



Northern  
Ireland  
Office

Consultation Paper –  
Response Form

**DEALING WITH THE PAST  
IN NORTHERN IRELAND:  
THE RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE CONSULTATIVE  
GROUP ON THE PAST**

June 2009

## Consultation response form

We welcome your responses and comments on the consultation. The deadline for responses is 2 October 2009. You can use this form to help you complete your response, but you can respond without using this form. A response can be submitted by letter, e-mail or fax to:

Legacy Policy Unit  
c/o Room B3.18  
Block B  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3SG

Telephone: 020 7210 6503      Fax: 020 7210 6565  
Textphone: 028 9052 7668      email: [legacypolicyunit@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:legacypolicyunit@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk)

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I am responding:    as an individual    ☐    on behalf of an organisation    ☒

(please tick a box)

|               |                                                                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name:         | The Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson                                                   |
| Title:        | Bishop of Clogher, Chairman of the Church of Ireland<br>Working Group on the CGP |
| Organisation: | Church of Ireland Working Group on the CGP                                       |
| Address:      | Church House<br>Church Avenue<br>Rathmines<br>Dublin 6, IRELAND                  |
| Telephone:    | +353 1 497 8422 / +353 1 4125 621                                                |
| Fax:          | +353 1 497 8821                                                                  |

email:

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Secretary to Committee - [janet.maxwell@rcbdub.org](mailto:janet.maxwell@rcbdub.org)

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## THE LEGACY OF THE PAST AND RECONCILIATION

1. *An independent Legacy Commission should be established to deal with the legacy of the past by combining processes of reconciliation, justice and information recovery. It would have the overarching objective of promoting peace and stability in Northern Ireland.*

### Do you agree with recommendation 1?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** As the Working Group recommended in its response to the NI Select Affairs Committee we welcome the proposed Legacy Commission and Commissioner. Action is required to co-ordinate initiatives which complement one another but are not currently integrated. (Submission Item 3.8)

The Working Group endorsed the perspective of the CGP Report which views the issues arising from the conflict as society-wide. The Group also wished to make a statement to contextualise its responses to the NIO Consultation on the CGP Report.

A Church is a faith-based organisation, not a political organisation and not a sectional lobby group.

This may seem an odd starting point for our Working Group's response to the NIO Consultation on the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past, but it is one that the Working Group feels that it must make. Many of the issues under review are moral issues, as well as being political and societal. In addressing these issues – justice, reconciliation, forgiveness, the dignity of the human being, the healing of the injured, the comfort of the bereaved – we address some of the fundamental values of Christian faith.

Christianity is a forward-looking faith. It focuses on the salvation of mankind through the redeeming work of Christ. Yet Christianity is also conscious of the infinite and the eternal, so that philosophically, it also seeks to examine what has gone before in order to avoid the error of the past and engage in newness of life creating positive from negative.

Christianity is also a generous faith looking to the enjoyment of the relationship between God and humankind and to the living of life fully and abundantly.

The observations and suggestions of the Working Group are made in the context of faith. The Working Group has concentrated its answers on those aspects of the CGP Report to which it can contribute most ably. It has also tried not to avoid those issues which are contentious.

The Working Group acknowledges the difficulty of the task of dealing with the past. The Church's anti-sectarian project, the Hard Gospel Project, acknowledges and examines the ways that sectarianism affects our own Church and its relationships with society. The Working Group pays tribute to those who have driven this initiative within our own Church, to our former Primate, the Rt Revd Robin Eames, the first President of the Hard Gospel Programme, to his successor as President of the Programme, the current Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd Alan Harper and to the Chairman, the Very Revd Patrick Rooke. The task of developing the next phase of this work has been taken on by the Rt Reverend Trevor Williams and the Standing Committee of the Church.

It remains clear, that two people considering these proposals in good conscience from a Christian perspective, can, and do have different views on what is right. Two families that have suffered bereavement as a result of the conflict can have different views of what they consider justice. Two communities can live through the same decades and both see themselves as victimised by the other.

Consequently, the group acknowledges the broad spectrum of political views held by and the diversity of experiences of members of the Church in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In some circumstances, this leads to different responses to some of the issues. The Working Group has not taken any intentional political stance on the proposals but applies the principle of whether a particular suggestion seems to offer an improvement over existing arrangements.

Where the Working Group felt that it was appropriate to note the specific feelings of a particular group of members of the Church, it has made a conscientious effort to identify the group of concerned people and to articulate their views as they have been expressed to clergy in the course of pastoral work or gathered through work conducted during the Hard Gospel project (the Church's anti-sectarianism project). The Group also notes that the points made are in the context of responses to particular proposals and not an inventory of wrongs.

Where the Working Group is conscious that there is no consensus on a point, it has stated this as an observation, sometimes offering some analysis, but without any political intent.

As a guiding principle, the Working Group has tried to make responses that leave the decision on issues such as 'how to remember', with the individual, the family, the group or the statutory body concerned.

Through its response, the Church offers to share any work or project models that may assist the Legacy Commission and Northern Ireland society as it seeks to deal with the consequences of the past.

The Working Group felt that in the midst of many areas of need across society arising from the years of conflict, there are specific current needs in Protestant communities, which arise from past events.

Processes need to be grounded and developed at the local level, recognising the difficulty that sections of the the Protestant community experience in verbalising their concerns. Reconciliation needs to happen in local communities and it is not entirely clear how this will be addressed. Among the key concerns for consideration are:

- The physical and emotional needs of surviving victims.
- The demographic pressures left after the conflict in border areas and in other areas where communities have tended to become single identity and polarised by the development of an understanding of 'who-we-are' that is based on understandings developed during the years of conflict.
- The ongoing intimidation of families and individuals.
- The ongoing concerns sections of the community that their interests will be sacrificed in what they perceive as the political barter economy focused around Stormont.

**To what extent is it effective to combine processes of reconciliation, justice and information recovery within a single body?**

**Comments:** In general, the Working Group favoured an integrated approach, rather than a dispersed system of independent authorities attempting to deal with different aspects arising from the conflict.

However, the Working Group queried whether, even within the proposed single model, the dispersal of the actions in respect of victims and survivors across the Four Strands could lead to tension between the groups attempting to address these issues.

Specific concerns included:

While the Working Group appreciates and supports the need for a mechanism to feed proposals into the statutory health and education bodies, in such a way that a real outcome is achieved, there was concern that the CRC and CVSNI will need to be facilitated in this by the statutory bodies and by the political machinery and those ministers of state with responsibility in these areas.

Further questions arise in respect of whether it is desirable to subdivide the budget for victims' needs from the main health service provision when the time frame envisaged is set at 5 years? It is a key recommendation of the Working Group that funding that will be needed in the longer term should not be compromised by limiting its availability to the term of the Commission.

A final concern was that the location of the CVSNI in Strand 1 as part of the Reconciliation Forum, might limit the Legacy Commission's overall insight into needs associated with victims and survivors related to the investigation and information recovery strands, and that the CVSNI should have a formal role in these Strands also.

**What alternative ways would you propose to deal with the legacy of the past?**

**Comments:** Rather than propose an alternative, the Working Group expressed the hope that the process would be driven by a commitment to integration, focused objectives and a strong emphasis on communication to achieve effective delivery without duplication.

2. *A Reconciliation Forum should be established through which the Legacy Commission and the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland (CVSNI) would liaise to tackle certain society issues relating to the conflict.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 2?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒

**Comments:** While the idea of a Reconciliation Forum was supported and there is support for the objectives of Strand 1 identified in Chapter 8 of the CGP Report, the form of this question as expressed in the Consultation posed some difficulty for our group. In essence, the Group felt that the Forum should have an integrating and championing approach, supported by sufficient authority to ensure uptake of proposals on which there is societal consensus, but it should not become the 'delivery body' expected to tackle the problems single-handed.

**Recommendation**

The Working Group calls for a review of the proposed model. The Forum may need a wider composition, to deliver the objectives of integrating the work of existing state services alongside voluntary sector initiatives.

**Reasoning**

The wider responsibilities in health, education and social development identified for the Forum are very different to the current remit of the two bodies destined to form the core of the Forum (CVSNI and CRC), regardless of the fact that it is desirable to have increased input to articulating the needs that exist from the voluntary sector and community to the statutory bodies AND some legislative support for ensuring that statutory bodies are responsive to these expressed needs.

However, the Working Group felt that it is possibly unfair to expect an international figure entering this model without in-depth knowledge of how our systems work to 'champion' these objectives effectively, by working with two

bodies which will themselves be growing into a new responsibility in these two areas.

Effective delivery will require senior management commitment from within the statutory bodies and political support across the sectors of health, education and social development, which are currently outside the Forum.

The Working Group felt that the mechanics of the Forum could be improved by including additional key personnel and key players from the voluntary sectors most involved in the work of the Forum as outlined.

The CVSNI and CRC currently address aspects of anti-sectarianism work, but the Working Group felt that there are other bodies which have also played central roles in delivering real outcomes in terms of the objectives outlined on p134 and p138 of the CGP Report (addressing sectarianism, storytelling, memorialising and day of reflection, addressing issues facing those exiled).

Among these groups, The Working Group particularly mentions Healing Through Remembering, which has spearheaded the Day of Reflection, and which, the Group felt, should be taking a prominent role in this Forum.

The majority of youth work in NI is facilitated by the Churches. The Churches should also be represented on this body so that their youth work can be integrated with the overall objectives identified under education and anti-sectarianism initiatives.

Memorialising and storytelling in the Protestant community are also often channelled through the Churches. In acknowledging that denominationalism was a part of the history of the conflict, it is also true that the Churches need to be integrated into the healing processes so that they play a constructive part in renewing our society.

The model as presented does not indicate where the faith based and community organisations link into this Strand of the process to build on the high level of day-to-day contact that Churches maintain with groups of survivors and relatives.

Some sections of the Protestant community are wary of representative bodies and worry that they have been excluded from funding in the past by the way in which criteria are drawn up. The Reconciliation Forum must demonstrate and articulate its openness across all sections of society and there is particular concern that the views of Protestant victims, who are not members of the

formal victims' groups, are heard. The Reconciliation Forum needs to address ambivalent perceptions among sections of the community in order to liaise with the various community-based groups effectively.

**How might a Forum operate in practice, in relation to the organisations that might make up the Forum and other organisations outside of it?**

**Comments:** The Working Group feels this is beyond its expertise, but offers one insight: An important objective is to include a mechanism to publicly give approbation to organisations and groups that help in the delivery of objectives. There is a risk that some of the grass roots bodies may become discouraged by finding recognition is focused on the Forum or the Commission as this is likely to be a natural focus of national and local media and such reporting tends to colour perceptions of reality.

3. *The Legacy Commission should be given a bursary of £100m to tackle these society issues.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 3?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒

**Comments:**

In the long term, the Legacy Commission should create a culture that is not driven by project funding, but as money is clearly required to run much of the infrastructure, it needs to be supplied in some form. The Working Group felt that some objectives were suited to bursary funding (by which we understand a time-limited sum to cover the five year period). Other expenditures, such as health services for those injured in the conflict clearly need lifetime funding in some instances and should not be compromised by being time limited. Money of any sort should be allocated to emphasise the following:

- value for money,
- evaluating impact of money spent,
- creating sustainability into the future.

It is important that the money allocated is expended in a way that is identified by people in their daily lives.

Funding for justice and investigation of past events tends to be invisible on a day-to-day basis, though a necessary part of the work. But there has to be a felt effect at the local level.

There has to be accountability at the end of the process so that government takes responsibility for delivering on the objectives set.

Within this proposal lies a fundamental question as to whether this is 'add on - time limited' funding, and the implications of this for providing, for example, health services that may be required for the lifetime of the people in need of them.

Th Working Group agreed that the response to this had to be based on the following principles:

Services that are needed for the lifetime of victims and survivors need matching funding, not a tranche of money that disappears at the end of five years. This applies particularly to health services.

Additional funding over an identified period is needed to address outstanding investigations and information recovery (Strands 2,3,4), anti-sectarianism work, education and youth work and storytelling, and thematic analysis (Strands 1 & 4). At the end of the five year period, a review of this additional funding and its effectiveness should provide a guide for the future. The Working Group expressed the hope that this additional funding would generate a sustainable recovery in the emotional and spiritual health of the communities in NI and that this would not require long-term financing.

The area of economic recovery is also likely to require significant injection of funds for training and development and this may need a longer time frame than 5 years, given that the situation arising from the conflict is further impacted by the current recession. The Working Group identified the goal in this area that the NI economy should reach a point where it is not overly dependent on public sector employment and is generating economic growth and a sustainable job market that benefits everyone.



**How might the use of a bursary relate to existing expenditure on societal issues?**

**Comments:** The Working Group expressed the following views:

In the health services, gaps in provision for conflict-related needs should be identified. Short-term needs might be addressed with additional funding from a five-year bursary, but long term needs should be built into the ongoing health budget.

Economic development - will be frustrated by the current recession and will require a longer term strategy. There would be huge social benefit to both communities in achieving a growth-driven economy in NI, as opposed to one that relies on public sector employment. Investment in promotion of Northern Ireland is likely to demonstrate a return in terms of economic capacity and social capital. An ongoing strategy is needed for economically disadvantaged areas.

Anti-sectarianism work, youth work Strand 1 - would be appropriate to bursary funding.

Justice, Investigations, Information Recovery Strands 2,3,4, might also be appropriate to bursary funding, but with a commitment to review this at the end of 5 years.

#### **How is duplication avoided?**

##### **Comments:** 3b Duplication

Duplication is undesirable. However, providing sufficient of what is needed is to be encouraged. For example, some services require more input from the voluntary sector, but in order to achieve this, support is needed for training and subsequently to provide for a level of support and supervision of the volunteers. This is not duplication, but extension.



## VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

4. *The suffering of families from Northern Ireland and Great Britain should be recognised. The nearest relative of someone who died as a result of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, from January 1966, should receive a one-off ex-gratia recognition payment of £12,000.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 4?**

Yes

☐

No

☐

Other

☒

### **Comments:**

The feedback from members of the Church of Ireland is mixed and some have expressed the view that the proposed £12,000 payment is an insensitive and blunt instrument. The public response has made it extremely difficult for anyone who might have wanted to support or apply for the £12 000 payment to articulate this. It also made it difficult for the Church's response (which had urged consideration of the wider issues in the report) to be heard by its own members or by the wider community.

There were a number of expressions of hurt expressed in the media and privately, and the Working Group concluded that there is no consensus to support this proposal. However, the Working Group feels that some other means needs to be found to address victim needs. Through pastoral work, the Church encounters victims of the conflict who have ongoing needs of various sorts, some of them financial and directly attributable to what they experienced during the conflict.

**How do you believe the suffering of families could be better recognised?**

**Comments:**

In their pastoral engagement, clergy often encounter the view that a review of how recognition is demonstrated would be welcome.

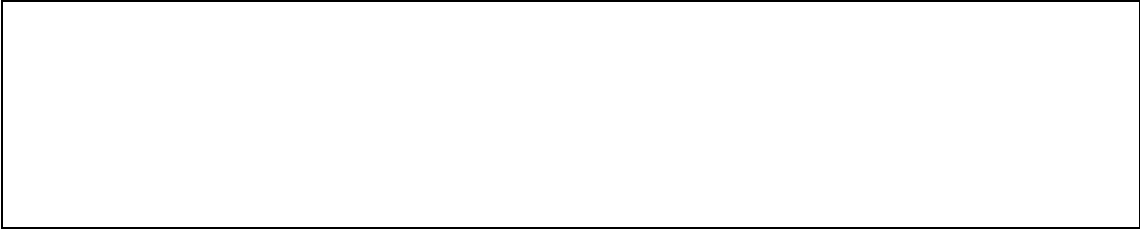
Similarly, pastoral feedback indicates a degree of discomfort with the current definition of a victim.

The Working Group feels it is important to say that the issues around victims and the suffering of families have become somewhat over-simplified. The issues are not black-and-white. Society has been drawn into a particular debate that cannot be resolved currently due to the distress around the issue of payments. The Working Group suggests that this might be more easily carried forward if separated from the issue of compensation and the £12,000 payment to victims. The Working Group expresses the hope that as we move beyond the language and

experience of conflict, we begin to find a holistic way of engaging with those who have suffered to promote healing and wholeness.

The feedback articulated through pastoral work, from a number of victims' groups and captured in the media indicates a sense that recognition is not about money, or, perhaps, is about much more than money. The Church is often asked about the erection of memorials for those killed, and there is clearly a sense in which people want to see some physical marker of past events. A wider debate is needed about how this is most appropriately done. The group, Healing Through Remembering proposes an annual day of reflection, which has received some positive response among our members, and allows a quiet moment in the year to take stock.

The Working Group recognises the difficulty that all victims are facing and also the considerable public pressure being placed on this group of people at present, however inadvertently, through public debate about victim's needs, the definition of who is or is not a victim etc etc. Many victims and relatives of victims do not enjoy the sense of being publicly discussed or objectified in political discourse as a consequence of the conflict. In our pastoral work as a Church, our clergy have sometimes had victims express to them a sense that society accuses them of an inability to get over what happened to them and their families or to imply that this is now, somehow, standing in the way of reconciliation. The human dignity and personal losses experienced by victims need to be respected by us all. We also need to acknowledge the human capacity to deal with loss and continue to live. Grief is a complex and deep-rooted matter.



5. *The CVSNI should take account of, and address in their work programme, the present and future needs and concerns of victims and survivors, devoting attention to the provision of services, funding, healthcare needs and compensation.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 5?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** The Working Group felt that the CVSNI could make a very valuable contribution under these headings. The Working Group would like to see the CVSNI acting as champions rather than as a delivery mechanism (as is perhaps implied in some of the outcomes mentioned, such as storytelling). The CVSNI should be an integral presence in every department at Stormont checking that the needs of victims are met rather than competing with existing organisations to carry out delivery. The majority of victims are not part of victims' groups and will not even engage with CVSNI, so CVSNI should be campaigning for these peoples' needs without meeting them, i.e. their needs in health legislation and funding etc, rather in terms of setting up storytelling, for example.

**Are the provision of services, funding, healthcare needs and compensation the areas which the CVSNI should prioritise?**

**Comments:**

The Group recognises the difficulty that all victims are facing and the need for a strong champion of their needs - particularly for those who are not attached to the victims' groups and do not currently have a voice lobbying on their behalf. Our view is that a good working relationship needs to be fostered between the Forum and the statutory service deliverers.

**Are there other issues to which the CVSNI should devote attention?**

**Comments:** Overall, the programme for the CVSNI given the time proposals seems quite busy. The Working Group would urge caution about spreading the resource of the CVSNI too thinly by adding additional responsibilities.

6. *The Reconciliation Forum would also have a mandate to promote the improvement of services for healthcare issues attributable to the conflict, such as trauma, suicide and addiction.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 6?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:**

The Church of Ireland Working Group considers that the Reconciliation Forum would be extremely well placed to promote and extend work in this area and that this should become a key objective for the Forum.

The Church of Ireland in its parish work has identified extensive pastoral issues facing those who suffer from trauma and addiction or are driven by the desire to self-harm or to commit suicide as a result of the conflict.

The Church has been investing in training for pastoral workers to provide support to people suffering in this way. Such workers are also able to provide an effective point of liaison with the health service providers, increasing the support available to those in need.

Other Churches have identified similar need in their own communities. The Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland and the Catholic Church have been jointly engaged in a project known as the Inter Church Addiction Programme (ICAP), which addresses issues in this area. The Church of Ireland has also developed a pilot programme in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe, to create an awareness of the issues and to enable pastoral workers to engage more effectively with people who face these issues day to day and to enable them to liaise effectively with the health service providers.

There are gaps in health service provision in this area. The Church's Board of Social Action has repeatedly called for health services in this area to be improved.

There is also a lack of trained pastoral workers able to respond to people suffering in this way on a day to day basis. Although all of the Churches have identified this need, the Reconciliation Forum might be in a position to

accelerate this training initiative and also to extend it to include smaller churches.

Models to achieve this already exist. This would be a key area where funding could be applied to produce results effectively. This investment would support other initiatives that are already in place, such as the provision of a new facility for teenagers at risk from suicide at Templepatrick, which is warmly welcomed.

Another programme that has proved effective is the ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) - a two-day training module for non-professionals.

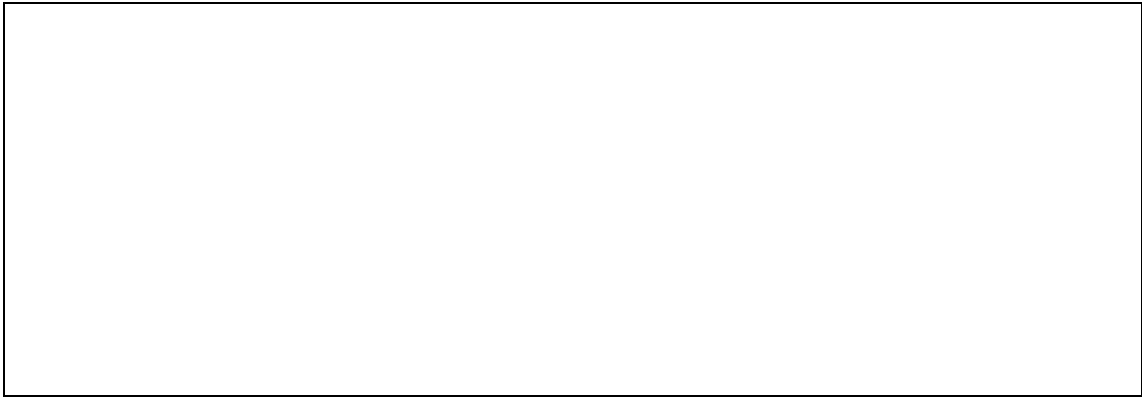
Overall, the Working Group emphasised:

The need for a long-term view of this area of work, and of

The need to include and integrate the work of statutory and voluntary sectors

Provision of proper support and supervision for volunteers so engaged,

Provision of appropriate training for volunteers (ASIST recommended).



**How would a Forum promote improvements to healthcare services in practice and how would it work with those organisations that already deal with healthcare issues?**

**Comments:** The Section above contains a specific suggestion that the Reconciliation Forum might consider in this respect. The model is already demonstrating benefits, by creating a low-cost, sustainable pastoral support and counselling network for sufferers that can liaise with the health services. The Forum's support would both accelerate the existing provision and could also extend it to include smaller churches and other community organisations, if they wished to participate.

## THE LEGACY COMMISSION

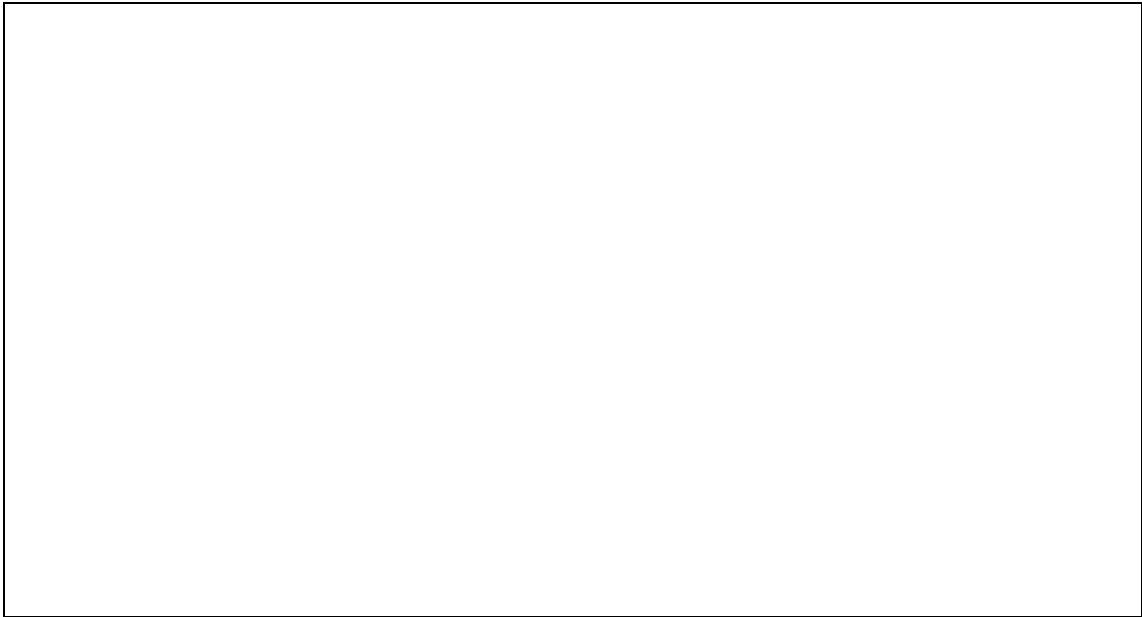
7. *The Chair of the Legacy Commission should be an International Commissioner, who would also have specific responsibility within the Commission for addressing society issues through the Reconciliation Forum, tackling sectarianism, promoting reconciliation and administering the bursary. There would be two other Commissioners.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 7?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒

### **Comments:**

The Working Group felt that despite the positive contribution of independence and objectivity that such a figure might bring, the proposed 5-year time frame and the need for accountability at governmental and community level means that consideration should also be given to appointing a local figure to lead the Commission. The Working Group felt that the community might respond positively to someone in this role who has a longstanding commitment to our society. However, if the two Assistant Commissioners were locally representative, an international figure might be able to deliver the championing role as outlined in the consultation effectively. In this case, some reconsideration would be required of the directive role envisaged for the Chair of Strand 1 in respect of healthcare, education and social development services.



**Are there other ways that international figures can help to deal with the legacy of the past?**

**Comments:** International figures can often provide inspirational commentary and can inject enthusiasm into the community. The contribution of such public spirited individuals is to be welcomed.

8. *The mandate of the Legacy Commission would consist of four strands of work:*

*-helping society towards a shared and reconciled future, through a process of engagement with community issues arising from the conflict;*

*-reviewing and investigating historical cases;*

*-conducting a process of information recovery;*

*-examining the linked or thematic cases emerging from the conflict.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 8?**

Yes

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No

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Other

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**Comments:** The Working Group agreed that the objectives identified were positive and would make a contribution to building society.

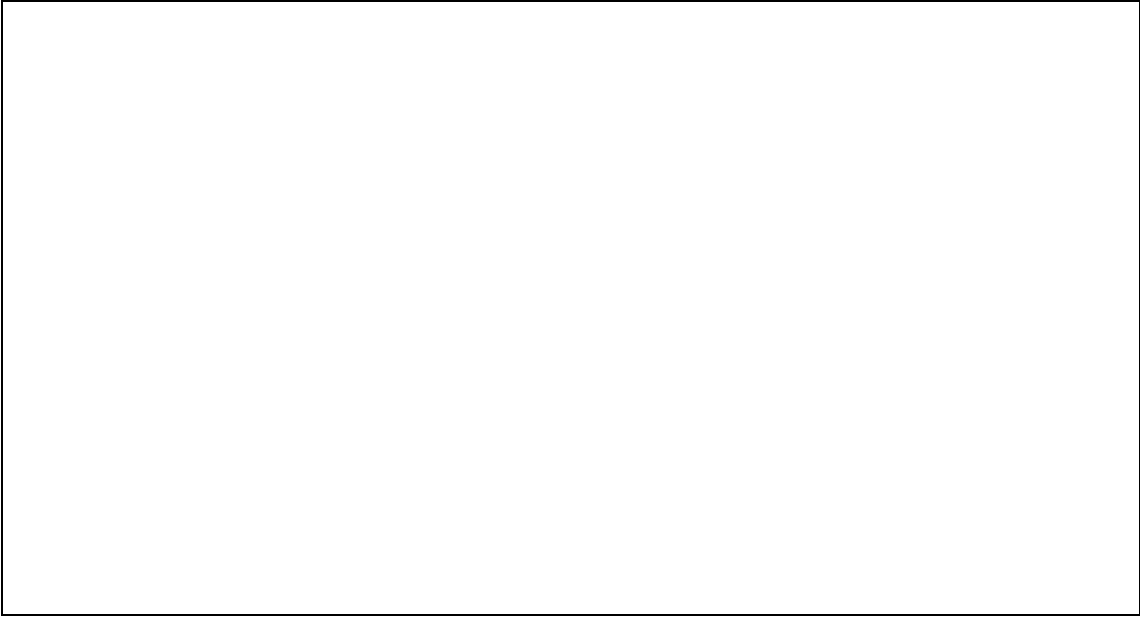
### **Are there other strands of work which should be taken forward?**

#### **Comments:**

If the Legacy Commission delivers on the objectives identified, it will have achieved a great deal. It could, however, assist in bringing reconciliation work down to the local level by empowering organisations within society to equip their own communities. Churches and other organisations are willing partners already working to sustain reconciliation initiatives beyond the 5-year horizon set for the work of the Legacy Commission. This work needs to be encouraged and supported by the Commission.

The Protestant community needs to find ways of telling what happened to its members and also to express where they are now. This community does not have mechanisms to connect remembered experience with current opportunities. A question to which the Church of Ireland has returned time and again in its anti-sectarianism work is how can you help people to reach the point of telling? There is also a divide between the rural community and urban community that tends to prevent mutual understanding.

A huge volume of work on reconciliation has already been done in Northern Ireland. The Legacy Commission needs to weave in the existing work on reconciliation. It isn't starting from scratch. One difficulty that the Commission faces is that much of the work to date has been funded with the assistance of groups such as Atlantic Philanthropy and the International Fund for Ireland. By the end of the five-year period, the culture of project funding for single initiatives will have to be transformed into community-driven, self-sustaining, models. While many groups, particularly victims' groups may find this threatening, the Church welcomes the return to conscience-based, value driven models, where the accountability is to the expectations of the community in a moral sense, with less emphasis on financial issues.



9. *The Legacy Commission's mandate would be for a fixed period of five years.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 9?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:**

The Working Group thought that 5 years was a good timeframe for the Legacy Commission. If properly planned and resourced it should have achieved considerable impact within 5 years and have stimulated a volume of sustainable ongoing work.

Certain aspects of the work might be reviewed at the end of five years. In particular, healthcare services for long-term sufferers of conflict-related conditions. Economic recovery and sustainability may also require further strategic inputs. Education is also likely to require a review rather than have reached a conclusion. Given the time already spent investigating unsolved cases, this area should also be reviewed, and probably restructured at that point to deal effectively with the remaining work.

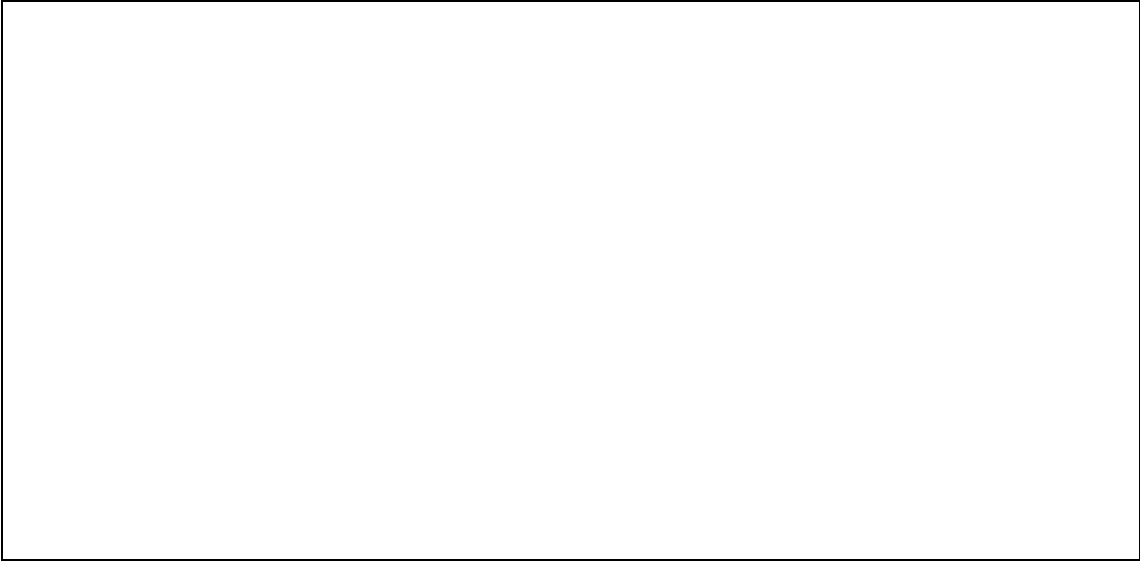
**Would it be helpful for a Legacy Commission to have an option for a second period of a further five years?**

**Comments:**

Perhaps best reviewed toward the end of the 5 year period.

**Could you envisage a different remit in the second five year term?**

**Comments:** If it was to be the same remit, it might be argued that nothing had been achieved.



10. *The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) should join the British and Irish Governments in implementing this initiative.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 10?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:**

These bodies need to take ownership of it and be accountable for participation in it and implementing delivery. A public mid-point report would be necessary.

**What should the roles of the British Government, the Irish Government and the devolved administration be in taking forward proposals to deal with the legacy of the past?**

**Comments:**

To take ownership of it and be accountable for participation in it and implementing delivery within the community. A public mid-point report would be necessary.

## SOCIETY ISSUES

11. *Society issues arising from the conflict which should be tackled include: addressing sectarianism; promoting remembering activities; working with young people; providing improved services for healthcare needs; ensuring an even spread of economic benefits; and helping those exiled from Northern Ireland during the conflict to return.*

### Do you agree with recommendation 11?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** The Working Group strongly supports the recommendations relating to the Reconciliation Forum in Chapter 8 of the CGP Report. As the Churches are involved in the delivery of 90% of youth work in NI, the Churches have a strong interest in the proposals around this particular area. However the Church has also invested in anti-sectarianism projects for more than a decade and has a strong interest in this aspect of the proposal as well. The Working Group agreed with the remainder of the list and its Church in Society Committee and the Hard Gospel implementation Group would endorse the need for emphasis on economic development as a key factor in establishing a healthy society.

The Church of Ireland has engaged in a lengthy institutional project addressing sectarianism - The Hard Gospel Project. This was jointly funded by the Church, the International Fund for Ireland and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Church found this project to be very beneficial. The Working Group would promote the model, which was not excessively costly to implement, to the Legacy Commission for wider use. The Church is very open to sharing with other organisations in any way that might be helpful.

See Appendix.

**Should societal issues be dealt with by a Legacy Commission?**

**Comments:** Yes, in partnership with those bodies already engaged in such delivery. The Legacy Commission should promote, accelerate and extend effective delivery, rather than try to do it, by itself.

**If not, are current arrangements to address these issues adequate?  
What changes would you purpose?**

**Comments:** A great deal of work on societal issues has already taken place. But moving society from conflict to normality is not achieved in an instant. The experience that the Church would offer, is that a constant process of review, identification of what is effective, promotion and delivery of what is effective and weeding out what is not working is needed. It is complicated and painstaking at an organisational level, and will require considerable energy and focus on the part of the Legacy Commission to manage such a programme across NI society.

The Working Group would see the role of the Legacy Commission as guiding and co-ordinating, eliminating duplication and stimulating new initiatives rather than replacing existing arrangements.

**Are the issues highlighted by the Group the right issues to be tackled?**

**Comments:** Our group felt that the CGP Report highlighted a number of significant issues. Rather than expand that list, it would be better to make a beginning with achievable objectives and review societal needs at the end of the 5-year period.

12. *The Reconciliation Forum should help to address these issues by analysing activity undertaken; considering the need for further activity; giving advice to Government and others; advising on strategies and on development and delivery of services; and deciding on priority areas of activity.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 12?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** The Working Group felt that this was a good description of what the Forum should do. It is important that the two bodies give acknowledgement to the role of the voluntary sector as well as the statutory sector. The Working Group restates its view that the structure of the Reconciliation Forum needs to be reviewed to include the service providers and faith-based organisations at least.

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**Are these the right functions for a Reconciliation Forum?**

**Comments:** The functions outlined for the Reconciliation Forum fall into two categories, both within Strand 1: (1) the integration of service provision and (2) the promotion of anti-sectarianism work. Both are desirable. Our group is concerned that the Forum as proposed is too narrowly composed and that its effectiveness would be enhanced by having rather wider membership.

The Working Group's analysis of the CGP Report, suggests that the CVSNI should have an articulated role in supporting families and survivors in the Strands responsible for investigation and information recovery.

13. *The Legacy Commission should act as a champion for these society issues.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 13?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** Yes. This championing function will be more effective if the Legacy Commission is a more widely based body. The Northern Ireland psyche is such that it is mistrustful of anything that appears as if it is being imposed. The values need to be championed by all of the Commissioners, but also by political, church, educational and community leadership figures.

**Should it be for the Chair of a Legacy Commission to champion societal issues?**

**Comments:** Yes, but not alone - along with other leaders in our society - political leaders, faith organisations, civic leaders, civil servants. Were this Chair to be from outside the community, it will be even more important that this message is reflected by leaders within the community.

**How would the Chair's champion function relate to other bodies working on societal issues, including any Reconciliation Forum?**

**Comments:** This is a question that requires a communications analyst to consider:

The profile of the Chair/former roles.

Whether the Chair is drawn from within or from outside NI society.

The existing/non-existing relationship of the Chair with other bodies.

The public image of the chair and nature of his/her media presence.

How the Chair's appointment is received by these bodies (any sense of conflict/ seen as a challenger/ seen as an encourager/ team leader etc)

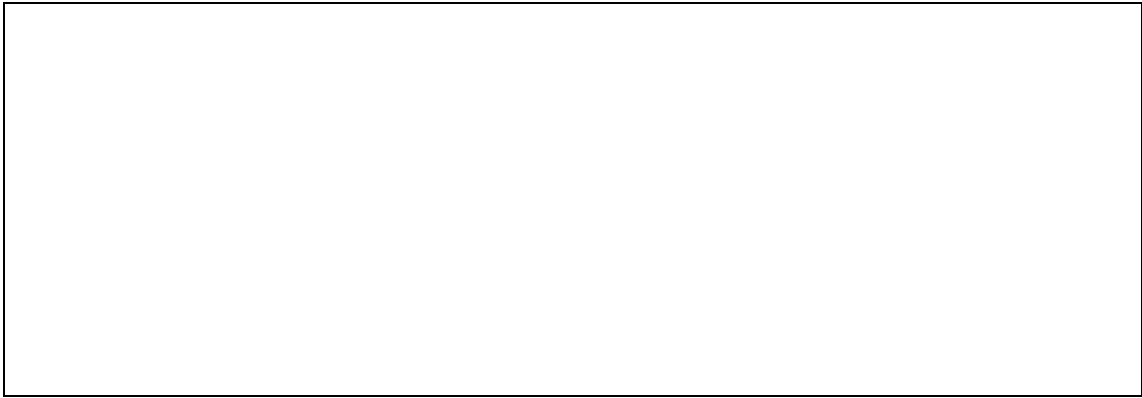
The interpersonal communication style adopted by the Chair.

14. *The Legacy Commission should take the lead in ensuring that sectarianism continues to be addressed, including through setting the direction for the debate and by highlighting the contribution that all sectors of society can make.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 14?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** It is clear that the attitudes that give rise to sectarian behaviour need to be addressed, probably for several generations and it is essential that the Legacy Commission gives leadership in this area. The Working Group agreed that if the Legacy Commission fulfils its objectives, it will give appropriate leadership in this area. It is important that the Legacy Commission is effective and remains focused on specific tasks to do with integrating the work of the health, education and social development agencies as well as maintaining the impetus of anti-sectarianism work. It will not be seen to be effective if it develops a conference culture approach.



**Is the concept of a challenge function as envisaged by the Group the right way to address this problem?**

**Comments:** This is an adversarial word. It drives people into corners. The Working Group felt that a challenge function may not sit easily with the need to achieve focused, integrated delivery in other areas of work. The culture of the conflict in NI can lead to 'challenge' being misread in our society. However, education about sectarianism is about raising awareness of the impact that our attitudes and behaviour can have in either perpetuating, or more positively, in bringing to an end the culture of 'them' and 'us'. We hope that this individual would be seen as an educator rather than as a challenger.

**Should it be for the Chair of a Legacy Commission to challenge sectors of society to tackle sectarianism?**

**Comments:** The comments in the previous sections would apply.

**How would the Chair's lead role on sectarianism relate to other bodies working on societal issues, including any Reconciliation Forum?**

**Comments:** As above.

15. *The Legacy Commission should engage specifically with the Christian Churches in Northern Ireland to encourage them to review and rethink their contribution to a non-sectarian future in light of their past, particularly in the area of education.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 15?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:**

What is the role of the Churches in moving forward?

The Church of Ireland and other Churches together with the Irish Council of Churches/Irish Inter-Church Meeting have been actively addressing issues addressing sectarianism, conflict resolution, the provision of pastoral care for victims and survivors through their central and parish structures since the 1980s.

The Church is ready to make an ongoing contribution where it can helpfully do so in terms of the proposals that will emerge from this consultation.

Part of the role of the Churches has to be that they share their experience in such a way that others do not have to retread the same path; To proactively champion a way of engaging; to model the way of respectful dialogue .

The Church of Ireland worked at central level on two major phases of such work: The Sectarianism Education Working Group and subsequently The Hard Gospel Project, an anti-sectarianism programme that is currently evolving into a third phase of work where the Church reviews and renews its structures and activities.

The Church recognised through a scoping study, completed in 2004 and received by The General Synod of the Church of Ireland, that

sectarianism is a systemic characteristic of our society, and that the Church and its members are a part of that social system.

In recognising the ways in which sectarianism forms part of the weave of our society and of the structures within it, the Church looks at various aspects of its life and its relationships with other denominations and bodies. The project looks at the past from the point of view of the Church and its members, encouraging dialogue within the Church and between the Church and other Churches, the GAA, and other social groups.

At least as difficult, is the challenge of looking at ourselves as individuals and seeing how we and our families are caught up in a society where sectarianism colours daily life.

Despite the difficulty of taking that hard look at ourselves, the Church of Ireland found great benefit in the Hard Gospel Programme, which ran for three years from 2006-2009, throughout Ireland.

The project found a response among those who perceived a need for it; but, it also had to engage with sections of our own community who saw neither need nor any desirability in such a project.

This model was developed with the International Fund for Ireland and would be of use if extended across other organisations. It was cost effective to run over the three year period. It continues to influence the life of the Church and can be said to have created a sustainable dynamic in terms of what it tried to achieve.

The Church has a number of ongoing initiatives arising from this work, at central and parish level.

At the central level, the Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher, who Chairs the Working Group responding to the NIO consultation on the

CGP Report has also been involved in three initiatives that articulate the new thinking that has emerged from the Church's anti-sectarianism work over the last two decades.

A new programme for the training of clergy has been developed and will 'go live' in 2009. Theological education has been revolutionised and the 'diversity audit' has become part of its weave. It has used the process of reflection and consultation to move beyond sectarianism and is moving leaders lay and ordained in this direction.

The Church is also restructuring its approach to social action and, under the Chairmanship of Bishop Jackson, covers a very broad range of issues, situations and challenges in society within Ireland and in Europe, which are vital to the positioning of the Church in the modern world. The Church in Society Committee has been one of the main channels through which the Church can articulate and discuss views on subjects that are sometimes considered taboo, even in the post-conflict society.

The most recent initiative in this sphere of activity is the restructuring of the social action of the Church through the Board of Social Theology in Action, which seeks to reinterpret the social work of the Church in the light of its theological inputs.

The question of our own identity has also been raised in a number of ways. The Rt Revd Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore has made several interventions in recent months arguing for a re-evaluation of the role of the Protestant community as participants in a society where social injustice resulted in armed conflict. This has had a mixed reception, and again the Church of Ireland has been accused of betraying 'its own' in parts of the media. However, there have also been letters of support in some newspapers demonstrating the complexity of the community response in NI. The Bishop has received a number of letters of support privately.

At the diocesan level, a pilot scheme in the Diocese of Derry is addressing issues of addiction and suicide, which are two phenomena that afflict post-conflict society in NI. The Churches Board of Social Action is also working with other Churches in the same area of addiction on the Inter Church Addiction Programme. Parishes in both rural and urban contexts are working with communities, to address the consequences of economic underdevelopment and to reach out to loyalist communities that have often become disaffected from the Church. The Hard Gospel Project also engaged in initiatives in loyalist areas addressing the subject of identity and achievement and presenting visual installations that were widely accessible and received considerable promotion by the local media. In the area of social support, the Mothers' Union has been instrumental in developing community-based contact centres, which provide safe environments for separated and divorced parents to exercise visiting rights - a service which supports many families that suffer particular aspects of social disfunction that can be related to the conflict, whether from addiction issues, imprisonment etc.

Models generated from reconciliation work in the Churches help us move beyond sectarianism. With every respect to the current consultation, huge volumes of work done on the ground by the Churches and other community organisations through volunteer inputs can seem to pass without notice in such consultations. The areas of work for which the state is directly responsible fall within the Health Services, Education, and Justice sectors. However, an equal volume of work that is needed in terms of reconciliation has to happen at the level of the community: and the model put in place following the NIO consultation needs to address the reality of how this is to happen. The mechanism for this needs to be considerably fleshed out. As we have indicated in the response to question 2a, we question if the current model for the Reconciliation Forum is fully formed in this respect.

The Legacy Commission could consider whether the anti-sectarianism project which ran over three years in the Church of Ireland (The Hard Gospel Project) can be reworked with other organisations. The Hard Gospel Project has had a resonance among other churches, the Irish Council of Churches and community-based organisations and there is already a degree of familiarity with the methodology of the programme. A cost-effective way to develop a shared understanding across key organisations would make a significant contribution to the capacity of the Legacy Commission to achieve its objectives under Strand 1. The Commission will no doubt be familiar with other projects that may be similarly useful. The Model developed by the Church for expanded delivery is included as Appendix 1.

One lesson learned from the Church's Hard Gospel project has been the importance of appreciating other communities in our society in order to move away from the association of denominationalism and conflict; consequently, the term 'Church' should be expanded to the phrase 'faith communities' to emphasise the shared dimensions as well as the community focus of reconciliation.

Education is a major issue of concern for the Protestant community.

The Church of Ireland Board of Education has been engaging in discussion about the future of education, which has emerged as a dynamic area of debate and activity in the last year. There is considerable concern that the secondary and primary education systems are not meeting the needs of all sections of the community. In society in NI, denominational identity is not something that can simply be set aside. The Churches are willing to explore with others how, from a position of confident identity, our systems can evolve over time to reflect changing society.

There remain two points of view on education. The Protestant Churches are more open to integrated education as a concept, although this is not a

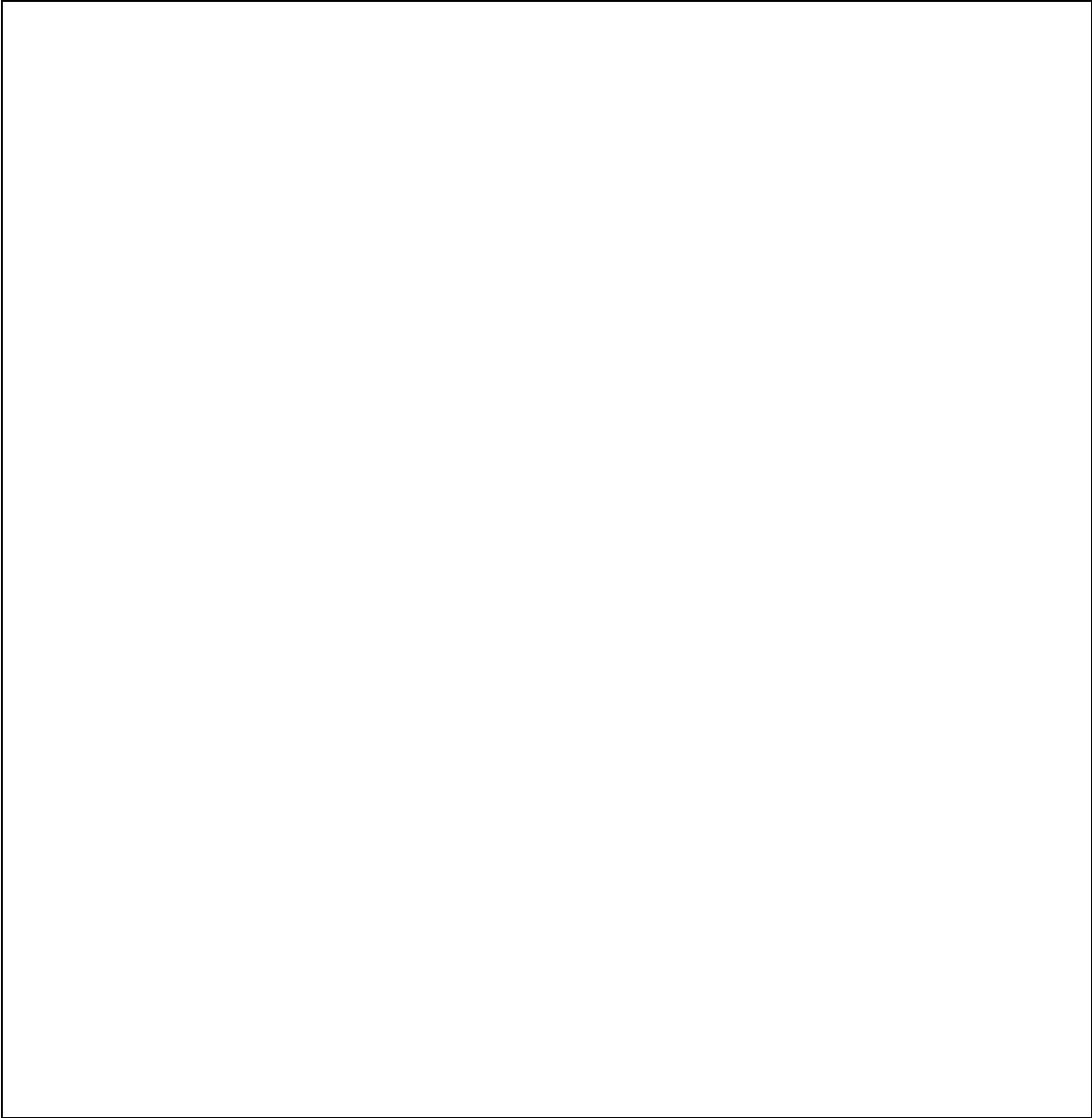
universal view at the community level. The Catholic Church has been strongly of the view that denominational education is the way forward. However, given the reality of life in Northern Ireland, it is not reasonable to dismantle a denominational system while individuals are too nervous of the consequences in terms of intimidation and inter-community bullying to participate in such a system.

The Church of Ireland Board of Education is anxious to continue debate in this area with the well-being of the pupil as the central focus, particularly in the context of declining populations and declining budgets.

Integrated schools can also be established by the transformation of existing schools. The Protestant Churches have accepted the transformation of controlled schools to controlled integrated status where there has been community support. The Catholic church is, however, opposed to transforming any of its schools. As a consequence of this, there has been a growing feeling that there is something intrinsically flawed with a mechanism for integration which can deliver such schools from only one side of the community.

There may be some potential in the concept of 'integrating education' which builds on the recognition that each sector has within it children from communities other than its natural constituency. There are also some policy initiatives which may encourage integration as a consequence, e.g. collaborative arrangements between schools to deliver aspects of the curriculum, shared sixth forms etc. The potential for jointly-managed schools might also be explored.

Some consideration of the emerging multi-cultural nature of our society is needed in respect of education with provision for people from other faith communities.



16. *The guidance produced by the Quigley-Hamilton working group, to eliminate discrimination against those with conflict-related convictions, should be incorporated into statute and made applicable to the provision of goods, facilities and services as well as recruitment.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 16?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒

**Comments:** While this may be an outcome of the work of the Legacy Commission during or at the end of the 5-year period, our group feels that for many in our community today, it would be too soon to incorporate this into statute or to make it applicable to the provision of goods, facilities and services as well as recruitment. Although there is an element of speculation in our response, the Working Group feels that such a proposal would not have consensus across the Protestant community. Additionally, the Working Group felt that as this is another issue where debate is needed, it will be easier to have that debate if the context is open, rather than pre-ordained. The Working Group felt that, as with the discussion around victims, this subject is also likely to generate heated and over-simplified reactions if the debate is conducted under pressure.

**Are there alternative or additional measures which could or should be taken in relation to conflict-related convictions?**

**Comments:** Attitudes to conflict-related convictions derive from firmly held views about the conflict and this should be borne in mind when considering how to re-integrate active participants in the conflict into the post-conflict society. Many people are still struggling with issues of memory and have not got to grips with the practicalities of the post-conflict situation. As a result, the reaction at a community level tends to be negative towards those with conflict-related convictions.

## PROCESSES OF JUSTICE AND INFORMATION RECOVERY

17. *A new independent Unit dealing with historical cases would be created within the Legacy Commission, which would continue to review and investigate historical cases, backed by police powers. This would constitute the second strand of the Commission's work.*

### Do you agree with recommendation 17?

Yes

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No

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Other

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**Comments:** The implication of this proposal is that the work of this Unit will be largely complete within the 5-year timeframe. Assuming that this proposal also implies the continuation of existing work in this area rather than a start from scratch, it seems practical in its intention.

It would be helpful at the outset to have a clearer indication given to wider society of the number of cases, and an evaluation of how many can be investigated further and prosecuted. The Commission needs to develop a mechanism to decide if unresolved cases will remain open in the long term, or if the case will be closed at a certain point. This is a matter that concerns many families in the Protestant community.

**Would it be an improvement on the present arrangements?**

**Comments:** We won't really be able to tell until it has done some work.

**If a new Unit were established, how should it determine which cases it should examine?**

**Comments:** The Working Group felt that the leadership of the Unit as established, together with those formerly working in this area, would have the greatest insight into this.

Some consideration needs to be given to the publicity around cases as there is a perception among some sectors of the Protestant community that higher public profile equates with 'more attention' and 'more resourcing' for those cases, which again, are perceived to be addressing more deaths in the

Nationalist community than in the Protestant community. It is important that balance is not only given but is also publicly demonstrated to avoid this perception of unfair treatment.

18. *The new Review and Investigation Unit would take over the work of the Historical Enquiries Team and the Police Ombudsman's Unit dealing with historical cases. The need for these would fall away when the new Unit is established. The new Unit would build on the work they have done to date.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 18?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** The HET and the Police Ombudsman's Unit have both addressed these cases in a thorough way. It would be important to retain the key skills and to share the information already collected with the new Unit.

**What are your views on the advantages and disadvantages of transferring to a new Unit the work of the HET and the work of the Police Ombudsman's Unit dealing with historical cases?**

**Comments:** The main advantage of this is to enable a review of what has been achieved to date and perhaps to identify those cases that are not likely to be progressed by further investigation and to refer these to some of the other mechanisms proposed in the CGP Report for information recovery. This would enable families to attain a degree of closure. From a pastoral perspective, clergy have often spoken of the desire of families for some information, even if a complete picture of what happened cannot be achieved. There will also be some families that do not regard this as acceptable and the Unit and Legacy Commission will have to consider this group of people. The NI Commission for Victims and Survivors must have a role to play in this area. Our group recommends that despite the division of work into four Strands, that the NIVSC should be engaged in this particular area to support the relatives awaiting the outcome of these investigations.

**What view should a new Unit take of work already undertaken by the HET and Police Ombudsman?**

**Comments:** As above.

19. *The process of recovering information of importance to relatives (information recovery) would be separated from the investigation procedure and be subject to a distinct process within the Legacy Commission under a separate Commissioner. This would constitute the third strand of the Commission's work.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 19?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

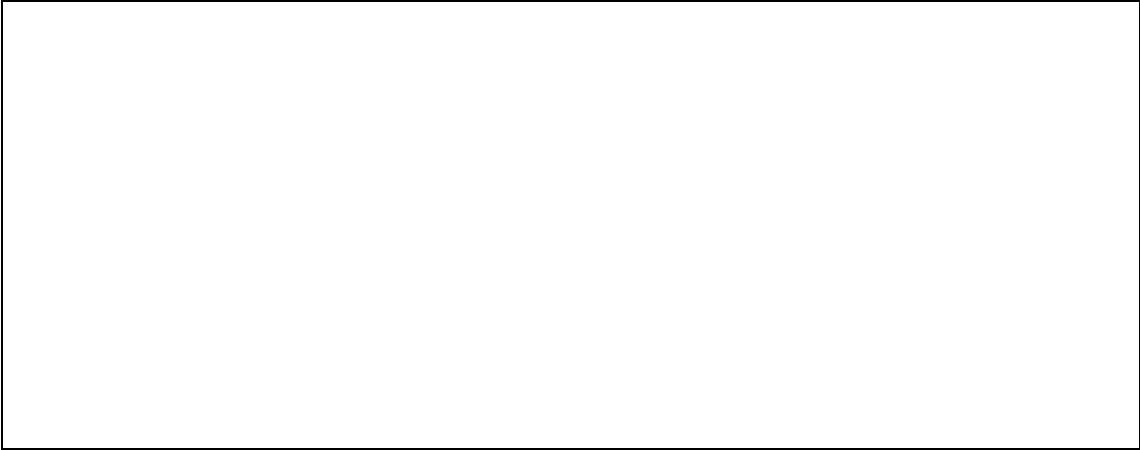
**Comments:** Many clergy have discovered in the course of pastoral ministry, that families would like to have information about what happened to their relatives, even if an investigation and prosecution is not possible. Our group would, therefore, support this proposal. However, clergy have also indicated that not every family feels the same desire for such information. Other families do not wish to see the possibility of further investigation closed by an information recovery process and are opposed to it for this reason. Rather than make such a process compulsory, a new Unit should work with relatives and take their views into consideration.

**Should information recovery be separate from investigations?**

**Comments:** In reflecting the views of families regarding investigations and information recovery, it is clear that there is a divergence of opinion about how to relate these two functions to best effect.

**Do you agree with the use of protected statements?**

**Comments:** Again, there is a divergence of opinion about the use of protected statements. Many people would find the concept of protected statements at odds with their understanding of the justice process.



**How could a Unit of the kind proposed protect the rights of people involved in the information recovery process, including those named in protected statements?**

**Comments:** There is clearly a conflict between obtaining information, protecting those delivering the information, those named and also protecting the rights of those who became victims in the course of the actions revealed. The Working Group did not see a means of satisfying these conflicting demands.

**Is it more likely that people would come forward to provide information under this system?**

**Comments:** There would seem to be a variety of risks represented in such a process.



20. *In the fourth strand of its work, the Legacy Commission would examine themes arising from the conflict which remain of public concern, such as specific areas of paramilitary activity, or alleged collusion. This thematic examination would take place without public hearings. This would facilitate more open and frank disclosure and avoid the constant publicity of present inquiry proceedings.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 20?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒

**Comments:** Our group can see a number of advantages, disadvantages and difficulties with this proposal.

Advantages:

Information is gathered and recorded.

Information can be made available to researchers at a point in the future.

Disadvantages

Public perception of a bypassing of justice in respect of these activities.

A strong likelihood that relevant information will be disclosed as part of this process that would be of interest to relatives, but may not be disclosed to them. Some relatives would therefore gain information through the information recovery process. Others will have to wait until, if ever, these records are made public. As a result, there will remain a group of relatives who are uncertain whether they have received full disclosure or not.

Speculation regarding what has been disclosed may fuel tensions among former members of paramilitary groups or former members of the armed services. This may feed rather than defuse the potential for renewed conflict.

Difficulties

Potential challenges from relatives seeking information.

Disclosure of information that could lead to prosecution.

Leaking of any information has potentially negative consequences outside the justice process for those named.

Individualising the process of disclosure may lead to intimidation of individuals to prevent disclosure.

**What are your views on the proposal that thematic examinations be held without public hearings?**

**Comments:** See above.

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**Should a Unit of the kind proposed have the power to compel witnesses?**

**Comments:** The Working Group is unclear as to how the Unit might have such power and be able to implement it.

**Do the proposed procedures protect the rights of people compelled to give evidence and those named in evidence?**

**Comments:** This is unclear.

21. *There would be no new public inquiries. The question whether to proceed with the promised Finucane Inquiry is a matter for the British Government but the issues raised by this case could be dealt with by the Legacy Commission.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 21?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒

**Comments:** Some members of the Protestant community tend to regard public inquiries as only one side of the investigative process. There is a strongly articulated sense that major financial resources have been put into the public inquiry process focusing on the role of the police and army and that this has not been balanced by equal scrutiny of unsolved killings and other atrocities. There is a strong feeling in parts of the community that the public inquiry system represents an unbalanced aspect of justice. There is also a perception that the extensive financial resources absorbed in public inquiries have prevented the proper investigation of many unsolved cases. The attitude to public enquiries is different among Church of Ireland members in the Republic of Ireland who are more open to the concept, although they may perceive these through the lens of recent Tribunals in the jurisdiction of the Republic.

**What are your views on the use of public inquiries in relation to historical cases?**

**Comments:** See above

22. *The outstanding Inquests would remain with the Coroners Service. Criminal case reviews would continue to be pursued through the Criminal Cases Review Commission.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 22?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:**

**Should a Legacy Commission be given the task of monitoring the burden of inquests and criminal case reviews?**

**Comments:** Yes

23. *The Group is not proposing an amnesty but recommends that the Legacy Commission itself make recommendations on how a line might be drawn at the end of its five-year mandate so that Northern Ireland might best move to a shared future.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 23?**

Yes

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No

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Other

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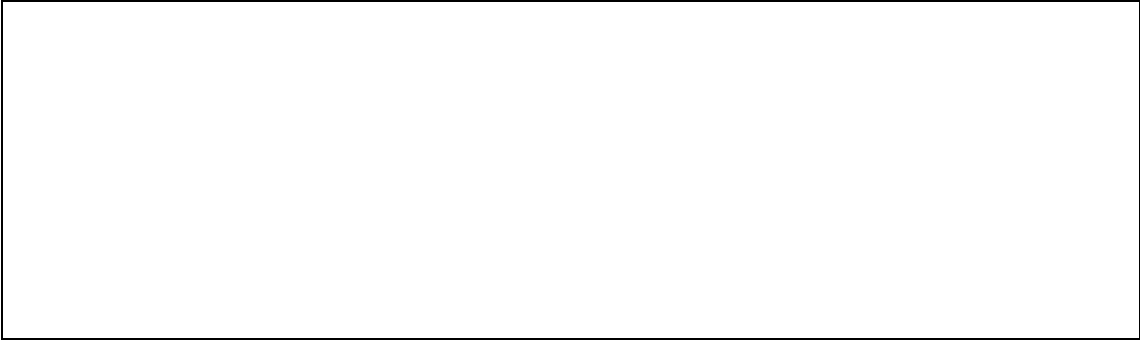
**Comments:** Anecdotal evidence would suggest that many in the Protestant community still think it is premature to speak of drawing a line. The Church of Ireland Response Group recommends that the Legacy Commission takes a view on the desirability of attempting such a thing at the end of 5 years, rather than makes an objective that it should do so.

**Do you believe it will be possible to find a mechanism to “draw a line” after 5 years?**

**Comments:** A review after 5 years is recommended.

**What are your views on the question of amnesty?**

**Comments:** Anecdotal evidence gathered through pastoral work and during the Hard Gospel project indicates that, there is a significant proportion of people reacting negatively to this suggestion. Our group feels that the CGP Report was correct not to recommend this course of action as it would not have consensus.



## REMEMBERING

24. *The Legacy Commission should, through the Reconciliation Forum, support CVSNI in facilitating and encouraging the telling of stories, including by young people, about the impact of the conflict on individuals and communities; and the stories of intra-communal differences.*

### Do you agree with recommendation 24?

Yes

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No

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Other

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**Comments:** The Church of Ireland Working Group believes that the CVSNI would find that Churches and Community Groups are able to assist in delivering the objectives around storytelling, remembering and sharing experiences and understandings of what happened. The Church of Ireland would be willing to engage with this aspect of work whether it is delivered through the CVSNI or any other group.

Considerable work has been done in this area by the group Healing Through Remembering and the Working Group believes that the contextualisation of storytelling in the context of reflection, healing and reconciliation is important.

See next section...

**How do you think an enhanced mechanism for storytelling would help address the legacy of the past?**

**Comments:** The phrase storytelling may not be sufficiently broad to encompass all of the things that relate to this area of work. The expression of memory and experience needs to be carefully addressed as it can also become a means of reinforcing existing attitudes and behaviours rather than paving the way for positive development. The Church believes that the storytelling needs to be contextualised within a framework of reflecting and healing and reconciliation. The Working Group and the anti-sectarianism team leading the Church's work in recent years, has gained considerable insight from the work of Healing Through Remembering in this area and would like to see more of this incorporated into the proposal.

**Should the existing bodies which enable storytelling remain independent or encouraged to work more closely?**

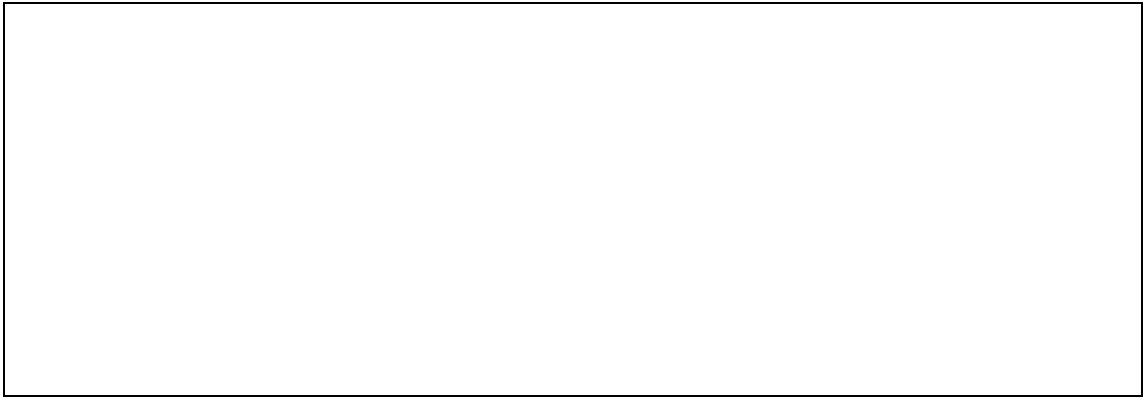
**Comments:** A bit of both. The experience of the Church of Ireland has been that it can take a long time to bring people to the point where they tell of their experiences. Where bodies have been building relationships, these need to be nurtured and encouraged. However, at some point, the stories need to be more widely articulated. The Working Group suggests that the Commission gives some consideration to how stories can be shared - possibly by encouraging engagement with the arts and media, although this may be something that happens in the longer term.

**Should it be for the CVSNI to facilitate storytelling? How could a Legacy Commission and Reconciliation Forum support this work?**

**Comments:** The Reconciliation Forum should lead this area of work, but storytelling is a grass root social activity and one organisation cannot effectively facilitate all of the dimensions of this. Leadership in this area would surely involve collaboration and developing the infrastructure for capturing, learning how to produce the stories in a format that can be shared. The Working Group envisages that, for example, schools, media students, and arts bodies should all be encouraged to capture these stories and turn them into the sort of product or artefact that can be articulated for the benefit of the wider community in books, websites, films and documentaries, and artworks.

**What more could be done on this issue?**

**Comments:**



25. *CVSNI should also be supported in developing the existing ways in which the conflict and its impact are remembered. This should include the development of educational projects; providing support and guidance for those facilitating remembering projects in line with certain criteria; and promoting the value of remembering across society as a means of achieving reconciliation.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 25?**

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☒

**Comments:** This is a good idea, but is likely to involve groups beyond the CVSNI.

**Do you agree that the CVSNI should lead work around remembering?**

**Comments:** Yes, in conjunction with other community groups, the Churches and Healing Through Remembering.

**What kinds of educational programmes might be developed to support work around remembering?**

**Comments:**

Church, school and community-based programmes.

Use of local media to articulate some of these.

Consideration to bringing groups together to hear one another's perspective.

Creating safe spaces for exchange between the two communities.



26. *Future Storytelling initiatives should be developed taking account of certain criteria.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 26?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** Yes, as per p 99 of CGP Report.

**What steps might future initiatives take to meet the goals set out by the Group, particularly in terms of ensuring that 'story hearing' as well storytelling takes place?**

**Comments:** The Working Group felt that it is important that people have a sense of safety in order to tell their story, particularly if it is to be heard by people from what is considered to be the 'other' community.

27. *Full support should be given by government, the private and voluntary sector, including the churches, to the continuation of the annual Day of Reflection, initiated by Healing Through Remembering, on 21<sup>st</sup> June each year. Consideration should be given to renaming the event a Day of Reflection and Reconciliation.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 27?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

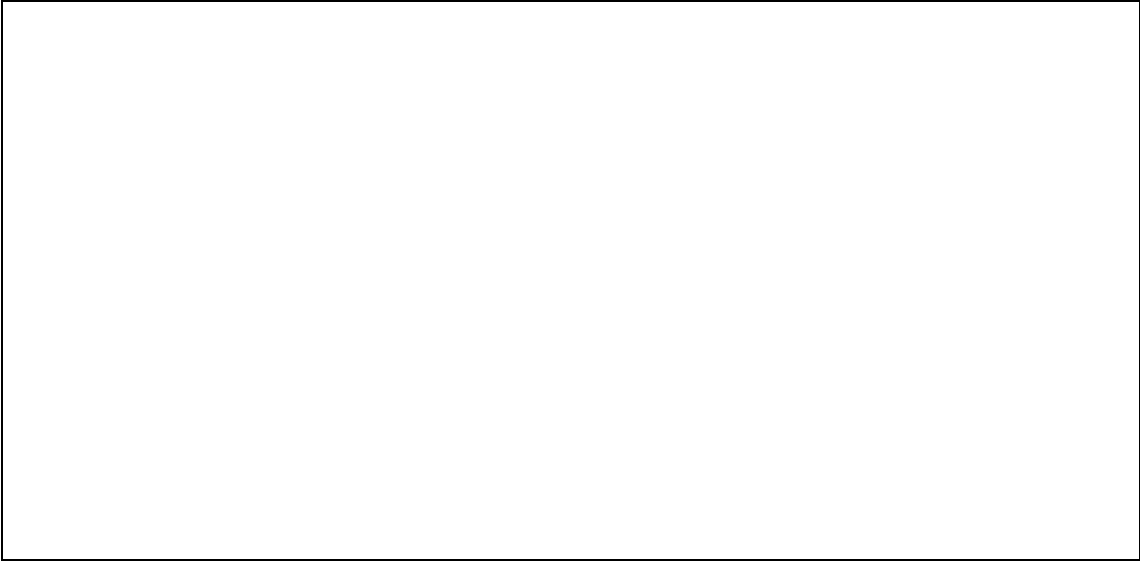
**Comments:** The Church of Ireland has already participated in supporting the annual Day of Reflection initiated by Healing Through Remembering. Many parishes of the Church of Ireland join in the Day of Reflection annually in an appropriate way for their community. The Working Group can see the advantage in the change of name as it would make it forward-looking as well as backward looking. The Hard Gospel Project emphasised the importance of being a forward looking community as reflecting the imperative of the Christian Gospel.

**Do you think such a day should be one of private reflection or should there be public statements by key organisations and statutory bodies?**

**Comments:** To date, the Church has approached this as a day of private reflection, conducted within the context of the Christian community of the parish. However, other organisations or statutory bodies may feel that a more public means of engaging is appropriate for them and should not be discouraged.

**How would this work?**

**Comments:** The Church of Ireland experience of the Day of Reflection is that each individual and parish community tends to interpret and use the opportunity of the Day in the way that they feel is most appropriate for them.



28. *Each year, on or around the Day of Reflection and Reconciliation, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister should together make a keynote address to the Northern Ireland Assembly and invited guests, reflecting on the past in a positive way and confirming their commitment to lead Northern Ireland society towards a shared and reconciled future.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 28?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Other ☐

**Comments:** The Working Group felt that if the First Minister and Deputy First Minister wished to do something of this nature, it should be encouraged. It would be interesting and beneficial to hear the reflections of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on what would be good for our society. This might encourage politicians out of the role of political combat and to focus on the need for healing to achieved a shared future. This would sholw political leadership in the same context of the Day of Healing and Reflection for the healing of the past and for hope for a shared future.

**Which other mechanisms would you propose to reflect effectively upon the past?**

**Comments:** The Church has a particular ongoing role in terms of pastoral care to those who have suffered as a result of the conflict, and this is perhaps the single most important contribution that we make to the process of dealing with the consequences of the past.

29. *The Reconciliation Forum should take the lead in implementing an initiative, at the end of the five year mandate of the Legacy Commission, whereby Northern Ireland, with the support of the two Governments and the Northern Ireland Assembly, should conduct a ceremony remembering the past and all those who suffered during the conflict.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 29?**

Yes

☒

No

☐

Other

☐

**Comments:** Again, this may be a helpful contribution, but the Working Group feels that the Forum should give consideration to it at a later stage in the process, rather than set it as a fixed objective at this point.

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**What do you think such a ceremony should involve? How would this work in practice?**

**Comments:** See above.

**How should the two governments and the Northern Ireland Assembly support this work?**

**Comments:**



30. *The Group therefore recommends that the Commission should, at the end of its work, challenge the people of Northern Ireland, including political parties and whatever remnant or manifestation of paramilitary groups remain, to sign a declaration to the effect that they will never again kill or injure others on political grounds.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 30?**

Yes

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No

☐

Other

☒

**Comments:** The principle of not killing others on political grounds is unquestionably to be wholeheartedly supported, and the Working Group felt this proposal should be given consideration as the process develops.

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**Would you be willing to sign such a declaration?**

**Comments:** See above

**Who else do you think should sign such a declaration?**

**Comments:** See above

**How would such a declaration be used in practice?**

**Comments:** See above

31. *A shared memorial to remember conflict in and about Northern Ireland should be kept under consideration by the Reconciliation Forum and criteria should be observed, in working towards a shared memorial conducive to reconciliation. The Legacy Commission should, at the end of its five year life-span, make recommendations to Government in this regard.*

**Do you agree with recommendation 31?**

Yes

☒

No

☐

Other

☐

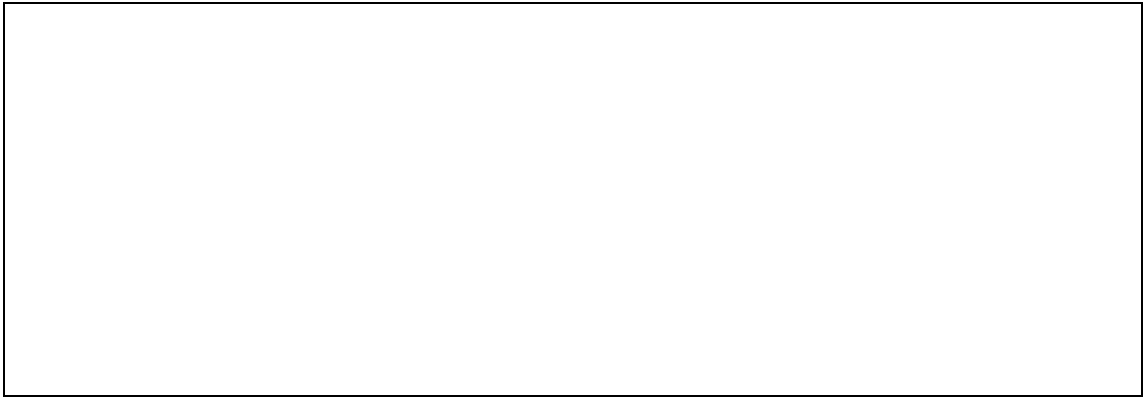
**Comments:** As referred in an earlier section, the Working Group feels that the issue of memorials in general needs consideration.

**What are your views on a shared memorial?**

**Comments:** The Working Group has not considered this subject, in detail, but suggests that further debate is promoted across society. The Bishops of the Church of Ireland currently hold the view that requests to place memorials for those who were killed in the conflict may be made for placement in cathedrals of the Church of Ireland, but not in parish churches. However, despite the Bishops having issued guidelines on this matter, the issue remains contentious and distressing in many parishes. There are a number of issues that remain unresolved around the use of language to describe the events, and particularly the use of the word 'murdered'. The Working Group feels that the discussion around memorials is difficult and continues to cause pain and would value encouragement of and support for a wider debate.

**How do you believe this would help?**

**Comments:** See above



**Do you agree with the criteria suggested by the Group?**

**Comments:** Yes.

**Who do you think should be responsible for any future work on memorials?**

**Comments:** See above

### **Additional comments**

## **Equality**

**Do you believe that any of the Consultative Group's proposals will have a positive impact on people within any of the section 75 categories?**

**Comments:**

**Do you believe that any of the Consultative Group's proposals will have an adverse impact on people within any of the section 75 categories?**

**Comments:**

**If so, are there any measures that should be implemented to mitigate against adverse impact on people in the section 75 categories?**

**Comments:**

**Will any of the proposals affect the promotion of good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

**Comments:** The Working Group profoundly hopes that the proposals will directly contribute to the promotion of good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

**Do you have any other comments on the equality impact of these proposals?**

**Comments:**

## **Alternative formats**

An electronic version of this document is available to view and download from the Northern Ireland Office's website: [www.nio.gov.uk](http://www.nio.gov.uk). Hard copies will be posted on request. The text phone details are provided above. Copies in various other formats, including large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer disk etc may be made available on request. If you wish to access the document in an alternative format or language, please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

## **Confidentiality of responses**

Following completion of the consultation process a summary of responses will be published. Unless individual respondents specifically indicate that they wish their response to be treated in confidence, their name and the nature of their response may be included in any published summary of responses. Respondents should also be aware that our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act may require that any responses not subject to specific exemptions under the Act be disclosed to other parties on request.

## **The Consultation Criteria**

The Government has adopted a set of criteria for consultations, which apply to public consultations by government departments. These are set out below.

### **Criterion 1 When to consult**

Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

### **Criterion 2 Duration of consultation exercises**

Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

### **Criterion 3 Clarity of scope and impact**

Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

### **Criterion 4 Accessibility of consultation exercises**

Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

### **Criterion 5 The burden of consultation**

Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

### **Criterion 6 Responsiveness of consultation exercises**

Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

### **Criterion 7 Capacity to consult**

Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

The code does not have legal force but is regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances requires a departure from it. The full code may be viewed at:

[www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/bre/consultation-guidance/page44420.html](http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/bre/consultation-guidance/page44420.html)

If you have any concerns or complaints about this consultation, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process, then please contact the Northern Ireland Office's consultation co-ordinator, Donna Knowles, at:

Central Management Unit

Northern Ireland Office

Stormont House

BELFAST, BT4 3SH

Telephone: 028 9052 7015

Textphone: 028 9052 7668

email: [donna.knowles@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:donna.knowles@nio.x.gsi.gov.uk)