



Press Release

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€8M OF EU FUNDING OFFERED FOR NEW SHARED SPACE PROJECT IN DERRY-LONDONDERRY

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 help address this €8m worth of funding has been offered, under the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, to the Waterside Shared Village project to create a multi-faceted shared space facility within the Waterside area of Derry-Londonderry. Iconic in nature the facility will encourage cross-community interaction across an interface area.

Led by Derry City and Strabane District Council the project will act as an example of good relations and peace and reconciliation development within the local area. Upon completion the facility will consist of a central community hub building, surrounded by a state-of-the-art sports complex.

The community hub will include: a community/sports hall (which can be transformed into four meeting or training rooms); a special youth zone; a community kitchen; a community office; along with a suite of sports changing rooms. The area around the community hub will comprise of a 3G pitch; a grass pitch; a cricket training area and tennis courts.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which manages the PEACE IV Programme, said: **“Whilst many different communities across the region live side-by-side, some still remain deeply divided. This polarisation is also unfortunately passed down from one generation to the next, creating a cycle of mistrust and suspicion.**



“The Waterside Shared Village project will create a new safe space where people from different backgrounds are given a unique opportunity to mix with and learn from each other. By doing so they will be able to challenge some of their own personal misconceptions, start to build trust and engage in meaningful reconciliation.

“The project is one of a number of shared space projects, 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 both sides of the border,” 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.”**

Welcoming the development, Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Councillor John Boyle, explained that the project will deliver a wide range of programmes aimed at building a closer relationship between the two communities in the Waterside, stating: **“I am delighted that our application to SEUPB for €8m of funding to finance this project has been successful and the public can look forward to accessing a state of the art community facility when it is completed,”** he said.

“Community groups and the Neighbourhood Partnership in the Irish Street and Top of the Hill areas have worked strategically together with Council to achieve this major funding which will transform the interface area.



“The Shared project will deliver a range of cross-community programmes for all ages including sports programmes, after-schools clubs, summer schemes, youth programmes, early years’ programmes and a series of festivals,” he continued.

- 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