

Title of Report:	Peace Plus Update – The Next Iteration of Peace Funding
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 November 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture Peace Plus Co-Ordinator

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	yes
Capital/Revenue	
Code	79416
Staffing Costs	n/a

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	tbc	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:		Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	tbc	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:		Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	tbc	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:		Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide the Leisure & Development Committee with information regarding the development and planning around the next iteration of Peace Funding, Peace Plus.

2.0 Background

In April 2021, the Leisure & Development Committee received a presentation regarding the Highlights of Peace IV whilst flagging up the next iteration of funding, Peace Plus.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) has the statutory responsibility for the implementation of the current EU PEACE IV (€270m) and INTERREG VA (€283m) Programmes and for preparing the successor programme, PEACE PLUS. We also have a signposting role to promote involvement in the INTERREG VB Transnational and INTERREG VC Interregional Programmes.

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.

The EU regulations pertinent to this programme have been published in draft form by the European Commission. Provision has been made for an indicative budget of approximately €1bn, including proposals from the EU budget, the Government of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK Government.

The Programme has been developed as a result of intensive stakeholder engagement and review of research material. From the outset of the Programme development process, the SEUPB has adopted a firm partnership approach at all levels including local communities. This has included the garnering of views of stakeholders on the priorities and focus of the Programme. The SEUPB commenced the Programme development process for PEACE PLUS in 2019. Since then, there has been a considerable amount of preparatory work, research and stakeholder engagement undertaken, the council having contributed as a consultee during January and February 2020.

The overall objective of the PEACE PLUS Programme will be to build Peace and Prosperity and ensure that this Programme will leave a lasting and tangible legacy. The Programme will build on the positives and successes from Peace IV and will use new opportunities to innovate where possible.

Based on the extensive engagement described, SIX KEY THEMATIC AREAS have emerged.

The Co-Designed Local Community Peace Action Plans (€90million) (1.1) fall under “BUILDING PEACEFUL and THRIVING COMMUNITIES.” The plans will be centred around 3 key themes. Local councils have been asked to facilitate the development and administration of these plans and resulting projects: The themes will include:

- Local community regeneration and transformation.
- Thriving and peaceful communities.
- Building respect for all cultural identities

The thematic areas outlined above provide flexible and far-reaching opportunities to engage with the Local Action Plan for a range of organisations, individuals and interest groups at a local level.

3.0 Progress

The Programme has been approved by the Irish Government, Northern Ireland Executive and the North South Ministerial Council.

It is anticipated that the Programme will commence implementation in early 2022 following the approval of the Programme by the European Commission.

In terms of preparation for the local action plans, local authorities have been engaged in workshops and consultations with the SEUPB appointed consultants (Blu Zebra, Locus Consulting and Venture I) inputting into a feasibility study, as the first phase in developing a final Peace Plus model for governance and approach to developing local action plans.

The consultants have liaised in the first instance with stakeholders such as the local authorities (Chief Executives, Senior Leadership Teams, Peace Managers and the Community Planning Teams), government departments and public bodies, culminating in a “workshop” for Peace Managers and Heads of Service on 1st September followed by a similar presentation to SOLACE on 4th October 2021.

4.0 Next Steps

The feasibility study, which has been signed off by SEUPB, recommended that the Peace Plus Model should “align” with the local Community Plan outcomes and deliver on a similar collaborative basis. It is understood that a Peace Partnership will be established which will optimise opportunities for cross-community engagement and participation. Councils await further guidance from SEUPB on specifics relating to governance structures, however it is understood the partnerships established should be sympathetic to existing infrastructure within each local authority area in order to support a co-design, community led planning process.

The consultants will now move to “Stage 2” of the plan focusing on the details regarding the development of the Peace Partnership, providing guidance on governance structures, roles and responsibilities of partners etc. It is expected that the normal nomination process for Elected Members will apply, that social partners, communities and community planning partners (statutory bodies) will participate. The most notable change is that the Partnership will be in position at the outset to drive forward an informed planning process based on locally identified, relevant issues.

Stage 3 of the model will see the consultant group providing further guidance to facilitate the development of a Local position paper, generic project selection materials, facilitation and support.

It should be highlighted that whilst the responsibility of the consultant consortium is support and guidance, governance and the approval of the plans lies with each responsible Council alongside the Community, who together have ownership of the Plan.

Ahead of Stage 2, staff are engaging with other service areas within Council to scope potential areas of work or projects that the Peace Plus Programme could support. In addition, legacy projects from Peace 4 are being considered for Peace Plus in terms of added value. Staff will continue to work on a consultation strategy for due to take place in 2022 along the lines of thematic and DEA engagement as well as a series of workshops which are planned for Elected Members and participants and organisations who engaged in the previous programme.

A further report will be brought to committee once the Stage 2 process is underway and further guidance is issued regarding the governance structures.

Correspondence from SEUPB is attached in **Annex A** for information and provides additional details in terms of process and support/role of the consultant consortium in assisting local authorities to progress local action plans.



David Jackson
Causeway, Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY

21 October 2021

Dear David

Local Authority PEACE PLUS Action Plan Update

I am writing to update you on the progress of the PEACE PLUS Programme, and the process regarding the development of the Local Authority PEACE PLUS Action Plans.

I am pleased to inform you that the PEACE PLUS Programme has now been approved by the Irish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and the North South Ministerial Council.

Blu Zebra, Venture International and Locus Management (the Consortium) have conducted a comprehensive consultation process with councils in recent months, and have prepared a report to SEUPB outlining some recommendations in relation to the next phase of support and guidance on the development of Action Plans. The recommendations include preparing and sharing more detailed guidance on the structures to support and facilitate the development of co-designed Local Community PEACE PLUS Action Plans.

The SEUPB has received a number of requests for clarification on the role of the Consortium in the development of the Local Action Plans. I would like to clarify the scope of support which will be offered as we move forward.

The production of the feasibility report will mark the end of the first stage of the PEACE PLUS Local Area Action Planning process. Stage 2 will involve the

development of Local PEACE PLUS Partnerships, and finally Stage 3 will be the development of Co-Designed Community Action Plans.

The Consortium will be available to support councils in the following ways under Stages 2 and 3:

Stage 2: Development of the PEACE PLUS Partnership:

The role of the Consortium in stage 2 will be to provide;

- A **model** for each council to develop and implement the PEACE PLUS Partnership and Action Plan to include:
 - Governance arrangements
 - Guidance on consultation and community buy-in
- **Guidance** and information to be used by councils to enable PEACE PLUS governance arrangements to be implemented in each council area and guidance to be applied by council staff in the partnership application/nomination process for membership of the Partnership.
- **Resources** which can be branded for use in the call for applications (information, promotional materials, selection criteria and application form).
- **Oversight** of the public call process and co-ordination of the assessment process with each council to include:
 - Guidance and oversight of an open call (public) to establish a Local Community Peace Partnership within each designated local area.
 - Co-ordination of the open call for nominations to each of the 17 PEACE PLUS partnerships.
 - Preparation of application documentation and promotional materials.
 - Co-ordination of the assessment and nominations process, including the management of communications with all nominees (successful and unsuccessful).

Stage 3: Facilitation of Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans

The role of the Consortium in Stage 3 will be to provide:

- Detailed **guidance** notes for councils to inform the co-design process.
- **Facilitate the development of a Local position paper to include:**
 - Overview of the policy context.
 - Needs analysis informed by socio economic data, gap analysis and consultation undertaken to date.
 - Overview of the PEACE PLUS programme – aims, objectives, budget, eligible criteria for projects and the co-design approach to be implemented. The position paper will be circulated to the council for review and a meeting with the lead consultant to discuss/agree the co-design process to be adopted, will be facilitated.
- **Generic project selection materials** to ensure a consistent approach across the entire council area.
- **Facilitation** for partnerships to prepare a long list of priority actions across individual thematic areas.
- **Support** to each partnership to select priority projects using an agreed assessment framework.

The Consortium will provide support to the council-wide PEACE PLUS Partnership in the form of guidance and facilitation in developing a PEACE PLUS Action Plan. However, the responsibility for the governance and approval of the plans, in advance of them being submitted to the SEUPB for assessment, will lie with each council, who have ownership of the Plan alongside the community. In the interest of clarity it is worth noting that, consultation and engagement at DEA/LEA or local community level, is beyond the scope of Consortium's remit.

I have already informed you that SEUPB have facilitated each council to utilise expenditure up to a maximum of €100k on resourcing the development of the plan. This expenditure can subsequently be included in the PEACE PLUS Action Plan application and when successful at steering committee, will form part of the letter of

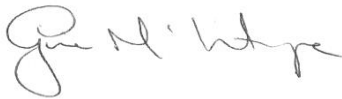
award for reimbursement. A clear audit trail in relation to the costs incurred by councils in the development of the plan will be required, as per current Programme rules. You will note with Annex 2 of the Letter (dated March 2021) that costs are eligible in relation to a number of areas including staff costs, research and consultancy support. To make best use of these resources, councils should ensure that any consultancy support does not duplicate the work of Blu Zebra, Venture International and Locus Management (the Consortium) as outlined above.

The SEUPB is working on the necessary structures and administrative architecture with a plan to implement the Programme early in 2022, following the approval by the European Commission which is the final step in the process.

We will continue to provide you with an update on progress, and will endeavour to provide further detailed guidance in the near future.

We wish you every success as you commence the consultation phase.

Yours sincerely



Gina McIntyre
Chief Executive