

# Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**

21st April, 2021

## **MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following items will also be considered at the meeting to be held remotely at 9.30 a.m. on Friday, 23rd April, 2021.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

#### **2. Restricted Items**

- (d) Update on Organisational Recovery and Covid Management (Pages 1 - 6)

#### **4. Governance**

- (c) Standards and Business Committee - Draft Terms of Reference  
(Pages 7 - 18)

#### **5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (e) Peace Plus 2021-2027 Consultation (Content/Administration)  
(Pages 19 - 48)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6  
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Standards and Business Committee: Draft Terms of Reference</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive; John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager; Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the development of draft Terms of Reference for a new Standards and Business Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is recommended to note the attached report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b><u>Background</u></b>
3.1.1	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18th September 2020, agreed to introduce additional arrangements to ensure that the Council, its officers and Elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct in all that they do. It was agreed that the

	<p>Council establish a Standards Committee whose main functions would be to promote, sustain and safeguard the conduct of Councillors within the Council and the probity of all the Council's proceedings.</p>
3.1.2	<p>The role of the Committee will include the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Members and officers, a commitment to joint working across political groups and between officer and Members, oversight of any training required on all matters relating to standards and conduct, advising the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors and oversight of the Members' Register and Declaration of Interests and associated procedures.</p>
3.1.3	<p>The Committee will seek to enhance Member/Officer relations and promote a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities when working collectively in a political environment.</p>
3.1.4	<p>In response to discussions at subsequent Committee meetings and with Party Groups it has been proposed that the new committee may also incorporate responsibility for specific roles in relation to managing some of the business of the Council, including reviewing Standing Orders and a delegated power to receive Notices of Motion. The Committee will operate on the basis of all Party membership but Members will note that this will require a facilitative arrangement with mutual agreement from all parties.</p>
3.2	<p><b><u>Standards and Business Committee – Proposed Terms of Reference</u></b></p>
3.2.1	<p>The main functions of the proposed Standards and Business Committee would be to promote, sustain and safeguard the conduct of Councillors within the Council; to promote a collaborative working relationship between senior officers and Members; to ensure the probity of all the Council's proceedings; and to review and improve processes in relation to bringing business before the Council, including any review of Standing Orders.</p>
3.2.2	<p>The Committee will have oversight of a Local Resolution Protocol which will deal with "low level disputes" between Members alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and will aim to restore positive working relationships through mediation.</p>
3.2.3	<p>The Committee will have delegated authority to consider any recommendation by the Monitoring Officer to refer any Councillor to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards in respect of any potential breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, particularly where the alleged breach relates to a matter which would potentially have a reputational consequence for the Council. In such cases the Monitoring Officer will retain a residual right to refer any matter to</p>

	the Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Standards Committee has endorsed a recommendation from the Monitoring Officer to do so.
3.3.4	A protocol will be developed on how information will be minuted so that personal information cannot be raised or discussed at Committee or Council meetings.
3.3.5	The Committee will also consider any update reports into investigations carried out by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards.
3.3.6	The Standards and Business Committee will also seek to improve processes in relation to bringing business before the council, including referring Notices of Motion and making amendments to Standing Orders. However, it is not proposed that the Committee will have any role in relation to the agenda setting of any other Standing Committee but it will keep under review the overall business brought before the Council.
3.3.7	A copy of the draft terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1. These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.
3.3	<p><b><u>New Process for Notices of Motion</u></b></p> <p>It is proposed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the case of urgent Notices of Motion, the proposer will have the option to take the Notice of Motion either to the Standards and Business Committee or to full Council.</li> <li>• The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. In either case, the Lord Mayor will indicate at Council those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.</li> <li>• The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a <u>strategic</u> or constitutional matter.</li> <li>• The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to full Council for debate.</li> <li>• Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.</li> <li>• In referring any matter to full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At Council, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.</li> </ul> <p>The proposed changes required to the Standing Orders would be brought to next months' meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee if this report is approved.</p>
3.4	<b><u>Next Steps</u></b>
3.4.1	It is proposed that the new Committee, consisting of 20 Members, be constituted at the next AGM in June 2021. A review of the operation of the Committee and its associated processes will be undertaken in six months.
3.4.2	The Members have indicated a wish to have all party representation on the Committee. In order to ensure that this will happen, it will need to be mutually agreed, in advance of each new term of office, during the annual selection of remaining places on Committees, that the requisite spaces are reserved for those Parties which do not have a seat automatically allocated on the Committee.
3.4.3	It is proposed that amendments to the Standing Orders will be brought to the May SP&R Committee to provide delegated authority for the new Committee to refer Notices of Motion to Council and to amend the defined timescales for submission and processing of such motions to fit within the monthly meeting cycle.
3.5	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> There will be minor financial implications associated with introducing a new Standing Committee. If the Standards and Business Committee is to meet monthly then it will require an



	associated Special Responsibility Allowance be allocated to the Chair and Deputy Chair positions of responsibility and funded from the reallocation of the existing Special Responsibility Allowance fund.
3.6	The Committee will be serviced by existing resources within Governance and Compliance Services, including Democratic Services. A budget will be required to cover any associated training and external mediation services.

3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Any equality, good relations and rural needs assessments implications will be subject to the usual screening processes.</p>
4.0	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Draft Terms of Reference</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Proposed process for Notices of Motion</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Proposed Membership of Committee</p>

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## **Draft Terms of Reference**

These are draft Terms of Reference which will be updated based on the detail of the processes to be developed. Any updates will be brought back to Members for approval.

The draft **Terms of Reference for the Standards and Business Committee** may include some or all of the following functions:

### **Standards**

- promoting and maintaining **high standards of conduct** by elected Members and in their working relationship with officers
- a commitment to encourage **positive joint working** across political groups and between officers and Members and to uphold the high standards of values and behaviours in a relationship of mutual trust
- supporting and facilitating **collaborative working** between Members and senior officers, particularly to support the **consideration of strategic priorities** by relevant committees
- **advising** the Council on the Code of Conduct for Councillors including any revisions to the Code
- oversight of any **training** required to train Members and relevant officers on all matters relating to standards and the promotion of the 12 Principles of Conduct in public life, including the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors and any associated training identified by the Committee
- oversight of the **Members' Register and Declaration of Interests**
- to develop, monitor and review any local protocols required to support the **standards regime** within the Council
- to ensure adherence with the **Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol**
- to consider any minutes of a formal meeting held under **Section 5.9 of the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol** [tbc re GDPR]
- oversight of the **Local Resolution Protocol** which will deal with "low level disputes" alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and is designed to restore positive working relationships through mediation<sup>1</sup>
- consideration of any **recommendation by the Monitoring Officer** to refer any Councillor to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards in respect of any potential breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, particularly where the alleged breach relates to a matter which would potentially have a reputational consequence for the Council
- the Monitoring Officer will retain a **residual right** to refer any matter to the Commissioner for Standards regardless of whether the Standards Committee has endorsed a recommendation from the Monitoring Officer to do so
- oversight of the procedural requirements of any **mediation** process put in place to restore internal relationships between political parties, Members and/or officers

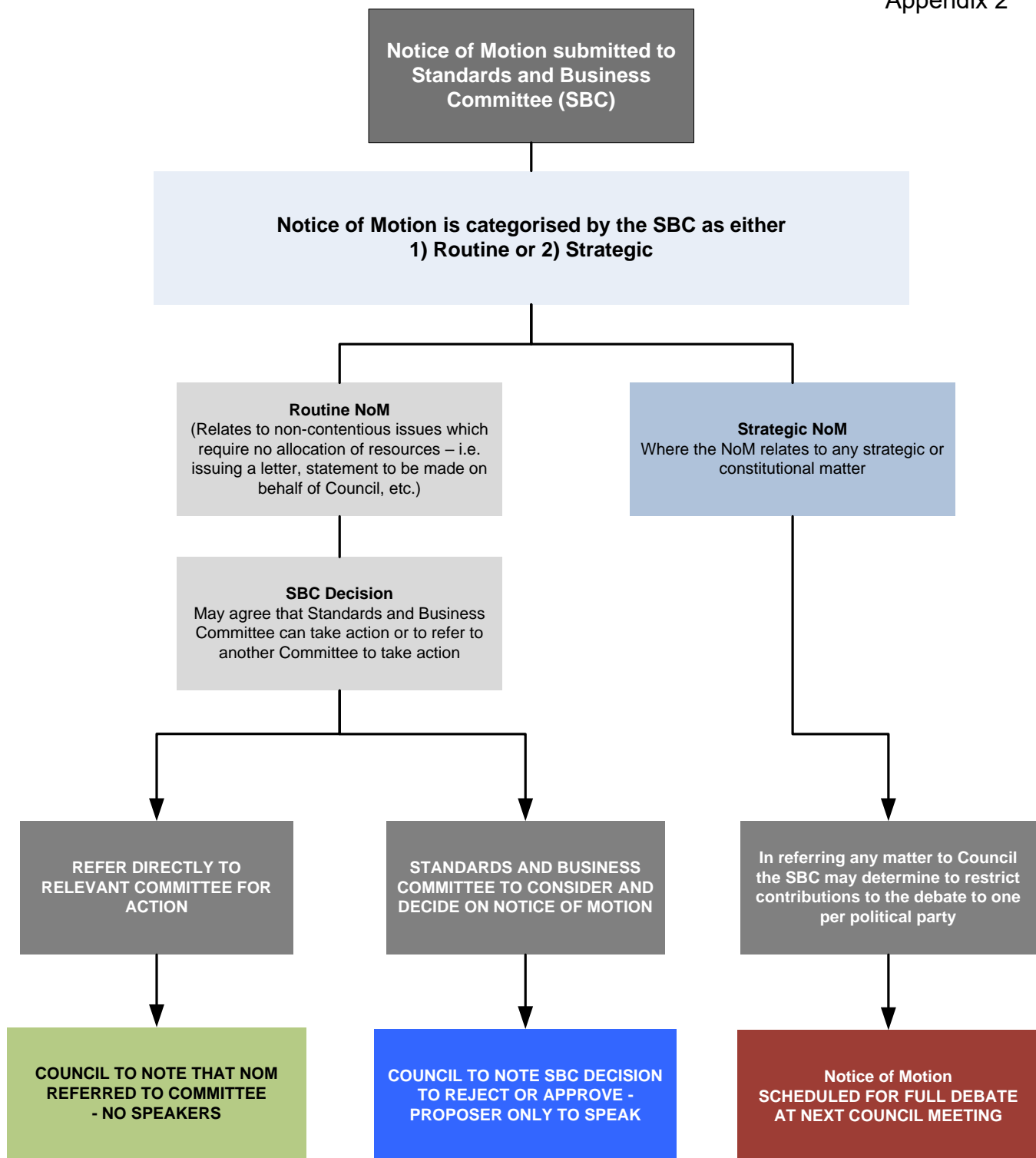
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<sup>1</sup> The Local Resolution Protocol will only deal with minor complaints about councillors made by other councillors. The Protocol will not consider complaints made by officers, members of the public or other third parties. The Protocol will not consider complaints made about officers

- consideration of update reports into **investigations** carried out by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards.
- oversight of the implementation of **recommendations** made by the Public Services Ombudsman / Commissioner for Standards
- providing recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in respect of any amendments which need to be made to the **Council Constitution** in relation to the standards regime within the Council
- In respect of any other matter which may require some consideration in the context of **standards**, acting in an advisory capacity, with reports referred to it either directly by the reporting officer or by another Standing Committee
- consideration of agenda items for other Standing Committees which identify **standards** implications

## **Business**

- receiving and reviewing all **Notices of Motion** and using the Committee's delegated power to recommend either adoption or debate at the next Council meeting
- Reviewing Council **Standing Orders** with a view to making recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
- initial consideration and review of Council matters that are under internal or external **investigation**
- keeping under review and monitoring the Council's **Scheme of Delegation**
- keeping under review and monitoring the Council's administrative and procedural arrangements in relation to **governance**



**POST COUNCIL  
DECISION PROCESS**

**STAGE 1**

**STAGE 2**

**STAGE 3**

**COUNCIL DECISION TO REFER MOTION TO COMMITTEE FOR ACTION**

Y

**REFERRING OF MOTION TO COMMITTEE**

Initial consideration of potential strategic, policy or resource implications and identification of lead department

Y

**INITIAL SCOPING REPORT APPROVED**

Examination of resource implications and incorporation into existing Corporate and Committee Plans and approval for funding required to progress to Stage 3

Y

**DETAILED OPTIONS REPORT APPROVED**

Formally adjusting committee plan and prioritisation/options for financing

Y

**LEAD DEPARTMENT TAKES FORWARD RECOMMENDATION**

N

N

N

N

**NO FURTHER ACTION  
REQUIRED**

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## **Committee Membership**

It is proposed that the Committee membership is 20.

Members will be aware that the Council makes its appointments to the Committees on an annual basis and there is a requirement by legislation to group all the Committees together, with the Quota Greatest Remainder Method being used to allocate the seats.

This would result as follows:

**20** Member Committee (as combined with all other Committees) - **2** remaining places

SF	DUP	ALL	SDLP	GREEN	PBP	UUP	PUP
6	5	3	2	1	1	0	0

As can be see 2 Parties would not get a seat automatically and, to fill these to ensure all-Party representation, this would need to be mutually agreed at the PGL's meeting when selecting the remaining places.

This would be taken into consideration when the table of Committee places is presented to the PGLs in May, with the final 2 places reserved for the UUP and PUP. Accordingly each of those Parties would have their quota for selecting places reduced by 1.

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Peace Plus 2021-2027 Consultation (Content/Administration)</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ryan Black, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Alison Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	Members will be aware of the development of Peace Plus, which is a new cross-border programme that will contribute to a more prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland. It will succeed of both the current 2014 -2020 PEACEIV and INTERREG VA Programmes.
1.2	The Council provided a formal response in February 2020 to the consultation on the Peace Plus policy objectives and the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) is currently consulting further on the content and administrative arrangements for the future Peace Plus programme.

1.3	The purpose of this report is to submit for the Committee's consideration the draft Council response to the current consultation being undertaken by SEUPB on the Peace Plus Programme 2021 – 2027.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to consider/approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The draft consultation response attached at <i>Appendix 2</i>, and;</li> <li>- The draft cover letter attached at <i>Appendix 3</i> providing further information to SEUPB on the opportunities for closer alignment of the Peace Plus Programme with Council and Belfast Agenda strategic ambitions.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b>Background</b>
3.1	SEUPB has recently opened the public consultation phase of the PEACE PLUS Programme (value €1 billion) to seek views on the content and administrative arrangements of the overall PEACE PLUS Programme. The public consultation document published by SEUPB can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>
3.2	The public consultation opened on 10th March 2021 and the deadline for responses is <b>12th May 2021</b> . The consultation document has been prepared on the basis of extensive cross Council engagement to ensure the collective strategic ambitions of the Council and the Belfast Agenda have been reflected.
3.3	The PEACE PLUS Programme policy objectives were developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, which took place between December 2019 and February 2020. A total of 16 public events were held across the programme area, with over 1,000 people in attendance. Over 300 survey responses were submitted.
3.4	<p>The overall Peace Plus Programme strategic policy objectives are summarised below (indicative regional budgets have been provided against each theme for information:</p> <p><b>Theme 1 – Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities (€210m)</b></p> <p><b>Theme 2 – Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation (€143m)</b></p> <p><b>Theme 3 – Empowering and Investing in Our Young People (€110m)</b></p> <p><b>Theme 4 – Healthy and Inclusive Communities (€155m)</b></p> <p><b>Theme 5 – Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Futures (€265m)</b></p> <p><b>Theme 6 – Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration (€47m)</b></p>

3.5	Belfast City Council's history of excellence in delivery of peace and reconciliation programmes, as well as economic and regional development programmes means that the council is uniquely placed to continue to successfully deliver both capital and revenue projects for citizens of Belfast and the region under this forthcoming Peace Plus Programme.
3.6	This is further amplified with the opportunities provided by Community Planning to bring statutory partners and communities together as we collectively work towards those ambitions, and in particular, the next stage of developing funding proposals.
3.7	The draft consultation response is provided at <i>Appendix 2</i> for Members consideration.
3.8	Given the restrictive nature of the consultation document prepared by SEUPB (500 character limit at each section), a draft cover letter is also provided for Members consideration. This is to ensure Council is able to ensure all the strategic opportunities for alignment of the Peace Plus Programme with the Council and Belfast Agenda ambitions are clearly articulated to SEUPB, to influence their future direction.
3.9	For Members information, PEACE PLUS is a cross-border programme. However, single jurisdiction partnerships (i.e. project partnerships involving organisations from a single country) will continue to be eligible for funding provided they meet the recognised objectives. Projects addressing wider economic and territorial development challenges (as previously funded under INTERREG VA) will need to involve cross-border partnerships and beneficiaries.
	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.10	As detailed in the report.  This funding programme will be administered and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and a competitive application process will operate to access funding.
	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
3.11	Equality, Good Relations implications and rural needs have been considered at a programme level by SEUPB as the responsible body. Detail is provided in Part 5 of the Public Consultation document at Appendix 1.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
4.1	Appendix 1 – Public Consultation Document - <a href="#">here</a> Appendix 2 – Draft Council Consultation Response Appendix 3 – Draft Council Response Cover Letter

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# EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL CO-OPERATION 2021 - 2027

Preparing the EU PEACE PLUS  
Programme for the 2021 – 2027 period

Consultation Response Survey (Word Template)

10 March – 12 May 2021



# Preparing for the EU PEACE PLUS Programme 2021 – 2027

## Public Consultation

### Consultation Response Survey (Word Template)

The EU PEACE PLUS Programme has been developed after a period of extensive stakeholder engagement from December 2019 to February 2020. A summary of the responses from the stakeholder engagement survey can be accessed on the SEUPB webpage <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

The purpose of this consultation is to provide citizens and other key stakeholders with an opportunity to share their views on the content and administrative arrangements of the PEACE PLUS Programme, findings from the Equality Screening Exercise and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the EU PEACE PLUS Programme for the 2021-2027 period.

The PEACE PLUS programme will contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland and will leave a lasting legacy. The Programme will achieve this by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation and contribute to cross-border economic and territorial development. It will build upon previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes.

### Accessibility

**The Consultation Information Document and supporting documents, including findings from the Equality Screening and the Strategic Environmental Assessment are available at: <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>**

We recommend you read these documents in advance of completing the survey to help your understanding of the proposed Programme Strategy including; the key Themes and Investment Areas, indicative budget allocations, administrative arrangements, findings from the Equality Screening exercise and findings from Strategic Environmental Assessment.

A video presenting an overview of the Programme and the process for this Consultation is also available on the SEUPB webpage <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

Documentation in other languages and accessible formats such as easy-read, large print, audio-CD and braille can be made available upon request. If you require the documents in these or other formats, please contact us at [PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu](mailto:PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu) or Reception on 02890 266660.

**Please complete this survey online, if you can.**

This will greatly assist us with the timely processing of responses, as staff access to resources and the Clarence Street West Building in Belfast are impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will also support our ongoing efforts to reduce the impact on our environment.

Please note it may take longer to process email and postal responses.

Early responses are encouraged but all responses should arrive no later than:

**Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 5pm.**

If you require any support during the consultation process, please do not hesitate to contact us at Reception on 02890 266660 or email [PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu](mailto:PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu)

## Consent and Confidentiality

The information collected in the survey will be analysed and a summary of responses to the consultation will be shared with the European Commission, Member States, Government Departments and published on the SEUPB website. Your responses will be used as part of the process to finalise the PEACE PLUS Programme prior to submitting to the NI Executive, Irish Government and the European Commission for approval.

*The SEUPB will publish a list of organisations that have responded to the consultation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, we may publish your organisation's name unless you request not to by ticking the box below. If you are responding as an individual, we may refer to the content of your response, but not your name or address, nor will we publish anything which may identify you or other individuals.*

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please contact [PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu](mailto:PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu) but under the Freedom of Information Code of Practice (North South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Ltd.), we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

For further information, on how we will process your data and your rights, please see the Privacy Notice in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Information Document.

☐ **I am responding on behalf of my organisation and I do not give consent for the details of my organisation to be published.**

## Survey Instructions

This survey is comprised of five sections. **There is no requirement to answer all of the**

**questions** unless you wish to do so. With the exception of Section A, no section is compulsory.

You are **required to provide your, and where applicable, your organisation's name, postal address and email address**. This is for verification purposes and to prevent multiple responses from the same person or organisation. No anonymous responses will be considered.

**An organisation or individual should only respond once.**

Responses are **subject to character limits** to ensure focused responses that can be effectively and efficiently analysed in the final stage of our consultation process. To paste into the text boxes, press and hold Ctrl and V.

If you would prefer to return your completed MS Word Consultation Response Survey template by email, please send to [PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu](mailto:PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu) Respondents will receive an acknowledgement email from the PEACE PLUS Team.

If you would prefer to return your MS Word Consultation Response Survey template by post, please send to PEACEPLUS Public Consultation, Special EU Programmes Body, 2 Clarence Street West, Belfast, BT2 7GP. Respondents will receive an acknowledgement letter from the PEACE PLUS Team if responding by post.



# Survey Questions

## Section A. About You

**A. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or as an individual?**

- ☒ Organisation
- ☐ Individual

**B. Please state which of the following best describes your type of organisation.**

- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Business Organisation
- ☐ Community/Voluntary Organisation
- ☐ Social Enterprise
- ☐ Cross Border Group
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environmental
- ☐ Government Agency
- ☐ Government Department
- ☐ Higher Education
- ☒ Local Authority
- ☐ Political Party
- ☐ Private Sector
- ☐ Research Organisation
- ☐ Youth Organisation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**C. Which of the following best describes your interest in this consultation?**

(Select as many as applicable)

- ☒ I am a stakeholder associated with the management of the PEACE or INTERREG Programme
- ☒ I receive or have previously received funding from the PEACE or INTERREG Programmes (as a lead partner, project partner or a subcontracted organisation)
- ☐ I have applied for funding from the PEACE or INTERREG Programmes but my application was not accepted
- ☐ I have been a participant or beneficiary of a PEACE or INTERREG funded project

☒ I would like to get involved with this PEACE PLUS Programme

☐ Other (please specify)

**\* D. Contact Details** (Required)

Name\*

Organisation  
(Where  
Applicable)

Address\*

Address 2

City/Town\*

Post Code\*

County

Email  
Address\*

**E. How did you hear about this consultation?** (Select as many as applicable)

☐ Social media post (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter)

☐ Advert in a newspaper (print and/or online version)

☐ Word of mouth

☐ Email (sent directly to you)

☒ Email (sent from a friend or colleague)

☐ Article in a newspaper

☐ Other (please specify)

## Section B. Themes and Investment Areas

For information on the Themes and Investment Areas, please read Part 3.7 of the Consultation Information Document available on the SEUPB webpage <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

There is no requirement to answer all of the questions unless you wish to do so.

**Q1 Theme 1 - Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas within Theme 1?**

Investment Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Co-Designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Empowering Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building Positive Relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Re-imagining Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q2 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q1.** (Optional)

(Max 500 characters per Investment Area)

***Co-Designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans***

LCCP is welcome defining roles of all stakeholder's is essential. Single identity work is essential as the impact of BREXIT will present further challenges. In addition intracommunity tension, organised crime and dissident activity tend to occur in marginalised, predominately single identity areas. Therefore to address these challenges, the LCPP should be permitted to work on a single identity basis. Schools play a critical role in local communities and therefore participation of schools in the local community Peace Partnership should be facilitated. Vocational

### ***Empowering Communities***

The Council's Belfast: Our Recovery document recognises that communities need to be at the heart of our City's recovery and we have committed to engage with and work alongside our citizens, and others, in our communities including voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors who play vital roles in city life, to identify priorities together. Working with these sectors, we have established a VCSE Panel and network and we continue to build on this to enhance participation going forward. This engagement will support community participation in co-design of area based

### ***Building Positive Relations***

We welcome the continuation of investment of this priority which can build upon the work undertaken within the Building Positive Relations Theme under PIV. This investment will assist in flexibility across a number of areas and fits with Community Planning, T:BUC priorities and Council's Good Relations Strategy. Experience shows that CYP are more accepting of other communities. The focus of theme should create opportunities for integration aimed at those principally affected by conflict and include actions to include refugees, asylum seeker and new

### ***Re-imagining Communities***

The Council believes this programme presents a huge opportunity to address many of the ongoing challenges facing the region and its capital city. Clearly Re-imagining Communities aligns to the Belfast new cultural strategy 'City Imagining.' <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturestrategy> also. Community planning, the duty led and facilitated by councils, has massive potential to materially assist the EU PEACE PLUS programme, but importantly, in its own right, is a citizen and locality-based statutory instrument to materially contribute to

### **Q3 Theme 2 - Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas within Theme 2?**

Investment Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>SME Development and Transition</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Innovation Challenge Fund</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Programme Areas Skills Development</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Smart Towns and Villages</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### **Q4 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q3. (Optional)**

(Max 500 characters per Investment Area)

##### ***SME Development and Transition***

Alignment with ambitions set out within the Councils response to Covid-19 pandemic – Belfast: Our Recovery' framework.  
Alignment with focus of community planning and collaborative activity across partners (e.g. skills development, business development and support etc)  
Need to highlight the importance and role of cities in creating sustainable economic growth and acting as hubs for both employment, creativity and innovation as well as being concentrations of deprivation and need.

##### ***Innovation Challenge Fund***

Innovation and Growth Commission is established and an Innovation Commissioner in place within Belfast. Belfast City Council's City Innovation team are committed to and are keen to seek further engagement with SEUPB with regards to projects which align to the six thematic areas of this programme and recognise economic prosperity and inclusive growth is essential for peace. Digital innovation as key to delivering economic regeneration and transformation. Welcomes opportunities to better support young people. Committed to creating Smart, Healthy and inclusive

##### ***Programme Areas Skills Development***

We welcome recognition that the Peace Plus programme can offer complementary support for the innovation elements of City Growth Deals, along with the National Planning Framework. We would encourage the Peace Plus programme to also support the Dublin-Belfast Corridor, as a key strategic development, given its potential to deliver economic regeneration, peace and prosperity along the corridor. We would emphasise the critical nature of skills development, particularly the necessity for upskilling / retraining as a key driver in the recovery from COVID19.

##### ***Smart Towns and Villages***

Need to include reference to smart cities and hubs and we would challenge 'Smart Towns and Villages' as an investment area as it limits the ability to fully realise the benefits of delivering regional economic regeneration/transformation, as there is no recognition of the role of cities and major urban areas nor the agglomeration impacts they create. We agree that peace and prosperity are intrinsically interlinked; however, focusing only on towns and villages misses the key opportunity that the region's major urban areas and cities can provide to deliver on this theme.

**Q5 Theme 3 - Empowering and Investing in our Young People. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas within Theme 3?**

Investment Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Shared Learning Together Education Programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PEACE PLUS for Youth Programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q6 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q5. (Optional)**

(Max 500 characters per Investment Area)

***Shared Learning Together Education Programme***

Community based education plays an important role in bringing people together from all parts of the City and the region and often promoting shared learning and Belfast is a UNESCO Learning City. An Educational Inequalities Task Group which has been formed under Belfast Agenda and community planning to develop and manage the delivery and coordination of programmes and projects to address educational inequalities across Belfast.

***PEACE PLUS for Youth Programme***

All provision for youth and youth services in the City and the region should be complimentary if possible and not result in duplication of provision and /or services. Additionally, Belfast is fully committed to the participation of children and young people in decision making (Belfast Youth Forum) and the Belfast Resilience Strategy recognises that as an important core principle in planning for the future. Finally, Belfast recognises the importance of supporting those young people most disengaged from education and employment (City Youth Pledge).

## Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

Long-term sickness (including mental health) is one of the key reasons for the persistent high levels of economic inactivity in NI and Belfast, therefore the importance of early intervention to build personal resilience and well-being is a key contributor to improving life chances and opportunities. A recent survey of children and young people in NI (October 2020) reported that while rates of mental health disorder in NI are broadly in line with other international studies, there are slightly higher rates for anxiety and mood disorders. Rates of anxiety/depression are 25%

### Q7 Theme 4 - Healthy and Inclusive Communities. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas within Theme 4?

Investment Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Collaborative Health and Social Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Victims and Survivors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Q8 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q7. (Optional)

(Max 500 characters per Investment Area)

#### Collaborative Health and Social Care

Addressing health inequalities, with a specific focus on mental health and social wellbeing is a key focus of the Belfast Agenda and work of the community planning partnership within Belfast.  
Strong partnership with health colleagues, communities and service users in place. Work underway to create an enhanced and integrated care system within the city and wider region. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing is a priority and Belfast's Community Planning Partnership is determined to work in collaboration to create a

### ***Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion***

Strengthening the interconnection of rural and urban areas is vital to support sustainability of businesses, communities and to build peace and reconciliation. Regeneration and social inclusion challenges in urban and rural areas may differ, the need to sustain effort on the regeneration and social inclusion in urban areas is vital to continue to support peace and prosperity; particularly in the context of COVID19 and as recent events in urban areas have shown. Research from OECD and Centre for Cities reports that the resultant behavioural changes have particular

### ***Victims and Survivors***

There remains a clear need for sustained focus on peace and reconciliation efforts in cities /urban areas ,as recent events have shown.

### **Q9 Theme 5 - Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment Areas within Theme 5?**

<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree or Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Marine and Coastal Management</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Water Quality and Catchment Management</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Water Quality Improvement Programme</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Q10 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q9.** (Optional)

(Max 500 characters per Investment Area)

***Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience***

Theme to cover restoration also, not simply within designated sites. Welcome the recognition and inclusion of urban areas however, we query the use of the term pollution and would prefer to see a drive to reduce drivers for biodiversity loss. Welcome the inclusion of initiatives to connect with nature and to address invasive species. Under IAS actions to address IAS are needed and not simply mechanisms to record and monitor. Actions to address the emerging skills shortages within the ecological sector are needed.

***Marine and Coastal Management***

Welcome this however need to include the restoration and management of marine habitats with a fundamental focus on ecological robustness. The actions to be supported are focussed on research and developing an evidence base. Whilst this is essential suggest the inclusion of positive actions to assist with restoration even through some small scale pilot projects based on research, mapping and surveys funded through the programme.

***Water Quality and Catchment Management***

Strongly welcome this theme especially the focus on nature-based solutions including habitat restoration. Welcome the behavioural change initiative but just shouldn't be restricted to landowners.

***Water Quality Improvement Programme***

Strongly welcome this theme especially initiatives to address pesticides and the development of sustainable farm practices. Outputs and learnings should be developed to enable usage across the full geographic region and not just restricted to selected catchments. Support the proposals for catchment based initiatives to achieve multiple benefits for water quality, quantity and biodiversity and the development of alternative approaches to treatment systems.

***Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme***

### ***Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity***

Investment in sustainable public transport to enhance accessibility and connectivity is a vital component of regeneration and in connecting local urban and rural communities as well as cross-border communities. We are encouraged by the recognition of enhancing the Dublin Belfast Corridor rail connections as a type of action to receive support and would suggest that this will be an important first step in supporting the overall ambitions for the Dublin-Belfast Corridor development and strategic cross-border collaboration. Sustainable transport in this is public

### **Q11 Theme 6 - Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Investment areas within Theme 6?**

Investment Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Strategic Planning and Engagement</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### **Q12 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q11. (Optional)**

(Max 500 characters per Investment Area)

#### ***Strategic Planning and Engagement***

With the launch of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor report on 24 March 2020, this investment area offers significant potential to help progress the commitment already in place from both governments, council areas and universities to realise the potential of this strategic cross-border collaboration. Strongly support the focus and proposed investment in 'Strategic Planning and Engagement' to increase cross border collaboration. Work being taken forward through the Belfast Regional City Deal in strengthening collaboration across local government in NI and exploring

#### ***Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens***

Strongly support the focus and proposed investment in 'Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens' investment area. Important to note that the legislation and statutory guidance for community planning outlines the need for Community Planning Partnerships to ensure they seek to involve the 'Community' (in its widest sense) in the community planning process, to ensure that community has a voice into the process and that views are taken into account. While the recently established Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sectoral Advisory Panel

## Section C. Indicative Budget Allocations

For information on the indicative budget allocations, please read Part 3.7 of the Consultation Information Document available on the SEUPB webpage

<https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

**Q13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the indicative budget allocation for each of the six Themes?**

Investment Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Theme 1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities (€10m)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Theme 2: Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation (€143m)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Theme 3: Empowering and Investing in our Young People (€110m)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities (€155m)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Theme 5: Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future (€265m)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Theme 6: Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration (€47m)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q14 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q13. (Optional)**

(Max 500 characters per Theme)

**Theme 1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities (€210m)**

There is limited information given to comment on the rationale for indicative budget allocations. • Technical Assistance for the Programme will be at 7% of the overall budget for the Programme - to provide for the administration costs for the Programme and used for developmental support for all areas of the Programme. It is not clear if this relates to the establishment and servicing of the Local PEACE PLUS Action Plans and Community Peace Plus Partnerships referenced in Theme 1.

**Theme 2: Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation (€143m)**

There is limited information given to comment on the rationale for indicative budget allocations. The consultation document states that the allocations have been developed based on the specific challenges and needs that have been identified and in close engagement with government departments in all jurisdictions. Further clarification and information is needed on the relationship between the PeacePlus Programme fund and existing EU funds and the future Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Theme 3: Empowering and Investing in our Young People (€110m)**

As above

**Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities (€155m)**

As above

**Theme 5: Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future (€265m)**

As above we welcome investment in sustainable travel in its widest sense i.e support for transition from car based travel to walking , cycling and use of electric vehicles and would encourage support for those programmes in rural and urban settings , inparticular linking local communities to neighbouring communities ,nature and city and town centres.

**Theme 6: Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration (€47m)**

As above

## Section D. Administrative Arrangements

For information on measures to reduce the administrative burden, please read Part 4.1 of the Consultation Information Document available on the SEUPB webpage <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

**Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following proposals would help to reduce the administrative burden for applicants to the new Programme?**

Investment Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Proposal to increase project development support	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposal to introduce more participation and flexibility in calls for applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposal to simplify the application process	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposal to increase training opportunities for project partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposal to make the monitoring system more user friendly	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposal to increase the use of simplified cost options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposal to increase flexibility in project management	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposal to make indicators and reporting more focused on quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q16 Please outline your reasons for your answers in Q15.** (Optional) (Max 500 characters per proposal)

***Proposal to increase project development support***

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further in development of measures to help reduce the administrative burden while also continuing to provide financial accountability.

Recognising that there will be a range of issues, challenges and priorities being submitted to the PEACE PLUS programme we would support a commensurate approach to project development support and administrative arrangements.

***Proposal to introduce more participation and flexibility in calls for applications***

Yes and ensure sufficient time is provided to allow applicants to respond to calls and develop applications. It would be helpful if SEUPB could give some clarity as to what it sees going into local plans versus elements that may be more relevant to an application through an open call. This would be helpful for us in thinking of content for the local plans.

The significant value of the programme also means that funding is now available for new areas that hadn't previously been covered. While this is helpful, it will be

***Proposal to simplify the application process***

Yes simplification of the application process would be welcome by applicants . Word limits in e-forms provided are overly restrictive at times.

***Proposal to increase training opportunities for project partners***

Yes provided it is targeted and beneficial to project partners . Provision of targeted & tailored 1-1 support to each type of project at the LAP/Regional levels would be more beneficial. Simplified guidance on procurement, financial monitoring, monitoring and evaluation and compliance with PEACE PLUS Programme regulations would also be preferable.

***Proposal to make the monitoring system more user friendly***

In line with the draft NI programme for Government Outcomes Framework & Community Planning, we would recommend an outcomes based approach to project development, monitoring & reporting. A more user friendly simplified model of monitoring & evaluation would be along with the use of standardised templates for questionnaires & reporting should be introduced. Experience from PIV indicates that participants are increasingly reluctant to respond to questions regarding their community/religious backgrounds & consideration should be given to removal

### ***Proposal to increase the use of simplified cost options***

The use of the simplified cost option (12% salary) has been beneficial to reduce the administrative burden, The use of flat rates would be beneficial to provide increased flexibility, however the option to use these simplified methods should be on an individual project basis not applied across the entire LAP. This will ensure a greater focus on results. Adopting a unit cost approach, similar to the current ESF Programme, would be beneficial and also help to reduce bureaucracy as well as increase the focus on results. General project elements such as catering cost per

### ***Proposal to increase flexibility in project management***

Welcomed as long as its risk and issues are correctly managed by all parties. Consideration of the LA role as a leading Public Authority should be taken into account and the use of LA resources which operate on a commercial basis be examined. Acceptable thresholds and guidance should be clearly defined. The potential to respond to emerging needs/community risks should also be considered.

### ***Proposal to make indicators and reporting more focused on quality***

Evaluation and monitoring are essential components to measure project impact. Whilst a focus on quality is welcome, enabling indicators to be more meaningful at a participant level is essential. Based on current experience, the volume of questions is excessive and levels of understanding/interpretation needs to be taken into account. Participant feedback is that Protestant/Catholic indicators are binary and need to be more broad ranging. Tailored 1-1 support to align LCCP/LAP outcomes and results to programme indicators would be welcome. The indicators



## Section E. Equality Considerations (Section 75)

The Section 75 screening documents can be found on the SEUPB webpage  
<https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

**Q17 Do you agree with the Equality Screening findings for the PEACE PLUS Programme?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't Know

**Q18 If no, what additional actions do you think we need to take and why?**

(Optional) (Max 1000 characters)

## Section F. Strategic Environmental Assessment

Findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessment, including the Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary are available on the SEUPB webpage

<https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>

**Q19 Do the findings from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the PEACE PLUS Programme cover all the relevant information?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Don't Know

**Q20 If no, what else do we need to consider and why? (Optional)**

(Max 1000 characters)

**END OF SURVEY**

**Thank you for completing our survey.**

**Belfast City Council**



Our reference:

Date:

Ms. Gina McIntyre  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
The Clarence West Building  
2 Clarence Street West  
Belfast  
BT2 7GB

Dear Ms. McIntyre,

### **Consultation on EU PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027**

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to input into the initial proposals, which will underpin the new EU PEACE PLUS programme 2021-2027 and recognise the transformative potential that the programme presents for Belfast and wider region. We look forward to ongoing engagement and co-design approach to firming up and bringing forward the programme.

In submitting its response, the Council commends the European Commission and Government on its clear commitment to further invest during a period emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, which has further widened major inequalities that already existed across the city and region.

In addition to providing feedback on the specific questions contained in the online consultation survey, there are a number of strategic comments the Council would wish to highlight as set out below. We believe that these should be considered as they seek further strengthen the potential of the programme and take account of local delivery structures and opportunities.

### **Strategic considerations in developing EU PEACE PLUS Programme**

1. **Scope of programme** – We are supportive of the proposed focus of the emerging programme and the associated thematic pillars. The Council believes that this programme presents a huge opportunity to address many of the ongoing challenges facing the region and its capital city. Furthermore, it provides a chance to work across government and sectors to create a new collaborative partnership which supports co-design and shared delivery.
2. **Scaling opportunity and impact through Community Planning** - Community planning, the duty led and facilitated by councils, has massive potential to materially assist the EU PEACE PLUS programme, but importantly, in its own right, is a citizen and locality-based statutory instrument to materially contribute to Covid Recovery and future public services delivery. The Council-led Community Planning Partnerships need to be utilised to their full potential with greater integration into wider Policy delivery, with the subsequent Community Plans being inter-departmentally recognised as hubs for locality based joint investment.

We therefore welcome the reference to community planning in Theme 1 but would also highlight the conflict in narrative to exploring other governance relationships. As a Council we seek further engagement with SEUPB on how we build upon existing community planning structures in supporting this programme and development of co-design local Community Peace Action Plans.

3. **Concentration of need and opportunity in Urban Areas** - Cities have an important role in creating sustainable economic growth and acting as regional hubs for both employment,

creativity and innovation as well as being concentrations of deprivation and need. The programme consultation document from SEUPB refers to 'Smart **Towns and Villages**' but needs to also include reference to 'smart cities and hubs. An Innovation and Growth Commission has been established and Innovation Commissioner in place within Belfast.

The Programme has a clear and "*renewed focus ... on rural and border communities in particular through initiatives which will support regeneration and reimagining of rural areas*". However, this should not be at the expense of support for regeneration and reimagining urban areas. We would urge the Programme not to ignore the challenges faced by the region's urban centres, particularly because of the impact of COVID19 and to recognise the role of urban centres in supporting economic and social life beyond their geographic boundaries at a regional level. While the benefits of agglomeration mean that cities are places of productivity, creativity and opportunity; they are also places where inequalities in education, housing and health are most exposed. There remains a clear need for sustained focus on peace and reconciliation efforts in cities/urban areas, as recent events have shown.

4. **Encouraging and embedding real partnership and co-design approach** - The Council believes that this programme presents a huge opportunity to address many of the ongoing challenges facing the region and its capital city. Furthermore, it provides a chance to work across government and sectors to create a new collaborative partnership, which supports co-design and shared delivery.

We note that emerging programme proposals outlines 'how government, community and individuals will work together to build a united community, based on equality of opportunity and the desirability of good relations and reconciliation and will achieve change against key priorities' (programme document, page 13). We look forward to better understanding how this broad aim translates into financial commitment to building inclusive, diverse communities. As with previous Peace programmes it is welcome that there are specific horizontal principles on equality which are stipulated by the European Commission under EU Programme including PEACE PLUS, and that applications under the Programme will be assessed against these requirements.

We welcome that the content of the Programme has been developed through community engagement, including citizens that are most marginalised, underprivileged communities, BAME communities, disabled persons and women accessing education and business. This demonstration of the Peace Plus Programme as a mechanism to promote equality of opportunity is further reflected in the diverse range of linked policies including strategies relating to disability and older people. We welcome SEUPB's commitment to monitoring for equality of opportunity.

Whilst it is welcome that the Programme Development process is supported by a Programme Development Steering Group (PDSG), comprising of members with expertise in issues relating to social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination, and how these relate to peace transition – this development is at the macro level. This demonstration of commitment to equality of opportunity should be reflected at local level.

5. **Thematic Feedback** – the following section outlines a number of strategic considerations linked to the thematic proposals set out in the consultation document. This feedback is submitted given the current limitations and functionality of the online survey.

- (i) **The Empowering communities** theme refers to institutional capacity but also needs to also focus on building community and civic capacity to support implementation and sustainability.

- (ii) **‘Youth and Mental Health and Wellbeing’** – is a major issue for the city and goes beyond ‘Youth’, affecting older groups, particularly with the impact of Covid which has contributed significantly to creating mental health and social wellbeing challenges and widened existing health inequalities which existed across the city and wider region. Addressing health inequalities, with a specific focus on mental health and social wellbeing is a key focus of the Belfast Agenda and work of the community planning partnership within Belfast.
- (iii) **Learning and Together Education Programme** – council would like to make SEUPB aware of the established Educational Inequalities Task Group, which has been formed under Belfast Agenda and community planning to develop and manage the delivery and coordination of programmes and projects to address educational inequalities across Belfast.
- (iv) **Collaborative Health and Social Care** - Addressing health inequalities, with a specific focus on mental health and social wellbeing is a key focus of the Belfast Agenda and work of the community planning partnership within Belfast. Strong partnership with health colleagues, communities and service users in place and work underway to create an enhanced and integrated care system within the city and wider region. Council would also like to highlight the associated importance of supporting the development of innovative community based health care interventions, particularly with a focus on early intervention and prevention – this is particularly important in areas adversely affected by the NI conflict and its legacy where community trauma has to be addressed through holistic approaches.
- (v) **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing in addition to Theme 3.** Belfast’s Community Planning Partnership is determined to work in collaboration to create a healthier city. The interrelated societal challenges linked to drugs, alcohol and mental health were identified as a key area of focus which was felt could be addressed in a more collaborative and holistic way. The Partnership recently agreed to explore a complex lives model to support vulnerable people and those ‘at risk’ from alcohol, drugs and mental health challenges.
- (vi) **Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion** there is no reference to Urban Regeneration and Social Inclusion. There is a concentration of deprivation, social issues and need for investment in urban areas and overall regional benefit will only be achieved when urban regeneration and rural regeneration work effectively together.
- (vii) **Supporting a sustainable and Better Connected Future.** – We recommend inclusion of ‘digital connectivity’. *Accessible environment makes a contribution to people having long, healthy active lives* – Council is well positioned to enhance and transform public parks and open spaces particularly in areas with high health inequalities. Investment in Council open spaces, particularly in segregated areas across the city, increases the number of venues where people from different backgrounds can meet. This investment could also connect different areas of the city through linking open spaces and promote enhanced access to the environment.
- (viii) **Enhanced Sustainable Travel connectivity** – we strongly support proposal for new rail rolling stock and infrastructure upgrades to facilitate the introduction of an hourly service between Dublin and Belfast. Also, we would like to see potential investment in cycling infrastructure included in this programme. Council strongly supports the focus and proposed investment in **‘Strategic Planning and Engagement’** to increase cross border collaboration. We highlight the work being taken forward through the Belfast Regional City Deal in strengthening collaboration across local government in NI and exploring opportunities to further enhance cross border relation including economic and commuter (e.g. Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor) and wish to explore how we can develop stronger relations with Dublin and other economic hubs in context of UK’s exit from EU.

- (ix) Council strongly supports the focus and proposed investment in **‘Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens’**. It is important to note that the legislation and statutory guidance for community planning outlines the need for Community Planning Partnerships to ensure they seek to involve the ‘Community’ (in its widest sense) in the community planning process, to ensure that community has a voice into the process and that views are taken into account. While the recently established Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sectoral Advisory Panel (Belfast) increases participation and representation of the third sector in Belfast within community planning the Partnership would also have aspirations to increase the involvement of the wider community or citizens within the community planning process, particularly with a local focus. Considering the population of Belfast has grown in excess of 340,000 residents this is clearly a challenging task. We suggest the potential creation of an ‘Innovation Fund’ to enable and encourage the development of innovative ideas and demonstrator pilots/interventions to address societal and community challenges, which has been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- (x) **Equality** - The gathering of evidence/information for Section 75 categories is grouped into a single overall category. Similarly needs, priorities and experiences groups some of the nine identities. This approach means that when the screening questions are applied the flow from evidence to policy impact is not always clear – for example evidence on disability reads across to needs of disabled people, and the impact of the programme and appropriate mitigations can be comprehensively considered. We fully acknowledge the challenges of the screening process, particularly at the macro level, however consideration of providing evidence in this way could help to inform development and delivery of the programme to a more inclusive and diverse population. We welcome the references to language and access requirements and also references to proposed legislation to deal with language and culture issues – the fund could also be used to promote understanding of the issues relating to indigenous minority languages in Northern Ireland.

The Council looks forward to building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG programmes and continuing to work in partnership with SEUPB at every opportunity to deliver on the ambitious set out within these proposals and to contribute positively to building peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland.

We look forward to further engagement with the SEUPB and NI Executive colleagues to discuss how we can collectively ensure we maximise the impact of the PEACE PLUS programme. This will include the role of local authorities, working in partnership, in co-designing and implementing impactful projects, programmes and interventions under the thematic area outlined as well as developing the Peace Action Plans.

Should you require clarification in respect of the appended information please do not hesitate either myself or my colleague Ryan Black Director of City and Neighbourhood Services at [BlackRyan@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:BlackRyan@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Thank you for the opportunity to input the views of Belfast City Council on this important programme.

Yours sincerely

**Councillor Christina Black**

Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee  
Belfast City Council