APPENDIX O

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND SUBMISSION REGARDING THE PROGRAMME FOR COHESION, SHARING AND INTEGRATION PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

<u>**Format of Response**</u>

Section A   Introduction and Summary Response
Section B   Vision and 'Goals'
Section C   Equality, Rights, Relations and Prejudice
Section D   Mechanisms for Implementation, Policy and Funding
Section E   Proposals for the Future – the role of the Church and a vision for genuine reconciliation
Appendix   Summary of existing policies detailed in CSI

<u>**Section A – Introduction and Summary Response**</u>

1. We acknowledge the publication of the Programme on Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (hereafter CSI) and welcome the opportunity to participate in the consultation that now follows. The role of the local Churches will be vital in working towards a future that seeks the dignity and respect of every individual within Northern Ireland, the reconciliation of divided communities, and the delivery of a peaceful and equitable future for all.

2. In reviewing the detail of the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) it became apparent to us that there is much to be grateful for. We have tabled the wide range of existing policies, initiatives and projects highlighted in CSI and have attached our overview in the Appendix. As the Foreword says "*the last decade has delivered many positive changes",* and there can be little doubt that considerable hard work has indeed been carried out and continues. Much of the detail in CSI is concerned with re-stating the existing policies and activities that cohere with the stated goals of CSI. In what can often be a fractious and difficult political and social arena, it is important not to overlook the very many progressive steps that have been taken. We wish to record our thanks and gratitude for all the work that has been done and is ongoing.

<u>**Summary Response**</u>

3. We find that CSI lacks an underlying ethic or ethos and a genuine vision of what our shared future might look like. In such a situation it is difficult to address specific policy areas as these are either not present or, where they are suggested, are often neither consistent nor coherent. Regrettably it appears that party politics have overtaken a genuine opportunity for OFMDFM to deliver a convincing blue print for the future.

4. The lack of consistency in CSI means that several key areas are addressed in different sections, making a 'section-by-section' response almost impossible. We have thus chosen to make our response in this fashion and trust that our views will

be given the same weight and consideration as they would have been given had we completed the form supplied.

5. The inclusion of so much detail on existing policies masks the serious shortcomings that exist in CSI with regard to future goals and aspirations. It is the view of the Church of Ireland that CSI fails to articulate a vision of, programme for, or pathway to a genuine reconciled future for Northern Ireland. In our submission we highlight the following points:

    (a) CSI seeks to promote and maintain a position of equality between two historically divided communities at the expense of community relations and reconciliation. The absence of the language of reconciliation is deeply regrettable.

    (b) CSI reflects the party political interests of OFMDFM in securing electoral mandates from existing tribal divisions, perpetuating the failings of the past at the expense of the future.

    (c) There is no reflection on how CSI relates to, builds upon or potentially supersedes other publications and reports that address the future of Northern Ireland.

    (d) Whilst some of the goals in CSI are laudable, others give rise to the concerns in (a) and (b) above. Further, it is not clear if OFMDFM jointly and wholly subscribe to all of the goals stated, there is a lack of a clear timeframe for the implementation of some goals, and a lack of clarity as to whether some of the aspirations alluded to are actually goals of OFMDFM.

    (e) In particular key areas, such as housing and education, CSI is woefully inadequate and lamentable in its lack of vision and direction.

    (f) There is no reference to the role of victims.

    (g) The use of language in relation to such matters as equality, rights, tolerance, and prejudice is at times incoherent and inconsistent.

    (h) With such a lack of vision and clear goals it necessarily follows that implementation will be problematic. The options presented for implementation and funding are, unsurprisingly, lacking in clarity and detail.

    (i) There is a consistent failing to present robust research and statistics for many of the aims and goals, and an alarming lack of research or analysis in the mechanisms to oversee implementation.

    (j) The role of the Church and other faith based communities is largely absent, to the complete detriment of the publication and our society as a whole.

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6. We would further submit that the title itself, '*Cohesion, Sharing and Integration',* will not find its way into the public consciousness. This is regrettable precisely because the title '*A Shared Future'* was something the entire community could grasp, rather than only being accessible to those comfortable with political-speak.

7. In such circumstances we conclude sadly that CSI does not represent ad adequate attempt to build towards a reconciled and shared future for the people of Northern Ireland.

<u>Summary Proposals</u>

8. As an alternative we propose the following:

   (a) A vision of the future must be predicated on more than accepting historic divisions as unalterable, then allowing for equal but separate communities in the future.

   (b) The aspiration for reconciliation, mutual respect, and peaceful relationships should undergird the concepts of equality and rights and how these concepts are articulated and pursued.

   (c) The need for peace and reconciliation must always take precedence over the interests of party politics.

   (d) An independent body, representative of the whole community, is vital in holding those in political office to account and to take a lead in promoting, training and equipping communities and individuals for the work of reconciliation.

   (e) Seeking forgiveness for the past is vital for the healing of relationships and to enable the community to secure a peaceful future.

   (f) There is much collaborative work that must be done, and can be done, across political and religious divides and as a Church we commit ourselves anew and afresh to this challenge.

   (g) The language of reconciliation, forgiveness, truth, and grace articulated by, and personified in, Christ becomes the voice of our future.

Section B: Vision and 'Goals'

1. We would seek clarification as to how the Programme relates to, or even replaces, a range of reports and proposals that have been published in recent years with the intent of building a better future for all. As the Programme comes from OFMDFM we feel it should be made clear if the present publication supersedes or concludes work carried out by others. In particular we draw reference to:

    (a) The Shared Future Report – is the Programme a replacement of this Report? The Foreword seems to use the language of building a *"shared and better future"* but nowhere is the Report itself acknowledged. This lack of clarity is unhelpful.

    (b) The Eames-Bradley Report – there is nothing to indicate whether any or all of the proposals in the Eames-Bradley Report are being addressed, dismissed or re-worked. Are these proposals no longer being considered?

2. CSI fails to articulate a genuine vision of what our future might look like. At times CSI seems to look towards a fully integrated society in housing, living environments, education, health and leisure provision. At other key moments however, the document seems to suggest a perpetuation of two equal but distinct communities, each allowing the other to co-exist, with middle-ground shared public spaces. We are somewhat confused as to what OFMDFM is seeking to achieve in our society, especially if the programme is predicated on historic divisions that will perpetuate equal but separate communities in the future.

3. If a vision of society for the future were to be articulated we believe that, in broad terms, four options might emerge on the following spectrum:

    (a) We continue to live in a divided society. Each historic community will retain its distinct areas, perpetuating the present political landscape, further entrenching opinions, maintaining ideological walls and deeply held divisions.

    (b) We continue to live in a segregated society in terms of housing, education, religious, political, sporting, and organisational units, but seek a better understanding of our differences and agree not to pursue violence against the other. We agree to work together for economic opportunity but continue to lead and live separate lives.

    (c) We move beyond simply working together for economic opportunity and an agreement not to resort to physical violence. Our society moves beyond mutual respect afforded from an agreed distance and towards reconciliation in attitudes, people and places. Although not exhaustive such a vision seeks housing policies that work towards integration, changing the party political landscape that benefits presently from heavily concentrated localised voting patterns. Educational systems seek the removal of political and religious

barriers that we have erected between our children. Our diverse cultural heritage and sporting traditions are made accessible to all. Freedom of religious belief and conscience provides for differing religious views and historic cultural allegiances to remain but honest dialogue is entered into to provide clarity and understanding as to points of difference.

(d) We live in a harmonious unity of civic and economic opportunity. Differences are celebrated to the point where there are differences are neutralised and a unified society enjoys the same values and belief systems. Segregation on the grounds of religion, political opinion, and (crucially because the impact of this is often ignored) economic standing is eradicated, and we all live as one.

4. It is our opinion that (a) above is to be abhorred. Further, (d) lacks integrity or understanding of the freedom of the human person not only to have freedom of conscience or belief but to shape their life in a way that gives expression to that freedom. The right of the individual in this regard however, is always limited by the rights of others and the responsibilities that each individual owes to the community at large.

5. It is our reading of the consultation document that although it alludes to the possibility of (c) in its various goals and key aims, it seems in fact to settle for (b). We make this observation for the following reasons:

(a) Para. 3.25 – 3.30 deal most extensively with mixed religion neighbourhoods. Impressive statistics are stated to indicate that 80% of people would prefer to live in a mixed neighbourhood. There is an alarming lack of clarity in the presentation of the statistic. What was the sample population? What was the breakdown between the two traditional communities? Was research spread across those living in both segregated and desegregated areas or carried out in one area alone? What for instance would the response have been in the fourteen areas identified in Belfast as being deprived and highly segregated? Two existing policies are highlighted that are making tentative steps towards mixed housing, but nothing is stated about housing policies in the Key Aims at the end of the section on People & Places.

(b) Integration is referred to with regard to the rights of EU citizens to live and work here (para. 7.2) but once again there is no integrated housing policy stated in the Key Aims at the end of the Section on 'A Cohesive Community'.

(c) Para 3.7 indicates that 62% of people would prefer to send their children to a mixed religion school. Once again there is a lack of clarity as to the statistic. Who was asked? What was the spread between those who already send their children to an Integrated School and those who do not? What did 'mixed religion' actually refer to and, potentially more importantly, what did respondents think it referred to? This lack of precision in such an important arena of our present and future society in a document that seeks to chart a path

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for our future is alarming. The only inference to be drawn is that there is no appetite for implementation of a robust plan for educating our children.

(d) Once again, although some existing practices are highlighted (paras. 3.13-3.14; 3.22-3.24) there is nothing on how OFMDFM defines 'integrated education' or 'mixed religion schools' in the Key Aims at the end of the section on People and Places. Further, there is no articulation of what the key aims or policies might be in this area. This is deeply concerning. Section 5 of CSI refers to education and the need to 'Respect Cultures', an indication perhaps of a desire to maintain segregation but with respect, rather than reconciliation.

(e) In particular we make reference to the very recent public debate between the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on the subject matter of Integrated Education. We do not wish to see issues of education manipulated for political ends. It is clear that inferences are made in CSI welcoming integrated education but it seems equally clear that such inferences do not reflect the true and unified vision of OFMDFM. The people of Northern Ireland deserve better.

(f) We would seek clarity from OFMDFM as to its proposals for Integrated Education, knowing that as existing stakeholders the local churches have much work to do in addressing how changes in our educational structures might contribute positively towards our Shared Future. We would observe the need for caution in the use of the phrase 'mixed religion' which sometimes in Northern Ireland can wrongly refer to different denominations within the Christian faith rather than differing world religions.

(g) There is ambiguity over flags, emblems, and symbols. It is recognised that one of the Long Term Aims in chapter two concerns Cultural Identity, including issues around flags, emblems, murals, bonfires and so on. Yet this is simply stated. There is no long term goal, aim or objective applied to the issue. Elsewhere the intimidatory aspects of such behaviour is recognised yet the only solution presented is the containment of such practices in environments that respect individual and community rights (para 3.43). The inference again is that in addition to Shared Spaces that are safe, there is an acceptance of Exclusive Places that will continue to be intimidating unless one subscribes to the views of 'the group'.

(h) As indicated above, the concept of Shared and Safe Spaces does leave open the acceptance of areas that are not shared nor safe. Is the latter really a goal in a document entitled 'Cohesion, Sharing and Integration'? If so, then the integrity of the whole document really does come under considerable pressure.

6. We are not convinced that the proposals have properly delineated the distinctions between Goals, Aims and Objectives. Much of the detail in CSI refers to work that is already ongoing, often with 'Key Aims' stated in imprecise and general terms at the end of each section. Chapter 2 sets out a range of goals and further states a

number of themes for action over periods of time simply stated as 'Short Term', 'Medium Term' and 'Long Term'. Yet there is no indication as to what actual timeframe is envisaged by the use of Short, Medium and Long. Without establishing clear timeframes to work towards, the entire enterprise lacks focus and public accountability.

7. We submit that much of this ambiguity and inconsistency arises due to party political expediency. Political mileage has been gained through acquiring an electoral mandate from 'our community'. It is not difficult to see why neither the First Minister or Deputy First Minister would seek to push hard proposals that might endanger attaining such a mandate or indeed to alienate the said 'community'.

8. There is also no indication of how these proposals are to be worked out in a geo-political region that is in itself the subject of much dispute between the two historic communities. The title 'Northern Ireland' is given scant recognition throughout the document, and we believe much greater consideration needs to be given to how the ultimate differing 'goals' for the governance of Northern Ireland impacts upon the level of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration OFMDFM actually aspires towards.

9. We welcome the statement in the Foreword that the *"whole of Government here has a role to play...(and)...we will improve the co-ordination of all Government effort"*. However, given the contradictory detail in CSI, it is not at all clear if the whole of Government will know or approve of what it is supposed to be working towards.

10. We would strongly urge OFMDFM to aspire to the sort of society envisaged in 3 (c) above. We must move beyond a mindset that aspires to nothing more than maintaining the peace between two separate communities. As a vision of our future, CSI represents a fear of moving beyond our fears into a new era that seeks to build trust, not barriers, and that seeks reconciliation over and above equality of representation.

11. As a final observation in this section, we highlight the absence of any mention of the role of victims in CSI. Both the Eames-Bradley Report and the Bill of Rights Proposals gave considerable attention to the needs of victims, either for compensation or for justice in reviewing past actions. In both processes the issues raised brought a wide range of public opinions and responses. As we move forward we must at the very least consider the role of those who suffered most during the conflict, that is hopefully in our past. It is deeply regrettable that in a consultation document proposed by the leaders of our Assembly, no mention is made of the role of victims.

Section C - Equality, Rights, Relations and Prejudice

1. We have significant reservations about the language used in the consultation document. It is unfortunate that it is in parts contradictory, ambiguous and, potentially forgettable. In this section we wish to draw attention to a number of concerns that arise in CSI.

Equality and Rights.

2. We note the variance in party political opinion on the recent proposals by the NI Human Rights Commission for a Bill of Rights for NI. The Programme states that "*we aim to build a strong community where everyone….can live, work and socialise in a context of fairness, equality, rights, responsibilities and respect"*. We would seek clarification from OFMDFM as to how they seek to interpret *equality and rights* within a Northern Ireland context. We would further seek clarification as to the role of the Programme in supporting or indeed suppressing the maximalist approach of the Human Rights Commission in its recent proposals.

3. We further question the juxtaposition in the Foreword in relation to 'Equality' and 'Rights' as seemingly compatible aspirations in building a strong community. Rights are necessarily hierarchical, with some rights being afforded preference over others in matters of social or personal dispute. It does not follow therefore that the existence of rights will lead to equality. In short, not all rights are created equal and when one right is preferred over another it may perpetuate a sense of inequality. The recognition of two or more equal communities who have access to comparable and competing rights is not a basis for good community relations. We will not succeed if Community Relations are to be considered a subset of Equality provisions. One does not necessarily lead to the other.

4. We would seek clarification as to the understanding of 'Equality' proposed. Is it equality of civic and economic opportunity, or is it the homogenisation of belief systems, conscience, and personal opinion. It is noted that the only reference to religious belief is entitled *"Confronting Exclusivity and Prejudice in Judaism, Christianity and Islam"* (p. 26). We greatly value all engagement in the area of faith and the exploration of the faith traditions of others in the pursuit of truth, justice and peace. Yet different faith traditions, and indeed those who claim no-faith, must be allowed to hold with integrity their, at times, exclusive belief systems without the assumption that the position of exclusivity must be 'confronted'.

5. We observe that it is not just religious groupings that subscribe to values or ideologies that may appear exclusive to others. CSI refers to the Orange Order and GAA within the context of promoting greater understanding and respect for the other, primarily with a view to reducing attacks on their symbolic premises. As with faith based communities, there are many within both institutions who work for the good of their community and, being cross-border institutions, for Northern Ireland and the island as a whole. However, both also have a history and a cultural

expression that might be considered by others as being exclusive and prejudicial, yet there is no stated intent or desire to challenge or 'confront' this. Once again the overriding concerns of maintaining electoral mandates and not alienating a supportive community or constituency appears to prevail.

Intolerance and Zero Tolerance

6. Again the use of language is unhelpful. A key goal which is stated is to tackle visible forms of intolerance and other forms of prejudice. Para 3.2 states that sectarianism, racism and intolerance destroy lives. Yet it is surely not too pedantic to highlight that it is important that we <u>are</u> intolerant of racism and sectarianism. Indeed a key goal is that we adopt a zero tolerance approach to such prejudice. It cannot therefore be the case that 'intolerance' in and of itself destroys lives.

7. Further, if intolerance is in context, a vice, it follows that tolerance is a virtue. Yet we do not tolerate that which we already accept. We tolerate the things or the attitudes that we do not accept, sometimes to the point of distress. To tolerate is to admit to difference and to disagreement, not necessarily to harmony and agreement. It follows that tolerating difference cannot be the same as 'celebrating difference' (para 3.5). Therefore to be a tolerant society, considered in this context as a virtue, may be to live with difference, not celebrate it. To celebrate difference is in some part, intellectually, emotionally or ideologically, to embrace that which we formerly understood to be 'not us'. This may be considered a movement or even a conversion in perception and perspective, negating an idea which is often held to be virtue of modern thinking – that we can all agree to differ.

8. It is important therefore to distinguish properly between those matters that we must be intolerant of, recognising that there may be areas of difference in which tolerance itself is necessary because not all differences can be simply eradicated or dismissed as irrelevant in a culture that lauds relativism.

9. If it is the case that the language used is ambiguous then it comes as no surprise to us that the goals themselves, addressed in Section B, are ambiguous. Nor is it a surprise that the mechanisms for implementation are fraught with difficulties. We turn now to address these difficulties in Section D

Section D - Mechanisms for Implementation, Policy and Funding

1. Para. 10.2 says that the Programme must be implemented "in a new fashion that is both effective and efficient." There is no analysis of why provisions to date have failed. Have they not been effective or efficient and if not, why not? How has this been measured? There has been no mention of the Community Relations Council in the Paper up to this point – it is referred to for first time in Chapter 11 (11.20, page 65) and, even then, there is no evaluation of its record at all. So where is the evidence base for this "new" policy?

2. We have concerns about the lack of clarity and detail in this part of the Paper. The proposed Ministerial Panel is to include representatives from a range of community organisations and the Racial Equality Forum. Who these organisations will be is not specified. There are no details of membership of the Advisory Panel (or alternatively an "arms length body"). There is also to be a Funders Group to advise the Ministerial Panel on funding issues and improve targeting and co-ordination of funding, but again scant detail on membership. There is no explanation of why the Advisory Group should not examine progress on implementation, offer advice on good relations issues, act as critical friend to Ministerial Panel and also advise on co-ordination and targeting of activity, yet all those matters are functions of the Funders Group. We ask for clarification on these issues. Our major concern, however, is that there would be no strong champion for community relations in these proposals, to hold the Executive Departments to account.

3. With regret, we must assert that we found much of the section on Policy and Funding unhelpful, as is indicated below:

(a) Paragraph 11.7 on Delivery of Funding refers to a successful alternative approach to the delivery of funding from the North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme but does not explain what it is or where it fits into the mechanisms proposed.

(b) Paragraph 11.13 has the first reference to churches (apart from page 26 in the context of three workshops run by The Junction on "Confronting exclusivity and prejudice in Judaism, Christianity and Islam"). We see that under Option 1, it is suggested that the church sector could be part of the Advisory Panel. We welcome that, and would be anxious to play our full part.

(c) Paragraph 11.18 outlines an alternative mechanism – Option 2. Instead of an Advisory Panel, Advisory Services would be obtained from one or more organisations. At this point in the Paper, there is the first mention of the Community Relations Council as one possible source of such advice. It is not entirely clear if this route would mean the exclusion of other groups, including the churches. Yet the Funders Group apparently remains unchanged.

(d) Option 3(a) would turn the Community Relations Council into a Non-Departmental Public Body with both advice and funding delivery functions. We presume that

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would be in place of Options 1 and 2, giving the roles exclusively to CRC, and ruling out involvement from churches. We note, however, that the Funders Group remains in position too. The paper says this proposal would require assessment to determine if the current CRC is fit for purpose. In the absence of proper analysis, any response from us would be premature.

(e) Option 3(b) proposes taking the funding role from the newly constituted CRC/NDPB and leaving it with only an advice role. There would then be a new body or bodies for funding delivery, but with the Funders Group retained as well. The Paper speculates that a dual role for CRC may lead to lack of focus and compromise quality, but no evidence is provided. There is no information on what other bodies would have the funding role. OFMDFM would manage the contracts involved. We would question the need to add layers of bureaucracy, especially with the current financial pressures.

Section E - Proposals for the Future – the role of the Church and a vision for genuine reconciliation

1. We regret the virtual absence of acknowledgement of the work of the Churches and other Faith Based Communities in the document. We recognise that the divisions in our denominations within the Church have contributed to the divisions in our society. However, at institutional and local levels, churches have played a vital role in building peace and community. Churches continue to be the single biggest provider of services to young people, with improving opportunities for young people clearly identified in the report as a key aim. In addition, local churches do much to provide care and support for the most vulnerable in our societies, as well as having walked quite literally beside the dying, the grieving and the suffering during our decades of conflict.

2. It is clear that churches have an absolutely vital role in shaping our future. In doing so we need to contribute by acknowledging the failings of our past and indeed the potential for preserving some of the existing status quo as being in our own selfish 'best-interests'. With this in mind we wish to affirm the recent proposals outlined by the Archbishop of Armagh at the Armagh Diocesan Synod on 12th October 2010. These have been adapted for the purposes of this response but in summary the approach and commitment of the Church can be set out as follows:

   (a) The first condition that needs to be met in the process leading to reconciliation is the open recognition that we have, in fact, allowed ourselves, in our various denominations, to be instruments of division, patient of or apologists for actions and attitudes incompatible with the teachings of God in Christ Jesus. While we cannot change the past we can and should regret and repudiate evil actions perpetrated against other people in the name of our religious tribe. Much as we might wish to, we cannot re-write history but we should never hide from past offences, especially when they have been offences in respect of which we, as churches, have been, historically, consenting. We can and should

seek to rid ourselves of unacceptable attitudes or actions that are our contemporary legacy from conflicts of the past. The standards of the past are not those of the present. In refusing to be imprisoned by the past, yet recognising the sin, we can and should start afresh.

(b)   It is therefore no longer enough for the churches in Northern Ireland to behave merely as polite neighbours engaged in discussions which rarely have tangible outcomes. To borrow the imagery of St Paul, setting aside what lies behind, we must strain forward to what lies ahead, pressing on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of Christ. [Phil. 3.13b-14] We need to consider, as churches, what work we ought to do together to make fruitful and concrete the goal of a reconciled society. For example:

(i)   The churches, which already provide most of the work with children and young people in Northern Ireland, and which share training programmes through Youthlink, must consciously sit down together, collaboratively to harmonise, resource and support each other at grass roots level. We need to examine how the contribution of the churches could be improved, enhanced and extended on the basis of "shared future" principles and incorporating the highest possible standards for the safeguarding of young people.

(ii)   The churches already, independently, make a highly significant contribution to the well being of the elderly and vulnerable in our society. We now need an audit of everything that falls into such a category, first to evaluate the work already in hand, and second to coordinate, extend and enhance such work for the future on a consciously cross community basis. Where particular churches do things well, or have expertise and capacity that others do not have, these should be shared, duplication reduced and standards enhanced.

(iii)   The churches, and especially the four largest churches, are already major stakeholders in the provision of education at primary and post primary levels. Schools already collaborate with one another, to greater or lesser extents, through Area Learning Communities and the like. However, it remains a common perception that educating children separately tends to reinforce sectarian division. The Controlled and Voluntary Grammar Sectors are open to all children regardless of religious affiliation but have largely a "Protestant" ethos; the Catholic Maintained Sector, likewise, is open to non Roman Catholics but is committed to a Roman Catholic ethos. Many parents want schools with a Christian ethos but they want their children to have a wider experience, and a wider respect, for traditions other than their own. They also want their children to grow up enjoying the company and friendship of children from a variety of Christian traditions. We can respond to those aspirations by setting out to create the links that have the power to draw separate institutions into an ever closer relationship of collaboration, respect and affection. Where new schools are required, we can work together with imagination and creativity to offer a shared Christian vision to enhance the educational experience of

children in our schools. Although the voices of secularists are strident we are not yet (and we submit never will be) a secular society. Patterns of faith are changing but faith itself is not in decline, quite the opposite. Our children deserve and need the rich and distinctive colours that each tradition brings to an understanding of the tapestry of the world that is God's and the society that God calls us to serve and shape in his name.

Towards an Ethic for a Truly Shared Future

3. We believe that we have an opportunity in this moment to build from and towards the common humanity that we all share. This will require an agreed value basis on which to build and to which all can subscribe, and a commitment to taking the difficult and costly steps to see these values lived out in Northern Ireland.

4. We have, in our submission, highlighted the inconsistent use of language that permeates the goals and the underlying value basis of CSI. In both the Church and in the world, how we use language is critically important. Language that is used to deceive, to manipulate, to cause or maintain division must have no part in the vocabulary of the future. We need a new voice that is willing to articulate the language of reconciliation, of forgiveness, of truth and of grace. It is this voice that will present a vision of genuine hope, that will converse over difficulties and disagreements, will define and direct policy decisions and the path to get there. We urge OFMDFM to speak with a united voice, providing the people of Northern Ireland with a hope and a vision that seeks to heal the wounds of the past, acknowledges the difficulties of the present, and looks towards a reconciled future.

5. The voice of the Church has not always been an instrument of healing and hope. We

- ***will this seek out, resource and value individuals and groups who look to build relations, rather than simply appeasing those who might destroy them?***
  Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

- ***will this help to bring about forgiveness for the hurts and legacy of the past?***
  Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- ***will this seek a genuine and honest peace, placing integrity and people above party and political advantage?***
  Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

- ***will this move us beyond a culture of violence and the conditions that give rise to violence to one of reconciliation that seeks wholeness for individuals and communities?***
  Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

- ***will this seek right relationships and genuine reconciliation rather than settling for 'benign' accommodation?***
  Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

6. These are critical questions that we must ask ourselves if we are to find a future that all might share in. We submit that the present consultation, whilst highlighting a range of initiatives that seek to address some of the above, does not adequately address these questions. Further, we submit that the consultation does not provide our divided community with a unified basis or agreed set of values for moving forward and, as a consequence, is lacking in any unifying vision for our future. We offer our views and opinions in this consultation in a genuine attempt to be part of the construction of a reconciled and peaceful future for all in Northern Ireland.

Appendix – Identification of Existing Programmes and Policies outlined in the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration

Paragraph	Department / Agency	Existing Programme / Policy
Relations between Good Relations and Other Key Policy Areas		
1.4-1.9; 1.12	Northern Ireland Act 1998	Section 75 – Equality of Opportunity Provisions; Immigration and Asylum issues for UK Government
1.10 – 1.11	Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005 – 2010	
Shared Workplaces		
3.9	Equality Commission	Promoting diversity in workplace and developing harmonious working environment
3.10 – 3.11	NICS	Commitment to equal working environment
Education		
3.13	Department of Education	Statutory Duty to encourage and facilitate development of integrated education
Health & Leisure		
3.19	Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Investing for Health strategy for health issues facing people in areas impacted most by conflict
3.21	Dept of Culture, arts and Leisure	NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019 supporting cross community projects
Participation in Further Education		
3.22	Dept for Employment and Learning	Learner Access and Engagement Pilot Programme
Places		
3.29 – 3.30	Department for Social Development	Twin Track approach for new build and existing social housing programmes. Promotion of mixed tenure and how best to accommodate those who wish to live in mixed religion neighbourhoods
3.32	2005 Flags Protocol	Established by OFMDFM but recognised as needing updating
3.33	Arts Council for NI	Re-Imaging Communities – enhancing physical and natural environment, removing displays of sectarian aggression
3.37-3.39	Dept for Social Development	City and Town Centre Master Planning Programme
3.40	Dept for Regional Development	Revised Regional Development Strategy setting out guidance on strengthening community cohesion, community spirit, and importance of city and twon centres as shared spaces
3.41	Dept of Agricultural and Rural Development	Funds 75% of Rural Community Network, rural Support Networks and NI Rural Women's Networks that promote community relations
Empowering Next Generation		
4.6	Department of Justice	Aspiration of taking lead in reducing risk of young people engaging in hate crime
4.7 – 4.10	Department of Education	Development of Community Relations, Equality

		and Diversity in Education policy; Acts as Managing Agent for International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme
4.12	Department of Employment and Learning	Study on those Not in Education, Employment or Training
Respecting Cultures		
5.6 – 5.8	Department of Education	Citizenship Education Element in Revised Curriculum; Local and Global Citizenship at post-primary level
Symbolic Premises & Cultural Expression		
5.13 – 5.14	OFMDFM	Consultation Paper on Public Assemblies, Parades and Protests on 20 April 2010
5.16	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	Regional or Minority Languages Strategy (yet to be agreed)
5.18 – 5.19	ArtsEkta / OFMDFM	Artistic led celebration of ethnic culture and creativity
5.21	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	Cultural diversity budget towards existing Executive Programme to promote tolerance, inclusion and health and well being'. (seek to review and align with Programme for CSI)
5.23 – 5.26	Community Festivals Fund 2006	Recognising festivals and their positive contribution; Example given of Orangefest – 5.26.
Tourism		
5.32	Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020
Secure Community		
6.5 – 6.6	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	Promotion of Libraries / Museums as Shared Spaces;
6.7	NI Environment Agency	Provides access to range of shared sites and properties
6.8	Dept for Social Development	Funding for Public Realm Schemes
6.9 – 6.11	Dept for Social Justice	Targeting anti-social behaviour; Development of new Community Safety Strategy (in alignment with Programme for CSI)
6.12 – 6.13	Community Safety Partnerships and District Policing Partnerships; PSNI	Proposed new Crime Reduction Partnerships
6.14	Dept of Justice	Chairs Hate Crime Action Group
6.14 insert	Unite Against Hate	Support of local celebrities, sports, and others
6.15	Justice Bill (to be introduced in 2010/2011 Assembly Term)	Addressing sectarian behaviour at spectator sports
6.20	Regional Transportation Strategy (2002 – 2012)	Under review and will revolve around economic, environmental and societal themes
6.21	Integrated Transport Plans	Related to Translink and Transport Hub in Belfast
6.22	Department for Social Development	Range of schemes, eg. Executive's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
Cohesive Community – Reaching Out and Being Inclusive		

7.6	Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Strategy and Action plan – promoting equality, good relations and human rights within health and social care system
7.7	Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Embracing Diversity – Good Practice Guide for Health Sector Employers launched in 2004
7.8 – 7.9	Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety & Equality Commission for NI	Racial Equality in Health and Social Care & NI Health & Social Care Interpreting Service
Embracing Difference and Celebrating Cultural Diversity		
7.12	Minister of Education	2008 Cross-Sectoral Taskforce on Traveller Education to be presented to Dept of Education by Dec 2010
7.14	Dept for Employment and Learning	Leads sub-group of Racial Equality Forum to help meet needs of migrant workers and those who employ or advise
7.15	Employers and Trade Unions	Anti-racist Workplace Week (Programme for CSI to draw together this work)
7.19	Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	Development of Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2010-11
Supporting Local Communities		
8.3 – 8.4	District Council Good Relations Programme	Role of local Councils in meeting local needs