



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast City Council Planning for PEACE IV / INTERREG V
<b>Date:</b>	29 August 2014
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<b>1</b>	<b>Background</b>
1.1	A public consultation on the draft Operational Programme for the PEACE IV and INTERREG V Programme opened on 3 <sup>rd</sup> June with responses sought by 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2014. Council submitted a response in the first stage consultation exercise conducted by SEUPB in November 2012. A response to the second consultation on the Draft Operational Programme has been prepared and submitted to SEUPB with the caveat that this is subject to ratification by the Shadow Policy & Resources Committee in August. A copy of the response as submitted is attached as an appendix to this report.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The PEACE IV Programme has been approved with a budget of €229 million ERDF plus 15% match funding. The key aims of the Programme are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;</li><li>• Contribute to the promotion of social and economic stability in the regions concerned, in particular through actions to promote cohesion between communities.</li></ul>
2.2	The main focus will be on Children and Young people with a strong role for local authorities. Approximately 30% of funding has been ring-fenced for Local Authority led Action Plans (11 NI Councils and 6 Border Region Plans) building upon the experience of delivery under the PEACE III Programme. The programme has been designed to fit with Community Planning and LGR and the Together Building a United Community strategy.

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p> <p>2.8</p> <p>2.9</p>	<p>The INTERREG V Programme has been approved with a budget of €240 million ERDF plus 15% match funding. The key aims of the Programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase cross-border cooperation to address common challenges and opportunities identified jointly in the border regions</li> <li>• To bring European citizens closer together to share ideas and assets that can help achieve common goals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Timeframe</b></p> <p>The Programmes will be presented to the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government and Scottish Government for approval before being submitted by 22 September 2014 to the European Commission for negotiation and final approval.</p> <p>It is estimated that the first call for applications is unlikely to happen before March / April 2015.</p> <p><b>Themes – PEACE IV</b></p> <p>Key themes and indicative funding allocation in the proposed Peace IV Programme are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared Education – €45 million</li> <li>• Children &amp; Young People – €50 million ( €20million through Local Action Plans)</li> <li>• Shared Spaces &amp; Services – €90 million ( €20million through Local Action Plans)</li> <li>• Civil Society – €30 million through Local Action plans</li> </ul> <p>The North Belfast Cultural Corridor has already been proposed to SEUPB as a key Council project for PEACE IV. This would fit as a capital project under the Shared Spaces theme. PEACE III Projects along similar lines to the PEACE IV themes identified above include the Migrant &amp; Minority Ethnic Project (Good Relations Unit); Youth Engagement Project (Community Safety Unit); Interfaces Project (Good Relations Unit); Growing Respect (Parks &amp; Leisure Department) and Creative Legacies project (Tourism, Culture &amp; Arts Unit) plus various projects run by 3rd sector organisations under the PEACE III Plan.</p> <p><b>Themes Interreg</b></p> <p>Key Themes and indicative funding allocation in the INTERREG V Programme are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic Objective 1 – Research and Innovation - €60 million</li> <li>• Thematic Objective 6 – Environment - €72 million</li> <li>• Thematic Objective 7 – Sustainable Transport - €40 million</li> <li>• Thematic Objective 9 – Health - €53 million</li> </ul> <p>Results focus - all funded projects and all eligible groups or organisations that apply for funding under Peace IV and INTERREG V, will be required to identify how they will contribute towards the achievement of the results that the Programme sets out to achieve.</p>
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2.10	The tables in Appendix 1 outline the detail of the INTERREG V and Peace IV thematic objectives and the investment priorities that are included in the draft operational programmes.
2.11	<p><b>Council's response</b></p> <p>As previously outlined, the deadline for submission of a response to this consultation was 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014; consequently, officers submitted a response to SEUPB by the deadline with the caveat that it was subject to ratification by the Shadow Policy &amp; Resources Committee in August. A copy of the response as submitted is attached as at Appendix 1 of this report:</p> <p>The response sets out answers to specific questions relating to each of the themes in both draft operational programmes, as set out above. INTERREG V is addressed first in the response and then PEACE IV.</p> <p>Some points highlighted are:</p> <p><b>INTERREG V</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We welcome Belfast City now being fully eligible within the INTERREG V Programme, however, the draft programme demonstrates little opportunity for local organisations to be able to apply for projects.</li> <li>• Projects should be developed with input from Local Authorities to ensure complementarity with local and regional initiatives.</li> <li>• The INTERREG V themes should clearly demonstrate how they are additional to the provision which already exists and more importantly how they contribute to cross border economic development. . We highlight lack of evidence that funds are currently being used to provide additionality over and above what government departments priorities are and where they should be investing, in particular around EU directives.</li> <li>• We would request that the entire Thematic Objective 9: Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty – support for economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities, resulting in improved economic, physical and cultural environment is included so that those most socially excluded can benefit through targeted local and regional actions.</li> <li>• Match-funding - in a period of efficiency savings, if a contribution of 15% matched funding is required from Local Authorities this would put them under additional budgetary pressure. This will have to be factored in to the current Councils medium financial plans well in advance of striking the rate for the new Council in February 2015. This is very challenging due to calls not opening until at least spring of 2015.</li> <li>• We welcome the proposal to reduce the administrative burden associated with the programme, however there is a lack of specific detail available at this time so it is not possible to determine whether these proposals are adequate or whether the burden will be shifted to lead partners (ie Councils).</li> <li>• We suggest that the production of simple, clear Guidance at the outset of the programme, which remains unchanged for the duration of the programme and highlight that Letters of offer in Euros may cause difficulties due to exchange rate fluctuations.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>PEACE IV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus on children and young people is welcomed and SEUPB are asked to note that Council has developed a Children &amp; Young People Framework within which any programmes will be developed;</li> <li>• The potential to bid for long term pieces of work i.e. 6-7 years duration is to be welcomed and will allow for more focused and strategic interventions as well as allowing for the implementation of robust monitoring and evaluation processes capturing the real impact of changes and lasting outcomes of any intervention.</li> <li>• SEUPB should commence engagement with Shadow Councils in consultation with the relevant accountable departments in advance of finalising the match funding requirements for the Programme.</li> <li>• SEUPB guidance on developing Local Action Plans should be issued as soon as possible to Local Authorities.</li> </ul>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Match funding of 15% will be required. This can come from a range of non EU sources including central or local government or other public or private sources. Match funding can be in cash or non cash contributions such as staff time.
3.2	There will be a requirement for significant additional officer time and resources in developing outline proposals for submission to SEUPB.

<b>4.</b>	<b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</b>
4.1	Screening conducted by SEUPB in developing the Operational Programme concluded that there were major positive impacts across four of the nine S.75 grounds and neutral or minor impact upon other S.75 grounds. These were all considered as impacts that would help to promote equality of opportunity and good relations with the result that the Programme will not be subject to a further Equality Impact Assessment at present. The proposed Local Action Plan will also require equality screening.
4.2	Screening by SEUPB of the new INTERREG V Programme concluded that there were minor, positive impacts across four of the nine Section 75 grounds. It found that there were neutral impacts upon sexual orientation, marital status, men and women generally, political opinion and religious belief and hence the programme should not be subject to a further Equality Impact Assessment.

<b>5.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	The Committee is requested to note the above report and ratify the draft consultation response submitted to the Special EU Programmes Body.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary Tables of Interreg V and Peace IV</li> <li>• Draft Consultation Response</li> </ul>