

PRESS RELEASE

Date: Monday 11th February 2019

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN YOUTH COUNCIL EVENT

On Sunday 10 February, Ards and North Down Borough Council's PEACE IV Partnership celebrated the election of an Ards and North Down Youth Council as part of the PEACE IV Capacity Building and Youth Leadership Programme. Approximately 50 young people participated in a day of programmed activity in Ganaway Activity Centre, Millisle.

The Election Event gave young people from the Borough the opportunity to officially put themselves and peers forward for the Ards and North Down Youth Council and was attended by the PEACE IV Partnership, Elected Members and the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The project is supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the SEUPB. Match funding for the PEACE IV Plan has also been provided from the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

The Capacity Building and Youth Leadership Programme is being delivered by The Northern Ireland Youth Forum on behalf of Ards and North Down Borough Council. The project has created a number of local youth forums across the Borough and participants have availed of a suite of leadership and development opportunities designed to build the capacity of young people. The project promotes peace and reconciliation, enabling those of different community backgrounds to interact and build sustainable and meaningful relationships.

The Youth Council has the core purpose of creating social engagement, enabling young people to have a better understanding of civic responsibilities, and lead a more initiating lifestyle. The programme aims to make the Borough a better place for young people to live and make a difference in the Community.

Councillor Eddie Thompson, Chair of the Ards and North Down Borough Council's PEACE IV Partnership commented: **“The PEACE IV Partnership is delighted to be here today to witness the formation of the Ards and North Down Youth Council. I would like to commend the Young People involved for their dedication and commitment throughout the lifetime of the project. Understanding the concerns of our future generations is of paramount importance and I welcome the opportunity to work with the Youth Council in the future.”**

Project Co-ordinator, Ian Donald said: **“We think this is a tremendous opportunity to bolster youth participation across the Borough, working closely with key stakeholders and youth providers, the new Youth Council will create a platform for young people to influence decision makers and advocate for other young people on issues that are important in their lives”.**

Congratulating the Capacity Building and Young People Project, Gina McIntyre CEO of the SEUPB said: **“This is a fantastic project which is giving young people the confidence and skills they need to articulate their personal views. It also affords them an opportunity to meet with, and learn from, another young person from a different background and culture. This is what the PEACE IV Programme is all about, as it helps young people across this region, to become agents for change to help build a more peaceful and cohesive society. I congratulate each and every young person in this project for their bravery and enthusiasm in making the decision to get involved,”** she continued.

The Youth Council will have regular meaningful contact with a select group of Elected Members at agreed youth council meetings. The Youth Council will be given the opportunity to complete OCN accredited Training, which will provide the skills and knowledge to allow them to successfully sustain the youth council and provide a platform for other young people to come through their forum to become future youth council members.

- ENDS.

Notes for the editor:

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