



## Press Release

**Date: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

### **€3.1M OF EU FUNDING OFFERED FOR A NEW SHARED SPACE PROJECT IN BALLYCASTLE, COUNTY ANTRIM**

**One of the most visible consequences of the troubles/conflict is the high level of social segregation which can be found right across the region.**

Communities continue to live and socialise separately, with many lacking access to a shared environment where they feel safe enough to meet and learn from one another. The absence of these spaces serves only to maintain division and increase social tension.

In order to address this, €3.1m worth of funding has been offered under the European Union's PEACE IV Programme to the Ballycastle Shared Services Project (BSSP). This funding will allow significant enhancements to be made to the proposed sports facilities planned for the Department of Education's new Shared Education Campus in the County Antrim town. The Shared Education Campus is being funded through the Fresh Start Programme and will provide new facilities for the neighbouring schools of Ballycastle High School and Cross & Passion College.

Led by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, this specific project will act as a cross-community sports hub, used by the schools' pupils during the day, and by the local community and sports clubs at night.

The project will create an enlarged sports hall; upgrade a grass soccer pitch to a 3G synthetic surface with floodlighting; install floodlighting to both GAA and hockey synthetic pitches and enhance the changing pavilion to accommodate the use of the facilities by local clubs and organisations.

The project also aims to address the impacts of the troubles/conflict in Ballycastle and the surrounding areas through the implementation of the Council's own cross-community Sports Development Plan for the local area.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, which manages the PEACE IV Programme, said: **"It is an unfortunate reality that many communities across the region remain deeply divided with little or no opportunity to**



**meet and interact with each other. This project will encourage local people to challenge their own misconceptions and provide a safe space where they can create new and meaningful relationships with someone from a different background or culture.**

**“The project is one of a number of shared space initiatives, funded under the EU’s PEACE IV Programme, that will have a hugely transformative impact upon the local communities in which they are located, on a cross-border basis,” she continued.**

Match-funding for the projects has been provided by the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

Outlining the importance of the funding in achieving the Programme for Government outcome of a ‘shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity’, Tracy Meharg, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities, said: **“This funding will make a significant contribution to our society by providing accessible shared spaces which facilitate greater levels of cross community contact, interaction and co-operation between communities and organisations with different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Their impact will be felt locally and across the whole of Northern Ireland and the Border Region.”**

Welcoming the funding Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring TD, commented: **“This funding will make a real difference in the lives of the communities both in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The PEACE IV Programme has a real and invaluable impact on building relations across the border. My Department will work with all parties to ensure delivery of these essential shared spaces.”**

The Mayor of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, Brenda Chivers said: **“This significant Peace IV funding allocation represents a huge opportunity for the community in Ballycastle and surrounding areas. An ethos of working and learning together has been nurtured by the two post-primary schools in the town and Council is delighted to lead the extension of this into the wider community through the provision of a shared sports facility for all. I commend everyone for their contributions so far and we look forward to seeing this project make a real and lasting difference within the community, by bringing people together and supporting healthy lifestyle choices.”**

- ENDS.



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#### **Notes to Editor:**

#### **SEUPB**

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.
- It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)