



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>PEACE PLUS Programme</b>
<b>Date:</b>	25th March, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director City and Organisational Strategy Rose Crozier, Director City and Neighbourhood Services Department Sinead Grimes, Director Physical Programmes
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<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>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<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 or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the development of the PEACE PLUS programme and on emerging work being undertaken as part of the first investment area that will open <b>1.1. Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action plan for Belfast.</b>
1.2	Approval is also being sought for officers to proceed with the development of a new PEACEPLUS Partnership for Belfast that will oversee the development of the local action plan via SP&R committee and will build on learning from PEACE IV and the governance arrangements through the Shared City Partnership (SCP).

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the report; and</li> <li>ii. agree to the proposed approach for the development a PEACEPLUS partnership for Belfast.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation is a unique Structural Funds programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. Currently, through its Managing Authority, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), the European Commission is developing a €1billion PEACE PLUS programme.</p> <p>The overall objective of the PEACE PLUS Programme is to build Peace and Prosperity and ensure that this Programme will leave a lasting and tangible legacy across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. The Programme’s strategy is to continue to take the opportunities and address the needs arising from the peace process in order to boost economic growth and stimulate social and economic regeneration and secondly, to promote social inclusion, particularly for those at the margins of economic and social life.</p> <p>SEUPB is currently seeking approval from the European Commission for the development of the PEACE PLUS Programme and have submitted a finance agreement to the European Commission as part of the process to receive final approval for the overall programme. The Programme in its totality comprises of six themes, which encompass 22 individual investment areas for possible submissions for investment.</p> <p>An infographic illustrating the main themes of the PEACE PLUS Programme is shown in appendix 1. Further information on the PEACE PLUS Programme including consultation responses is available at:  <a href="https://www.seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS">https://www.seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS</a></p> <p>The potential for investment within Belfast is significant, due to the scale of the overall programme Senior officers are currently scoping the overall programme to assess where we should consider making submissions across the 22 investment areas. It is likely that some of the investment areas may open in 2022, with others to follow in 2023, not all of them will be suitable for Councils to make submissions, but an initial scope has identified a number of areas where we may lead on delivery.</p>

A corporate approach is required to provide cross Council oversight for delivery of potential investment opportunities for the Council from across PEACEPLUS. A more detailed report will be brought back to members to consider the areas of work in addition to the Local Community PEACEPLUS Action Plan where Council may make a bid for investment.

3.2

### **Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plan Investment Area 1.1**

The first investment area likely to open is The Local Community PEACE Action Plans contained within **Theme 1: Building peaceful and thriving communities** of the PEACE PLUS Programme under **Investment Area 1.1. Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans** (€110 million budget across 17 local authorities). Following discussions with SEUPB, early indications are that Belfast may be able to make a submission of at least £17million, with this being managed as previous Local PEACE action plans.

The plans will centre on three core themes:

1. Local community regeneration and transformation.
2. Thriving and peaceful communities; and
3. Building respect for all cultural identities.

and are likely to include activities such as;

- youth development programmes;
- health and wellbeing initiatives;
- community regeneration projects;
- redevelopment and reimaging of existing community facilities for shared usage;
- initiatives to build positive relations;
- education and skills development programmes;
- social innovation / enterprise initiatives.

The Managing Authority, SEUPB has indicated that the open call for applications to this programme will be made in Quarter Two 2022 and that the application process may remain open for 3-6 months with the earliest date for open call expected to be April 2022 (though this may not be realistic as no guidance on the expected co-design process has yet been received from SEUPB). It is yet to be confirmed but it is expected that there will be a 6-month window for applications. Members should note that this will be an extremely tight timeframe with significant consultation and engagement required to inform any submission.

3.3

**PEACE PLUS Partnership - Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans (priority 1.1)**

It is a requirement that each Local Community Action Plan should comprise of a PEACE PLUS local authority partnership which will oversee the co-design and implementation of a process in their local authority area which will be used to inform the development and delivery of an overarching PEACE Action Plan ensuring alignment with the local Community Plan for the area.

SEUPB previously advised that they will not be overly prescriptive in terms of partnership composition, development process or selection, but rather they encourage that representation should be balanced as far as possible. They advised partnerships should ideally include some of the following:

<b>Pillar 1</b> Elected Members	<b>Pillar 2</b> Statutory Partners
<b>Pillar 3</b> Social Partners -Geographical Community Representatives / Civic Society	<b>Pillar 4</b> Social Partners - PEACE PLUS Target Groups; S75 / under- represented groups

3.4

**Preferred option**

Council officers have been engaging with SEUPB on a preferred model for the Belfast partnership with the preferred option as follows:

The current Shared City Partnership (SCP) retains oversight of the development and implementation of the future PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan and becomes the PEACEPLUS Partnership.

The key reasons that officers engaged with SEUPB on this model included:

- There was a significant refresh of the SCP recently, which included recruitment of new members from the Community and Voluntary Sector.
- The SCP is a formal working group of the Council that oversees the Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan and PEACE IV Plan via SP and R.
- SCP will continue post PEACEPLUS completion and will have sustainability with capacity to continue to work on Peace and Reconciliation post PEACE funding.
- SCP has representation from across Political parties.
- SCP has a good mixture of elected members, statutory agencies, interested groups and community partners across the four pillars outlined above.

3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCP membership currently has clear alignment with community planning partnership members.</li> </ul> <p>Following discussions with SEUPB, it has advised that it is content that the preferred option above is an acceptable model for overseeing the future PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan. Officers are seeing approval from members to proceed on this basis.</p> <p><b>External Support</b></p> <p>SEUPB has also given approval to councils to use a maximum of €100,000 on resourcing the development of the local action plan. This expenditure is not additional to any final award that the Council receives, it will be included in the PEACE PLUS Action Plan application and when successful, will form part of the letter of award for reimbursement.</p> <p>There will be significant work required to deliver on these ambitious timelines, which will require additional external support. While we may not maximise the full €100,000 available to assist with the development of the local action plan, we will initially use circa £48,500 (€56,260) to appoint suitably qualified contractors who will be expected to lead on the development, facilitation and submission of the Belfast PEACE PLUS local community PEACE action plan, this investment cannot be used for anything other than 1.1 Development of the Local Community PEACEPLUS Action Plan.</p> <p>This will help develop the systems and processes including the design and facilitation of a consultation and engagement framework and associated local area informal governance to enable Council to submit their Local Community PEACE Action Plan. The successful applicants will be expected to undertake a co-designed approach with members, the local community and stakeholders to develop a prioritisation list for possible projects, develop and draft the action plan for consideration by Council and write the detailed plan and engage with SEUPB on any changes required post submission. As we develop our approach to 1.1, ongoing engagement will take place with members, with updates brought back via SP&amp;R.</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>External support of up to 100,000 euros for the development of 1.1 local action plans can be claimed from any future Letter of Offer from SEUPB but will be included in the final budget allocation.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The plan will be subject to equality screening</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents attached</b></p>
	<p>PEACEPLUS Investment areas for the overall programme</p>