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### Minutes of the Reconvened Stage One PEACE IV Review Panel Meeting

Tuesday 13 June 2017, 10.30am  
SEUPB Offices, Clarence Street West, Belfast

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In Attendance:	Gina McIntyre	SEUPB (Chair)
	Sean Kelly	MC Panel Member
	Ivan Cooper	MC Panel Member (via TC)
	Philip Graham	Independent Member
	Tara McCormick	SEUPB (Secretariat)

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#### 1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed Members to the Stage 1 Review Panel meeting of the PEACE IV 2014 – 2020 Programme which was reconvened to consider the Stage 1 application; *Newforge Community Complex (PSNI)*, submitted under the Shared Spaces Capital Development call.

The Chair reminded the panel that the applicant had requested a review on both grounds, i.e. that;

- The outcome was a decision that no reasonable person would have made on the basis of the information provided to the Steering Committee; and
- There was a failure in adherence to procedures or systems that materially affected or could have materially affected the decision.

A previous Review Panel meeting, held on 25 May 2017, considered the application against both grounds for appeal, and concluded that the decision of the Steering Committee was unreasonable and therefore there were grounds for a re-assessment to take place.

Following the decision made at that meeting the following action has been taken:

- the application has been sent for assessment by an independent party; and
- the application is being returned to the Steering Committee for re assessment.

The Chair informed Members that, following the previous Review Panel meeting, the Joint Secretariat (JS) were requested to provide additional information relating to the procedural issues raised by the applicant. She apologised for the administrative error which meant the full Steering Committee minutes were not available at the previous Review Panel meeting.

Upon consideration of the additional Joint Secretariat information and, in the interests of transparency, the Chair requested the Review Panel reconvene to review the submission.

She noted that the current review procedure does not afford the Joint Secretariat an opportunity to provide evidence or counter arguments to the applicant's submission which on this occasion has resulted in a reconvened panel. The Review Procedure will therefore be subject to review and amendment as a result.

The Panel noted;

- the additional JS document provided;

The Panel considered the application against the second ground for appeal, i.e. that there was a failure in adherence to procedures or systems that materially affected or could have materially affected the decision and the questioned the following:

- Whether the sample form was clearly marked and clearly identifiable as a sample form only; what the substantive differences between the sample and final application forms were - other than the word count totals and file names; the number of applications received on a sample form; when SEUPB became aware that the form was incorrect; and whether the applicant had been made aware that they had submitted the application on an incorrect form.

The Chair provided the following points of clarification;

- The application in question was the only application submitted on an incorrect form;
- Excluding the word count and file names, there were no substantive differences between the sample and final application forms;
- A standard line was used in correspondence to all applications, to inform them that they had exceeded the character limit;
- The application was submitted in a Word document which did not automatically limit entry once the maximum word count had been reached; and
- The independent assessment being carried out will examine the additional information.

The Review Panel agreed that the application form was accepted on an incorrect version of the document as a gesture of goodwill, and that the acceptance of the application form created an exception to the process which could not be considered a breach in procedure in terms of how the application was ultimately assessed.

However, in accepting the incorrect application form, it was agreed that the potential for confusion around which character count to adopt then arose. The Members acknowledged that the application should not have progressed through assessment as accepting the form could have potentially disadvantaged other applicants.

However, in light of the potential for confusion around word count, the Panel agreed that the full application, i.e. reflecting the word count limit in the original application form used by the applicant, shall be re-assessed by the Joint Secretariat and re-presented to the Steering Committee.

This would be assessed based on the applicant's first ground for appeal (the outcome was a decision that no reasonable person would have made on the basis of the information provided to the Steering Committee) which is reflected in the minutes of the first Review Panel meeting in respect of the application.

The Panel noted the following points for future learning derived from this appeal:

- Applications should be rejected in the first instance if they are submitted on an incorrect form;
- No exceptions to the process should be allowed; and
- The Joint Secretariat should review instructions for future calls to ensure that it is clear and explicit that no exceptions will be made.

**In conclusion, the Panel agreed that there had not been a breach of procedure in terms of the assessment of the application by the Joint Secretariat, however, process had been breached in that the application was accepted and assessed in an incorrect form.**

The Chair will circulate draft letters to the Panel before they are issued to the applicant.