



Subject:	<i>A City Imagining</i> Investment Programme: Cultural Multi-Annual Grants
Date:	26th February 2020
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• update Members on the outcome of the cultural multi-annual grants funding process;• seek approval for recommended grants to successful organisations; and• seek approval for the development and delivery of support programmes for those organisations unsuccessful in securing a multi-annual grant.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. note the contents of this report and agree the recommendations for cultural multi-annual grants, as set out in Appendix 5 of this report; and ii. agree the proposed approach to address issues that have emerged as a result of this funding process including providing support to those organisations that have been unsuccessful in securing a multi-annual grant.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that, at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 28th August 2019, a new ten year cultural strategy for Belfast, <i>A City Imagining</i>, was agreed. As part of this strategy, a new investment approach was approved including phased implementation of new funding programmes. The criteria for a new multi-annual programme was agreed with permission granted to open this scheme in October 2019. It was acknowledged that the timeframe for this process was determined by the need to have new funding contracts in place for April 2020 as current agreements expire in March 2020.</p>
3.2	<p>Similar to the Belfast Agenda, the recommended investment model for culture proposed a new partnership approach to supporting the cultural sector, with the aim of sustaining and developing accessible cultural activity and infrastructure across Belfast. This investment is central to creating positive cultural, social and economic impacts for the city, delivering on our overall targets for the period, positioning Belfast as a regional driver, and creating the conditions for long-term transformation.</p>
3.3	<p>As included in the strategy, the aims of the cultural investment model are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support the cultural life of the city by enabling citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change; - invest in the cultural and creative sectors skills development and capacity for production and innovation; - position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemaking; and - establish Belfast as a cultural destination.

3.4	<p>The first phased implementation of the cultural investment model commenced with the opening of a competitive funding programme for cultural multi-annual grants. It was agreed that these multi-annual grants would cover two main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Arts and heritage organisations, which have a year-round programme of cultural activity (<i>Anchor</i> four year grants and <i>Enable</i> two year grants)- Festivals and events organisations, which have a festival or event with an audience of 65,000 or more (<i>Imagine</i> four year grants), or an audience of 10,000 or more (<i>Activate</i> two year grants) by end of grant period.
3.5	<p>These two strands of funding, Arts and Heritage and Festivals and Events, each with two tiers of investment available (two- and four-year) replace the existing core multi-annual funding for arts and heritage (due to end March 2020) and previous one-off funding agreements to events and festivals awarded on an annual basis via the Committee process.</p>
3.6	<p>The Arts and Heritage strand of funding is similar to and replaces the established core multi annual funding first implemented in 2013. It is designed to sustain our existing cultural offer covering both programmes and infrastructure. The Festivals and Events strand of funding is a new element and is designed to develop large events and festivals that will help Belfast become a year-round events destination. Furthermore, it creates a transparent and open process in line with the arts and heritage funding.</p>
3.7	<p>The awards recommended in this report under this funding programme represent only one funding stream within the Council and it has been designed to specifically meet the needs of core organisations currently operating at an established level of capacity. Not all cultural organisations or activity in Belfast is best suited or eligible for this programme therefore it is important to note that a number of other programmes will continue to operate such as project funding including support for neighbourhood festivals through the Community Festivals Fund and investment in other activity through Arts and Heritage Project Grants. Furthermore in 2020/21 new programmes to support the cultural strategy will be designed and implemented that directly respond to the intelligence gleaned from completing the CMAG process and a gap analysis relating to need. These and other phased elements of the cultural investment model will be reviewed and developed as part of the cultural strategy implementation plan. This report includes proposed immediate mitigating actions.</p>

3.8	<p>Funded activity is only one form of investment in culture by Council. Council will also continue to directly deliver a number of city events, however these events will be reviewed with an increased focus on partnership working and delivery to ensure complementarity and connectivity with funded activity.</p> <p>Cultural Multi-Annual Funding</p> <p><u>Applications received</u></p>
3.9	<p>Cultural multi-annual grants opened for applications on 7th October 2019 and closed on 22nd November 2019. The grants were advertised via websites, existing networks and on social media. Nine information sessions were held across the city, with 204 attendees in total. In addition, 137 one to one advice sessions took place. In total, officers engaged directly with 406 potential applicants in advance of the deadline.</p>
3.10	<p>84 applications were received in total, and 54 grants are recommended to be awarded across the two strands as follows:</p> <p><i>Festivals and Events cultural multi-annual funding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four year <i>Imagine</i> grants: 11 applications were assessed, of which four are recommended to receive a grant. Seven applications were unsuccessful, of which six were considered for a two-year grant. - Two year <i>Activate</i> grants: 26 applications were assessed, of which 12 are recommended to receive a grant. Eleven applications were unsuccessful, two were ineligible, and one was withdrawn. <p><i>Arts and Heritage cultural multi-annual funding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four year <i>Anchor</i> awards: 13 applications were assessed, of which nine are recommended to receive a grant. Four applications were unsuccessful, of which three were assessed for a two-year grant. - Two year <i>Enable</i> awards: 43 applications were assessed, of which 29 are recommended to receive a grant. Thirteen applications were unsuccessful, and one was deemed ineligible.
3.11	<p>Organisations applying for four-year grants could elect to be considered for two-year grants, if their four-year applications were unsuccessful. Two organisations were unsuccessful with their four-year applications but did not request to be considered for two-year grants. These were Grand Opera House Trust and Cathedral Quarter Trust.</p>

	<p data-bbox="272 206 639 237"><u>Criteria for Decision-making</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 255 1417 338">3.12 The criteria and guidance for applicants for the cultural multi-annual grants are included in Appendices 1 - 3.</p> <p data-bbox="272 356 1302 387">Assessments were made and scoring applied under three key areas of criteria:</p> <ul data-bbox="323 405 1406 792" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="323 405 1406 488">- Quality of programme: this includes their vision, content, audience experience and marketing and audience development. <li data-bbox="323 506 1406 689">- Impact of activity: this includes how the programme contributes to the four strategic themes (A City Belonging, A City Challenging, A City Creating and A City Exploring) and how they will monitor and evaluate that impact. A minimum score of 30 was required in this section to be eligible for a grant. <li data-bbox="323 707 1406 792">- Readiness for investment: this includes planning, financial management, staff, governance and environmental impact. <p data-bbox="165 860 1431 992">3.13 Assessments were made only on the basis of information supplied by the applicant within their submission. This included the application form and supporting documentation such as business plans and strategies.</p> <p data-bbox="272 1061 767 1093"><u>Principles of the Assessment Process</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 1113 1431 1346">3.14 Applications are received and eligibility checked by the Central Grants Unit before being passed to officers for scoring. A five-day rule is implemented consistently by the Central Grants Unit at the eligibility check stage for missing key eligibility information such as annual accounts, bank statements and governing documents. Thereafter, officers do not return to applicants to request any additional details in relation to their applications.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1413 1431 1798">3.15 Officers undertake a thorough assessment of all eligible applications. Applications and assessments are discussed and agreed at an internal moderation panel. Applications to Festivals and Events grants were assessed and moderated jointly between the Tourism Culture Arts & Heritage team and the City Events team. This was in order to combine the skills and knowledge of both teams. Given the substantial investment for the <i>Imagine</i> festivals and events grant strand, an independent external advisor was appointed via competitive quotation to complement the team in assessing and moderating these applications.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1865 1431 1948">3.16 An independent assessment panel co-ordinated by Central Grants Unit and chaired by a Senior Managers is then convened. The role of this assessment panel is 'to ensure that</p>
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the scoring of applications has been undertaken in an appropriate fashion and to provide verification or validation of sampled applications and the overall process’.

3.17 A summary of assessment and moderation results is included at Appendix 4. A summary of recommended grants and proposed grant recipients is included at Appendix 5.

Rationale for Funding Allocations

3.18 The threshold for awarding grants was determined by the quality of applications and the budget available within each strand. This was a competitive process and the standard of applications was overall very high, with thresholds ranging from over 73% to over 79%.

3.19 Due to limits of budget available, volume of applications, and high scoring threshold, some parameters were set in place to help guide grant allocations. The following general rules were applied to help rationalise allocation of grants:

3.20 Festivals and Events organisations (*Activate* two-year grants):

- Those organisations recommended to receive an *Imagine* and an *Activate* grant, or two *Activate* grants for different festivals or events, were recommended to receive a maximum of £20,000 for their second festival or event.

3.21 Arts and Heritage organisations (*Enable* two-year grants)

- The following three steps were applied:
 1. Grant offer is 10% of turnover based on average of last two year’s supplied audited accounts, or £30,000, or specific amount requested, whichever is the lowest (as published in the guidance notes).
 2. Maximum of standstill funding, if applicant is an existing core multi-annual funding recipient, where the minimum score of 30 has been achieved under the ‘Impact’ criteria within the scoring matrix.
 3. Where an uplift of funding is recommended following step one and the minimum impact score of 30 has been exceeded, then 90% of the amount calculated at step one will be awarded. The exception is where this amounts to less than standstill funding for existing clients, at which point the amount recommended will revert to standstill, or maximum grant of £30,000, whichever is lower.

3.22	<p>In calculating the level of award for organisations that met the scoring threshold and are not currently in receipt of a core multi-annual grant, the moderation panel took into consideration the level of turnover and discretionary factors such as nature of work and potential for alternative sources of income.</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p>
3.23	<p>The total request for Festivals and Events funding is £2,431,150.00, and for Arts and Heritage it is £2,014,963.50. This is a total request of £4,446,113.50 which is substantially more than budget available.</p>
3.24	<p>54 organisations are recommended for a grant, details of organisations and amounts are provided in Appendix 5. The total level of investment recommended for allocation is £2,363,264. This is an increase from £1,454,101 awarded in 2016 (which was recurrent for four years) however Festivals and Events is an additional grant stream introduced this year specifically to support the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and the <i>A City Imagining</i> ten year cultural strategy.</p>
3.25	<p>The additional budget for core funding can be found within the estimates for 2020/21 and is achieved by realignment and growth. The rationale for the proposed realignment is to protect the significant investment to date in the cultural infrastructure of the city and to limit long term damage that will result from ongoing public sector cuts. The overall investment in culture is strategically important for the council and key to the delivery of <i>A City Imagining</i> ten year cultural strategy, which is central to achieving the Belfast Agenda's aspirations for the city.</p>
3.26	<p>Of the 51 organisations representing 54 grants recommended for funding, nine are not currently in receipt of core funding: Dumbworld; Ulster Architectural Heritage Society; Belfast Film Festival (Docs Ireland); Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (Out to Lunch); Outburst Arts Festival; Eastside Arts Festival; Festival of Fools; Odyssey Trust (Friendship Four); and Science Festivals NI (NI Science Festival).</p>
3.27	<p>Of the current 56 Arts and Heritage core multi-annual funding recipients 2016-2020, 12 organisations will no longer receive multi-annual funding. Of these 12, eight organisations were unsuccessful, one was ineligible, and three did not apply. It is recommended that a transition programme is delivered to support these organisations and further information is available at 3.3.</p>

3.28	<p>Those in receipt of an <i>Imagine</i> festivals and event grant will not be eligible to apply for any other council funding for the same festival or event, including ancillary activity such as outreach or audience development. Those in receipt of an <i>Activate</i> festivals and event grant will not be eligible to apply for a Community Festivals Fund grant for the same festival or event, including ancillary activity (as they will no longer be considered to be at the scale that the community festivals fund is designed to support). All other council funding applied for must be for activity that is clearly additional to that supported through the multi-annual grant. We have publicised that we may prioritise applications from applicants not in receipt of a cultural multi-annual grant.</p> <p><u>Follow up support</u></p>
3.29	<p>All organisations that applied for funding will be offered a debrief meeting. At this meeting officers will help unsuccessful applicants identify alternative potential sources of support and development.</p>
3.30	<p>Additional support for investees will be provided through a wraparound support programme and initiatives developed alongside key sector organisations and forums where appropriate. All investees will be appointed a dedicated relationship manager who will act as a single point of contact between the organisation and the council. Relationship managers for the <i>Imagine</i> and <i>Activate</i> investees will support the development of the festival or event, whilst ensuring that all liabilities remain with the organisation.</p>
3.31	<p>Before the grant contract is released, <i>Imagine</i> and <i>Activate</i> investees will confirm which budget lines they will spend the council's investment against, targets will be clarified, and our partnership approach to support will be mutually agreed. This is in keeping with project funding practice, it manages risk and minimises the issue of council subvention being used to support commercially viable performances or other activity.</p>
3.32	<p>Officers will monitor expenditure of grants and measure achievement of agreed aims and objectives. Investees that consistently underperform against targets may be penalised.</p> <p><u>Transition support</u></p>
3.33	<p>From the outset it was acknowledged that the new cultural strategy would result in a new core funding programme that would not be the best fit for every organisation currently in receipt of core funding. Given this it was agreed that where any organisation currently in</p>

	<p>receipt of core funding is deemed ineligible for new CMAG programme or unsuccessful following the assessment process then one year transition funding at a level of current grant up to a maximum of £30,000 would be offered. This support will be tailored to individual organisations but will be a combination of finance, training, and advice, in order to assist with future planning.</p>
3.34	<p>It is therefore recommended that this <i>Transition</i> Programme would be delivered as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Funding contract drawn up with clear objectives, targets and programme details. b. 50 per cent unrestricted funds upfront to enable unsuccessful applicants to continue “business as usual”. c. A support programme to help organisations plan to develop sustainability capabilities or develop, test or implement a change project. d. Organisations submit a project plan to be incorporated as an addendum to their letter of offer to unlock the second 50 per cent restricted funding.
3.35	<p>Organisations eligible for transition funding are included at Appendix 6 with details of proposed awards.</p>
	<p><u>Additional areas of need</u></p>
3.36	<p>As is inevitable with all strategic change, some organisations will be positively impacted by the Investment Model and some will be negatively impacted. To mitigate against any impact of the new multi-annual grant, project funding for arts, heritage, festivals and events will remain unchanged in 2020/21. The proposed <i>Transition</i> programme will also be in place to help manage the change.</p>
3.37	<p>Whilst modelling the impact of this change has not identified any differential impact based on section 75 dimensions in relation to equality of opportunity, completion of the cultural multi-annual grant process has indicated specific areas of need that may require additional mitigating actions in relation to good relations.</p>
3.38	<p><i>A City Imagining</i> and the Investment Model does not specify particular priority section 75 dimensions. Rather, applicants for funding are required to evidence how and why the people or groups they intend to work with are at risk of missing out. This allows cultural</p>

	<p>organisations to demonstrate need based on their own considerable experience and expertise working with different groups, allowing for groups with multiple complex identities that can otherwise be overlooked. This is supported by research from Thrive, which recommends a more nuanced “focus on particular demographics in particular areas will be the best way to achieve overall growth in the city’s rates of engagement”; and supported by feedback from the <i>A City Imagining</i> engagement programme which recognised that individuals cannot be categorised into only one section 75 category.</p>
3.39	<p><i>A City Imagining</i> places particular importance on culture as a driver of social capital, and by building the “capacity of our citizens to allow people to express their own cultural identities” is likely to continue to increased understanding and tolerance of the culture and identities of others. Therefore there is considered a good relations implication that indicates that there may be a differential impact on cultural capacity in the long-term because this new process has pointed to a complex set of circumstances (cultural organisations primarily preserving, promoting or developing the protestant culture have lower organisational capacity) and multiple identities.</p>
3.40	<p>It is, therefore, recommended that a programme is designed and taken forward that addresses this impact. The programme will focus on building individual and organisational capacity with a view to culminating in event(s) of scale to be produced as part of 2023 programme.</p>
3.41	<p>Previous research has also indicated that disability arts organisation are particularly vulnerable to policy changes. Whilst University of Atypical is not recommended for a multi-annual grant, it would be supported by the proposed <i>transition</i> one year funding which includes support to address sustainability issues. It is further recommended that this should be revisited at the end of year one.</p>
3.42	<p>Finally, whilst an application from Cathedral Quarter Trust for delivery of a scaled up Culture Night has been unsuccessful, the importance of ensuring a largescale shared cultural event in the city centre is recognised. It is therefore recommended that in 2020 Council offers ongoing support to Cathedral Quarter Trust in partnership with Department of Communities of £50,000 towards programming and £12,000 towards core costs. This is to ensure no loss of activity or local engagement. In parallel a strategic review of culture</p>

night will be completed including recommendations for long-term governance and a sustainable partnership model to be considered in the context of the city's overall events calendar. This review would aim to relaunch a significant city centre annual event from 2021 onwards with year on year growth leading to 2023.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.43 The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from agreed departmental budgets for 2020/21. A breakdown of the budget is detailed below.

- 3.44
- The total recommended for funding through cultural multi-annual funding is £2,363,264. This would represent investment of:
 - £1,004,665 for Festivals and Events grants, and
 - £1,358,599 for Arts & Heritage grants
 - £168,000 will be allocated to *transition* funding
 - £80,000 will be allocated to capacity building programme
 - £50,000 to be awarded to Cathedral Quarter Trust in partnership with Council and other stakeholders to deliver a city centre event.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

3.45 An Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment was carried out for the Cultural Strategy. An equality screening was completed on the Investment Model including multi-annual grants which has been screened out with mitigating actions. Mitigating actions include: monitoring key population indicators and programme performance measures, in particular participation and attendance by disabled people; consider additional support and for sector-wide audience development of under-engaged audiences, in particular disabled people and older people; people and groups where there is evidence of additional barriers, such as LGBTQ+ and carers, and people with multiple identities; promotion and implementation of the council's Inclusive Events Guide for outdoor events and cultural festivals.

3.46 Other investment model strands will be equality screened as they are designed and implemented.

3.47 Reviewing the outcomes, there has been under-representation of groups from or representing the PUL community. Capacity building has been identified as a mitigating action.

4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Guidance Notes (General)</p> <p>Appendix 2: Guidance Notes (Arts & Heritage organisations)</p> <p>Appendix 3: Guidance Notes (Festivals and Events organisations)</p> <p>Appendix 4: Summary of all applications received, scores, and recommendations</p> <p>Appendix 5: Grant recommendations and summary of proposed programmes</p> <p>Appendix 6: <i>Transition</i> funding</p>