



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for the Office of the First Minister  
and deputy First Minister

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Inquiry into Building a United Community:  
Office of the First Minister and  
deputy First Minister

13 May 2015

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Mike Nesbitt (Chairperson)  
Mr Chris Lyttle (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Megan Fearon  
Mr Alex Maskey  
Mr David McIlveen

**Witnesses:**

Miss Donna Blaney	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
Mrs Linsey Farrell	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
Mr Michael McGinley	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
Mr Peter Robinson	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** I welcome Peter Robinson, Michael McGinley, Donna Blaney and Linsey Farrell.

**Mrs Linsey Farrell (Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister):** Thank you, Chair. I will make a few brief opening remarks, if that is OK.

Chair, thank you for your introduction and for the invitation to appear here today to update the Committee on the progress of the implementation of Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) and respond to the common themes that emerged from the inquiry into the strategy's implementation.

Together: Building a United Community was published on 23 May 2013, following the announcement of seven strategic headline actions by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on 9 May. We had the opportunity to brief the Committee in February and October 2014 on the implementation of the strategy, and we welcome this further opportunity to comment on the responses received to the inquiry.

As you are aware, the range of commitments and actions contained in the T:BUC strategy extends well beyond the seven headline actions. In total, there are in the region of 42 actions and commitments, which, compositely, will contribute to achieving our vision of a shared, united and reconciled community. I acknowledge the view raised in inquiry responses that the headline actions, in and of themselves, will not address all the issues that divide our community. However, it is a long-term strategy, and it is one that will evolve over time.

I would like to commence by focusing on the responses received to the inquiry. While it is impossible to cover every issue raised, I will focus on a number of the key issues that have been highlighted throughout. We welcome the wide range of interest from organisations that have responded to the inquiry. I believe that this is testimony to the real passion across our community for building a united, shared and reconciled society. From an analysis of the responses received, there are a number of common themes that have been identified, and I will cover each in turn.

In respect of the level of engagement or involvement with the sector, there was a lengthy public consultation on the Executive's draft cohesion, sharing and integration (CSI) strategy and further stakeholder engagement as part of the detailed design of the many actions being delivered. The establishment of the thematic subgroups has also provided vital opportunities for engagement with the sector, and we look forward to developing that engagement as the subgroups take their work forward.

In respect of communications, we are working to develop a stakeholder newsletter to show the continuing progress in the implementation of the strategy and other good relations activities. We are also working closely with the Community Relations Council (CRC) to enhance our opportunities to engage with stakeholders in a more structured way. Over the coming months, we hope to hold a number of events that will also provide a platform to communicate the work that has been taken forward under the strategy and highlight other successes that have been achieved as a result of good work across our community.

A number of the comments received focused on funding issues, and we acknowledge that it has not always been possible to provide groups with early notification of funding. For 2015-16, steps have been taken to ensure that funding is released earlier in the new financial year. This has been made possible by the Executive's commitment to allocate £10 million of funding towards the delivery of the strategy. This will facilitate the allocation of funding earlier in the year and funding programmes commencing promptly. Letters of offer were issued to six of the councils in April, and we plan to be in a position to agree the remaining five before the end of May. Officials are working with those five councils to ensure that their planned programmes of work meet the Department's requirements.

Assessment of applications to the north Belfast programme was also completed in April, and letters of offer were issued to the 12 contract holders in the week commencing 4 May, dependent on their ability to revise their applications as appropriate to ensure they are sufficiently outcome-focused and that all programmes align with the aims of the T:BUC strategy.

In total, we received 175 applications to the central good relations fund, which closed on 20 April. The assessment panel met initially on Monday 11 May, and officials are in the process of contacting groups that have been successful. The summer camp multi-agency panel will meet to review the applications to deliver 100 summer schools and camps during 2015 on 20 May, and we are on target to announce the successful projects in the week commencing 1 June.

Several issues have also been raised through the inquiry regarding the sharing of best practice. We are fully aware of the importance of sharing best practice, and it is something that we are continually seeking to do. The good relations officer conference is a good example of sharing that provides a space for sharing experiences of successful project delivery. We are also actively discussing with our officers other ways of sharing best practice through a new shared learning initiative within the structures of the new councils.

The north Belfast strategic good relations programme bi-monthly forum has progressed to being a monthly forum due to demand from the groups and progression of the forum remit in response to learning and feedback from 2014-15 programme. That forum is a key driver in facilitating the use of techniques, such as outcomes-based accountability and mapping, which can be built on in-year and incrementally through each iteration of the strategic good relations programme in north Belfast. That learning is vital to informing the work of other areas, as ideas from those areas are used to add value to the work of the north Belfast programme.

Through other fora led by the Department, such as the good relations programme board, learning and best practice is shared across all Departments. These fora facilitate the sharing of learning and knowledge to help inform plans, projects and programmes within other Departments. The Department also engages closely with the Community Relations Council and other stakeholders to share information. That engagement enables the Department to give feedback directly to practitioners and other stakeholders and facilitates open and frank discussion on a range of issues.

With enhanced community planning powers, the new councils have the potential to have greater involvement in many areas, such as community relations. The Department has been working with councils to facilitate that and share alignment between the good relations action plans and the key priorities within Together: Building a United Community. Further engagement with councils is planned.

A further focus of the responses to the inquiry was on outcomes, and I can report that the performance monitoring framework for all programmes and projects related to T:BUC will utilise an outcomes-based approach. This approach has involved the development of departmental guidance on outcomes-based methodology to monitor and evaluate actions and activities flowing from projects.

Respondee have expressed concerns about an absence of definitions in the strategy. However, it is our view that actions are outlined in the strategy to address these issues. For example, whilst there is a definition of sectarianism in the strategy, a commitment is given to reach an appropriate consensus on a definition for inclusion in the legislation for the equality and good relations commission. Good relations are currently defined by reference to the groups named in section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. There is no additional definition in the strategy; however, a commitment is given to reviewing and revising the good relations indicators that will measure the desired impacts of activities for each of the four priority areas in the strategy.

The revised indicators have now been agreed by Ministers following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. In the context of the implementation of the strategy, the revised indicators and associated outcomes will be used to monitor progress at a population level and will provide the strategic performance measurement framework to underpin the measurement of impacts across the strategy's headline actions, associated programmes and funding streams, including the district council good relations actions.

Equality screening has also been raised as an issue in the inquiry. Through the good relations programme board, assurances have been sought from all Departments that they are fulfilling their statutory obligations as they deliver their headline actions on a regular basis. Officials in OFMDFM have carried out an equality impact screening of the T:BUC summer camps pilot programme for 2015-16. At this stage, no negative impacts have been identified, and as such the policy will be screened out. However, given that this is a pilot programme, it was decided that this decision will be kept under review in the event that any additional impact should be identified as the programme rolls out.

I would now like to provide a brief update on the headline actions contained in the strategy, if time allows.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** You have certainly gone over five minutes. My first question is this: why was the paper submitted at 9.08 am today?

**Mrs Farrell:** The papers were under consideration by the Department.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** When were they written?

**Mrs Farrell:** The date on which they were written or submitted to the private office is immaterial to the date on which they issue. Both are parts of the wider process in the Department to allow engagement and ongoing discussion between Ministers and officials.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** I read the following line about summer camps:

*"the closing date for applications to be submitted to the Education Authority is 8 May 2015."*

That use of tense tells me that it was written well before 8 May. Linsey, you know that papers are supplied to the implementation group of the Stormont House Agreement every Monday, days in advance, regularly and promptly and without any issues. Yet this Committee is entirely disrespected on a weekly basis by the same people.

**Mrs Farrell:** I cannot comment on that, other than to say that they were under consideration by the Department.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Together: Building a United Community is a strategy that celebrates its second birthday this month. How much have you spent?

**Mrs Farrell:** On good relations in general or on T:BUC headline actions?

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** How much have you spent on T:BUC over the last 24 months?

**Mrs Farrell:** Over the 24 months, particularly during 2014-15, we delivered in the region of £9 million to support good relations activity across a number of programmes. I believe that those are cited in the briefing document the Committee received about the range of funding programmes.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** How much of that would not have been spent were it not for T:BUC?

**Mrs Farrell:** The T:BUC allocation in this year's budget was only agreed in the context of the Stormont House Agreement and the Budget settlement, and of the £10 million allocation, just over £8 million has been allocated across the headline actions to a number of Departments.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Are you saying that the £9 million that you have just said has been spent would have been spent anyway, with or without T:BUC?

**Mrs Farrell:** Not necessarily. I believe that there was a real commitment given in Together: Building a United Community by the Executive to ensure that resources were available, particularly at a time when they were depleting in other areas. Together: Building a United Community has continued to be a priority and one that has attracted funding. It has not suffered in the same way as other areas. There is real priority given to it, and those funding schemes are testimony to that.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** How much of the £9 million would have been spent anyway, and how much is attributable directly to T:BUC being in existence?

**Mrs Farrell:** Donna may know the detail of spend before that, but it certainly would not have been to that level.

**Miss Donna Blaney (Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister):** No, it would not. I do not have the exact figures for the difference between what would have been spent and what was spent, but, through in-year bids for T:BUC, we have achieved additional funding for the district councils good relations programme, the central good relations programme, the north Belfast strategic good relations programme and the summer interventions programme.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** In round terms, what would that add up to?

**Miss Blaney:** It is going towards at least £3 million. That is just off the top of my head.

**Mrs Farrell:** We can certainly check the exact figures and write back to the Committee, if that would be useful.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Two years: £3 million.

**Mrs Farrell:** And now £10 million; in fact, £13 million.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** This is a programme that was launched with the then junior Minister saying that it was a half-a-billion-pound initiative. Three million pounds has been spent in two years. Wow.

**Mrs Farrell:** I think that the figure of half a billion pounds took in the expenditure across a range of funding programmes, including what is put in by the Executive. Peace III was a significant player in promoting good relations and reconciliation. A proportion of that is provided by the Northern Ireland Administration, and OFMDFM is the accountable Department for that. If you take in the expenditure under Peace III and that from other external funders, such as the International Fund for Ireland and The Atlantic Philanthropies, with which we jointly funded the contested spaces programme, it represents a significant expenditure on good relations over the period. Since the beginning of this financial year, we now have £10 million that is specifically ring-fenced to support the delivery and implementation of T:BUC across all Departments.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** In what way is Northern Ireland better off because of T:BUC?

**Mrs Farrell:** It is better off because we now have a strategic framework for good relations. Previously, we were working with a direct rule document, 'A Shared Future'; the Executive now have their own good relationships strategy and framework for action.

Although issues have been raised around implementation, some of which are included in the inquiry, the community has embraced the fact that there is now a framework for action with which to align their work. What we heard previously was that there was a bit of a vacuum and that they had nothing to pin their work to. T:BUC sets out a clear vision of the type of society that we all want to live in. It sets out four key strategic priorities that we want to focus on over the lifetime of the strategy, a number of quite challenging headline actions and somewhere in the region of 42 other actions and commitments that are to be taken forward by Departments. There is no doubt that it is a longer term strategy.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** You say that there are challenging headline actions, and you have included, for example, summer camps. Those have been happening for decades. What is challenging about running a summer camp?

**Mrs Farrell:** Summer interventions have been happening for decades. Summer schools and camps represent a new approach to how we engage with young people.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** That is not what we heard when we took evidence.

**Mrs Farrell:** From our view in the Department — and Donna will want to come in on the detail — the detailed design has been with stakeholders, and their involvement in putting together the design has shown the importance of it not just being about working with children and young people for three to four days in the summer to divert them from periods of tension. It is about engagement before and after and Donna can detail that.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** I am very happy for Donna to come in, but perhaps you would include something else, Donna. When we had our stakeholder event, I was sitting beside a woman who works in youth services, and her speciality is summer camps. When T:BUC was announced in May 2013 she was very excited. She sat by her phone thinking that you guys would be phoning her in a day or two because she had all the expertise in the world and you would want to tap into it. She waited 18 months for that phone call. I would like you to take that on board as you are responding to what Linsey said.

**Miss Blaney:** Over that interim period, we recognised that summer camps have been going on for a number of reasons and to deliver a number of outcomes. In the context of Together: Building a United Community, summer camps are different.

At the beginning, the aspiration was to create the opportunity for young people who attended the camps to build and maintain sustainable relationships that they maybe would not have had the opportunity to have in their day-to-day lives. We carried out an extensive engagement process with stakeholders and, hopefully, the person you referred to has had the opportunity to speak to us. Over 200 stakeholders have engaged in the co-design process, including people who have direct experience of delivering summer camps, youth workers and young people. We had almost 300 attendees at workshops in preparation for the applications to the summer camps.

As a result of that process, we have been able to design a programme that will deliver specific and very defined outcomes for those camps. They are things along the lines that, as a result of the camps, attendees will have positive attitudinal change towards people from a different background, sustained contact and friendships will be developed between young people from different backgrounds, young people will be more positive about shared activities, there will be better recognition about the role that young people play in peace building and they will have a better understanding of and respect for cultural differences. That is the focus of the scheme.

We have other summer camps that are called planned interventions, but they are much more generic and are about facilitating people at times of specific community tension and maybe taking them out of their areas. That is quite a different programme. Our stakeholders and particularly the young people have welcomed that. They want something different. They just do not want to go away on a certain night and spend some time together and then go back to their communities and never see those people again.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** So, those are summer camps, the likes of which Northern Ireland has never seen before.

**Miss Blaney:** Hopefully. At the minute, we have 154 applications to deliver them and those will be assessed in the next couple of weeks.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Will they all be new camps, or will some have happened before but simply be reshaped to meet your objectives?

**Miss Blaney:** We will assess them to make sure that we have people delivering them who have experience of working with young people or delivering camps. If people do not have experience in delivering camps, we want to make sure that they are working with those who have the experience to deliver camps that will have those outcomes.

One of the unique aspects is pre- and post-engagement. It is not that they take a group of young people away for three or five days. They will also build relationships during pre- and post-engagement processes. Young people will use social media in whatever way they want to keep in contact, and we plan to have a shared learning forum in the late autumn or early winter, and some sort of celebration event, at which we can bring back the young people who participated to tell us what worked well and what did not. Remember: this is a pilot that will inform how we go forward in the future.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** There was a pilot last year as well.

**Miss Blaney:** We delivered some pilots, but those were done before and during the engagement process and they have also informed this process. We wanted to make sure that the process was shaped to be different and actually delivered for the young people who participate.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** OK. I am a young person, you prep me, I go to a camp in the first week of August and I know what to expect. I come through the camp. What happens after that?

**Miss Blaney:** After the camp, there will be post-engagement.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** When will that be? If I went to the camp on the first week of August when would you —

**Miss Blaney:** It will be up to the project deliverers. The people who are making the applications to deliver the camps have to include pre- and post-engagement phases.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Is it just one engagement? Is it one meeting?

**Miss Blaney:** It could be a one-day event. Within the programme design, there is a set number of hours for face-to-face contact between the programme deliverers and the young people. It is not that they just take them to a museum and put them back on the bus at the end of the day. In addition —

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Specifically what happens? I have been to the camp, how long do I wait before the organisers get back in touch and how often do they get in touch? How many post-camp events will there be?

**Miss Blaney:** At the moment, for this year, there will be one post-camp event that is being organised by the camp deliverer.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Just one.

**Miss Blaney:** That will be followed up by another event in the late autumn or early winter that we will organise. That will be a mixture of a celebration event and a shared learning forum. There may actually be two events?

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** And that is it.

**Miss Blaney:** It is, for the pilot for 2015. Importantly, we will take the learning from this to inform what we need to do differently if the participants and deliverers tell us that it is not as effective. It is also

about how we build in the online or continuous monitoring to see whether it is effective. You cannot really tell, the following week, whether people have sustainable relationships. We will need to build in that monitoring.

**Mrs Farrell:** Those are exactly the things that we will want to test at the pilot stage. When we look at assessing the applications, we will look for innovative ideas and different delivery models to allow us to test how the post-camp event will work in practice. Furthermore, we are looking at how we can signpost and cross-refer to the various headline actions of T:BUC. It may be useful to signpost a young person involved in a summer camp to United Youth or to the cross-community sports programme. We are looking at that in the context of the outcomes framework as well.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** My reading of the evidence that we have taken so far is that, if engagement is not continual — continual rather than continuous — it is potentially a waste.

**Mr Lyttle:** Thanks for your update. I start by wishing you well as you get further into the detail of the actual work on delivering the strategy. I have worked closely with some of you before, and I know that you are genuinely committed to doing the work. I do not envy your challenge of building a united community in a political context where parties seem content to represent what they believe to be their community, but you are committed nonetheless. Have community relations improved in the two years since the publication of T:BUC?

**Mrs Farrell:** Thanks for your comments, Chris. The good relations indicators showed where improvements had been made, albeit other indicators showed some ways in which relationships were not improving. That is why a key commitment was given to look at the indicators and review them in the light of Together: Building a United Community. I often heard the indicators referred to as "bad relations indicators", as opposed to something more positive, so that is what we have tried to do through the engagement process and the consultation on them. We have tried to develop indicators that can align T:BUC to the outcomes that we are trying to achieve in order to get to what the key differences are that we need to make right across our society — young people, shared spaces, a safe community and cultural expression — that will have a tangible impact. It is the word "impact" that we are looking for in building good relations. Now that the key differences have been agreed, they can form the basis of the outcomes framework that we produce. We can then really be serious about measuring the impact that T:BUC has. In the absence of those agreed indicators aligned with T:BUC, there was perhaps a bit of a skewed picture.

**Mr Lyttle:** How far off are you from agreeing the new good relations indicators? Will you be able to present those to the Committee in the near future?

**Mrs Farrell:** We will check that out. There will hopefully be a launch, and we will obviously engage with the Committee in advance of that happening.

**Mr Lyttle:** It has been quite a while since they were put under review.

**Mrs Farrell:** They were out to consultation. They went through a couple of consultation periods and work with an advisory group. Peter, is there anything that you want to add?

**Mr Peter Robinson (Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister):** I just want to add that we have been looking at the departmental funding schemes and the funding schemes that the CRC delivers to ensure that the good relations indicators are incorporated into the application processes that are going out this year. Therefore, when applying for funding, groups have to show what contribution the interventions that they are taking forward are having on the impact of the good relations indicators.

**Mr Lyttle:** We were discussing the Children's Services Co-operation Bill earlier. There are proposals to produce annual reports on performance against the outcomes. Is there any possibility of having annual reporting on performance against good relations outcomes or indicators?

**Mrs Farrell:** Absolutely. It was discussed. We were at a good relations programme board meeting this morning with the Departments involved in delivery. The plan is that they will get guidance on the outcomes-based approach. We have already been working with Departments to develop a number of shared outcomes across all the headline actions. Departments will submit report cards against each

of those outcomes, and the programme board will monitor the progress against all of those and then produce a report on the basis of the information received.

**Mr Robinson:** I will just add that, over the next year, we will be working with the funded groups to help them produce similar report cards on the impact on their outcomes.

**Mr Lyttle:** In the absence of that type of report, it would be quite difficult to make an assessment as to what impact the headline actions are, or are not, having.

**Mrs Farrell:** The issue with the headline actions is that a lot were significant projects. There is a lot of work to go through on governance and business cases. We are now entering the stage of true implementation and will be able to measure the real impact of the headline actions as resources flow and the communities start to see the real benefits.

**Mr Lyttle:** You mentioned the contested spaces programme that was co-funded with Atlantic Philanthropies. That seemed to have some really good, positive impacts. One scheme attached to the programme was the nursery-school buddy scheme.

One action in T:BUC is the roll-out of nursery-school and primary-school cross-community buddy schemes. It is my understanding that that action rests with the Department of Education. Do you have any update on the status of the business case being progressed to roll it out?

**Mrs Farrell:** The latest update from DE is that it is still going through the process. We can certainly seek a further update. Community Relations in Schools (CRIS), which has been delivering a buddy scheme, has been successful in receiving core funding from the Community Relations Council. Again, that was money flowing from the Department to support that work. I think that the amount has increased, in recognition of the work that CRIS has been doing on the buddy scheme.

**Mr Lyttle:** Another key item of T:BUC is to deliver and enhance the good relations impact assessment for all policies across government. I think that that linked in with the paragraph in the Stormont House Agreement that there should be an independent audit of departmental spending to identify how division in society impacts on the delivery of public services. Is there any update on the progress of that?

**Mrs Farrell:** It was intended that that would be one of the issues taken forward in the context of the proposed equality and good relations commission. While the legislation is under consideration, we are working with the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council to identify the areas that they can work on within their existing remits and vires. We plan to engage with them further over the next period, and that is one of the specific actions mentioned in T:BUC that we will be looking at.

**Mr Lyttle:** Given that a previous OFMDFM audit costed division at upwards of £1 billion, are there any moves afoot to implement that Stormont House Agreement to conduct an independent audit of all departmental spending?

**Mrs Farrell:** The First Minister and the deputy First Minister have written to Executive colleagues to remind them of that Stormont House commitment and of the structures that are in place already through Delivering Social Change (DSC) and Together: Building a United Community. The head of the Civil Service will follow up shortly with permanent secretaries on that as well to assess how we can look at the cost of division across all the areas while bearing in mind the existing structures in place with DSC and T:BUC.

T:BUC also committed to commissioning research into identifying shared services and the extent of shared service delivery. Again, that is something we will be exploring further.

**Mr Lyttle:** I hope that you get the ministerial support that you need to expedite delivery of those really important issues.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Linsey, you talked about moving to the implementation phase. One objective that you have to implement is the creation of 10 shared education campuses. Each campus will obviously be a multimillion-pound initiative. How much implementation do you think that you will do this financial year, given that I have just seen that your paper, which we got at 9.08 am today, advises that the budget for the 10 new shared education campuses this year is £200,000?

**Mrs Farrell:** That is £200,000 of resource budget that was bid for from the Department of Education. It secured that bid from the T:BUC allocation to progress business cases. This is the point that I was making about a number of the headline actions: there are a lot of processes to go through, particularly where there is capital build involved. The shared education campuses would be one of those areas. However, DE has advised that the first three successful applications for shared campuses are going through the process now. In fact, one wants to go even further with its application and become more ambitious, and DE is working with that campus. The second call for applications has closed, and DE is considering those applications. Good progress will have been made on business case approvals for the initial three applications and on gearing up for spend to be able to happen on the capital side.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** OK. We may have only 10 minutes left before we become inquorate, so I will split the time in two, if that is OK. Alex and David both want in, and Alex is first on the list. You have five minutes.

**Mr Maskey:** Thank you, Chair.

**Mr D McIlveen:** I need only two minutes.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** Don't tell him, Pike.

**Mr Maskey:** There are a couple of questions that I want addressed. A bit like the Deputy Chair, I do not envy your task, because I am not exactly sure what everybody wants out of the process. Some people expect a light switch to be turned on and we will all be the same in our wee Norn Iron and everything will be wonderful. That will not happen, because we are not all the same. We are different, and there is nothing wrong with that. The trick is managing to deal with, embrace and respect that difference.

One of the things that concerned me a wee bit came in some of the evidence sessions with people for whom I have immense respect and who have worked a lifetime at the coalface and at interfaces. Sometimes I felt like handing some of them an elephant. A lot of the focus was on asking, "What do you mean by 'sectarianism'? You haven't told us what you mean by that". I might have a definition, and somebody else might have a different definition. Those are people who are genuinely trying to grapple with what they can do. I am very appreciative of the work that has been done on summer camps and very keen to see how they work out. I have no doubt that there will be difficulties, because how do you measure some of the outcomes?

The Chair was pressing you on how many engagements you have to have regarding a camp: one before, one during the camp and one afterwards. However, you are talking about organisations that are working around the clock all year round and are funded to work on those issues. Surely there could not possibly be a one-day prep meeting, the camp itself and another day for assessment. There has to be a continuum of work. The people who are doing the camps are going to be people who are doing such work anyway.

I am certain that there will be people trying to get camps organised this year that are to be as much around diversionary work, and that may be a bit challenging. I have been at residential with young people, and some of them involve taking people away in the summer, giving them diversions and challenging them on some of their ideas. Some of the sessions were quite good. How do you measure the outcomes from that, because to do so is quite difficult? Good luck with all of that.

The design is critical. When we held the round-table and other discussions, including our evidence sessions, people were saying in general terms, "OFMDFM officials are very good. They're out there a lot and are attending all the meetings". However, there were some issues raised around co-design. Has co-design been properly taken on board between the Department and organisations that have been doing great work for a long time?

I am interested in what kinds of clear outcomes you have in mind when you engage with stakeholders, because it is a two-way process. You cannot bring all the answers. You are bringing resources and government commitments. We want people to co-design, but we also want them to tell us what they mean. I have asked people, "What do you mean by that?" I know people who are working very well in interface areas, but they are never going to move to the other side of the interface, so let us get real on some of this. Do they always challenge each other? No, they do not. Sometimes they do not challenge themselves. It is difficult, and there is a lot of work to be done. I do not underestimate the difficulties involved.

To make sure that this becomes organic in the longer term, what kinds of challenges are we putting into the process from your end, where you deal with stakeholders, who, as I say, are, for the most part, excellent and doing great work? I am just glad to see that there is a commitment through T:BUC to giving added support, but there has to be a two-way process as well as additional resource.

**Mrs Farrell:** To me, there is a subtle difference between consultation with stakeholders and co-design. That is perhaps something that has taken all of us a bit of time to understand and get our heads around. Consultation has traditionally meant us going out to stakeholders with our ideas and asking them what they think of them. The approach that we have used through co-design has involved going out with more of a blank page and saying, "Here is what we are trying to do. Here's the outcome that we are trying to get to, which is linked to T:BUC. Now, tell us from your experience how that can best be designed and delivered". That is the approach that we have taken with summer schools and camps, because you are right when you say that it is a two-way thing. We have to tell stakeholders what we are trying to do in government through the Executive, but we need to listen to their experiences and informed opinions from the real world. Then, together we design something that is workable with our processes and governance but that will also meet the needs of the community.

That is something that we have found with the United Youth programme, which we have worked on with the Department for Employment and Learning, and, more recently, the summer schools/camps programme. You are right: there has to be a challenge back into the community, and that is something that we are trying to build into our subgroup structures. It is no longer the case that there are just statutory agencies sitting around the table. There are community representatives involved, and it is about getting across that there is an onus and responsibility on them to bring the information to us. Collectively, we need to identify what we need to do, and each of us then has to take responsibility for the bits that we can take responsibility for.

Donna, I am not sure whether there is anything to add on summer schools in particular.

**Miss Blaney:** A phased approach was taken. We had the more generic stakeholder engagement-cum-co-design to decide what it should look like. We then had in a specific design team, which had the representatives from statutory organisations and the youth sector. We then had in young people from the Northern Ireland Youth Forum, NEETs and representatives from Bryson and district councils — all the key players. They came up with the current design, which has to be a pilot. At the end of the year, we will take back what we have learnt and ask why things did or did not work. That is the opportunity to introduce the challenge factor.

The fact that we have outcomes is a challenge to the applicants. Therefore, people have been applying for interventions and for camps, but, when they look at our scheme, they will see that it is quite different, is more challenging and intentionally does not deliver the same things. Some people may not like that, but perhaps the scheme is not what they are interested in delivering. We will find that out as we go through the year.

**Mr Robinson:** That is what we are telling you about all the funded groups. At the very start of the application process, we made it clear what the T:BUC priorities and the associated indicators and outcomes are. We said, "This is what we want to achieve. You tell us the best intervention that you can make that will contribute to the advancement of those outcomes and impacts". We like to see the innovative approaches that they come up with, as long as there is a clear link between what they are doing and the T:BUC outcomes and impacts.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** It is two minutes, David.

**Mr D McIlveen:** No problem, Chair. I will try to keep to that, because I have to go at 4.00 pm as well.

My question is almost a supplementary to what Alex asked. It is on the same theme. I would not be splitting hairs about whether there is one further engagement with Departments or are two. This should be supported by Departments, not led by them, because there are plenty of people who are already doing this work very well, and I suspect that they will be the people who put in the application forms to run the summer camps. We all know that kids are probably the hardest group to reach, so there needs to be a bit of experience and expertise involved to do that.

Bear in mind that, in every single part of our community, most likely on a Friday night, there are dozens upon dozens of community-led or church-led gatherings that involve Protestant, Catholic, Traveller or Polish children. They have the whole mix there. What can T:BUC do to support those

groups, because they are the ones that ultimately will do the continuous work that builds on the strategy? Has any thought been given to having a curriculum for children and youth groups? If all the community-led groups throughout Northern Ireland were putting the same message across, with the support of the Department, with their arms being lifted up by the Department to give them the capacity to do that — it would have to be voluntary, but I do not think that any of them would have any great objections — why would we not tap into what is already there and support it?

Alex is absolutely right that everybody is different, but the message is the same: this is about tolerance and respect. My little girl has tried a few different things on a Friday night, and the message, broadly speaking, is the same but is being taught in a different way. That is a little confusing. If there were a little bit more structure to the whole thing, the Department could find itself a role by giving groups the capacity to get the final outcome that we want?

**Mrs Farrell:** That is a useful point, because one of the things that we grapple with is that structure and standardisation to allow groups the flexibility to do things in the way in which they feel at ease doing them, with some consistency of message. That is something that the children and young people's subgroup could look at when it is up and running.

In recognition of the work that goes on across the community delivered by community workers, community organisations and church- and faith-based groups, those are the groups that we want to see applying for the summer schools and camps. We want to assist and support those groups. This is not about good relations just being the business of Departments but about getting the message out that it is everybody's business. Those are the groups that have the relationships, and, at the end of the day, it is those relationships with young people that are so important. Those groups will be able to reach out to those young people in a way that we, as officials, will never be able to. Therefore, it is really important that we see applications coming from those organisations, and that is something that we have tried to build into the design, specifically for summer schools and camps. Other Departments are doing the same around, for example, cross-community sports and United Youth. They have been tapping into the expertise that is already out there in the community.

**The Chairperson (Mr Nesbitt):** OK, folks. I am afraid that time has beaten us, but thank you very much indeed, Michael, Peter, Donna and Linsey.