

ARDS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Good Relations Unit

GOOD RELATIONS STRATEGY 2009 - 2011



Mission Statement

Ards Borough Council will take a leading role in:

- *working for a peaceful, inclusive, stable and fair society where there is a recognition of our dependence upon one another, which is founded on partnership, equality and mutual respect based on good relations between and within communities*
- *working in partnership with key stakeholders to build strong and socially cohesive communities in which diversity is accepted, respected and celebrated*
- *working to create a positive image of Good Relations within the Ards Borough in a cost effective and efficient manner*

1. Good Relations and Ards Borough Council

The Ards Borough Council's Good Relations Unit provides a wide range of both proactive and reactive activities, targeting sections of the resident population of the Ards Borough, Elected Members and Council staff. The programme of activity focuses on Good Relations issues, with the Good Relations Officer being placed in the Chief Executive's Department.

1.1 Statutory Background

From 1987, a twin-track approach to resolving Northern Ireland's constitutional impasse was developed. At a political level, the focus was on attaining a constitutional settlement, which accommodated both Unionists and Nationalists.

Complementing this, organisations with a dedicated Community Relations remit were established and through them, resources were targeted at a local community level.

In the late 1980s, Government policy on Community Relations in Northern Ireland had three main aims:

- to increase the extent of contact between Catholics and Protestants
- to encourage a greater mutual understanding of, and respect for, their different cultures and traditions

- to ensure that everyone might enjoy equality of opportunity and equity of treatment

In line with these aims, a number of measures were introduced, including the District Councils Community Relations Programme. The Council has participated fully in this programme since its inception, and has employed a Community Relations Officer since 1991.

The primary role of the Community Relations Officer is to present an annual operational plan to the Council for agreement, as well as to manage the objectives and to record the outcomes of the plan. 75% of the total cost of the Community Relations Programme is Grant Aided from the Community Relations Unit, located within the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister. The remaining 25% of the cost of the Good Relations Programme is met from the Council resources.

Since 1991, there has been a great variety of projects, activities and events taking place, all striving towards improving community relations within the Ards Borough.

The period 1994-2004 has seen a concerted effort on the part of successive UK governments to address the seemingly intractable problems of community relations in Northern Ireland. The approach has again been twofold with attempts to find a constitutional resolution to the conflict complemented by the development of a community based community relations infrastructure.

The Community Relations Unit has been working in close co-operation with significant stakeholders within the community across the length and breadth of the Ards Borough:

- Local statutory bodies - Northern Ireland Housing Executive; Police Service of Northern Ireland; South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; South Eastern Regional College
- Local community groups in Ballygowan, Ballywalter, Ballyhalbert, Carrowdore, Comber, Cloughey, Donaghadee, Killinchy, Kircubbin, Lisbane, Newtownards, Millisle, Portavogie and Portaferry
- Umbrella organisations such as Ards Intercultural Forum, The Ards Development Bureau, East Down Rural Community Network and the Newtownards Community Forum
- Faith groups such as the Ards Churches Forum, the Newtownards Inter-Church Group, Comber Churches Action Forum
- Minority ethnic support groups such as the Bangladeshi Welfare Association

1.2 Recent Developments

Since 2001, there have been significant social changes due to the increased numbers of people from minority ethnic backgrounds and of migrant workers. There has also been proposed new legislation, such as introduction of the District Councils Good Relations Challenge Programme, and the implementation of **A Shared Future**,

the Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland, published in March 2005.

In the light of these, the Council has agreed significant changes in terminology and role for the Community Relations Unit, and these were implemented during the period 2005-2006. The Community Relations Unit has evolved into a Good Relations Unit and the Community Relations Officer's title and role has been changed to Good Relations Officer.

These changes are more than merely cosmetic or semantic, and are developing the Council's Good Relations Unit to encompass the broader values and ethos of a Good Relations Programme. This is consistent with the Council's duties to promote equality of opportunity and Good Relations under Section 75 of the 1998 Northern Ireland Act.

The year 2004 – 2005 saw a new strategic approach towards Good Relations work within the Ards Borough, with the development of a new Mission Statement for the Good Relations Unit:

Ards Borough Council will take a leading role in:

- ***working for a peaceful, inclusive, stable and fair society where there is a recognition of our dependence upon one another, which is founded on partnership, equality and mutual respect based on good relations between and within communities***

- ***working in partnership with key stakeholders to build strong and socially cohesive communities in which diversity is accepted, respected and celebrated***
- ***working to create a positive image of Good Relations within the Borough of Ards in a cost effective and efficient manner***

Another significant development within 2004 – 2005 was the Council's survey and research activity, in partnership with the Link Family and Community Centre. The output from this work has provided the basis for the Good Relations Plan for 2005 – 2006.

More than that, the 2006 – 2007 Good Relations Plan has also been specifically geared to fit corporately within the new Ards Borough Council strategic Corporate Plan, and to fulfil its Objectives, which aim to make the Borough of Ards a better place to live, work and relax. The Good Relations elements are in bold italics:

Ards Borough Council provides dynamic leadership to improve the quality of life and well being of its residents and to promote the best interests of the Borough

Corporate Theme 1: Improving the quality of life for the residents of the Borough

- To develop the social, economic, recreational and cultural infrastructure of the Borough

- To provide quality, value for money services
- To create and promote a healthy, safe and sustainable environment for the people within the Borough:
 - To provide value for money customer focused services and facilities meeting the economic, social, recreational, environmental and cultural needs of the Borough
 - To work in partnership to promote opportunities for residents to participate in and influence the development of infrastructure of the Borough:
 - ***By maintaining and developing existing relationships with local communities and groups and to create new dialogue and relationships with and between other local communities and groups where those relationships do not yet exist.***

Corporate Theme 2: Developing ALL our communities

- To encourage and engage ALL of our communities in order to generate a culture of self help
- To promote civic pride in the achievements of the Borough
 - To ensure the Council promotes and delivers equality of opportunity and good relations
 - To encourage, enable and support our communities in their development by the provision of training, education, information, resources and advice

- ***By developing a Strategy to promote and to advise about the work of the Good Relations Unit with a view to developing the concept of Good Relations in the Borough of Ards***
- ***By participating actively in the Ards Churches Forum and the Comber Churches Action Forum and any other identifiable religious forum, with a view to furthering Good Relations issues within the religious community***
- ***By being an active participant in the Council's Inter-Departmental Equality Committee, contributing fully towards the on-going development, mainstreaming and delivery of the Council's Equality Scheme***

Corporate Theme 3: Planning and delivering [economic] prosperity in partnership

- ***By seeking out partnerships with stakeholders with whom to organise and/or fund projects that foster respect for different cultural traditions and community backgrounds in the Borough of Ards***
- ***By providing Grant Aid facilities to enable local communities and groups to engage in programmes and projects that further Good Relations in the Borough of Ards***

Corporate Theme 4: Forward planning and development

- To be the first stop shop for public service enquiries within the Borough of Ards

- To be the primary voice for the people of the Borough to obtain a fair deal from regional and central government, external agencies and other organisations
 - To engage in targeted intervention in partnership with relevant agencies in the interests of the Borough
 - ***And by regular use of the information contained within the Good Relations Audit, as well as the other research literature produced by The Link, so that the Good Relations Strategy and Plan are managed for maximum positive effect within the Borough.***

Corporate Theme 5: Providing the resources to do the job

- To be an innovative, dynamic and responsive organisation, developing the full potential of its human and physical resources for the benefits of the Borough

- To promote and reinforce the Council's positive image with residents of and visitors to the Borough
 - To ensure optimal use of all available internal resources

- To identify and secure, where possible, external resources which add value to development and delivery of services
- To be open and transparent in everything we do
 - ***By providing Training and Resources that will further the aims of the Good Relations Unit within the Council itself as well as in the voluntary and community sectors***

There are two significant developments within Local Government that were scheduled to take place between 2006 and 2009:

- The changing of the District Councils Community Relations Programme to the District Councils Good Relations Challenge Programme.
- The implementation of the Review of Public Administration

With these significant developments due within quick succession, the Council believed it was important that the focus on Good Relations was not lost within these changes. In light of this, the Council drew up a Good Relations Strategy to provide an anchor and direction in the area of Good Relations between the years 2006 – 2009.

The Strategy was based on the findings of four pieces of research:

- The Council's Borough-wide Good Relations Audit (2004), facilitated by Vision Management Services

- The Link Community and Family Centre's Newtownards Community Relations Audit (2004), facilitated by Macaulay Associates
- The Link Community and Family Centre's Research into the Perceptions of the Catholic Community in Newtownards (2004), facilitated by Will Glendenning Consulting
- Focus Group based qualitative research (2005) by Vision Management Services in Ballygowan, Comber, Kircubbin and Portaferry

The Good Relations Strategy will be in keeping with the principles enshrined within Section 75 of the 1998 Act, namely "Equity, Respect for Diversity and Interdependence", which are defined in the **A Shared Future** document, and which are fundamental to Good Relations outcomes.

From these principles work will be derived that involves bringing together groups and individuals from varying religious, racial and political communities, to engage with each other at a level which openly challenges perceptions, develops understanding, and encourages meaningful dialogue and sustainable relationships.

The recommendations of all these documents were incorporated into the objectives and actions of the 2006 – 2009 Good Relations Strategy.

Neither the Review of Public Administration nor the introduction of the District Councils Good Relations Challenge Programme have been

implemented as of 1st April 2009, and with the Good Relations Strategy coming to an end at that date, it became necessary to extend the current strategy to match the life of the current Council.

1.3. Further Developments

During the term of the previous Good Relations strategy, a number of further developments took place that have an impact on any extension of the Council's Good Relations Strategy.

1.3.1 Programme for Government

With the re-institution of the Northern Ireland Assembly as of 8th May 2007, the introduction of a Programme for Government brought about another significant driver for the promotion of Good Relations in one of the 23 Public Service Agreements (PSA).

PSA 7 deals with the area of “Making People’s Lives Better” with section 5, “Promoting equality and people’s rights”, having the following actions relevant to the promotion of Good Relations:

- Implement the Racial Equality Strategy
- Implement a programme of Cohesion and Integration for a shared and better future for all
- Deliver new effective structures of public service which measurably more responsive to the needs of people and communities

The Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy has not yet been made available to the public. However, the Strategy is expected to build on the values and successes of the **Racial Equality Strategy** and **A Shared Future**. The CSI Strategy will create one cohesive document to be used as a guide for combating racism, sectarianism and all forms of discrimination. The strategy will alter the current Good Relations context and provide an improved approach to creating a cohesive and integrated Northern Ireland.

1.3.2 Ards Borough Council Corporate Plan

To assist in the preparation for the impact of the Review of Public Administration and the proposed merger with North Down Borough Council, the Council has reviewed and amended its Corporate Plan to prepare for that.

Corporate Theme 6 – Preparing For 2011

- To prepare fully for the merger of Ards and North Down Borough Councils, ensuring the needs and priorities of the people of Ards are to the fore during the change process.
- To ensure Ards meets the targets set by the Statutory Transition Committee.
- To continue to provide high quality services to the residents of the Ards leading up to the merger with North Down Borough Council and to ensure an orderly transition.
 - ***Liaison and workplans established with North Down Community Support/Development teams and wider partnership base***

- ***Investigate all possible options regarding a co-ordinated approach to bonfires with North Down Borough Council***
- To build the capacity of Councillors and our employees to help them meet the challenges of the merger.

The Good Relations Strategy will take this into consideration, particularly with regards Hard Issues such as Bonfires and Re-imagining, and will explore all possible ways of developing a consistent approach between the two Councils as the merger takes place in May 2011.

2. Good Relations Audit 2009

A tender was drawn up and fifteen consultant groups applied. The successful tenderer was Holywell Consultancy Ltd from Londonderry.

A number of methods were used in the compilation of this evaluation report. A range of techniques were used in carrying out the Audit of Good Relations within Ards Borough Council. These were:

2.1 Methodology

- **Good Relations Survey**

A survey was developed to capture the Good Relations situation within the Ards Borough Council area. To allow for comparison with

previous audit exercises a previous good relations audit survey was used as a template for the survey.

The survey was distributed to 2, 800 randomly selected homes throughout the Ards Borough Council area with prepaid envelopes for the return of the surveys. Of the 2,800 surveys that were distributed 151 were returned to the Council as undeliverable. 336 completed questionnaires were returned by post. This represents a return rate of 12.68%. This return rate is somewhat above the average return rate for a postal survey,¹ particularly for such a detailed form.

A link was also provided from both the Ards Borough Council and Holywell Consultancy websites to allow interested citizens to complete an online version of the survey. This was not taken up.

- **Focus Group Meetings**

A series of 8 Focus Group meetings were held throughout the Ards Borough. Over 300 direct invitations were sent to organisations throughout the Ards Borough Council area to attend these sessions. Each session was held in the evening, in local community venues to encourage local people to attend.

- **Desk Research**

A number of regional and local policies and strategies were reviewed for their relevance to the Good Relations work of Ards Borough

¹ Direct Mail Information Service (UK) – Average response rates in 2005 11.6% and 8.6% in 2006

Council. A brief summary of the main points of each document is included in Section 3 Good Relations Context. A full list of the documents reviewed is also included in Appendix 4.

2.2 Key Findings

The following are key findings arising from the Good Relations audit process. These are the main issues that have come to the fore both through the Focus Groups and survey. These are not listed in any order of importance or priority.

- **Migrant Workers**

The issue of migrant workers, and how they are accepted within the local community, remains a matter of importance within the Borough. It was pointed out that we are not yet accustomed to living in a multi-cultural society and as a result migrant workers have not yet become fully integrated or accepted into the local community. It was agreed however, that migrant workers play a key role in the local community and that more seasonal workers seem to have made way for those who are more settled within the local community. There have, however, been racist attacks on migrant workers within the Ards Borough Council area in recent times.

- **Community Divisions**

There is recognition that the population of the Borough is predominantly Protestant (90%). This presents a number of challenges for the Council. There is a perception that the 'green'

areas of the Council receive more than their fair share of the Council resources and attention. During the consultation process there was a sense within the Protestant community that things are OK and that there are no real issues arising from the community divide. This perception seems to deny the reality that there are still issues of sectarianism within the Council area that need to be addressed. This was reflected through the survey in the identification of issues that impact on good relations within the Borough and how people relate to each other dependent on perceived community background, as detailed in the charts below:

- **Bonfires**

Significant efforts have been made by the Council to make 11th Night bonfires safer, more environmentally friendly and to address issues of sectarian activity e.g. burning of Irish Tricolour. This programme has been well received by the majority of the local community and a number of bonfire alternatives have been piloted.

There is a strong sense that bonfires are an important part of local cultural traditions and that this will be protected within the local community. A number of community organisations have made efforts to build on the opportunities presented by the bonfire celebrations to hold wider community fun days and cultural events.

- **Church Relations**

A key issue for a number of people was the lack of involvement of local churches in good relations activities. Many people outlined how

many local churches are insular in their approach working almost exclusively with members of their own congregation. There was a real sense that people would like to see the churches take a lead role in promoting good relations efforts locally. Concern was also expressed that not all local churches are involved in Church Fora that have been established.

- **Paramilitary Influence**

Anecdotal evidence of the influence that paramilitary organisations have on the local community was shared during the consultation process. The role of paramilitaries ranked as the top good relations issue within the Borough.

Paramilitary groups still hold a lot of control and power within local communities often 'policing' the local community and it was suggested that recruitment is still ongoing. However, it was also suggested that it is 'not as bad as it used to be'. Intra paramilitary tensions do have an impact on the local community, particularly within the most socially deprived housing estates of the Borough.

- **Perceptions of Good Relations Work**

The good relations work that takes place within the local community was perceived differently throughout the Borough. Some people suggested that good relations work makes little difference to the lives of local people whilst others suggested that it is of vital importance if a safe future is to be built. This was reflected in the different perceptions of the current good relations climate within the Borough.

- **History**

History was a common thread throughout the audit process. It was stressed by all involved that it is important to remember and celebrate history and to use our shared history to build relationships on not to divide the community.

Flags & Emblems

The flying of flags was highlighted as a concern for many people consulted. Among the concerns were that the flags were not taken down following agreed periods. It was also agreed that the flying of flags may make some areas unwelcoming to members of the minority Catholic/nationalist community.

2.3 Recommendations

Following the audit process, the following are the recommendations of Holywell Consultancy regarding future Good Relations work to be delivered by Ards Borough Council. Once again, these recommendations are not displayed in any order of priority or importance.

- **Good Relations Action Plan**

Ards Borough Council should continue to deliver its good relations activities along the same general lines as in the past 5 years. The issues to be addressed within the local area have not changed significantly and largely the same approach should be adopted.

Ideally, through the Council's Good Relations Grant Aid programme, additional resources should be provided to provide opportunities for local groups to engage in cross-community activities.

In addition, a focus on cross-community engagement should be stressed within any revised plan. Whilst the Catholic community may only make up 10% of the population of the Ards Borough Council area, additional efforts should be made to encourage and increase cross-community contact within the area.

- **Civic Leadership on Good Relations**

Council should continue to take a lead role on the promotion of good relations locally. This should be exemplified through the local elected representatives to should be supported and encouraged to promote good relations in all aspects of their role. Specific training on good relations issues should be provided to Councillors to enable this and to allow opportunities that will arise through the Review of Public Administration process to be maximised.

- **Churches**

Local churches play a significant and important role within the local community and should continue to be encouraged to engage in good relations activity. Whilst acknowledging sincerely held beliefs, particular attention should be given to involving the Catholic Church in inter-church activities, particularly in any Church Fora that are established or ongoing. Recognising the role that each church plays

in its local community and engaging at a community support level could encourage this development.

- **Community Support**

Support should continue to be provided to key community organisations that are positively engaging on good relations activities. Efforts should also be made to identify other groups that could have a positive impact in this area. Where possible, additional resources should be provided to key organisations to ensure that their work continues. Support should also be given to assist these organisations to receive support from other sources.

- **Migrant Workers**

Local migrant workers and minority communities should continue to be engaged with and supported. Ideally people from these communities should be supported to form their own organisations and societies so that they in turn can support each other. Funding should be allocated to make this happen.

- **Bonfire Programme**

The current Bonfire Programme being operated by the Council should be continued. Efforts should be made to attract additional resources to this programme and more communities should be encouraged to become involved. A target should be set for the increased uptake on bonfire alternatives and to encourage a move away from traditional bonfires and their associated issues. Local communities should also

be encouraged to make contributions towards the development and delivery of festival/fun days in their areas.

- **Education**

Work should continue with local schools and youth groups on good relations issues. Dealing with these issues at an early age can help to reduce community tensions in the future.

- **Review of Public Administration**

Relationships should be developed with the good relations staff of North Down Borough Council in advance of the merger of the Councils in 2011. This should include the delivery of joint programmes between the staff, elected and community representatives on key common good relations issues.

3. The Themes of a Good Relations Strategy

Taking into account all of the findings of this and previous research, there remain four themes that emerge which not only fulfil the aspirations of the Council's Corporate Plan, but which also provide the basis for the distillation of four principles which govern the development of any Good Relations Strategy:

- Good Relations Environment
- Community Capacity
- Cultural Expression

- Civic Leadership

As with every activity of the Council, every effort will be taken within the development and implementation of the Good Relations Strategy to demonstrate value for money and best practice.

3.1 Good Relations Environment

The Good Relations Strategy is geared to improve the environment in which Good Relations within the Ards Borough can take place.

Taking into account the recent social changes in ethnic minorities and migrant workers since 2001, the Good Relations Strategy includes emphasis on the importance of relationships between people of different racial backgrounds. However, the Good Relations Strategy also seeks to maintain a keen focus on the relationships within and between the two main communities of differing religious and political opinion.

The Good Relations Strategy should be founded upon the principles of partnership and co-operation, leading to the development of Good Relations work across a range of sectors in a “joined up” way. The development of working groups with community and agency representation would strengthen the community’s confidence in the Council’s commitment to Good Relations.

The Good Relations Strategy seeks to address apathy, denial and fear through programmes that address underlying good relations

issues such as prejudice and fear. The Strategy should seek to create a positive good relations environment in which all areas of the Ards Borough can develop and prosper.

3.2 Community Capacity

Through the Good Relations Strategy, the Council continues to develop ways in which it can work to help enhance relationships and enable dialogue between the Council and other statutory bodies; the Council and the community/voluntary sector; and the different groups within the community/voluntary sector.

The Good Relations Strategy will enable the Council to continue to address areas of weak community infrastructure in the medium to long term, particularly in the development of youth based initiatives, community based research, and a focus on that which is shared.

The Good Relations Strategy will enable the Good Relations Officer to focus on community capacity building, leading to a positive good relations impact. This will be enhanced by inter-departmental co-operation and the provision of other community development programmes by staff other than the Good Relations Officer.

3.3 Cultural Expression

The Good Relations Strategy should focus on the culture and history of local communities as a means of understanding that community,

as well as developing the confidence for those communities to engage with that which is different. A growth in confidence on the ground in local communities will greatly help in providing contexts for dealing with the more contentious “Hard Issues” of bonfires, murals and emblems, and parades.

The principles of “Equity, Diversity and Interdependence” within Section 75 will continue to guide the strategic development process with the Good Relations Strategy supporting and promoting the sharing of culture in a positive non threatening manner.

The Council will continue to seek to provide neutrality in terms of service provision to maximise the impact of the Good Relations programme.

3.4 Civic Leadership

The promotion of Good Relations will continue to be a core value of the Council with members being seen to endorse and support the strategy’s implementation. The Good Relations Strategy will therefore enable members to become more skilled in Good Relations approaches and will increasingly mainstream Good Relations at the centre of the Council’s policy framework. Commitment to proactive implementation must be evident to local communities through the Council’s commitment to inclusion.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of a Good Relations Strategy of this nature can only be achieved in partnership with the residents, ratepayers and key strategic stakeholders of the Ards Borough. The Council is therefore committed to the principles of partnership and co-operation, so that more local people can become engaged in Good Relations work.

Throughout this process of change and development that will find its ultimate expression in the **Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy**, the Council will continue to seek to give strong and accountable leadership as it seeks to improve the quality of life for all the residents of the Borough as it implements this Good Relations Strategy.

Ards Borough Council would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who have contributed their knowledge and expertise to producing this strategy. In particular, the Council would wish to thank all those who attended group consultations and meetings in regard to the development of the strategy. We value and appreciate the openness of all those who participated.

Thanks are also due to the many local people who have taken part in the postal survey and participated in public meetings. Your experiences and insights have broadened the Council's understanding and have greatly enriched this document.

Finally, the Council acknowledges the commitment shown by many organisations to delivering the Good Relations strategy and looks forward to continuing this collaboration for the benefit of the Ards Borough.

Theme 1: Good Relations Environment

To enable the continued development and promotion of Good Relations in all parts of the Ards Borough

Corporate Theme	Rationale Audit Issue/ ASF / RES theme	Good Relations Objective	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011
Corporate Theme 1 Improving the quality of life for the residents of the Borough	A Shared Future page 10, section 1.2.2, bullet point 6 PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	To ensure that all of the Council's good relations activities are delivered in a way that promotes good relations across the Borough	Delivery of 1 Good Relations Awareness Training Course to 25 staff Develop a programme of Good Relations Awareness Training to Cleansing and Leisure Teams	Complete Staff Training in Good Relations Third Good Relations residential course
Corporate Theme 1 Improving the quality of life for the residents of the Borough	A Shared Future page 10, section 1.2.2, bullet point 6 PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	To ensure that all of the Council's good relations activities are delivered in a way that promotes good relations across the Borough	Organise three sessions to raise awareness of racism and sectarianism issues with Council staff	Organise three sessions to raise awareness of racism and sectarianism issues with Council staff
Corporate Theme 1 Improving the quality of life for the residents of the Borough	A Shared Future page 10, section 1.2.2, bullet point 9 PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	To improve public awareness of the Council's Good Relations programme through relationships with stakeholder groups, communication with local contacts, and through media coverage	Provision of funding to seven groups which have been engaged in a variety of projects that promote cross community contact, involvement and co-operation in community and cultural contexts.	Provision of funding to seven groups which have been engaged in a variety of projects that promote cross community contact, involvement and co-operation in community and cultural contexts.

Theme 2: Civic Leadership

To develop positive citizenship through strong and accountable civic leadership and by enabling and supporting wider participation in civic society

Corporate Theme	Rationale Audit Issue/ ASF / RES theme	Good Relations Objective	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011
Corporate Theme 5 Providing the resources to do the job	A Shared Future page 10, section 1.2.2, bullet point 3 and 4 PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	Provide financial help, expertise and support to activities and projects that promote Good Relations and good citizenship in the community, focusing particularly on schools and youth group based work.	Provide funding for community midnight soccer programme Provide small project grant aid for community projects Provide funding for two community training projects Engage with Key Stage 2 children in Good Relations Schools Programme	Provide funding for community midnight soccer programme Provide small project grant aid for community projects Provide funding for two community training projects Engage with Key Stage 2 children in Good Relations Schools Programme
Corporate Theme 6 Preparing for 2011	PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	To ensure that all of the Council's good relations activities are delivered in a way that promotes good relations across the Borough	Liaison and workplans established with North Down Community Support/Development teams and wider partnership base Investigate all possible options regarding a co-ordinated approach to bonfires with North Down Borough Council	Liaison and workplans established with North Down Community Support/Development teams and wider partnership base Investigate all possible options regarding a co-ordinated approach to bonfires with North Down Borough Council

Theme 3: Community Capacity To support communities in working for the common good, addressing the issues behind prejudice and mistrust, regardless of religious, political or racial background				
Corporate Theme	Rationale Audit Issue/ ASF / RES theme	Good Relations Objective	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011
Corporate Theme 2 Developing all our communities	Racial Equality Strategy page 6, section 1.2, themes 1, 4,5,6 PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	To develop a programme of events, activities and projects that completely fulfil every aspect of the Six Shared Aims within the Racial Equality Strategy	Provision of funding for ESOL classes Provision of funding for Bangladeshi Women and Toddlers' Group Provision of funding for Polish Advice clinics in the Ards Borough Provision of funding for the management of Ards Intercultural Forum	Provision of funding for ESOL classes Provision of funding for Bangladeshi Women and Toddlers' Group Provision of funding for Polish Advice clinics in the Ards Borough Provision of funding for the management of Ards Intercultural Forum
Corporate Theme 2 Developing all our communities	A Shared Future page 19, section 2.1 PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	To define the problems within "Hard Issues" faced by people of different political backgrounds, and to work with the key stakeholders within local communities to develop structures and processes through which these issues could begin to be addressed	To work with local communities un at least 18 locations to minimise the negative impacts of bonfires: socially, environmentally, culturally and politically To work towards a decrease in triumphalism in cultural activities	To work with local communities un at least 18 locations to minimise the negative impacts of bonfires: socially, environmentally, culturally and politically To work towards a decrease in triumphalism in cultural activities

Theme 4: Cultural Expression

To promote respect for and celebration of the rich diversity of cultures in the Ards Borough, preserving it and developing it for the future

Corporate Theme	Rationale Audit Issue/ ASF / RES theme	Good Relations Objective	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011
Corporate Theme 2 Developing all our communities	ASF page 10, section 1.2.2, bullet point 9 PSA 7/5 Programme for Government	To identify and work with stake-holders within the community with whom to organise or fund projects that foster respect for different cultural traditions; promote awareness & acceptance of all local communities; help empower the marginalised	Build upon the new working relationship with local GAA clubs and provide financial support for Féile (including bringing Mayor to GAA club to make a speech) Provide funding for an Ulster-Scots event to take place in the perceived Nationalist area of the peninsula as part of the Council's Festival of the Peninsula	The Féile will not take place in the Ards Borough in 2010 and, but it would be essential to have some joint project in 2010/2011 Provide funding for an Ulster- Scots event to take place in the perceived Nationalist area of the peninsula as part of the Council's Festival of the Peninsula

Appendix B: Council Information

Ards Borough Council has twenty-three elected members spread across four electoral areas: Ards East; Ards Peninsula; Ards West; and Newtownards.

The political make-up of the current Council is as follows:

- The Democratic Unionist Party has 11 seats
- The Ulster Unionist Party has 6 seats
- The Alliance Party has 3 seats
- The Traditional Unionist Voice has 2 seats
- The Social Democratic and Labour Party has 1 seat

Ards East Councillors

Councillor Jonathan Bell (DUP); Councillor Colville Elliott (DUP); Councillor Ronnie Ferguson (UUP); Councillor Jeffrey Magill (UUP); Councillor Hamilton Gregory (DUP); Councillor Terry Williams (TUV)

Ards Peninsula Councillors

Councillor Joe Boyle (SDLP); Councillor Angus Carson (UUP); Councillor Robin Drysdale (DUP); Alderman Kieran McCarthy JP MLA (Alliance); Alderman Jim Shannon MLA (DUP)

Ards West Councillors

Alderman Margaret Craig (DUP); Councillor James Fletcher (UUP); Alderman Robert Gibson (DUP); Councillor Jim McBriar (Alliance); Councillor William Montgomery (DUP); Councillor Mervyn Oswald (DUP)

Newtownards Councillors

Alderman George Ennis (TUV); Councillor Simon Hamilton MLA (DUP); Councillor Tom Hamilton (UUP); Councillor Alan McDowell (Alliance); Councillor Michelle McIlveen MLA (DUP); Councillor David Smyth (UUP)

The Good Relations Officer for the Ards Borough Council area is Jim Murdock. He has the role of co-ordinating and implementing this Good Relations Strategy, and can be contacted at:

Ards Borough Council Offices

2 Church Street

Newtownards

BT23 4AP

Telephone: **028 91824076**

E-mail: jim.murdock@ards-council.gov.uk

Website: www.ards-council.gov.uk

Six Shared Aims within A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland (2005 – 2010)

Elimination of racial inequality

To eliminate racism, racial inequality and unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of life, including public life, for people of different ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland

Equal protection

To combat racism and provide effective protection and redress against racism and racist crime

Equality of service provision

To ensure equality of opportunity for minority ethnic people in accessing and benefiting from all public services

Participation

To increase participation and a sense of “belonging” of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in public, political, economic, social and cultural life

Dialogue

To promote dialogue between, and mutual understanding of, different faiths and cultural backgrounds, both long standing within Northern Ireland and recent arrivals to these shores, guided by overarching human rights norms

Capacity Building

To build capacity within minority ethnic communities to develop a vibrant and sustainable minority ethnic sector at both local and regional level and to help minority ethnic people to fulfil the Government’s aim of a shared future for Northern Ireland