



Press Release

7th January 2019

€32.4M OF EU FUNDING OFFERED TO HELP BRING DIVIDED COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is delighted to offer over €32.4m worth of funding from the EU's PEACE IV Programme, which will create five new 'shared space' projects across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland.

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

Gina McIntyre, CEO of the SEUPB which manages the PEACE IV Programme said that: **"Each of these projects will be specifically designed so that they can be used by all sections of the community and provide an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of people to mix with someone from a different culture or background.**

"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 remain segregated with many lacking access to a shared environment where they feel safe enough to meet and learn from one another. This can create a cycle of mistrust which is passed down from one generation to the next," she continued.

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: **"The funding for these projects 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 following projects have been offered funding under this objective of the EU's PEACE IV Programme:

- The **Newforge Community Development Trust**, which has been offered approximately €5.8m to develop a 15-acre site located beside the River Lagan and Newforge Lane in South Belfast. Led by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) the project aims to transform the site through the provision of enhanced indoor and outdoor sporting facilities. The new shared space will be available to community groups, youth groups, schools, churches, sports clubs, and local residents on a cross-community basis.
- The **Ballycastle Shared Services project**, which has been offered €3.1m to upgrade existing (and develop new) sports facilities on the Shared Education Campus (SEC) in Ballycastle. 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 **Waterside Shared Village project**, which has been offered €8m to create a multi-faceted shared space facility within the Waterside area of Derry-Londonderry; incorporating a central community hub building, surrounded by a sports complex. The project will be led by Derry City and Strabane District Council and act as an exemplar of good relations and peace and reconciliation development within the local area.
- The **Connecting Pomeroy project**, based in County Tyrone has been offered approximately €6m to encourage greater levels of cross-community contact within the local area. Three core elements form the focus of the project which will enhance the look and feel of the centre of the village; create a suite of new community facilities; and boost outdoor and tourism opportunities through the development of a 'magic forest'. Supporting the capital investment is a three year engagement programme to generate contact across the community, particularly among children



and young people, encouraging respect and understanding, and leading to the formation of sustained friendships.

- The **Monaghan Peace Campus**, based in Monaghan Town has been offered €9.5m to create a new shared community space comprising of a four-storey community building situated beside the Garda Station on Plantation Road. The facility includes: a youth space; cultural heritage centre; library and peace archive; shared community space; welcome zone; and external events space.

- 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 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