

<b>Commission for Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> December 2016</b>
<b>To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
<b>Outcome</b>	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Head of Community & Culture Good Relations Manager
<b>Cost: (If applicable)</b>	N/A

**The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the role of the Commission for Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition.**

### **Background**

The Stormont House Agreement provided that a Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition would be appointed and would comprise 15 members. Seven have been appointed by the leaders of the five largest political parties with the remaining eight drawn from outside of Government. This was reaffirmed in 'A Fresh Start'.

The Commission has been established to take forward a programme of work which will include:

- Scoping the range, extent and nature of issues relating to flags, identity, culture and tradition;
- Mapping the benefits and opportunities in terms of flags and related issues whilst also highlighting where challenges remain; and
- Producing a report and recommendations on the way forward.

As part of its role the Commission will:

- Identify and acknowledge the opportunities presented by having a rich diverse community in which cultural expression can be celebrated;
- Consult with the established and new elements of our community;
- Identify key areas of commonality as well as difference;
- Consult with the UK and Irish governments as appropriate, should its work touch on the expression of sovereignty, national identity and political allegiance in a divided society; and
- Encourage shared learning, active listening and understanding in a meaningful way across traditional boundaries.

It will also examine and seek to co-design with all sections of our community innovative solutions to address:

- The divisive nature of displays and expression of identity;

- Specific contentious instances-events;
- Sources of conflict which arise in displays and expression of cultural identity and in some cases sovereignty, national identity and allegiance and which compound the reality of living in a contested society;
- An agreed protocol around public flag displays; and
- Displays and expressions of identity, or objection to such displays and expressions being used to provoke.

The Secretariat to support the Commission is provided from within the Executive Office.

### Consultation

The Commission are currently hosting a number of stakeholder engagement events across Northern Ireland, gathering views in relation to Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition. It is seeking written submissions as well as hosting a range of public and sectorial meetings as detailed below.

Questions being asked by the commission are:

- In your opinion how can we ensure that in Northern Ireland we develop a rich diverse community in which cultural expression can be celebrated?
- Do you have any examples of positive practice in relation to display of flags, identity, culture and tradition that have been accepted in a positive manner by communities of different backgrounds and traditions?
- What do you consider are the issues in respect of flags, identity, culture and tradition in your community or within Northern Ireland as a whole?
- What barriers presently exist to making progress to become a society that understands and accepts different cultures and expressions of these?

Details of events are as follows (public events are highlighted):

DATE	TIME	VENUE	SECTOR
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> November	7.00pm	Omagh Library	OMAGH PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> November	10.00am	Ulster Museum	Arts & Music
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> December	10.00am	Skainos Centre	Private Sector
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> December	7.00pm	Bridewell – Magherafelt	MID ULSTER PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> December	7.00pm	Belfast MET College – Titanic Quarter	BELFAST PUBLIC MEETING
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	10.00am	NICVA	Women’s Sector
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	4.00pm	Queens University	Academia/Law/Commissions
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> December	2.00pm	Rural Community network	Rural
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> December	10.00am	NICVA	Section 75 groups
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December	10.00am	Queens Sport Centre	Sport
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	FARSET	Young People

January			
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> January	7.00pm	Canal Court Hotel	NEWRY PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> January	10.00am	174 Trust	Education sector
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> January	10.00am	The MAC	Media
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> January	7.00pm	Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena	NORTH EAST PUBLIC MEETING
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	10.00am	174 trust	Public Sector & Unions
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> January	7.00pm	The Guild Hall – Subject to Change	LONDONDERRY / DERRY PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> January	7.00pm	Fermanagh Rural Community Initiative	ENNISKILLEN PUBLIC MEETING

It is anticipated that further feedback will be provided to Councils and other stakeholders following the stakeholder and public engagement process.