Press Release

Date: Monday 21 February 2022

LORD MAYOR LAUNCHES NEW CULTURAL EVENTS PROGRAMME FOR FORTH MEADOW COMMUNITY GREENWAY STARTING WITH LUMINATE FESTIVAL IN MARCH

Lord Mayor off Belfast, Councillor Kate Nicholl, helped launch an eight-month cultural programme of events for Forth Meadow Community Greenway commencing with a spectacular free community festival Luminate at the Springfield Dam on Saturday 5th March (6pm - 8.30pm).

The programme is part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway project, which aims to promote the greenway as a shared, welcoming, connected and safe space for all.

The Greenway is one of a number of projects being delivered through Belfast City Cuncil's £14.5m, PEACE IV, Local Authority Action Plan. This Action Plan has been funded through the European Unions' PEACE IV Programme, which is managed by The Special EU Programmes Body. Match-funding has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland. The redevelopment of Springfield Dam Park received additional funding from the Department for Communities.

Luminate will be the first of four spectacle events along with a programme of smaller events designed by leading cultural group ArtsEkta over the coming months to bring communities together to enjoy the new space. The £5.1million EU PEACE IV-funded Forth Meadow Community Greenway connects existing open spaces in north and west Belfast along a 12km route from Clarendon Playing Fields to the new Transport Hub in the city centre.

Working in partnership with groups across north and west Belfast, more than 100 participants have been creating large scale models of buildings and wildlife from their local areas and around the world. Luminate will celebrate the natural and built heritage surrounding the Forth Meadow Community Greenway, showcased through a magical

floating lantern installation on the Springfield Dam with music, dance, fire performers, workshops, food and fun for all the family. The wider programme also includes activities such as nature walks, cycling events and foraging to heritage tours, wellness events and family fun days.

The Lord Mayor said: **"I'm delighted to announce the first in a series of cultural animation events to promote the Forth Meadow Community Greenway. Luminate will be lighting up our sky on 5th March and providing the start of more opportunities for local people and communities to come together and enjoy this amazing new space. There are further exciting events planned between March and September to celebrate this wonderful new outdoor space offering great physical and mental health benefits too."**

Commenting on the programme of cultural activities, Gina McIntyre CEO of the SEUPB said: **"Due to the segregated society we live in, it is so important that we provide opportunities for   planned cultural events, to help showcase this fantastic new EU-funded shared space and in so doing encourage people from all communities to come out and enjoy it. It is for this reason that the PEACE IV Programme was designed with an objective to bring people together through the provision of new spaces and facilities that are welcoming to all.**

"These spaces and the events that they support are helping to create a more positive and forward-looking society which can embrace diversity and difference. I am delighted that as restrictions start to ease we can return to normality and events of scale can take place safely, once again," she continued.

Councillor John Kyle, Chair of the Shared City Partnership at Belfast City Council, said: **"The greenway is aimed at encouraging vital connections and reconnections across the north and west of the city. It will help the community to move away from years of segregation and fragmentation towards a more connected and undivided society. Important connections will be made every day as our citizens explore this wonderful natural environment and its surprising wildlife."**

Nisha Tandon, Founder and CEO of ArtsEkta said: **"We are delighted to present a spectacular light festival to launch a fabulous programme of events along the Forth Meadow Community Greenway on behalf of Belfast City Council. Our creative work**

brings together communities across the city to celebrate our collective civic identity and we are excited to be working with so many different community partners in the area to bring the Forth Meadow Community Greenway to life this year."

Luminate takes places on Saturday 5th March from 6pm to 8.30pm at Springfield Dam.

Tickets are free but must be booked in advance via ArtsEkta's website.

For more information on Belfast City Council's PEACE IV programme, please visit the council website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/PEACEIV

For more information on the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, please contact John McCandless, Communications Manager with the SEUPB via mob. 07841 367052 or email: john.mccandless@seupb.eu

For further information on the Cultural Events Programme at the Greenway please contact Orla McKibbin, Communications Consultant for ArtsEkta: orla@orlamckibbin.com / Tel: 07879 666427.

- **ENDS.**

Notes to editors:

The SEUPB

- 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