



Consultation Response:

**Draft Statutory Guidance for the Operation of
Community Planning**

February 2015

About NISMP

The Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) aims to work across the spheres of government in Northern Ireland and with other key stakeholders to ensure that Northern Ireland is a welcoming place for new migrants. It seeks to support the retention and integration of people in a way that helps meet skills and labour needs to support future economic growth. It provides a regional advisory, developmental and consultative function, enabling our partners and stakeholders to develop an appropriate Northern Ireland migration policy structure. This will help ensure that Northern Ireland's needs and concerns in respect of immigration are recognised within the constraints of UK wide strategy.

This response has been approved by representatives on the Partnership. However this does not necessarily reflect the views of Partner Organisations, some of whom have not been canvassed.

General Comments

1. NISMP recognises the opportunities that Community Planning offers for the promotion of good relations and supporting the integration of new and emerging communities into local neighbourhoods. Our response will therefore be focused on how to ensure best use of these opportunities.
2. The onus in the guidance (3.28) is placed on community and voluntary organisations to ensure that they have a fully representative and accountable structure when participating in the community planning process. Newly established migrant communities will not necessarily have this level of organisation and yet it is vital that they are included in the community planning process. There should be recognition of this in the guidance with responsibilities noted for the community planning partnership to support the formal organisation of representative groups for new and emerging communities where necessary.
3. The requirement for the community planning partnership to actively engage with policies and strategies set out in TBUC (7.4) should be extended also to the Racial Equality Strategy.
4. There is weak oversight of the community planning process with community planning partners charged with the development of the plan as well as the monitoring, review and reporting process. Accountability to the public is mentioned only in 12.4 and can be addressed simply through a public statement on progress. Accountability should be included in the title of this section (Section 12) to give it the required emphasis. The community involvement statement should also detail how the community will be involved at the monitoring and review stages and how this will help improve accountability.