

Review of Public Administration

Briefing Paper

Partnerships

Colin Knox¹
School of Policy Studies
University of Ulster
Shore Road
Jordanstown
Northern Ireland
BT 37 OQB

Telephone: 028 90366378/90366667

Fax: 028 90366847

Email: cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk

The views in this report are those of the author and are not to be attributed to the Review of Public Administration team or the Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister.

26 September 2002

Executive Summary: Partnerships

1. 'Partnership' has now become part of the everyday parlance of discussions on new forms of public administration. Their emergence is recognition of the multi-faceted nature of public policy and the interconnectedness of complex social issues in services such as health, education and employment. Partnerships also feature in the 'joined-up' approach synonymous with the current Labour Government (Blair's 'joined-up problems need joined-up solutions'). This briefing paper aims to address several practical questions of first principle:
 - What is the purpose of partnerships?
 - What issues are addressed by such partnerships?
 - Who is involved in partnerships and what is their role?

The paper also includes a discussion on good practice, specifically in the Northern Ireland context.

2. The purpose of partnerships can be considered on a continuum based upon their particular aims and objectives. At one extreme, the goal of a partnership might simply be to **lobby** on behalf of a particular group. At another level, a partnership might be involved in identifying the needs of a particular area and developing an action plan to meet those needs. Here the partnership is actively **advocating** existing agencies to take action within a commonly agreed strategic framework which it has developed. Moving beyond the roles of lobbying and advocating, partnerships are not only involved in developing action plans but are responsible for their **implementation**. The final level in this continuum is a collaborative cross-sectoral approach to the **long-term delivery** of services. In other words, partnerships are not set up to undertake a number of discrete projects which are funding limited and disband when resources are expended, but are integral to the way in which particular services are provided.
3. The burgeoning nature of partnership arrangements makes it difficult to categorise which issues are dealt with under this format. In functional terms, and generalising crudely, the main areas of partnership activity in Northern Ireland have centred on economic development, health, urban regeneration, and peace & reconciliation, accepting that the boundaries between these activities often overlap. The role of European funded initiatives (e.g. PEACE, URBAN, INTERREG) has had a significant influence on the formation and institutionalisation of partnerships and the development of cross-sectoral decision-making processes.
4. In broad terms a number of partnerships have been styled to comprise representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. This rather neat cross-section, however, belies problems over the appropriate mix, whether they are selected or elected to the partnership, and the extent to which those on the partnership are representative of the sectors from which they originate. Given the various types of partnerships and the different purposes for which they are established, no standard template exists for their

composition. This will often depend on what the objectives of the partnership are and how it aims to achieve them.

5. Three examples of partnerships in Northern Ireland are considered. Community safety partnerships are developing as a (non-statutory) response to the Review of Criminal Justice. Local strategy partnerships have been heralded as important, not simply as a mechanism for disbursement of PEACE II monies, but for their wider role in integrated social, economic and environmental planning within each district council area. 'Investing for Health' partnerships will be involved in developing long-term local cross-sectoral health improvement plans as a means of implementing the new health strategy in Northern Ireland.
6. Comparative experience highlights just how widespread partnership governance is in other jurisdictions. The Republic of Ireland's well-known social partnership at the macro level (Programme for Prosperity and Fairness) has played an important part in the country's economic and social development. The Republic's equivalent of the local strategy partnerships (in Northern Ireland) are County and City Development Boards which have drawn up plans for economic, social and cultural development that will act as a template guiding all public services and local development activities in their areas. Local strategic partnerships in England & Wales will play a key role in several areas – preparing and implementing a community strategy, working with local authorities which are developing a public service agreement, and delivering a local neighbourhood renewal strategy. European experience of partnerships highlights their value as a complementary response to issues of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, but not as a substitute for mainstream public services.
7. A number of points emerge from these discussions. First, partnerships add to the already confusing machinery of governance in Northern Ireland. The complexity of public service organisations in itself may not, however, be a reason for change, but partnerships do create the potential for overlap, duplication and lack of clarity in their role vis-à-vis government departments, agencies, boards, trusts, local councils and quangos. Second, questions can be posed about the accountability of partnerships. Since the majority of their members tend to be appointed rather than democratically elected, can they be held properly to account? Indeed, with devolved government arrangements in place, are partnerships now an anachronism? On the other hand, has the partnership approach ongoing merits as a more inclusive form of democracy empowering local communities and enriching the decision-making process as a result? Third, little thought has been given to the role suggested for local strategy partnerships in Northern Ireland beyond the lifetime of PEACE II. Although they have been tasked to produce a local strategy and action plan that will become the framework for sustainable regeneration and development in each district council area, how will this impact upon the future role of local government as an elected forum?

1. Introduction

1.1 'Partnership' has now become part of the everyday parlance of discussions on new forms of public administration. Like other terms which have entered the new managerial lexicon such as 'best value' or 'total quality management', 'partnership' has an intuitive appeal. Who could disagree that we should have 'best value' in public service delivery? Similarly, to work 'in partnership' seems an eminently sensible approach both within functional areas and across sectoral boundaries. This catch-phrase appeal of working in partnership, however, obscures the wide variety of approaches which now fall within this sphere and adds increasing complexity to the mosaic of government departments, agencies, trusts, boards, councils and quangos that collectively comprise public administration in Northern Ireland.

1.2 This briefing paper aims to address several practical questions of first principle:

- What is the purpose of partnerships?
- What issues are addressed by such partnerships?
- Who is involved in partnerships and what is their role?

The paper also includes a discussion on good practice, specifically in the Northern Ireland context. In addressing these questions, considerations of accountability, equity and social needs, and efficiency and effectiveness (as referred to in the research specification) will be highlighted, not as separate topic areas but an integral part of the narrative.

1.3 The concept of partnership emerged during the 1990s as a canon of public policy and private enterprise. Partnerships are increasingly being embraced in advanced capitalist societies as a service delivery mechanism. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defined partnerships as:

Systems of formalised co-operation, grounded in legally binding arrangements or informal understandings, co-operative working relationships, and mutually adopted plans among a number of institutions. They involve agreements on policy and programme objectives and the sharing of responsibility, resources, risks and benefits over a specified period of time.²

1.4 The scope of this definition, in itself, is indicative of the problems in circumscribing partnership arrangements. It spans very different organisational forms and processes of partnership working. A much simpler definition derives from the business sector where partnerships (usually in the form of strategic alliances or joint ventures) are formed to add value through organisations working together. This collective offers collaborative advantage. Using this analogy, the following is offered by commentators as a more pragmatic working definition of partnership:

Three or more organisations – representing the public, private and voluntary sectors – acting together by contributing their diverse resources in the furtherance of a common vision that has clearly defined goals and objectives.³

- 1.5 The proliferation of the partnership approach and the variety of collaborative forms involved in policy implementation have caused problems of definition, as the above suggests, and overuse/abuse of the term ‘partnership’ to describe different modes of service delivery. The potential for abuse becomes greater in a divided society like Northern Ireland where, to be working ‘in partnership’, conjures up an image not only of cross-functional collaboration but also cross-community co-operation. One observer notes:

Partnerships are now everywhere. Alliances, joint ventures and network forms of organisation now proliferate in the private sector. In the public sector many areas of activity, such as the health service, have been restructured into multi-organisational forms. Every part of the public sector is now exhorted to take part in partnerships. All of the ‘wicked problems’ from economic regeneration to crime and disorder, are seen as requiring a partnership approach, usually involving both public and private sectors.⁴

- 1.6 The emergence of partnerships is recognition of the multi-faceted nature of public policy and administration and the interconnectedness of complex social issues in services such as health, education and employment. Partnerships also feature in the ‘joined-up’ approach synonymous with the current Labour Government (Blair’s ‘joined-up problems need joined-up solutions’). This has been operationalised in Great Britain through area-based partnerships to tackle inequalities in areas of highest social need. Hence, Health Action Zones have been set up to develop health improvement programmes through a partnership comprising health authorities, local government, NHS trusts and new primary care groups. Education Action Zones have been established to tackle low levels of education attainment adopting similar partnership arrangements (business, community organisation and parent representatives), and Employment Zones (‘New Deal for Communities’) set up in areas suffering from a high concentration of long-term unemployment. Hence the state under New Labour is seen ‘as an enabling partner that joins and steers flexible networks...the task is to build bridges between organisations involved in designing policies and delivering services’.⁵ Table 1 summarises the advantages and disadvantages of partnerships.

Table 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Partnerships⁶

Advantages of Partnerships	Disadvantages of Partnerships
Partnerships can establish stability in a turbulent environment created by economic, social and political changes. Stakeholders come together to create a unified organisation which is flexible and capable of adapting quickly to a turbulent environment. Stakeholders can address common problems in a collective way.	Partnerships increase environment complexity and turbulence. Partnerships are created under numerous strategies leading to a confusing mix of inter-linking and overlapping partnerships and strategic alliances.
Empowerment at the local level will improve local democracy, as traditionally excluded groups are given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.	Partnerships are undemocratic. Partnerships increase the power of self-appointed members of partnership boards vis-à-vis local politicians thus diluting local accountability. Members of the community/voluntary sector are unrepresentative of communities they claim to act on behalf of.
Stakeholders involved in developing one common approach create a more effective and co-ordinated policy. Partnerships involve participants who have first-hand knowledge of the problems at ground level. Partnerships adopt a multi-agency approach to multi-dimensional problems.	Partnerships find it difficult to develop a common approach. Due to the inclusion of a wide variety of interests, partnerships are prone to conflict and are hindered by the need to keep all the partners together.
Involving stakeholders in partnerships creates empowerment and ownership which will establish sustainable programmes and a culture of self-help. An inclusive partnership approach ensures that stakeholders at the local level will benefit from local action.	Partnerships are fragile mechanisms and are unsustainable. Stakeholders come together in partnership largely to gain additional funding.
Synergy – partner organisations can achieve more acting together than individually through mutual learning and sharing than they can acting individually Transformation – stakeholders in partnerships have the ability to learn from each other, share experiences and teach partners other processes and procedures. Stakeholders in partnership can gain control over resources and maximise budgets.	Powerful interests dominate partnerships which creates conflict and hinders the development of a common approach.

2. The Purpose of Partnerships

- 2.1 The above describes attempts to define partnerships and gives some reasons for their proliferation, but what specifically is the purpose of partnerships? Much like definition, the purpose of partnerships is not easily captured. Observers offer a continuum based upon the particular aims and objectives of the partnership⁷ (see figure 1). At one extreme the goal of a partnership might simply be to **lobby** on behalf of a particular group. An example in Northern Ireland is the *Quartiers en Crise* Partnership. This is a group comprising politicians and senior officials from the Belfast Education and Library Board, Training and Employment Agency, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, Belfast City Council and the Department for Social Development. As part of a wider network of over 20 European cities, its aim is to promote integrated approaches to urban regeneration. The partnership assisted local groups in submitting a successful application for funding under the URBAN EU Community Initiative which levered €13m into projects in the Upper Springfield and Greater Shankill areas. Hence, *Quartiers en Crise* has been a successful local partnership lobbying in Europe for areas suffering from the symptoms of social exclusion (long-term unemployment, low-skills base, high crime environments, family breakdown, etc.).

Figure 1: Partnership Purpose – A Continuum

LOBBY → ADVOCATE → IMPLEMENTATION → SERVICE DELIVERY

- 2.2 At another level, a partnership might be involved in identifying the needs of a particular area and developing an action plan to meet those needs, without actually being responsible for the management and delivery of the services involved. This goes beyond a lobbying role. Here the partnership is actively **advocating** existing agencies to take action within a commonly agreed strategic framework which it has developed. North Belfast Partnership is a typical example of an advocacy body. The North Belfast Partnership was established in 1997 under the Making Belfast Work (MBW) Initiative⁸ comprising elected members from Belfast City Council, the community/voluntary sector, statutory organisations, representatives from business, and the trade unions. MBW aimed to increase job opportunities, develop new businesses, enhance the employability of residents to compete for jobs, improve the quality of life in targeted areas, and involve the community and private sector in partnership with Government. The latter was the rationale for setting up area partnerships, of which North Belfast is one of five operating city-wide.
- 2.3 North Belfast is one of the most socially deprived areas in Northern Ireland⁹ and the ongoing sectarian violence at interface areas continues to impact upon

the quality of life of its residents. One of the key tasks that the partnership identified was to 'facilitate an ongoing consultation process involving the community and the private and public sectors, leading to the progressive development of a common agenda for regeneration and reconciliation of the area'.¹⁰ The partnership produced a needs and social audit report to assess the scale of this task. This report became the basis for a strategy document aimed at the 'development of structures and enhanced collaboration between existing bodies needed to implement a common agenda'.¹¹ At the launch of the partnership strategy the former Secretary of State (Mo Mowlam) stated:

The Government is committed to supporting partnership approaches to the regeneration of disadvantaged areas. North Belfast contains some of the highest levels of poverty and disadvantage in the city...The absence of a common agenda for North Belfast has hindered both its development and its ability to attract investment...In many ways, North Belfast is a test bed for a Government committed to partnership in a divided society.¹²

2.4 Perhaps more frequently, however, a partnership will move beyond the roles of lobbying and advocating by creating and/or managing the delivery mechanisms that meet the goals it has identified. In simple terms, partnerships are not only involved in developing action plans but are responsible for their **implementation**. The North Belfast Partnership has recently made this transition through its responsibility for the day-to-day management and delivery of the European Union Community Initiative URBAN II (2000–2006). The strategic aim of this £10.6m Initiative is to 'regenerate North Belfast into a vibrant, safe and viable urban community for its people, its environment and its economy'.¹³ It comprises three priorities designed to deliver this strategy: developing the physical and social resources of the area; developing the resources of local people to gain access to lasting employment opportunities; and the technical resources to implement the programme efficiently and effectively.

2.5 Whilst the Department for Social Development (through its Belfast Regeneration Office) is the 'managing authority' for this Community Initiative, North Belfast Partnership is charged with its implementation, and has a responsibility to the European Commission for the effective delivery of operations. This transition from advocate to service deliverer is reflected in the partnership's budget which increased from £370k to almost £11m. More fundamental though, URBAN II aims to change the nature of top-down decision-making and move to an inclusive process exemplified through partnership working. This is made clear in the detail of the operational programme:

The URBAN II Programme has the potential to transform local democracy especially in areas denied access to formal decision-making channels and accountable policy processes. This means changing the organisational relationships between state agencies in the form of the Belfast Regeneration Office (Department for Social Development) and the community, in the form of North Belfast Partnership. The Initiative

will, over time, develop participatory governance as key planning decisions must be made around the delivery of operations. But this process can also bring real empowerment to local people...the pivotal role played by North Belfast Partnership in the design and delivery of URBAN II should ensure that the Initiative becomes the focus for continuing learning and community growth.¹⁴

In short, partnership involvement in this Initiative signals a new role for stakeholder participation from policy conception through to service delivery.

- 2.6 The final role in this continuum of partnerships could best be described as a collaborative cross-sectoral approach to the **long-term delivery** of services. In other words, partnerships are not set up to undertake a number of discrete projects which are funding limited and disband when resources are expended, but are integral to the way in which particular services are provided. One example of this is the partnership approach adopted by Government in the provision of criminal justice services to victims and offenders. Therein collaboration between the state and voluntary sector is increasingly evident. The Northern Ireland Office, for example, provides substantial funding to three organisations whose long-term service delivery roles are vital in meeting the needs of victims and offenders – Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO), the Extern Organisation and Victim Support (Northern Ireland). NIACRO is involved in resettlement of offenders and prisoners, the prevention of crime, support services to prisoners' families, and campaigning for a more just, humane and effective criminal justice system. Extern works with people affected by crime and social unrest through the provision of residential services, employment training, youth and family support and community safety programmes. Victim Support (NI) offers a listening service and practical advice on forms of help available to those who have been hurt by crime including their family members.
- 2.7 A partnership approach between the state and the voluntary/community sector has been particularly important in long-term service delivery in the whole field of criminal justice. There were, for example, huge sensitivities around the early release of political prisoners as an outcome of the Belfast Agreement. This precipitated an outcry from victims' groups that Government had ignored their plight. It would be problematic, if not impossible, for the Northern Ireland Office to be solely involved in service provision to victims and offenders in such a politically charged area. The voluntary/community sector is therefore seen as a key service provider, working in collaboration with Government.

3. Issues addressed by Partnerships

- 3.1 The burgeoning nature of partnership arrangements makes it difficult to categorise which issues are dealt with under this format. What exactly constitutes a partnership can be ambiguous and whether this is for short-term convenience or a more formal ongoing arrangement can vary. Operating ‘as a partnership’, for example, can be a useful and convenient shorthand if bodies are in search of funding, in some cases for work they would be undertaking in any case. This is particularly true of cross-community partnerships in Northern Ireland where groups have become adept at perfunctory collaboration to secure (peace) monies that could be more difficult to access as single identity groups.
- 3.2 The research that exists in Northern Ireland groups partnerships at the level of spatial operation rather than the functional activity with which they are involved.¹⁵ Hence, partnerships can be considered which operate at the local, sub-regional and regional levels, in practice usually at the level of a local authority, a geographical sub-region or cluster of local authorities, and throughout Northern Ireland as a region, respectively. Typical examples include a local strategy partnership (under PEACE II), the sub-regional Tyrone Economic Development Initiative, and regional partnership between Government and the voluntary/community sector, espoused by the ‘Partners for Change’ strategy (Department for Social Development, 2001). This spatial analysis can be extended by adding a transjurisdictional dimension (where the partners involved are in another national jurisdiction) to each of the categories above. Belfast City Council, for example, has a partnership arrangement with the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia, the aim of which is to further economic development and trade between the two areas by linking companies with mutual trading interests. There are also local authority cross-border partnerships. The East Border Region Committee is a partnership of Down District Council, Newry and Mourne City Councils and Louth and Monaghan County Councils, set up originally to work on areas of joint interest such as tourism development. This has evolved into a partnership that lobbied government departments (North and South) to develop the border region and produced integrated strategic plans spanning the two jurisdictions.
- 3.3 In functional terms, and generalising crudely, the main areas of partnership activity in Northern Ireland have centred on economic development, health, urban regeneration, and peace & reconciliation, accepting that the boundaries between these activities often overlap. Making Belfast Work, the Derry/Londonderry Initiative and the Laganside Development are all examples of partnerships that were set up to tackle economic, social and environmental problems through the combined efforts of the Government, the community and the private sector. The URBAN I EU Community Initiative also funded local partnerships in deprived urban areas and was designed ‘to help find solutions to the serious socio-economic problems experienced, by supporting schemes for economic and social revitalisation and environmental protection’.¹⁶ Partnerships participating in this initiative included the Upper Springfield Development Trust which devised a programme aimed at meeting the needs of young adults in the area, and the Greater Shankill Partnership

Early Years project which targeted children within their home environment.¹⁷ The URBAN II Community Initiative (2000-2006), referred to above, which is aimed at the economic and social regeneration of cities and urban neighbourhoods characterised by multiple deprivation, will be implemented through the North Belfast Partnership.

- 3.4 European Union Special Support Programmes have institutionalised partnership arrangements most notably through PEACE I (1995–1999) and PEACE II (2000–2004). The aim of the former was to ‘reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation, by increasing economic development and employment, promoting urban regeneration, developing cross-border co-operation and extending social inclusion’.¹⁸ The key delivery mechanism was the 26 district partnerships, coterminous with local authority areas, comprising local councillors, community/voluntary sector representatives, and members from business, trade unions and statutory organisations.
- 3.5 PEACE II carries forward the overall aim of its antecedent but with a new economic focus. District partnerships have been replaced by Local Strategy Partnerships that are responsible for locally based regeneration and development strategies, addressing grassroots needs with local delivery mechanisms (PEACE II - priority 3). Accordingly, the new partnerships have been described as different from PEACE I district partnerships in that they are ‘more integrated and sustainable in their nature and with greater autonomy in their decision-making’.¹⁹ Commenting on the importance of the role played by Europe on partnership formation observers noted:

The design of the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland highlights the preference of the European Commission that funded initiatives should be embedded in local participative structures, the strongest manifestation of which is the creation of partnerships.²⁰

- 3.6 Other EU Community Initiatives such as the INTERREG cross-border programme have also contributed to partnership working. Starting in 1991 its aim was to overcome the problems associated with under-development and peripherality and to encourage the process of rural regeneration and community development.²¹ As the initiative evolved, its emphasis shifted towards generating partnerships between Member States and regional & local authorities for cross-border co-operation. In its present form INTERREG III’s overall purpose is to ensure that national borders are not a barrier to the balanced development and integration of the European territory. Specifically, the programme seeks to strengthen economic and social cohesion by promoting cross-border transnational and interregional co-operation and balanced development. The INTERREG programme has helped to support local authority cross-border partnerships such as the East Border Region Committee (referred to above); the Irish Central Border Area Network (Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal County Councils and Armagh, Omagh, Dungannon, Fermanagh District Councils); and the North West Region Cross-Border Group (Limavady, Derry and Strabane District Councils

and Donegal County Council). The role of European funding, in general, has therefore had a significant influence on the formation of partnerships and the development of cross-sectoral decision-making processes.

4. Who is involved and what is their role?

- 4.1 Given the various types of partnerships and the different purposes for which they are established, it is unsurprising that no template exists for their composition. This will often depend on what the objectives of the partnership are and how it aims to achieve them. One suggestion for deciding who should be involved is to consider which individuals and organisations are likely to be affected by the initiative or who is a legitimate stakeholder in the work of the partnership.²² These might include people/organisations who are needed as a resource such as funders or those with expertise valuable to the partnership; those affected by the initiative, typically beneficiaries or the client group; and those whose backing or endorsement the partnership requires, perhaps elected members or civic leaders.
- 4.2 In broad terms a number of partnerships have been styled to comprise representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. This rather neat cross-section however belies problems over the appropriate mix, whether they are selected or elected to the partnership, and the extent to which those on the partnership are representative of the sectors from which they originate. For example, the district peace and reconciliation partnerships (under PEACE I) comprised equal numbers from three sectors – one-third councillors, one-third community/voluntary representatives, and one third made up from other partners – business, trade unions and statutory organisations (in equal proportions). The local strategy partnerships (PEACE II), on the other hand, comprise two equal strands: local government and the main statutory bodies operating at the local level; and the four pillars of the social partners - private sector, trade unions, community and voluntary sector, and agricultural and rural development sector.²³ Where there is local agreement, a degree of flexibility in the membership is permitted. This revision in composition from PEACE I to PEACE II was necessitated by a change in the role of partnerships. The latter are expected to be more strategic rather than project funders, and councils encouraged to participate as corporate bodies rather than individual councillors.
- 4.3 Other partnerships mentioned above have very different structures. The East Border Region Committee, for example, comprises six councillors and two officials from each its four constituent councils, and a central government representative from both Belfast and Dublin. This reinforces the point that composition is related to the objectives of the partnership, who are perceived as the key stakeholders, and what they can bring to the partnership in pursuit of its objectives. As commentators have argued:

The greatest fallacy in partnership management is to assume that ‘everyone must have a voice’. A partnership needs to develop a clear understanding of who is legitimately able to participate in the work of the initiative. This understanding can only be derived from a formal exercise that identifies the stakeholders in a partnership and assesses the degree to which each is able to contribute to the work of the initiative.²⁴

4.4 Additionally, in the context of Northern Ireland, the membership of the partnerships should have ‘due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity’ and have ‘regard to the desirability of promoting good relations’ under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.²⁵ The rather obvious reliance on public, private and community/voluntary sectors may for example overlook a role for faith communities, the media, and even academia (perhaps revealing the author’s vested interest!).

4.5 In general terms the roles of the partnership stakeholders might be described as follows:

- The public sector typically comprises local councillors and the statutory bodies. Elected representatives bring a degree of democratic legitimacy to the local decision-making process. Moreover, their knowledge of services being undertaken by the council or proposed in the future will ensure complementary between the work of the partnership and the local authority. Councillors are normally well networked and can provide valuable assistance in taking initiatives forward with other public agencies.
- Statutory bodies represent a large financial resource commitment to specific services (e.g. health, housing, education) at a regional level (in Northern Ireland) and can therefore offer specialist advice and assistance to the work of the partnership. As important, statutory organisations can be held to account for their ongoing work at a local level and ways in which this might assist with the objectives of the partnership. The role of statutory bodies has been under-exploited by partnerships and real potential exists to capitalise on this resource.
- The private sector, first and foremost, offers an alternative perspective to the public sector not least in terms of the way in which it would seek to implement initiatives, devoid of the constraints of public accountability. Businesses are also key consumers of, and contributors to, many local activities and services. They therefore play a vital part in the health of local communities and have experience of addressing the (business) needs of consumers. This experience can usefully be applied to beneficiaries of partnership activities or services. It has been difficult to organise and maintain private sector involvement in the work of some partnerships. Working through a local business forum such as the Chamber of Commerce can secure nominees but they may not feel able to speak on behalf of a rather amorphous private sector.
- The community and voluntary sector, by definition, operates at the grassroots level and can offer detailed knowledge of local issues and problems. Indeed some of the tensions which arise in partnerships concern the fact that community/voluntary representatives may have a more detailed understanding of local needs than elected representatives. The sector also provides services in its own right to local communities. They can therefore offer advice on service gaps and deficiencies and how their work can complement that of the partnership. Representation is also an issue for the voluntary/community sector. Given its diversity, partnership

participants will be no more representative than one statutory agency can be considered to represent the entire public sector. Community members can perform a very valuable role as a two-way conduit into their community in terms of what the partnership is proposing to do and reaction to the things which it has done.

5. Best Practice?

- 5.1 We consider here three examples of evolving partnerships in Northern Ireland. These are not necessarily examined as models of best practice because of the variation in partnership arrangements, and some are in embryonic form only. These examples have been selected for their prominence in current local practice and relevance to a debate on the future role of partnerships. What makes for good partnership arrangements in a general sense will be considered later. The examples chosen are community safety, health, and local strategic partnerships.
- 5.2 ***Community Safety Partnerships***. The Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland resulting from the Belfast Agreement 1998 considered, *inter alia*, community safety as a core feature of the reforms. According to the review, ‘the term ‘community safety’ addresses not only criminal behaviour as such but also anti-social behaviour and other factors that affect people’s perceptions of safety’.²⁶ One important outcome of the review was the need for a Northern Ireland-wide community safety strategy, the aim of which should be to ‘create the conditions which promote an inclusive partnership-based approach in developing community safety initiatives between relevant agencies, voluntary groups, the private sector and local communities, with a view to reducing crime, the fear of crime and enhancing community safety’.²⁷ This strategy is currently at public consultation stage, appropriately entitled ‘Creating a Safer Northern Ireland through Partnership’.²⁸
- 5.3 The review of criminal justice recommended that the functions of community safety and policing be combined and the proposed District Policing Partnerships²⁹ (recommended under Patten³⁰) should have a broader role in the form of Community Safety and Policing Partnerships. The Government rejected these proposals largely because District Policing Partnerships were not conceived as service delivery bodies. Instead, although the Government supports the creation of community safety partnerships in the long-term on a statutory basis, it has encouraged the creation of non-statutory equivalents. Interestingly, the consultation strategy (referred to above) comments that the Review of Public Administration is likely to result in ‘significant changes to existing roles and responsibilities across various organisations that could be expected to contribute to community safety’.³¹ It suggests that the community safety strategy should be part of an overall strategic plan for the local area. Since these are being developed by the new local strategy partnerships (under PEACE II), there should be an alignment between the two. This is seen as a means of mainstreaming community safety by its integration into local strategic plans with the endorsement and ownership of partnership members.
- 5.4 A number of local council areas have already established community safety partnerships (on a non-statutory basis) and are in the process of developing local strategies. The approach broadly follows a model advocated by the Community Safety Centre³² which includes an audit of community safety needs, public consultation and the preparation of a local strategy to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime in the district council area. Newtownabbey Borough Council, for example, set up a safety steering group

comprising members from the local council, Police Service, Education and Library Board, Housing Executive, Probation Board, the former Police Authority, Probation Board, district partnership, Victim Support and Extern. This partnership produced a consultation document 'A Safer Future for Newtownabbey' as a means of developing a local community safety strategy. Ballymena Borough Council has also involved a number of multi-agency steering partnerships to consider community safety as it affects various groups (e.g. the elderly, young people) and by theme (drugs, vandalism, road safety etc.). What is clear in examining the partnerships established thus far is the wide variation in their constituency membership.

- 5.5 **Local Strategy Partnerships.** Local strategy partnerships have been heralded as an important development, not simply as a mechanism for the disbursement of PEACE II (Priority 3) monies,³³ but for their wider significance in establishing the concept of partnership working as a future component of a participative democracy. This is described in guidelines for the partnerships as follows:

The longer-term perspective and role is important; it is essential that the local strategy partnerships be established in a way which enables them to evolve into long-term strategy-making partnerships for local levels with a role and remit which goes well beyond the delivery of EU funds.³⁴

This wider brief is explicitly referred to thus: 'local strategy partnerships may also develop other roles (over and above responsibility for delivering Priority 3 – PEACE II), reflecting local needs and priorities...One example of a further role which a local strategy partnership may play is to be the focal point for the delivery of EU structural funds at the local level'.³⁵

- 5.6 The experiences gained through the operation of district partnerships (under PEACE I) suggested a more inclusive form of decision-making. This process is being developed further with local strategy partnerships. Beyond their role in delivering PEACE II/Priority 3, they are expected to engage in integrated planning for their local areas, in other words to ensure that services provided to the public are better integrated across administrative boundaries and are more responsive to the needs of local communities. Guidelines for the partnerships suggest this is 'a process for agencies, stakeholders, communities, local councillors and individuals to engage in collaborative decision-making about tackling key issues – jobs, education, health, crime and so on – for local people'.³⁶ This task of delivering co-ordinated local services is part of the wider (UK) Government's 'joined-up' and 'modernising' agenda. In this sense the requirements for PEACE II are only part of a larger integrated policy development role expected of the local strategy partnerships.

- 5.7 This is best summed up by the following description of their role:

The key role of the local strategy partnership is to develop a local area strategy and action plan that will become the framework for the sustainable regeneration and development of a district council area beyond the lifetime of the programme. This is referred to as an

integrated local strategy. The integrated local strategy will be integrated insofar as it will seek to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in a local area and contribute to sustainable development. It will provide the framework within which Priority 3 will be implemented in each council area.³⁷

Each of the 26 partnerships is expected to have integrated local strategies approved by November 2002.

5.8 **Health Partnerships.** The health sector in Northern Ireland has had an ongoing commitment to the partnership model most notably through Healthy Cities Projects, Health Action Zones and Childcare Partnerships. Two Health Action Zones, for example, were established in 1999 to tackle health improvement in North & West Belfast and Armagh & Dungannon Trust districts. The health action zones were introduced with the aim of bringing organisations together to pool resources and expertise, and to target health inequalities where there was evidence of disadvantage by implementing locally agreed strategies. The mechanism for achieving this was a partnership which included the main statutory, voluntary agencies and the community. A second phase of health action zones followed in the Northern and Western Health Board areas. The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety renewed funding (in July 2002) for the initial two pilots for a further three years until 2005.

5.9 The recent launch (March 2002) of the 'Investing for Health' strategy,³⁸ however, demonstrates the centrality of partnership to the implementation of a long-term approach that seeks to tackle factors which adversely affect and perpetuate health inequalities. The two principal goals of the strategy are: to improve the health of people by increasing the length of their lives and increasing the number of years they spend free from disease, illness and disability; and to reduce inequalities in health between geographic areas, socio-economic and minority groups.

5.10 The strategy will be implemented through a partnership approach at a number of levels. A ministerial group on public health, comprising senior officials from all government departments will be responsible for collective departmental input, co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the strategy. Importantly, however, four Investing for Health Partnerships have been established in each of the Health and Social Services Board areas. The role of the Investing for Health partnerships will be:

To identify opportunities for improving the health of the people in its area by addressing the social, cultural, economic and environmental determinants of health. They will develop long-term local cross-sectoral health improvement plans to address the identified health and well-being needs of their local populations to meet the strategic aims and objectives of 'Investing for Health'.³⁹

Membership includes public, voluntary/community and private sector representatives but there is local flexibility over composition.

5.11 What is interesting about the formation of Investing for Health partnerships is that some local authorities requested they or the local strategy partnerships should take the lead because of Investing for Health’s focus on the wider determinants of health. This was rejected in favour of the Health and Social Services Boards assuming this role given their overarching responsibility for improving health and well-being, reducing health inequalities and ensuring effective health and social services. Investing in Health partnerships are encouraged to work with other health partnerships (mentioned above) and the local strategy partnerships.

Table 2 sets out the attributes of both successful and unsuccessful partnerships.

Table 2: Successful and Unsuccessful Partnerships⁴⁰

Successful Partnerships	Unsuccessful Partnerships
There is a clear identity and role expectation for the partnership.	The agenda of one particular agency dominates.
There is a clear identity and role expectation for each partner.	There is an unresolved culture clash between the various partners.
All partners have shared aims and objectives and work together to achieve them.	Partner agencies find that the partnership’s policies and actions adversely affect their work.
The partnership process and outcomes are both effectively resourced.	The local community is not consulted or involved.
There is a developing degree of interrelationship between each agency and the partnership, and between agencies.	The partnership structure is not formalised.
There are clear links to other strategies - the community and the partnership does not function in isolation.	The partnership focuses on short-term projects rather than long-term strategies.
Partners recognise that the partnership will bring together a number of organisational cultures, and ensure that this does not become an obstacle to effective partnership working.	Differences between partners on the aims and objectives cannot be reconciled.
Strategies are carried out over an adequate period of time.	Partners work in isolation rather than together.
There is clear, inclusive political and executive leadership.	There is no clear accountability.
Outcomes are measured carefully and constructively.	Partners do not trust each other.

6. Experience elsewhere

6.1 The limitations of space do not permit comprehensive coverage of partnership arrangements elsewhere. A short overview is therefore presented of partnerships in the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and Europe.

6.2 **The Republic of Ireland** is well known for the national ‘social partnership’ programmes which have been implemented since the late 1980s.⁴¹ These emerged as a collective attempt to address severe economic and social problems at that time through a range of measures which could promote international competitiveness, employment growth, a reduction of inequality and improved health, education and welfare provision. The Government embraced a close working relationship with trade unions, employer and business organisations, farming bodies and, latterly, representatives of the community and voluntary sectors. The most recent social partnership agreement (of which there have been five) entitled *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* runs until December 2002. This partnership approach has played an important part in Ireland’s economic and social development, although the extent of the contribution has been questioned.⁴² Despite this, there remain problems of social exclusion, poverty and long-term unemployment. Government has adopted a development perspective which is supportive of local partnership intervention within this programmatic context as part of the response to these challenges.

6.3 The wider social partnership approach has prompted questions about the role played by partnerships:

From a broader governance and public administration perspective there has been some, through perhaps surprisingly little, questioning as to how the essentially functional principle of representation embodied in social partnership is to be reconciled with the elective democratic principle of parliamentary representation.... Some concerns continue to be expressed that a strong policy consensus orientation in this and other areas may be a factor in declining levels of electoral participation over the past two decades though, of course, many other reasons have been advanced to account for this phenomenon.⁴³

6.4 One commentator suggests there are more than 100 officially recognised local partnerships in Ireland, operating under a range of EU and national programmes, and over 40 additional alliances which share some of the characteristics of local partnerships without the formal recognition of central government.⁴⁴ The main features of the former are:

- A formal institutional structure, usually a limited company without share capital.
- A diverse membership including representatives of public bodies, the business sector and community and voluntary organisations.
- A strategic and integrated approach to local planning and development.
- An emphasis on unemployment and social exclusion.

- Autonomy to agree priorities and to allocate funds sourced from the EU and Government.
- 6.5 There are a number of examples of partnerships.⁴⁵ Some 35 city or county enterprise boards were established in 1993 to promote micro-enterprises for sustainable employment at the local level through the development of enterprise plans for their administrative areas, the provision of business advice, and financial assistance with capital or employment grants. There are 38 partnership companies whose role is to prepare and implement a local development plan to counter disadvantage for their areas. Their aim is to accelerate local economic development and, as a result, increase employment, tackle exclusion and marginalisation resulting from long-term unemployment, poor educational attainment, poverty and demographic dependency. These partnerships have been established in areas which have been designated as disadvantaged by Government based on deprivation criteria (an approach similar to Targeting Social Need in Northern Ireland).
- 6.6 The Republic's equivalent of the Local Strategy Partnerships (NI) are County and City Development Boards. In 2000 County and City Development Boards were established in each county and county borough. The boards are representative of local government, local development bodies (area partnerships, LEADER groups,⁴⁶ and county and city enterprise boards), the state agencies and social partners operating locally. They have drawn up plans and will oversee the implementation of county/city strategies for economic, social and cultural development which will act as a template guiding all public services and local development activities. There is an emphasis on tackling social exclusion and a focus on economic and cultural development.
- 6.7 In **Great Britain** partnership work is well established in the areas of regeneration, health, education and lifelong learning, tackling crime and disorder, and sustainable development. The obvious comparison with Northern Ireland, however, is the evolving Local Strategic Partnerships in England and Wales⁴⁷. These partnerships bring together at the local level different parts of the public sector along with private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together. Importantly they are non-statutory and non-executive, and they do not provide services themselves.
- 6.8 Guidelines for the partnerships suggest their core tasks are to:
- prepare and implement a community strategy for the area, identify and deliver the most important things which need to be done, keep track of progress, and keep it up-to-date;
 - bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a forum through which mainstream public service providers work effectively together to meet local needs and priorities;
 - work with local authorities that are developing a local public service agreement to help devise and then meet suitable targets; and
 - develop and deliver a local neighbourhood renewal strategy to secure more jobs, better education, improved health, reduced crime, and better housing,

closing the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and the rest, and contributing to the national targets to tackle deprivation.

The details of these are described below.

- 6.9 The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities in England and Wales to prepare a community strategy to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas and their inhabitants. Although the statutory duty for preparing the strategy rests with local authorities, their development and implementation requires successful joint working across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. This puts local strategic partnerships at the centre of the community planning process.
- 6.10 Another key task for the local strategic partnerships is to explore ways in which the number of separate partnerships are reduced, to improve the links between existing local partnerships, and to integrate new work into the strategic partnership. In short, there is recognition that the same key stakeholders are involved in several partnerships and a need to rationalise and simplify existing and potentially new partnership arrangements.
- 6.11 Local public service agreements offer local authorities the opportunity to commit themselves to delivering key national and local priorities in return for agreed operational flexibilities, pump-priming funding, and financial rewards if they meet their targets. National targets have been set by Government in key areas of education, employment, crime, health and social housing to narrow the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the country. This is to ensure that everyone, wherever they live, can expect a minimum level of basic services – they are also known as ‘floor targets’ for this reason. For example, in education the national target is to increase the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C to at least 38% in every local education authority by 2004. Alongside national targets, local authorities will propose local priorities. Local strategic partnerships provide a forum to agree both national and local priorities and decide how best to deliver them.
- 6.12 In January 2001, the Government published *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: the National Strategy Action Plan* to take forward the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. The action plan sets out the new policies, funding and targets which will drive neighbourhood renewal in the key areas of education, jobs, health, housing and crime. In addition to a wide range of initiatives and investment to address these policy issues, the Government is supporting renewal by improving public services in the 88 most deprived local authority districts with Neighbourhood Renewal Fund grants over a three-year period (2001–2004). Decisions about where and how the money should be spent are taken locally. The key task for the local strategic partnerships in the context of neighbourhood renewal is to prepare a local renewal strategy which reflects prioritisation at that level. In recognition of the need to engage with the community in deprived neighbourhoods, the Government has also set up a Community Empowerment Fund (£36m over three years in the 88 areas eligible for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund) to help

communities and the voluntary sector participate effectively in the decision-making process through their involvement in the local strategic partnerships.

- 6.13 Local partnerships are also important in the **European** context particularly in EU-funded programmes (such as LEADER, URBAN and PEACE already referred to) but also national programmes aimed at tackling unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. The problem in trying to summarise the European experience is adequately capturing the breadth of partnership types. As one commentator notes:

Across the European Union, local partnerships concerned with problems of social cohesion and inclusion vary greatly in their scope and focus, and there is wide variation in the extent to which local partnership is important in different member states. Many local partnerships are part of European or national programmes, but some others are the product of more local, ‘bottom-up’ initiatives. In some, the emphasis is on the delivery of largely determined programmes, while others are more open ended and developmental. The financial resources available to local partnership projects range from tens of millions of ECU to very small sums.⁴⁸

- 6.14 Despite the variability, research studies on local partnerships in 10 EU Member States reached a number of important conclusions about the value of partnerships and their impact. These can be summarised as follows:

- Local partnerships can contribute positively to both the processes and outcomes of measures to tackle unemployment, poverty and exclusion. They can lead to better policy co-ordination and integration at local level. This facilitates a multi-dimensional approach to problems, drawing upon the knowledge, skills and resources of different partners. Because their focus may be on a specific local area, such as a deprived urban neighbourhood, they may not tackle more dispersed problems of exclusion.
- Partnership working, however, requires a considerable investment of resources (both financial and personnel) over a substantial period of time; it requires a clear definition of responsibilities and a respect for diversity of partners’ contributions. It can also raise new problems of transparency and accountability.
- Local partnerships can improve the delivery of policies at local and regional levels, enhancing the performance of mainstream economic, welfare and environment policies by tailoring them to local needs capacities. However, local partnership by itself is a valuable but not sufficient response to localised problems of poverty and exclusion – they should complement rather than replace mainstream policies.⁴⁹

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 A number of points emerge from these discussions which might prompt the thinking of the Review of Public Administration team when considering reforms in Northern Ireland. These are posed as an *agent provocateur* to encourage debate rather than (necessarily) representing the views of the author.
- 7.2 First, and perhaps the most obvious point, is that partnerships add to the already confusing machinery of governance in Northern Ireland. The complexity of public service organisations in itself may not however be a reason for change, but partnerships do create the potential for overlap, duplication and lack of clarity in their role vis-à-vis government departments, agencies, boards, trusts, local councils and quangos. It is interesting to note that one of the tasks recommended to local strategic partnerships in England and Wales is to promote streamlining of existing partnership arrangements. Guidelines suggest: ‘local strategic partnerships should reduce, rather than increase, the burden of ‘partnership fatigue’ and ‘consultation fatigue’ that the proliferation of separate partnerships can lead to amongst key agencies and local people’.⁵⁰
- 7.3 Second, there are questions which can be posed about the accountability of partnerships. Since the majority of their members tend to be appointed rather than democratically elected, can they be held properly to account? Of course, some appointees may have been ‘elected’ within their own constituency sectors (such as the voluntary/community representatives), but does this dilute the concept of local electoral accountability to which councillors and Members of the Legislative Assembly adhere? Indeed, with devolved government arrangements in place, are partnerships now an anachronism? One argument of some import is that partnerships were a useful EU experiment in participative democracy when ‘normal’ politics were inoperative – they helped to bridge sectoral boundaries and provide opportunities for ‘bottom-up’ involvement in decision-making. The political environment has changed, however, and institutions which have a public service remit need to be reintegrated into the machinery of government for reasons of accountability (and perhaps efficiency and effectiveness – there is limited research to demonstrate how partnerships perform in service delivery, the emphasis tends to be on process rather than product). On the other hand, has the partnership model ongoing merits as the Deputy First Minister (Mr. Durkan) suggests?

The partnership approach can, and I believe will, be extended with new dimensions to gain increasing influence on the way we do business. They will have a vision and purpose which will last well beyond the horizons of the PEACE II programme... In the context of the new institutions, I see an opportunity for the partnership process to be widened and deepened at both regional and local level. We do not want the partnership approach to be confined to European funding, nor do we want it to wither away when that source of income has ceased. The whole purpose of our approach is to increase the scope and significance of decision-making at local level.⁵¹

- 7.4 Third, little thought has been given to the role suggested for local strategy partnerships in Northern Ireland beyond the lifetime of PEACE II. Although they have been tasked to produce a local strategy and action plan that will become the framework for sustainable regeneration and development in each district council area, how will this impact upon local government in general as an elected forum? In England and Wales there is now a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare community strategies to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and its inhabitants. Local strategic partnerships will be involved as part of the community planning process in their preparation, but the ultimate statutory responsibility rests with councils. This is not the case in Northern Ireland. Do the developments in Northern Ireland usurp the role of local government in favour of local strategy partnerships? Moreover, do such proposals constrain the reform of local government (and indeed partnerships) under the Review of Public Administration and reinforce the existing structure of 26 local councils?
- 7.5 Finally, experience from European partnerships prompts questions about the precise role of partnerships. Therein the suggestion is that partnerships provide a useful complementary role to mainstream services in addressing regeneration, social exclusion, poverty and unemployment. In any reformed system of public administration in Northern Ireland, particularly as European structural funds assistance is withdrawn, what future role will partnerships play and how will they be financed? Should they be non-statutory and non-executive as with the local strategic partnerships in England and Wales, or should they have a service delivery role? Furthermore, attempts to rationalise using local strategy partnerships as ‘the hub’ in Northern Ireland have not been successful thus far if the *Investing for Health* partnerships are typical. Whilst accepting that there was a strong convergence between neighbourhood regeneration, health improvement and sustainable development agendas, the new health strategy opted for the four health and social services boards as the lead in steering and co-ordinating local partnerships. Although this is hardly surprising, it does point up the propensity for partnership proliferation rather than rationalisation.
- 7.6 These questions should not be read as an evaluative criticism of the work of partnerships. The author of this briefing paper has (with colleagues) charted the success of PEACE I partnerships. The aim here has been to provoke thinking as we move into new political circumstances, which demand a reassessment of the existing and future role of partnerships in a devolved administration and without (increasingly) the benefit of financial assistance from Europe. The emerging importance of local strategy partnerships within Northern Ireland in the area of integrated planning at district council level all but substitutes for a similar statutory ‘well-being’ role given to local authorities in England and Wales. Does this herald a further emasculation of an already denuded local government in Northern Ireland?

-
- ¹ The author wishes to thank Dr. Paul Carmichael for helpful comments on this paper.
- ² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1990) *Partnerships for Rural Development*. Paris: OECD – p 18.
- ³ Wilson, A. and Charlton, K. (1997) *Making Partnerships Work*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation – p 10.
- ⁴ Darwin, J. (1999) ‘Partnership and Power’ in Montanheiro, L., Haigh, B., Morris, D. and Linehan, M. (eds) *Public and Private Partnerships: Furthering Development*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University 125-139.
- ⁵ Bevir, M. and Rhodes, R. (2001) ‘Decentering Tradition: interpreting British Government’ *Administration and Society* 33 (2) 107-132.
- ⁶ Source: Greer, J. (2001) *Partnership Governance in Northern Ireland: Improving Performance*. Aldershot: Ashgate – p 34/35
- ⁷ The taxonomy of purposes described here has been developed by: Wilson, A. and Charlton, K. (1997) *Making Partnerships Work*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation – p 14.
- ⁸ The Making Belfast Work Initiative was launched in 1988 to reinforce the efforts made through government departments’ mainstream programmes to tackle the economic, educational, environmental, health and social problems which existed in the most disadvantaged areas of Belfast. See Birrell, D. and Wilson, C. (1993) ‘Making Belfast Work: An Evaluation of an Urban Strategy’ *Administration* 41 (1): 40-56.
- ⁹ The electoral wards of Crumlin, St Anne’s, New Lodge, Ardoyne, Waterworks and Duncairn respectively rank amongst the top 20 most deprived wards in Northern Ireland, as measured by the Noble Indicators ‘Measures of Deprivation in Northern Ireland’ (2001). Oxford: Social Disadvantage Research Group.
- ¹⁰ *North Belfast Partnership Strategy 1998-2001* (1998): Belfast: North Belfast Partnership Board - p 9.
- ¹¹ *ibid*. See also Carmichael, P. and Knox, C. (2002) *Review of North Belfast Partnership Board*. Belfast: Department for Social Development.
- ¹² *North Belfast Partnership Strategy 1998-2001* (1998): Belfast: North Belfast Partnership Board - p 2.
- ¹³ *Urban II Community Initiative Programme 2000-2006: Operational Programme for Northern Ireland* (2001). Belfast: Department for Social Development.
- ¹⁴ *ibid* – section 2.6: 22-23
- ¹⁵ Greer, J. (2001) *Partnership Governance in Northern Ireland: Improving Performance*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- ¹⁶ European Commission (1995) *Community Initiatives in Northern Ireland 1991-1999*.
- ¹⁷ Hughes, J. and Carmichael, P. (1998) ‘Building Partnerships in Urban Regeneration: A Case Study from Belfast’ *Community Development Journal* 33 (3): 205-225.
- ¹⁸ European Commission (1995) ‘Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland 1995-1999’. Eurolink Supplement, No. 9. Belfast: European Commission Office.
- ¹⁹ Special EU Programmes Body (2001) *Local Strategy Partnerships – Guidelines*.
- ²⁰ Greer, J., Hughes, J., Knox, C. and Murray, M. (1999) ‘Reshaping Local Governance in a Divided Society: District Partnerships in Northern Ireland’ in G. Haughton (ed.) *Community Economic Development*. London: The Stationery Office.
- ²¹ INTERREG Programme Document 1995.
- ²² This section draws on the work of Wilson, A. and Charlton, K. (1997) *Making Partnerships Work*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation – p 22.
- ²³ Special EU Programmes Body (2001) *Local Strategy Partnerships – Guidelines*.
- ²⁴ Wilson, A. and Charlton, K. (1997) *Making Partnerships Work*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation – p 29.
- ²⁵ There should be due regard to the need to promote quality of opportunity between: persons of different religious belief; political opinion; racial group; age; marital status; sexual orientation; men and women generally; persons with a disability and persons without; and persons with dependants and persons without.
- ²⁶ Criminal Justice Review Group (2000) *Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: The Stationery Office – p 254.
- ²⁷ *ibid* – p 269.
- ²⁸ Northern Ireland Office (2002) *Creating a Safer Northern Ireland through Partnership: a consultative document*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Office.

²⁹ District Policing Partnerships are being set up under the Police Act 2000 as a means of holding the police to account for the delivery of a local policing plan and as a mechanism to promote dialogue and co-operation between the police and the local community.

³⁰ The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (1999) *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland*.

³¹ Northern Ireland Office (2002) *Creating a Safer Northern Ireland through Partnership: a consultative document*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Office – p 27.

³² The Community Safety Centre was set up in 1996 to develop and promote community safety throughout Northern Ireland. As recommended by the Criminal Justice Review, the Community Safety Centre has been incorporated into Central Government.

³³ Priority 3 in PEACE II is entitled ‘Locally-based Regeneration and Development Strategies’ and its focuses on enhancing capacities to develop and implement local development strategies produced bottom-up by local stakeholders. The Priority is being implemented through 4 measures (2 in Northern Ireland and 2 in the border region): NI local economic initiatives for developing the social economy; NI locally-based human resource, training and development strategies; building better communities (border region); and improving rural communities (border region).

³⁴ Special EU Programmes Body (2001) *Local Strategy Partnerships – Guidelines* – p 6.

³⁵ *ibid* – p 12 –13.

³⁶ *ibid* – p 6 –7.

³⁷ *ibid* – p 8.

³⁸ Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2002) *Investing in Health*. Belfast: DHSS&PS.

³⁹ *ibid* – p 145.

⁴⁰ Source: *The Nacro Guide to Partnership Working* (2001).

⁴¹ This section draws on material in Hughes, J., Knox, C., Murray, M. and Greer, J. (1998) *Partnership Governance in Northern Ireland: The Path to Peace*. Dublin: Oak Tree Press.

⁴² National Competitiveness Council (1999) *Social Partnership*. Dublin: NCC; O’Donnell, R. and Teague, P. (2000) *Partnership at Work in Ireland: An Evaluation of Progress under Partnership 2000*. Dublin: Department of the Taoiseach.

⁴³ Stapleton, J (2002) Evidence to the Committee of the Centre, Northern Ireland Assembly, 24th April.

⁴⁴ Walsh, J. (1998) ‘Local development and local government in the Republic of Ireland: from fragmentation to integration?’ *Local Economy*, February: 329-341.

⁴⁵ This section draws on material from *Institute of Public Administration Yearbook* (2002). Dublin: IPA.

⁴⁶ LEADER groups are partnerships set up to implement the EU LEADER Community Initiative. Each of the groups delivers a programme which encourages, supports and facilitates the process of rural development with a particular emphasis on community development.

⁴⁷ This section draws extensively on the following - Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (2001) *Local Strategic Partnerships – Government Guidance*. London: DETR.

⁴⁸ Geddes, M. (1999) ‘Partnership and Local Development in the European Union’ in G. Haughton (ed.) *Community Economic Development*. London: The Stationery Office.

⁴⁹ This is a summary of the key findings from Geddes, M. (1998) *Local Partnership: A Successful Strategy for Social Cohesion?* Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

⁵⁰ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (2001) *Local Strategic Partnerships – Government Guidance*. London: DETR – p 11.

⁵¹ Durkan, M. (2001) Local Strategy Partnerships *Hansard* Northern Ireland Assembly 27th March