

## **BELFAST EVENT/FESTIVAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

**Belfast City Council, and the organisations it funds**, should endeavour to deliver festivals and events with the least amount of environmental impact as possible. Working through every aspect of the festival or event, you should develop systems and innovative solutions across key areas such as energy, transport, purchasing and waste.

Our collective aim is for each event and festival to be ISO 20121 compliant. Sustainability should be at the core of Belfast's festival and event planning throughout the event cycle. Equal loading should be given to sustainability throughout the planning, load in, event itself, load out and post-event analysis of each festival and event.

Consideration to all activities throughout the event cycle should be assessed - each one in context of the significance of their impact. Event and festival organisers should be fully committed to sustainability, aiming to exceed the legislative requirements and in the long term, to exceed best practice.

If possible, an environmental sustainability specialist should be engaged, and if feasible, work with the event and festival team and its contractors & suppliers, in order to focus on sustainability issues and develop innovative solutions.

The city's events and festival sector should work closely to reduce its impact, and implement systems onsite, which the audience can participate in, providing the opportunity for encouraging positive behaviour change. We hope this focus on sustainable practices will affect the events and festivals industry through suppliers and contractors and of course, festival and event organisers.

Belfast City Council

## What is sustainability?

### 1. What is Sustainability

**Sustainability is the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

True sustainable development connects three spheres of awareness:

- *Economic awareness* – using assorted assets of a company efficiently to allow it to continue functioning profitably over time.
- *Social awareness* – a community focused approach that includes employee welfare, fair trade and community interaction.
- *Environmental awareness* – making responsible decisions that will reduce an organisation's negative impact on the environment.

### 2. What's in it for the Belfast Events and Festival Sector

Given the value of the events industry to the Belfast economy there is a strong argument for improving sustainability at all levels of the delivery process. Primary reasons (drivers) for organisations to consider sustainable development are; reducing operating costs, securing funding, compliance and meeting industry standards.

### 3. How to Plan an Environmentally Sustainable Event

Before you begin building sustainability into your events, it is important to overcome any barriers to change at an early stage in the process.

To ensure success:

- get commitment from senior management;
- set realistic aims, objectives and targets;
- encourage the staff to play a part and be involved;
- develop effective working relationships with your supply chain; *and*
- seek help and expert advice when you need it.

Then, it's time to consider your event's environmental impact. At the heart of truly sustainable development is planning. Plan early and costs will be minimised and impact maximised. Use this guide to lead you through successful pre, in and post event planning and implementation. 'Green Champions' can underpin staff engagement around sustainability in the organisation and the supporting role of a Green Team. Every event is different. Differing venues, seasons, content, acts and people make for a totally unique event each and every time. It is therefore essential to assess each event independently. Plan your event around the elements relevant to you such as; venue, catering, overlay, energy, water, waste, transportation, supply chain and procurement and communication.

#### 4. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- If feasible, a specialist environmental sustainability consultant should be used to engage with all staff, contractors, sub-contractors, suppliers, services, agencies, media companies, sponsors, traders and audience/ticket holders.
- If it is not feasible to engage a specialist environmental sustainability consultant, then use guidance within this document to inform and set your policies
- Feedback should be encouraged from these parties about sustainability issues and where possible, investigate their pertinent ideas.
- This consultation process should continue in the debriefing after each event and festival.
- A partnership approach should be encouraged in this consultation process.

#### 5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

- BCC's Sustainability Resources website is available to event/festival organiser, along with their contractors and suppliers. This gives information on policies, requirements, hints and tips and other information relating to sustainable event management.
- Updates on festival/event specific information regarding sustainability, along with bigger picture topics, which have relevance to the events industry or the wider community, should be shared.
- Festival and event organisers should supply comprehensive information to the audience. This should include audience participation programs, information on reducing individual impact while attending an event or festival, and links to other relevant information.
- Where appropriate, various groups promoting environmental issues and initiatives will have access to audiences onsite via information stalls and interactive displays.
- The nominated Sustainability Manager should work with internal staff to encourage further feedback and training and to ensure that there is someone at each festival to oversee these issues.
- A communications strategy is put together to get the messages across to the audience while onsite at the festival. Media releases and website articles highlight sustainable measures that we are taking.
- Artists and performers are briefed on sustainability initiatives at each event and encouraged to participate.
- All of the education and training campaigns should steer clear of a lecturing tone and rather aim to appeal to the relevant audience profile.

#### 6. Event Delivery Process

**The environmental sustainability of an event/festival should be considered throughout the initiation, planning, implementation, delivery and post-event evaluation.** Organisations should determine and prioritise their environmental goals and objectives. Organisers should identify event elements (technical, production, venue, food/beverage, ancillary service, entertainment, set dressing/décor, etc.) in regard to their environmental impact.

#### 7. TARGETS & KPI's

The key performance indicators are as follows:

##### Waste Volume

- Reduction of waste generation.
- Reduction of waste to landfill.
- Match or exceed the relevant local authorities recycling targets at each festival.
- Increase composting amounts each year.
- Resource recovery prior to waste disposal, particularly looking at campsites and salvage of useful items.

## **Energy Usage**

- Measure and review efficiencies.
- Reduce total volume of fuel.
- Increase use of bio-diesel.
- Move to alternative energy production where possible.
- Look to establish permanent sources of energy generation rather than temporary.

## **Transport**

- Aim to positively influence travel choices by offering incentive for public transport and working with public transport suppliers.
- Increase vehicle occupancy rates through promoting car sharing.
- Encourage low carbon modes of travel such as cycling where possible.
- Reduce product miles by sourcing locally where possible.
- Measure production transport to see where efficiencies can be made.

## **8. LIGHT & NOISE POLLUTION**

### **Noise Pollution**

- Festivals and event will have adequate controls to minimize the impact from noise pollution.
- A noise management plan is in place at all festivals and events.
- Noise complaint hotlines are in place in order for residents that perceive they are experiencing noise nuisance to register their concerns. This is monitored and readings taken to ensure levels set by the premises license are not exceeded.

### **Light Pollution**

- The risk of light pollution is limited, but can impact on local communities so the following measures should be undertaken:
- If used, light shows and laser shows are planned and executed with great care to ensure they are not directed into areas which could impinge on the sleeping and living spaces of local residents. The timing of such light shows are planned to minimize any potential disruption.
- Public lighting is kept to the minimum necessary for health and safety and security reasons.
- Any tower lights installed at vehicle gates are positioned carefully to minimize the potential of light pollution impacting on local residents.

## 9. WATER

Water courses must be protected from pollution and adhere to legislative and local government regulations.

- Placement of soak-aways, toilets, showers and other amenities is at a distance from natural watercourses.
- The provision of toilets should exceed the recommendations in the Event Safety Guide to dissuade people from urinating on the ground.
- In consultation with the relevant contractors sustainable alternatives to chemicals used as cleaning fluids, anti-smell chemicals, toilet chemicals etc. are used where possible.

### Water Use

- All water points should have self-closing taps to ensure water is not wasted by taps being left on after use.
- If water bowsers are used to deal with dust around the site an organic dust settling agent will be used to reduce the spray requirement to once only.
- Signage in public and staff showers encourages shorter showers to save water and energy consumption in heating the water.
- The following message is included in all specs, contracts, letters of agreement with contractors, traders, sponsors etc.:

*“Please help us make the festival sustainable by using the free water points when you are onsite working rather than bringing bottled water.”*

## 10. AIR

Air pollution in association with the festivals and events includes;

- Power generator exhaust
- Vehicle emissions
- Toxic fumes from fires.

Strategies to manage these areas include:

- Power management planning, including alternative fuels (e.g. bio-fuels) and alternative energy.
- Clear communication with audiences, crew, contractor, suppliers and artists to decrease transport impact.
- The burning of toxic materials such as tents, along with dangerous items such as gas canisters is discouraged and programs in place to reduce such activity.
- Naked flames or campfires should not be permitted.
- Stewards and security patrols should swiftly intervene if the burning any toxic material is witnessed.
- The continuous planned collection of waste during the event limits the potential of waste being set alight.
- Stewards should encourage car drivers in queues to switch off their engines rather than sitting in their cars with their engines idling.

## 11. LAND & WASTE

Minimising volume of waste to landfill is a priority. This is achieved through various initiatives including:

### Audience Campaigns

- Supporting and promoting charities and organisations that encourage reuse of materials.
- Recycling and composting on-the-go.
- Recycling incentives including deposits/refunds on beer cups and plastic bottles.
- Aluminium can campaign.
- Bag of recycling return incentives to Litter Exchanges.
- Green Messenger Stewards to assist the audience with the three-bin system and the recycling operation.
- Resource Recovery & programs to encourage 'pack it up and bin-it!'
- Inviting charities and voluntary organisations onsite post event to salvage unwanted event material.

### Contractor Strategy

- Regulate what contractors, particularly vendors, can bring onsite.
- Encourage suppliers and sponsors to use minimal packaging.
- Only compostable/biodegradable food packaging is allowed onsite.
- Resource recovery back of house.
- Education and resourcing for micro waste management systems onsite.

### Waste Management

- Develop waste management plans with a specialist waste contractor with recycling targets.
- A thorough litter pick is carried out during and post festival with the aim of "leaving no trace"
- Where appropriate and in consultation with the local authority, a litter pick is carried out along offsite strategic routes to the festival sites.
- There is continuous waste management carried out throughout the duration of an event or festival.
- A winter clean is conducted to ensure any litter that becomes apparent once the vegetation has died is found and removed.
- There is continuous monitoring of sanitary facilities including checking self-closing taps are working, that showers are not leaking, and there are no maintenance issues with the toilets etc. by a team of EHO monitors.
- All contractor, trader, supplier etc. specifications and contracts, is a requirement that there be no emissions to the land.
- If there is any accidental oil or chemical leakages onto the land, these will be dealt with immediately.

## **12. ECOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY AND HERITAGE CONSERVATION**

Every event, and its related site(s), have their own unique features. Event site designs should take into account any ecologically sensitive areas or artefacts of heritage or cultural significance:

- Work closely with local authorities and government agencies on specific site considerations.
- Design sites with consideration to the surroundings i.e. by mitigating the effects, for example, on water courses.
- Protect existing biodiversity resources i.e. by not using sensitive parts of the site.
- Protect sites of archaeological or cultural interest.
- Wherever possible and feasible, temporary roadways and hard-core roads will be installed to ensure the impact of heavy vehicles on the soil is minimized. Consider installing permanent infrastructure such as water mains and power distribution where applicable in order to cut down on the energy costs in installing temporary infrastructure each year.

## **13. PROCUREMENT**

The objectives of purchasing include:

- Considering the environmental impact of purchasing.
- Develop new markets and try to use new sustainable products.
- Ensure support for ethical production.
- Buy from local suppliers where possible to reduce transport miles i.e. buy manufactured in the UK and Ireland.
- Buy product made from raw materials from the UK and Ireland.
- Buy products made from recycled and/or non-toxic materials.
- Buy products, which have regard for the welfare of their workers.
- Sustainability should be at the core of the decision making process before appointing a supplier or contractor.

## **14. COMPLIANCE WITH TARGETS**

Sustainability targets should be written into supplier specifications, contracts and letters of agreement and employment. The Sustainability Manager will monitor compliance with the aims of this policy and quantify the success of the implementation of this policy.

## **15. GENERAL POINTS AND WIDER ISSUES**

Wider issues of sustainability such as health and safety, employment terms, working environment etc. should be covered within health and safety arrangements.

## **16. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

An appointed Sustainability Manager should carry out a quantitative assessment post-event/festival to monitor the reduction in vehicle use, increase in public transport use, car-sharing, percentage of waste recycled, amount of waste recycled, water use, emissions, etc. Each year these should be reviewed with the aim to strengthen and improve the sustainability of the event/festival. Sustainability issues will be part of the post-event/festival assessment with an audit and assessment setting future targets.