



Platform for Change ***Cohesion, Sharing and Integration***

We, citizens of Northern Ireland from diverse backgrounds, believe that the only viable future for this region is as an integrated society in which individuals are free to define their unique identities in their interactions with others, in a culture of tolerance which can enrich the lives of all.

In this context, we express our deep dissatisfaction with the poverty of vision in the consultation document *Cohesion, Sharing and Integration*, which holds out only a future of sustained segregation, defying the clear public aspiration that we live, work and are educated in common.

The document dispiritingly assumes that Northern Ireland's conventional politically-driven identities will survive indefinitely—and indeed should command respect—without regard to the much more fluid multi-ethnic and multi-faith world we now inhabit.

In particular, we express concern that the consultation document threatens the abolition of the Community Relations Council, whose arm's length status from political control allows it to address all aspects of the challenge of intolerance—funding, research and development—in an holistic manner, in dialogue with practitioners.

We call for the rewriting of this document, in collaboration with independent experts, with clear aims and objectives and concrete programmes and projects to realise them.

We are conscious that no issue can currently be discussed outside of the economic crisis and the prospect of unprecedented public expenditure cuts. This makes it imperative that Northern Ireland become a culturally dynamic and open society, with effective and efficient public services accessible to all.

Yours sincerely

Robin Wilson
Chair

Contact us:

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Have your voice:

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