



COOKSTOWN DISTRICT
COUNCIL



“Sharing and Caring”

A Good Relations Audit and
Strategy for Cookstown
District Council

June 2007

The Good Relations Vision for Our District:

*“To develop and enhance
Cookstown District as a place
that’s fair, tolerant and
comfortable for everyone who lives
in it or comes to it ... and where
people’s heritages and cultures are
acknowledged, respected and
celebrated”*

Contents

1.0 Executive Summary

2.0 The Good Relations Context

- What Does It Mean
- The Context Set By “A Shared Future”
- The Purpose of This Strategy
- How the Strategy was Developed

3.0 Cookstown: The Place and Its Communities

- Geography ... And a Little Bit of History
- Population
- Diversity in Cookstown
- The Local “Good Relations State of Play”
- How Things are Changing
- What’s Already Being Done

4.0 Consultation Feedback: What People Said

- Introduction
- Issues ... Responses ... and Needs
- The Funded Groups’ Views
- Drawing It All Together

5.0 A Good Relations Strategy for Cookstown

- A Good Relations Vision for Cookstown
- Our Guiding Principles for the Advancement of Good Relations
- Strategic Themes
- A Good Relations Action Plan
- Managing and Measuring Performance

Appendices

1. The Council's Good Relations Action Plan
2. Sources
3. Consultation Template
4. Funded groups' questionnaire
5. Council Staff Questionnaire

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This audit and strategy were developed by Cookstown District Council to help fulfil the Council's obligations within the Shared Future framework. A Shared Future expects local government to replace its existing community relations programmes with better-focused and better-resourced good relations programmes. Those programmes should be based on local needs and should complement local community and voluntary activities. They should also have strong administrative and political support within the Council ... and beyond.
- 1.2 Put simply, this strategy has been developed to advance the good relations agenda in Cookstown District. It aims to do that on the bases of:
 - A good understanding of the District and its people
 - A scoping of the local good relations issues
 - Strategies and actions which are practical and likely to be well-received locally ... but which equally are courageous and effective
 - Recognising that good relations work won't attract sizeable new funding.
- 1.3 The strategy was based on widespread consultation, both within the Council and beyond. Research and other information already in the public domain were also used to inform it. It also reflected the experience of community relations work.
- 1.4 Cookstown is a vibrant and growing District of over 32,000 people. It remains a largely rural District but Cookstown continues to increase in significance. Although now experiencing unprecedented economic prosperity, the District equally experiences high levels of deprivation and disadvantage. In the traditional NI context it has a majority Catholic population (55%) but the distribution of the two main religious groupings varies greatly across the District. Nationalist politics are in the ascendancy but up to a decade ago, Unionist politics dominated. In the same way, the District did not escape the realities of the NI conflict.
- 1.5 The District is now home to a series of vigorous ethnic minority populations, largely from eastern Europe. Overall, local people remain more loyal to traditional social and cultural values than does NI overall.

1.6 The consultations underpinning the strategy identified a number of core good relations issues to be addressed:

- Segregated estates and overt territoriality
- Flags inappropriately flown
- Mutual community/cultural ignorance
- Migrant workers' issues
- Weak community capacities in some areas
- The importance of the Council's leadership role
- The reality that a "one-size-fits-all" approach isn't appropriate in/for Cookstown

1.7 As a result, four strategic good relations themes for the Council were developed. They, and the rationale underpinning each, are as follows:

Theme 1	Being a "Well-Related" Council
Rationale	It's not just a truism to say that important work begins at home. As the body charged with giving a strategic local lead on this issue, it's simply vital that the Council delivers, and is seen to deliver, in its own ways on the good relations agenda. As the local corporate civic leadership body, Cookstown District Council has to set standards that others can aspire to and hopefully follow. In the same way, the Council's 250 employees make it one of the District's largest single employers: it therefore has its own, independent good relations obligations to meet.
Theme 2	Understanding Ourselves and Our Heritages
Rationale	Before we can trust; respect; and accommodate each other we need to know where we're coming from; what's important to us; and why we think the way we do. Ignorance and lack of knowledge – usually "accidental" rather than wilful – are at the root of most of our tensions, real or imagined. Cookstown and all its people, both new and long-standing, have rich heritages. It's important that they're explained; shared; and understood ... but not compromised or diluted.

Theme 3	Promoting Good Relations
Rationale	Sometimes explanations and awareness-raising aren't enough: they have to be accompanied by clear, focused work. Cookstown has some specific good relations realities that need to be addressed in practical, pragmatic ways.
Theme 4	Providing Direct Support and Assistance
Rationale	There is clear, ongoing evidence that groups; communities; and individuals across Cookstown want to help take the good relations agenda forward. Often they want to do that as part of their mainstream work. That work is frequently voluntary ... and even small bits of financial support and advice can make a major difference. It's important that such support and advice remains available.

- 1.8 A total of 33 Actions are then identified, with a lead Department listed for each and a sense given of the resources needed and an ideal timescale for implementation. Finally, a measure of success for each Action is also put forward.

The Good Relations Vision for Cookstown:

“To develop and enhance Cookstown District as a place that’s fair, tolerant and comfortable for everyone who lives in it or comes to it ... and where people’s heritages and cultures are acknowledged, respected and celebrated”

2.0 The Good Relations Context

What Does it Mean?

2.1 Since the development of the NI conflict in the late 1960s, there have been a number of strategic initiatives aimed at improving relations between what were seen as “the divided communities”. The first structural response was the creation under the Community Relations Act (NI) 1969 of a Community Relations Commission. The Commission’s basic remit was to:-

- Encourage harmonious community relations
- Provide advice to Ministers
- Deliver education programmes to discourage discriminatory behaviour.

By the mid-1970s the Commission had effectively collapsed ... and government-led or supported structural approaches to community relations more or less went into cold storage for over a decade.

2.2 Political; cultural; and social changes in the 1980s led to a re-awakening of interest and government began to put in place a number of policies; strategies; and structures. Pivotal amongst these were:

- The direct involvement of District Councils in Community Relations work from the start of the 1990s
- Section 75 of the NI Act (1998) obliging public bodies to promote good relations between people of different religious belief; political opinion; or racial group
- “A Shared Future”, launched in 2005, which seeks to establish a mutual civic society based on dialogue; equity; respect for diversity; and interdependence.

The NI Community Relations Journey : Some Milestones

- 1969 Community Relations Commission established
- 1974 Power-sharing Executive set up ... and collapses
- 1987 Central Community Relations Unit established
- 1989 DENI funds integrated schools and launches Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) programme
Government funds Councils to deliver Community Relations programmes.
Fair Employment Act leads to establishment of Fair Employment Commission
- 1990 NI Community Relations Council established
- 1994 Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) launched which leads to proofing on, among others, religious and political grounds.
- 1995 Peace 1 Programme established with reconciliation as a core focus.
- 1998 "Good Friday Agreement" leads to the development of "Section 75"
- 2002 Harbison Report critiques Community Relation policies and actions
- 2005 "A Shared Future" launched.

The Context Set By "A Shared Future"

- 2.3 "A Shared Future" was published in March 2005 following a consultation and strategy development process that had begun over two years earlier. It sets out a clear vision for itself i.e.

“The establishment over time of normal, civic society in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere, and where all people are treated impartially. A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence”

- 2.4 “A Shared Future” is constructed around a three part framework. That framework, and the key issues underpinning it, can be summarised as follows:

Good Relations in NI

- Diverse communities can be integrated and strong
- In NI our core difficulty is a culture of intolerance
- That culture brings with it many costs, both social and economic
- Equality must be a core goal
- Good relations policy and strategy in NI must be built on a number of principles, i.e.
 - Political, civic and community leadership are vital
 - North/South and East/West perspectives need to be developed
 - Progress towards a shared society must be equality and rights-based
 - A shared future is important to everyone in NI
 - Separate but equal is not an option
 - Public services have a key role to play
 - The legacy of the conflict and violence must be dealt with
 - Relationships matter and are central
 - NI is becoming increasingly culturally diverse

Towards a Shared Society

- Visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism must be tackled
- Shared spaces need to be reclaimed by everybody
- Tensions at interface areas need to be reduced
- The delivery and content of education should be shared
- More shared communities should be developed
- Diversity and cultural diversity can support good relations
- Shared workplaces are important
- Good relations; community development; and tackling disadvantage must all be interlinked

- The victims' voices must be heard
- Delivering services within and across a divided society brings its own costs

Making It Happen

- Action is required at central government; regional; local government; and community levels
- The delivery and effectiveness of good relations work needs to be monitored and evaluated.

The Purpose of this Strategy

- 2.5 This audit and strategy were developed by Cookstown District Council to help fulfil the Council's obligations within the Shared Future framework. A Shared Future expects local government to replace their existing community relations programmes with better-focused and better-resourced good relations programmes. Those programmes should be based on local needs and should complement local community and voluntary activities. They should also have strong administrative and political support within the Council ... and beyond.
- 2.6 Put simply, this strategy has been developed to advance the good relations agenda in Cookstown District. It aims to do that on the bases of:
- A good understanding of the District and its people
 - A scoping of the local good relations issues
 - Strategies and actions which are practical and likely to be well-received locally ... but which equally are courageous and effective
 - Recognising that good relations work won't attract sizeable new funding.

Community Relations Work in NI

Most Community Relations activity in NI tends to be non-prescriptive and based on a bottom-up approach. The six headings below cover the full breadth of this type of activity:

Cultural Traditions	Builds on people's common interests in cultural heritage and local history
Community Development	Co-operation encouraged on the basis of social; economic; and environmental issues.
Reconciliation	Aims to improve inter-group awareness and to foster respect
Reactive	Initiatives that emerged in response to specific incidents
High Profile	Encouraging "low level contact between large numbers of diverse people", e.g. festivals.
Education / Personal Development	Generating confidence at the individual level and exploring issues personal to people's lives

How The Strategy was developed

2.7 The Strategy was developed by using information that was already in the public domain and by seeking out new opinions and feedback using a broadly-based consultative approach. Among those consulted, either face-to-face or via anonymous questionnaire-based surveys were:

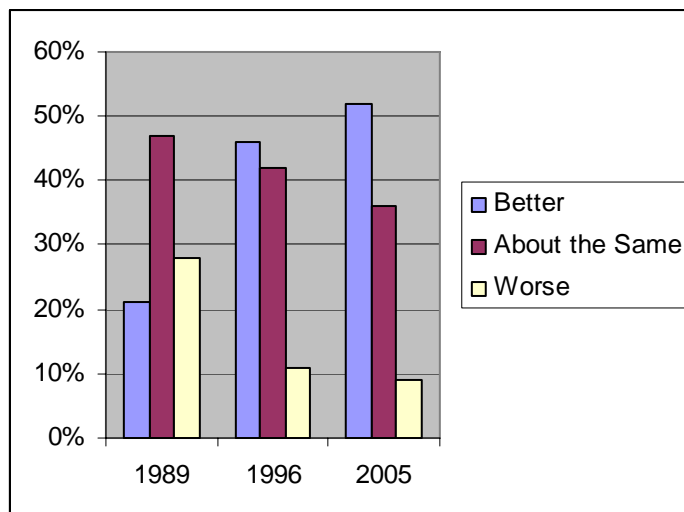
- Churches
- Central Community Relations Unit
- Community Relations Council
- Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN)
- Council staff and officers

- Councillors from all four parties on the Council
- Community groups in receipt of Community Relations funding from the Council
- Ethnic minorities
- The GAA
- The Loyal Orders
- Women's Groups.

Is A Difference Being Made?

The NI Life and Times Survey has recorded our attitudes; outcomes; and beliefs since 1989. Presented below are the answers over time to a basic question:

“Are relations between Catholic and Protestants better now than five years ago?”



On this basis, people clearly believe things are getting better.

3.0 Cookstown: The Place and Its Communities

Geography And a Little Bit of History

- 3.1 Cookstown is in geographic terms probably the most central of NI's 26 Districts. It covers some 620 sq km and runs from Lough Neagh in the east up into the Sperrin Mountains in the west. It is a largely rural District but one third of the population now live in Cookstown town, located in the centre of the District.
- 3.2 In terms of the contexts which have shaped and influenced the local good relations agenda, Cookstown has much in common with the rest of NI ... but equally has its own local nuances. The events and other things that have helped create modern Cookstown and its beliefs and attitudes include:

When ...	What ...
c3000BC	Beaghmore stone circles laid out
900AD	Ardboe High Cross erected
c1000 onwards	High Kings of Ulster are crowned at Tullyhogue
1602	Lord Mountjoy breaks the O'Neills' crowning stone at Tullyhogue
1609	Plantation of Ulster begins; English and Scots settlers arrive locally. Cookstown town founded.
1641	Rebellion of native Irish. Cookstown and Moneymore burned.
1796	United Irishmen activity locally
1840s	The Great Famine: Cookstown workhouse overcrowded
1880s	Agitation for tenant farmers' rights
1916	Many Cookstown men die at The Somme
1921	Irish War of Independence: several incidents across the District
1969-1993	c70 local people lose their lives in the NI conflict
2000s	Dramatic increases in migrant workers.

- 3.3 As is the case elsewhere in NI, these events and their interpretations create and sustain folk and cultural memories and can act as individual and community touchstones.

Population

- 3.4 At the time of the 2001 census 32,581 people lived in Cookstown ... though by mid-2005 this was estimated to have increased by a further 1,500 people (4%) to 34,100. That pattern of healthy growth has been consistent for the past quarter century, the District's population during that time having increased by almost 6,000 people, or 20%. By 2017 the local population is projected to reach almost 37,000.

- 3.5 Some other key features of Cookstown's population include:

- About 45% are urban (i.e. living in the larger towns/villages) and 55% are rural
- The age profile is younger than the NI average meaning the District is healthy and dynamic in demographic terms

- 3.6 A Shared Future (section 2.8) highlights the connectivity between disadvantage and the issues that good relations strategies must try to address. Put simply, social and economic disadvantage foster the tensions and difficulties that act against the development of good relations. Some of the main deprivation features apparent in Cookstown are:

- Despite recent and current historically low levels of unemployment, wages remain low, at about 89% of the NI average
- Many "economically inactive" people across the District aren't included in the standard unemployment figures
- Over 8,000 people (one person in every four) are "Income deprived"
- Deprivation varies significantly in its intensity across the District: there isn't a single "Cookstown deprivation picture".

Cookstown: Some Social Indicators (Sources 2001 Census and NISRA)

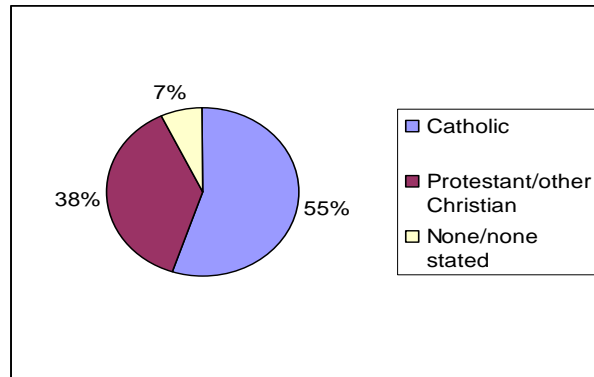
	<u>Cookstown</u>	<u>NI</u>
Married	53%	48%
Cohabiting	2%	4%
Divorced/Separated	6%	8%
Births to unmarried mothers	28%	34%
Marriages in a Registrar's Office	13%	27%
Women Economically Active	49%	54%
Qualified to degree level	11%	16%
Recorded offences per 000 People	58	78
Average household size	2.97	2.65

These figures suggest Cookstown remains a socially and culturally traditional district, where "older ways of doing things" remain more vibrant than they do elsewhere in NI. Detailed analysis of the figures shows that "rural Cookstown" is in turn much more traditional than "urban Cookstown".

Diversity in Cookstown

- 3.7 In the traditional NI context, Cookstown has a majority Catholic community:

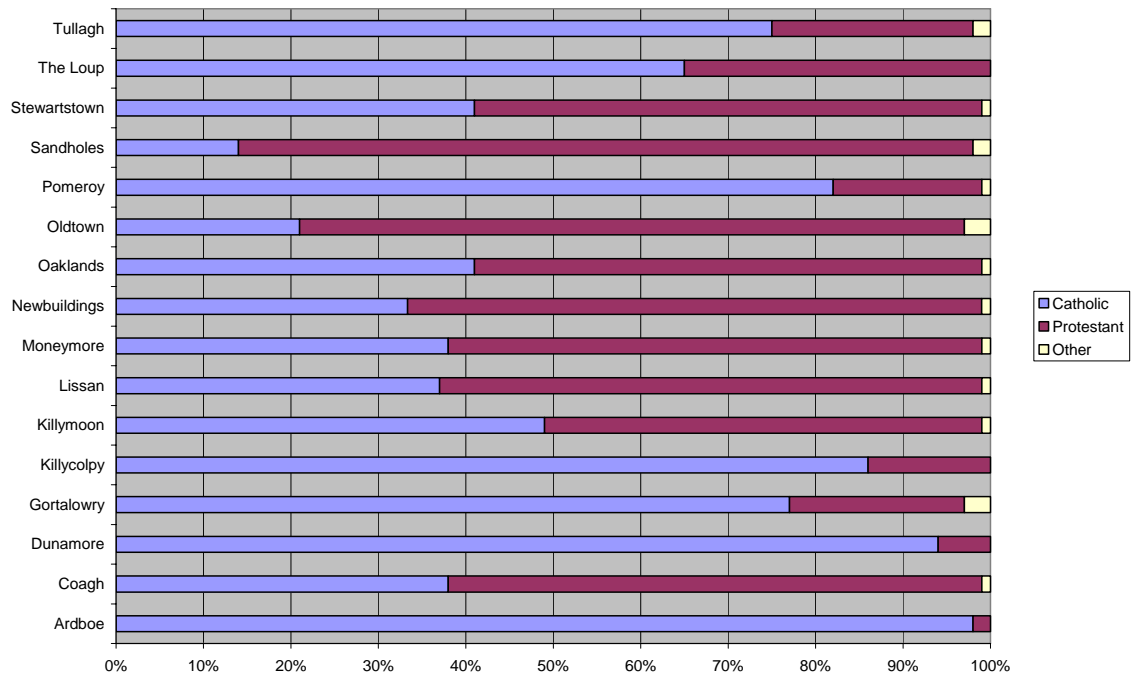
2001 Census Community Background



The fact that 7% only of the local population either have no religion or don't state their religion, compared with a NI equivalent figure of 14%, is maybe another indicator that traditional ties and loyalties remain strong locally.

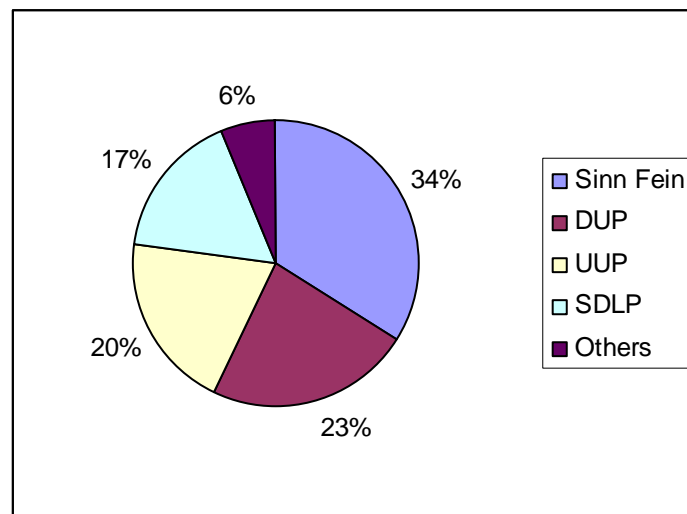
- 3.8 The various religious groupings are not spread evenly across Cookstown District but, as is the case across NI, often live in areas that are dominated by one community or the other. The chart below shows the distribution on a ward basis:

Community Backgrounds across Cookstown



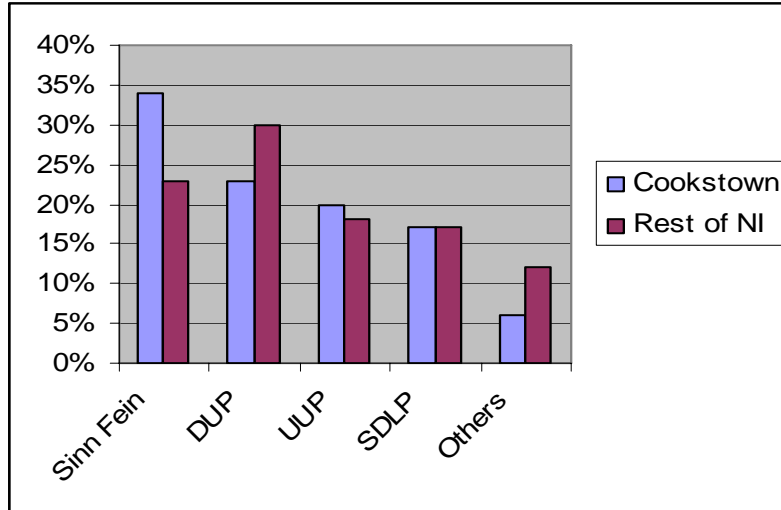
- 3.9 Politically too Cookstown is a diverse District. Interest and involvement in electoral politics – an indication elsewhere in the UK and Ireland of high levels of social cohesion – are high. Turnouts for Westminster and NI Assembly elections run at around 85% whilst for local Council elections it runs at 81%. These are significantly above the NI equivalent figures of 68% and 66%.
- 3.10 The local Council elections provide the most precise barometer of political opinion within the District. The 2005 Council elections saw the votes disaggregated as follows:-

Cookstown Council Elections 2005



- 3.11 The relative strengths of the parties as outlined above are fairly consistent across the District's three electoral areas – Ballinderry; Cookstown Central; and Drum Manor. Because six candidates only were nominated (for six seats), no election took place in Ballinderry in 2005. In the previous election, in 2001, the SDLP was the largest party in Ballinderry, getting 33% of the vote followed by Sinn Fein; DUP; and OUP.
- 3.12 Compared with the rest of NI, Cookstown's Council voting patterns emerged as follows:

How Cookstown Votes Compared With NI Overall



3.13 The main local political shift occurred in 1997 when control of the Council shifted from unionist to nationalist. Prior to that, Cookstown Council had, since its establishment in 1973, been unionist-controlled. At the same time, the Mid-Ulster Westminster seat also shifted, from DUP to Sinn Fein. That seat had been held by unionist MPs since 1974.

3.14 The final piece of the “diversity equation” in Cookstown is the one that’s both the most recent and the most dramatically changing ... i.e. the growth of the ethnic minority population. The 2001 Census identified just 375 Cookstown residents (c 1.1% of the population) as having been born outside the UK or Ireland. Since then there has been a significant inflow of migrant workers to the District, particularly from Eastern Europe.

3.15 There is no single, comprehensive count of the numbers of migrant workers in either NI overall or in Cookstown in particular. NISRA has produced a report on migration into NI which looks at a number of counts of migrant workers. These counts are as follows:

- Home Office Worker Registration (WRS) for people from the eight new EU Accession states ... but which exclude
 - Self-employed people
 - People living and working here for at least one year before May 2004
 - People working here temporarily for a non-national employer

- Health Card Registrations
- National Insurance Number Registrations
- Home Office Work Permits (i.e. allocated to people from outside the European Economic Area)

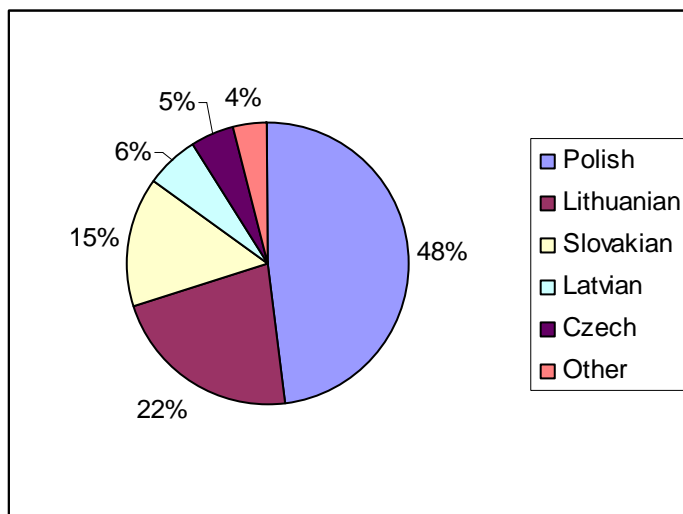
3.16 The results of each of the counts for Cookstown District are presented below:

Migrant Workers in Cookstown

Measure	Local Count	As a % of NI Totals	Per 000 Cookstown Residents	Per 000 NI Residents
WRS (May 2004 - March 2006)	1,095	8%	32	8
Health Cards 2005	334	2%	10	8
NI No's (April 2004 - March 2005)	117	2%	3	3
Home Office Permits	171	3%	5	4

3.17 It is clear from the above that Cookstown is now home to a sizeable, vibrant migrant worker population. In less than two years between 2004 and 2006 some 1,100 people came to Cookstown from Eastern Europe. If this population (which for instance does **not** include the local pre-2004 Portuguese population) reflects NI's overall WRS population then it will be broken down as follows:

Migrant Workers in Cookstown



3.18 Again, if Cookstown reflects the overall NI picture:

- 70% will be male and 30% female
- 77% will be aged 18 to 34.

The “Good Relations State of Play”

3.19 There is no clear, set way of measuring the “good relations condition” of an area or community. A useful proxy measure however is the number of sectarian or racially-motivated incidents and crimes recorded by the PSNI. The recent picture here for Cookstown can be summarised as follows:

Sectarian/Racially Motivated Incidents/Crimes in Cookstown District 2005/06

Motivated By:	Incidents	Incidents per 000 people	NI Incidents per 000 people
Sectarianism	20	0.61	1.01
Racism	21	0.64	0.56

Life For Migrant Workers in Cookstown

In late 2006 the CWSAN Migrant Workers project (established in direct response to the local growing migrant worker population) published the findings of a study into broad health and well-being issues for migrant workers locally. Its main findings can be summarised as follows:

Access to Healthcare

- “frontline/reception” staff can make life difficult for migrants
- local clinicians may not be familiar with medical conditions experienced by migrants
- migrants may misunderstand how the healthcare system here works

Mental Health and Well-Being

- migrants’ work contexts/pressures, particularly if exploitative, can lead to pressure and stress
- housing is often problematic
- isolation is a particular problem

Language

- good communication is vital to good service delivery

Racism and Prejudice

- some local people believe migrants have no entitlements
- all migrants are lumped together as one, homogenous group
- migrants are seen as “stealing locals’ jobs”

3.20 Among the comments that can be made on the figures at paragraph 3.19 are:-

- Sectarian-motivated incidents in Cookstown are much less common than in NI overall
- Racially motivated incidents however are more frequent ... but given that Cookstown may have at least four times the NI average in terms

of migrant workers living locally, the “real rate” here may be well, well below the NI average

- The District experiences one recorded sectarian incident and one recorded racial incident about every fortnight.

How Things Are Changing

3.21 Good relations is essentially concerned with politics; religion; and race. Within these settings the strategic and ongoing changes across Cookstown District can be summarised as follows:

- The district is increasingly Catholic/nationalist
- Nationalist politics are in the ascendancy ... but up to a decade ago unionist politics dominated
- There may now be some 2,000 migrant workers locally ... mostly male; in their twenties; and from Eastern Europe.

3.22 These changes meanwhile are taking place in a Cookstown District which:

- Is growing in population terms
- Remains largely rural but where Cookstown town is of increasing significance
- Enjoys unprecedented levels of economic well-being
- Remains more loyal to traditional social/cultural values than NI overall
- Has not escaped the realities of the NI conflict and the history that preceded it.

Advice From Elsewhere:1

In its Management Paper “Directions in Diversity” the Audit Commission puts forward four main evidence-based findings:

- the diversity agenda is not about treating everybody in the same way
- there is a strong business case for action on diversity
- there is a need for shared definitions
- action on diversity and equality must be managed effectively

Six Shared Aims

The **Racial Equality Strategy** for NI is based on six shared aims:

- **Elimination of racial inequality** ... for everyone and everywhere in NI
- **Equal protection** for all ... including redress where needed
- **Equality of service provision** ... in using and benefiting from public services
- **Participation** ... to increase people's sense of belonging
- **Dialogue** ... to improve mutual understanding
- **Capacity building** ... to help minority communities to become vibrant and sustainable

What's Being Done Already?

3.23 Whilst this Strategy will take the Council onto a new level in terms of good relations work, it's important to stress that much has already been and is being done. Among the Council's achievements here have been:

- the creation of a ... " ... cohesive, inclusive and just society ... " identified as one of the Council's six corporate objectives in its 2005 - 2009 Corporate Plan
- an Equality Scheme that draws together policy screening; equality impact assessment; consultation; monitoring; and training dimensions
- a policy of flying no flags on Council property
- a joint community relations programme with the Cookstown LSP
- a community relations small grants programme
- close collaboration with CWSAN in its pioneering single identity and other good relations-type work across the District
- similar collaboration with CWSAN in its Migrant Workers' project
- naming of townlands (an important feature of rural NI) on road signs
- support given to projects associated with iconic local places, eg Tullyhogue Fort and Lissan house
- inclusion of both Irish and Ulster-Scots on the Council Chairperson's chain of office and Council letterheads

- development of the Burnavon Arts centre and the Mid-Ulster Sports Arena to foster and promote different cultural traditions

3.24 The Council's Best Value Residents' Survey, carried out in 2004, showed that over half the District's residents had used or visited Council arts/cultural events/facilities in the previous two years. Satisfaction levels with these were the highest for any Council in NI ... suggesting strongly that they're well-placed to lie at the heart of the Council's good relations work. In the same way the survey found that people felt:

- the Council treats people fairly and without discrimination (73%)
- Councillors present a positive image of the Council (73% ... the highest response for any Council in NI)

Again these provide very strong bases from which to take forward good relations work.

4.0 Consultation Feedback: What People Said

Introduction

- 4.1 As outlined in Section 2, this strategy is based on the findings of a focused consultation across Cookstown District. Details of those consulted are attached as Appendix 1. In order to keep people at their ease, it was stressed during the consultations that nothing would be attributable to any party; group; organisation; or individual. Put plainly, the emphasis was on **what** was said or thought ... rather than on **who** said or thought it.
- 4.2 This Section is structured to reflect the basic template used for the face-to-face consultations. A copy of that template is attached as Appendix 2. In sequence people were asked and/or discussed:
- What they felt were the main good relations issues in / around Cookstown
 - What were the good; positive; and / or successful things that were being done in response
 - What more could or should be done
 - Who should do those additional things
 - Any other issues they felt were relevant.

Issues ... Responses... and Needs

- 4.3 The feedback is summarised below, under the various headings. The points listed are in, roughly, descending order of priority ... i.e. those put forward most strongly by most people are listed first.

The Main Good Relations Issues Are ...

- How “Cookstown natives” relate to migrant workers (the single most popular response)
- Catholic/Protestant mistrust ... usually based on ignorance of each other
- Segregated estates, especially public sector estates
- Flags ... but really only when they’re flown in inappropriate places and/or are kept up too long (when they simply become an eyesore)
- Parades ... but not in the sense that they’re controversial/confrontational as in other parts of NI but rather a

Protestant/unionist fear that they'll be increasingly curtailed and eventually smothered

- A Catholic community that's increasingly confident and a Protestant community that's increasingly dispirited.
- Mutual ignorance of things like the GAA and the Loyal Orders
- Migrant workers being "ripped off/exploited" re wages; working conditions; and housing
- Painted pavements/kerbs ... seen as more intimidating than flags.

The Good / Positive Things Being Done to Address These Issues Include...

- The Burnavon ... seen by many as a place for everyone ... but which doesn't "do" good/community relations in an in-your-face way
- Gortalowry House and what happens in it
- Significant changes re loyalist bands
- The Mid-Ulster Sports Arena
- A whole network of organisations e.g. the LSP; DPP; East Tyrone Rural; Community Safety Partnership; YESIP; Town Twinning; CWSAN; TIPSAN; Youth and Disability Fora; etc.
- The Council/LSP's Community Relations programme
- A range of cross-community projects and events ... particularly in schools, e.g. EMU
- The Churches/Clergy Forum
- Increasing collaboration on major issues within the Council and the implementation of D'Hondt
- Bowling (the District's integrated sport)
- Peace Programme funding
- Women's groups work
- Single identity funding
- Flags being taken down "in time"
- The "Cookstown in Harmony" project
- CWSAN's Migrant Workers' project and single identity work

Areas Where Additional Work is Required Include ...

- A "challenge fund-type" approach to Council good/community relations ... i.e. one where people don't get the same money for doing the same things, year-on-year (supported by those both "for" and "against" traditional community relations approaches)

- Ongoing single identity work ... particularly in some Protestant/unionist communities to build their confidence and abilities: less tokenism and more honesty/realism
- More leadership from the Council ... i.e. leadership from the Councillors acting corporately, not just singly or along party lines
- A District-wide “understanding” re flags, i.e. what they represent; where/when they should fly; and when they should be (voluntarily) taken down
- Work in and across segregated estates
- Agreed “live-and-let-live” approaches to people promoting and expressing their own culture
- More promotion/advertising of what’s already being done.
- Events in, for example, the Burnavon for migrant workers
- More symbolic acts by Cookstown Councillors ... e.g. support for the Clergy/Churches Forum
- Promotion of respect for, rather than opposition to, Orange Culture
- Some additional language interpretation for migrant workers (which is likely to be a time-limited need)
- Building of capacity/confidence in some Protestant/unionist communities so they can better access appropriate funding (ie Lottery funding is sometimes not acceptable here)
- Be a bit bolder ... move beyond the comfort zones ... take risks
- The needs of ex-service personnel locally
- Childminding for migrant workers.

And Who Should be Doing These Things ...

- The Council primarily
- Local Groups
- The Churches

Any Final Comments ...

- The Catholic/Protestant “divide” is less of an issue for the younger generation
- There’s a danger of losing a number of important “good relations vehicles” (e.g. the LSP) after the RPA
- As the economy improves the focus on sectarianism decreases.

In Their Own Words

Presented below are some direct quotes picked up from people during the consultations:

“Whatever your tradition is, stick to it ... but don’t close your eyes to others.”

“Many of our local problems aren’t really good relations problems. They’re more to do with drink-related anti-social behaviour!”

“A turning point (re the migrant workers) will be if employment prospects get worse here!”

“None of us has a monopoly on hurt”

“Too many of us think good relations are for the rest ... but not for me!”

“Councillors need training. When you come in first, there’s nobody to tell you what to do and how things work!”

“Just one or two individuals putting up flags can label an estate a paramilitary estate!”

“For me the Twelfth is about place; family; pride; and culture nothing more, nothing less.”

“You can respect somebody or something without having to like it.”

“Everything seems to be in favour of the nationalists now.”

“It’s foolish to try to make everything neutral or for both traditions. The Twelfth isn’t about both traditions.”

“It’s hard to know if we should tread gently and quietly on these issues ... or just face them head on.”

“The segregation is more obvious in Cookstown town!”

“The migrants come here to work hard and send money home. But I wouldn’t like to see women wearing veils.”

The Funded Groups' Views

- 4.4 To try to get a perspective from local groups that are already trying to address the good relations agenda, those groups that were given community relations grants by the Council in 2005/06 were contacted. A questionnaire (See Appendix 3) was sent to them and eight responses were received. Six identified themselves as essentially cross-community groups/projects whilst the remaining two saw themselves as in/from the broadly unionist community. Beyond that, the responses were totally anonymous.
- 4.5 The responding groups received their funding for a whole variety of projects/initiatives ranging from developing a community relations policy to providing carer information/support on a cross-community basis. Most (six) hadn't received community relations-related financial support from anyone other than the Council.
- 4.6 Most groups would like to continue with their current community relations work ... but again mostly with a view to taking it up to a higher level. Areas where support would be welcomed included:
- Bringing children and young people together
 - Providing translators
 - Driving forward the cross-community dimension within their mainstream work
 - Cross-border linkages
 - Developing joint acts of Christian worship.
- 4.7 Interestingly the main barriers to taking these things forward were not local divisions and/or attitudes ... but a lack of man/woman-power and finances. Two groups identified transport difficulties as a barrier to further progress.
- 4.8 The main perceived good relations issues in Cookstown District were (again in descending order of popularity):
- Work (mostly capacity building) in the main NIHE estates.
 - Welcome to and integration of migrant workers
 - Geographic/area-based segregation (mostly in Cookstown town)
 - The two traditions being comfortable "staying with their own/what they know."

4.9 Finally the areas of greatest potential in terms of progressing the good relations agenda locally were seen to be:

- Work with young people, including the very young (e.g. via childcare)
- Involving migrants in existing community activities / events
- NIHE integration initiatives
- Low level, informal networking.

Drawing It All Together

4.10 The main consultation feedback can usefully be summarised as follows:

Strengths to be Built On	Issues to be Addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Council services • Council facilities like The Burnavon and MUSA • The “neutrality” of Cookstown town centre • Current and past good relations work • The District’s heritage • Local community capacities • Organisational capacity of, for example, LSP; East Tyrone Rural; CWSAN; etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregated estates and overt territoriality • Flags inappropriately flown • Mutual community/cultural ignorance • Migrant workers’ issues • Weak capacities in some areas • Council’s leadership role • Reality that “one-size-fits-all” isn’t appropriate in/for Cookstown

The Benefits of Good Relations

4.11 Finally, the audit part of this project has helped identify a number of benefits of focusing on and prioritising good relations. These can be seen to be:

- both the historic and more recent cultural richness of the District will be fostered and celebrated

- Cookstown will come to terms with the challenges of the 21st Century and will thereby become a better and more rewarding place in which to live ... leading to greater prosperity for everyone
- the local, very powerful senses of belonging will be strengthened
- the Council's corporate objectives will be more effectively delivered
- the Council's business performance will improve as it will be both a better place in which to work and it will be better tuned in to its communities' needs.

Advice From Elsewhere: 2

In its report "Equality and Diversity" the Audit Commission suggests five critical factors for improving equality and diversity:

- *commitment*- understanding the concept, owning and leading the work at the highest levels, and committing adequate resources
- *involving users*- consulting the actual and potential users of services about their needs and requirements
- *mainstreaming equality and diversity*- integrating equality and diversity into day-to-day work, and translating policy into practice
- *monitoring performance data*- ensuring that data gathering and analysis on equality and diversity is part of core performance monitoring systems
- *sustainability*- continuously keeping up the momentum to counter discrimination and promote diversity, reviewing performance and setting new targets

5.0 A Good Relations Strategy for Cookstown

A Vision for Cookstown

- 5.1 This Strategy has been developed to help achieve the following good relations vision for Cookstown District and its communities:

“To develop and enhance Cookstown District as a place that’s fair, tolerant and comfortable for everyone who lives in it or comes to it ... and where people’s heritages and cultures are acknowledged, respected and celebrated”

Our Guiding Principles for the Advancement of Good Relations

- 5.2 To help achieve this vision, the Strategy is underpinned by four guiding principles. These are based on what we believe to be good practice in this area but also on what our consultees told us was important to them. The principles are:

- *good relations issues in the District will be seen not as problems but as realities: the Strategy aims to deal with things as they are ... not as they might ideally be*
- *the pursuit of equity; diversity; and interdependence will underpin local good relations work ... but single identity and church/faith-based work will also be accepted as valuable and worthwhile in good relations contexts*
- *the Council will see good relations as a part of its core or mainstream business: that means it will use its resources; services; and facilities to promote good relations across the District*
- *to advance good relations locally the Council recognises that a robust partnership between the following is required:*
 - *Councillors - to provide leadership; resources; a community voice; and a scrutiny role*

- *Council managers and staff – to implement the plans; to challenge themselves and others; and to seek out best practice*
- *the wider community sector – to help deliver the Council’s (and others’ plans); to take forward their own work; and to provide feedback*

Strategic Themes

5.3 Cookstown’s Good Relations Strategy is structured around four strategic themes. The themes, their underpinning rationales based on this Audit, and how they relate to the core elements of A Shared Future (as summarised at paragraph 2.4 above) are as follows:

Theme 1	Being a “Well-Related” Council
Rationale	<p>It’s not just a truism to say that important work begins at home. As the body charged with giving a strategic local lead on this issue, it’s simply vital that the Council delivers, and is seen to deliver, in its own ways on the good relations agenda. As the local corporate civic leadership body, Cookstown District Council has to set standards that others can aspire to and hopefully follow. In the same way, the Council’s 250 employees make it one of the District’s largest single employers: it therefore has its own, independent good relations obligations to meet.</p> <p>This theme will bring life to the following Shared Future objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tackling the Visible Manifestations of Sectarianism and Racism ● Reclaiming Shared Space ● Reducing Tensions at Interface Areas ● Shared Communities ● Developing Shared Workplaces ● Ensuring That Voice is Given to Victims ● Shared Services

Theme 2	Understanding Ourselves and Our Heritages
Rationale	<p>Before we can trust; respect; and accommodate each other we need to know where we're coming from; what's important to us; and why we think the way we do. Ignorance and lack of knowledge – usually “accidental” rather than wilful – are at the root of most of our tensions, real or imagined. Cookstown and all its people, both new and long-standing, have rich heritages. It's important that they're explained; shared; and understood ... but not compromised or diluted.</p> <p>This theme will bring life to the following Shared Future objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling the Visible Manifestations of Sectarianism and Racism • Reclaiming Shared Space • Shared Communities • Supporting Good Relations Through Diversity and Cultural Diversity • Good Relations, Community Development and Tackling Disadvantage • Ensuring That Voice is Given to Victims
Theme 3	Promoting Good Relations
Rationale	<p>Sometimes explanations and awareness-raising aren't enough: they have to be accompanied by clear, focused work. Cookstown has some specific good relations realities that need to be addressed in practical, pragmatic ways.</p> <p>This theme will bring life to the following Shared Future objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling the Visible Manifestations of Sectarianism and Racism • Reclaiming Shared Space • Reducing Tensions at Interface Areas • Shared Education • Shared Communities • Supporting Good Relations Through Diversity and Cultural Diversity • Developing Shared Workplaces • Good Relations, Community Development and Tackling

	<p>Disadvantage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring That Voice is Given to Victims
Theme 4	Providing Direct Support and Assistance
Rationale	<p>There is clear, ongoing evidence that groups; communities; and individuals across Cookstown want to help take the good relations agenda forward. Often they want to do that as part of their mainstream work. That work is frequently voluntary ... and even small bits of financial support and advice can make a major difference. It's important that such support and advice remains available.</p> <p>This theme will bring life to the following Shared Future objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling the Visible Manifestations of Sectarianism and Racism • Reclaiming Shared Space • Reducing Tensions at Interface Areas • Shared Communities • Supporting Good Relations Through Diversity and Cultural Diversity • Good Relations, Community Development and Tackling Disadvantage • Ensuring That Voice is Given to Victims

A Good Relations Action Plan

5.4 A three-year action plan to take forward the four strategic themes is outlined in Appendix 1. A series of actions is put forward under each theme, indicating:

- **what** we'll do about this theme
- **who** needs to be involved
- what **resources** are likely to be needed

- the **timescales** involved, ie Ongoing (ie continuation of existing work); Short (within a year); Medium (two/three years); and Long (four/five years)
- the **Outcomes** or **Impact** we want to achieve as a result

Managing and Measuring Performance

- 5.5 The Council's good relations work will be managed and measured just as seriously as any other part of its business. The Action Plan presented above is clear about the performance that's expected and responsibilities, timescales and targets have been identified. This will be translated into a more detailed Operational Plan on an annual basis. In addition the Steering Group referred to in Action 1.9 will maintain an overview of the Strategy's implementation. Progress with the Strategy will be reported to the full Council on a regular basis.

Appendix 1: Cookstown District Council's Good Relations Action Plan

Theme 1: Being a "Well-Related" Council

What we'll do about this theme	Who needs to lead on it ... and who needs to be involved?	What resources are likely to be needed ?	What's the ideal timescale?	Outcomes or Impact sought
1. Maintain current practices and approaches in terms of the Council's Equality Scheme; flag policy; its use/promotion of The Burnavon and MUSA; and its delivery of services generally	Council SMT	Staff time	Ongoing	Council provides civic leadership and the Council and its facilities are seen to be for all and to be shared by all
2. Produce a Good Relations Protocol where Councillors publicly agree not to seek to heighten tensions in a manner which could exploit divisions and differences. Ask other organisations to sign up to the Protocol.	Council; other local organisations	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Short	Clear political leadership for the good relations agenda
3. Produce a Good Relations briefing note for all staff outlining how we prioritise this work and why: develop	Corporate Services	Staff time; Good Relations	Short	Clear, summary statement of Council's good relations position

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to outcomes sought by this Strategy • impact on specific groups; sectors; or areas 				
<p>7. Include good relations as a standard item/feature in the Council's Newsletter</p>	Corporate Services	Staff time	Ongoing	Promotion of the good relations agenda to all households in the District
<p>8. Host, in conjunction with the LSP; East Tyrone Rural; DPP; Community Safety Partnership; CWSAN; and other interested bodies an annual, all-inclusive Cookstown good relations conference or workshop, which can showcase different themes and issues</p>	Development	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Short	The local, Cookstown-specific good relations agenda continuously energised and driven forward: greater dialogue promoted
<p>9. Support and promote the work of the cross-party Council Good Relations Steering Group, and give it the remit of overseeing the development and delivery of this Strategy.</p>	Council	Staff time	Short	Clear, Cookstown focus on the "Making It Happen" part of the "Shared Future" framework

Theme 2: Understanding Ourselves and Our Heritages

What we'll do about this theme	Who needs to lead on it ... and who needs to be involved?	What resources are likely to be needed?	What's the ideal timescale?	Outcomes or Impact sought
1. Identify; publish; and then promote to local people in a good relations context a Cookstown Heritage Trail which brings together in an overall historical and cultural context landmark places and events in Cookstown District.	Development; local groups	Staff time; Good Relations funding; other funding	Medium	Growing local understanding of the District's shared heritage: myths and stereotypes dispelled
2. Establish a central resource, available to the public, of local history and associated cultural publications	Development	Staff time; storage space	Medium	Growing local understanding of the District's shared heritage: myths and stereotypes dispelled
3. Support events which raise local awareness of the backgrounds; traditions; and cultures of the main ethnic minority populations in the	Development; Community Services	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Short	Better local understanding of other cultures and breaking down of prejudices, leading to

District.				integration of minority populations
4. Support the creation of specific migrant/ethnic minority groupings/fora	Development; other local organisations	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Short	Involvement of minority populations in Cookstown life: improved dialogue
5. Lead on and/or support the development/regeneration of iconic district features and historic monuments such as Ardboe Cross; Beaghmore Stone Circles; and Tullyhogue Fort	Development	Staff time; Council and other funding	Ongoing	Growing local understanding of the District's shared heritage
6. Work with local groups to address contentious issues (such as flags; emblems; and bonfires) in ways which bring life to the principles of equity; diversity; and interdependence	Development; Community Services	Staff time	Medium	Reduction in visible signs of sectarianism and in interface area tensions
8. Ensure a good relations dimension is incorporated within the District's proposed Community Support Forum	Development; Community Services	Staff time	Short	Good relations embedded in all aspects of the District's "development agenda"

9. Support events which interpret and explain traditional cultural festivals, eg 17 March and 12 July	Development; Community Services	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Short	Growing local understanding of the District's shared heritage
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Theme 3: Promoting Good Relations

What we'll do about this theme	Who needs to lead on it ... (and who needs to be involved)?	What resources are likely to be needed?	What's the ideal timescale ?	Outcomes or Impact sought
1. Work with the local small business sector to devise and deliver a programme which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highlights key employment issues re migrant workers • outlines migrants' cultural backgrounds and expectations • points out the economic and business benefits of good relations 	Development; other local organisations	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Medium	Good relations brought into Cookstown workplaces in meaningful and practical ways
2. Provide three annual bursaries/awards as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two for the best good relations- 	Council	Staff time; Good Relations	Short	Development of good relations work within the education sector

management; local traders; and local organisations and through the direct management of The Burnavon, promote Cookstown town centre as a place for all local traditions, belonging to everyone but controlled by no one	Development	Staff time	Ongoing	Reclaiming of shared spaces for everyone
6. Continue to consult as appropriate, with for example, residents' groups, on good relations issues	Council SMT	Staff time	Ongoing	Robust community input to good relations issues
7. Use public art (eg via the Re-Imaging Communities Programme) to advance the good relations agenda	Development	Staff time	Ongoing	Iconic manifestations of the District's cultural variety and increase in shared spaces
8. Work with other Councils, via a Western Forum, to mutual good relations benefits	Chief Executive	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Ongoing	Improved joined-up working and good relations becomes embedded in all aspects of the Council's business; Cookstown benefits from work and experiences elsewhere
9. Maintain the good relations dimension within the work of the Cookstown Sports Forum	Mid-Ulster Sports Arena	Staff time	Ongoing	Good relations incorporated into an important aspect of Cookstown community life

10. Support schools-based programmes which use art; drama; and music to promote the good relations agenda	Community Services; schools	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Short	and activity Development of good relations work, in meaningful ways, within the education sector
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Theme 4: Providing Direct Support and Assistance

What we'll do about this theme	Who needs to lead on it ... and who needs to be involved?	What resources are likely to be needed?	What's the ideal timescale ?	Outcomes or Impact sought
1. Develop and deliver a good relations grant scheme which is "challenge-based", ie applicants have to demonstrate how their project will advance the Council's Good Relations	Development; LSP	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Short	Focussed, effective and clearly understood use of public resources in the delivery of the good relations agenda

<p>Strategy; how it differs from previous work supported by the Council; and how it will add value to the Council's input: target of 15 grants</p>				
<p>2. Develop and deliver a programme which explains to groups (for example church-based and ethnic minority groups) how public governance and financial support regimes work</p>	<p>Community Services</p>	<p>Staff time; Good Relations funding</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>Traditionally-excluded groups operating in the funding mainstream</p>
<p>3. Continue to provide advice and support in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good practice in good relations • potential links/collaboration with elsewhere • sources of funding 	<p>Development; Community Services</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Cookstown's good relations capacity and competence improved</p>
<p>4. Offer structured good relations training and capacity building to local groups, tailored to fit each group's stage of development</p>	<p>Development; Community Services</p>	<p>Staff time; Good Relations funding</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>Cookstown's good relations capacity and competence improved</p>
<p>5. Provide support and advice to other public; private; and voluntary bodies on good relations issues</p>	<p>Development; Community Services</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Cookstown's good relations capacity and competence improved</p>

6. Support groups; projects; and initiatives which have established track records in this area of work	Development; Community Services	Staff time; Good Relations funding	Ongoing	Cookstown's existing and proven good relations capacity used to best effect
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Appendix 2: Sources

Age Concern, Cookstown, Good Relations Policy

Belfast City Council, Good Relations Strategy, 2003; Good Relations Plan 2007

Cookstown District Council, Best Value Residents' Satisfaction Survey, 2004

Cookstown LSP, Social Inclusion Audit, 2004

Directions in Diversity, Audit Commission, 2002

Equality and Diversity, Audit Commission, 2002

Faith Based Voluntary Action, ESRC

Fermanagh District Council, Good Relations Strategy 2006

Guidelines for a Cultural Diversity Policy, Community Relations Council 2001

Leading Cohesive Communities, IDeA, 2006

Long Term International Migration Estimates for NI 2004/05, NISRA 2006

Migrant Workers in Cookstown, CWSAN Migrant Worker Support Project 2006

Racial Equality Strategy for NI 2005/10, OFMDFM

A Shared Future, OFMDFM, 2005

A Shared Future First Triennial Action Plan 2006/09, OFMDFM, 2006

Appendix 3: Consultation Template

Cookstown Good Relations Audit Workshop

(Date) 2006

1. What are the main “good relations” issues in and around Cookstown District?
2. What are the good; positive; and/or successful things that are being done in response?
3. What more could or should be done?
4. And who should be doing those things?
5. Anything else you’d like to add?

Thank you for your help in this important work!

Appendix 4: Funded Groups' Questionnaire

Cookstown Good Relations Audit

The Community Groups' View

We are currently working on drawing up a Good Relations strategy for Cookstown District Council area. By "good relations" we mean the ability to live together, comfortably and confidently, based on a shared trust in each other. By "each other" we mean people of all religions; opinions; and races.

As a group which has recently benefited from Community Relations funding from Cookstown District Council, we're interested in hearing your views on these issues. It would be very helpful if you could fill in this questionnaire. Your responses will of course be treated totally confidentially.

1. Would you say your group was part of (tick as appropriate):
 - the broadly "Nationalist" community
 - the broadly "Unionist" community
 - neither of these communities

2. What did the Community Relations grant aid from the Council help your group to do?

3. Do you or did you ever get Community Relations support from any other source, apart from the Council?

4. What type of Good Relations-related work would you like to be able to do but currently cannot?

Appendix 5: Council Staff Questionnaire

Cookstown Good Relations Audit

“What do you think ...?”

Cookstown District Council is currently involved in an audit of “good relations” across the District. By “good relations” we mean the ability to live together, comfortably and confidently, based on a shared trust of each other. The audit is being carried out to provide the base information and views we need to develop a Good Relations Strategy for the Council. Every other Council in NI is doing, or has done, the same work.

To help build the base of information and views it’s important we get the views of people who work in the Council. That’s what this survey is about. It’s totally anonymous – we’re interested in **what** people think ... not in **who** thinks it! If you need to use additional sheets, feel free to do so.

Please take a few moments to fill it in and return it to *****

- Male (Tick as appropriate)
 Female

1. Would you say you’re a member of (tick as appropriate):
 - The broadly “Nationalist” community
 - The broadly “Unionist” community
 - Neither of these communities

2. What do you think are the “big” Good Relations issues across Cookstown District?

2.1 What’s good/positive/successful about what the Council’s doing in response to these?

2.2 What's not-so-good about what the Council's doing?

2.3 What more could/should the Council do?

3. Are there any Good relations issues that affect you in the workplace? If so, what are they?

3.1 Again, what could or should the Council do in response?

4. Anything else you'd like to add?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. We'll keep you informed about what will be in the Strategy as a result.

