



Subject:	Consultation - DCAL Community Festival Fund
Date:	10 June 2015
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Brian Johnston, Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of the report is to agree a response to the consultation document from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) for their Community Festivals Fund Policy and Guidance Framework. The policy outlines the purpose and objectives of the community festivals fund and the principles and assessment criteria that councils must adhere to when administering the fund. The full document is attached as Appendix 1.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note the draft Belfast City Council response – attached as Appendix 2- Approve the submission of this response to the consultation exercise, subject to council ratification.
3.0	Main report
3.1	DCAL provides Belfast City Council with funding towards the community festivals fund, which is then match funded and administered through the Council's Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit. This year, the value of DCAL's letter of offer to Belfast City Council is £75,900. The fund is very competitive, and we receive a large number of applications for a diverse range of festivals run by arts, heritage, community, sports and other organisations. In the first of two rounds of applications for festivals running in this financial year, 55 applications

	<p>were received. These requests totalled more than £380,000. 14 applications were recommended for funding.</p>
3.2	<p>The last review of the community festivals fund was carried out in 2012. This review acknowledged the positive outcomes of the fund, but it also highlighted a number of shortcomings. Some of the key recommendations included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DCAL should have a clearer, defined ambition and purpose for the fund – The fund should not be used to support large tourism-driven festivals – DCAL should set more specific objectives for the fund – Councils should dedicate more resources to training and support for project applicants – The applications process should be simplified and standardised – More applications should be encouraged from deprived areas.
3.3	<p>The new framework – as set out in the consultation document – has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To support the community and voluntary sector in promoting equality and targeting poverty and social exclusion – To enable communities to celebrate their cultural identity – To enhance community relations – To enable partnership working between the community and voluntary sector and local Councils – To improve the capacity of community festivals by providing support and training in addition to funding towards the cost of events.
3.4	<p>Under the new approach, local authorities will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weight assessments in favour of applications for festivals taking place in the top 10% of the most deprived wards in their Council area – Weight assessments in favour of applications from festivals which target the socially excluded – Publish their assessment criteria and application process for making awards – Demonstrate how festivals have targeted poverty, social exclusion and equality – Provide match funding equal to the amount of grant provided by the Department. If Councils decide not to provide match funding, the Department will retain the right to redistribute surplus funding as appropriate to other areas – Decide on whether or not to fund a festival and the level of funding. Each council

	<p>will operate an appeals procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide advice and assistance to help build capacity in festival organisations – Undertake a festivals training needs analysis. Councils will have flexibility to allocate a proportion of the budget to training and consultancy support for festivals – Provide an annual report detailing the festivals supported, the awards made and an assessment of the impact in the community – Ensure compliance with all relevant legislative and audit requirements. <p>3.5 DCAL have requested responses to a series of questions as part of the consultation exercise. The proposed Council response is attached as Appendix 2.</p> <p>3.6 The key elements of the Council's response include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The objectives of the fund should be more focused than are currently set out in the policy and guidance framework – There should be more focus on improving the quality of festival provision – There should be further consideration of the definition of “festival” and of “community” in order to help potential bidders understand whether they might meet the criteria and to differentiate the fund from other sources – Targeting festivals in the top 10 per cent most deprived wards may exclude previous grant recipients and further clarification is required around targeting socially excluded people and how this can be defined – Additional funding is required to meet the targets – applications are always significantly oversubscribed in Belfast – The proposal to set a target around training undertaken may not be measurable or achievable and may present a barrier to small festivals – Attracting visitors to the area should not be an assessment criterion. <p>3.7 <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no immediate impacts from the consultation response. However, any change to the festival fund may impact on future finances.</p> <p>3.8 <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are no negative implications and the fund provides an opportunity to promote good relations and equality.</p>
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4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 - Community Festivals Fund: Draft Policy and Guidance Framework Appendix 2 - Draft Belfast City Council Response to DCAL Community Festival Fund Consultation.