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**Minutes of the
PEACE III Review Panel Meeting**
Thursday 1 September 2011, 11.00am
SEUPB Offices, Belfast

In Attendance:	Pat Colgan	SEUPB (Chair)
	Denis Galway	MC Panel Member
	Angela Holohan	MC Panel Member
	Peter Osborne	Independent Member
	Ian Boden	SEUPB (Secretariat)
	Christine Markey	SEUPB (Secretariat)

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Agenda

The Agenda was agreed.

3. Register of Interests/Conflicts of Interest

None

4. Review

The Review of the Wellington Hall Project (Ref: 20956)

Representatives from Wellington Hall (WH) and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) were invited to enter the room.

In Attendance: Rev. Sandra Pragnell, WH
 Trevor Patterson, WH
 Howard Keery, JTS
 Brenda Hegarty, JTS

After introductions, the Chair outlined the procedures to be followed. The Chair then invited the Project promoters to outline the reasons for their request for a review.

The representatives for WH presented their case. The main points included:

- The project will meet the priority objectives through engagement with a small religious minority; a cross-border dimension; use by the wider community; introducing the value of a shared legacy; undertaking activities that will achieve progress.
- It will address divisions past and present; have a cross-community management committee; and create a neutral shared space.
- It is in demand and has strong community support.
- Information on a shared history will be documented and gathered with the local community, museums, historical societies and schools with an exhibition organised by a cross-cultural group.
- It will enable a shared future that will involve youth, older people, new communities, women, religious, people with disabilities, and minority groups. Different communities will share unique traditions and cultures and the publications will record and preserve information.

The Chair thanked the project promoters for their presentation and invited the JTS to respond.

Representatives from the JTS made the following points:

- The theme was significantly over-subscribed with a high success bar and rejection rate of 75-85%.
- The assessment process has changed. There was an initial assessment against programme and priority, if projects failed to meet the 65% threshold they were presented to SC for rejection.
- The JTS assessment noted that the project fell down due to its failure to evidence contested space or lack of shared space in the area; it was felt the focus was on the restoration of a building of heritage merit; and there was a limited programme of activity to promote peace and reconciliation.
- Contested space was not an issue in Dundalk, however it was noted that the minority community were struggling to get heard.

- There was acknowledgement that the promoters had raised £21,000 towards the costs; and the Louth Partnership could potentially fund a programme of activity.
- Section 2.7.2 of the application form had been omitted however the JTS extracted information from other areas.

The Chair thanked the JTS for their comments.

A Review Panel Member asked if the £30k was a reasonable amount for programme activity.

The JTS noted that the SC needed confidence that the activities are going to manifest into a shared space. The programme activity should be a substantial element.

The promoter stated that programme activity was drawn from community engagement but to have a full programme of activity is premature. They also referred to question 2.7.2 stating that it was an administrative error. Had they been informed, the information, they would have been supplied.

A Review Panel member noted that £30k is a reasonable amount and asked the JTS if it was a fair criticism to say that it was not enough.

The JTS stated that it was a fair criticism. Bricks and mortar do not achieve peace and reconciliation. The activity within the building needed to be highlighted. The minimum that would be expected for programme activity is £250k.

The Chair asked if the promoters had any contact with the Louth PEACE III Partnership.

The promoters stated that they had and that it was clear that there may be money for activities but not for capital build. They also noted that they were not aware that the minimum amount was £250k.

The JTS noted that there was an expression of interest before the call opened. If a proposal was submitted the JTS then offered advice to the applicants.

The project promoters noted that they did not hear about the call until December 2010 and were not aware the advice was being offered.

A Review Panel member noted that there was interaction in the Border Region and asked if it was fair to say that there is a lack of inclusion.

The promoters noted that when activities are up and running, the project committee will evolve into a cross-community management committee. To have that level of commitment just to raise funds was unfair.

A Review Panel member noted the application needed to show engagement with Louth County Council and that the groups named in the Louth PEACE III plan could use this shared space.

The promoters noted that they had met with a lot of community groups through the partnership and they all endorsed use of the space.

A Review Panel member asked how are the facilities currently used; what the ongoing obligations for maintenance are; the programme activity is fairly small and that needs to be balanced against the ongoing running cost; and noted that there are no costs for project management.

The promoters noted that the building is currently not safe for use; there are ongoing financial obligations to maintain the façade which is raised by volunteers; and there are businesses interested in using the space and it is hoped they will generate income.

A Review Panel Member asked how the JTS feel inclusion is achieved without the hall.

The JTS confirmed that it was felt the Church of Ireland would achieve the inclusion without the Wellington Hall.

A Review Panel member asked if they had received planning permission as this could take time and the promoters noted that that was the job of the architect.

The Chair clarified that the project promoters felt the the SC had been unduly harsh in rejecting before conducting a value for money check.

The promoter agreed noting that they were taken aback by the decision. They had advisors who could not understand the score.

The JTS noted that the assessment was based on the information supplied in the application form.

The Chair then asked if benchmarking against other projects was fair.

The JTS said that it was extremely fair as the applications getting through were of an extremely high quality. The scoring was between 6 and 8 which is less evident. The score needed to increase by 50% to move to the next stage.

The Chair asked if the promoters had a Business Plan and the promoters confirmed that they had not.

The Chair asked for any final statements.

The promoters stated that they regret that they did not know that there was an opportunity to get advice. They believe that this is a worthwhile project and they were grateful of the opportunity to present their case.

The JTS noted that they believe that they assessed the project as fairly as they could.

The Chair then asked the Project promoters and the JTS if they were happy with the way the Review Panel had been conducted, and if they felt they had been given the opportunity to convey all the main points of their argument. Both the Project promoters and the JTS confirmed that they were happy with the process.

The Project promoters and the JTS exited the room.

The Review Panel discussed the application and information presented and noted:

- The applicant did not have enough background or wide enough consultation.

- There is a wider issue of engaging with the protestant community in the Border Region.
- It is highly unlikely that there will be another avenue for funding in the current PEACE III Programme.
- SEUPB is aware of the serious issues around development support for minority communities.
- Had it been assessed against the efficiency and effectiveness the score would more than likely be less.
- The regional projects and local authority plans have a remit to offer developmental support and the applicant could liaise with them.

After considerable deliberation, the Review Panel concluded that the Steering Committee decision had not been unreasonable. It also confirmed that there had been no failings in the procedures followed.

The Review Panel recognised the value and merit in the project and noted the importance of engaging with the protestant community and encouraged the promoters to engage with the JTS in terms of accessing any potential future funding.

5. Review

The Review of the St Comgall's Project (Ref: 28987)

Representatives from Falls Community Council (FCC) and the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) were invited to enter the room.

In Attendance:

- Gerry McConville, FCC
- Marie Maguire, FCC
- Caroline Wilson, Belfast City Council (FCC)
- David Gilmour, Strategic Investment Board (FCC)
- Kerry Wilson, KPMG (FCC)
- Howard Keery, JTS
- Brenda Hegarty, JTS

After introductions, the Chair outlined the procedures to be followed. The Chair then invited the Project promoters to outline the reasons for their request for a review.

The representatives for FCC presented their case. The main points included:

- The building is in a contested area and is an iconic building that is located on a peace line. It is a multi-purpose venue whose main focus will be on peace and reconciliation.
- The Steering Group included key statutory agencies and cross-community representatives who then mandated a small technical group to take the project forward.
- The programme of activity will be on a cross-community basis.
- The project will be self-sustaining and the income generated would fund other projects.
- The application referred to the removal of an interface barrier for access. It is a sensitive issue and it will not be removed. There is an opportunity for discussion on how to increase activities and the barrier will be the focus.
- There will be a relocation of other projects to St Comgalls.
- The building is currently a major tourist attraction due to its part in the conflict.
- Belfast City Council will be the Lead Partner and they will bring buy-in from unionist and nationalist parties.
- There will be dialogue to and between communities and it will also benefit economic activity.

The Chair thanked the project promoters for their presentation and invited the JTS to respond.

Representatives from the JTS made the following points:

- The theme was significantly over-subscribed with a very high success bar and rejection rate of 75-85%.
- The assessment process has changed. There was an initial assessment against programme and priority, if projects failed to meet the 65% threshold they were presented to SC for rejection.
- This was a very good project; it just failed to get over the bar.
- The SC expressed concern around the amount of true engagement with the local communities; the proposal appeared to be a physical re-construction with no programme costs allocated; and that this was a large scale proposal which included

a proposal to remove a barrier which appeared to be outside the remit of the promoter.

- The application form did not demonstrate development of activities.
- Information had been provided detailing the objectives associated with the proposed exhibitions, however, this was not deemed sufficient.

The Chair thanked the JTS for their comments.

A Review Panel member asked had other funding sources been investigated; what are the financial obligations for the restoration of the building; will the restoration remove the iconic status; only £24k has been costed for tour leader, are they part-time; will the site be sustainable; will the movement of other projects displace the income from where they are now; the budgeting for resource costs does not add up; and have the high ongoing costs in relation to the exhibitions been taken into account.

The promoter noted that there were a number of potential sources for funding and they had previously received building assistance from Atlantic Philanthropies. St Comgalls is a priority but this was not clear at the time of submission. It is a B1 listed building and the façade has to be maintained so the iconicity will remain. There will be a pool of tour guides that will be called upon as and when required as opposed to full time positions.

The promoters also noted that the tourism side would provide sustainability but it was felt this would not score well so was not included in the application. The revenue generated by all activities would also provide a revenue scheme to fund it. The intention was that the relocating projects would always be in St Comgalls and the discrepancies in the budget are an administrative error.

A Review Panel member asked the JTS to clarify what information was insufficient.

The JTS noted that there was a major exhibition space but that it was felt that the detail was not sufficient to show peace and reconciliation.

A Review Panel member asked if there were any conditions on the Atlantic Philanthropies grant that the building had to be used by a certain date. The Review

Panel member noted that the while FCC are doing good work the perception could be that this is mainly an FCC project and wider engagement needs to be assured.

The promoters noted that they had engaged with the protestant community and engagement is inherent across most of their projects. The FCC is in the heart of West Belfast yet it actively employs loyalists and has the trust of that community. New projects will also be established built on the relationships that the FCC has.

The promoters also noted that there were terms and conditions with the Atlantic Philanthropies grant. However due to unexpected circumstances FCC asked to put this on hold. Atlantic Philanthropies were happy to do so.

The promoters also noted that they are working on behalf of the Belfast Conflict Resolution Consortium. They will make it useful and attractive so that people will cross barriers.

The Chair asked what Belfast City Council's (BCC) role was within this application.

The promoters stated that the FCC approached BCC after the expression of interest. The strategy, policy and resource unit were unanimous that FCC would be the lead in the application and that BCC would take the lead in implementation.

The JTS noted that they had received correspondence confirming that.

The JTS noted the SC point of view was that while there was reference made to the composition of the steering group, there were no declarations of intent.

The promoter stated that if they had known they were needed, they would have been provided.

A Review Panel member referred to the reduction in the scores by the SC and asked if the JTS or SC were wrong.

The JTS stated that there was recognition that the partnerships existed previously but it was not clear in this application. The JTS stated that there was a weakness in not bringing members of protestant communities to the small technical group.

The promoters noted that the project board is cross-community but the technical group were tasked with getting funding. The technical group is about taking ideas from the wider group to put the project together.

The Chair asked if the JTS and SC had set a standard and benchmarked across the other applications in terms of engagement on a cross-community basis.

The JTS stated that this was the case and they had taken a consistent approach.

A Review Panel member asked if it was felt the FCC's structure was used to say it was doing cross-community work but when it came down to it, it appeared to be single identity.

The JTS stated that the genuineness of cross-community engagement was in the exploratory group but was removed for the management group. It was noted that it still scored in the evident band. It was felt that it was evident but that successful projects have the cross-community element at their core.

A Review Panel member asked if the reduction in the score was justified given the clear engagement with protestant groups.

The promoter stated that it was their understanding that their application was scored on its own merits not measured against others.

The JTS noted that every project was scored on its own merits, but that they cannot ignore the knowledge gained from the other projects. Both scores were still within the evident band.

The Chair asked if there was guidance on the scoring mechanism.

The JTS stated that there is guidance on project selection that has been approved by the Monitoring Committee.

The Chair asked if the JTS could now account for the difference in how the JTS and SC score.

The JTS noted that there is a distinction between the JTS and the SC. The JTS complete the assessment with an indicative score. The SC, on sight of the assessment report, come to a collective consensus on what they believe is right. There is much debate before agreement.

A Review Panel member noted that the promoter is doing great work. However, there is a lack of protestant representation at this meeting.

The promoter noted that there is evidence of who is involved through FCC employees. People will not be meeting in a neutral venue. FCC are being inclusive by bringing loyalists into a nationalist area. The projects envisaged will require engagement from both communities.

A Review Panel Member asked who owns the venue.

The promoter stated that the FCC owns the venue. However, the project board will run it and the communities will have ownership of it too.

A Review Panel member referred to the activities in the centre noting that the use of the space was not very innovative in terms of peace and reconciliation and asked if this was not already provided by other organisations like the Culturlann.

The promoter noted that they had held consultation with the other areas such as the Culturlann to ensure that St Comgalls will provide different activities. The exhibitions will be based on what is happening, the cultural aspects of both communities and will bring people together to discuss these areas.

The Chair noted that this was a significant project in terms of money and location. However the panel have to decide if, based on the application, the decision was justified.

A Review Panel member asked what role the strategic investment board would have.

The promoter noted that they would have an advisory role. They had asked to develop business case and looked at the opportunities for funding.

The promoter then asked what paperwork is presented to SC.

The JTS noted that the SC would receive consistent information for all applications. They would receive the assessment and can seek additional information, each project is presented by PowerPoint to them and that information will come from the application.

The promoter stated that based on the JTS assessment they felt that the JTS did not understand the application and that may be why there was a reduction in the score.

The JTS noted that even if the SC had have accepted the JTS score it would still be below the threshold.

The Chair asked for any final comments.

The promoter felt that they had given a fair representation of the issues and asked if their project be considered for a lesser amount.

The Chair noted that the panel had to address the issues on the table. Within that the money in the pot is limited. There are also other projects with high scores and this project would also need to score higher than those.

The JTS also noted that depending on the decision all due process would also need to be followed.

The Chair then asked the Project promoters and the JTS if they were happy with the way the Review Panel had been conducted, and if they felt they had been given the

opportunity to convey all the main points of their argument. Both the Project promoters and the JTS confirmed that they were happy with the process.

The Project promoters and the JTS exited the room.

The Review Panel discussed the application and information presented and noted:

- The scores should have been closer to the JTS assessment.
- The application still needs a lot of improvement to get over the threshold.
- Being away from a neutral area is an important consideration.
- The joint board is significant, the board is not single identity and it is difficult to understand the rationale for bringing that down.
- The chances are that the value for money may score low.
- They are unlikely to get over 65%.

After considerable deliberation, the Review Panel concluded that the decision had not been unreasonable. It also confirmed that there had been no failings in the procedures followed.

While the Review Panel agreed to uphold the decision of the Steering Committee, they held a detailed and robust discussion in relation to the scoring of the application and felt that the scores for the application were in line with the JTS assessment rather than the Steering Committee. While this was the case it was recognised that those scores were still below the threshold of 65% and as such it would not make any material difference if the application were to be sent back for re-assessment.

The Review Panel also recognised and appreciates the value of the work of the applicant.

6. Conclusion

The Chair thanked the Review Panel members for attending and informed them that he would write, on behalf of the Review Panel, to inform both project applicants and the JTS of the Review Panel's decisions. He also stated that the minutes from the meeting would be e-mailed to Review Panel members in due course for their approval.