

PEACEPLUS Expression of Interest Guidance Notes For

Theme 1

- Development of new or enhanced facilities within existing buildings, which will enable increased levels of cross community interaction and service provision.

Theme 2

- Development of new or enhancement of existing shared outdoor spaces which enable increased levels of cross community interaction and where possible capitalise upon natural assets.

Please note this is not a grants programme, Council will manage the technical requirements and procurement process on behalf of the successful applicant.

Applicants may only submit one application per theme.

Any projects selected through the EOI process are subject to SEUPB approval.

Applications are open from 12 noon, 8th January 2024

and close at 12 noon, 19th February 2024

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1. Overview

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council invite applications through an Expression of Interest from the community and voluntary sector (i.e. not-for-profit). This document sets out guidance for applicants applying through this process.

Council's purpose in identifying potential PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1 projects is to allow it to achieve its objectives in line with clearly identified local needs and within the parameters of Council's powers.

Theme 1.1 of the PEACEPLUS Programme aims to enable and empower local community partnerships to self-determine and deliver priority projects on a cross-community basis; which will result in improved, shared, and inclusive local services, facilities, and spaces; and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation. The Programme also aims to address issues of racism and sectarianism, increase social inclusion, and promote civic leadership.

The following needs were identified through the development of the Co-designed Local Authority Action Plan: more accessible community spaces, improved disabled access, upgrades to existing spaces so they can be better utilised, lack of 'neutral', 'safe' and 'hub' spaces for communities to use particularly in areas with no/limited facilities.

PEACEPLUS aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Empower local people to regenerate and transform communities on a cross community basis.
- Change how people feel about their local area.
- Change how people use their local area.
- Thriving communities should provide physical spaces in which people can spend time together, as well as receive vital services.
- Reflect the character and shared heritage of an area, its sense of pride and potential therein.
- Contribute to redressing poverty, inequality, and disadvantage.
- Prioritise most marginalised and vulnerable communities.
- Create pathways for increased levels of cross community interaction.

Council will seek to ensure that any successful applicant is:

- In line with Council's Corporate Strategy, the aims and objectives of PEACEPLUS and Council's Community Plan 2030.
- In line with the specific requirements of the PEACEPLUS programme.
- Able to meet a clearly identified need in line with PEACEPLUS requirements.
- Used in an effective and efficient manner and to demonstrate value for money.
- Not duplicated with other possible PEACEPLUS projects such as those under Themes 1.2 or 1.4

These Guidance Notes set out the process to be used in identifying potential projects and processes Council will use in assessing eligibility and suitability. Applicants should ensure that they have a sound understanding of the specific rationale of the PEACEPLUS programme to which they are applying and that their proposal responds to each of the criteria set out by Council. Council will only seek to obtain the minimum information necessary to assess an application. It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure that this information is provided in full.

Further Information on the PEACEPLUS programme and specifically Theme 1.1 can be found here: www.seupb.eu/peaceplus

2. Thresholds for each theme:

Theme 1

- Development of new or enhanced facilities within existing buildings, which will enable increased levels of cross community interaction and service provision. Minimum project value of **£50,000 up to a maximum of £100,000.**

Theme 2

- Development of new or existing shared outdoor spaces which enable increased levels of cross community interaction and where possible capitalise upon natural assets. Minimum project value of **£10,000 up to a maximum of £50,000.**

3. Eligible and Ineligible Expenditure

Eligible:

- Repairing and replacing existing structures e.g.: heating upgrade, replacement flooring, windows, kitchen, disability access or energy efficiency upgrades, walking trails and community gardens etc.
- Professional Fees associated with capital building works.

Ineligible:

- Rent / Rates
- Staff costs
- Running costs e.g. heat / electricity
- Maintenance costs
- General office equipment e.g. tables / chairs / stationery
- Retention
- As per Council policies

Organisations that are uncertain whether they are eligible for funding are advised to discuss this with the relevant Council officers before submitting application forms to minimise unnecessary effort.

The applicant should include 100% of costs associated with the project.

The applicant must indicate the amount required for their project, ensuring they do not exceed the lower and upper thresholds as identified in the Guidance Notes; this is part of the Basic Eligibility requirements. Applicants must also be aware that Council may fund less than the amount requested.

Costs should be outlined for every item of expenditure even where Council is not meeting the costs. Applicants should ensure costs are realistic and preferably based on quotes. Please note the final cost of the project is subject to procurement by Council however indicative costs at this stage are part of the essential criteria to ensure they fit within the programme requirements.

4. Points to consider before applying.

- Where applications are made for projects that are outside of the Council's legal power to provide funds (*ultra vires*), then such applications will not be considered.
- Please note this is not a grants programme, Council will manage the technical requirements and procurement process on behalf of the successful applicant along with associated payments.
- Applicants may only submit one application per theme.
- Any projects selected through the EOI process are subject to SEUPB approval.
- Council accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any expenditure or liabilities arising out of the applicant's project. Only expenditure procured and incurred by Council will be eligible.
- The budget should include any associated Professional fees, which will be publicly procured. Any fees incurred outside of the Council procurement process will not be deemed eligible.
- Applicants should be applying for 'spade ready' projects only.
- A mandatory requirement of successful applicants will be to participate in a follow up engagement programme and launch event with Council Officers.

5. Application process

Applications must be completed in full and returned along with any documentary evidence required by the closing date and time as stipulated on the application form. Applications can be submitted via email to peace@nmandd.org or via Council reception at O'Hagan House Monaghan Row, Newry or Downshire Civic Centre, Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road, Downpatrick.

Council may require additional specific information and therefore reserve the right to amend accordingly.

Any applications submitted without the necessary details, signatures or required attachments will be rejected and therefore it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all requirements are met at the initial Application stage.

Applications will only be considered from projects which can be completed by September 2027.

Projects that have passed the minimum requirements and scored will be allocated on a scored and ranked basis according to budget allowance. A score equivalent to 50% or above will not necessarily guarantee selection as applications will be scored and ranked with funds available awarded to the highest ranked projects. Thereafter a project may be reconsidered, and allocated funding should it become available at a later date. Council aims to select at least one project per DEA under each theme.

Council will manage the technical requirements and procurement process on behalf of the successful applicant and a Development Agreement and Licence for Works (contract), signed off by both parties may be required. The Council will project manage the relationship with the Contractor but will include the group at all site meetings therefore ensuring co-design and collaboration throughout. Successful applicants will also be required to develop and deliver, in partnership with the Council, a community event to launch their project to wider community and showcase new space/ facility along with a longer-term engagement programme for the new scheme.

Please note any projects selected will be subject to SEUPB (funders) approval.

Stage 1 Basic Eligibility

Applicants can fail to pass Stage 1 due to the following reasons:

- An incomplete application including related documents.
- Failure to provide the application form and all the details required by the closing date/time.
- An application which has not been approved by two office bearers.
- Project not delivered within the Council area.
- Project does not meet the criteria of the programme/theme applied under.
- Failure to include all relevant documents **(Section C)**:
 - Recent Accounts / income and expenditure / independently examined accounts.
 - Copy of organisations constitution or evidence of community/ voluntary legal status.
 - A copy of the most recent bank statement.
 - Evidence of land ownership and/or legal title and/or lease to property confirmed and in place and the relevant folio maps.
 - Evidence that the statutory approvals and permissions are in place or evidence that they have been applied for, please ensure the applicant contacts relevant departments for same.
 - A copy of the completed Business Case / Economic Appraisal, this should be proportionate to the value of the project.
 - Evidence of completed site surveys for all projects regardless of scope and scale.
 - Evidence of approved Design Brief(s) are required for all projects regardless of scope and scale.

6. Completing the Application Form

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. The amount of information provided within the application form should be proportionate to the scale of funding and the nature of the programme.

Application – Section A, Section B and Section C

Section A

Question 1.1(a) – 1.1(f) Lead Applicant and Contact Information

The applicant must ensure the contact details are correct for the contact person, as this will be the only person Council will contact regarding your application(s). If the contact person changes during the period of the application process, please provide alternative contact details.

The e-mail contact details will be used for future correspondence therefore it is vital this is up-to-date and correct.

Section B

Please note: Answers will only be scored on the information provided in the answer boxes for each question and should reference your organisation's relevant attached documents.

2.1. Give a brief description of your project and how it will complement the PEACEPLUS theme applied under. Outlining specific aims, objectives, outcomes and benefits. *(750 words maximum)*

2.2 Need and Demand

You must, describe the current and future need for the project. This question allows the applicant to outline why the project is needed in the local area, the applicant should outline the specific needs that will be met and clearly link these to the theme being applied under and PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1. There should also be a rationale explaining how the need was identified and why existing provision does not address this. You should also explain why your project is the most appropriate solution to address the issue(s). *(750 words maximum)*

2.3 Quality of cross-community and cross-border cooperation with demonstrable added value. Please demonstrate how the project will improve equality of opportunity and good relations? How your project is cross border and/or incorporates cross-community partnerships or activities. *(750 words maximum)*

2.4 Please outline any likely sustainable benefits which will occur through this project. Please specify possible positive or negative environmental effects related to the project and how the project will create positive community impact beyond the lifetime of the project. *(750 words maximum)*

Section C – Mandatory Supporting Documents

Please ensure you include the following mandatory documents with your application submission, it is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct approvals etc in place:

- Recent Accounts / income and expenditure / independently examined accounts.
- Copy of organisations constitution or evidence of community/ voluntary legal status.
- A copy of the most recent bank statement.
- Evidence of land ownership and/or legal title and/or lease to property confirmed and in place and the relevant folio maps.
- Evidence that the statutory approvals and permissions are in place or evidence that they have been applied for, please ensure the applicant contacts relevant departments for same.
- A copy of the completed Business Case / Economic Appraisal, this should be proportionate to the value of the project.
- Evidence of completed site surveys for all projects regardless of scope and scale.
- Evidence of approved Design Brief(s) are required for all projects regardless of scope and scale.

Please also note:

- Projects valued over £30,000 will be required to have a 15-year lease in place prior to commencing the project and will also be subject to a Deed of Charge (this is an additional cost not to be included in the project budget).

- Projects valued less than £30,000 will be required to have a 10-year lease in place prior to commencing the project and will be subject to a retention and disposal agreement.
- Organisations which rent/lease must show approval for works from the owner and in the case where it is a Council rental agreement/lease a letter of support from Council confirming support for application must be included. Please note no work can commence until lease arrangements have been put into place and agreed by the budget holder and Legal department.

7. Section 2 Project Specific Criterion

For consistency and to facilitate efficient assessment the following approach has been adopted to scoring against the following criteria:

Question (as per application	Maximum	Weighting	Weighted Final Score
2.1. Project summary and fit with the PEACEPLUS theme 1.1 aims and objectives.	5	x 8	40
2.2 Need and Demand	5	x 4	20
2.3 Quality of cross-community and cross-border cooperation with demonstrable added value.	5	x 4	20
2.4 Please outline any likely sustainable benefits which will occur through this project.	5	X4	20

Applicants must score a minimum of 50% in each section to be considered.

In addition, the following scoring system will be used by the panel to ascertain the scores for the criteria above:

Link at project level	Link to Criterion	How evident	Score
The project proposal does not demonstrate that it has the capacity to deliver basic project outcomes that would be expected in order to be awarded funding.	The application does not meet the basic standard under this criterion	No evidence provided	0
The project proposal demonstrates some ability to deliver key outcomes in some areas but overall, it is below the standard expected in order to be awarded funding.	The application met some of the basic requirements of this criterion.	Not sufficient evidence	1

The project proposal demonstrates an ability to deliver project outcomes to an acceptable standard and it may be considered suitable for funding.	The application met the requirements of this criterion.	Less Evident	2
The project proposal is evident in the way it describes a range of activities that will result in good outputs and the achievement of outcomes.	The application is evident in the requirements of this criterion.	Evident	3
The project proposal is strong as the activities described will result in good outputs and the achievement of outcomes.	The application was very evident with strong fit with the requirement of this criterion.	Strongly evident	4
The project proposal fully complies with the outputs and achievement of the outcomes.	The project is excellent and fully met the requirements of this criterion.	Highly Evident	5

8. Appeals

Where an application has been rejected for reasons of incomplete information, failure to sign the application/complete the declaration, or ineligibility, there will be no right of appeal. However, where an application is unsuccessful after the full assessment process, appeals can be made to Council on the following basis:

- The outcome was a decision that no reasonable person would have made on the basis of information provided to the Assessment Panel.
- That Council's stated policy or procedures had not been followed and led to a materially different decision.

Should you wish to submit an appeal this must be done as follows:

- A request for debrief must be lodged, in writing, within 5 working days of the date of the rejection letter. At the debrief an officer will talk you through the scores your application was awarded.
- After debriefing, if you wish to appeal the panel's decision an appeal must be lodged in writing within 5 working days of the date of the debrief session.
- The appeal should be submitted to the Grants and Funding Unit and proof of receipt obtained.
- The appeal request must state:
 - The application details including theme applied for, title of project and contact details for the applicant.
 - The grounds on which an appeal is being made.
 - Any evidence the applicant believes the review process should consider which supports the view that one of the two bases for an appeal is justified.

The appeal will be reviewed by a panel independent from the original scoring panel who will decide on the appeal in line with Council procedures.

Data Protection

A copy of our privacy notice is available on request or via the following link:
http://www.newrymournedown.org/media/uploads/privacy_notice.pdf

Declaration

Please ensure all relevant sections are complete and signees details are inputted as this section forms part of the Basic Eligibility requirements.

9. Useful Contacts and Links to Strategies

For Further information please contact:

Grants and Funding Unit
Telephone: **0330 137 4040**
Email: peace@nmandd.org

Elaine Carr
PEACE Officer
Telephone: 0330 137 4389
Email: elaine.carr@nmandd.org

Appendix

Further Information on PEACEPLUS and Community Plan can be found here:
www.seupb.eu/peaceplus
www.newrymournedown.org/living-well-together