

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council
held on Thursday 13 February 2020 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road,
Magherafelt**

Members Present

Councillor Wilson, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Burton, Clarke, Corry, Cuddy, Doris,
Elattar, Kerr, Hughes, Kearney, McNamee, Milne, Molloy,
Monteith

**Officers in
Attendance**

Mrs Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Mr Browne, Head of Tourism
Mr Hill, Head of Parks
Ms Linney, Head of Community Development
Mr McCance, Head of Culture and Arts
Ms McKeown, Head of Economic Development
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in
Attendance**

Agenda Item 4 – Boom Foundation
Leona Rankin

The meeting commenced at 7.02 pm.

D024/20 Apologies

Councillor Black

D025/20 Declaration of Interests

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

D026/20 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that there were two matters to be raised tonight under Chair's Business.

Councillor Kerr thanked the Chair for allowing him to raise this issue tonight as he had originally intended to bring it too the full Council Meeting.

He advised that Helen Sweeney had been in contact with him, she originally was from Coalisland but was residing in England. He said that due to the highly unfortunate circumstances she had lost her father Noel to an accident involving a tree hitting his car just before Christmas which ended Noel's life, which left Helen and her family naturally devastated. He stated that a few weeks later another tree had fallen on the same stretch of road which greatly concerned Helen and she contacted all the

relevant agencies, but she was told that responsibility with potential liable trees on a road was down to the owner's discretion to remove them.

Councillor Kerr advised that Helen and himself had several conversations about highlighting her campaign and she has now launched an online petition for people to sign and share their concerns about the lack of clarity regarding her issue. She also spoke to local and national media organisations regarding her campaign.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr

To issue an invitation to Ms Sweeney to a future meeting to help highlight her campaign and to educate Councillors throughout the district about this potential life changing ordeal.

Seconded by Councillor Monteith

Councillor Burton said that she would fully support Councillor Kerr's proposal as this was a very important issue. She said that a lot of the time when concerns were raised about overgrown trees and hedges people were being told that it's the responsibility of the local landowner which was very difficult to get them to do anything about it.

The Chair said that the occupants of a car in Cookstown had a lucky escape after a tree fell on their car before Christmas. He said that the landowner was very proactive as he had all the trees removed the very next day.

The Head of Economic Development advised that the circulated Response to Consultation on the New PEACE PLUS Cross Border EU Funding Programme for the period 2021-27 was being brought tonight for decision.

The Director of Business and Communities updated members on the contents of the report and advised that this had to be submitted by 24 February 2020. He said that Mid Ulster Council welcomed the opportunity to respond to SEUPB's consultation exercise with respect to the plans for the new PEACE Plus Programme which would succeed both of the current 2014-20 PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

He said that the combination of the PEACE and INTERREG type activities in a single programme was reflected in the name of the programme where "PLUS" represents the inclusion of wider economic, social and environmental activities. He said that the PEACE PLUS Programme would be delivered within a significantly changed landscape in NI with Brexit, new Stormont agreement and the implementation of Council led City/Growth Deals aimed at super changing economic growth.

The Director of Business and Communities advised members that this was the last chance to avail of hundreds of thousands of Euro funding. (appendix 1)

Councillor Wilson advised that he sits on PEACE IV and was a great opportunity.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy

Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to proceed with the submission of the response to SEUPB consultation exercise in respect to plans for the new PEACE PLUS Programme as at appendix 1.

Councillor Wilson referred to the closure of Dungannon Leisure Centre last Sunday and enquired what was the reason for doing so.

He also referred to the re-opening of the new look Dungannon Leisure Centre and said that he was very unhappy regarding the short notice Councillors received in relation to this.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that last Sunday was a stormy day with wind and rain, resulting in a sheet around the skylight being blown off and water getting into the electrics in the communications room and alarms constantly going off. She said that management had made the decision to close the building for safety reasons until the roof was repaired. She stated that this was down to the consequences of the weather and no other reason.

She referred to the invitation to Councillors for the re-opening and said that she was aware that invitations should have been issued within a reasonable timeframe which was an admin error and would ensure that this does not happen again.

Councillor Molloy said he was a user of Dungannon Leisure Centre and felt that there were still a lot of teething problems as there were long queues at reception and issues around swimming lessons etc and advised that there should be procedures in place to handle these types of concerns. He also stated that there were a number of pieces of gym equipment out of use and felt that this was a poor reflection as these items were all newly purchased.

Councillor Cuddy agreed with Councillor Molloy's concerns and said that he had also been contacted by members of the public about long queues amongst other things and felt that this was unprofessional but hoped that these types of issues would ease off in time.

He said that he would have a real concern about the lift in Dungannon Leisure Centre as it was very old and not fit for public use. He felt that money should have been put into installing a new one as customers will go elsewhere where there are modern facilities.

The Chair asked that a report be brought back to the next meeting on concerns raised tonight.

Councillor Ashton said that management made the right call to close the leisure centre last Sunday due to health and safety concerns but felt that members should have availed of an email advising them of the situation to keep them up to date on matters before being contacted by the public.

Councillor Monteith said that he agreed with previous members comments as the public were of the opinion that Dungannon Leisure Centre was going to be a state of the art, with a 2020 swimming pool and it's humiliating for this Council that this was

not the case. He felt the Council should have been at the top of their game and better prepared as it was anticipated that a large crowd would be arriving to view the new look Leisure Centre. He also agreed with comments regarding the closure last Sunday and said that Councillors had got it in the neck about how the public felt that they were being treated like second class citizens in Dungannon.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation to bring a report back on concerns raised by members tonight and the issue regarding invitations being issued at short notice to members for the reopening.

D027/20 Deputation – Boom Foundation

The Chair, Councillor Wilson advised that a presentation was being made tonight on behalf of the Boom Foundation, but firstly he wanted to acknowledge that the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Kearney had hosted a reception for Ms Shannon Whitehouse and her family regarding their fundraising for the organisation. He said that Shannon was an inspiration and that off her family also.

The Chair welcomed to the committee Ms Leona Rankin and invited her to make her presentation on behalf of the Boom Foundation.

Ms Rankin thanked the committee for giving her the opportunity to address the meeting tonight and wanted to firstly say how grateful she was to Shannon and her family as they were so inspirational and said that the organisation would support them every step of the way.

Ms Rankin said that the Boom foundation was set up in memory of her fiancé Philip Wilson who lost his battle from sarcoma on 8 March 2013. She said that Philip sadly passed away only 7 weeks before his wedding day and following a ten-year battle with sarcoma. Without complaint, Philip lived with sarcoma and the side effects of the countless periods of treatment and surgery.

The impact of losing Philip has been unimaginable but despite his passing, Philip's presence is as strong as ever through the Boom Foundation. The word 'Boom' was always used by Philip when he was enjoying something (most likely on the golf course, his favorite place) and it was never without a high five (hence their hand logo)! Boom was the perfect name because it will forever link the charity with this outstanding person whilst also signifying the impact the charity will make on the lives of those living with sarcoma every day.

She said that the money raised by Boom would be split between practical help and vital research, 50% will remain in Northern Ireland to be used by us here at Boom for the benefit of sarcoma patients in NI, whilst the remaining 50% of our funds will be sent to Sarcoma UK to try to achieve the best possible standard of treatment and care for patients with sarcoma.

She stated that sarcoma was uncommon cancers which affect any part of the body, on the inside or outside, including the muscle, bone, tendons, blood vessels and fatty tissues.

Ms Rankin provided a breakdown of issues relating to sarcoma (appendix 2):

- 15 people are diagnosed with sarcoma every day in the UK
- 100 cases in Northern Ireland each year
- 100 different sub-types of sarcoma
- Almost 8 in 10 people (78%) diagnosed with sarcoma in the UK will live up to a year
- The average percentage of people living 3 years after being diagnosed with sarcoma in the UK is 64.5%
- The five-year survival rate for sarcoma is 55%

The Chair thanked Ms Rankin for such an informative presentation and said that by watching Councillors around the room tonight, this had struck a chord with everyone and felt that this Council lobby the Health Minister on behalf of the Boom Foundation. He said that if a Notice of Motion was brought to the Council to seek a meeting with the Health Minister that consideration be given to issuing an invite to Ms Rankin also.

Councillor Kerr said that firstly he would like to thank the Whitehouse family and Leona for accepting the Council's invitation. He said that he would like to pay extreme high regard to Shannon, Pierce, TJ and all the Whitehouse family for the charity work they have carried out raising a great deal of money in such a short space of time. He stated that their noble, selfless actions and particularly Shannon thinking about others before herself was something that should be commended. He said that he would also like to praise Maurade and all her friends for the great work they have done in helping Shannon organise the recent event.

Councillor Kerr said that he would also like to thank Leona for attending tonight to make her presentation and travelling all the way to highlight the Boom Foundation to help highlight the Foundation.

He said that he would like to propose that Mid Ulster Council writes to every other Council in the North of Ireland highlighting the work carried out by Leona and the Boom Foundation and to ask each of them to consider issuing an invite for a deputation to meet them to publicise the fantastic work that is being carried out by Boom Foundation and the possibility of running a themed week on behalf of Boom.

Councillor Ashton thanked Ms Rankin for her presentation and said that she would have no difficulty bringing this forward as she wasn't aware of the issue and would certainly support the major concerns patients face in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Kearney said that everyone was humbled by Shannon and also by Ms Rankin as the Boom Foundation had achieved so much in the last 7 years and wanted to wish them well in the future.

Councillor Milne said that he wanted to wish everyone every success going forward in this campaign and enquired about the issue regarding concerns around Mobility car modifications for patients and the matter of the car being used for the carer of the dependent.

Ms Rankin referred to a patient that the organisation was currently working with and said that this patient took sarcoma in her fingers but when she went to Birmingham for

surgery, they removed her arm. This patient was a classroom assistant and has a young son and when she applied to get a specially adapted car, she was refused by PIPs system because she could walk unaided and ineligible for the mobility element. She currently drives a manual car as she cannot afford an automatic one and by the time you pay for modifications it would be impossible. Ms Rankin said that it was bazaar that a person who has lost their complete arm was deemed unsuitable to receive an specially adapted car even though she had prosthetic hand and arm and very frustrating as she wished to return to work to support her young son.

Councillor Monteith said that it may be worthwhile contacting the Law Centre as they would be only too willing to take on this kind of challenging case. He stated that the PIPs system was a complete farce which didn't show any empathy towards the vulnerable people within our society.

Ms Rankin said that it was a difficult situation for this lady as she was told that if she appealed the decision, she may lose all her benefits.

Councillor Monteith said that the Law Centre should be an option for this lady to try and seek a way forward.

The Chair thanked Ms Rankin for her attendance tonight and said that the Council would try and support the Foundation in any way they could.

He said that Shannon was an inspiration and was a very brave girl and wished to thank her and her family for attending tonight. He also wanted to thank Councillor Kearney for hosting the reception and to Councillor Kerr for suggesting the invite.

The Chair said that although he acknowledged what Councillor Kerr had previously proposed, he felt that it may be more beneficial if the proposal was brought forward as a Notice of Motion to the full Council as he didn't foresee any objections being made and would like to include that an invite be issued to meet the Health Minister or a delegation to meet him.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr

Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to provide a Notice of Motion to full Council after tonight's deputation of the Boom Foundation, that Mid Ulster Council writes to every other Council in the North of Ireland to highlight the good work they carry out, and ask for each Council to extend an invitation to the Boom Foundation for a presentation to raise awareness around Sarcoma.

That Mid Ulster District council also provides further ways of Highlighting the Booms Foundation tremendous work to the wider public.

Matters for Decision

D028/20 Draft Response to Foras na Gaeilge Consultation Document – Strategic Direction for Foras na Gaeilge 2020 – 2025

The Head of Culture & Arts presented previously circulated report and sought approval to issue previously attached submission (appendix 2) to Foras na Gaeilge in response to the Public Consultation on the Strategic Direction for Foras na Gaeilge 2020-2025 (draft document).

Councillor McNamee said that he was aware of an increase in Irish Language speakers but a decline in teaching in mainstream schools and was glad that this was being highlighted within the response.

Councillor Monteith referred to the response at C2 of the document and said that he welcomed the increase in Irish language but felt that Foras na Gaeilge should have a more strategic focus in this regard. He said that within his own area the local GAA was developing the language. Consideration should be given to the support of urban Gaeltachts and to signposting within the Irish Language Sector. He felt that there needs to be a more strategic direction provided by Foras na Gaeilge, towards something more stable and sustainable.

Councillor Monteith also referred C5 of the document regarding courses/classes and said there was a need for a more strategic approach, to make it easier for people to avail of refresher courses as there seemed to be a flatline once you go so far and no further option or no easily identified option for progression. There was a need for an easier identified path to follow for this wishing to develop their Irish language.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Milne and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council, subject to the above amendments, to approve the draft response to the Strategic Direction for Foras na Gaeilge 2020-2025 (Draft) on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council.

D029/20 Heart of Ancient Ulster Landscape Partnership Update

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report to update on the Heart of Ancient Ulster Landscape Partnership project and sought approval to submit a Stage 1 development application to Heritage Lottery Funding.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to contribute a maximum of £3,000 to Fermanagh and Omagh Council towards the preparation and submitting a stage 1 development application to Heritage Lottery Fund.

In response to Councillor Clarke's query regarding Future Search Programme, the Director of Business and Communities advised that he had been in discussions with

the Director of Derry City Council regarding the recruitment of an Officer which was unsuccessful. He said that it was anticipated to re-advertise for a candidate one last time, but it could be difficult as staff wouldn't want to give up their job for a seconded post for a year. He concluded by saying that Causeway Coast and Glens, Derry City and Strabane, Mid Ulster and Fermanagh and Omagh made a commitment to this but if needs be it may be an issue of moving forward without certain Councils.

D030/20 Economic Development Report – For Decision

The Head of Economic Development presented previously circulated report which provided an update on key activities as detailed below:

- **Business Improvement District Feasibility Study (Final)**

Councillor Molloy said that the recent engagement with Reval 2020 and the impact for businesses within Mid Ulster, he would be happy to support the recommendation of not proceeding.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Mid Ulster 5 Towns BIDS Feasibility Study (Executive Summary) recommending that Council do not pursue BIDs in any of its 5 towns at this juncture.

- **Renewal of Membership with NI Chamber of Commerce**

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Corporate Membership of NI Chamber of Commerce costing £2,500+Vat for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2020.

In response to member's query, the Head of Economic Development advised that within item 3.2 of the report, it highlighted a variety of supports provided by the Chamber to organisations who subscribe. She said that Council Officers are in regular engagement with the Chamber to promote events and programmes that are available to businesses in Mid Ulster. Council also works alongside the Chamber every year to host a large business event in Mid Ulster which draws upwards of 100 business briefings and updates Council on upcoming funding opportunities.

Councillor Molloy referred to an email from traders in Moy in relation to the lack of carparking facilities which was having a major impact on the village. He stated that Moy was one of the busiest villages within Mid Ulster and was outstripping other small towns by 95% and said that it was up to us to try and help with this issue.

He proposed that the Council request that engagement takes place with Department of Infrastructure and CAMDA group within the village to try and find a favourable outcome.

Councillor Monteith seconded Councillor Molloy's proposal and said that it was important to take the lead and a launching pad as DEA Councillors. He said that Moy needed urgent attention as the village had received little to nothing from this Council and needed a long term vision as this would create an opportunity to try and move things forward, otherwise it would just seem as if the village was being left behind and an afterthought. He said that this was also failing strategic transport groups also.

Councillor Cuddy said that he supported the comments from the previous two Councillors and stated that Moy had great character and was a very attractive village which was always at the front within the previous Dungannon Council. He stated that it was up to this committee to try and get the issue of appropriate carparking facilities out of the starting blocks as Moy was a village to be proud of and deserved all the help it required.

D031/20 Community Development Report

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report and provided an update on the following:

- **Rolling Grant Awards – Good Relations and Local Community Festivals**

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Milne and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Rolling Grant Awards – Good Relations (£960) and Community Local Community Festivals (£3,460) as per grant recommendations at Appendix 1 of report.

- **Community Support Plan 2020 – 2021**

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Community Support Plan 2020 - 2021.

- **Good Relations Plan 2020 – 2021**

The Chair, Councillor Wilson declared in interest in Augharan Pipe Band as a member of Mid Ulster Pipe Bands Association.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Good Relations Plan 2020 – 2021.

- **Community Development Update**

Members noted the Community Development update.

Councillor Monteith advised that there was a need for further follow through for larger grants that include support for facilities, and to look at pricing structures for user groups which the Council is indirectly contributing towards. He said that it was vital that pricing for community usage was within a reasonable cost comparable between community locations/facilities.

The Chair agreed with Councillor Monteith's comment and said that it was important that there was equality for community accessing facilities supported by Council and pricing provided for value for money.

Councillor Milne left the meeting at 8 pm.

D032/20 Leisure and Outdoor Recreation Service Level Agreements 2020/21

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report and sought approval to agree proposals on Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the financial year 2020/21.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the:

- 1) Proposal to extend the scope of Muintor na Mointeach Ltd current Service Level Agreement and associated payment increase of £2,000 per annum.
- 2) Proposals on Leisure and Outdoor Recreation SLAs for the 2020/21 financial year only.

Councillor Ashton left the meeting at 8.01 pm.

Matters for Information

D033/20 Minutes of Development Committee held on 16 January 2020

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 16 January 2020.

Councillor Kerr referred to item D011/20 – Cappagh issues and enquired if there was any further update regarding discussions with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and if not, could a meeting be set up with them and make it a DEA wide meeting, with consideration being given to Councillors working full time.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that Officers had met with 3 official representatives from the Water Service who agreed that it would be good to work together to develop the area to include recreational activities. She said that over the next few weeks it was anticipated to organise a meeting with DEAs and

Fermanagh and Omagh Council to take this issue forward. She stated that the Water Service would not commit to handing the reservoirs over to the Council due to new legislation around reservoirs and the management around water matters. Councillor Cuddy advised that there was a short distance between the two reservoirs and enquired if funding was available, could consideration be given to turning them into a hydroelectric facility. He said that it was disappointing that this initiative was never progressed as it was discussed at length in the legacy Dungannon Council and was seen at the time as having great potential to generate free electricity.

D034/20 Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group

Members noted previously circulated report which provided Minutes of Tourism Development Group meeting held on 20 November 2019.

D035/20 Economic Development Report – For Information

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on matters related to Mid Ulster Skills Forum Update, Mid Ulster Skill Forum – OECD Workshop, Cookstown Bypass Scheme Minute 07.01.20, Chinese Consul General's Visit to Mid Ulster, Cypriot Business Delegation Study Visit to Mid Ulster, US Consul General's Visit to Mid Ulster, Christmas Trade in Mid Ulster Towns.

Councillor Monteith requested that a DEA meeting in relation to Ann Street Development be facilitated as a matter of urgency as this was raised before Christmas by Councillor Molloy.

The Director of Business and Communities agreed that this would be arranged.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items D036/20 to D043/20.

Matters for Decision

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| D036/20 | Review of Culture & Arts Facility Hire Charges |
| D037/20 | Development of Business Plan and Branding Review at Hill of The O'Neill & Ranfurly House Arts and Visitor Centre |
| D038/20 | Regional Minority Languages Bursary Programme 2020/21 and Irish Language Activity Funding Programme 2020/21 |
| D039/20 | Provision of Seasonal Security Guarding Services at Dungannon Park and Additional Sites as Required |

Matters for Information

- D040/20 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on
16 January 2020
- D041/20 Dark Sky Observatory Davagh – Brand Update
- D042/20 Seamus Heaney HomePlace International Linkages
Update
- D043/20 Procurement of a Contractor to Deliver the Mid Ulster
Gearing for Growth Programme

D044/20 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____



RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE NEW PEACE PLUS CROSS BORDER EU FUNDING PROGRAMME FOR THE PERIOD 2021-27

February 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mid Ulster District Council (the Council) welcomes this opportunity to respond to SEUPB's consultation exercise with respect to the plans for the new Peace Plus Programme, which will succeed both of the current 2014-20 PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

The combination of the PEACE and INTERREG type activities in a single programme is reflected in the name of the programme where "PLUS" represents the inclusion of wider economic, social and environmental activities.

The PEACE PLUS Programme will be delivered within a significantly changed landscape in NI with Brexit, new Stormont agreement and the implementation of Council led City / Growth Deals aimed at super charging economic growth.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF MID ULSTER

Mid Ulster is generally characterised by:-

- Its dispersed rural location in NI that straddles the border
- Rising young and elderly population
- Several pockets of acute deprivation exist in both its urban centres and rural areas
- Critical need for investment in both roads and digital infrastructure
- Little to no foreign direct investment
- Key local sectors of employment (manufacturing and engineering, construction, agri-food, hospitality, retail and ICT) which require targeted support to drive competitiveness
- A private sector led economy with a high dependency on SMEs.
- Skills and labour shortages in key local sectors
- Average weekly earnings below the NI average
- Below average employment in the public sector
- Town and villages struggling economically and socially
- Little / no cross border service cohesion both in delivery and development terms

The area represents a population of more than 145,000 across 1,714 km², i.e. 14% of the NI land mass and is the fastest growing Council area in Northern Ireland (NI) - its population is expected to grow to 165,000 by 2030. The Mid Ulster region is home to over 9,000 small businesses, which is the largest concentration of small businesses outside of the Belfast Metropolitan area.

With circa 700,000 people within a one-hour commute of the district boundaries, the area supports approximately 50,000 jobs, which are mainly concentrated within micro businesses and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). As the most entrepreneurial region in Northern Ireland, the Mid Ulster area contributes towards producing 7.3% of the region's total economic output (Gross Value Added is £2.075 billion). Its business base provides the lifeblood of the local

economy, whilst the skills and capabilities of its workforce are vital to its sustainability and growth.

3.0 CONTEXT

Mid Ulster District Council is one of eight Member Councils of the Central Border Region, which include Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon; Fermanagh and Omagh; and the counties of Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo. Moreover, the Council is one of eleven local authorities who occupy the Ireland/Northern Ireland border corridor, which is recognised as the sub-regional economic driver for NI within the Regional Development Strategy for NI.

The Council in partnership with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and Fermanagh and Omagh Council are currently in the process of developing a Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the Mid South West region. The RES will underpin the case for significant Growth Deal funding to the region announced by the UK government in October 2019 as well as complimentary economic initiatives. The Mid South West region (relative to the other City/Growth Deal regions in NI) has the longest proportion of the Border Corridor. As a result there are significant existing cross-border co-dependencies in our region (e.g. in areas such as trade, movement of people/ labour, agri-food tourism, inward investment and funding) which presents opportunities, risks and issues to consider, particularly in a post-Brexit era which is largely unknown in terms of impact in the short and medium term. Clearly, increasing the prosperity of the Border Region will consequently bring about a much wider regional multiplier effect.

In this context, it is the Council's view that the new PEACE PLUS programme should afford a central role for local government located along the border region and should seek to address dilapidation, poverty and unemployment in border areas through targeted economic regeneration activity and investment in infrastructure, which is essential to enhance mobility and strategic regional connectivity. Councils have a critical role in responding to and mitigating the impacts of Brexit on the Border Corridor; and driving the Border Corridor's longer-term growth and development in a transformative way, which is designed to address the specific challenges and opportunities that this brings for both Governments and the communities of the Border Corridor.

Councils on both sides of the Border are the key stakeholders in determining area-based priorities and therefore the PEACE PLUS Programme should be designed and aligned with locally led development plans/strategies and Growth Deals that can contribute to and support North/South cooperation on economic, social and environmental areas of mutual interest. Indeed the 'Community-Led Local Development' principle should be advocated across all policy objectives in the new PEACE PLUS Programme. Such an approach is crucial towards addressing the key disparities that exist within Northern Ireland and the Border Region and in particular the specific needs of the Mid Ulster region and cross border partners in the ROI.

The Council believes that the current INTERREG V Programme has been very much 'institutional' in being dominated by projects which are driven by central government departments on both sides of the border and there have been few opportunities for local delivery as a result. It is imperative that PEACE PLUS is not used by governments to finance their mainstream service and similarly that funding is not directed predominantly towards universities. By way of example, €198M of ERDF investment by the last Interreg Programme was channelled through academic institutions and government departments and agencies, rather than directly into struggling border towns, villages and communities that need it the most.

The Council was a partner in one project - Renewable Engine Programme (Total project cost: €6.1M) which was led by South West College. ICBAN secured funding for one project; Literary Tourism Project €1.9M and was a partner in a Digi2market project at €1.6M.

The Council's current Peace IV budget is £3.2M and an additional £5M was secured towards the Connecting Pomeroy Project.

4.0 THEMATIC FOCUS

The Council would comment on each of the draft policy objectives as follows:-

Policy Objective 1: Smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation – *this objective focuses on boosting the capacity of the region, the uptake of advanced technology, the growth and competitiveness of the SME Sector and improving digital services.*

The Mid Ulster region straddles the border and is a highly entrepreneurial, private sector led economy and the Council welcomes the focus of this particular policy objective. Despite the area's high concentration of SMEs and above average concentration of activity in advanced manufacturing, there is a need to foster higher levels of innovation, R&D and enabling advanced technologies e.g. AR and VR.

Assistance in the form of business support mechanisms such as training and mentoring programmes at a local level to help SMEs grow and develop is required, as well as building the capacity of others to take the first step towards entrepreneurship.

Sectors such as manufacturing, engineering, agri-food, construction, retail, hospitality and ICT contribute significantly to the economy of Mid Ulster. Going forward therefore, it is critical that a broad range of SME's from these sectors receive support to consider ways of becoming more innovative and export orientated, thus driving growth and productivity. The Council believes that a key component of driving economic development and growth is the provision of assistance for capital programmes to acquire and develop modern business support infrastructure (Business Parks, Innovation Centres and Digital Tech Hubs).

The support and further development of the SME sector will address issues of economic inequality and enable sustainable economic and social development within the Border region, through increased opportunities for people to obtain employment, in a post Brexit era.

Moreover, future proofing the skills base in Mid Ulster is a top priority as skills and access to labour are both a major current and future constraint to growth and competitiveness.

Policy Objective 2: A greener, lower carbon Europe – *this objective focuses on promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaption and risk prevention and management.*

Electricity supply and the cost of energy is a real constraint for businesses in Mid Ulster and the border region and interventions are needed to incentivise green energy, perhaps via localised and shared green energy production at new business parks referenced above in policy one.

The focus of this policy objective should be inclusive of all opportunities for green innovation and target support to promote resource efficiency among SMEs. This would provide an opportunity for the private sector across Mid Ulster and the border region to make a positive impact on the environment.

The potential exists under this policy to improve water and waste treatment which is a major constraint on housing and on the development of serviced industrial land in Mid Ulster. This issue poses potential threats to the environment and delivery of the 'green agenda'.

There is a need for enhanced support for the development of renewal/alternative energy sources drawing on the assets of the region. For example, Mid Ulster with its natural landscape has the potential to be sustainable through utilising its natural assets. Therefore, investigating

and harnessing the potential of hydro-electric power as an alternative source of energy is one which should be strongly considered for inclusion within this policy objective.

Policy Objective 3: A more connected Europe – *this objective focuses on enhancing mobility and strategic regional connectivity*

Following decades of underinvestment in infrastructure across the border region, there is potential under this objective to address key roads transportation infrastructure priorities including improved connections between the border region and key urban centres north and south. This includes upgrading roads as appropriate to facilitate necessary cross border linkages and access to services.

In particular, there is a clear need for providing connections and the development of a number of new roads, including the A29 Dungannon and Cookstown bypasses to ensure the border region is connected on an East-West axis and North-South basis.

Mid Ulster has the second worst broadband coverage in NI and therefore, the Council would support broadband enhancement across the region – with an emphasis on fibre and addressing key deficits in high speed broadband provision across the border region ensuring that existing limitations in provision do not become barriers for future provision.

The potential also exists for ‘innovation projects / hotspots’ in selected areas with higher capacity (e.g. 5G networking) which have the potential to bring higher connectivity benefits to a larger critical mass of economic activity. These hotspots will help make locations ‘technology ready testbeds’ capable of attracting a cluster of companies and related investment.

This policy objective should offer scope to improve access to services to allow businesses to operate more competitively, on a local, national and international level.

In addition, investment in environmentally friendly solutions including the establishment of additional cross-border Greenways and connected Blueways would have multiple benefits including increased community cohesion.

Policy Objective 4: A more social Europe – *this objective implements the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare. Actions on community and social cohesion would also be supported under this Policy Objective. N.B. All of the PEACE activities must be within this objective.*

Our research has shown that skills and access to labour are both a major current and future constraint to growth and competitiveness in Mid Ulster. However, the Council is in a strong position to target skills needs of priority/emerging growth sectors through the industry-led Mid Ulster Skills Forum, which have been established to bring a collaborative dynamic between local businesses, colleges/universities and industry sectoral bodies. The Council believes that skills and labour shortages can be addressed to meet the European Pillar of Social Rights through providing opportunities for equal access to skills training, apprenticeships and leadership development. This will add value by improving labour mobility and having better gender opportunities, equal rights, social protection and working conditions.

The Council understands that the European Social Fund (ESF) will be implemented under the new Programme at 100% funding which will reduce the need for match funding.

There is potential to develop key cross border quality healthcare initiatives to address health inequalities and maximise use of existing resources and buildings could include the delivery of joint health clinics, shared GP facilities and Outpatient clinics. It will be important that the programme seeks to deliver sustained health and well-being improvements, particularly to those “hard to reach” disadvantaged groups in areas of high deprivation. Such actions would

contribute to the promotion of social, economic and regional stability in NI and the ROI border region.

Specific comments in relation to greater peace and reconciliation through community and social cohesion:

At a local community level

The Council believes that community and social cohesion at a local level would be best facilitated and delivered through the existing Good Relations Programme (Council partner with Executive Office). Good Relations has been very successful in delivering on TBUC (Together Building a United Community) under the themes of: Shared Space, Children and Young People, Cultural Expression and addressing hate crime. These are central to building positive relations and creating shared space within our communities. The delivery through the Good Relations Programme would provide value for money and add value with regards to targeting need and engaging vulnerable communities with low capacity, whilst still meeting the regional policy of TBUC (and PEACE PLUS principles).

In learning from Peace IV it is important that the new PEACE PLUS Programme give consideration to key principles and outcomes and not setting restrictive targets regarding engagement and contact time. Whilst it is important to bring people and communities together, it is still recognised that there are times when communities are clearly demonstrating they are moving forward and particularly in relation to the development of shared space. For example if a community is prepared to develop shared space through removal of graffiti, emblems, bonfires and reimaging art pieces; these are key outcomes for peace without the need to have cross community contact hours. Local delivery should concentrate on changing places and space for wider society.

Children and young people

The Council is of the view that peace building activities for children and young people should be delivered through our schools and Education Authority (EA) Youth Division. There are existing projects such as the Signature project and EA Youth cross community leadership programme, where PEACE PLUS could add real value. Delivery within school time is important to give as many children and young people as possible the opportunity to develop cross community friendships.

Education and Social Mobility

It is important under PEACE PLUS to consider the wider implications of people and society when engaging in peace building. Bringing people together has a role; however, a greater priority is social mobility through economic opportunity; through creating the environment and conditions to develop such opportunities.

The Council is of the view that the new Programme needs to give consideration to the overall outcome of what it is seeking to achieve and a more strategic direction is required. PEACE PLUS should concentrate on the strategic issues impacting on peace; including social mobility and poverty, which are impacted by education (including skills) to access economic opportunities. The wider environment to support people in education and long-term impact on change is also important including housing, environment etc. Delivery should be through a number of strategic organisations through co-design via community planning and focus investment on priorities and in particular education (education not just formal but education through skills development).

The new Programme should not seek to tinker at the edges of society in terms of addressing a peaceful society through small programmes, but focus on establishing a society where all people have the best opportunity in life through education (and skills) to access job opportunities alongside the creation of an environment where our services and spaces are shared and open to all (developing shared spaces and services).

There is evidence to that if you change the social mobility of people through interventions to support greater opportunities and life choices both for the individual and through a shared environment this opens up to new opportunities and a more peaceful society.

A Shared Environment

Similarly cross border connections cannot be about bringing people together on programmes it is the larger strategic infrastructure that will create sustained contact and real engagement between areas and communities. Examples include: the Ulster Canal, road links, shared services, creating shared spaces at our border communities.

Policy Objective 5: A Europe Closer to its citizens – *this objective seeks to foster the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives. (These initiatives can focus on Tourism, Cultural Heritage, community facilities and security in urban areas).*

The Mid Ulster region is facing challenges with the declining health of our town centres and villages as a result of online shopping and out of town shopping. These urban and rural centres play an important role in bringing citizens together and providing a social and community focal point for people all ages. However, they need urgently to adapt, transform and find a new focus in order to survive. The PEACE PLUS Programme provides an opportunity to enable the development and reimagining of these centres as multi-functional places with a diverse offer, which contribute to the economic performance of the area as a whole. Investment in developing 'shared spaces' will contribute to peace and reconciliation.

It is noteworthy that local government is requesting the transfer of "Regeneration" powers and budgets from the Department for Communities. Such powers would enable Councils to maximise the potential funding under this particular policy objective.

The Council welcomes the inclusion of Tourism and Cultural Heritage focused initiatives under this proposed policy objective. Consideration of Tourism and Cultural Heritage initiatives under PEACE PLUS will allow for greater scope to develop cross border strategic Tourism and Cultural Heritage focused projects and initiatives that would include linkages of heritage product and marketing and promotion of tourism and cultural heritage product, on a cross border basis. This will further enhance and develop the tourism potential of the region and foster learning and cooperation between areas within the region that share common tourism and cultural heritage product.

Significant work has been undertaken over the last several years in terms of the development of linkages and partnerships within the recognised main Ancient Clans of Ulster. Under Policy Objective 5 of the PEACE PLUS Programme, these partnerships should be further enhanced and developed to ensure strong linkages between clans and areas within the region that will work together to develop projects and initiatives on a cross border basis, within the nine Counties of Ulster which will enhance and develop the Tourism and cultural Heritage product that is unique to the region.

Literary Tourism is a rapidly developing market and Ireland is fortunate to be blessed with four literary giants. The development of the Literary Tourism offering within the region and connecting and celebrating the legacy of the four Nobel Laureates of Ireland – William Butler Yeats (1923), George Bernard Shaw (1925), Samuel Beckett (1969) and Seamus Heaney (1995) should be further developed through tourism and Cultural Heritage initiatives supported under Policy Objective 5 of the PEACE PLUS programme. By enhancing the visitor experience, bringing the writers works to life, placing visitors in the landscape, in the communities, that inspired so much of their work, will further enhance and support the development of Literary Tourism and the Cultural Heritage offering on the island of Ireland and will contribute significantly to the social and economic stability of the region.

The focus of this policy objective should also allow for further consideration of significant cross border strategic tourism and cultural heritage projects such as the restoration of the Ulster Canal. The Ulster Canal is one of the last major waterway projects awaiting restoration on the island of Ireland. Most major waterway routes have been restored or are undergoing restoration. The Ulster Canal is a 93km (58 mile) stretch of disused waterway running north east from lower Lough Erne in south Fermanagh to southern Lough Neagh. Historically, the Ulster Canal linked the Erne system and the Lough Neagh basin. It originally passed through, or close to, Clones, Smithborough, Monaghan, Middletown, Tynan, Caledon, Milltown, Benburb, Blackwatertown, Moy and Charlemont. Along the way it also passes through counties Cavan, Monaghan and Tyrone, and its total route is about evenly split between the two parts of the island. The re-opening of the Ulster Canal is seen as a major cross-border infrastructural project with broad political, Government and community support on both sides of the border.

The Ulster Canal has been characterised as the “missing link” in Ireland’s canal systems, allowing passage between Coleraine, Limerick, Dublin and Waterford. The original route of the Ulster Canal ran for 93km linking the Erne system and the Lough Neagh basin. The Council believes that the inclusion of Tourism and Cultural Heritage under this policy objective would allow for consideration of this and other significant cross border projects particularly those with a broad reaching strategic value and which contribute to the promotion of social, economic and stable society within the region.

There is also an opportunity to deliver cross border tourism projects by co-operatively branding the Sperrins and Donegal highlands.

Finally, the Council identifies this policy objective as an opportunity to allocate sizeable funding towards local and regional programmes and projects.

5.0 Programme Administration

It is important that future funding has a shorter ‘lead-in’ time from Application submission to provision of funding to facilitate a longer period of preparation and delivery, which will maximise the impact and benefit of projects.

Further efforts to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries are necessary. A more simplified appraisal and decision-making system reducing unnecessary bureaucracy should be agreed.

Accountability is very important and there must be the proper safeguards in place. However, a balance needs to be found between enabling an initiative to be implemented more efficiently and the administrative procedures required from an accountability perspective.

6.0 RESPONSE SUMMARY

The design and development of the new PEACE PLUS Programme provides what may be the last opportunity to learn from previous programmes and develop an improved programme that will produce real and sustained economic growth to underpin a peaceful society post Brexit. The new Programme should be innovative and help to ensure delivery of key local investments into the region using a strategic, collaborative approach with local government at the forefront of its delivery. The Council is willing to work with other partners in central government and transnationally to develop a regional approach to securing Peace Plus investment in the region.

The Boom Foundation



Support and Information
close to home

Is it Sarcoma?



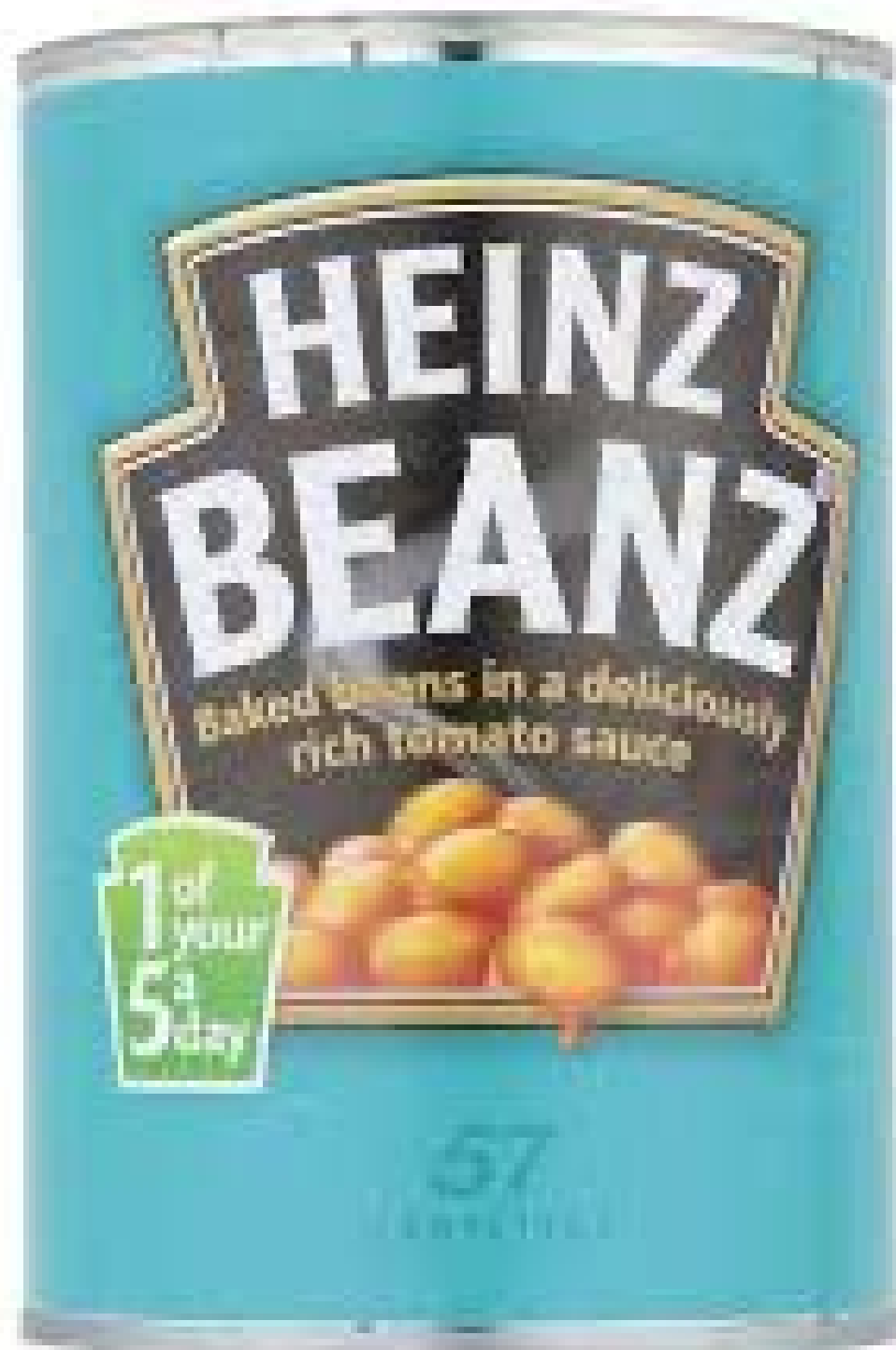
Uncommon cancers that can affect **any part** of the body, on the **inside or outside**, including the muscle, bone, tendons, blood vessels and fatty tissues.

15 people are diagnosed with sarcoma every day in the UK.

100 new cases in N.I. each year

100 different sub-types of sarcoma





Almost **eight in 10 people** (78%) diagnosed with sarcoma in the UK will live up to a year.

The average percentage of people **living three years** after being diagnosed with sarcoma in the UK is **64.5%**.

The **five-year survival rate** for sarcoma is **55%**.



Boom - who are we?



- ❖ Established April 2013
- ❖ The only charity in N.I. dedicated to sarcoma patients
- ❖ Small group of trustees and volunteers
- ❖ Raise money through voluntary donations only



Boom - what do we do?

- ❖ Provide support and information close to home through our unique **referral system**
- ❖ Liaise with medical professionals to fill the “gaps” in support for sarcoma patients and their families
- ❖ Hold the only dedicated sarcoma support group in N.I.
- ❖ Fund vital research through Sarcoma UK
- ❖ Raise awareness of Sarcoma through N.I.



Funding

How do you help?

Your £ goes....

50p to **vital research**



50p to **support those in NI affected by sarcoma**

- ❖ We raise money through voluntary donations only
- ❖ From March 2013 - March 2019 - we have raised in excess of **£600,000**
- ❖ **50% stays here in N.I.**
- ❖ **50% funds vital research**



What support?



- Financial support (e.g. travel expenses, private tuition for children, help with car modifications etc.)
- Annual winter fuel payments
- Boom 'Pack a Punch Day'
- Emotional support (e.g. counselling)
- Practical support (e.g. travel insurance)



Future of Boom

- ❖ Support for patients with upper limb amputation
- ❖ Striving for equality of treatment for N.I. patients
- ❖ Increased awareness throughout N.I. to help with early diagnosis
- ❖ Funding for further sarcoma specialist nurse
- ❖ Increase levels of support in rural communities - specialist end of life care
- ❖ Supporting research programmes to help find better treatment optionsand a cure!



Thank you for listening

