system
- Lack of encouragement/motivation at the local school level
- Students need mentoring and leadership
- Youth feel disillusioned
- Vocational training at local level insufficient
- Apprenticeships with companies too short

Interface Issues

- Ballysillan surrounded by interfaces
- Politicians have caused the majority of the issues
- A feeling that the Protestant community is being “squeezed”
- No trust in Housing Executive
- Two communities are feeling increasingly isolated
- Current tense climate has affected cross community work
- Vast majority of the local community would work together but small minority causing the problems

Developing Leadership

- Youth Forum has worked in past
- Exchanges to Toronto/Vancouver allow young people experience another culture/way of life but difficult to recruit Protestants for such initiatives
- Local religious leaders appear to be doing a good job

SPECTRUM CENTRE (Shankill Road)

Developing Communities

- Shankill Road split into two parliamentary constituencies - West and North Belfast
- Shrinking community
- Community fractured/breakdown of community structure
- Apathy among local people
- Difficult for communities to progress without paid workers
- Statutory bodies have fixed agendas
- Open spaces in Lower Shankill following demolition of many buildings
- Need extensive audit in the area across all services
- Need environmental and economic regeneration
- Need to develop cultural identity of area
- Need to give more ownership to local community
- No one group - statutory/voluntary has all the answers for the Shankill
- Need to stop criticising each other in public
- All community groups and statutory agencies working in the area (health, culture, learning, employment, regeneration) need a FORUM
- Area strategy, agreed by local community, should be the benchmark for any future development in the area
- Need to work across political and sector boundaries
- Encourage people to get involved in existing groups
- Everyone needs to start caring for their neighbours

Social and Economic Issues

- Lack of appropriate accommodation for disabled people
- Bungalows are being built in the area but demand exceeds supply
- Waiting lists for Fold accommodation
- Need for family housing
- Fold accommodation needs to be mixed with family housing
- Housing must be built in consultation with local people and match their needs
- Disillusioned with government
- Very little employment
- People moving out of area
- Feeling that Protestant people accept inferior quality in design and material for their houses
- Councillors need to work with the people more and pull together
- Loyalist Commission - seen as positive step forward
- Media bias

- People who work in Everton Complex have problems getting to work when there is trouble
- Drugs are big problem in the area
- Feeling that because you come from the Shankill you are automatically discriminated against
- Protestant people lack the confidence to challenge discrimination
- Low educational achievement levels

Public Services

- Need to be able to attract teachers graduating from teacher training college
- Training programmes seen as cheap form of labour
- Lot of groups will not be able to apply for PEACE II funding
- Cleansing issues - illegal dumping on waste ground prevalent. Lot of litter and dog dirt
- Schools should be used as a venue for sharing information in the evenings and at weekends
- Social services not working with the Housing Executive
- Need for bursaries backed up by business to encourage young people from lower economic background to go on to further education

Youth

- Parental responsibility is key in terms of managing young people
- Drugs are easier to obtain than alcohol
- Feeling that there was no point on achieving results as there are no jobs available
- Lack of recreational facilities for all age groups
- Access to facilities is dangerous
- Major criticism of application forms for funding
- Strong criticism of Government, departments and local council
- Need for equality of housing
- Criticism of private landlords and the lack of legislation governing tenants
- Need to listen to young people
- High rate of crime in order to feed drug habits
- A strong feeling that the area is being deliberately run down
- Need for education on both sides
- Leaders within the community need to be media trained
- Levels of confidence dropping sharply

Interface Issues

- Shankill has a number of interfaces to deal with
- Many riots are instigated by young people

SPECTRUM CENTRE (Shankill Road)

- Attacks will continue to happen while it suits someone's agenda
- No interaction between government and community
- Community not free to express their cultures/identity
- Constant fear of attack
- Senior citizens at great risk
- Access to and from area restricted
- Lack of trust/faith in police
- Lack of police resources and inaction of service highlighted
- With interfaces comes fear, bigotry, hatred and sectarianism
- People need support and resources to help regenerate their areas
- High fencing is not the answer
- Planners put family housing on interfaces

Developing Leadership

- Lack of good leadership in Greater Shankill
- Lack of visible positive role models
- Politicians only interested in their own agendas
- Need to invest in future leaders

Tolerance

- There is a need to be able to express cultural opinion, without causing offence
- The short-term approach is not acceptable and demoralising
- Joined-up government needs to set an example
- Young people need to have their say and to be nurtured
- Young people who study should be guaranteed jobs
- The area is 'depressing'
- There is a waiting list of 400 persons wanting to move back into the community
- Many residents would like to move out if there is no improvements
- All communities need to work together on common issues

APPENDIX B - LIST OF CONSULTATIONS

LIST OF CONSULTATIONS

MINISTERS

David Trimble, First Minister
Mark Durkan, Deputy First Minister
Nigel Dodds, Minister for Social Development
Jane Kennedy, Northern Ireland Office Minister
Martin McGuinness, Minister of Education

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Alban Maginness
Billy Hutchinson
Fred Cobain
Gerry Kelly

ORGANISATIONS & BODIES

Advisory Forum (North Belfast Community Action Project)
Ardoyne Group at Ardoyne Community Centre
Ashton Centre
Assembly Committee of the Centre
Belfast Education & Library Board
Belfast Interface Project
Belfast Regeneration Office
Business in the Community
Civic Forum
Community Development Centre North Belfast
Community Relations Council
Cooperation Ireland
Corporation for Enterprise Development (Washington DC)
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Department of the Environment
Department of Finance and Personnel
Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
Department for Regional Development
Department for Social Development

LIST OF CONSULTATIONS

Edward de Bono Foundation
Flax Trust
Glenbryn Community at Concorde Community Centre
Health Action Zone
Institute for Conflict Research
Intercomm
International Fund for Ireland
Invest Northern Ireland
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Northern Ireland Teachers Council
John Carlisle Partnerships
Ligoniel Improvement Centre
LINC Resource Centre
Lower North Belfast Community Council
Loyalist Commission
Mater Hospital
Newington & Parkside Residents Association at Parkside
NI Sports Council
North & West Belfast Health & Social Services Trust
North Belfast Partnership Board
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Northern Ireland Office
Northern Ireland Policing Board (Development Officer)
Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Pacific Institute
Police Service of Northern Ireland (Antrim Road Division)
Princes Trust
Wishing Well Family Centre

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Ardoyne Youth Centre
Ashton Centre
Concorde Community Centre
Elim Christian Centre
Hazelwood Integrated College
Loughside Recreation Centre

LIST OF CONSULTATIONS

Manor Street Community Centre
Mountcollyer Complex
Parkside Community House
Rush Park Centre
Seaview Presbyterian Church
Spectrum Centre
Torr Heath Community Centre
Whitecity Community Centre
Willowgrove Centre
Wolfhill Centre

SCHOOLS CONSULTATIONS

Belfast Boys' Model School
Castle High School
Glengormley High School
Little Flower Girls' School
Newtownabbey Community High School
St Gabriel's College
St Gemma's High School
St Patrick's College, Bearnageeha

CHURCHES CONSULTATIONS

- a. Meetings with North Belfast Churches:
 - Baptist Church
 - Church of Ireland
 - Church of the Nazarene
 - Elim Christian Centre
 - Methodist Church
 - Presbyterian Church
 - Roman Catholic Church
- b. Meetings with Church related bodies:
 - Transformed Conflicted Communities Project
 - First Step Drop-in Centre
 - Frontier Youth Trust, Ireland
 - 174 Trust
 - Churches Community Work Alliance and Belfast Churches
 - Belfast Churches Urban Development Committee

**APPENDIX C - EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH E-TECHNOLOGY**

EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH E-TECHNOLOGY

FLAX TRUST - INITIATIVE 2002

(An example of e-technology's potential for community and small business development)

North Belfast suffers from pervasive social distress and disadvantage, which has led to its isolation and exclusion from mainstream life in Northern Ireland. Like many low-income and underserved communities, residents in North Belfast watch media content on television, radio and the Internet that does not reflect their world. In a survey of U.S. Internet-based community media initiatives in 2000, the Children's Partnership found that with respect to low-income communities, content usually fails to address a community's sense of isolation because it lacks local information, excludes those who cannot read, or does not portray the local culture.¹

The Flax Trust's "**Initiative 2002**" seeks to address these problems by:

- a. developing local leaders for positive social action through the Irish School for Social Entrepreneurs, part of the School for Social Entrepreneurs network throughout the UK;
- b. facilitating outreach and the development of relationships between the University of Ulster, area schools, and future students; and
- c. training residents of all ages to teach one another greater technology skill levels from passive multimedia consumption to interactive multimedia content production.

These elements of the Initiative will engender local residents with all the necessary skills to take full advantage of the interactive multimedia technology infrastructure being put into place by Flax Trust and its partners.

Within each community of North Belfast, **Initiative 2002** will offer not only the tools for multimedia communication, but also the skills to prepare content. The shift from multimedia consumers to multimedia producers offers North Belfast communities the opportunity to:

- a. improve quality of information sent out about their community and thus address a sense of isolation;
- b. provide youth and adults with an outlet for interactive artistic expression as well as an informed and critical eye when consuming media information;
- c. give a voice to positive mainstream neighbourhood values;
- d. allow schools to communicate with parents and students quickly and directly; and
- e. create targeted marketing media for local businesses.

Initiative 2002 therefore aims to provide a non-confrontational medium for individuals to learn about their neighbours in other communities. Residents will have access to television channels and radio stations and presumably will watch the content of the other community in the privacy of their own homes. Also, as community residents develop their television and radio content, they will observe each other's progress and will work together to solve similar technical production problems. Such television and radio content will be governed by a cross-community body to create and enforce standards.

Initiative 2002 will also facilitate the development of small businesses in North Belfast and aim to help mitigate all of the primary barriers to using e-commerce and compete in a global market.

¹Lazarus and Mora, *Online Content for Low-Income and Underserved Americans*, Children's Partnership: Washington, D.C., 1999.

EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH E-TECHNOLOGY

For businesses that already own computers the Initiative offers two primary advantages. It will provide universal access to broadband within its service area. Unlike dial-up modem systems, broadband connections are always on at no extra cost and can handle high volumes of digital information at one time. Examples of opportunities opened for small businesses by broadband capability include:

- a. lucrative global business-to-business supplier markets;
- b. telecommuting, video-conferencing, and distance learning applications;
- c. an online shop-front that is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year; and
- d. online banking, accounting and other professional services over the Internet.

Secondly, the Initiative will provide a range of relatively low-cost services to small businesses that equate to hiring a corporate Information Technology department by the month. This includes:

- a. full service web-hosting with one-click pay for online shopfronts;
- b. monthly software rental allowing small firms to avoid the expenses of purchasing full licences and contending with regular software updates and security patches; and
- c. access to a high-quality, low-volume (from 2 to 2,000) colour printing press for printed marketing materials at a business resource centre within the service area.

This business resource centre will also be important for small businesses without their own computers. In addition to low-volume printing capabilities, the resource centre will offer pay-by-the-minute access to computers with broadband Internet access and an array of business software applications from basic office applications to video and sound editing for television and radio commercials. The resource centre will be open to individuals, community groups and others on a 'walk-in' basis.

Initiative 2002 is in its pilot stage therefore all costs should be taken as estimates.

In relation to costs, the costs of rolling-out the technology infrastructure will equate to about £60/address. The costs of opening and operating community technology and Small to Medium Enterprise resource centres are estimated at between £16,000 and £30,000 (depending on the desired capacity of the centre) initially and between £20,000 and £40,000 each year thereafter. In addition the cost of developing the basic technology curriculum is approximately £300,000. Brookfield Business School (a partner of the Flax Trust and a Recognised Training Organisation approved by the Department for Learning and Employment to deliver accredited training in basic business Information Technology, trades and health care) has started to do the work speculatively. Once the basic technology curriculum is finished, rolling it out into peer learning schemes for each community is being estimated at approximately £50,000 for each community. The cost of operating the Irish School for Social Entrepreneurs which under the auspices of Brookfield Business School aims to cultivate and groom indigenous leadership in distressed communities, is estimated at £130,000. The initial curriculum and pilot were funded by the Millennium Fund. A source for ongoing operation of the School has not been identified.

Finally the Brookfield Mill site will act as the primary hub of activity for **Initiative 2002**. The cost of redeveloping the Brookfield Mill site will be around £7 million. The Flax Trust will underwrite a portion of this and government grants will be sought to cover the remainder.

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