

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS FUND

DRAFT POLICY AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS FUND

1. The purpose of the Fund

A key priority in the DCAL Corporate Plan is to enable the population to enhance their quality of life through participation/engagement in culture, arts and leisure activities.

The Department also has statutory and public policy obligations to deliver Section 75 requirements and to promote equality of opportunity and tackle poverty and social exclusion (Annex refers).

The Community Festivals Fund (CFF) was established in recognition of the positive contribution that festivals can make to communities and to the local economy.

2. Objectives of the Fund

The objectives of the Community Festivals Fund are as follows:

- a) to support the community and voluntary sector in promoting equality and target poverty and social exclusion;
- b) to enable communities to celebrate their cultural identity;
- c) to enhance community relations;
- d) to enable partnership working between the community and voluntary sector and local Councils
- e) to improve the capacity of community festivals by providing support and training in addition to funding towards the cost of events.

3. Definition of a Community Festival

A community festival is a series of events (or a single event with several elements) with a common theme and delivered within a defined time period. It is developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what the community represents.

Community festivals are about participation, involvement, and the creation of a sense of identity and are important in contributing to the social well being of a community.

They must be initiated and led by, or in partnership with a community organisation. The community must play a strong part in the development and delivery of the festival and have ownership of it.

For the purposes of the Community Festival Fund the following will apply;

- all Festivals must be culture based, where culture is defined as ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or social grouping;
- all festivals must demonstrate their commitment to promoting social cohesion, social inclusion, equality of opportunity and good community relations .

4. Targets

In order to be considered successful the CFF will have to meet the targets listed below. Councils will be expected to contribute towards the achievement of those targets and will provide the necessary information to the Department for measurement;

a) All Councils should make a contribution to the promotion of equality and the targeting of poverty and social exclusion through community festival funding. Councils will be required to implement the following;

- Councils should **weight their assessments** in favour of the following
 - i) applications received in respect of festivals taking place in the top 10% of the most deprived wards (Annex 1 refers) in that Council area, and
 - ii) applications received from festivals which will target those who are socially excluded.
- Each Council should demonstrate that it has been robust in **marketing** the Community Festivals Fund **and encouraging applications from** those in poverty and social exclusion in that Council area. Examples of how this might be done are attached (see Annex 1).
- Each Council should demonstrate how it has promoted equality in line with Section 75 equality obligations.

b) A minimum of 350 community festivals will be supported by the Community Festivals Fund on an annual basis.

c) Councils should aim to ensure that at least 80% of capacity requirements support or training needs identified as clearly required in the application

process are supported within the necessary timeframe. (Festival organisers must be asked to identify training needs as part of the application process. Each council must undertake training needs analyses based on successful applicants). Councils must provide details to the Department demonstrating how identified needs have been supported.

5. General Principles which apply to the Community Festivals Fund

This is a competitive scheme and applications will be determined on the basis of merit.

Applications to this scheme will be open to all festivals that can meet the core criteria of the scheme irrespective of whether they are established or emerging events.

Festivals will continue to be able to apply to other sources of public support which will add value to the festival.

Festivals should contribute to the promotion of a positive image of Northern Ireland and organisers must take steps to avert anti-social behaviour.

Organisations in receipt of public funding must comply with all statutory obligations regarding the delivery of and access to their events.

Festival organisations will make every effort to increase capacity within the community through e.g. skills training and volunteering.

Festival organisations will be expected to make efforts to maximise income through ticket sales and sponsorship. They should develop a plan to improve their sustainability and reduce reliance on public funding.

It is a prime responsibility of Government to ensure the proper and efficient use of and the accountability of public monies. To this end, festivals will be required to provide relevant supporting information when applying for funding.

Festival organisations will be required to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of their festival and that public funding is put to good use and shows a positive and measurable impact on the local community or economy.

6. Assessment Criteria

Core

In order to deliver the Fund's aims and principles festival organisers will need to demonstrate how their event addresses the following issues:

- promotes equality
- targets poverty and social exclusion ;
- has strong community participation;
- provides opportunities for people to improve skills or receive training;
- improves community relations;
- contributes to building a strong sense of community; and
- demonstrates value for money.

Desirable

- attracts visitors to the area.
- provides opportunities for development - this includes capacity-building, links with other organisations and diversity of activities.
- takes steps to address rural isolation issues where applicable.

7. Exclusions

The Community Festivals Fund will not normally provide funding for the following activities:

- festivals taking place outside Northern Ireland;
- festivals of a commercial nature, organised to make a profit;
- trade or professional conferences/conventions;
- festivals that are primarily fundraising events, are heavily branded with charity branding or deploy potential sources of income from a festival to a charity;
- awards ceremonies or industry events;
- residential courses and associated events;
- festivals that are social events for an organisation; and
- primarily tourism focused events where the organisation cannot demonstrate significant community involvement.

8. Administration of the Community Festivals Fund

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has overall policy responsibility for the Community Festivals Fund while responsibility for making awards to individual festivals rests with individual councils. The Department will make an annual allocation to each Council based on population with a weighting for multiple deprivation.

Each Council will be required to adhere to the overarching policy framework set out in this document. Councils will have flexibility to develop their own application processes and detailed criteria for funding provided it is consistent with the policy framework. Template application and evaluation forms demonstrating best practice are available from the Department and can be tailored to suit the needs of each Council.

Councils will be required to:

- a. Publish their assessment criteria, application process and their procedures for making awards.
- b. Demonstrate to the Department how Community Festivals have targeted poverty and social exclusion and promoted equality.
- c. Provide match funding in each financial year 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.
- d. Decide on whether or not to fund a festival and the level of funding. Each council will operate an appeals procedure.
- e. Provide advice and assistance to help build capacity in festival organisations, for example, through training provision for volunteers.
- f. Undertake a festivals training needs analysis. Councils will have flexibility to allocate a proportion of the budget to training and consultancy support in relation to delivery of festivals.
- g. Evaluate the impact of investment in festivals in their local community. They will provide an annual report to the Department detailing the festivals supported, the awards made together with an assessment of the impact in the community.
- h. Comply with the rules laid down regarding the provision of State funding for events and ensure that it operates within EC State Aid legislation.
- i. Ensure that Executive and DCAL branding is appropriately placed on all CFF documentation produced by the Council and promotional materials produced by festival organisers in receipt of CFF funding.
- j. Expenditure by councils on community festivals will be subject to audit by the Local Government auditor.

9. **Effective Date**

This Policy and Guidance Framework will apply in respect of all Community Festivals funding applications for the 2016/17 financial year and subsequent years.

Annex 1 to CFF Policy and Guidance Framework

1. Social Exclusion – is about an individual’s relationship with society. Social exclusion describes a level of alienation or disenfranchisement with society. Government uses the term “social exclusion” to describe what can happen to people who are subject to the most severe problems. Social exclusion has to do with disability, poverty, joblessness, age, race, location, language and gender and many other factors. But it is more than that. It is about being cut off from the social and economic life of our community. What all these things have in common, is that they can create barriers to full participation in society.

2 Councils should use the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) as the indicator of deprivation. Those Councils that have a predominantly rural population may also use the ‘Access to Services’ domain within the overall Measure as an alternative indicator.

3. Councils may use their various existing means of communication to pass information out to groups in the most deprived areas and the socially excluded to (a) advertise the festivals and (b) make them aware that the Community Festival Fund is open for applications and that applications from them are particularly welcome.

Examples of using existing communication channels would include the following;

- Neighbourhood Renewal officers (and similar) channels
- Agenda of Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (or similar) meetings - Newspaper (or other) advertisements announcing the availability of the Fund could be placed on the Agenda and brought to the attention of members.
- Community Development resources within the Council area
- Mailshots
- ‘Good Morning’ project or similar
- Community Newsletters