

Creating Cohesive Community



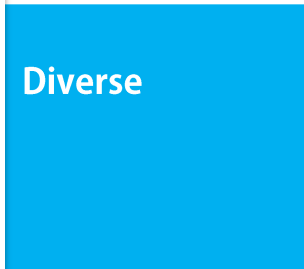
Safety For All In Our Changing Community



South Belfast



Cohesion



Diverse



A strategy for Community Cohesion in Lower Ormeau and Botanic



European Union
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Investing in your future



Shaftesbury
Community Recreation Centre
Balfour Avenue : Belfast



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT

In December 2011, LORAG, in partnership with South Belfast Roundtable were successful with a strategic grant application to Belfast City Council's Peace III Programme to deliver a programme of activities and events which would help to improve levels of cohesion in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast.

As well as delivering community and school initiatives, the project partners were tasked with the development of an overarching strategy for cohesion, focusing specifically on 3 key issues: 1. Early Intervention and Engagement, 2. Housing & 3. Emergency Response. This report therefore represents a key output and outcome of the Creating Cohesive Community Project.

The CCC project was developed against a backdrop of heightened and underlying tension in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic communities. This tension manifested itself in increased levels of hate crime and fractured relations between majority established and minority ethnic families and individuals. A socio economic review of the target areas reveal that its inhabitants face a myriad of challenges including high levels of unemployment, low levels of educational achievement and low levels of health, this is compounded by the pending local government reform, the welfare reform and the uncertainty caused by these and other changes. The catchment area for the project contains a high number of minority ethnic families (more than any other electoral wards in Belfast) and the end of accession for Bulgarian and Romanian families in January 2014 is likely to result in increased numbers of minority ethnic families moving to the area. Resultantly, the project partners consider this to be an opportune time to begin to introduce new projects, structures and initiatives to enable

minority ethnic and majority established communities to live cohesively together. Importantly, a range of statutory and government agencies have identified the promotion of cohesion and good relations as a key priority over the next number of years, Belfast City Council, NIHE and DoJ for example, have all produced reports that indicate a renewed commitment to cohesion and good relations. It is anticipated therefore that the CCC project is timely, and can make a significant policy contribution with appropriate levels of resources and support.

In developing this report, the project partners conducted a widespread community consultation process. The consultation accounted for more than 250 individuals, and over 30 organisations during the period November 2012 – March 2013. Over 42% of those consulted are representative of minority ethnic communities or organisations that provide specific support for minority ethnic communities. Approximately 20% of the organisations consulted were statutory agencies.

The consultation process ranged from young people aged 6 to elderly residents aged 91 and was designed to enable all stakeholders to identify any key concerns or challenges relating to cohesion within the immediate catchment area.

The project partners consulted with youth groups, residents, landlords, community associations, politicians and local councillors as well as a range of other groups locally. Consultation was delivered using a combination of focus groups, one to one interviews, interactive workshops, games/ children's workshops, phone interview / consultation, group seminars and discussion (feedback to flipchart).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT

A number of key challenges and concerns were identified under each of the overarching themes of Early Intervention & Engagement, Housing and Emergency Response. The project partners have prioritised the key concerns based on the consultation findings. The priorities under Early Intervention & Engagement are presented below:

1. To provide greater levels of support for new arrivals to Lower Ormeau and Botanic
2. To work with schools to provide training and support to address attitudes/perceptions at an early stage
3. To provide meaningful opportunities for engagement and dialogue

Housing was identified as a particularly contentious issue in Lower Ormeau in Botanic and was the most common concern across all of the consultation findings, both from the minority ethnic and majority established perspective. The key priorities for those consulted in terms of Housing include:

1. To address the condition of houses locally, (particularly HMO's and those that are not classified as HMO but have multiple occupants) and the subsequent environmental and hygiene concerns that ensue
2. To address the perceptions relating to housing allocation across the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas

The consultation process also identified uncertainty in terms of the roles and responsibilities as well as the legislative powers of statutory agencies to deal with local issues. The CCC project was challenged to provide some clarity on this and create actions that could help alleviate local concerns.

The following key priorities were noted under the overarching theme of Emergency Response:

1. To increase the level of faith/trust in the statutory response to hate crime (and crime in general) in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas
2. To address the perception of unfair treatment from PSNI in relation to hate incidents and increase the capacity of the PSNI to engage

Full details of the consultation findings are presented in this report. The project partners identified key recurring themes across the consultation process, prioritised the most common concerns and designed an action plan to address these locally. The project partners, alongside its advisory steering group and key statutory agencies, worked to develop a range of short, medium and long term actions to be delivered during the lifespan of the project, or to be developed to ensure that the legacy of the project continues beyond its funded period. A total of 11 strategic actions were identified, these are presented below:

EARLY INTERVENTION & ENGAGEMENT

To develop a community based resource pack for residents including minority ethnic communities, students and established residents to be distributed to every household in Lower Ormeau and Botanic. The pack will offer a comprehensive review of local services and guidance on 'being good neighbour'.

To recruit, train and deploy 6 community 'active citizens' (including students) to provide an 'orientation' support for new arrivals to Lower Ormeau and Botanic. This pilot will initially be delivered on a volunteer model.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT

EARLY INTERVENTION AND ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED

To provide a capacity building programme for 15 x local teachers (building on the existing schools initiative), to empower teachers to deliver training to pupils on an annual basis. The training will help build an understanding of cultural differences and increase teachers confidence in dealing with differences in a changing community

Support the ongoing programme of events in Lower Ormeau/Botanic by establishing one connected mail group. E.g. Yahoo Group. This aspect will work through the Networking Forum and those consulted to form an area wide connected mail group: each community organisation will be accountable for disseminating information to members/user groups and local stakeholders.

To establish a structured referral pathway for homework clubs and youth initiatives through the networking forum for EAL students and established communities. The purpose is to support those with English as a Second Language and enable integration outside of school and create familiarity with existing community infrastructure & engage with student tutors

HOUSING

To lobby, alongside Belfast City Council for the introduction of the Selective Licensing Scheme to reflect council powers in England & Wales, to address the root cause of poor housing conditions and environmental concerns

To work through new investment in Lower Ormeau (Big Lottery) to establish a 'Community Environmental Improvement' scheme that provides youth employment opportunities with a focus on providing specific support for some of the most vulnerable members of the local community and their homes. Complementing the emergency response repair aspect, this project can provide qualifications for young people along with practical work experience to paint/improve/clean/repair and enhance the physical appearance of the community (working in partnership with NIHE, LANI and BCC)

To establish and implement a Housing Taskforce consisting of CCC Project, BCC Environmental Health, BCC Cleansing and BCC ASB Officer to deal with rubbish, bin hoking and housing condition complaints on a case by case basis as an interim measure. To review the outcome of the taskforce after 6 months and report back through networking forum and PACT. This group will develop a specific terms of reference to ensure appropriate management of data and clear lines of communication.

To support the existing sub office delivered by the NIHE using the community connected mail service developed under the early intervention & engagement strategy. These events can help provide information on new developments and dispel myths about housing allocation, this information is to be included within the Neighbourhood Guide

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

To provide training to PSNI Neighbourhood Officers alongside proposed community active citizens, teachers and other community representatives to build relationships and capacity to manage emergency response incidents

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

To build on the new 'Police Response to Hate Incidents' directive by implementing additional community based procedures for local PSNI officers, this includes:

1. To establish a preferred community based 'line of communication' to support local residents that are victims of crime, this has been agreed at LORAG through the established community active citizens
 2. Agreement from the PSNI that the local Neighbourhood Police Officer will engage directly with this project coordinator/active citizen within 72 hours of an incident to identify if the victim requires additional support (relating to language, comforting, advice, signposting). With consent, this has now become part of the investigative strategy in relation to hate incidents.
 3. The new directive will offer a 30 day review on incidents. The PSNI will now communicate with this project coordinator/active citizen at the 30 day review to identify if the victim requires additional support. This has become part of the Police Response to Hate Incident Directive in Lower Ormeau and Botanic.
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The actions identified above have been endorsed by statutory partners that are represented on the advisory steering group creating a unique cross sectoral approach to address key issues linked to cohesion. The key challenge for the CCC Project is now to deliver against each of the actions and maintaining momentum and commitment to the overall process.

The Creating Cohesive Community Project has evidenced a strong degree of collaboration and partnership working, the project demonstrates a strategic fit across a range of local, regional and national policy documents and this strategy has been designed against a backdrop of

sectoral reform including: the end of accession for A2 nationals, the local government reform in Northern Ireland, and the implementation of local authority investment programmes and government strategy.

The project has established a robust monitoring and evaluation framework as well as a detailed marketing strategy, ensuring participation and 'buy in' from a range of organisations and individuals within the target area and beyond.

As the project partners begin to deliver on the action plan, they are faced with the ongoing task of securing resources to sustain the project beyond its initial funded period. Due to end in September 2013, the project has demonstrated that it has the potential to embed a collaborative, cross sectoral model to improve levels of cohesion within the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast, as well as creating an example of good practice for other areas in Northern Ireland and the UK. This report has recommended that project partners, and those agencies that have committed to the process, work together to secure appropriate resources to enable the project to build upon its work to date, and ensure that the enclosed action plan is delivered successfully.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report comprises one element of the Creating Cohesive Community Project in that it presents the findings of a widespread community consultation relating to 3 key issues under the overarching theme of Cohesion within the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast. The 3 key issues have been identified as:

1. Early Intervention and Engagement
2. Housing
3. Emergency Response

1.2 SETTING THE SCENE

The report has been informed by widespread consultation with individuals, community and voluntary organisations and statutory bodies, combined with a detailed analysis of strategic fit and a review of good practice. For ease of reference the following terminology will be used throughout the project:

Minority Ethnic Community (MEC) – Refers to those individuals and groups that come from outside of Northern Ireland and UK. This includes for example: The Roma, Sudanese, Polish, Chinese etc. (not exhaustive)

Majority/Established Community (EC) – Refers to those individuals that are considered local in that they are from Northern Ireland and have spent a large proportion of their lives in Lower Ormeau and Botanic.

The following section introduces the Creating Cohesive Community Project, hereafter referred to as CCC Project.

1.3 CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Creating Cohesive Community Project has been designed to address identified needs within specific areas. The project was developed in response to ongoing strained relations between the established community and ‘new’ communities in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast. Over recent years, the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas have experienced a large influx of new communities (particularly Roma) moving to the area because of access to cheap housing for rent and because of the already large number of minority ethnic communities that reside in these areas. It is therefore perceived as a safe place to go for new communities.

In December 2011, LORAG, in partnership with South Belfast Roundtable submitted an application to Belfast City Councils Strategic Grants Programme to deliver a focused piece of work which sought to improve relations locally whilst building capacity to live and work cohesively.

The application was a direct response to an increase in hate crime and violence between local residents and minority ethnic community (particularly the Roma community). LORAG (and key staff) as a strong and visible community presence in the area, were often called upon to support those families that were subjected to crime, vandalism and anti social behaviour and work to allay fears & misunderstanding. In designing this project, LORAG & SRBT recognised that anti social behaviour and hate crime were a symptom of underlying tensions and frustrations linked to issues such as housing and lack of meaningful engagement.

From the outset, LORAG (as lead partner) has maintained that this project and the issues it seeks to address, sits outside of the remit of the organisation.

1.3 CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT

In designing this project, both LORAG and SBRT recognised that anti social behaviour and hate crime were a symptom of underlying tensions and frustrations linked to issues such as housing, poor community relations and low level of cohesion. From the outset, LORAG have maintained that this project and the issues it seeks to address, sits outside of the remit of the organisation. However the opportunity that presented itself through the Strategic Grants Programme enabled LORAG and South Belfast Roundtable to act as a catalyst that could enhance levels of cooperation and partnership working to address the concerns of local and new communities.

Subsequently, LORAG and South Belfast Roundtable developed Creating Cohesive Community Project to deliver a focused piece of work in the target area. This document is considered one of the key outputs of the programme. The following pages describe the comprehensive consultation process conducted during the period October 2012 – February 2013.

1.4 CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation framework and delivery comprised a number of different forms, and was specifically tailored to each group. Those consulted ranged from children aged 8, to pensioners aged 90+, and with everyone in between, including those representing and from the minority ethnic community it was essential that the process was tailored to ensure they were all given the opportunity to express their opinions, and even more importantly, that these opinions were listened to and recorded accurately. In response to a terms of reference issued by LORAG and South Belfast Roundtable, the agreed consultation methodology included the need to:

1. Be fully aware of the sensitivities of the area and specific periods of time / issues that have and can cause unrest or tension leading to hate crimes and hate incidents
2. Use local expertise and tailored resources to ensure voices of all relevant stakeholders are heard in the process
3. Ensure cross-sectoral engagement in the implementation of actions through open communication processes

This consultation process was delivered between October 2012 and February 2013. All information has been collated, analysed and embedded throughout this report. As anticipated, the consultation focused on: community cohesion in general, living environment, specific issues in relation to Early Intervention & Engagement, Housing, Emergency Response as well as an opportunity to identify any additional issues to be considered by the project. The process of gathering information comprised a number of different forms, each one matched to the particular consultation group. The consultation framework included:

- Group question and answer sessions-Focus Groups
- Phone interview / consultation
- Group seminars and discussion (feedback to flipchart)
- Interactive workshops (tasks, games, etc.)
- Games / children's workshops
- Individual meetings
- One to one discussion

A list of those consulted as part of the Creating Cohesive Community Project are highlighted overleaf.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The table below provides an overview of those consulted as part of the strategy development process.

- Sure Start Mum’s Group (7)
- Mornington Women’s Group (4)
- St John Vianney’s Pensioners Bingo Group (32)
- RRCANI Youth (17)
- LORAG Youth Group (10)
- NICRAS Members x (17)
- St John Vianney’s Youth (8)
- Open Consultation No. 1 (6)
- LORAG Children’ Programme (15)
- Community Stakeholders x 13 representatives (GEMs NI, St John Vianney’s, LORAG, Home Plus, Mornington Project, Fitzroy Church, NICRAS, Chinese Welfare Association, BCC Tension Monitoring)
- Open Consultation No. 2 (4)
- QUB Students x (12)
- Sudanese Women’s Group (7)
- BHRA (9)
- ROMA Women’s Group (11)
- ROMA Men’s Group (24)
- Bryson Intercultural (2)
- BHSCT (2)
- Belfast City Council (13)
- PSNI South Belfast (7)
- LANI (1)
- NIHE (5)
- Political Reps Consultation (5)
- LORAG Staff and Committee (14)
- Belfast Migrant Centre (5)
- ACSNI Members (12)

The consultation process was largely delivered on a single identity basis to ensure that those consulted were provided with a safe space to speak open and honestly. An overview of the consultation process is provided in the table below:

Total Number of Consultees – 262
Total Number of Minority Ethnic Consultees – 107
Total Number of Organisations – 28

As highlighted, the consultation process was comprehensive, over 42% of those consulted are representative of minority ethnic communities or organisations that provide specific support for minority ethnic communities. Approximately 20% of the organisations consulted were statutory agencies. Considering the context within which this document has been produced, it was important to ensure appropriate engagement from statutory organisations.

The combination of grass roots and high level strategic views on local issues offers a dynamic yet complex overview of the difficulties faced by community organisations, by statutory agencies and by local residents in seeking to create a more cohesive community.

This document combines the consultation findings with local statistics and research as well as an overview of existing statutory and community infrastructure to make some key recommendations about the best way to improve relations in a meaningful and sustainable way. Section 2 provides a context for this report.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Having introduced the project and for ease of reference and clarity, this sub section provides an overview of what you can expect from this report:

❖ SECTION 2

Section 2 provides a context to the target area, looking specifically at the demographic profile of the Botanic and Shaftesbury Electoral Wards as well as some key statistics relating to socio economic deprivation and the challenges faced by local communities. This section also explores some key emerging challenges for local communities, in particular the end of accession for A2 nationals and the imminent council reform (RPA) and review of public administration.

❖ SECTION 3, 4 AND 5

Section 3 explores each of the overarching themes: Early Engagement and Intervention, Housing & Emergency Response. Given the complexity of each issue, the report explores and contextualises each of these issues in isolation. Each sub section presents the following information:

1. Defining the Issue
2. Evidencing a Need for Intervention
3. Existing Interventions and Strategic Fit
4. Cross Referencing Consultation findings
5. What happens elsewhere?
6. Summary /Prioritisation of issues to be considered
7. Action Plan

The project partners believe that it is important to identify the context within which the project will operate in order to create meaningful

actions/strategies. In anticipation of a multi agency, collaborative approach to address issues, it is important to identify existing provision. Each section concludes with the prioritisation of key challenges/concerns and a range of proposed actions/interventions to address these. Importantly, the action plan considers potential resource implications and responsibility to ensure accountability.

❖ SECTION 6

Section 6 summarises the key strategies against the consultation findings and identifies specific anticipated impacts and outcomes resulting from the implementation of various actions.

❖ SECTION 7

Section 7 presents the key marketing message to be delivered by this project. It is important that the aims, objectives and core messages are communicated to the wider community to create ownership and buy in to the process.

❖ SECTION 8

Section 8 presents a bespoke monitoring and evaluation framework, building appropriate time for strategy review and a specific tool to measure perceived success and impacts of various actions.

❖ SECTION 9

Section 9 summarises the document and key findings and offers two key recommendations for project partners, advisory group members and other stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the 11 key actions noted within this strategy.

2.1 REPORT CONTEXT

The geographic area identified as the primary target location for this project is presented below.



South Belfast is considered one of the most culturally diverse areas in Northern Ireland. There has been a large influx of minority ethnic groups into the area over the past 10 years, with many settling in the Lower Ormeau, Shaftesbury and Botanic areas.

As a result, the area has experienced high levels of racial and cultural tension between established groups and new residents, as well as between different minority ethnic groups moving to this part of Belfast.

2.2 AREA PROFILE

The electoral wards which span this project are primarily Botanic and Shaftesbury. The statistical evidence for each of these electoral wards identifies high levels of socio economic deprivation. The Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) indicates that the total population of the Botanic Ward in 2010 was 8,380, which was made up of: 809 children aged 0-15 years, 5,971 people aged 16-39 years, 1,125 people in the 'older working age category' - comprising of 653 men aged 40-64 years and 472 women aged 40-59. . A total of 476 people were male and 65 years or older (173), or female and 60 years and older (303).

The Botanic Electoral ward suffers from significant levels of deprivation, this exacerbates much of the racial tension locally:

	Rank Botanic
Multiple Deprivation Measure	237
Income Deprivation	362
Employment Deprivation	519
Health Deprivation and Disability Deprivation	351
Education Skills and Training Disability	62
Proximity to Services Deprivation	558
Crime and Disorder	1
Living Environment	13

The table above highlights some of the challenges faced by local residents and new communities. Of particular concern is the Crime & Disorder and Living Environment rank of 1 and 13 respectively. These figures indicate severe challenges and correlate directly to the issues of housing and emergency response as noted in the Creating Cohesive Community Project.

2.2 AREA PROFILE

The total population of the Shaftesbury Ward in 2010 was 6,352, which was made up of: 973 children aged 0-15 years, 2,728 people aged 16-39 years, 1,583 people in the 'older working age category' comprising 894 men aged 40-64 years and 688 women aged 40-59 years, and a total of 1,069 people who were male and 65 years or older (415), or female and 60 years and older (654).

In relation to the overall deprivation, the following table provides a context for the Shaftesbury Electoral Ward.

	Rank Shaftesbury
Multiple Deprivation Measure	22
Income Deprivation	29
Employment Deprivation	44
Health Deprivation and Disability Deprivation	15
Education Skills and Training Disability	10
Proximity to Services Deprivation	573
Crime and Disorder	28
Living Environment	22

The table again indicates specific concerns relating to crime and disorder 28/582 and living environment 22/582 whilst education, health, income and employment are also major concerns locally.

The statistics suggest that local residents face a myriad of barriers to improve quality of life, much of which is compounded by high levels of racial tension and a lack of cohesion. The statistics however merely present an outline context of the target areas, the following information provides specific local context.

On Census Day 27th March 2011, in the **Botanic** Ward, considering the resident population:

1. **91.47%** were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group;
2. **60.83%** belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and **23.25%** belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and
3. **24.66%** indicated that they had a British national identity, **46.58%** had an Irish national identity and **27.85%** had a Northern Irish national identity
4. **10.23%** did not have English as their first language

On Census Day 27th March 2011, in **Shaftesbury** Ward, considering the resident population:

1. **87.62%** were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group;
2. **35.31%** belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and **47.32%** belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and
3. **48.34%** indicated that they had a British national identity, **24.15%** had an Irish national identity and **23.94%** had a Northern Irish national identity
4. **10.89%** did not have English as their first language.

The demographic information and deprivation statistics provide an overarching context for the Creating Cohesive Community Project. Such is the complexity of each of the identified issues: Housing, Emergency Response and Early Intervention, each will be addressed in isolation in the pages that follow.

2.3 CONTEXT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

In contextualising this report, the project partners are keen to highlight existing and pending sectoral changes which may greatly influence the delivery of community based services and partnership work.

In April 2015, as part of the reform of local government in Northern Ireland (previously known as the Review of Public Administration), Belfast will grow to take in around 50,000 additional residents and 20,000 households as the number of councils is reduced from 26 to 11. This new council will, once in place, include parts of the existing Lisburn and Castlereagh councils, plus a small area of North Down. Legislation confirming the boundaries of the 11 councils has now been approved. There are many expected benefits to reform, including:

- ❖ delivery of citizen-centred services which are more tailored to local need
- ❖ additional responsibilities, including key functions like planning and city regeneration
- ❖ a more joined-up approach to local government, including closer working relationships with central government, statutory bodies and other agencies
- ❖ more councillors representing the interests of residents
- ❖ possible extra facilities, including physical assets like parks, recycling centres and leisure centres
- ❖ staff with expertise in their new areas of responsibility.

Currently, local councils are responsible for some areas of work, while government departments look after other areas, which can often be seen as similar.

For example, Belfast City Council is responsible for cleaning our roads and streets, while Roads Service (Department for Regional Development) looks after the maintenance of roads and equipment such as traffic lights. Under the reform of local government, councils - including the new Belfast council - will be given additional responsibilities. These are still to be confirmed, but are likely to include:

- ❖ **Planning** - transferring from Department of the Environment
- ❖ **Urban regeneration** - transferring from Department for Social Development
- ❖ **Part responsibility for local roads** - transferring from Department for Regional Development
- ❖ **Local economic development and tourism** - transferring from Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
- ❖ **Local sports facilities** - transferring from the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure
- ❖ **Rural development** - transferring from the Department for Rural Development.

As a result of the changes, it will be easier for citizens to 'do business' with the council because many services will be 'under the one roof'. Reform also offers an opportunity to work together with partners, particularly on areas which cut across different agencies, including health and wellbeing and community safety. In the context of CCC Project, this presents an obvious opportunity and therefore CCC Project is timely, potentially creating the structures now, that can influence service delivery around key themes under LG reform.

2.3 CONTEXT: A2 NATIONALS AND ACCESSION

As noted previously, Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast are some of the most culturally diverse in Northern Ireland. Throughout the consultation process, many of the challenges and concerns related to, or were reported by the Roma community, of which there is now a larger population in this area. The UK is about to embark in a period of change relating to A2 Nationals and it is important to contextualise this in relation to the CCC Project.

In the UK, 'A2 nationals' refers to the two countries which joined the EU in January 2007 – Romania and Bulgaria. If you are a citizen of one of these countries you are known in the UK as an Accession State national or A2 national. When both countries joined the EU, the UK government established the Accession State Worker Authorisation Scheme. It requires Bulgarian and Romanian nationals to apply for permission to work before they start working for an employer in the UK. This scheme does not apply to A2 nationals who are self-employed or students.

Currently, A2 Nationals have permission to live in the UK for 3 months. This right is extended if you are: authorised to work, self employed, self sufficient or you are a student. For those that suffer from financial hardship, as a general rule, must have taken active steps to establish themselves as self-employed in order to claim benefits. There is no exact set of steps that constitute 'active steps'. Whether someone has taken active steps will be decided on an individual basis when they go to claim benefits. In the case of the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas, the inability of Roma to access social welfare benefits results in overcrowding in private rented houses as many families are forced to live together in sub standard living conditions.

Subsequently due to sub standard housing, low levels of hygiene and increased environmental and health concerns, all of which impact negatively on community cohesion. Importantly for the CCC Project, the period of Accession for A2 Nationals end in January 2014, at which point, it is anticipated that all Bulgarian and Romanian nationals will have the same rights as EEA/EU nationals with full rights. The extra need to register under the Workers Authorisation scheme finishes at the end of 2013. As a result, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals will have the right to work and will therefore also have housing rights if they are:

- ❖ currently employed
- ❖ temporarily unable to work because of sickness or an accident
- ❖ were working for at least one year and are now registered as a jobseeker
- ❖ were in work but are now in vocational training

The implications of these changes and the increased access to social security benefits could result in larger numbers of Bulgarian and Romanian moving to the UK (although there is currently no evidence to confirm this is the case), and particularly to the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas given the existing population. The *'Impacts of Migration on Social Cohesion and Integration'* (January 2012) indicate that new migration does not notably affect cohesion but pre-existing diversity and high levels of poverty are predictors of lower social cohesion. The high levels of socio economic deprivation as noted earlier reinforce the need for projects like Creating Cohesive Community Project to create the conditions, at a grass roots and statutory level to enable the smooth integration of new and established communities and support community cohesion at a local and strategic level. The following sections summarise the consultation and local context before offering an overview of proposed actions to enhance cohesion at a local level.

2.4 BELFAST CITY COUNCIL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME & GOOD RELATIONS STRATEGY

The Belfast City Council Investment Programme 2012-2015 sets out the Councils commitment to deliver for the city of Belfast over the rest of this council term (2012-15) and beyond. However it is also a prospectus for partnership - a call for joint working across all sectors, organisations and communities to bring together the resources needed to help its citizens realise their potential and make Belfast a competitive, inclusive and successful city.

The council has worked to manage budgets and generate efficiencies to free up money to pay for additional investment across the city to deliver this Investment Programme. This will allow the Council to deliver significant additional investment, balanced across the city. The Investment Programme 2012-2015 is underpinned by a number of core principles, these principles inform everything that councillors and council staff will do to deliver on its investment programme. These principles are described below:

1. Good Relations and Equality: *“We are committed to promoting equality and good relations and believe these are key to improving the quality of life for everyone. Fairness and respect are central to this programme and underpin all of our activities. A peaceful and inclusive society is vital to economic regeneration, attracting talent, sustaining inward investment, generating tourism and tackling poverty. We want to shape Belfast so that its spaces and services meet the ambitions of all residents”.* This key principle of the BCC Investment Programme has a clear strategic fit with Creating Cohesive Community Project, the ethos of Good Relations and Equality is embedded across the consultation and actions that have emerged.

2. Partnership and Collaboration: *“We believe in strong, shared, collaborative leadership and are committed to bringing together partners from all sectors and communities to develop innovative solutions to Belfast’s challenges and to take advantage of all opportunities. We believe organisations should work together to deliver the most accessible and convenient services and facilities wherever possible. We will engage with local communities in delivering this programme and will advocate with government and the private sector for more investment in Belfast”:* Creating Cohesive Community project has promoted the ethos of cross sectoral partnership working across all proposed initiatives, demonstrated by its advisory group and networking forum, and therefore aligns itself to this key principle.

3. Sustainability: *“We will work to improve quality of life, now and for future generations, creating a sustainable, clean and healthy living space for all”:* One of the key strands of Creating Cohesive Community Project strategy is focused on addressing issues related to housing condition and environmental health concerns. The project is also committed to the ethos of sustainability and has designed this strategy in such a way as to enhance the potential for it to be sustained long term, demonstrating a clear correlation with the principles of the BCC Investment Programme.

The previous pages have clearly demonstrated the strategic position of the Creating Cohesive Community Project against a range of local and regional policy. In the context of key sectoral changes, the project has an opportunity to position itself as an example of good practice for cohesion and multi agency initiatives.

2.5 HOUSING STRATEGY FOR NI

The Housing strategy for Northern Ireland identifies three main roles of government in relation to housing:

1. *Helping to create the right conditions for a stable and sustainable housing market that supports economic growth and prosperity*
2. *Providing support for individuals and families to access housing, particularly the most vulnerable in society*
3. *Setting minimum standards for the quality of new and existing homes and for how rented housing is managed.*

The Housing Strategy sets out how the Department of Social Development intends to fulfil these roles over the next five years, the strategy also notes how housing has an additional role in driving regeneration within communities. DSD note that in delivering on each of its three main roles, it will provide advice and guidance and support the first time buyer market through investment. It will improve and promote access by reviewing the allocation of social housing and support households through the welfare reform. Importantly for this project, the strategy identifies that in the private rented sector, DSD will focus on making the sector a more attractive housing option for people by improving standards and regulations.

The strategy has a clear alignment to Creating Cohesive Community Project. A major concern for project partners is the impact of poor housing conditions and the environmental implications of rubbish, littering and dereliction. In devising a strategy to address housing concerns, Creating Cohesive Community Project can make a significant positive contribution to the NI Housing Strategy.

2.6 HATE CRIME RESEARCH PAPERS (DoJ)

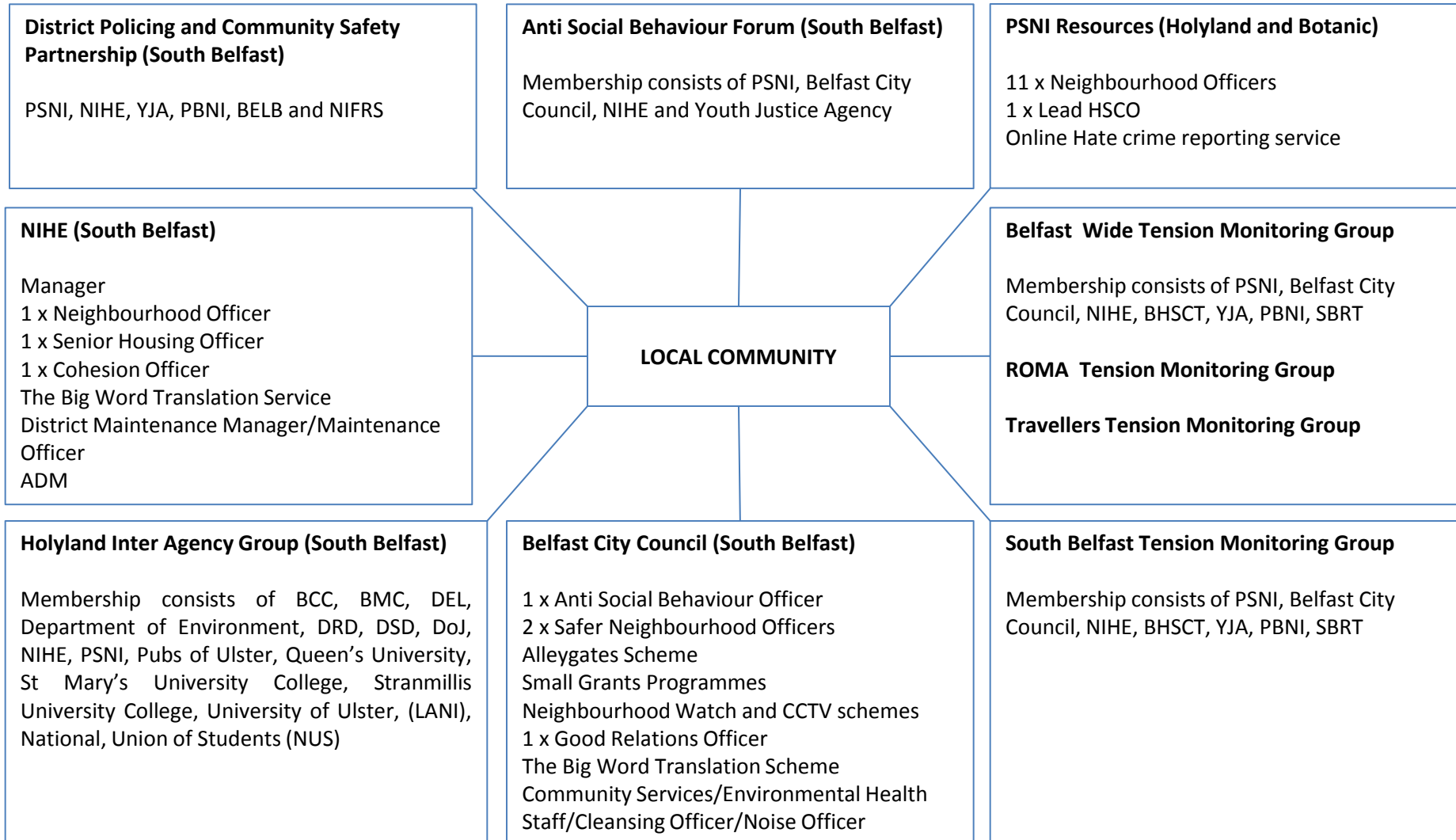
The Department of Justice launched a series of research papers compiled following a unique pilot programme set up to specifically examine and address how hate crime and sectarianism is dealt with in Northern Ireland. The research papers, and accompanying DVD's, outline the extent of the problems with regards to hate crime in Northern Ireland and the need for a more effective response and joined up approach across the criminal justice system. The project is a partnership between the NI Prison Service and NIACRO and was funded under the European Union's PEACE III Programme. It is hoped that this research, which was undertaken over a three year period, will help inform the delivery of a model which will result in a reduction in the levels of hate crime incidents and consequently the numbers of victims of hate crime. Each agency is already working on a range of practical changes to ensure hate crime offences are dealt with effectively. The departmental action plan to address hate crime focuses on the following:

- tackling under-reporting;
- improving detection rates and prosecutions;
- to do more work with Minority groups, and particularly victims, to encourage them to come forward and report crimes against them;
- to improve support for the victims of hate crime; and
- more action to challenge attitudes and raising awareness

The action plan correlates with some of the key priorities of Creating Cohesive Community Project, potential investment in the initiative from DoJ could make a significant contribution for both CCC Project and the Hate Crime Action Plan.

2.7 SUMMARY OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The diagram below seeks to summarise the existing infrastructure with a direct remit for the target area



3.1 EARLY INTERVENTION & ENGAGEMENT

This section contextualises the need for a more coherent and coordinated approach to Early Intervention in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast. Firstly, it is important to understand what this project means by early intervention. In the context of Creating Cohesive Community Project, whilst early intervention can undoubtedly address and dispels myths as well as build relations at an early stage, the project also needs to consider early intervention in the context of ‘new communities’ (including students and established community) arriving and choosing to settle in Lower Ormeau and Botanic and the prevention of escalation of violence.

The original application to Belfast City Council’s Strategic Grants programme also includes a targeted education and engagement programme in local schools which seeks to enhance the level of understanding, tolerance and acceptance between established and new communities.

Creating Cohesive Community Project, and the consultation that has informed this report, needs to consider the concept of early intervention in its widest sense. The easiest way to contextualise this is to present some of the key findings from the consultation process.

The table opposite provides an overview of key consultation findings linked to the overarching theme of early intervention and engagement. These have been contextualised further in the pages that follow.

Key Consultation Findings: Established Community Perspective

- Perception of a lack of understanding amongst minority ethnic community in terms of what is expected and accepted
- A feeling that language barrier causes obvious communication difficulties between established and minority ethnic communities
- Historical differences between communities in the area, both religious and racial continue to cause tension according to residents
- Perception of a lack of mediums through which to engage with one another in a non-prejudiced environment are lacking
- Perception that minority ethnic communities find it easier to access to housing and human rights issues (housing, health, etc.)
- Consultation indicated that it is difficult to engage those who “*do not respect the existing cultures in the area*” (childcare, sanitation, housing, language, etc.)
- Perception that minority ethnic children cause trouble and are involved in anti-social behaviour throughout the area
- Feeling that minority ethnic communities do not make the effort to embrace existing cultures which are the accepted way of life in Belfast
- Perception that minority ethnic communities ‘they keep themselves to themselves’ and therefore it is difficult to engage them or get to know them
- Major trust issues given the history of cohesion in this area
- Perception that there is a lack of ‘a link’ between minority ethnic communities and local residents

3.1 EARLY INTERVENTION & ENGAGEMENT

Key Consultation Findings: Minority Ethnic Perspective

- Language barriers pose obvious barriers, many rely on their children to translate and therefore don't have a good grasp on information available, perception that adults are mistreated because of this
- Perception that they are not welcome to participate in some mainstream community projects and that established community is reluctant to engage
- Perception that if one negative incident occurs involving an individual from a minority ethnic community, that the entire community is automatically discriminated against
- Perception of mistreatment, particularly in relation to statutory services such as housing and health services, treatment in GP settings have been noted as particularly difficult at times
- Much of the consultation noted that many minority ethnic communities felt targeted to blame for crime and anti social behaviour, but lack of understanding or lack of faith in the process of reporting because of perceived mistreatment by PSNI or statutory agencies
- Minority Ethnic Community find it hard to identify opportunities to get involved in community activity and perception of a lack of trust amongst the established community toward minority ethnic communities
- Roma community find it difficult to engage because of their socio economic situation, for example what value can a mother bring her family by participating in sports classes

3.2 A LOCAL CASE STUDY

Philip Barr is a 19 year old 2nd year student at Queens University Belfast, studying business management. Originally from Banbridge, Co Down, he currently resides in the Holyland area of Belfast. Having been an active volunteer with 'Youth bank', working with young people in the Banbridge area, Philip was keen to continue to develop those skills once settled in Belfast. In addition to supplementing his C.V during his student years, Philip wanted to 'give back to the community' in which he was now living.

When he was approached by the Vice President of Community at Queens University, Belfast to become involved in the Volunteer Academy, it proved the perfect opportunity to be part of a structured volunteer programme within a local community in Belfast working with young people. After an extensive induction period, including relevant training, Philip became part of a team of students from QUB and Stranmillis University.

Philip currently volunteers with a homework club in the Belfast City Council run Sandy Row Community Centre. Part of a volunteer team, Philip volunteers for three hours every two weeks, working with local young people ages 12-15 years old supporting learning and preparing students for their GCSEs. As he has fairly recent experience of completing GCSEs himself, Philip feels he can empathise with the young people and offer practical support. Working in the Sandy Row community has changed Philip's perception of the area as he felt that previously it had received a lot of 'bad press'.

3.2 A LOCAL CASE STUDY

In addition, he feels as though it has gone some way to bridging the gap between the student community and the wider community. Working closely and consistently with young people in the community has taken away any 'pretension' or difference that Philip feels may exist between students at QUB and young people in Sandy Row and that he is seen as a 'normal person'.

Philip's main interaction has been with the staff at the centre but he would welcome more involvement with the wider community and sees this as a positive step towards engagement. He has built relationships with other students volunteering from different universities and feels that relationships with the wider community could also develop.

"There's great scope for this programme, I'd really like to get more involved with the local schools and work together to plan for the homework club and offer additional support. This programme could go far in encouraging young people to consider further study, perhaps even coming to Queens University in the future"



3.3 EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The consultation process sought to establish the typical integration process for migrant workers or immigrants. Roma, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers all of varying experiences of how they first arrive in NI. Regardless, each of these groups require varying levels of support to firstly settle, and then integrate into community life in Northern Ireland.

Belfast City Council has recently produced a 'Guide of Support Services' for those that are 'new to Belfast'. The following organisations are noted:

1. Afro Community Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI)
2. Barnardos Tuar Ceatha Services
3. BCC (Community Safety/Community Centres)
4. Belfast Islamic Centre
5. Bulgarian Association NI
6. Chinese Welfare Association
7. East Belfast Ethnic Minority Support Network
8. Statutory Provision (BHSCT)
9. East Belfast Filipino Community
10. East Belfast Independent Advice Centre
11. EMBRACE NI
12. Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)
15. Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)/Belfast Migrant Centre
16. Bryson Intercultural
17. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
18. Indian Community Centre



3.3 EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

15. Polish Association Northern Ireland
16. Simon Community
17. South Belfast Roundtable
18. The Welcome Organisation
19. Belfast Jewish Community
20. Czech/Slovak Support Organisation
21. Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association
22. Sudanese Community of NI
23. Roma Romanian Community Association NI

Of those organisations noted opposite, 46% are located in South Belfast and therefore within close proximity to the CCC Project.

It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of organisations. moreover this gives a flavour of the range and type of support services available to 'new' communities. The location of these support services correlates directly with the large number of minority ethnic communities that choose to reside in South Belfast. The organisations listed above provide a range of support services to minority ethnic communities, these include: Information and advice; referral to other agencies, monthly socials for information and networking, family support service, capacity building and skill development, advocacy support, housing information, employment advice, crime prevention advice. In the case of A2 nationals (Romanian and Bulgarian), the advice relating to housing, employment and benefits is irrelevant during accession (due to end in January 2014), therefore support for these communities is somewhat more complex.

That said, many of the organisations noted have provided support to the ROMA, particularly in the aftermath of the 2009 violence, in which a number of the Romanian Roma fled their homes in the Lisburn Road area of South Belfast. Much of the support for ROMA community includes self employment, assistance with health related issues and practical support. The organisations note that familiarity breeds confidence, and many families continue to seek advice once a basic relationship is established.

3.4 EMERGING TRENDS & CONSIDERATIONS

In terms of Early Intervention and Engagement, it is clear that a range of organisations exist locally that are capable of providing specific and focused support to minority ethnic communities across a range of issues. The consultation process however suggests a disconnect between individuals and services with common concerns identified around the ability and accessibility of information, a lack of trust and link between established communities and minority ethnic communities and despite the vast number of existing services, a lack of opportunities for meaningful engagement across all ages.

The challenge for Creating Cohesive Community Project and the cross sectoral partners involved, is to create sufficient infrastructure to address identified concerns. In developing a BESPOKE action plan and strategy, the project partners have reviewed all of the consultation data and cross referenced this with existing infrastructure to establish 3 key priorities under the Early Intervention and Engagement Theme. The following pages identify the priorities as well as the proposed action plan.

3.4 EMERGING TRENDS & CONSIDERATIONS

The priorities under Early Intervention and Engagement are identified in the table below:

1. To provide greater levels of support for new arrivals to Lower Ormeau and Botanic and support established community to encourage good neighbours
2. To work with schools to provide training and support to address attitudes/perceptions at an early stage, including support and capacity building for teachers
3. To provide meaningful opportunities for engagement and dialogue

As noted previously, the project partners were keen that the consultation process underpinning the development of the 3 strategies was meaningful in that feedback and information provided was used to directly inform key actions.

The tables that follows provides 5 suggested interventions to be developed and delivered as part of Creating Cohesive Community Project and beyond. Importantly, the interventions have been developed with existing provision in mind and in direct response to the consultation findings. The various initiatives will not displace existing services, moreover they will seek to embed the already strong working relationships forged during the early stages of the CCC Project.

The action plan is then summarised with key information in terms of likely cost implications and identified responsibility for project partners and stakeholders.

3.5 EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The 'Communities R Us' project included three pilot projects all designed to enhance the levels of cohesion between established communities and new communities arriving to the area. The three pilot projects, in Bolton, Wakefield and Manchester, were selected because of:

- recent refugee or new migrant settlement;
- little effective existing activity to encourage
- neighbourliness across different communities;
- underlying tension between people living in the same locality.

The project therefore identifies a number of similarities with Creating Cohesive Community Project. The 'Communities R Us' initiative had little resources and was supported through a number of small grants to deliver very focused activities and initiatives in small geographic areas. For example, The New Moss Brook pilot in north Manchester and the City Council's Mancunian Agreement were mutually reinforcing. The Agreement is a form of neighbourhood charter that includes an explicit requirement for residents to take responsibility for welcoming newcomers.

All three pilots used a mix of door knocking, focus groups and residents' surveys and two – Bolton and Wakefield - used drama to present the issues for further discussion at community events. Other initiatives included an environmental improvement scheme with hanging baskets. The project has reported significant improvements to cohesion locally, and draws a number of comparisons with Creating Cohesive Community Project, with some potential ideas.

3.6 STRATEGY FOR EARLY INTERVENTION

The following table provides an overview of key short term actions (i.e. those that will be delivered during the lifespan of the project) in anticipation that these can create infrastructure that is sustained beyond the project. The actions are based on the key consultation findings.

KEY PRIORITIES	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	COST
To provide greater levels of support for new arrivals to Lower Ormeau and Botanic	To develop a community neighbourhood guide for residents including minority ethnic communities, students and established residents to be distributed to every household in Lower Ormeau and Botanic. The pack will offer a comprehensive review of local services and guidance on 'being good neighbour' .	June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ NIHE 	£2200 design and preparation £1200 Translation £1400 Print
	To recruit, train and deploy 6 community 'active citizens' (including students and minority ethnic community) to provide an 'orientation' support for new arrivals to Lower Ormeau and Botanic. This pilot will initially be delivered on a volunteer model.	July 2013 – September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ Alternatives ➤ CRJ 	Training delivered to active citizens = £1400 Volunteer Expenses for Active Citizens £3000
To work with schools to provide training and support to address attitudes/perceptions at an early stage	To provide a capacity building programme for 15 x local teachers (building on the existing schools initiative), to empower teachers to deliver training to pupils on an annual basis. The training will help build an understanding of cultural differences and increase teachers confidence in dealing with differences in a changing community	September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ Local Schools 	Series of Training courses delivered = £5500
To provide meaningful opportunities for engagement and dialogue	Support the ongoing programme of events in Lower Ormeau/Botanic by establishing one connected mail group. E.g. Yahoo Group. This aspect will work through the Networking Forum and those consulted to form an area wide connected mail group: each community organisation will be accountable for disseminating information to members/user groups and local stakeholders.	May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ Networking Forum ➤ Advisory Group ➤ Community Partners 	No cost associated
	To establish a structured referral pathway for homework clubs and youth initiatives through the networking forum for EAL students and established communities. The purpose is to support those with English as a Second Language and enable integration outside of school and create familiarity with existing community infrastructure & engage with student tutors	May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ Networking Forum ➤ Advisory Group ➤ Community Partners 	No cost associated

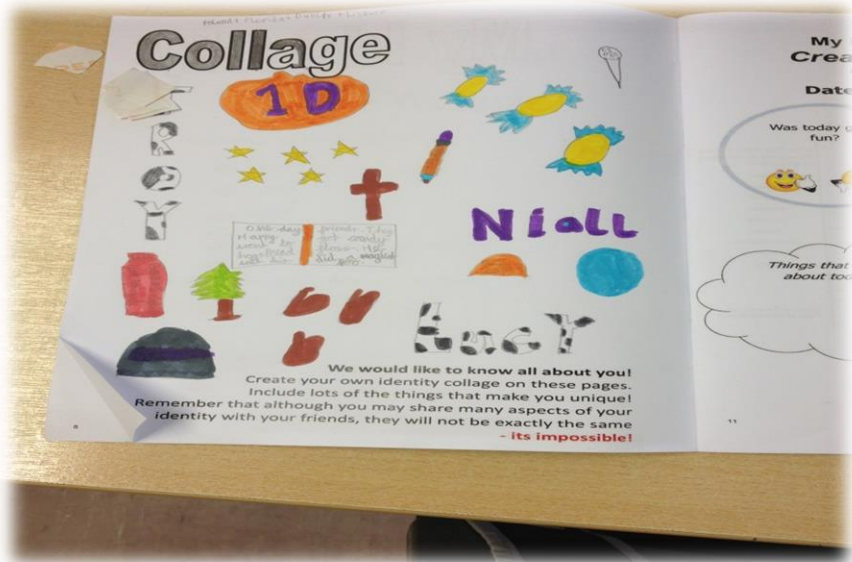
3.7 SUMMARY OF THE EARLY INTERVENTION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The table above describes 5 proposed interventions against the overarching theme of Early Intervention and Engagement. The project partners are keen to implement key actions at the earliest possible convenience and maintain the momentum of the project to date.

Whilst the actions identified are short term in nature, it should be noted that the project partners are committed to the long term impact of these initiatives and have therefore proposed the following:

1. The local neighbourhood guide is updated on a quarterly basis and distributed to households to ensure the most up to date and relevant information for new communities, established residents, students etc. This action requires a designated organisation to assume responsibility for the development and distribution of resource packs and ongoing financial support from key statutory partners (Northern Ireland Housing Executive) to include: print, translation etc.
2. The community active citizen scheme is designed as a pilot project initially to demonstrate and determine impact and benefits of the initiative. It is anticipated that the project should be resourced in terms of volunteer expenses, ongoing coordination and management in order to retain integrity. The development of dedicated community active citizens (representative of a wide range of communities) underpins many of the other actions. The consultation identified the importance of a 'link' between new and established communities as well as key agencies. The community active citizens can operate as this link.
2. It is anticipated that each of the actions will utilise and benefit from the initial work of the project in establishing effective communication pathways between community and statutory partners. The community active citizens can enhance these relationships and address the disconnect between perceived delivery of services and actual uptake of services at a grass roots level.
3. The existing school initiative delivered as a part of CCC Project has been embraced by local schools. The cost of resourcing an annual programme is however difficult. The training proposed will focus on teachers and will build the capacity of each school to train new teachers and continue to deliver training to young people. The consultation noted that it was important to engage young people at an early age to address perceptions. This action seeks to achieve this in a sustainable and empowered way.
4. The connected mail network is a cost effective way of sharing information and disseminating key messages through existing community and statutory infrastructure. It is anticipated that this will continue to operate beyond the lifespan of this project.
5. The structured referral process seeks to maximise the impact of the networking forum. The forum will continue to exist beyond the funded period creating the conditions for sustained engagement and information sharing. This also presents an opportunity for students to volunteer and engage in community activity.

CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY



4.1 HOUSING CONSULTATION FINDINGS

A key aspect of the consultation process was to explore the extent to which current Housing services address the needs and concerns of local communities. Some of the key consultation findings relating to Housing are noted below.

Consultation Findings Minority Ethnic Perspective

- Often made to feel 'guilty' for trying to access housing support because of perceptions and attitudes amongst established communities
- A perception that statutory agencies can be less responsive or concerned with minority ethnic families in comparison to established communities and families
- Access to childcare provision, health services, benefits and social services is extremely limited and often families not aware of how to access
- Minority ethnic communities report feelings of intimidation in areas which decreases the quality of living environment
- Perception that law enforcement is targeted more at minority ethnic communities and families, often inappropriately
- Minority Ethnic families reported that their houses are often victimised and targeted for attack from local residents/young people
- In the event of an incident, language barriers create challenges in terms of understanding rights
- Perception that minority ethnic groups are always treated with suspicion. For example men standing on the street corner is assumed as suspicious when in reality there may be no room inside the home to meet

Consultation Findings Established Community Perspective

- Perception amongst established community that minority ethnic communities are given preferential treatment in the allocation of housing
- Established communities note that there is a lack of communication in terms of maintenance of home and surrounding area and what is considered acceptable for new arrivals in the neighbourhood, also noted that they could potentially take more of a lead role in assisting minority ethnic communities
- Established communities often fear reporting because of a fear of someone 'playing the racist card'
- Perception that it is difficult to engage those who do not respect the existing cultures in the area (sanitation, housing)
- Over-crowding and noise in housing areas which are predominantly minority ethnic and students causes much civic unrest according to established community
- According to local residents and established community, sanitation ('bin hoking', defecating in the streets, etc.) make it very difficult to welcome those from minority ethnic communities into the area
- Perception that law is not enforced on minority ethnic (Roma) around housing or cleansing issues
- Established communities expressed concern about the health and well being of children in overcrowded houses, particularly amongst Roma families
- Students partying and causing noise and Roma hanging about the street were noted as key concerns for established communities
- Poor condition of minority ethnic and student rented houses makes it more difficult to attract other tenants and depreciates property value

4.2 A LOCAL CASE STUDY

Patricia Breen has been a resident of the Lower Ormeau for the past 50 years, having moved there as a young child with her family from the Markets area of Belfast. At the time, the family of 9 were living in a 1 bedroom house, with an outside toilet and no bathroom. Moving into a 3 bedroom house, with an inside toilet and bathroom in Artana Street provided room for the family and a place to be part of a new community where Patricia's mother still lives today. Of Patricia's 8 siblings, 5 still live in the Lower Ormeau area and remain a close knit extended family, with many of the grandchildren choosing to live in the Lower Ormeau and raise their own families. It has been important for Patricia and the extended family to stay in the neighbourhood, particularly since her mother was widowed 15 years ago.

Patricia first moved into a Housing Executive House in 1979, setting up home with her husband and 2 children in Balfour Avenue. The family expanded with the arrival of 2 more children after moving to Powers Court Place in 1982. Due to her mother's ill health, Patricia and the family moved house for the last time in 1990 to Dromara Street to be nearer to her mother and offer support. Throughout this period, Patricia has been actively involved in community life, volunteering for 16 years at LORAG (Lower Ormeau Resident's Action Group), working with the youth group and children's programme. She is also an active member of the Women's Information Group, championing initiatives for women in the Belfast area and networking with other groups. Patricia's home in Dromara Street is still lively as she has been a foster parent for the last 12 years, welcoming 27 children into the family during this time and providing a loving, caring home environment.

Because of the social welfare reforms, with the introduction of 'the bedroom tax', this 3 bedroom family home is now under threat as the family home of 23 years has a spare bedroom, Patricia's last child having moved out to raise her own family in 2003. Patricia remembers the Lower Ormeau in years gone by and feels that the rise in private rental and multiple occupancy of houses has detracted from the community spirit that previously existed. With boarded up windows and a sense that private landlords and agents do not care about the community, Patricia feels that some streets are now unappealing. One of Patricia's children faces similar challenges with their housing situation as they have been on the NIHE waiting list for 4 years; currently renting a home from a private landlord. Working part time, with responsibility for a small child, Patricia's daughter wishes to stay in the local area to be close to her family.

It is frustrating for Patricia to see her daughter waiting for an opportunity for a NIHE home, when she feels other people are offered homes before her. With the changing face of the neighbourhood, there is a perception that other people from outside the community are allocated NIHE houses ahead of established families in the community, who have been 'born and bred' in the neighbourhood and the system is unfair. Tensions have arisen in the neighbourhood in the past between people in the community.



4.3 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The issue of housing condition was the most common concern identified during the consultation process, particularly amongst local residents and relating specifically to the Roma community. In addition, where the allocation of housing was identified as a key issue, there was also an acceptance that NIHE are bound by legislation and broadly, those consulted were aware that deliberate discrimination in terms of housing allocation is extremely unlikely. Most frustrating for local residents was the perception of lawlessness amongst the Roma and student community and a perception that statutory agencies “were not doing enough” to address overcrowding and the subsequent environmental issues that results from this.

Similar to the issue of emergency response, LORAG and South Belfast Roundtable find themselves in the difficult situation of having limited power to influence issues directly. Despite this, the weight of expectation that has emanated from past and present community development work with the Roma and other minority ethnic groups creates an expectancy that the organisation will play a fundamental role in addressing these issues, hence the development of this strategy. As has been noted, the project partners wish this process to act as a catalyst through which enhanced provision or issues can be addressed, it is anticipated that any recommendations will require a collaborative approach and that each of the agencies identified, both statutory and community will have a role to play. The following page provides another example of good practice relating specifically to housing issues, similar to those faced by the Lower Ormeau and Botanic Communities.

4.4 INTRODUCTION TO HOUSING CONTEXT

This section contextualises the need for a more coherent and coordinated approach to housing in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast, with a specific focus on the implications that these issues have on community cohesion. Firstly, it is important to understand what this project means by housing. The consultation process has identified a number of major concerns under the overarching theme of housing. These can be categorised as follows:

1. *Allocation of Housing*
2. *Environmental concerns in relation to housing*
3. *Condition of Houses*

In designing this project, the initial consultation process conducted by CCC Project identified that housing concerns are one of the key underlying causes of tension locally. The 3 overarching themes of emergency response, housing and early intervention are all inextricably linked, but the sensitivities relating to housing undeniably create high levels of frustration.

As has been identified previously, the Botanic and Shaftesbury electoral wards are both located within the top 4% most deprived in Northern Ireland with regards to living environment, much of this can be linked directly to issues relating to housing, particularly environmental concerns that emanate from overcrowding.

Under this key strategic theme, high levels of frustration were identified specific to the Roma community and students. Resultantly, this represents the main focus in this section of the overall report.

4.4 HOUSING CONTEXT

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive District Housing Plan and Local Housing Strategy 2012/13 indicates that at 2009, migrant worker families from Central and Eastern Europe represented approximately 2.5% of the population of Belfast. Consultation with local estate agents concluded that the majority of migrant workers continue to live in the private rented sector. There has been no significant change in the number of migrant workers seeking housing in the social sector.

The housing stock in Belfast is approximately 130,380 units. The private rented sector accounts for approximately 20% of total stock, higher than the Northern Ireland figure of 17%. Social housing represents 25% of local stock which is also higher than the Northern Ireland figure of 15%. The percentage of vacant stock in Belfast is 4.7% and this is lower than the Northern Ireland figure of 5.9%. The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) sector can provide affordable housing for some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society including benefit claimants or those on low incomes, students and foreign migrant workers. Locally and specific to the CCC project, On Census Day 27th March 2011, in **Botanic** Ward:

1. **16.33%** of households were owner occupied and **81.80%** were rented;
2. **7.99%** of households were owned outright;
3. **4.14%** of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;
4. **6.01%** were lone parent households with dependent children

In addition, in **Shaftesbury** Ward:

1. **23.95%** of households were owner occupied and **70.33%** were rented;
2. **8.96%** of households were owned outright;
3. **12.50%** of households were comprised of a single person aged 65+ years;
4. **9.82%** were lone parent households with dependent children



4.4 HOUSING CONTEXT

The table below identifies the housing composition of housing applicants at 2012. The table provides information for common landlord areas Lower Ormeau and Cromac, these areas correlate closest with the catchment area for the CCC Project. The table identifies a high number of HS applications (i.e. those applicants with 30 points or more). Additionally, the allocation is significantly lower than the applicant count which indicates a potential shortfall in available houses. According to the consultation, this alone can cause both intra and inter community tension, much of which stems from the perceived allocation of social housing to minority ethnic communities ‘instead of’ majority established members of the community. In reality, NIHE are bound by Housing Selection Scheme which is governed by a set of rules which are approved by DSD. This indicates a lack of awareness about the housing selection process.

Common Landlord Area	Type	Single	Small	Small	Large	Large	Older	Total
		person	Adult	Family	Adult	Family	Person	
Lower Ormeau	Applicant	182	13	59	5	17	16	292
	Housing Stress Applicant (30 points or more)	134	8	44	5	8	10	209
	Allocation	17	2	22	0	4	3	48
Cromac	Applicant	39	6	16	2	2	7	72
	Housing Stress Applicant (30 points or more)	28	3	14	2	11	5	53
	Allocation	18		6			3	27

An analysis of the target area for this project (as per the map in section 2.1) conducted by NIHE using the Pointer Residential Property Count identifies that are 3168 properties. As of June 2011, these properties can be broken down as follows, NIHE Tenanted Property Count – 163, Housing Association Property Count – 337, HMO Property Count – 1271. This leaves 1397 properties which are either private rented properties or owner occupied. These statistics evidence the high number of HMO and private rented properties, within the catchment area for the CCC project. Many of the housing challenges identified, relate directly to these properties.

4.4 HOUSING CONTEXT

With regards the Roma community in Lower Ormeau and Botanic, (as noted in section 2) their status as an accession state national prohibits access to public funds such as housing and social security benefits. Resultantly, the enhanced availability of HMO's in the project catchment area and the large existing minority ethnic population creates an attractive environment for new communities. Consultation process suggests that the Roma families in South Belfast are largely illiterate. They have no access to mainstream employment. Children often struggle with English or literacy skills. Some of those consulted indicate that Roma parents prefer not to send their children to school during cold weather, not only because they can't afford warm winter clothes, but more importantly because they do not want to take the risk that their children become sick, when they do not have access to health services. Due to their position as accession EU state resident, the Roma do not have access to regular health services in Northern Ireland, with the exception of Accident & Emergency facilities.

The extreme financial situation faced by Roma families often results in shared housing with up to 30 people living in 3 and 4 bedroom properties. As a result, environmental conditions, hygiene and general living environment deteriorate rapidly. It is estimated that there are approximately 400 Roma currently living in Lower Ormeau and Botanic. For many of these individuals, private rented sector represents the only housing option available. It should be noted that 'technically' with members coming from one family, these properties cannot obtain HMO status and therefore are not subject to regulation from NIHE. The Housing Executive uses a combination of methods to raise standards in HMO's including inspection, grant aid and enforcement orders. There are 2,201 registered HMOs in Belfast according to the NIHE Housing Strategy 2012/13.

4.5 HOUSING:EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The issue of housing is a complicated one, it has a clear strategic fit with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The Migration in NI Research and Information Service Paper (February 2012) indicates that the majority of international migrants initially find accommodation in the private rental sector. However, with rental costs in the private sector increasing, affordability and security of tenure are key drivers for increasing numbers of migrant workers and their families applying for social housing. The latest statistics available for NI include:

- ❖ 1,894 migrant worker households applied for social housing in the 35 District Offices in the one year period to 31st July 2012. This is a slight increase on the 1,870 migrant worker households that applied in the year to 31st July 2011. Main nationalities include Polish (563), Lithuanian (325) and Latvian (192).
- ❖ 272 migrant worker households were allocated housing in the year to 31st July 2012. This is similar to the number of allocations in the year to 31st July 2011 (268). Main nationalities include Polish (118), Lithuanian (45), Latvian (23) and Portuguese (20) households.
- ❖ 914 migrant worker households were tenants on 31st July 2012 out of 89,034 homes managed by the Housing Executive. This is an increase of 17% on the previous year. Main nationalities at 31st July 2012 included Polish (285), Portuguese (141), Lithuanian (138) and Latvian (79) migrant workers households.
- ❖ 754 applications were received from migrant workers applying as homeless in the one year period to 31st July 2012. This is a slight fall on the 795 applications made by households applying as homeless in the previous year. Main nationalities applying as homeless included Polish (215), Lithuanian (105) and Portuguese (75).

The information above describes the typical process of housing access for 'new' communities, however, as the majority of local concerns relating to CCC Project fall with the Roma community and students, the enforcement ability of the Housing Executive becomes somewhat restricted. The NIHE can help to influence the impact of these housing concerns by enforcing powers relating to HMO's.

4.5 HOUSING:EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

❖ LANDLORD REGISTRATION SCHEME

Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations were approved by the Assembly on 24 September 2012. The purpose is to create a register of all private landlords which will capture and maintain relevant and up to date information about private landlords and their tenancies. The scheme will maintain an up to date database and is aimed at helping to enforce standards and improve tenancy management within the private rented sector. It is anticipated that these regulations may contribute and help manage the issue of overcrowding in Lower Ormeau and Botanic.

❖ NIHE NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICERS

The Housing Executive currently employs up to 17 Neighbourhood Officers, one of which is dedicated to South Belfast. The Neighbourhood Officers have a range of responsibilities including environmental and housing management responsibilities. These are however primarily concerned with NIHE stock properties and therefore may have limited impact on Roma related issues in Belfast South.

❖ ROLE OF NIHE

The Housing Executive is responsible for ensuring that HMOs meet a number of requirements in relation to the overall condition of the dwelling, and the number of people living in the dwelling. The consultation identified that the Housing Executive experienced difficulty accessing landlords details, it is anticipated that the landlord registration scheme may help to alleviate this issue.

4.5 HOUSING:EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

❖ ROLE OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL CONTINUED

Belfast City Council adopt a number of key roles in relation to housing concerns. Some of the key responsibilities include:

1. Provision of legal advice
2. Enforcing housing and public health legislation
3. Inspecting Properties to make sure they are suitable to live in

Belfast City Council can take legal action against landlords if the condition of their property creates an unhealthy environment for tenants. This covers privately-rented properties and those owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive or other housing associations. The council can also serve legal notices on owners of private properties asking them to carry out repair works, abate nuisances or make houses fit to live in by issuing statutory notices to social housing landlords or by serving legal notices to tenants if they are responsible for causing a public health nuisance.

Whilst Belfast City Council have a number of enforcement powers relating to housing condition and living environment, the officers tasked with carrying this out have experienced significant difficulty with regards the Roma community. The transient nature of the Roma, the difficulty in serving fixed penalty notices and their inability to pay fines reduce the impact of enforcement. In fact, the consultation has identified a perceived lawlessness for the Roma community, whilst several private landlords have suggested that the environmental impacts of overcrowding and inability to combat these issues creates additional problems attracting tenants.

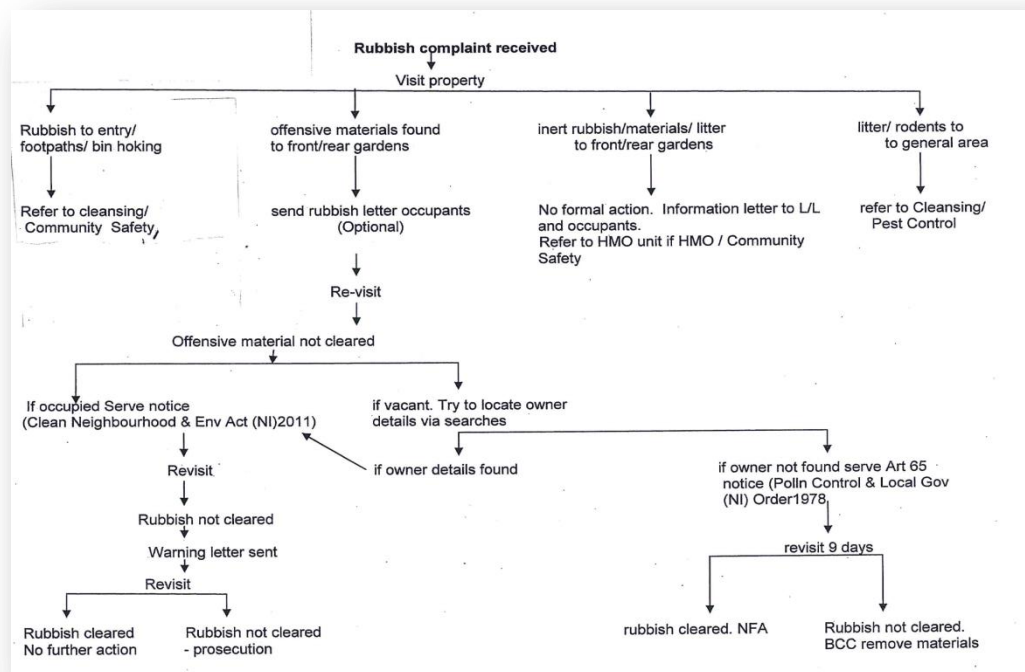
4.5 HOUSING:EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Belfast City Council has identified its processes for dealing with the following:

1. Litter/rubbish complaints
2. Complaints relating to overcrowding
3. Complaints regarding disrepair in vacant property
4. Complaints regarding disrepair in occupied property

Each of these processes are presented in the pages that follow, cross referenced by some of the key consultation findings.

RUBBISH COMPLAINTS

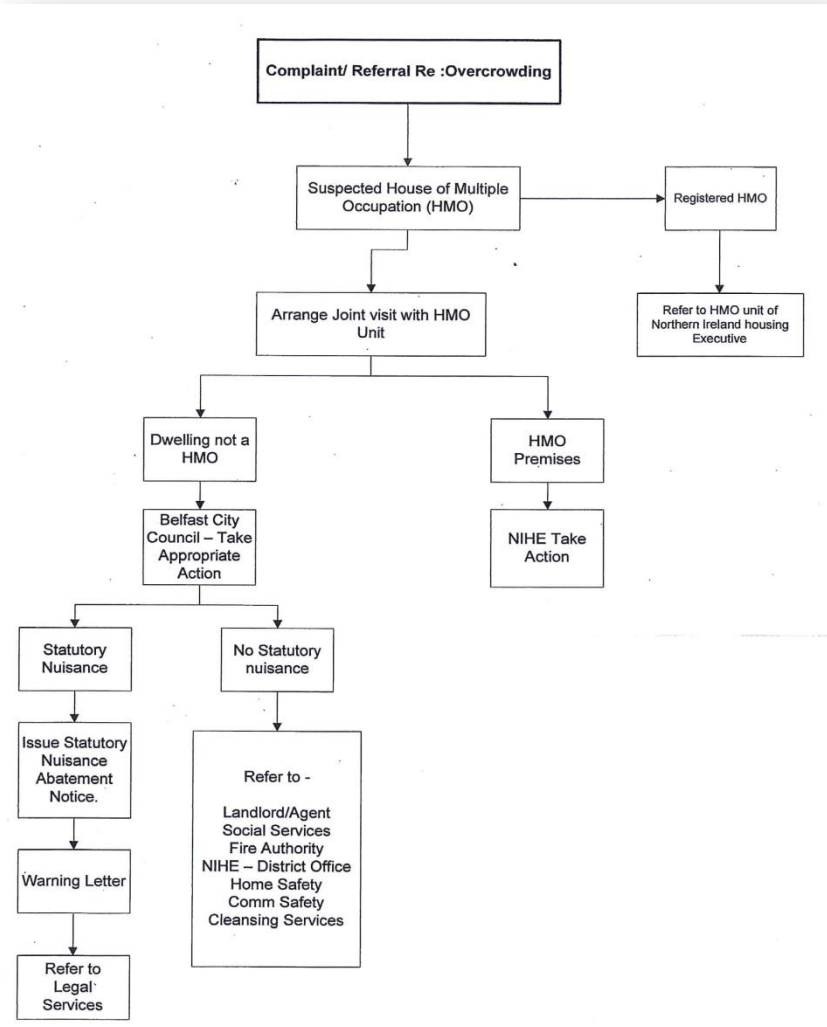


The diagram opposite presents Belfast City Council's existing approach to deal with rubbish/litter complaints. Whilst the process can result in prosecution and the removal of rubbish, the consultation process actually identifies that for many of the residents within Lower Ormeau and Botanic, for example the Roma, prosecution holds no fear and has no impact. The transient nature of the Roma, and lack of income makes it difficult for prosecution to be implemented.

As a result, the issue has never really been resolved. It should be noted however that prosecutions have been successful with students in the past. The challenge for CCC Project and for BCC is to ensure effective procedures for all sections of the community.

4.5 HOUSING:EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

OVERCROWDING COMPLAINTS



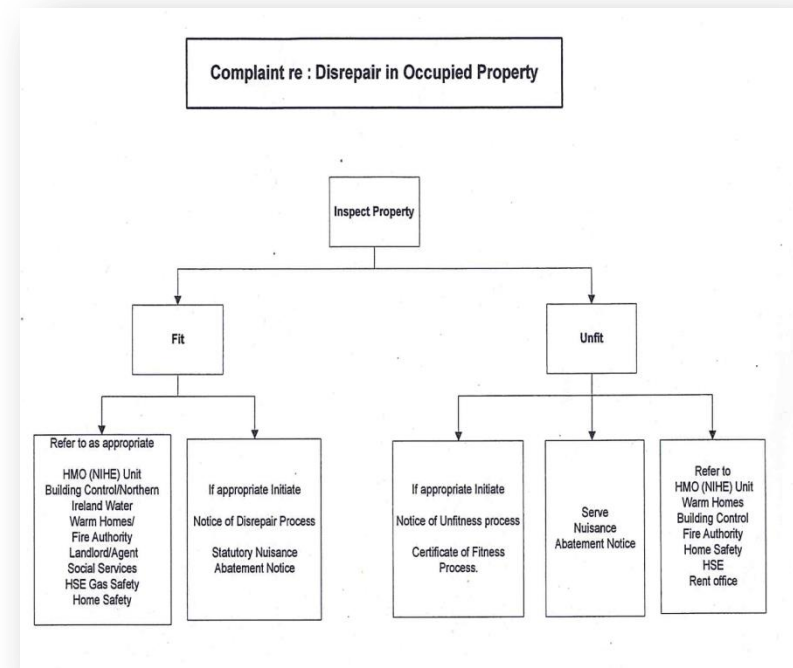
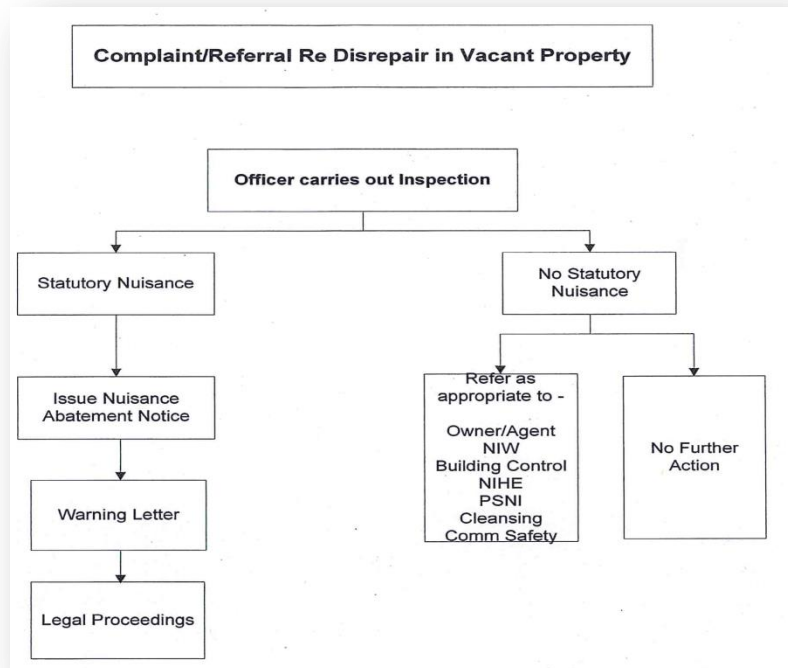
This diagram describes the process of dealing with complaints relating to overcrowding . Initially, officers will seek to determine if a property is considered to be a HMO (House of Multiple Occupation), if this is the case then responsibility for dealing with this property is transferred to NIHE. For clarity, a HMO is defined as “a house occupied by more than 2 qualifying persons, being persons who are not all members of the same family” .

This is a complex issue in Lower Ormeau and Botanic. Despite up to 30 people living in one property, it has been reported that the Roma community (and other minority ethnic communities) have informed officers that these occupants are all members of one family and therefore the property is not classified as a HMO. In this instance, responsibility for action falls with Belfast City Council.

Where the property displays no statutory nuisance, BCC will refer the issue to a range of other sources, most often the local cleansing officer or anti social behaviour officers. The issue here is that often, complaints are not resolved and in the case that warning letters are provided or legal services involved, this carries little or no threat to the habitants as in some instances, the occupants do not understand English or have little understanding of judiciary implications. The consultation has identified a lack of legislation as the overriding issue, whereas the lack of onus on landlord responsibility has been cited as a major concern. The complexity of the issue creates challenges for the CCC Project which this strategy will seek to find ways to address.

4.5 HOUSING:EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

DISREPAIR IN OCCUPIED AND UNOCCUPIED PROPERTY



The diagrams above represent the various approaches of BCC in terms of vacant and occupied properties that have been referred as unfit or in disrepair. The diagrams reflect limited powers within council in comparison to its counterparts in England (Newcastle City Council) and Scotland who can avail of selective licensing schemes and other legislative power. The challenges for local communities is the environmental and health implications of unfit houses, the capital depreciation of other properties as a result and the continued heightened tension that ensues. The Council have powers of enforcement but also rely on input from other agencies, and in particular the commitment of landlords to address disrepair and ensure a house is fit for purpose. The council already work with partners such as NIHE through referrals. Wider consultation has reported examples in which minority ethnic families live in properties with no flushing toilets and heat. This causes environmental concerns and results in excrement in the streets and overcrowding. These issues are often the root cause of local tensions but frustratingly for local communities and the local authority, are bound by legislation and require fundamental shift in power to create meaningful change.

❖ ROLE OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL CONTINUED

The consultation with Belfast City Council identified very specific parameters for housing concerns. These include:

1. Concerns relating to the condition of houses, emptying bins in search of goods or 'bin hoking'
2. Environmental concerns including bin hoking, sanitation, cleansing, litter, dumping and hygiene

In the context of this project, the consultation has identified a range of challenges across each category. With regards the environmental concerns, the Clean Neighbourhoods Act became law in Northern Ireland on 1st April 2012. This strengthened some powers which Belfast City Council already had and introduced a number of additional powers which, it is hoped, will allow council to deal with environmental offences more effectively. The act deals with six broad areas:

- ❖ fly-posting and graffiti;
- ❖ litter;
- ❖ noise;
- ❖ dog control orders;
- ❖ gating orders;
- ❖ nuisance vehicles and statutory nuisances (such as rubbish in gardens, artificial lighting or fumes)

Belfast City Council anticipate that this will enable them to deal more effectively with issues in the catchment area for this project, including student noise in partnership with Queens University and University of Ulster.

❖ ROLE OF QUB

Queens University take a pro active role in dealing with issues relating to students in the community. For example, comprehensive systems are in place to deal with incidents and complaints of housing concerns and anti-social behaviour by students. Residents who wish to report an incident or make a complaint can do so by phoning the **Queen's University** or the **Community Affairs Office**. The hotline is line operational 24 hours a day. Community Affairs can also be contacted by email.

QUB also provide advice and guidance on 'being a better neighbour' for students including for example (not exhaustive)

- Keep your garden and any surrounding areas free of rubbish
- Don't forget to clean up and dispose of your rubbish properly.
- Not everyone will share your taste in music – keep the volume down to a reasonable level.
- Position speakers away from adjoining walls.
- Avoid shouting in the street and remember to be careful and quiet when you return home after a night out.
- Take your rubbish home or use proper bins
- Respect the property of others, particularly fences, walls, street furniture and parked cars

QUB warn students that their degree may be at risk as a result of complaints. CCC Project welcome this involvement and is keen to continue to work with QUB and work more with University of Ulster to ensure appropriate management of issues relating to cohesion.

4.6 WHAT HAPPENS ELSEWHERE?

Tower Hamlets Homes is an ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation), a not-for-profit company, whose sole purpose is to deliver high quality housing services for residents living in 22,000 Tower Hamlets Council homes. The organisation aims to make your neighbourhood a pleasant, safe and attractive place to be. The Council is owner of the homes that THH manage. Tenants are Council tenants and leaseholders are Council leaseholders. THH manage the tenancies and leases on behalf of the Council. The organisation provides the following key services (not exhaustive):

1. Keep your block and neighbourhood clean and keep green spaces maintained to a high standard, as well as carrying out inspections with residents.
2. Help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
3. Keep your block and communal areas in good repair, and arrange major construction works to repair and improve your neighbourhoods.
4. Provide extra support if you need it to help you live independently or to help you manage your tenancy or lease.
5. Improve homes to bring them up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard.
6. Involve you in making decisions about what we do and keeping you informed about matters that affect you.
7. Work with you to address any problems, including taking action against residents where we cannot agree solutions.
8. Collect your rent and service charges and take action if you are in arrears.

4.6 WHAT HAPPENS ELSEWHERE?

The Govanhill Neighbourhood Management Steering Group was set up by the local community planning partnership in 2008. The group brings together public agencies, further education and other providers to identify local priorities. Action plans have been developed through four sub groups focusing on community safety and security, children and young people, adults, employment, debt and financial inclusion and housing. Govanhill has a long history of communities settling in the area including Jewish, Irish and Bangladeshi people.

A recent research report identified that the following groups were considered vulnerable by community groups in the Govanhill area:

Most participants identified the Roma communities as disconnected. In particular Romanian and Lithuanian Roma (there are approx. 200/300 in Govanhill) and the Slovakian Roma.

Other 'hidden' communities identified include:

- Vulnerable people living in private lets: e.g. drug addicts and those
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Non Roma EU migrants (most are under 30 and seeking work)
- Polish
- Slovaks and Czechs
- Disabled people

4.6 WHAT HAPPENS ELSEWHERE?

The research report identified that there is a sense among some respondents that the needs of the settled populations of working age who do not get involved in residents groups are largely unknown and that these residents are possibly invisible to services. There was also a consistent view that there is potential for greater engagement with families across minority ethnic groups through schools and greater involvement of parent groups such as school boards, PTAs, nursery and pre-school groups.

The report identified transience, language, racism, culture as key barriers to engagement locally and therefore demonstrates similarities with the CCC Project. The community organisations in Govanhill operate a range of initiatives to address these issues locally, one example includes: Govanhill and Pollokshields Integration Network, which brings together local individuals and organisations to promote equality, celebrate cultural diversity and develop community cohesion in Govanhill and Pollokshields – the most ethnically diverse areas of Scotland. The Network acts as a forum for people to come and discuss ideas, identify issues within their community, and develop a partnership approach to local service delivery. The Network is made up of local individuals, community/voluntary organisations and statutory or NGO partners. Meetings of the Network are monthly, rotating around community organisations in Govanhill and Pollokshields. Typically, the kind of activities which partners are involved in include work with young people, families and gender specific groups, support for speaker's of other languages; advice, information and advocacy; drop-ins; promotion of local cultural diversity through the Arts; work to promote employability; activities to support safe and healthy lifestyles; festivals and events and work to challenge racist or discriminatory attitudes.

4.7 EMERGING TRENDS & CONSIDERATIONS

The priorities under Housing are identified in the table below:

1. To address the condition of houses locally, (particularly HMO's) and the subsequent environmental and hygiene concerns that ensue
2. To address the perceptions relating to housing allocation across the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas

As noted previously, the project promoters were keen that the consultation process underpinning the development of the 3 strategies was meaningful in that feedback and information provided was used to directly inform key actions.

The tables that follows provides 4 suggested interventions to be developed and delivered as part of Creating Cohesive Community Project and beyond. Importantly, the interventions have been developed with existing provision in mind and in direct response to the consultation findings. The various initiatives will not displace existing services, moreover they will seek to embed the already strong working relationships forged during the early stages of the CCC project.

The action plan is then summarised with key information in terms of likely cost implications and identified responsibility for project partners and stakeholders.

4.8 STRATEGY FOR HOUSING

The following table provides an overview of key short term actions (i.e. those that will be delivered during the lifespan of the project) in anticipation that these can create infrastructure that is sustained beyond the project. The actions are based on the key consultation findings.

KEY PRIORITIES	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	COST
To address the condition of houses locally, (particularly HMO's) and the subsequent environmental and hygiene concerns that ensue	To lobby, alongside Belfast City Council for the introduction of the Selective Licensing Scheme to reflect council powers in England & Wales, to address the root cause of poor housing conditions and environmental concerns. To lobby alongside BCC to introduce overcrowding standards legislation in HMO's	June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ DSD ➤ Belfast City Council 	No cost associated
	To work through new investment in Lower Ormeau (Big Lottery) to establish a 'Community Environmental Improvement' scheme that provides youth employment opportunities with a focus on providing specific support for some of the most vulnerable members of the local community and their homes. Complementing the emergency response repair aspect, this project can provide qualifications for young people along with practical work experience to paint/improve/clean/repair and enhance the physical appearance of the community (working in partnership with NIHE, LANI and BCC)	Commencing September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ Statutory Agencies ➤ Advisory Sub Group 	Ongoing costs (supported by project partners through Big Lottery investment)
	To establish and implement a Housing Taskforce consisting of CCC Project, BCC Environmental Health, BCC Cleansing and BCC ASB Officer to deal with rubbish, bin hoking and housing condition complaints on a case by case basis as an interim measure. To review the outcome of the taskforce after 6 months and report back through networking forum and PACT. This group will develop a specific terms of reference to ensure appropriate management of data and clear lines of communication. This taskforce will feed into the local neighbourhood management initiative as noted in Belfast City Councils strategic study for the Holylands.	May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ Belfast City Council 	Officers Time
To address the perceptions relating to housing allocation across the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas	To support the existing sub office delivered by the NIHE and other social housing providers using the community connected mail service developed under the early intervention & engagement strategy. These events can help provide information on new developments and dispel myths about housing allocation, this information is to be included within the Neighbourhood Guide	May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ Networking Forum ➤ Advisory Group ➤ Community Partners 	No cost associated

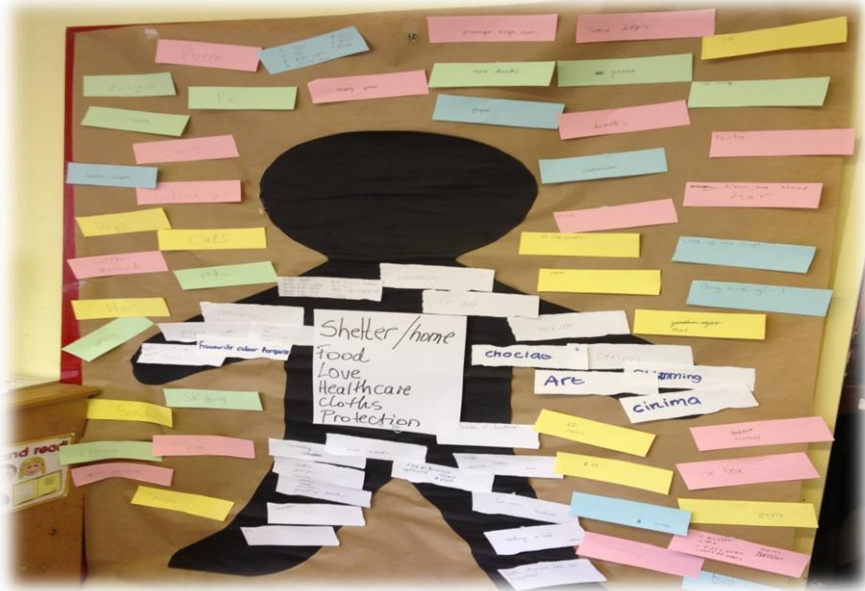
4.9 SUMMARY OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY

The table above describes 4 proposed interventions against the overarching theme of Housing. The project partners are keen to implement key actions at the earliest possible convenience and maintain the momentum of the project to date.

Whilst the actions identified are short term in nature, it should be noted that the project partners are committed to the long term impact of these initiatives and have therefore proposed the following:

1. The potential to lobby for new housing powers for local authorities is aspirational and the project partners are keen to note that they will continue to explore alternative means of improving housing issues locally. The project partners will make a commitment to continue to review good practice examples and where appropriate, to implement new projects and initiatives locally to help address concerns relating to the condition of houses and environmental concerns linked to houses.
2. The project partners are committed to the concept of partnership working and collaboration and where existing projects have the potential to be extended to this area, the project is keen to build relationships and facilitate this process. In addition, LORAG has recently been awarded funding from the Big Lottery to deliver a strategic youth employment initiative across the target area, it is anticipated that this project can act as a catalyst through which the environmental improvement initiative can be implemented.
3. Key for the project partners is to clarify the exact roles and responsibilities of both Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in terms of cleansing and other support. It is important to note at this stage that this information has been requested by the project partners. It is the intention that the CCC Project will embed community based accountability to existing structures, both to facilitate and assist statutory partners and local residents to provide and receive the most appropriate and effective support, and to improve the level of faith and trust in statutory response across the target area.
4. The consultation process has identified a range of perceptions in relation to the allocation of housing and services available. The project is committed to supporting existing infrastructure and through the connected mail group and networking forum, will work to ensure that those most in need, can take advantage of NIHE support (information events). This applies particularly to minority ethnic communities who rarely attend events, yet noted that they don't feel supported and are unaware of their rights or new developments regarding housing.

CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY



5.1 CONSULTATION FINDINGS: EMERGENCY RESPONSE

A key aspect of the consultation process was to explore the extent to which current emergency response services address the needs of local communities. Some of the key consultation findings relating to emergency response are noted below:

Consultation Findings Established community perspective

- Perception of unfair treatment from statutory bodies and law enforcement agencies amongst established community and often victim of the 'racist card'
- Lack of understanding on what the process is for emergency response or who is responsible for housing support whenever an incident takes place, it takes too long for statutory agencies to respond
- Community Safety (racism, anti-social behaviour, sectarianism) are still very prevalent and daily occurrences
- Perception that minority ethnic children cause trouble and are involved in anti-social behaviour throughout the area, particularly in relation to stealing and bin hoking
- Perception that minority ethnic communities are not punished as severely as majority established community by the PSNI nor by statutory bodies
- Perceived lawlessness and lack of enforcement particularly regarding the Roma is a cause of frustration for established communities
- Reluctance to report because of a "belief that nothing will be done anyway"
- Established communities note a lack of faith or trust in a statutory response and don't see the point in reporting incidents, feeling of hopelessness to resolve issues
- Perception that young people from established communities also

Consultation Findings Minority Ethnic Perspective

- Perception of unfair treatment from statutory bodies and law enforcement agencies amongst minority ethnic communities and a feeling that agencies do not take their issues seriously
- Literacy and language barriers, as well as lack of faith and trust prevent a lot of minority ethnic families from accessing additional support after an incident
- Perception that at times the PSNI and other statutory agencies can be racist in their behaviour and treatment of minority ethnic communities after a hate incident
- Community Safety (racism, anti-social behaviour, sectarianism) are still very prevalent and daily occurrences
- Fear of local youths, PSNI, statutory bodies and other residents amongst minority ethnic communities
- Many minority ethnic families and individuals have experienced racial abuse during their time living in Lower Ormeau and Botanic
- Reluctance to report because of a "belief that nothing will be done anyway" is a common concern amongst minority ethnic communities

The consultation findings identified above note key similarities in terms of established and minority ethnic communities perspective on emergency response, crime and anti social behaviour. The challenge for the project partners is therefore working with both communities and statutory agencies to create systems and infrastructure that enable issues to be addressed at the earliest possible stage, to initially increase the number of people willing to report, and ultimately reduce the number that need to report.



5.2 A LOCAL CASE STUDY

This case study has been provided to 'bring to life' some of the issues and concerns relating to cohesion in Lower Ormeau and Botanic.

Sebastian came to Northern Ireland from Romania in 2007. Since this time, Sebastian has worked in a carwash providing for his family. The family lived in the Ava area of Ballynafeigh, South Belfast for 2 years and felt content to live there, as an extended family, reporting 'good neighbours' and a 'good landlord'. Their children attended St Joseph's College and although, at times, the family had been victims of indiscriminate name calling in and around the neighbourhood and Belfast City centre; they reported not feeling threatened when inside their home. On Wednesday 21 November as Sebastian was leaving home for work at approx. 9.30am, an unknown man, aged between 35-40 years, with a Belfast accent approached him outside his house and told him that if he did not leave the house and the area, he would smash the windows of his home. This was not taken seriously by Sebastian as there has been a history of verbal abuse and mild threats since his arrival in Belfast in 2007 which had never escalated. This threat was not reported to PSNI or any community network, including the Romanian Roma Community Association of Northern Ireland.

On Friday 23 November, between approx. 6.30-7.30pm, the family, including young children were sitting in their home, when the front window of their house was smashed. In a state of shock, Sebastian ran out to the front of the house and saw two Caucasian men running away. As they reached a street corner, one man turned around and waved a baseball bat at Sebastian before continuing to walk away.

5.2 A LOCAL CASE STUDY

At this time, some neighbours had come out of their homes to see what had happened, but did not approach the family. Sebastian returned to the house and rang Nicolae Nicola – chairperson of RRCANI to inform him and ask for advice. As Nicolae was out of Belfast supporting a residential between the Roma youth and LORAG youth groups, he rang a colleague and then telephoned the PSNI immediately to report the incident.

Two PSNI officers arrived on the scene within 5 minutes of reporting the incident to PSNI. As Sebastian did not speak English, his 15 year old son interpreted for the PSNI as an incident report was recorded. Two further officers arrived shortly after. PSNI completed house to house enquiries with one neighbour providing information that he believed was of interest to the PSNI, whilst other neighbours declined. During this time, the family cleared up the glass inside the house as there were young children in the home.

A further three PSNI officers joined the scene, including the sergeant/supervisor attending the scene as per protocol. The sergeant also ensured that a crime scene investigator was tasked to attend the incident and this investigator arrived that evening. Two officers stayed with the family for approximately two hours and a further three went on patrol in the area paying attention to other houses with Roma families. PSNI were provided with a telephone number for the landlord and left a voicemail. The landlord rang the PSNI back the next day. Sebastian also contacted the landlord and was told that as he lived outside of Belfast, he was unable to carry out repair work to the property that evening, but would arrive the next morning.

Initially, Sebastian told police that he would stay in the home, but he grew increasingly concerned that the perpetrators could return that evening and was fearful that his house would be further attacked and set alight, particularly as the window was smashed and the front of the house exposed. Nicolae Nicola's colleague arrived at the scene shortly after the police. It was at this time that the family decided to leave their home to go to the house of a relative at an alternative address. The police were made aware of their decision to leave the property as they returned from their patrol in the early hours of the morning. In moving house, the family have incurred the extra cost of buying furniture for their home and forfeiting the remainder of their rent on the house in Ava Park. As routine, PSNI issued a crime reference number and victim support offered on the scene. Since the incident, Sebastian has said that he has not had any contact with the PSNI to follow up or correspondence from Victim Support. He is not aware of a crime number for this incident or how he can find out more about his case. Due to the nature of the hate crime, the PSNI contacted the Roma advocacy worker and the Belfast City Council anti-social behaviour officer, who work closely together to follow up with the family on 29/11/12.

A response was given to PSNI confirming that the visit was made and information provided to the family that HIPA (Hate Incident Practical Scheme) was offered and declined. PSNI had a further meeting on 28/11/12 at BCDA to discuss community tensions, with relevant agencies and personnel. When asked how he felt about the incident, Sebastian responded with, 'In this country, anything can happen'. He said that he is expecting to be attacked anytime.



5.3 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

This section contextualises the need for a more coherent and coordinated approach to emergency response in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast. Firstly, it is important to understand what this project means by emergency response. An emergency is response is defined as:

Any hate incident, or hate crime which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate because of sectarianism, race, disability, faith or sexual orientation

The original application to Belfast City Council's Strategic Grants programme was inspired by a growing number of incidents locally which included criminal damage and vandalism to the homes of minority ethnic communities. The emergency response in these instances tended to be led by the community. In recent times, the outcome has been that families have been forced to move home as a result of ongoing violence. In the context of Creating Cohesive Community Project, typical incidents requiring emergency response may include (not exhaustive): violence against the person, criminal damage to property and anti social behaviour. It should be noted that these are incidents that are classified as hate incidents or motivated by hate.

The large student population within the catchment area extends the issue of emergency response where incidents have been noted throughout the Holyland area, clashes between students and local residents as well as minority ethnic communities becoming more prevalent. It should be noted however that these are not necessarily hate incidents and in that case, not applicable to this project.

5.4 A CONTEXT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

As noted earlier in this report, the Botanic Electoral Ward is the most deprived in Northern Ireland with regards to crime and disorder disadvantage (ranked 1 of 582).

PSNI Statistics evidence that the South Belfast Policing District records particularly high number of crimes, and specifically those with a race/hate motivation. In the period October 2010 – September 2012, the area has recorded 766 racially motivated hate crimes in comparison with 248 in North, 101 in West and 330 in East Belfast. This number accounts for more than 20% of all racially motivated hate crimes in Northern Ireland during this period of time. It should be noted that these statistics represent the wider South Belfast District, although it is anticipated that a large % are recorded in the target areas for Creating Cohesive Community Project.

According to the Safer Belfast Cohesion Mapping Project 2011, Shaftesbury, Botanic and Ballynafeigh have a large ethnic population. Of the 52 wards in Belfast, Botanic has the largest ethnic population. The Safer Belfast Cohesion Mapping project 2011 reports:

“There is one ward (Shaftesbury) that consistently has very high levels of race hate incidents compared to the rest of the wards in the city. In only one year were there more offences in a ward other than Shaftesbury”

The report continues: The Botanic ward has far and away the largest non-White ward population in Belfast with 532, on the other hand, the Shaftesbury ward with 105 non-White residents saw the highest number of race hate crimes committed in every year except 2008/09. The statistics reinforce the need for a coherent approach to crime and emergency response.

5.3 A CONTEXT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The PSNI Interactive Crime Map can now be used to identify the range and type of crime in an identified location on a monthly basis. The following image provides an overview of the vast number of crime committed in the target area for this project during the period January 2013



The majority of incidents reported were related to anti social behaviour 79 of 169. Violent Crime (15), theft (15), criminal damage and arson (28) and burglaries (15) were all frequently reported. These statistics are alarmingly high and again reinforce the challenge faced by both statutory agencies and local communities. It should be noted, that typically, many students vacate the area during this time due to holidays.

5.4 EMERGENCY RESPONSE: EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

It is important that this report establishes a current approach to emergency response. During the period September to November 2011 (prior to this application being submitted), the emergency response effort in Lower Ormeau was predominantly community led. It is clear that this response is not sustainable, the following information notes existing infrastructure in relation to emergency response.

❖ ROLE OF THE PSNI

Clearly, much of the responsibility regarding emergency response relates to the PSNI. Currently, the PSNI have 11 Neighbourhood Policing officers dedicated to the Lower Ormeau, Botanic and Holyland area. Each of the Neighbourhood Officers have a mobile phone number which is publically accessible. When not on duty, a neighbour hood officer will not be available to take your call their mobile phone will switch directly to the Call Handling Centre where you can leave a message to be contacted. It should be noted that the primary number for reporting crime remains 999 or 08456008000.

The PSNI also have a dedicated hate crime reporting service which can be accessed on <http://www.urzone.com/hatecrime/hatecrime.asp>. In January 2013, a new directive has been established in relation to reporting hate crime: The PSNI website provides a link to agencies that provide independent advice and information relating to Hate Crime, as well as information that has been translated into various languages to enables minority ethnic communities to access appropriate contact details and support.

❖ ROLE OF THE PSNI

The PSNI Directive in terms of Police Response to Hate Incidents is noted below:

1. Response officers will be tasked to attend the scene of the hate incident and investigate the report unless otherwise directed
2. Background checks regarding the individual/address involved etc. will be made to ensure the appropriate action is taken and to identify repeat victims
3. Consideration will be given to cultural issues/language/literacy requirements etc. of each hate incident to ensure awareness of sensitivities. If in doubt officers will ask the victim sensitively/carefully about their needs/worries/concerns.
4. The Investigating Officer will liaise with NPU officer(s) carrying out the Hate and Signal Crime role as well as CID to formulate the investigative strategy in relation to the hate incidents.
5. Consideration will be given to assistance from other specialist departments, for example crime prevention and the hate incident practical action (HIPA) scheme etc.
6. Referral to Victim Support including the advocacy services should be encouraged.
7. The report/case of the hate incident remains with the officer in the case, including maintenance of the NICHE OEL as well as victim update in accordance with Policy Directive 05/06 'Dealing with Victims and Witnesses'

❖ ROLE OF THE PSNI

According to PSNI literature, The Police Service of Northern Ireland has a clear policy in respect of the investigation of these incidents. District Commanders via Service Delivery Superintendent appoint and maintain dedicated police officers who carry out a Hate and Signal Crime role (HSCO).

They will be located within each police area within Neighbourhood Policing Units, specialising in this role and taking the lead in supporting and advising victims of hate incidents and liaising with significant partners in addition to supporting investigating officers and colleagues. This does not mean that these officers will automatically be the investigating officers for hate incidents. Victims are advised that they will also provide information on crime prevention, police powers and procedures and appropriate support groups. Literature relating to the HSCO indicates that this officer can be spoken to in confidence, offer a sympathetic service and respond appropriately to the individual needs of the victim.

Evidently, the PSNI has allocated significant resources to deal with issues relating to hate crime and anti social behaviour. The consultation process explores the extent to which these services are achieving their desired effect in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas of South Belfast. In developing a strategy to address key concerns, the project partners were keen to build on the commitment shown by the PSNI through its new directive and have used this a starting point to create a more accountable, visible and accessible response to hate crime.

❖ ROLE OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Belfast City Council also appoint an Anti Social Behaviour Officer dedicated to the South Belfast area. The ASB officer can receive reports relating to Anti Social behaviour, and Belfast City Council have limited enforcement powers against specific issues. Belfast City Council can apply to the Magistrates Court for an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO) which will prohibit a person from acting in an anti-social manner or from carrying out an act which contributes to anti-social behaviour. BCC have attributed significant resources to deal with issues such as anti social behaviour and hate crime. The Safer Belfast Plan has identified a range of actions to be delivered by Council in relation to hate crime and anti social behaviour:

- 2 Safer Neighbourhood Officers (from May 2013)
- Anti Social Behaviour Forums established and operational in South Belfast in partnership with NIHE and the PSNI
- Advice and Support services for victims of hate crime, including advocacy workers to encourage reporting
- Tension Monitoring Project which encourages regular meetings between key statutory agencies to identify and monitor tensions and established coordinated planning and responses
- Support and leading on the Holyland Interagency group to facilitate a coordinated approach to delivering services and interventions
- Supports the South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership
- Good Relations Unit Migrant and Minority ethnic project provides signposting information to victims of hate crime and works with community safety to co-ordinate community response to hate crime Provides 'Ending Hate in our Communities' training to BCC staff and community representatives.

❖ ROLE OF THE NIHE

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive also play an important role in dealing with and reporting anti social behaviour and hate crime. Individuals can report hate crime by calling in person to the NIHE office, advising a Housing Officer or Neighbourhood warden who is located within the South Belfast area. NIHE also provide translation services for BME communities. The Housing Executive has specific powers to take actions against its tenants which can include possession and injunction proceedings and Anti-Social Behaviour Order applications. Any existing housing executive tenant can report Repairs and contact Emergency Out of Hours Service at any time. Some forms of help can only be provided if the caller has a PSNI issued Crime Reference Number or if the Housing Executive can request this from the PSNI. To be treated as an emergency, the fault must carry the risk of immediate injury to people or major damage to property. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, as with other public authorities, is responsible for removing hate motivated graffiti from its properties. The NIHE also provide support for Private Rented properties through its HIPA scheme. This scheme, in particular circumstances, can provide personal and home protection measures if your home has been damaged or someone from your household has been a victim where the motivation of the attack is racist, homophobic, disability, sectarian, transphobic or faith related. It is available to owner-occupiers and tenants in privately rented and Housing Executive properties. This can only be applied to incidents that have been referred as hate crime by the PSNI. It should be noted that the CCC Project consultation has identified that this has been used as an emergency response service, NIHE confirm that the service is available 24 hours per day. The NIHE also participate in and contribute to a range of local forum, and are committed to working in partnership with community and statutory organisations to alleviate key issues, although emergency response falls slightly outside of the remit of the organisation, they try to refer to appropriate services and utilise 'The Big Word' Translation scheme to help minority ethnic communities.

5.5 SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND SERVICES

The information presented previously in relation to emergency response identifies a range of resources, infrastructure and schemes that seek to address hate crime and anti social behaviour locally. However, the consultation findings indicate that both established and minority ethnic communities are still unaware as to the correct reporting channels, and for those that do, they have noted a significant lack of confidence in the statutory response.

The Race Relations Policy for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive notes:

“Depending on the status of the individual (victim), responsibilities between the Housing Executive, Social Services, PSNI and the immigration service may vary.

This is complicated further by the enlargement of the EU and the ambiguity around the status of A8 countries who have also recently become the targets for racial attack.

Clearly public service response to racist incidents should be seamless and this again will be a priority for the Race Relations Policy where we can achieve this with others”

It appears that although a significant amount of resources and focus has been placed on emergency response and dealing with issues relating to hate crime, there is a lack of coherence and co-ordination to enable this to be delivered effectively and in a way that gains the confidence of local communities and new communities.

The issue of emergency response is undoubtedly a statutory responsibility. Organisations such as LORAG and South Belfast Roundtable, whilst taking the lead in this process, are extremely restricted in their ability to apply emergency response structures. The organisations have no enforcement or legislative powers, yet as a strong and visible presence within local communities, the organisations can undoubtedly make a contribution to a more structured and coherent approach. The project partners are conscious not to create something ‘new’ when significant infrastructure already exists, moreover, the project wishes to maximise and enhance existing provision by encouraging or acting as the catalyst for a more structured and strategic approach.

The following page describes an example of good practice relating to emergency response within diverse communities.



5.6 WHAT HAPPEN ELSEWHERE?

Agencies against Racist Crime and Harassment (ARCH) is a network of over 40 organisations working together to stop hate crime and reduce community tensions in Newcastle. They get the right help to victims and take action against attackers. Originally established to tackle racist crime, it has extended to cover other types of hate crime. It has a web based system for reporting racist, homophobic, transphobic, religious incidents and bullying of young people.

ARCH is widely acknowledged as national best practice. There are 140 incident reporting centres in the city across 30 agencies with over 300 trained and registered users. Since 2003 there has been an increase of 461% in incidents reported. There has also been a 51.9% increase in the number of cases dealt with in accordance to agency service standards since 2005.

This system exceeds legislative requirements and combines:

1. A 24-hour Freephone reporting line offering live translation in over 100 languages.
2. Multiagency casework files with automated referrals and case updates to agencies.
3. Multiagency case analysis and service level agreements.
4. Partnership performance management systems.

The system has expanded to all young people experiencing bullying of any type to report and get support, both in and out of school.

5.6 WHAT HAPPENS ELSEWHERE?

ARCH (Agencies Against Racist Crime and Harassment) is working to stop hate crime in Newcastle. Victims can report a hate incident to ARCH. ARCH are third party reporting centres for hate incidents.

ARCH are a group of organisations working together to get the right help to victims, and to take action against the attackers. Everyone involved in ARCH will believe victims and deal with an incident in the same way. Victims decide what happens to their information, for example it can go to Victim Support and not to the police. Victims simply say yes to those you want help from.

Key success factors for ARCH include:

1. With just one telephone call victims can get help from a range of organisations including: Your Homes Newcastle, the police, Victim Support, the Private Rented Project, NomadE5, Shelter, Streetwise, Connexions, mesmac and Outpost.
2. The organisations all work together to get the best support to victims and take action against the attackers.
3. If victims do not want to give their name and personal details they do not have to.

The ARCH phone number is widely publicised and is available 24 hours a day and is free. There is a translation service to over 100 languages. Victims can report something that has happened to them, to someone else or about something they have seen. There are 100's of ARCH reporting centres across Newcastle including schools, universities, council facilities and community organisations.

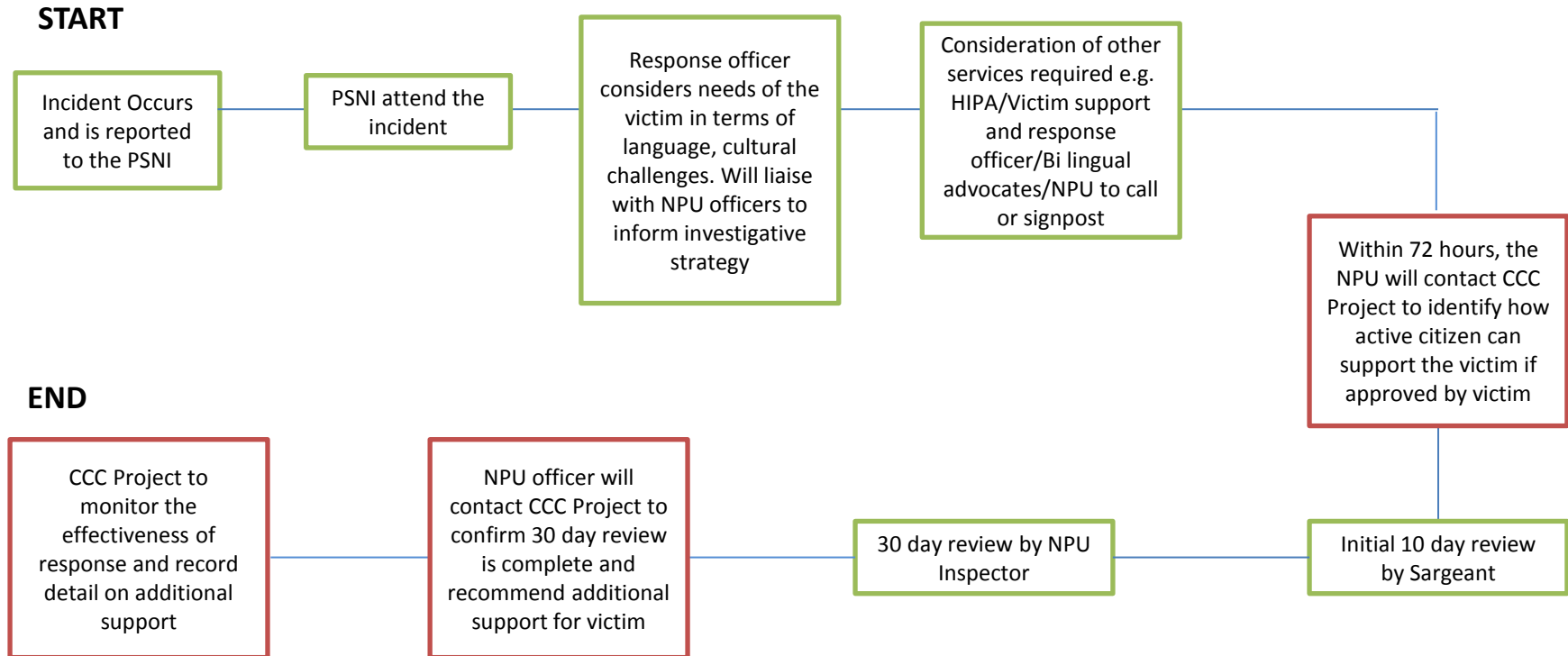
5.7 STRATEGY FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The following table provides an overview of key short term actions (i.e. those that will be delivered during the lifespan of the project) in anticipation that these can create infrastructure that is sustained beyond the project. The actions are based on the key consultation findings.

KEY PRIORITIES	PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	COST
To increase the level of faith/trust in the statutory response to hate crime (and crime in general) in the Lower Ormeau and Botanic areas	<p>To build on the new 'Police Response to Hate Incidents' directive by implementing additional community based procedures for local PSNI officers, this includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish a preferred community based 'line of communication' to support local residents that are victims of crime, this has been agreed at LORAG through the established community active citizens 2. Agreement from the PSNI that the local Neighbourhood Police Officer will engage directly with this project coordinator/active citizen within 72 hours of an incident to identify if the victim requires additional support (relating to language, comforting, advice, signposting). With consent, this has now become part of <i>the investigative strategy in relation to hate incidents</i>. 3. The new directive will offer a 30 day review on incidents. The PSNI will now communicate with this project coordinator/active citizen at the 30 day review to identify if the victim requires additional support. This has become part of the Police Response to Hate Incident Directive in Lower Ormeau and Botanic. 	May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ PSNI ➤ Appointed Active Citizens 	No cost associated
To address the perception of unfair treatment from PSNI in relation to hate incidents and increase the capacity of the PSNI to engage	To provide training to PSNI Neighbourhood Officers alongside proposed community active citizens, teachers and other community representatives to build relationships and capacity to manage emergency response incidents	July 2013 – September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Partners ➤ PSNI ➤ Active Citizens ➤ Community Stakeholders 	Cost of training included previously as £1800

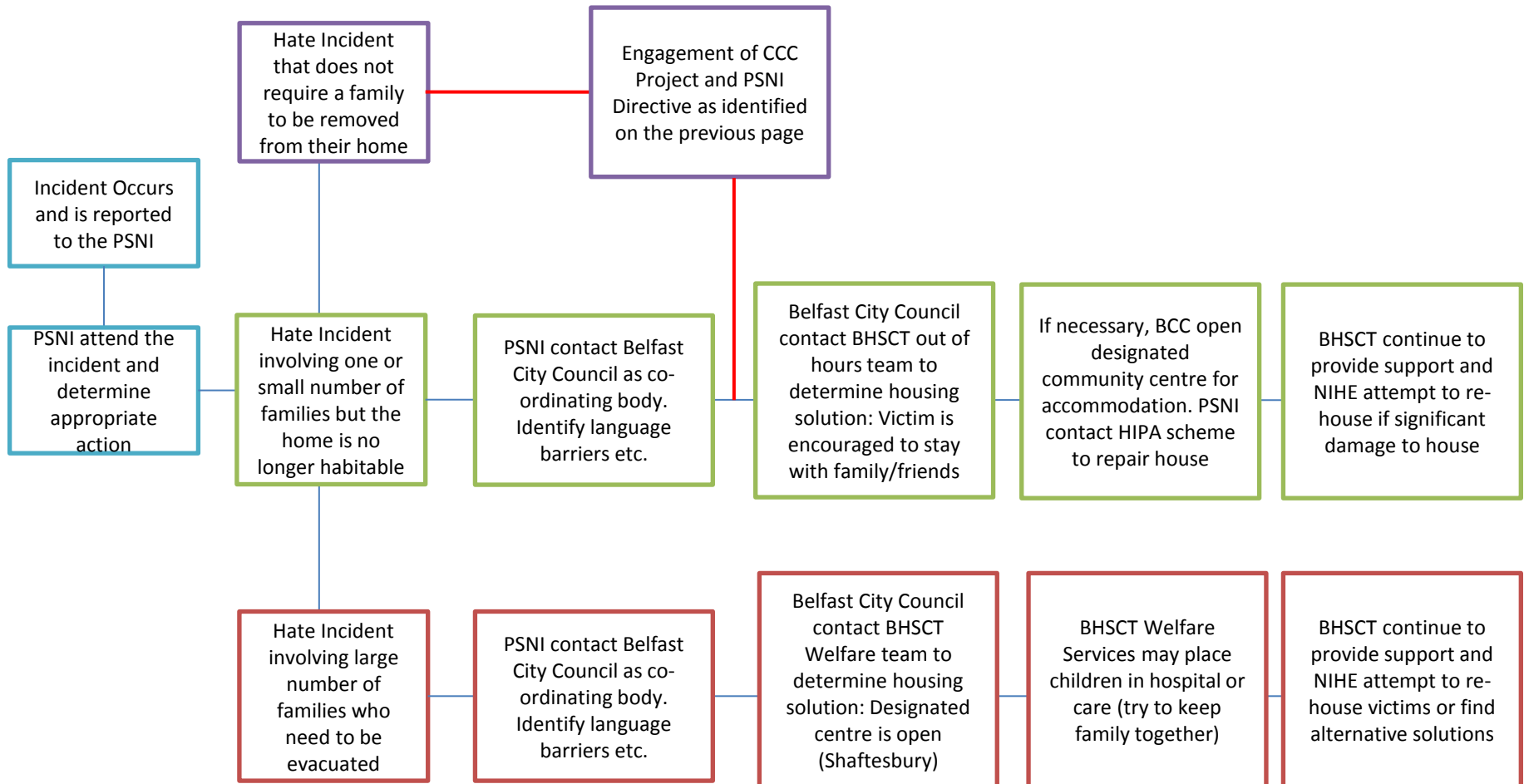
5.8 SUMMARY OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCESS

Common concern across all of those consulted identified the need to clarify the process of emergency response, and the roles and responsibilities of key agencies. The diagram below seeks to clarify the new PSNI directive for hate incidents and identifies the added value of Creating Cohesive Community Project. The boxes coloured in green represent existing PSNI actions as identified in the New directive. Those highlighted in red have been agreed by the PSNI as part of the Creating Cohesive Community Project



5.10 SUMMARY OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCESS

The consultation process for Creating Cohesive Community Project sought to identify the varying roles and responsibilities of agencies in relation to emergency response, particularly those incidents that result in victims being forced from their home. The following diagrams present the projects understanding of this process based on consultation findings. Please note that at all stages, the PSNI will continue to apply an investigative strategy, this diagram merely points out other services that help to deal with key issues.



6.1 CONCLUDING THE STRATEGIES

As noted previously, the project partners (LORAG and South Belfast Roundtable) were eager that the consultation process would be meaningful in that it would directly inform the development of key strategies. The following diagram illustrates the link between proposed actions and the consultation findings

YOU SAID... “need to support people that arrive to the area to integrate more and engage in local services”

WE HAVE AGREED... to develop a neighbourhood guide for all new residents, students and established communities providing info on local services and advice on ‘being a good neighbour’

YOU SAID... “there is a need to create more opportunities for meaningful engagement”

WE HAVE AGREED... to support the ongoing programme of events in the area through a connected mail group and referral system through the networking forum and facilitate joint engagement initiatives

YOU SAID... “need to address the issue of environmental concerns relating to housing”

WE HAVE AGREED... to explore the potential of a community environmental project that enables local unemployed people to access sessional work through practical environmental improvements

YOU SAID... “need to provide a link between the community and agencies, someone to support communities directly”

WE HAVE AGREED... to train 6 community active citizens to provide support to new arrivals to the area, and support all members of the community to access the services, advice and support that they need and are entitled to

YOU SAID... “we need to address the environmental issues related to housing”

WE HAVE AGREED... to establish a housing taskforce with key officers from BCC to deal with housing complaints on a case by case basis and report back to the community

YOU SAID... “work with young people to address attitudes at an early age”

WE HAVE AGREED... to provide training to local teachers, to ensure that they have the capacity to dispel myths and work with young people on an annual, and sustainable basis

YOU SAID... “that there is a lack of faith/trust in statutory support and a feeling that you are not fairly treated by the PSNI (all communities)”

WE HAVE AGREED... to create a specific role for the community in the New PSNI directive for addressing hate crime (the only area in NI to do so). This provides accountability within the community. We have also agreed to provide training to PSNI officers to ensure they understand local needs

YOU SAID... “we need to improve the input from statutory agencies around the key issues”

WE HAVE AGREED... to continue working through the networking forum and advisory sub group to provide practical solutions to local issues

7.1 PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation is viewed as an integral part of the management, development and ongoing operations of Creating Cohesive Community Project and invariably, the actions presented throughout this strategy. The Monitoring and Evaluation framework must be considered in 2 distinct components. The overall CCC Project has been supported by Belfast City Council Peace III programme and therefore must adhere to stringent M&E protocol. This strategy document represents one of the key programme outputs, and process of developing the strategy is therefore subject to the M&E protocol as identified by Peace III.

However, this section focuses on the monitoring and evaluation of the actions noted within this strategy. These also need to be monitored and measured to identify the potential for new structures to deliver positive cohesion impacts over a longer term.

This section therefore presents a monitoring and evaluation framework specific to the actions identified in sections 3,4 and 5. In measuring success, the project needs to comprise a range of data and research. This research must consider Qualitative and Quantitative evidence to adequately highlight the successes of any initiative or strategy. Additionally, it will be the responsibility of the project partners to ensure that monitoring and evaluation activity during the implementation stage of this strategy is adhered to. The information presented will allow the project partners to follow a straightforward and structured framework to monitor and evaluate all activity associated with the strategy and its key actions.

7.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

It is anticipated that in order to assess the impact of the strategy, various monitoring and evaluation procedures, presented below, will be used.

- 1. Quantitative** data on key outputs will be continually recorded and information on the following key outputs will be collated:
 - ❖ Number of resource booklets distributed to number of households ;
 - ❖ Number of active citizens recruited
 - ❖ Number of hours volunteered by active citizens
 - ❖ Number of families accessing support from active citizens
 - ❖ Number of services accessed as a direct result of resource booklet
 - ❖ Number of training sessions delivered to active citizens and number/range of other organisations and individuals attending (i.e. PSNI NPU)
 - ❖ Number of groups and organisations involved in the connected mail network
 - ❖ Number of emails distributed and number of events/activities promoted
 - ❖ Number of teachers trained and schools participating in training initiative
 - ❖ Number of sessions delivered by teachers to pupils post training (within 6 months)
 - ❖ Number of referrals passed through the Networking Forum
 - ❖ Number of incidents supported by the active citizens
 - ❖ % of hate incidents that follow new directive with embedded community influence
 - ❖ Number of housing clinics delivered in the area and number/profile of those attending

7.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

1. **Quantitative** data on key outputs will be continually recorded and information on the following key outputs will be collated:

- ❖ Number of EAL/Minority Ethnic students accessing mainstream/established homework support and youth projects
- ❖ Number/Range and type of community organisations involved in complaints or referrals regarding cleansing
- ❖ Number of incidents and % increase in incidents reported to the PSNI
- ❖ Numbers of incidents and % increase in complaints to BCC/NIHE
- ❖ Profile/Age of people receiving resource welcome packs.

2. **Qualitative** data on key outputs will be continually recorded and information on the following key outputs will be collated:

- ❖ Perceptions about the validity and 'use' of the neighbourhood guide and whether individuals and families felt that it benefitted them
- ❖ Opinions relating to the active citizens, how approachable they are and if it helped individuals and families to feel more welcome
- ❖ Attitudes and perceptions on the relevance and quality of training delivered to active citizens, teachers and PSNI NPU officers
- ❖ Increased access to and sharing of information relating to ongoing events and perceived benefits
- ❖ Perceived increased confidence/faith in statutory response
- ❖ Perception that partnership working and collaboration is enhanced locally through the networking forum and connected mail group
- ❖ Increased understanding and acceptance of NIHE/PSNI/BCC procedures

- ❖ Key benefits to users/participants including perceived improvements in cohesion, confidence and safety;
- ❖ Levels of satisfaction amongst users, partner organisation;
- ❖ The collection of personal testimonies / case studies showing the extent of the impact of this strategy;
- ❖ Attendance increases for partner organisations at local events and forum
- ❖ Informal participant feedback and observations (from training, events, general)

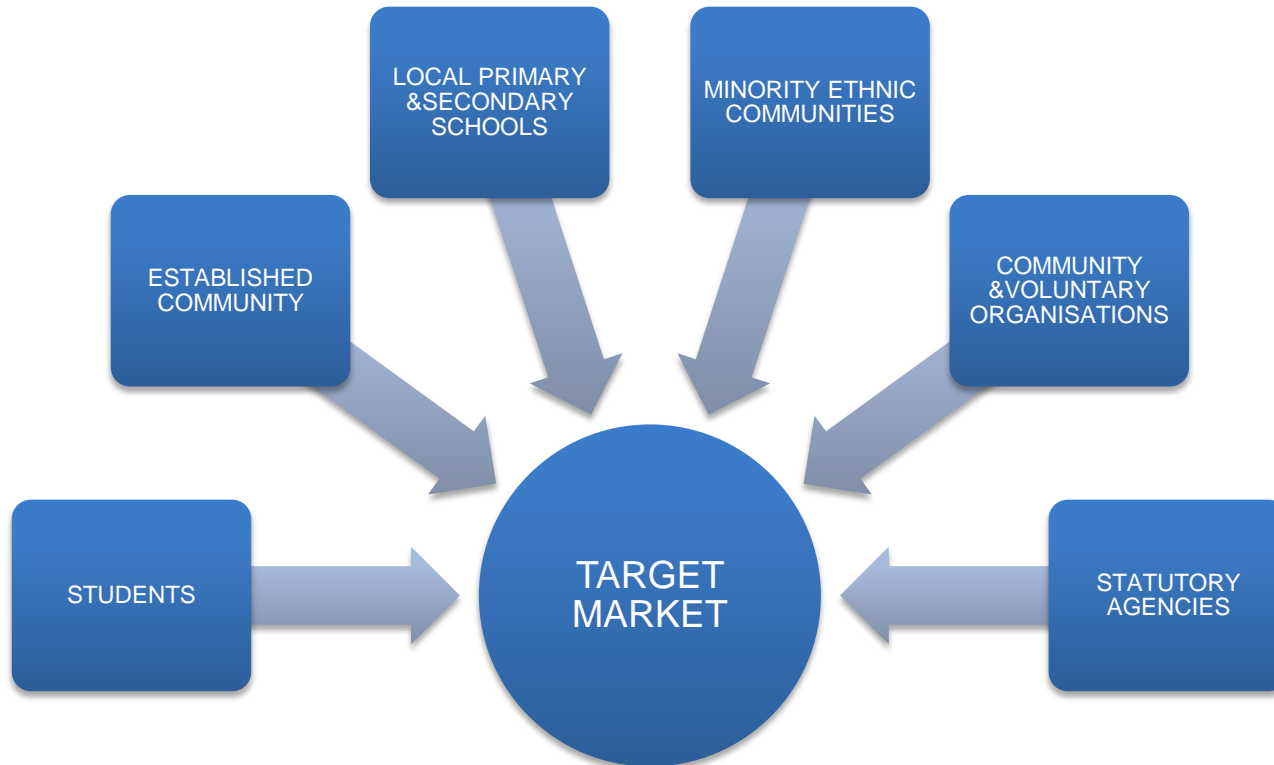
7.3 RESEARCH GATHERING TECHNIQUES

The collection of data will be conducted through various mediums and techniques. It is anticipated that monitoring and evaluation will be the responsibility of the project partners (predominantly lead partner). Ongoing monthly meetings between the advisory sub group and the Networking Forum will enable formative evaluation of the strategy.

The collation of data will involve a range of methods including: one to one interviews, attendance sheets, focus groups, informal feedback, financial records, attitudinal surveys and participant/beneficiary questionnaires etc. All research will be used to inform the potential for the strategies to achieve long term impacts and therefore support the need for enhanced resource allocation and ability for actions and initiatives to be adopted and delivered in other parts of the city and in Northern Ireland.

8.1 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The importance of an effective Marketing and Communications Strategy which underpins all communications from the project and the implementation of the strategy will be critical to the successful delivery of actions. This section will outline in detail the core messages that will be communicated to the identified target audiences using a variety of methods. To adequately detail this information, it is important to outline the specific target audience groups as the message and communication method may differ slightly for each. The diagram below outlines the identified target audience groupings:



Undoubtedly, members of the wider community, minority ethnic families, students and community organisations, will be the main target group to which the majority of communications will be focused. As evidenced above however, this strategy and the actions herein will provide services to a range of other distinct categories to disseminate a core message and deliver maximum impacts on cohesion locally. The identified groups, a number of core messages specific to each group, as well as the methods utilised to communicate those messages are presented in tabular form below:

CORE MESSAGE TO TARGET AUDIENCE GROUP	COMMUNICATION METHOD	WHEN
<p>Students</p> <p>Reinforcing the fact that this is a shared neighbourhood and the rights of long term residents and new communities should be respected.</p> <p>The message is to encourage active participation in community life, attend events and programmes and be a good neighbour</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Guide developed as part of the project will be distributed to every household in the target area. This will contain key information for all members of the community, including students.</p> <p>The project is keen to work in partnership with the students unions and student reps to ensure ongoing communication through various channels</p>	<p>Piloted in August 2013 and quarterly if necessary</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Local Primary and Secondary Schools</p> <p>That school provides a window of opportunity to help address perceptions and attitudes at an early age and that teachers can deliver significant cohesion impacts for young people through dedicated training and ongoing reinforcement of core message</p>	<p>The delivery of quality schools training programmes to teachers (in Line with the NI Curriculum) to empower teachers and build their capacity to deliver a core message to others (teachers and pupils)</p>	<p>Ongoing and updated training provided to schools annually</p>

CORE MESSAGE TO TARGET AUDIENCE GROUP	COMMUNICATION METHOD	WHEN
<p>Community and Voluntary Organisations</p> <p>Important to spread a core message relating to attending events and dispelling myths locally. The connected mail group can only be effective if community organisations take responsibility for disseminating core messages through grass roots staff and members in an appropriate way.</p> <p>Participation in the Networking Forum and other structures is crucial in sustaining momentum for the project and cohesion locally</p>	<p>The connected mail group will be an ongoing source of information sharing for community groups locally, and a way to promote an ongoing programme of events across South Belfast</p> <p>The Networking Forum will continue to meet and remain focused on practical issues and solutions</p>	<p>As and when required but expected that a minimum of one email per week to sustain momentum</p> <p>Monthly</p>
<p>Minority Ethnic Community</p> <p>To embrace the support provided by the active citizen project and utilise the neighbourhood guide to enhance access to services locally.</p> <p>To report incidents if they take place and where possible/appropriate to engage in community activities and events</p>	<p>The neighbourhood guide developed as part of the project will be distributed to every household in the target area. This will contain key information for all members of the community, including students.</p> <p>The connected mail group and Promotional activity (i.e. adverts in local press, email promotions to identified organisations etc)</p> <p>Through the community active citizens and dedicated support channels such as City Church, Community organisations</p>	<p>Piloted in August 2013 and quarterly if necessary</p> <p>Ongoing with weekly email and ‘as and when’ promotional information</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

CORE MESSAGE TO TARGET AUDIENCE GROUP	COMMUNICATION METHOD	WHEN
<p>Established Community</p> <p>To embrace the support provided by the active citizen project and utilise the neighbourhood guide to enhance access to services locally.</p> <p>To report incidents if they take place and where possible/appropriate to engage in community activities and events</p>	<p>The neighbourhood guide developed as part of the project will be distributed to every household in the target area. This will contain key information for all members of the community, including students.</p> <p>The connected mail group and Promotional activity (i.e. adverts in local press, email promotions to identified organisations etc)</p> <p>Through the community active citizens and dedicated support channels such Community organisations</p>	<p>Piloted in June 2013 and quarterly if necessary</p> <p>Ongoing with weekly email and ‘as and when’ promotional information</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Statutory Agencies</p> <p>To continue to provide a local presence through the Networking Forum & advisory sub group and continue to support this initiative through advice, guidance and funding</p> <p>To work with local organisations to embed structures and action plans where appropriate</p>	<p>The connected mail group will be an ongoing source of information sharing for Statutory agencies</p> <p>The Networking Forum will continue to meet and remain focused on practical issues and solutions whilst the advisory sub group will oversee delivery</p>	<p>As and when required but expected that a minimum of one email per week to sustain momentum</p> <p>Monthly</p>

8.2 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

As with the development of any new project or initiative, the initial profile enhancement and public awareness can be the difference between success and failure. This strategy is no different in the respect that if it fails to communicate and publicise its purpose, as well as practical strategies for delivery it may struggle to influence the aforementioned target groups. In addition to specific marketing and communications, a number of practical marketing methods are detailed below:

Official Launch of the Strategy Document

In addition to the ongoing marketing and communications delivered prior to implementation of the strategy, it is imperative that project partners plan a way to launch the strategy. Conscious that many organisations have provided valuable input to the consultation process, it is important to provide these organisations with a very clear idea of where their input has influenced the development of actions and the implementation plan. This launch does not need to be a large scale event per se, but can include the distribution of an executive summary or information booklet to relevant stakeholders as a means of raising awareness and promoting the implementation of the strategy.

Website

Online communications have become increasingly important in recent years and are now expected to be central to most marketing strategies. The project partners could increase its marketing capabilities and aid the promotion of the strategy through a dedicated website if the project is sustained long term. The frequency of updates and quality of information would be crucial in retaining interest.

Email Marketing

Email communications have become an important element of the marketing mix in recent times and the e-mail details of all key contacts must be included on the target group database to allow communications with various target markets. This form of marketing is free and will be a very useful tool in maintaining profile and reminding users of services and activities on offer different times of the year. The strategy itself includes the establishment of a connected mail group which creates a foundation upon which events and initiatives can be promoted and enhanced within the target area.



9.1 CONCLUSIONS

This report has presented the findings of a comprehensive consultation process that has engaged over 262 individuals, more than 28 organisations and key statutory agencies including NIHE, BCC, PSNI and BHSCT.

The consultation findings have identified a range of concerns relating to three overarching themes, notably:

1. Early Intervention and Engagement
2. Housing
3. Emergency Response

The combination of grass roots and high level strategic views on local issues offers a dynamic yet complex overview of the difficulties faced by community organisations, by statutory agencies and by local residents themselves in seeking to create a more cohesive community. In addition, the report has presented a range of key statistics and socio economic data that evidence a range of challenges for the local community in terms of crime, health, employment and living environment. These challenges exacerbate high levels of tension locally.

Crucially, Creating Cohesive Community Project has evidenced a strong degree of collaboration and partnership working, the project demonstrates a strategic fit across a range of local, regional and national policy documents and this strategy has been designed against a backdrop of sectoral reform including: the end of accession for A2 nationals, the local government reform in Northern Ireland, and the implementation of local authority investment programmes and government strategy as well as the new OFMDFM report Together Building a United Community, 2013.

The need for intervention, and the need to improve levels of cohesion in the target area is apparent. Whilst statutory agencies offer a range of services and have adopted policies and processes to deal with local issues, the consultation process identifies that many of these are ineffective. The report identifies a disconnect between the local community and statutory agencies.

As a result, the report has presented **11 key actions** across the 3 thematic areas, to be implemented on a short, medium and long term basis. The action plans have received support and commitment from statutory agencies which represents a major step forward for the project and the community.

The Creating Cohesive Community Project however enters a period of uncertainty. Core funding for the project is due to come to an end in September 2013. In the context of the 11 key actions and the strategies included herein, this report presents two key recommendations:

1. The statutory partners (advisory group) should combine resources to sustain this project beyond September 2013 to ensure the work to date is not lost and that the strategies can be implemented, monitored and reviewed over a long period of time.
2. In the context of A2 accession and local government reform, statutory agencies should use this project as an exemplar, and a basis upon which it can lobby for legislative changes and further investment, creating a model that can be lifted and adopted to Create Cohesive Communities.

CREATING COHESIVE COMMUNITY

Creating Cohesive Community Project is a partnership between **LORAG** (Lower Ormeau Resident's Action Group) and **South Belfast Roundtable** (SBRT). It is a Belfast City Council PEACE III Strategic Grants Programme, part of the Belfast PEACE III Plan 2011-2013 providing a new approach to the development of improved relations across communities. Main aims of the project are:

- Support community to work together in changing neighbourhoods
 - Develop community safety
 - Develop work with other agencies

LORAG - (Lower Ormeau Resident's Action Group) is a 'needs led', community development organisation, founded in 1987 to support the residents and community of Lower Ormeau area of South Belfast. LORAG currently provide youth and after schools projects, sports and health development, Sure Start, employment and training advice through GEMS with NIHE offering housing advice and support and PHA delivering a range of health programmes. In addition, LORAG offer a range of facilities for hire. Since 2000, LORAG has had responsibility for the day-to-day management and development of the Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre.

SBRT - (South Belfast Roundtable) brings together the key agencies and community organisations in South Belfast with an interest in addressing racism in a positive and proactive way. The 85 groups involved include representatives from minority ethnic groups, local community, faith and political leaders, the PSNI, voluntary and community groups and representatives of statutory bodies.

Its mission is "To work in partnership to challenge racism and promote diversity in South Belfast".

