



Discretionary Payments Scheme guidance notes

1. Introduction

In September 2018, Belfast City Council approved a new framework for discretionary payments to organisations that request funding from the council outside the council's existing grant or other funding schemes.

Depending on the in-year financial position, the council may set aside funds for discretionary payments up to an annual limit. **Please note that the availability of funds for discretionary payments is dependent on the council's in-year financial position, so there is no guarantee that funding for discretionary payments will be available.**

Applications must relate to a specific, non-recurrent activity, event or initiative. We will not fund organisational running costs or make a contribution to an organisation's general or unrestricted funds.

2. Making an application

You may apply for a discretionary payment at any point throughout the year. Applications will normally be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June and November. In order to have your application considered at the next committee, you should ensure that your application is submitted at least eight weeks before the committee meeting.

You should complete the Discretionary Payments Scheme application form and send it to us:

- By emailing an electronic copy to: generalenquiries@belfastcity.gov.uk
- By posting the form to:

General Enquiries Helpdesk
Belfast City Council
Finance & Resources
6th Floor
9 Adelaide
9 – 21 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8DJ

- By bringing it to:

Belfast City Council
Finance & Resources
9 Adelaide
9 – 21 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8DJ

3. Eligibility criteria

If your application does not meet the following eligibility criteria, it will not be considered for funding.

We will not fund:

- Applications that:
 - could be made to one or more of the council's other funding schemes. Further information on the council's other grant schemes is available at www.belfastcity-grants.com
 - are incomplete or do not provide a detailed activity, event or initiative budget
- Organisations that:
 - do not have a constitution or memorandum and articles of association
 - do not operate on a not-for-profit basis
 - that are not based in Belfast or cannot demonstrate significant benefit to the Belfast City Council area.
 - are in poor financial health or cannot show effective financial control
 - have previously received a grant or funding from us that was not managed satisfactorily
- Requests from individuals.
- Requests for contributions to general funds or organisational running costs
- Activities, events or initiatives that:
 - could be carried out on a commercial basis
 - have already taken place
 - are charity or fundraising events or activities
 - are of a party political nature
 - promote a particular religion
 - are against Belfast City Council policy. For example, we do not allow balloon or Chinese lantern releases as they are against our environmental policy.

4. Assessment criteria

If your application meets the eligibility criteria, it will be assessed against the following criteria:

- supports one or more of the Belfast Agenda immediate priorities:
 - Creating jobs and investment
 - Making life better for all our residents
 - Creating a competitive and sustainable city
 - Connecting people to opportunities
- You can download the Belfast Agenda at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/belfastagenda
- benefit to the council, the council area or its residents
- value for money

You must provide a detailed activity budget that demonstrates that all costs are reasonable and necessary to complete the activity. The council reserves the right to deem costs ineligible or award less funding than the amount requested.

5. What happens next

Based on our assessment of your application, we may make an offer of funding. However, funding is competitive and subject to availability dependent on the council's in-year financial position. **There is no guarantee that funding for discretionary payments will be available.**

If your application is successful, we will send you a letter of offer outlining the conditions of the grant and the stages we will pay the grant in.

At the end of the activity, you will be required to complete a monitoring form. We may also choose a number of organisations to audit to check how the grant was spent and that the conditions of funding were met.

6. Further information

For further information, please contact generalenquiries@belfastcity.gov.uk