PEACEPLUS
Northern Ireland - Ireland
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Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin Monaghan County Council
A project supported by PEACEPLUS; a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Group	Meeting of MCC PEACEPLUS Partnership Board		
Date of Meeting	23.04.26	**Time**	3pm – 4.30pm
Meeting Chair	P M	**Location**	Mtek I Building, Knockaconny Monaghan

Meeting Objectives
Report on progress of MCC PEACEPLUS programme.

Attendees		
1	P M	MCC
2	A K	MCC
3	E B	MCC
4	D P	MCC
5	S M	MCC
7	Cllr. R A	Elected Member
8	Cllr. N Mc C	Elected Member
9	U Mc K	Women's Collective
10	C D	Tusla / HSE
11	F Mc C	MID
12	F Mc C J	Truagh Spirit Monaghan
14	S Mc Q	CMETB
15	G Mc K	SEUPB
16	K K	SEUPB

Apologies		
	Name	**Partner**
1	Insp C Mc N	An Garda Siochana
2	Cllr. R T	Elected Member
3	H F	MCC
4	Cllr. P G	Elected Member
5	M B	Scotshouse Co. Childcare PPN
5	A G	Clones FRC PPN
6	D B	Carrickmacross Tidy Towns
7	A Mc C	Environmental Group

Agenda, Minutes & Actions			
Item No	**Agenda Item**	**Minutes**	**Actions - Responsible Officer**
1.	**Welcome & Introductions**	PM welcomed all in attendance with a warm welcome given to SEUPB members GMcK and KK. Apologies were relayed.	
2.	**Conflict of Interest**	PM reminded members to declare any specific conflicts of interest as and when any issues arise in the agenda which are	

		over and above what is already held on the written declarations.	
3.	**Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held 22nd January 2026**	The minutes of the previous PEACEPLUS Board Meeting were proposed by Cllr N Mc C and seconded by C D.	
4.	**Matters Arising**	**Agenda Item 6** from the meeting of 22 January regarding a request for timeframes from SEUPB. GMcK (SEUPB) provided an overview of the Modification process and explained that approval timelines are dependent on the size and scope of the request. She noted that higher-value modifications require a greater level of scrutiny, while lower-value requests can be processed more quickly. PM asked what assistance Partners could provide to help expedite the Modification process. In response, GMcK advised that modification requests should be submitted fully complete at the outset, as this reduces the need for additional information requests and assists in speeding up the process. **Agenda Item 7** from the meeting of 22 January regarding projects omitted from the circulated list of Monaghan PEACEPLUS Projects. EB advised that all other programmes are listed on the SEUPB website under the *Full List of Projects*; however, as they did not specifically reference Monaghan, they were not included in the extract presented to the Board in January. The Board accepted this explanation. **Agenda Item 8** (January meeting): EB reported on the Changemakers Programme. While outside the scope of the PEACEPLUS Action Plan, concerns regarding potential barriers to uptake were addressed. It was noted that funding is now provided through fixed lump-sum payments based on agreed outputs, significantly reducing administrative requirements, with additional helpdesk and one-to-one support available to applicants.	**Clarification to the Board:** MCC submits Modification Requests that are full and complete. Clarifications requested to date by SEUPB have related to information already provided or to matters outside the scope of information requested within the application form.

		FMcC outlined difficulties under the PEACEPLUS Programme arising from the requirement to obtain quotations, noting that the Changemakers Programme operates a simpler approach. GMcK explained that this reflects the different funding models, with Changemakers using a simplified cost option and PEACEPLUS operating on a real-cost basis. EB advised that a recent change to Monaghan County Council's procurement policy will simplify the process by requiring quotations to be sought rather than obtained, with guidance to issue to partners. **Agenda Item 9** (January meeting): A request to seek approval for a joint launch was noted. EB advised that approval had been granted, with the launch taking place on Friday, 20 March, and thanked all involved in marking the commencement of Theme 2.	
5.	**Programme Progress Updates**	EB presented a detailed powerpoint presentation on the programmes progress and updates for all 3 Themes **Main points:** **Theme 1, Activity 1.1 Enhancement to existing Community Spaces/Halls** Progress is continuing as planned, except for six sites that are pending approval of Modification Requests before further progress can be made. All other sites are advancing, with the in-house Technical Engineer measuring up and preparing detailed plans for procurement. U McK raised concerns regarding the significant increase in construction costs and the potential impact on community groups' ability to deliver their projects. EB acknowledged this issue and advised that measures are being taken to mitigate the risk, including informing groups of potential cost pressures, considering options to raise additional funding or reduce the scope of works, and exploring whether additional support may be available from SEUPB.	

		PM asked the SEUPB representatives whether any additional budget might be available to support increased project costs. GMcK acknowledged rising costs but advised that SEUPB is not committing to cover expenditure in excess of approved project budgets. She added that where community groups are unable to meet increased costs, the scope of works may need to be reduced, noting that this would require a Modification Request. **Activity 1.2 Capital youth programme** All projects are progressing to schedule, except for the Monaghan–Scotstown Playground, which is dependent on approval of the associated housing application and subsequent Part 8 planning process. It is anticipated that all other projects will be ready for, or out to, procurement by the end of June 2026. Subject to approval of the housing development, consultations with young people and progression of detailed design for the playground will commence once the site layout is confirmed, expected by the end of the current quarter. **Activity 1.3 Womens Hub and Activity 1.4 Community Garden** Regarding the Women's Hub, options are actively being explored to identify a suitable property for development in Monaghan town. Consultation in relation to the Mullaghmatt Community Garden is scheduled for September, with the project expected to commence in Spring 2027. EB said a new, third, modification would be presented later in the agenda in respect of two Theme 1 activities. **Theme 2** Progress is good with JEMs training presently taking place with the 5 Partners. Currently a delay with DPA's, but progress is steady, taking a little longer to ensure GDPR compliance. **Theme 3**	

		It was noted that the project is awaiting approval of the January Modification Request to commence delivery. In the interim, preparatory work has been completed, including engagement with internal partners, drafting of SLAs, and approval of business cases. Assurance was given that, notwithstanding the delay, the project remains on track to meet the programme deadline of June 2026 for completion of Phase 1 and commencement of project activities. Cllr A queried why Tourism was not listed as a partner on Theme 3 projects. PM advised, in her capacity as Director of Services with responsibility for Tourism, that while the Museum and Library are the lead partners for delivery, Tourism is supporting the projects in the background. EB added that a working group will be established to ensure engagement with all relevant stakeholders. **General Updates** An electronic data registration system has been developed in-house and rolled out to Theme 2 partners. The Spring newsletter has been published. Service Level Agreements are in place with all internal partners and business cases for Theme 3 have been approved, subject to Modification Request approval. Claims submissions have commenced and quarterly forecasting is ongoing. **Looking ahead** EB outlined key actions for April–June 2026, including a focus on claims submissions, procurement for the capital delivery of Theme 1 projects, continued support to Theme 2 partners, support for the new post under Theme 3, and development of project communications. FMcC thanked EB for her work and noted that engagement with her was greatly appreciated. PM thanked EB noting that a significant amount of information had been covered in the time and the overall message was	

		everything was progressing well and anything not there is a good reason, overall positive, with no concerns at present.	
6.	**Programme Modifications Requests – Board Approval required**	**Theme 1 Activity 1.2** Surface in Ballybay from polymeric to tarmac as polymeric exceeds the budget and tarmac lower maintenance requirements, and the provision of a polymeric surface at a nearby site. It was noted that the change will not impact the intended informal use of the facility or programme outputs, including participant targets. **Theme 1 Activity 1.1** Change of scope to focus on Castleblayney Faughs downstairs meeting room **Theme 2** A CMETB budget modification to reallocate funding between cost categories was noted, with an increase in staff costs and associated Office & Administration and Travel & Accommodation costs, offset by reductions in External Expertise & Services and Equipment. The change reflects a strategic decision to deliver programme activities through employed tutors rather than external facilitators. A handout was circulated at the meeting. The proposed modifications were approved by Cllr. R A and seconded by Cllr. N Mc C. PM queried whether there are circumstances, such as the modifications discussed, where SEUPB approval is not required and whether any level of modification can be exercised at the discretion of the Lead Partner. GMcK advised that while not all project variances require referral to SEUPB, Modification Requests are necessary where proposed changes impact the detail of the approved Action Plan, as is the case with all Modification Requests presented to date. She further suggested that, where possible, modifications should be combined rather than submitted individually, as the process is	**Clarification to the Board:** MCC makes every effort to combine Modification Requests, as evidenced by previous submissions. However, there is a necessary balance between submitting Modifications in a

		time-consuming and increases administrative workload. PM queried whether combining submissions could risk pushing Modification Requests into the higher-value threshold referenced earlier, potentially resulting in increased scrutiny and longer response times. GMcK advised that the combined approach does not adversely impact response times and requested that all Modification Requests be kept to an absolute minimum, as each request requires additional administration on both sides. A K noted that Modification Requests often arise unexpectedly. She cited the CMETB request as an example, which resulted from Revenue's tightened enforcement and guidance on employment status tests, indicating that facilitator and tutor roles are increasingly meeting the legal definition of employment.	timely manner to expedite the process and identifying all potential Modifications at the same time. Given the nature of programme delivery, it is inevitable that Modifications will arise over the lifetime of projects and may not be evident at the outset; otherwise, there would be no requirement for Modifications if all factors were known from the beginning.
7.	**SEUPB Memo Project Performance Targets**	GMcK outlined the memo and emphasised the importance of meeting annual N+3 spend targets to avoid potential decommitment of funding where SEUPB targets are not met in 2026. She noted that SEUPB are taking all steps to meet targets and had explored the possibility of additional funding in 2026. EB advised this was considered; however, due to tight timelines requiring procurement, award, completion, and payment by September 2026 (for December 2026 reclaim), it was deemed unachievable. GMcK acknowledged the limited timeframe. It was confirmed that underspend in one year cannot be offset by overspend in a subsequent year, as targets apply annually. The Board and Chair raised concerns regarding the application of annual targets and the risk of decommitment at an early stage, noting that delays in programme commencement and Letters of Offer were outside Delivery Partners' control. A K highlighted concerns regarding the risk of funding loss. GMcK advised that SEUPB must identify alternative spend where required and emphasised the need for	

		accurate forecasting and ongoing communication of risks. PM expressed serious concern at Board level regarding potential funding risks and queried the rationale for offering additional funding where existing allocations are challenging to spend. U McK noted that decommitment at Year 1 is unusual and highlighted that delays occurred at Departmental level. It was also noted that overall programme-level assurance on meeting targets could not be confirmed. FMcC requested that concerns regarding financial pressures on community organisations be raised with SEUPB. PM reiterated that, while the Council remains committed, the situation is not straightforward given external delays. R A requested that a letter issue to SEUPB outlining the Board's concerns regarding the spend memo. **Action:** Issue correspondence to SEUPB outlining Board concerns. PM confirmed correspondence has already issued and that claim submissions are progressing, with improved timelines expected. GMcK acknowledged receipt of correspondence and confirmed the revised deadline for backdated claims as end June 2026. The Chair thanked attendees and reaffirmed Monaghan County Council's commitment to continued partnership with SEUPB.	EB: Letter sent 28.05.26, approved by DoS
8.	**Risk Register**	The Risk Register was circulated to the Board. EB emphasised the importance of ongoing monitoring to mitigate identified risks. It was noted that, should the SEUPB position outlined in the memo be applied, Item 12 would represent a high-impact risk; however, it is deemed low probability due to mitigation techniques in place, including the early engagement with SEUPB on any emerging risks, including formal and quarterly reviews of spend and forecasting.	

		C D queried how participant targets would be addressed where community backgrounds are diverse. GMcK clarified that targets are applied based on the 80/20 principle, with flexibility for 'other' participants.	
9.	**AOB**	FMcC requested training on the new Data Registration System for Theme 2 partners **Action** EB replied that training would be provided. EB to schedule Cllr R A and U McK sincerely thanked PM for her due diligence and guidance and wished her the very best in her retirement.	EB: Teams training provided to all partners 29.04.26
10.	**Date of Next Meeting**	23rd July 2026 at 3 pm in M Tek 1 Boardroom.	