



Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Subject: **Response to the European Territorial Co-operation Consultation 2014 - 2020**

Date: 9th November, 2012

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1.0 Purpose of report

To provide Members with a Council response to the European Territorial Co-operation Consultation 2014-2020

1 Background

1.1 Members will be aware that 2014 marks the beginning of a new 7 year EU Programming cycle, both for NI Mainstream programmes and the wider competitive EU programmes. Later this year, Members will be presented with draft consultation responses in relation to the evolving ERDF (led by DETI) and ESF (led by DEL) programmes for the period 2014-2020.

1.2 This report outlines the Council response in relation to the evolving Peace IV and INTERREG V programmes together known as the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes 2014-2020.

1.3 On 28th August 2012, the Managing Authority for both emerging programmes, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), launched a public consultation process which will close on 8th November, 2012. This is the first of two consultation processes which are framed around the following timeline:

- August-November 2012 public consultation1
- November-December 2012 Development of Operational Programmes
- January-March 2013 Formal statutory consultation of Operational programmes
- April-June 2013 Formal statutory consultation of Operational Programmes
- Summer/Autumn 2013 Approval of Operational Programmes by NI Executive/Irish Government/Scottish Government
- Autumn 2013 submission, negotiation and approval of Operational Programmes with EU Commission
- Early 2014 Commencement of new INTERREG V and Peace IV programmes

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 With regards to the current ETC Consultation exercise, both the European and Good Relations Units within BCC have taken the lead with their respective programme responsibilities and stakeholders.
- 2.2 The European Unit held a Comet wide stakeholder workshop in the Ulster Hall on 25th September 2012, attended by 32 delegates. In addition, each Council area of the Comet Councils will gather its own geographical and stakeholder views and respond directly to the SEUPB.
- 2.3 Finally the EU Unit on behalf of the Comet INTERREG Board (attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development) will work collectively with the other 4 INTERREG Cross Border Partnerships to submit a collective view to SEUPB. This will conclude a year long lobby to minister North and South and the EU Commission to return to the model of INTERREG III A, devolving more control and delivery to local authority level for the next programme.
- 2.4 The Good Relations Unit held a workshop with BCC stakeholders on 1st October to gather views on the PEACE IV Programme and held a session with the Good Relations Partnership on 8th October, 2012.
- 2.5 The proposed BCC responses to both the INTERREG V and PEACE IV consultations are outlined in the attached appendix, via the SEUPB Informal Consultation document.
- 2.6 A summary of views within the response is outlined as follows:

- i. **INTERREG IV A**

INTERREG V delivery should be structured around a return of the INTERREG III A model, whereby a proportion of funding is devolved to the Cross Border INTERREG Partnerships of elected members and social partners to deliver on a pre agreed needs based local area strategy. There should be one accountable department providing match funding (if available) to reduce the bureaucracy and remove the long time delay from project application to approval stage.

The INTERREG Partnerships should have a role at the early stages of programme development and throughout implementation to the end of the programming period.

The eligible area should be extended to include Dublin as a more natural partner for the Comet Urban Centre.

The programme content should reflect the real needs of local areas and therefore concentrate on themes

Note: Agreement could not be reached by the stakeholder group on 4 themes out of 11 themes outlined by the European Commission.

The geographical delivery of the programme should reflect the RPA areas and the 11 geographical sets should also be the basis for the other programmes, basically:

- PEACE IV
- Rural Development Programme
- Delivery of ERDF/ESF
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Social Investment Programme

Note: This confirms the need to push for an Integrated Territorial Investment Programme for Greater Belfast considering all EU Programmes in NI as well as attracting other financial instruments and domestic funding to deliver a pre agreed integrated urban strategy.

BCC should urge Government departments and the SEUPB to consider this model of delivery for Belfast and Derry/Londonderry and not delay due to the lower capacity of other areas to organise and strategise.

ii. PEACE IV

The Council's Good Relations Partnership has successfully delivered both Phases of the Peace III Local Action Plan. It is proposed that this model be continued under Community Led Local Development Delivery model.

It is proposed that the following theme and associated investment priorities should inform the development of Peace IV Programme.

- Employment and supporting labour mobility
- Social inclusion and combating poverty
- Education, skills and lifelong learning
- Institutional Capacity Building and efficient public administration

During the conflict, Belfast was the seat of the most intensive violence in NI and suffered disproportionately as a result. This should be reflected in the development of any new PEACE IV Programme.

Potential activities that could be covered in any PEACE IV Programme include:

- Actions to create and promote use of shared public space, promote mobility within and between communities.
- Actions to develop and deliver integrated interface regeneration strategies. It is essential that local communities are involved in the process of re-developing contested spaces
- Actions to promote inclusive cultural expression and celebration.
- Action to align good relations/ peacebuilding and conflict transformation activities with the processes of existing policy development in areas such as education, regional strategic planning, urban and rural regeneration and community development and culture, arts and leisure provision.

Young people should remain a priority focus for any new Programme.

Match funding should be provided centrally by one accountable department for any future PEACE IV Programme.

The time taken for the project assessment and appraisal process should be reduced.

Reporting and Monitoring arrangements should be streamlined with an enhanced role for local authorities.

3 Resource Implications
None
4 Recommendation
<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. approve the attached proposed Council response to the European Territorial Co-operation Consultation; andii. agree that the response be submitted to SEUPB by the 20th November deadline, subject to council ratification on 1st December 2012.
5 Abbreviations
<p>SEUPB – Special EU Programmes Body ETC – European Territorial Cooperation</p>
6. Document Attached
Council response