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PRESS RELEASE

Commission responds to OFMDFM Strategy announcement

The Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission, Michael Wardlow, commenting on the announcement of the 'Together: Building a United Community' strategy, said today (Thursday May 9, 2013):

“The Equality Commission will be studying carefully the proposals regarding the new Together: Building a United Community strategy, outlined in short form today by the First and deputy First Minister.

“The Commission has been calling for urgent movement to give effect to the Executive’s express commitment in the Programme For Government to build a shared and better future for all, and welcomes this important development.

“Such a strategy must commit to the creation of a society where people can live together with confidence, safety and security, both respecting and being respected. To be meaningful it must set out clearly how and when the objectives committed to will be achieved, by whom they will be delivered and the resources committed to them.

“The proposals set out today may be limited in number and in type but we acknowledge that long journeys are achieved step by step. We fully support the ambition that seeks to address the issues of division across housing, education and on and between our streets. We also welcome the ambition to create a sense of a united community, while cautioning that Northern Ireland is not about blending just two communities into one – our modern society is a vibrant and diverse collection of communities and identities each of which should be recognised and valued.

“Everyone living here is a co-creator of peace and we will want to see full and meaningful opportunities being offered to all to shape this strategy and make it real. We

should build on the experiences and expertise of the past to create our future. True leadership is about enabling all to participate and we will wish to see all communities and the parties who seek to serve them, reflected in the work going forward.”