

A

Subject: Committee Terms of Reference

Reporting Officer: Chief Executive

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To advise Members on the Terms of Reference of the Development Committee.

2	Background
2.1	Members will be aware that Mid Ulster District Council at its meeting on 26 June 2014 established four committees to take forward the work of the Council during the transitional period.
2.2	<p>The committees established and functions aligned to each committee were as follows:-</p> <p>Policy & Resources Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Human Resources • ICT • Governance • Marketing & Communications <p>Environment Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Management • Cleansing • Building Control • Environmental Health <p>Development Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning • Economic Development • Leisure • Arts and Culture <p>Planning Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building • Area Plan preparations

2.3	<p>At the meeting on 26 June 2014, parties appointed the following Members to the Development Committee</p> <p>Cllr Frances Burton, DUP (Chair) Cllr Kate McEldowney, SF (Vice-Chair) Cllr Linda Dillon, SF Cllr Catherine Elattar, SF Cllr Caoimhe O'Neill, SF Cllr Dominic Molloy, SF Cllr John McNamee, SF Cllr James Shiels, DUP Cllr Anne Forde, DUP Cllr George Shiels, UUP Cllr Tony Quinn, SDLP Cllr Sharon McAleer, SDLP Cllr Trevor Wilson, UUP Cllr Barry Monteith, Ind Cllr Cáthál Mallaghan, SF Cllr Kenneth Reid, UUP</p>
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3	Key Issues
3.1	Members will be aware that a committee's terms of reference specify the functions with which the committee is charged and define the limits of its authority.
3.2	Collectively, the terms of reference for Mid Ulster District Council committee's should be all-embracing and mutually exclusive. The terms of reference of all committees should cover the whole of the council's area of operations without any overlap.
3.3	As it is not possible to foresee every eventuality that may arise it is necessary that the terms of reference of one of the committees includes responsibility for any matter not coming within the remit of any other committee. It is recommended that this requirement is added to the terms of reference of the Policy & Resources Committee.
3.4	Mid Ulster District Council has not delegated any authority to the Development Committee during the transitional period.

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>N/A</p>

4.2	<u>Human resources</u> N/A
4.3	<u>Assets and other implications</u> N/A

5	Other Considerations
	N/A

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members note the Terms of Reference for the Development Committee.

7	Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix A : Terms of Reference – Development Committee

Terms of Reference

Development Committee

To consider and make recommendations to the council on the following:-

Leisure
Sports Development
Parks Development
Open Spaces
Play Areas
Arts and Culture
Economic Development
Rural Development
Urban Regeneration
Tourism
Community Planning
Community Services
Visitor Attractions
Events
Advice Services
PEACE
INTERREG
DSD transferring functions
DCAL transferring functions

Date and Time of Meeting

Meetings of the Development Committee shall normally be held on the Thursday following the first Monday in each month at 7pm.

B

From: Development & Regeneration Working Group

Officer(s) Presenting: Adrian McCreesh, Anne-Marie Campbell, Iain Frazer

1.0	Purpose
1.1	Provide members with an update on transition working group activity during the Mid Ulster Statutory Transition Committee period and subsequent priorities for action throughout the Mid Ulster District Council transitional period.

2.0	Remit and Scope of Group: Transition Committee Period
2.1	Undertake scoping and baseline activities on a cross-council basis to gather the information necessary to inform the Transition Committee on critical decisions to be taken in convening the Shadow Council and establishment of the new Mid Ulster Council.
2.2	Identify discreet Development & Regeneration functions provided across the 3 Councils.
2.3	Confirm financial and non-financial resources required by the Development & Regeneration sections for shadow period to aid convergence.

3.0	Summary of Activity: Transition Committee Period
3.1	Establishment and facilitation of a monthly Development & Regeneration Working Group involving Councillors and Officers from each Council.
3.2	Establish a 'baseline' position of Development & Regeneration functions in each Council and identify similarities and differences on discreet services provided.
3.3	Preparation of report outlining the financial and non-financial resources required by Development & Regeneration Services for the Shadow Period.
3.4	Identification of key priority tasks that need to be undertaken to allow seamless transition of Development & Regeneration functions on 1 April 2015.
3.5	Contribute to Community Planning process – support provided to collect and collate data to audit and map existing communities, assist with event planning, etc. Further work ongoing which will contribute to the community planning process.
3.6	Organise a large 'Meet the Buyer' event in Cookstown on 4 March 2014 to provide Mid Ulster businesses with an opportunity to meet the Preferred Bidder to construct the Northern Ireland Community Safety College at Desertcreat. (Complete)
3.7	Delivery of 'Business Negotiation Masterclasses' to 10 local companies in Mid Ulster. The Masterclasses were delivered by Linkubator to assist business managers improve their negotiation skills. The initiative was fully funded by DEL and accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management. (Complete)

3.8	Development of an Economic Development Plan for Mid Ulster – consultant team appointed and desk research completed. Work now progressing to consultation phase.
3.9	Preparation of a tender specification to submit to DSD to seek funding to commission consultants to undertake a Town Centre Baseline Study and Healthcheck on five towns in Mid Ulster (Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera) based on population and Local Development Plan priorities. Subject to funding, this initiative will provide a useful tool to baseline the existing position of our town centres and assess their future vitality and viability.
3.10	Development of a new Foreign Direct Investment App which will be used as a platform to promote Mid Ulster to inward investors. Consultant appointed and work progressing to prepare and input data to the system.
3.11	Development of a new 'Mid Ulster Business Directory' to provide details of local businesses in the district. It will be technically advanced to permit 'searches' for business type, location, size etc and will be developed in accordance with data protection regulations. Work progressing and officers are exploring the option of using a 'graduate' to assist with the collation of business data across Mid Ulster.
3.12	Mid Ulster Advice Services – Review of Current Provision. Audit Completed of Magherafelt Advice Services. Similar audit to be completed in Cookstown and Dungannon in July 2014.
3.13	Support to Community and Voluntary Sector – Audit of Grant and Financial Assistance.
3.14	Rural Development Programme – initial discussion to collate information with local DARD officials.
3.15	Peace IV Plan and Interreg V – consultation attended and draft report produced 27 June 2014.
3.16	Preparation of a tender specification to develop a Mid Ulster Tourism Plan – to be progressed at an appropriate stage within the Community Planning process.

4.0	Working Group Priorities : Mid Ulster DC Transitional Period
4.1	To work towards completion of the first Mid Ulster Community Plan.
4.2	To procure and agree delivery of Advice Services for Mid Ulster.
4.3	To reach an agreed Grant-Aid policy for Mid Ulster.
4.4	To negotiate and agree with DSD a planned approach for Urban Regeneration, Community Development and Neighbourhood Renewal, including securing agreement with DSD on future of Environmental Improvement Schemes in Mid Ulster.
4.5	To prepare an Interim Economic Development Plan for Mid-Ulster (2014-2016).
4.6	To commence discussions regarding a new Mid Ulster Rural Development

	Programme (2014-2020) and Peace IV Plan (2014-2020).
4.7	To input and shape the content of future European Programmes, including Interreg V, ERDF, ESF etc and maximise all funding opportunities for Mid Ulster District.
4.8	To ensure that a regional wide arts & cultural quarterly programme is available to all residents/patrons from Autumn 2015 (this needs to be prepared and agreed in final quarter of 2014/15).
4.9	To work towards completion of a Good Relations Strategy for Mid Ulster.
4.10	To work towards completion of a new Tourism Plan for Mid Ulster.

5.0	Forward Work Plan to 1 April 2015
	To works towards the completion of the following actions by 31 March 2015.
5.1	To provide necessary input data and evidence towards ongoing preparation of Mid-Ulster Community Plan.
5.2	To secure through procurement an agreed provider for Advice Services across Mid-Ulster, commencing 1 April 2015.
5.3	To develop and agree our approach towards Grant-Aid consideration and allocation across Mid-Ulster, commencing 1 April 2015.
5.4	To finalise discussions with DSD on Urban Regeneration, Community Development and Neighbourhood Renewal with a view to having an agreed approach in place commencing 1 April 2015. Additionally, determine the viability of progressing four Environmental Improvement Schemes in Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Coalisland in 2014/2015 and explore an alternative approach towards utilizing any existing funding, if the EI schemes do not progress in the specified timescales.
5.5	To commence discussions towards shaping the structure and approach for the Mid-Ulster Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) and Peace IV Plan (2014-2020).
5.6	To input and shape the content of future European Programmes, including Interreg V, ERDF, ESF etc and maximise all funding opportunities for Mid Ulster District.
5.7	To complete an Interim Mid-Ulster Economic Development Plan for 2014-2016 (Dec 2015).
5.8	To pursue and secure match funding for the production of a new Town Centre Baseline Study and Healthcheck for the following Mid-Ulster towns (Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera).
5.9	To produce a new Mid-Ulster Business Directory.
5.10	To produce a new Foreign Direct Investment App for Mid Ulster.
5.11	To discuss and agree Town Centre Action Plans and associated funding for 2015/2016.
5.12	To complete a tourism plan for Mid Ulster.

5.13	To have an agreed approach for Arts, Culture and Heritage offering
5.14	To produce Tourism Action Plan for Mid Ulster.
5.15	To prepare a Good Relations Strategy for Mid-Ulster.
5.16	Review existing programmes to determine if any 'gaps in provision' will occur before future funding becomes available.

6.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Development and Regeneration Progress Report (June 2014)

Development and Regeneration Working Group Progress Report

Activity	Target Completion Date	Status
Confirm financial and non-financial resources required by Development and Regeneration sections for shadow period	18/12/13	Complete
Identify and provide prioritised tasks that need to be undertaken to allow seamless transition of Development and Regeneration functions	18/12/13	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a town centre baseline healthcheck on Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Coalisand and Maghera) 	30/3/15	Terms of Reference prepared. Awaiting decision from DSD on availability of funding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise a Mid Ulster 'Meet the Buyer' Event 	4/3/14	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Mid Ulster Tourism Plan 	31/10/14	TOR prepared. Issue of these has been postponed to be undertaken in conjunction with the Community Planning consultation process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to community planning process 	31/3/15	Information has been collated through the data capture template and is currently being reviewed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new Foreign Direct Investment App 	31/7/14	A draft framework for the app has been agreed. Content currently being obtained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Mid Ulster Business Directory 	30/9/14	Currently considering options on how to collate data for the business directory.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 'Business Negotiation Masterclasses' by the Linkubator Programme 	28/2/14	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Ulster Advice Service – review of current provision 	31/3/15	Magherafelt audit of statistics complete. Cookstown and Dungannon audits to be undertaken by the end of June 2014.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an audit of grant and financial support to the Community and Voluntary sector 	31/3/15	Audit complete and paper being presented at WG meeting.

Activity	Target Completion Date	Status
Develop an economic development action plan for Mid Ulster	31/12/14	Consultants currently preparing consultation lists and draft questionnaire for issue to businesses.
Identify discrete services provided by Development and Regeneration sections	31/1/14	Complete
Provide analysis of similarities and differences on discrete services provided by Development and Regeneration sections	31/1/14	Complete
Contribute to the development of a draft community plan	31/3/15	Data is currently being gathered for development and regeneration working group.
To shape the structure and approach for the Mid Ulster Rural Development programme and PEACE IV	31/3/15	Discussions ongoing with DARD and SEUPB. Consultation response prepared for Mid Ulster Shadow Council to be submitted by 29 July 2014.

From: Community Planning Group

Officer(s) Presenting: Adrian McCreesh

1.0	Purpose
1.1	To provide an update on the current progress with regard to the future development of a Community Plan for Mid Ulster.

2.0	Remit and Scope of Group: Transition Committee Period
2.1	As you are aware early preparatory work has commenced towards the future development of the Mid Ulster Community Plan. Many of you, through your participation in the eight Work Groups have already contributed significantly to this early process.
2.2	Our direction continues to be shaped by the Community Planning Foundation Programme launched in December 2013 and is further guided through the preparation of a Mid Ulster Phased Action Plan, prepared by the Development and Regeneration Work Group, subsequently updated and adopted by the Mid Ulster Statutory Transition Committee in January 2014. More recently I attended the first meeting of the DOE Community Planning Implementation Monitoring Group established to support our previous STC and new Shadow Councils to prepare for the introduction of the duty in April 2015.
2.3	The process is extremely fluid and one which will require a continuous learning approach from all of us within the Local Authority arena, our stakeholders and partners. I will share all learning and activity from across the new Clusters with the STC and work groups at every opportunity and will openly invite regular feedback from all involved in this early process.

3.0	Summary of Activity: Transition Committee Period
3.1	Approach
3.1.1	A governance structure has been established and agreed with our recent STC and new CEO, designed to ensure from the outset, that initial preparatory work required is shared across each of the work groups thus ensuring inclusivity and as the plan process develops, a shared ownership and commitment towards its successful delivery. This structure will be continually reviewed by the new Mid Ulster CEO and is designed to be

	flexible and adaptable.
3.1.2	In adhering to the Community Planning Foundation Programme, our early steps have involved the process of scoping out the information already available to us, the subsequent identification of strategic gaps and taking appropriate steps towards addressing current and future data deficiencies.
3.1.3	The methodology to achieve this early “ALIGNMENT and SCOPING” part of the process will vary between the use of in-house expertise, utilising Departmental support through Community Places and commissioning professional support. All work groups have contributed to the initial design of the Template and will be involved in its completion through their respective Councils. Statutory Agencies will also be major contributors to this data capture process.
3.1.4	Community Planning capacity building has also commenced through initial engagement with staff, members and statutory agencies. Progress activity as per June 2014 is attached in Appendix 1.
3.2	An Inclusive Approach
3.2.1	Community planning challenges traditional ways of working and how we deliver services. Successful implementation elsewhere required the development of new attitudes, behaviours, skills and competencies. It also requires the formation of real, honest partnership working supported through meaningful and effective engagement.
3.2.2	It is critical therefore that as we embark upon this exciting journey, we do so in an inclusive manner, engaging internally at all levels and across the entire new Mid Ulster Council. All members and staff involved in the respective work groups were encouraged to participate fully during this alignment and scoping process. Future efforts will be supported through on going and relevant capacity building activities commissioned as and when necessary.
3.2.3	As we now engage Phase 2 of the suggested work plan, we are quickly moving towards converging our thinking and knowledge across the three organisations. Good progress has been made to date however this is merely the beginning of a process that will no doubt afford us challenge and opportunity in equal abundance.

4.0	Working Group Priorities: Mid Ulster DC Transitional Period
4.1	The Department has outlined the recommended steps that our STC and incoming Shadow Council should follow pre and during the shadow period, putting in place the necessary building blocks ahead of the statutory duty in 2015. Please refer to table below.

	Timescale	Responsibility	Focus of Activity
	PHASE 1 2013/14	STATUTORY TRANSITION COMMITTEE	Auditing and mapping Scoping and aligning Commence early awareness and capacity building
	PHASE 2 2014/15	SHADOW COUNCIL	Developing approach Building partnerships Refining processes, structures and defining outcomes
	PHASE 3 2015 ONWARDS	MID ULSTER COUNCIL	Agreeing vision, delivery and implementation Link to Corporate and Local Development Plan
<p>As we now engage Phase 2 of the suggested work plan, we are quickly moving towards converging our thinking and knowledge across the three organisations. Good progress has been made to date however this is merely the beginning of a process that will no doubt afford us challenge and opportunity in equal abundance.</p>			

5.0	Forward Work Plan to 1 April 2015
5.1	Please refer to attached appendix A

6.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix A: Progress & Forward Activity 2014-2015

Appendix 1

Progress & Forward Activity 2014-15

ACTIVITY	ACTIONS	STATUS
PREPARE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR STC APPROVAL	Issued to work Groups for consideration. Agreed by STC/ CEOs January 2014.	Continuous Review by Shadow Council/CEO
DESIGN/ COMPLETE DATA TEMPLATE	<p>Issued to all work groups for input. Revised version issued to each Council 23/6/14</p> <p>Shared data template with Planners Issue latest version to Stat Agencies 3/7/14</p> <p>Strategy/Partnership analysis across Mid Ulster Issue to Councils in July 2014 Collate and share with Consultants September</p>	<p>On-going process of updating data and information</p> <p>Responses incorporated</p> <p>Internal analysis by officers... recently commenced</p>
COMMISSION PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR DATA ANALYSIS	<p>Draft Terms of Reference issued to work groups 20/3/14.</p> <p>Considered and discuss with STC Mg Cmttee Shared with Planning Service Discuss/Share with Statutory Agencies</p>	<p>STC Updated 1/5/14</p> <p>Commission after discussions and input from Stat Agencies July 2014</p>
ENGAGEMENT		
Internal Process With Existing Work Groups	Morning/afternoon workshop.	First sessions completed. Plans underway to progress future activity with each key stakeholder
Internal Process With Council	Morning/afternoon workshop	

<p>External Process With Statutory Agencies</p> <p>Community Engagement Preparations</p>	<p>Morning/afternoon workshop.</p> <p>Public consultation events 7 DEA and 3 Town Events</p>	<p>Engagement Plan for September 2014</p>
<p>PLANNING SERVICE ENGAGEMENT</p>	<p>Share draft papers with DOE colleagues</p>	<p>On-going</p>

From:	Sport & Leisure Transition Working Group
Officer(s) Presenting:	Andrew Cassells, Liam Glavin, Ken Barrett

1.0	Purpose
1.1	Provide members with an update on transition working group activity during the Mid Ulster Statutory Transition Committee period and subsequent priorities for action throughout the Mid Ulster District Council transitional period.

2.0	Remit and Scope of Group: Transition Committee Period
	Undertake scoping and baseline activities on a cross-council basis that will gather the information necessary to inform the Transition Committee on the critical decisions to be taken in convening the shadow council and establishment of the new Mid Ulster Council by 2015;
2.1	Identify and provide discrete services provided in Sport & Leisure sections across the 3 Councils
2.2	Identify and provide prioritised tasks that need to be undertaken to allow seamless transition of Sport & Leisure functions on 1 April 2015
2.3	Confirm financial & non-financial resources required by Sport & Leisure sections for shadow period to aid convergence
2.4	Provide report on similarities and differences on discrete services provided by Sport & Leisure sections across the Council

3.0	Summary of Activity: Transition Committee Period
3.1	Have identified and produced “baseline information” with regard to the Sport & Leisure Services across the 3 Councils.
3.2	Have identified and provided a list of prioritised tasks that need to be undertaken to allow seamless transition of Sport & Leisure functions on 1 April 2015.
3.3	Have confirmed financial & non-financial resources required by Sport & Leisure sections for shadow period to aid convergence.
3.4	Similarities and differences on discrete services provided by Sport & Leisure sections across the Council have been demonstrated in the baseline information and were reported by the Sport & Leisure STC Working Group.

4.0	Working Group Priorities: Mid Ulster DC Transitional Period
4.1	Harmonise Fees and Charges – Consider how harmonised prices may affect income.
4.2	Harmonise Policies and Concessions - Consider how harmonised policies and concessions may affect income.
4.3	Revenue Budgets – carry out a zero based budget exercise.
4.4	Produce proposals for harmonising terms and conditions for Sport & Leisure Service staff to be considered by the Human Resources Working Group.
4.5	Produce indicative Capital Programme.
4.6	Harmonise “front of house” IT and MIS systems.
4.7	Sports Development Baseline Information, Review and Draft Options.
4.8	Mid Ulster Council “Signature” Sports & Leisure Event – Mid Ulster Council Membership Scheme.

5.0	Forward Work Plan to 1 April 2015
5.1	Mid Ulster Council Membership Scheme – “approval in principle” to be considered at July 2014 Development Committee Meeting; detailed report to be considered at September 2014 Development Meeting.
5.2	Fees and Charges, Policies and Concessions - Harmonised Price List to be considered at November 2014 Development Committee Meeting.
5.3	Revenue Budgets – to be completed by November 2014.
5.4	Draft proposals for staff terms and conditions – to be completed by November 2014.
5.5	Draft Capital Programme – review in November 2014.
5.6	Harmonised IT (£11.4K) – completed by December 2014
5.7	Sports Development Baseline, Review and Options – to be completed by December 2014.
5.8	“Transferring Services” DCAL Water Recreation Sites (4) – consider issues and implications complete by December 2014.

6.0	Documents Attached
	None

C

Subject: Mid Ulster DC Sport & Leisure Membership Scheme Proposal

Reporting Officer(s): Andrew Cassells, Liam Glavin, Ken Barrett

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek approval to proceed with the development of a Mid Ulster Council Sport & Leisure Membership Scheme.

2	Background
2.1	During the term of the Statutory Transition Committee (STC) the Sport & Leisure Transition Working Group have, in conjunction with the Chief Executive and Members, been discussing the proposal to introduce a Membership Scheme for the Mid Ulster Council area. This Scheme could form a signature event which would assist in launching the Mid Ulster Council as a new and distinct entity.

3	Key Issues
3.1	Scope and extent of Membership Scheme arrangement i.e. the specific facilities (activities, classes etc.) in the 3 current council areas that are to be included in the membership package, and in particular Greenvale Leisure Centre.
3.2	Implications for existing contractual arrangements e.g. there may be amendments required to be made to the contract with Pulse re Greenvale Leisure Centre.
3.3	Convergence of “front of house” IT systems. Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt Council’s all currently use XN Leisure systems. These systems are all at different stages of development and are not yet “web-based”. Pulse uses a different system (Clublead). Systems will need to have a degree of compatibility to ensure they are customer friendly for our members.
3.4	Delivering “fair and affordable access” to sport & leisure facilities across the Mid Ulster Council area. The Department of Health, UK Physical Activity Guidelines (July 2011) states: “to stay healthy, adults aged between 19-64 should try to be active daily and should do at least 300 minutes of moderate intensity activity and muscle strengthening activities each week.” The only affordable way (without a significant decrease in prices) to promote regular use of our facilities is by providing “Household” Membership” similar to the current Pulse model. If Greenvale was not included in the package it would also seem unfair that people living in the Magherafelt District area would have to purchase 2 different membership packages to obtain “affordable access” to the facilities in this area.
3.5	Timetable and implementation. There is a considerable volume of work required to design an arrangement that would be acceptable to all parties involved and install a system to ensure smooth operation and transition.

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<u>Financial</u>
4.1.1	Cost of converging “front of house” IT systems for all 3 current Councils, while facilitating an element of compatibility with Greenvale.
4.1.2	Increased throughput and its impact on income and expenditure. It is hoped that the introduction of membership will increase income and assist in off-setting any increased expenditure that “transition” may incur. However it should also be noted that increased use of our facilities may also have some increased expenditure implications e.g. staff, utilities, chemicals etc.
4.2	<u>Human Resources</u>
4.2.1	Formation of Mid Ulster Membership Sales Team. A sales team will be required to take the lead with regard to membership sales.
4.2.2	Potential increased staff requirement as a result of increased throughput.
4.3	<u>Assets and Other Implications</u>
4.3.1	Potential increased wear and tear on building fabric, equipment and plant due to increased throughput of our facilities.
4.3.2	Potential increased requirement for utilities.

5	Other Considerations
5.1	Positive impact on Health and Wellbeing. A Household Membership Scheme would appear to be congruent with current “Health Guidelines” by facilitating affordable regular use the facilities in our Mid Ulster Council District area; and would ensure that this was offered in a fair manner to our ratepayers.
5.2	Direct debit collection. To make membership more affordable a direct debit facility could be offered. Again is service would require additional resources and could be either offered in-house or contracted-out.

6	Recommendations
6.1	That the Development Committee endorses the recommendation to Council with regard to the introduction of a Mid Ulster Council Sport & Leisure Membership Scheme, and tasks the Sport & Leisure TWG to bring back a detailed report to the September Committee Meeting.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	N/A

D

Subject	Response to consultation on new EU Programmes: INTERREG and PEACE
Reporting Officer(s)	Adrian McCreesh, Anne Marie Campbell

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider response to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) consultation document on the new EU Programmes for Cross Border Cooperation (INTERREG) and Peace and Reconciliation 2014-2020.

2	Background
2.1	The SEUPB is currently consulting on the future delivery of new INTERREG and Peace and Reconciliation Programmes. The programmes will be known as INTERREG V and PEACE IV.
2.2	It is proposed that the new INTERREG Programme, to be known as INTERREG V, will be delivered under four core priority areas (EU Priority Axis) to include Research and Innovation; Environment (Habitat, Species and Marine); Sustainable Transport; and Health.
2.3	It is proposed that the new PEACE Programme, to be known as PEACE IV, will be delivered with a distinct focus on Shared Education; Children and Young People; and Shared Spaces and Services; and civil society.

3	Key Issues
3.1	INTERREG
3.1.1	Funding streams should be accurately matched and delivered to address local economic, social and environmental needs specific to the area covered by INTERREG Funding, of which Mid Ulster District Council is positioned.
3.1.2	Response highlights that that the consultation document and new programme appears to predominately direct funding to resourcing government departments for 'mainstream activity'. It also indicates that community led 'bottom up' approaches to identifying and delivering local activities of benefit is absent from the draft programme.
3.1.3	It is proposed that it be designed to deliver a small number of high level and impact strategic projects.

3.2	PEACE
3.2.1	The PEACE III programme is currently delivered as a South West Cluster with a single council acting as the lead on the administration of the programme.
3.2.2	The new programme will focus on shared education; children and young people; shared spaces and services, civil society attracting an allocation of €45m, €50m, €90m and €30m respectively.

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<u>Financial</u> On both programmes further information and detail to be provided as programmes are developed and the role council will have within it.
4.2	<u>Human resources</u>
4.2.1	PEACE programme: on the basis of the document being consulted on will require Administration, which requires further guidance.
4.3	<u>Assets and other implications</u> N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	N/A

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members consider and adopt the draft response for submission with SEUPB.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix A: Response to Consultation on INTERREG and Peace and Reconciliation Programmes

MID-ULSTER COUNCIL

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE NEW EU PROGRAMME FOR CROSS BORDER COOPERATION (INTERREG) AND A NEW EU PROGRAMME FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION 2014 – 2020

June 2014

This response is submitted on behalf of the Mid-Ulster Council (comprising Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council and Cookstown and Magherafelt District Councils), to the SEUPB Consultation document on the new EU Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation (INTERREG) and a new EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE) 2014 – 2020.

INTRODUCTION

The Mid-Ulster Council welcomes this opportunity to respond to SEUPB's consultation exercise with respect to the plans for the new Interreg V and Peace IV Programmes.

The resources available in these new Programmes, if effectively delivered, have the potential to deliver significant economic and social benefits to the region and contribute to the Europe 2020 overarching themes of achieving Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.

In addition, each of these new Programmes will be administered within a significantly changed environment in Northern Ireland, with the implementation of the Review of Public Administration, bringing enhanced powers to Local Government.

INTERREG V RESPONSE: CONTEXT

To effectively deliver results, it is critical that future funding can resource and enable each region to adequately address the unique economic and social circumstances faced by SMEs in their area, e.g. in relation to productivity, enterprise, knowledge and innovation, transport and infrastructure, skills and employment.

Funding streams should therefore be able to assist in addressing local economic, social and environmental needs. 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 Mid-Ulster.

Mid Ulster and the Central Border Region is generally characterised by:-

- a) Its peripheral and dispersed rural location
- b) A number of multiple deprivation and new TSN areas

- c) Critical need for infrastructure investment in both roads and telecommunications
- d) Key local sectors of employment (manufacturing, engineering, agri-food, construction, retail, mining and quarrying etc) which require targeted support to drive competitiveness
- e) Little or no foreign direct investment
- f) Plethora of small businesses/high dependence on SMEs (98% of existing businesses in the Central Border Region are SMEs)
- g) Below average employment in the public sector
- h) High proportion of residents with no qualifications
- i) Average weekly earnings below the Northern Ireland average
- j) A strong dependency on the agricultural sector which is shrinking rapidly
- k) Towns and villages in Border Regions struggling both economically and socially
- l) Little / no cross border service cohesion, both in delivery and development terms

The Mid Ulster area comprises a population of 139,903; the Central Border Region has a population of just under 704,398, which is expected to grow to over 750,000 by 2022. It accounts for 1/5 of the land area of the island of Ireland and 1/10 of its population. Clearly, increasing the prosperity of the Central Border Region will consequently bring about a much wider regional multiplier effect.

8,150 businesses are located in the Mid Ulster area, with a total of 33,769 in the Central Border Region – with approximately 98% of these businesses employing fewer than 50 people. The provision of effective and targeted interventions for this sector is therefore critical to our region's future economic prosperity, especially following the recent but prolonged economic downturn.

Assistance in the form of business support mechanisms 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, construction, agri-food, retail and tourism contribute significantly to the economy of this region. 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 drive growth and productivity.

2. Council's Comments on the Focus of New INTERREG V Programme

The economic challenges of this cross border region are well documented and include the following priorities to drive economic development and reduce the inequalities within the region:

- stimulating economic regeneration,
- promoting employability and
- enhancing skills.

Accordingly, Mid Ulster Council's comments on each of the key Themes are as follows:

Priority Axis 1: Research and Innovation

- The Themes which were originally outlined by SEUPB for INTERREG V are different to those which are now being presented during this consultation. Council is extremely concerned about the removal of the 'Regeneration' Objective, which had previously been included. The only support now available through Interreg for SMEs is under Priority Axis 1 'Research and Innovation' where the objectives are:
 - To increase cross border research and innovation in two target sectors: 'Health and Life Sciences' and 'Renewable Energy' , and;
 - To increase the number of SMEs engaged in cross-border research and innovation activity
- With the focus on actions now confined to 'innovation' and 'research and development' Council believes that the proposed interventions within this Priority are far too restrictive and will have minimal impact in addressing the economic priorities of the Central Border Region.
- **It appears that this element of the proposed Programme will predominantly involve the Universities and Innovation Centres and will only support a very small cohort of those SMEs which are export and/or innovation-orientated. Effective and targeted actions to stimulate the economy and competitiveness of this Region would undoubtedly have a much wider impact across the island but without a much broader range of interventions within this Theme; Mid Ulster Council fear this will not happen.**
- There is evidently no scope for programmes to build the capacity of key sectors in the region to increase productivity and competitiveness, which would act as a stimulus for SMEs to take the next steps towards innovation / research and development.
- A key component of driving economic development is the provision of assistance for capital programmes. Within the Central Border Region a key economic need has been identified to promote sectoral 'clustering' initiatives and develop 'Centres of Excellence' for engineering and the food sector to stimulate innovation and research and development. Again, even though this is clearly compatible with this Priority's aims, it would appear that such an initiative will be almost impossible to fund through Interreg V as it is currently proposed.
- Urban Regeneration – Again, current Interreg V proposals fail to include this, a key driver of economic development. The economic health of Mid Ulster and the sub-region is underpinned by the vibrancy and strength of their urban centres. Indeed town centres act as the economic hub of our rural districts and no more so than in the Mid-Ulster and ICBAN sub-region where they play a pivotal role in regenerating local communities and providing thousands of jobs. Actions to drive the regeneration of town centres are critical and provide a true exemplar of economic development and regeneration at a local level. With the increase in e-commerce activity, it is vital that town centre businesses are assisted to become more competitive sustaining the

vitality of key provincial towns as well as improving the economic performance of the area as a whole.

- The objectives of this Priority also appear very similar to 'Horizon 2020' – it has been noted that Interreg V could build SMEs' capacity to develop potential Horizon 2020 applications; surely there is enough investment in this area already? This could potentially result in a disproportionate amount of support from both Programmes being delivered to a relatively small number of businesses.
- Telecommunications Infrastructure /Improved Connectivity - The Programme in its current format offers no scope to improve access to services to allow businesses to operate more competitively, on a local, national and international level. This approach does not meet the current or future telecommunication needs of our SME base.

The Central Border Region has real potential to become more competitive economically and socially, not just with other regions on the island but also internationally. However, the absence of any targeted support for SMEs or any scope for urban regeneration or capital initiatives on a cross border basis will undoubtedly result in Interreg V having a negligible impact at best on the economic development potential of Mid Ulster and the Central Border Region.

Priority Axis 2: Environment (Habitat, Species and Marine)

- The focus of this Priority is also much too narrow. Previous consultations had included the provision for support to promote resource efficiency among SMEs but this has been removed. With the EU drive for reducing carbon footprint and increasing efficiency, the Programme has missed the opportunity to provide support to the private sector across the region to make a positive impact on the environment.
- The Central Border Area, with its natural enduring landscape and distances from main energy supplies, has the potential to be sustainable through drawing on its natural assets. 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 Priority. The Central Border Region offers a number of areas where this could be piloted.
- This Priority also previously included the action of 'protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage' which is now omitted. The Central Border Region's cultural heritage and its high quality environment is a key asset. There is a strong potential for a number of regional cross border cultural heritage projects which would also stimulate investment in the region and promote and complement tourism initiatives.
- Once such potential activity was the development of the 'O'Neill's Trail Project' which would have involved linking at least six sites from across the region into a major

cultural heritage attraction. This project had not been progressed due to the Trail crossing county boundaries, so was ideally suited as an Interreg proposal. It is estimated that it would have attracted numbers of approx. 300,000 over 3 years and provided an economic boost to other sectors across the region including construction, hospitality, accommodation providers, retail and tourism amenities. This is a huge opportunity to facilitate sustainable development now also missed.

Priority Axis 3: Sustainable Transport

- In addition to good connectivity, the provision of good infrastructure is key to achieving balanced and effective regional development, facilitating good linkages between towns, rural areas and easy access to services. It is also a critical requirement to enhance the competitiveness of the region's businesses. The Central Border Region has limited connectivity to major roads and key arterial routes. Investment in the roads network is critical to support business development, increase labour mobility and facilitate access for visitors.
- There is a clear need for the development of a number of new roads, including the A5 / N2, A4/N16 and the A29 Link Corridor which has been identified by the Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan 2015. This route is the third designate cross-border route (Regional Development Strategy 2035) connecting north/south traffic. The A29 key arterial route running through Coleraine, Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon which presents huge difficulties for North/South traffic as it results in significant levels of congestion and delays, adding to commuter journey times and negatively impacting upon business performance. DOE Roads Service estimate that, for Cookstown alone, if a by-pass was available currently it is estimated to carry 22,000 vehicles per day using it, rising to 35,000 vehicles per day by 2029.
- More effective cross border commuter infrastructure would clearly result in achieve a more sustainable transport solutions, including reducing commuter travel time, improving cross border trade opportunities and attracting of investment to provincial towns (North/South) linked through the 'corridor'.

Priority Axis 4: Health

- Within the 'Health' Axis, it appears the opportunity to tackle a number of wider social well-being issues has also been omitted with the focus mainly now on supporting clinical activities.
- In previous consultations this Priority included actions such as, 'reducing inequalities in terms of health status' and 'support for physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities'.
- Resourced at €53m, this Priority had real potential to bring about significant improvements to the quality of life of those in the Central Border Region. Projects which had been suggested were in keeping with the EU ethos of a 'bottom up' community –led approach and included e.g. the provision of health support workers within communities to support individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices in their own

lives and give practical support to promote knowledge, skills and confidence in improving lifestyles. Health support workers would be employed from the local community and trained to focus on “hard to reach” communities where health inequalities exist to support individuals to make positive behaviour changes.

- Other potential key cross border health 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 is difficult to ascertain how the proposals within the document will deliver sustained health and well-being improvements, particularly to those “hard to reach” disadvantaged groups in areas of high deprivation.

Other Issues

- The Consultation Proposals make no reference to the providing of future funding for the cross border bodies. These bodies managed the regional promotion of the programmes, assessment and approval of projects, monitoring and evaluation as well as all aspects of management, in particular financial. They also worked with a wide range of key stakeholders from community and private sectors, central government and local government in inclusive structures.
In the ICBAN region to date, the delivery of Interreg IVA has contributed to:
 - 360 full time equivalent jobs created
 - 1800 businesses assisted
 - 4280 individuals from the Central Border Region received training and took part in courses.

Programme Administration / Management

- Future funding must have a shorter ‘lead-in’ time from Application submission to provision of funding to facilitate a longer period of delivery and maximise the impact/benefit of Programmes.
- Further efforts to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries are necessary. The proposals suggested to assist in reducing the administrative burden should help ease the verification process and therefore mean greater efficiencies in processing project claims. The flat rate proposals for (if appropriately managed) overheads and staff costs should also help ease administration.
- 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.

Interreg V Response Summary

On a variety of economic and social indicators, the Central Border Region is highly disadvantaged compared to other regions of Ireland and Northern Ireland; there is therefore

a need to address this inequality of economic and social outcomes between the Central Border Region and other regions and also to address persistent inequalities across the Region.

Council understands that the new Programme must have a more 'focussed' and 'concentrated' approach. However, in its current format it appears that it is directed predominantly at resourcing government departments for mainstream activity; it is not, in our view, driven by the local/community led "bottom-up" approach advocated by the EU. Instead we would suggest it is designed to deliver a small number of high level strategic programmes which will go no way towards addressing the many social and economic challenges of the Mid Ulster and Central Border Region and will fail to achieve balanced regional development, the key objective and driver of the Programme.

MID ULSTER COUNCIL

PEACE IV CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Context

The PEACE III programme in the South West Cluster has had a significantly positive impact in the South West region of Northern Ireland. In Phases 1 and 2, a range of projects were successfully delivered in the areas of children and young people, education, shared spaces and civil society. The programme phases had a strong cross-border element with the Decade of Commemorations programme bringing different communities together on a cross border basis. Monitoring and evaluation has shown the positive attitudinal change participants have made as a result of participating on the programmes delivered with the support of PEACE III funding. Attitudes have been challenged, tolerance increased and healthy connections made. This has resulted in new friendships being formed between different communities and spaces shared with others.

However, it should be noted that all this has been achieved within a volatile political environment and in spite of the many challenges that the administration of such a programme presented. The burden of the administration borne by the Lead Partner and the other Councils and organisations that delivered the PEACE III programme, was excessive and in many ways worked against the achievement of the desired PEACE outcomes. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council therefore welcomes SEUPB reviewing the administrative burden with a view to introducing measures that will reduce the pressures that the requirements place on Lead Partners.

Types of activity to be supported

Do you agree that the specific objectives and actions to be supported for the PEACE programme are appropriate to meet the needs of the cross- border region?

- a) Shared Education** – The SW Cluster, through its Local Action Plan, has delivered a number of programmes which were targeted at schools from all backgrounds. These successfully developed linkages between schools and children that built bridges and provided positive contact on a cross community basis. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council support the specific objective and actions presented under this theme as they have the potential to create significant opportunities for future joint working, sharing and collaboration between schools from all backgrounds and thereby contribute to improved educational outcomes.
- b) Children and Young People** – The SW Cluster has delivered a wide range of programmes that have been targeted at children and Young people from play group stage up to young adults. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council recognises the need for a strong connection between Council, Education Providers and the Youth Sector to deliver this theme. The Mid Ulster Council has an important role to play in the delivery of this objective and associated actions and strongly support the allocation of budget to Local Authority led Peace Action Plans.

The Shadow Council fully supports the objective of equipping young people with the necessary skills and attitudes that will allow them to more fully contribute to the creation of a more cohesive society. The Shadow Council would however highlight the importance of partnering with other statutory bodies and organisations that have a role in supporting children and young people and that the priorities of PEACE IV be included in their strategies and plans. Given the current economic situation in Mid Ulster and the difficulties that young people are experiencing in obtaining employment, the Shadow Council would emphasise the importance of providing courses and programmes that improve young people's employability e.g. young enterprise, apprenticeship schemes etc. The Shadow Council would support the promotion of this theme using Council functions such as sports and leisure, economic development etc. as innovative ways to engage Children and Young People and so achieve the theme's objectives. Other proposals the Shadow Council would make include:

- **Playgroup** support to encourage preparedness for Primary School, including diversity training. This could include payment for staff and resources.
- **Primary school** - use of specifically trained organisations e.g. Speedwell to ensure the match between diversity training and practical additions to the curriculum.
- **Secondary school** - specific training to include diversity but also relating to work place experience.
- **Disengaged young people** - out of school programme to assist young people gain skills to enter employment.
- Subsidised **apprenticeships** for young people in trades/ organisations additional to statutory provision.

c) **Shared Spaces and Services** – As a rural area, the Mid Ulster Council includes communities, from different backgrounds, that live side by side and do not interact on a daily basis. A strong need exists within the Mid Ulster area to create shared spaces that facilitate the integration of divided communities. The Mid Ulster Council will play an important role in delivering this objective through the provision of developmental programmes that will create innovative and creative ways for communities to use spaces thereby bringing them together. The Mid Ulster Council can also contribute to the delivery of the theme through the implementation of regeneration activities, and small capital developments that will create both shared urban and rural spaces.

Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council has utilised the concept of shared history on the historic site of Castle Hill/Hill of the O'Neill. This is a very successful vehicle to promote both Shared Space and increase understanding and awareness around important commemorative dates surrounding the Decade of Anniversaries. These are two practical examples, one of a capital development nature and the other of a programming/event nature. Both have been very successful in engaging wide sections of the two main communities in addressing the divisions in society and underpin the concept of Shared History-Shared Future. Given the impact of spatial

segregation, the notion of sharing should and has allowed for differing traditions expressing elements of their identity in a way that is sensitive to other competing identities. For example around important cultural dates and times of the year, allowance has been made for what would be deemed shared space to accommodate manifestations of identity within an agreed timeframe. This has been generally well received.

Programmes and events are an important part of embedding the concept of sharing and this has been most evident in the activity planning for the “Decade of Anniversaries”. This has presented a great opportunity for people to engage in history as a means of understanding our most recent period of conflict. Hearing differing perspectives to those that one would be accustomed to and emphasising the learning from the continuum of history in not looking at key events or anniversaries in isolation from everything else, has had many dividends in engaging a rich mix of people in connecting with our past and using this to inform the future.

The recent media attention around people/communities claiming ownership of resources (housing, play parks etc.) and services (education, health etc.) as belonging to them (local = ours) requires constant challenge. Attention must be drawn to addressing this narrow minded notion and promoting the fact that publicly funded amenities and services are open and accessible to all in society. Proposals the Council would make under this theme include:

- **Shared spaces** - provision of ‘hub’ type facilities for basic services and encouragement through funding for services to relocate into shared locations.
 - Linking this theme back to children and young people, **supporting play groups and colleges** through the provision of equipment, training etc.
 - The **ANIMATE** project acted as partnership demonstration initiative in this area, challenging myth, negative stereotyping and racist discourse. It could be revisited under this objective to deliver on concept of a shared society.
- d) **Civil Society** - The role of Civil Society cannot be understated in building Peace and Reconciliation. Given the significant role many community and voluntary sector organisations have made in contributing to building a better society for all, it is critical all sections are facilitated to play their part. The importance of recognising the cultural diversity within the two main community traditions, alongside the demographic changes that have taken place with increased ethnic diversity, present key opportunities to create cohesive communities.

All of the potential development programmes cited in the consultation provide a broad range of areas where Peace and Reconciliation activity can be embraced, including arts & culture, commemoration events, heritage & history, religion & faith, language, social inclusion/justice, conflict resolution/mediation, social enterprise, adult/community education & training, sports and leisure, enterprise, community development and leadership.

Sectarianism is one of the key defining factors of life in Northern Ireland, the Border Counties and to a lesser extent Southern Ireland. It is contextualised as a socio-political problem requiring both civil society and publicly elected representatives to play their part in its eradication. Our past history and most recent phase of violent conflict have resulted in significant communal segregation and divided communities who for a larger part live separate lives. This reality highlights the need for civic society to play its part in tackling the problem, especially the large civic institutions such as the churches, sporting bodies, cultural organisations, education and other sectoral groups in partnership with political leadership. To this end the role of local government will be paramount through its civic leadership functions to facilitate all of the various diverse sections of society in playing their part in striving to build a cohesive community free from prejudice and intolerance.

The SW Cluster has a strong track record in delivering programmes and working with groups of varying capacity, to address issues of isolation, polarisation, division, prejudice and stereotypes between and amongst different groups. This is evidenced by the achievements the cluster has made. The Cluster delivered a successful cross border programme that included projects targeted at promoting centenary commemorations in a peaceful and respectful manner. We have established the evidence that supports the positive impact these types of programmes can deliver. The Mid Ulster Council will have a team of officers with the experience, track record and knowledge to closely work with communities and groups that have varying degrees of capacity to create a more cohesive society. The Mid Ulster Council is best placed to deliver this theme through their PEACE Action Plan and would propose programmes that include:

- **Civic Leadership programmes** for young people and community leaders.
- **Development programmes** that focus on events, history, arts and culture.
- Innovative programmes targeted at **young adults** not engaged in work or training to attract them back into employment.
- Development of **local partnerships** to provide them with the capacity and resources to address local problems.
- Programmes that integrate and celebrate **ethnic minorities**.
- **Shared history and shared future programmes** that link to the upcoming centenary of commemorations.

Do you agree that the budget allocation is appropriate for the following objectives?

- **Shared Education (€45m)**
- **Children and Young People (€50m)**
- **Shared Spaces and Services (€90m)**

- **Civil Society (€30m)**

The Mid Ulster Shadow Council would encourage that the allocation of funding to local authority led Peace Actions Plans is maximised. Low capacity groups are inhibited from accessing funding from some programmes. The Shadow Council consider it essential that adequate resources are awarded to the Council. This will allow them to support and engage low capacity groups and involve them in peace building activities that they may otherwise not have had the opportunity to.

Measures to reduce the administrative burden

Do you think that the proposals are adequate in terms of reducing the administrative burden for beneficiaries?

The Mid Ulster Shadow Council welcomes any proposal that will reduce the administrative burden for Council and beneficiaries. The systems that are currently in place are cumbersome and time consuming. The Shadow Council recognises that it is necessary to apply appropriate governance and protocols when spending EU funds. However our experience to date indicates that low capacity groups are inhibited from accessing funding because of the significant burden that the administration places on beneficiaries. The Shadow Council would welcome SEUPB working more closely with Lead Partners to develop systems that will reduce the administration burden. In relation to the proposals that have been made, the Mid Ulster Council would make the following comments:

- **Application process** – the development of an application and local action plan for the Mid Ulster Council region will require significant resources. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council would request that SEUPB provide technical assistance in the form of a budget to assist in the development of the local action plan. As was provided in PEACE III, an adequate budget is required, to ensure that the plan accurately reflects the needs of the area and that communities are fully involved in its development. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council would welcome an indicative budget for the Council led action plan with an explanation of the basis on which this is being allocated. It is also essential that guidance is provided at an early stage on the completion of applications.
- **Information on calls for grant aid** – The Mid Ulster Shadow Council considers the 40 weeks processing time for applications as excessive. It is not clear if this is in addition to the 3 months decision making timeframe stated at stage 1 of the application process. Given these timescales, it is unlikely that the Mid Ulster Council would have a Letter of Offer before late 2015. Given that the majority of activity under the SW Cluster Action Plan ended in December 2013, with a small extension into 2014, this would leave a period of almost 2 years whereby the communities in Mid Ulster have not been receiving programmes supporting peace building. There is a risk that due to the lack of support that communities currently have, that the good work which has been done will be undone and communities will lose interest if activity is not kept going.

The delay in getting PEACE IV operational will also force a shortening of the time available to deliver programmes on the ground with the pressure being on spend in a short period of time. The nature of peace building is such that sufficient time must be provided to realise the full benefits in the longer time. This will not be achieved if delivery of the programme is delayed due to the assessment processes.

- **Match funding** – The Mid Ulster Shadow Council would have difficulties with the provision of 15% match funding towards the Council led Local Action Plan. Previous PEACE programmes have been 100% funded. This has allowed low capacity groups and organisations who would not normally be involved in peace building, to benefit from and contribute to achieving peace outcomes.

In addition, the Mid Ulster Council has yet to establish its budgets and would not be in a position to commit the provision of match funding for a 7 year programme at this time. The requirement for communities or indeed other statutory partners to provide 15% match funding themselves, would act as a significant deterrent in encouraging them to participate in the programme. This will ultimately adversely affect the benefits that can be realised and the impact of the programme overall.

- **Project duration** – The Mid Ulster Shadow Council is supportive of projects being up to seven years in duration without the need to resubmit applications. This will allow development programmes the time to adopt a community development approach which will progress communities at the rate they can absorb. However, the Shadow Council would emphasise the need for plans to be flexible as the need may change due to differing local circumstances and unforeseen events. This may require programmes to change or delivery approaches to be reconsidered. It is essential that the approval process for any changes is responsive and not time consuming.
- **Monitoring** – The Mid Ulster Council welcomes the reduction in the number of indicators to no more than three and the move away from the Aid for Peace approach. However the Council would be concerned that failure to achieve these targets would result in financial penalties. Political situations may arise that result in it being difficult to achieve the targets. This would be outside of Council's control but does present a financial risk to Council. Further clarification would be required from SEUPB on the achievement of outputs against a Letter of Offer and the financial implications of this to Council. The Shadow Council would also reiterate that the indicators must also be relevant, useful and measureable.
- **Budget Structure** – The Mid Ulster Shadow Council would welcome a simplified budget structure with a limited number of categories of eligible expenditure. This will provide the Lead Partner with greater operational flexibility as they will not be required to seek approval for changes to sub budget lines. This approach should however also be reflected in having a simplified reporting structure to SEUPB in terms of budget reporting and the level of sub project reporting.

- **Simplified Costs** – The Shadow Council welcomes the pro-active promotion and implementation of simplified costs. SEUPB must however provide clarification at the outset on what is included in the flat rate for overheads. More detail is also required on the unit cost approach in terms of when it will be applied, how it will be established and how it will be verified and agreed. The Shadow Council is concerned that it may not be able to fully reclaim the total costs of programme delivery using a unit cost approach. There are many valid reasons why outputs may not be achieved that are outside the control of the Council e.g. political unrest. This poses a significant risk for Council as they would have to fund the excess costs or have a penalty applied. Greater clarification would also be needed from SEUPB as to how the outputs will be verified and at what stage payments will be made to Council from SEUPB. For programmes with a long timeframe, it may be some time before the outputs are achieved. Consideration must be given by SEUPB as to how stage payments can be made to ensure the timely payment of costs.
- **Lead Partners** – The councils within the SW Cluster have proactively reduced the administration burden to final beneficiaries within the community and have applied a resource allocation model during Phase 2 of PEACE III. The Mid Ulster Council will aim to continue to reduce the administrative burden in PEACE IV also. However, Council must operate within its agreed governance and audit requirements. Many of the groups and communities that will participate in the PEACE IV programme will be low capacity. Officers will be required to ensure that adequate controls are in place to avoid any fraudulent activities. It may not be appropriate to adopt the same models with these types of groups as SEUPB would with a Council.
- **Verification** - It is unclear how unit costs will be applied to all programmes that the PEACE IV programme is likely to include. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council would be concerned about the level of detail that will be required in the verification of outputs and how the accuracy and reliability of data will be collected. It is unclear how the verification process will link to claims submitted to SEUPB as the achievement of outputs may only be realised some time into the programme. This may present the Council with cash flow difficulties if they are required to 'bank roll' the programme until the full realisation of outputs at the completion of the Council's Action Plan.
- **Letter of offer** – The issuing of letters of offer in Euro, will present the Council with an exchange rate risk. Due to market fluctuations, Council may have to supplement any letter of offer award at the time it is drawing down the funding. Given that the budgets for the new Mid Ulster Council have yet to be established, it will be difficult for the Council to factor this risk into its financial considerations. The Shadow Council would request that letters of offer are issued in sterling.
- **E-cohesion** - The existing database for the PEACE III programme has limited functionality. The system is unable to provide Lead Partners with management information to assist them in the management of the programme. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council would support the creation of a new database with improved functionality. The Shadow Council would emphasise the need for Lead Partners to be involved in the design and testing of any new database and that appropriate

training is provided in a timely manner. The database must be operational from the start of the PEACE IV programme.

The burden of the administration borne by the Lead Partner and the other Councils and organisations that delivered the PEACE III programme, was excessive. At this stage, and in the absence of guidance on how the proposed measures will be implemented, it is difficult for the Mid Ulster Shadow Council to see how the measures proposed will reduce the administrative burden. The Mid Ulster Shadow Council therefore would welcome further opportunity to work with SEUPB to review the administrative burden with a view to introducing measures that will reduce the pressures that the requirements place on Lead Partners.