**Press Release**

Council PEACE IV Programme celebrates first birthday

**Wednesday June 20th 2018**

Derry City and Strabane District Council have celebrated the first anniversary of their award of £6.2 million in EU Peace IV funding with a networking event at the Holywood trust.

The funding has been used to fund several significant projects over the last 12 months which aim to support peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border region.

The guiding vision on the programme is that by 2023, Derry and Strabane will be a peaceful and shared society where good relations is embedded, our communities inclusive and connected and where all cultures and traditions are respected,

Speaking at this week’s networking event, Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Derek Hussey praised the work of the PEACE IV programme to date.

“I would like to thank all involved in these PEACE IV funded projects throughout our City and District for their hard work and dedication in this inaugural year of the programme,” he said.

“In an era of uncertainty, both at home and on a wider global scale, the need for promotion of peace and reconciliation remains and indeed is perhaps increasingly vital.

“Our local PEACE IV programme reflects on what local people have identified as important to them.

“There is still a lot of work to be done but we are confident that all the outstanding PEACE IV projects being rolled out will have every success within the next few years.”

Councillor Caoimhe McKnight, Chair of the PEACE IV Board added:

“There are 38 significant projects already underway which range from small grants projects up to £50,000 each which were won by 12 local community groups, Council led projects on a range of service areas like Peace Tourism, Community Planning and Sport; and 13 major tender awards totalling nearly £2 million which are predominantly also allocated to leading Community and Voluntary sector groups locally.

“The effort, ambition and sheer hard work of local groups in delivering these peace and reconciliation cross-community projects is excellent.”

The networking event focused on making connections between the projects, exploring approaches to engaging with diverse communities and giving consideration to how to impact attitudinal change for peace and reconciliation.

Catherine Cooke from Foyle Women’s Information Network and Co-Chair of the PEACE IV Board noted that the programmes offered a wide range of options for anyone who wants to get involved in reconciliation.

“The programme has had a fantastic response from our local community and voluntary sector to date,” she said.

“There are frequent opportunities arising now for individuals to get involved in projects for free.

“That may mean signing up for cultural workshops, community training courses, conferences or other community activities,  there’s something for everyone if they are interested in community activity which supports peace building locally.”

For further regular information on free opportunities to take part in the EU’s PEACE IV Programme individuals and groups are encouraged to sign up online for the monthly e-newsletter on [www.derrystrabane.com/Peace-IV<http://www.derrystrabane.com/Peace-IV](http://www.derrystrabane.com/Peace-IV%3Chttp%3A/www.derrystrabane.com/Peace-IV).

The PEACE IV Programme is supported by the European Union, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). Match-funding has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

**Ends**

Notes to Editors

  \*   The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.

  \*   It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

  \*   The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.

  \*   The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

  \*   For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu<http://www.seupb.eu>

**Caption for image:** Pictured at a Peace IV Networking event in the Holywell Trust with Deputy Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Derek Hussy, are from left, Jennifer Coyle, Project Officer (Peace IV), Catherine Cooke, Board Member, Alderman Thomas Kerrigan, Sue Divin, Programme Manager, Mary Claire Kerlin, Project Officer (PEACE IV).