

# A CITY IMAGiNING

**Belfast**

Cultural Strategy for  
Belfast 2020 - 2030

**Your guide to cultural  
multi-annual grants**

General guidance notes

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## A City Imagining

The Belfast Agenda, our city's first community plan, has helped to establish a new approach to partnership working. Belfast's 10-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*, is a consolidation of the foundation, commitments and achievements of several preceding strategies and frameworks.

Similar to the Belfast Agenda, our new investment model for culture proposes a new partnership approach to funding with the aim of sustaining and developing accessible cultural activity and infrastructure across Belfast.

## The investment model

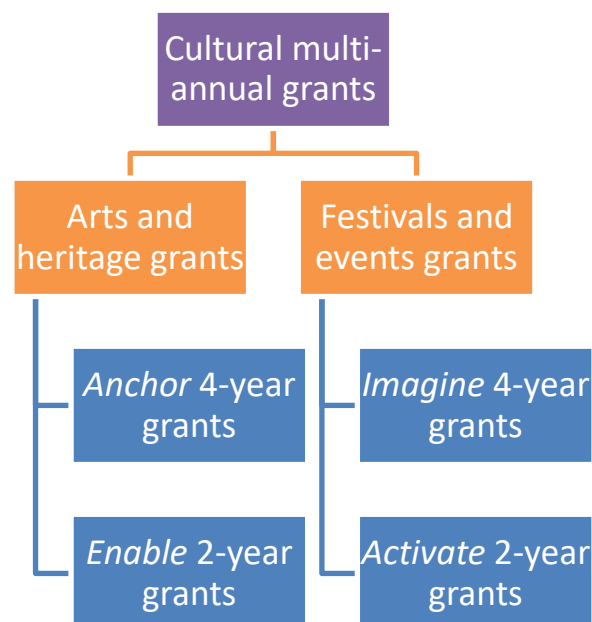
The aims of the cultural investment model are to:

- 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
- Establish Belfast as a cultural destination

Multi-annual grants are the first phased element of the cultural investment model being developed by Belfast City Council. Other programmes will follow in due course. There are two strands of multi-annual grants available, that is multi-annual grants for:

- Arts and heritage organisations with a year-round programme of activity (*Anchor & Enable*)
- Festivals and events with an audience of more than 10,000 (*Imagine & Activate*)

These multi-annual grants are available over two and four years as outlined in the diagram below.



## Anchor & Enable

These multi-annual grants are for **arts and heritage organisations**. They can support organisations that have a recurrent, year-round programme of work and ongoing costs associated with this. This investment is not intended for short- or fixed-term projects or single or one-off events. If you are interested in these grants, please also read **Your guide to completing an application for Anchor and Enable grants**.

## Imagine & Activate

These multi-annual grants are open to all cultural organisations – whether they work through sports, arts, heritage, architecture, language, food and so on – running a **large festival or event**. For the purpose of this investment, festivals and events are defined as an activity or a series of activities with a common theme that occur on one day or over a period of several successive days. If you are interested in these grants, please also read **Your guide to completing an application for Imagine and Activate grants**.

**It is anticipated that applications for multi-annual grants will be very competitive. If you are unsure which grant you should apply for, talk to us.** Our contact details are available at the end of the guidance notes, or come along to one of our information roadshows in October – log on to [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy) for more information.

## What you can apply for

This table shows the different levels of investment available.

Strand	Minimum grant per year	Maximum grant per year	Estimated average grant per year	Estimated number of grants
<i>Imagine</i>	£50,000	Up to 25 per cent of your organisation's turnover, but no more than £250,000	£160,000	3 to 4
<i>Activate</i>	£10,000	Up to 25 per cent of your organisation's turnover, but no more than £50,000	£46,000	12
<i>Anchor</i>	£30,000	Up to 10 per cent of your organisation's turnover, but no more than £150,000	£124,000	7
<i>Enable</i>	£10,000	Up to 10 per cent of your organisation's turnover, but no more than £30,000	£20,000	25

The same level of award will be received each year. For example, if you apply and are awarded £10,000, you will receive £10,000 each year.

As this is a competitive programme subject to budget availability, we may offer you less than the amount you applied for. If this is the case, we will talk to you about the effect this may have on your programme before we issue your contract.

## What we can invest in

Our investment can be used towards the cost of running your organisation and your programme of activities. It cannot be spent on:

- activities that contravene Belfast City Council policies. An example of this would be balloon or Chinese lantern releases, which contravene our environmental policy
- groups or activities that discriminate against any particular racial group, political grouping or religious body
- any particular political party or party political activity
- commercial programmes or activities that could be undertaken on a commercial basis. If, in the reasonable opinion of the council, the organisation applying for a grant is a de facto commercial organisation, whatever the legal make-up of the organisation, then the council will not fund that organisation. The decision of the council shall be final in this regard. Regardless, our grant must only be used to support elements of your programme that are not commercial and can demonstrate public benefit.
- capital expenditure (that is the cost of buying physical assets for long-term use, such as buildings, land, vehicles, equipment and so on)
- costs associated with filling in this application form
- any costs or activities before 1 April 2020

## Who can apply

You must meet the following eligibility criteria to be considered for investment.

### Common eligibility criteria

- Your organisation must
  - have an office in and operational focus in the Belfast City Council local government district.
  - be a legally constituted group and supply evidence of this (a constitution or memorandum and articles of association).
  - be a not-for-profit organisation and be unable to share out profits to members or shareholders.
  - have a board or management committee and supply a list of members.
  - hold a bank account in the organisation's name and provide evidence of this.
  - be in good financial health, have effective financial controls and submit evidence of this such as financial accounts and bank statements.
  - complete the application form in full.
  - All of your organisation's policies and procedures must be in place, up to date and fit for purpose to comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements for the group, services and activities for which your organisation is wholly liable. This may include a safeguarding policy for children and vulnerable adults; an equal opportunities policy; and all other relevant policies. You must also keep to all relevant laws including the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997, the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976, Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
  - It is unlikely that we will invest in you if you have previously received a grant from us that was not managed satisfactorily or was not completed. This includes if you did

not send us monitoring reports within the agreed timescales or if you did not seek approval for changes to your project.

## Grant-specific eligibility criteria

In addition to the common eligibility criteria, each grant also has specific eligibility requirements which are outlined in the table below.

	<i>Imagine</i>	<i>Activate</i>	<i>Anchor</i>	<i>Enable</i>
<b>Primary purpose of organisation</b>	Culture	Culture	Arts or heritage	Arts or heritage
<b>Type of activity</b>	Festival or event	Festival or event	Year-round programme	Year-round programme
<b>Minimum annual turnover</b>	Estimated £300,000 average over the contract period (from 2020/21 to 2023/24)	Estimated £50,000 average over the contract period (from 2020/21 to 2021/22)	£300,000 average over the previous two financial years (based on annual accounts)	£100,000 average over the previous two financial years (based on annual accounts)
<b>Staff</b>	Has or will employ in the first year of the grant at least 3 fulltime equivalent staff	Has or will employ in the first year of the grant at least 1 fulltime equivalent staff	Has 3 fulltime equivalent staff	Has 1 fulltime equivalent staff
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>event business plan for the first year's festival or event</li> <li>strategic plan up to and including 2023</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>event business plan for the first year's festival or event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organisational business plan for the first year of the grant</li> <li>longer-term strategic plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organisational business plan for the first year of the grant</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marketing plan up to and including 2023</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marketing plan for the first year of your festival or event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marketing plan for the first year of the grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marketing plan for the first year of the grant</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	Local, regional, international, media and cross-sectoral (that is, from outside the cultural sector) partners	Local and regional partners	Local, regional, international, media and cross-sectoral (that is, from outside the cultural sector) partners	Local and regional partners
<b>Volunteers</b>	Minimum 40 per year	Minimum 20 per year	Minimum 20 per year	Minimum 10 per year
<b>Audience</b>	65,000 by 2023 or a 10 per cent increase each year, whichever is greater	10,000 by 2022 or a 5 per cent increase each year, whichever is greater	Minimum 50,000 per year from 2018/19	No minimum requirement
<b>Visitors</b>	25 per cent of audience from outside Belfast	20 per cent of audience from outside Belfast	No minimum requirement	No minimum requirement

	including a target for visitors from outside NI	including a target for visitors from outside NI		
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## How to apply

**Please read the guidance notes in full before you decide which grant is right for you.**

We have also developed an eligibility quiz that will guide you through the eligibility criteria and help you decide which strand to apply for.

You cannot apply for both a festivals and events grant **and** an arts and heritage grant.

**However, if you have two or more festivals or events, you may apply for more than one grant.** For example, if you are planning a festival with an audience of 65,000 and an event with an audience of 10,000, you may apply for both an *Imagine* and an *Activate* grant.

**If you are an arts and heritage organisation that runs or is planning a festival or event with an audience of 10,000 people, you must apply for a festivals and events grant (*Imagine* or *Activate*)** regardless of your programme of activity throughout the rest of the year.

**If you are applying for a four-year grant, you can choose to be automatically considered for a two-year grant if your four-year application is unsuccessful.**

## The application form

**To apply for a grant, you must first take the eligibility quiz,** which you can do online at [www.belfastcity-grants.com](http://www.belfastcity-grants.com).

Once you have completed the quiz, you will be able to access the application form for whichever grants you are eligible.

We are committed to making sure that our services are available to all sections of the community. We may be able to provide the guidance notes and application form in different formats on request.

The organisation completing the form must be the same organisation that will receive the grant and manage the programme. We will not consider an application made by one organisation on behalf of another.

## Timescales

<b>Deadline for applications</b>	12 midday, Friday 22 November 2019
<b>Notification to applicants</b>	by Friday 6 March, 2020

We must receive your application on or before 12 midday on Friday 22 November 2019. We will not accept applications we receive after this time. The date of notification to applicants is subject to council approvals.

## The assessment process

### Stage one: eligibility check

We will first make sure your organisation meets the eligibility criteria listed under the “Who can apply” section. If you have forgotten to provide us with copies of your:

- constitution or memorandum of association
- annual accounts

- management accounts, or
- bank statements

we will contact you and ask you to send us the information within five working days. Annual accounts and management accounts must be signed and dated by your chairperson or treasurer to confirm they are your organisation's accounts. No other information will be requested.

**If your organisation does not provide this missing information within five working days, or does not meet the eligibility criteria, your application will be deemed ineligible.** This means that your application has been unsuccessful and will not be recommended for a grant.

#### Stage two: scoring and risk assessment

If your organisation passes the stage one: eligibility check, your application will then be scored against the following criteria.

Criteria	Weighting %
<p><i>Quality of programme</i></p> <p>This includes your vision, content, audience experience and marketing and audience development.</p>	30
<p><i>Impact of activity</i></p> <p>This includes how your programme contributes to the four strategic themes (A City Belonging, A City Challenging, A City Creating and A City Exploring) and how you will monitor and evaluate that impact.</p> <p><b>You must score 75 per cent or over (that is, 30 marks or more) in this section to be eligible for a multi-annual grant.</b></p>	40
<p><i>Readiness for investment</i></p> <p>This includes planning, financial management, staff, governance and environmental impact.</p>	30

**You must score at least 65 per cent overall to be considered for investment.** However, even if an application scores highly, we cannot guarantee that we will have the resources to invest in your programme, and we reserve the right not to award any funding.

We will also carry out a risk assessment on your proposal. We will consider:

- Organisational risks
- Programme risks
- Delivery risks
- Finance risks

A high-risk rating means that we have serious concerns, and it is very unlikely we will invest in your programme.

A medium-risk rating means that we have some concerns. If you are awarded a grant, we may reduce the level of money we invest, make you a conditional offer, build additional conditions in to your contract or monitor you more closely.



### Stage three: assessment and recommendations

Applications will undergo a rigorous multi-stage assessment process. Finally, recommendations will be presented to and ratified by the council. Applicants will be notified of the council's decision by 6 March 2020 (subject to council approvals).

The Council's decision on whether to award funding is final and there is no appeals process, however if your application is unsuccessful you can contact an officer for feedback and advice on future funding applications.

### Filling in your application form

For some questions, we have set the maximum number of words you can have in your answer. Please keep to the word limits as we will not consider any words over the word limit.

Your responses should be well structured and clearly linked to the question. We recommend you use bullet points and headings where possible.

It is important that you give us clear and detailed information on your programme and its impact. It is not enough to repeat what we say in *A City Imagining* or in these guidance notes.

We assess your programme and impact only on the information you provide as part of the application. We may be familiar with your work – perhaps the council has funded your organisation in the past or staff have attended your events and other activities – but we will not take this knowledge or experience into account.

We will also not take into account information we have not specifically asked for as part of the application, such as press clippings, photographs, evaluation reports, CVs and so on.

We may verify information you provide about the management and governance of your organisation by checking the information you have provided to Companies House or the Charity Commission NI. We may also check how you managed any grants previously awarded by Belfast City Council. It is unlikely that we will invest in you if you have previously received a grant from us that was not completed or managed satisfactorily.

The information contained in your business plan or strategy and marketing plan should support what you have told us in your application form. We will be looking for a “golden thread” between your application form and your supporting documents.

Applications that are not complete or do not provide detailed financial budgets in the tables provided in the application form will be deemed ineligible.

**For more detailed guidance on the application form, please refer to the guidance notes for the type of grant best suited to your organisation:**

- **Your guide to completing an application for *Anchor* and *Enable* grants (for arts and heritage organisations), or**
- **Your guide to completing an application for *Imagine* and *Activate* grants (for festivals and events)**

**If you are unsure which grant you should apply for, talk to us.** Our contact details are available at the end of the guidance notes, or come along to one of our information roadshows in October – log on to [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy) for more information.

## What happens next?

If we agree to invest in your programme, we will write to you to let you know.

If the amount of investment we offer is less than the amount you applied for, we will talk to you about the effect this may have on your programme and targets before we issue your contract.

If you have been awarded an *Imagine* or *Activate* grant, you will also have to tell us what you are going to spend our investment on. (*Anchor* and *Enable* investment is unrestricted – you just have to agree to use our money responsibly in line with the conditions of your contract.)

We will then issue you with your contract, which will set out:

- your programme and targets
- the general conditions of the grant
- any special conditions
- the stages we will pay the grant in

## Working together

We want to build a trusting and collaborative relationship with the organisations we invest in – a relationship that is supportive, but that can also withstand challenge.

You will be appointed a relationship manager who will be an expert in culture or events management. Depending on your programme and the value of our investment, you and your relationship manager will agree what support you need, when and how.

We also intend to develop a central package of support, such as forums, training and networking, based on clusters of activity and need.

## Monitoring and evaluation

You must complete regular monitoring, to a schedule that will be agreed with your relationship manager, giving details of your progress, including your performance against your planned activities, targets and spend. You must also submit an updated budget and programme at the end of each year of your contract. You must also get the permission of your relationship manager in writing before you make any significant changes to your organisation, programme or the budget.

We are looking at how we can streamline our monitoring and evaluation with other major funders. For example, we may work with Tourism NI and our *Imagine* and *Activate* festivals and events to create a standard methodology and survey to measure economic impact. We may also introduce other methods to measure or independently evaluate the impact of *A City Imagining* and our investment.

## Paying the grant

We will make payments based on a schedule to be agreed with your relationship manager, and this will be detailed within your contract. We may review this payment schedule based on your spend profile.

We make all payments by Bacs transfer.

We have asked *Imagine* and *Activate* festivals and events to develop ambitious growth targets. We will work with you to achieve these. However, should any organisation we invest in fail to deliver

their programme or targets, we may withhold all or part of our investment. This will be done in consultation between the organisation and their relationship manager.

## Using our logo and the Belfast brand

Organisations in receipt of council grants must use the Belfast City Council logo to acknowledge our support. We will give you further guidance on this if your application is successful. If you do not acknowledge council support, we may withdraw some or all of your grant.

In addition, we are encouraging creative use of the Belfast city brand ([www.belfastbrand.com](http://www.belfastbrand.com)) for all Belfast based cultural activity, events, and festivals. We will give you further guidance on this if your application is successful.

## Applying for other funding from Belfast City Council

*Imagine* festivals and events grant recipients 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.

*Activate* festivals and events grant recipients will not be eligible to apply for community festivals funding for the same festival or event, including ancillary activity.

All other council funding applied for must be for activity that is clearly additional to that supported through your multi-annual grant.

We reserve the right to exclude cultural multi-annual grant recipients from applying for other council grants or to prioritise applications from applicants not in receipt of a cultural multi-annual grant.

## Talk to us

### Information roadshows

We will be running information roadshows during October. Dates and venues will be published on our website [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culturalstrategy) or you can contact us for more information.

### Central Grants Unit

For general enquiries about the application process or advice on filling in the application form, contact the Central Grants Unit.

Phone: 9027 0324      Email: [cgugrants@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:cgugrants@belfastcity.gov.uk)      [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding)

### City Events Unit

If you are planning an event or festival and would like more advice and support, please contact our events team.

Phone: 9027 0260      Email: [events@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:events@belfastcity.gov.uk)

### Tourism, Culture, Arts and Heritage Unit

If you are an arts or heritage or festival organisation and would like more advice and support, please contact our tourism, culture, arts and heritage team.

Phone: 9050 0512      Email: [culture@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:culture@belfastcity.gov.uk)      [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culture](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culture)



## General glossary

Annual accounts	Accounts prepared at the end of your financial year. Those organisations required by law to produce audited accounts (that is accounts examined by a trained, independent auditor) should submit their audited accounts with their application. Other organisations should submit annual accounts examined, agreed and signed by their board or management committee. For further information on legal requirements, see <a href="http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk">www.charitycommissionni.org.uk</a> or <a href="http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk">www.companieshouse.gov.uk</a> .
Articles of association	<i>See memorandum and articles of association</i>
Attendees	This is the number of people attending a one-off event such as audience or spectators.
Audience	Attendees and participants
Audience development plan	A plan of activity designed to strengthen relationships with existing and potential attendees and participants. It can include marketing, commissioning, programming, education, customer care, distribution, and so on. For some organisations, audience development will be included in their marketing plan.
Bacs	An electronic transfer of money from one bank account to another.
Baseline	The starting position or a reference point from which you can measure progress and performance.
Business plan	A formal statement that sets out what you want to achieve and how you are going to achieve it over a specified period of time, usually one year. For the purposes of this application, it must cover at least the first year of the contract period (that is, 2020).
Capital expenditure	The cost of buying physical items for long-term use such as land, buildings, vehicles or equipment.
Cash flow	The amount of money being transferred in to and out of your organisation.
Commercial activity	Any activity that could reasonably be carried out by a for-profit organisation for the sole purpose of making money.
Constitution	A legal document that sets down what your organisation can do and how it can act, e.g. if it can earn income, if it can apply for funding, the responsibilities of the board of directors, etc.
Contract	A legally binding agreement between two or more parties to do (or not do) something.
Contracted staff	People you hire for a particular project on a short-term contract
Contributions	Income received not in exchange for goods or services (earned income) or from funding. It is often in recognition of the value of what you do, for example, donations from audience members, corporate sponsorship or income from trusts and foundations.

Core costs	<i>See running costs</i>
Cultural organisation	An organisation that preserves or promotes culture. <i>See also culture.</i>
Cultural practitioner	A person engaged because of their expertise in the preservation, practice or promotion of culture. This can include artists, sports professionals, coaches, directors, historians, facilitators, teachers, academics, and so on.
Culture	Any expression of how we live our lives and relate to the world around us. It can include arts, heritage, architecture, sport, food, language, customs, traditions and ideas.
Eligibility criteria	Basic requirements that an organisation must demonstrate in order to have their application considered for funding.
Established organisation	An organisation that has been operating for several years and can reasonably be expected to have two years' annual accounts
Estimated attendees	This is the number of people attending a one-off event that cannot be measured using a precise method, for example, attendees at a large, outdoor, un-ticketed event.
Evaluation	Evaluation is an assessment how well something ran (for example, 90 per cent of participants would recommend your activity to a friend) and what difference it made (80 per cent of participants learned a new skill).
Event	An activity that occurs on one day or over a period of several successive days.
Festival	A festival a series of activities with a common theme that occurs over a period of several successive days.
Financial verification	An examination of an organisation's financial records and processes by a funder or other independent body
Financial year	Accounting period of 12 consecutive months after which annual accounts are prepared. The financial year can start on any day of the year.
Freelance staff	A self-employed person hired for a particular project
Fulltime equivalent	The number of hours worked by one full-time employee. So, for example, a part-time employee working half the week would be 0.5 fulltime-equivalent. You can find several fulltime-equivalence calculators, such as <a href="https://m.wikihow.com/Calculate-FTE">https://m.wikihow.com/Calculate-FTE</a> , online.
Grant	An award of financial assistance to a successful grant applicant
Governance	The structures, processes and procedures that control your organisation. Responsibility for governance lies with your board of directors or management committee
Impact	This is the difference your activity will make, sometimes referred to as outcomes or theory of change. Impact usually changes over time, and it affects different groups of people differently. For example, a

	participant on a training course may gain a new skill. When they put that skill in to practice, it may help them gain employment as a cultural practitioner. If enough cultural practitioners develop new practice, this may have an impact on the sector, which may in turn change cultural or government policy.
In kind	Goods or services given in support where no cash is exchanged
Investment	Money awarded to you by Belfast City Council to enable you to deliver cultural benefit for the city
Local government district	The geographic area Belfast City Council is responsible for
Known attendees	This is the number of people attending a one-off event that can be “known” – that is, calculated using a precise method such as ticket sales – and verified.
Management accounts	A summary of accounting data (balance sheet, cash flow and income statement) used to make short-term, day-to-day business decisions. Your management accounts should be presented at regular board or committee meetings and signed and dated by a representative of the board or committee to confirm that they are true and accurate.
Market segment	A group of people that share one or more characteristics that you want to market your good or services to
Marketing	How you promote or sell your organisation company, product or service
Memorandum and articles of association	Legal documents that set down what an organisation can do and how it can act, e.g. if it can earn income, if it can apply for funding, the responsibilities of the board, etc.
Monitoring	Systematic supervision and recording of activities to ensure that they are being delivered on time, within budget and to the agreed performance target.
New organisation	An organisation that is recently established and cannot reasonably be expected to have two years’ annual accounts
Objective	A goal or specific result you want to achieve
Participants	A participant is a person who actively takes part in an activity.
Partnership	Two or more organisations working together for mutual benefit. A partnership can be informal or formal, sometimes written down in a contract or memorandum of understanding.
Payroll	A list of employees receiving wages or salaries
Permanent staff	Staff on your payroll on a permanent contract or fixed term contract of one year or more.
Practitioner	<i>See cultural practitioner</i>
Primary purpose	What your organisation was set up to achieve.

Programme	A series of interlinked projects designed to achieve your vision, aims and desired impact.
Programme costs	The cost of delivering your organisation's programme of activity, such as practitioner fees, materials, venue hire, marketing, and so on.
Project	A discrete piece of work with a set beginning and end to achieve a particular result
Risk assessment	A method of controlling risks (and opportunities). It involves identifying a risk, evaluating the chance of the risk happening and the effect it could have, and then deciding on an appropriate way to deal with it.
Running costs	The ongoing cost related to the day-to-day running of an organisation, such as staff costs, light, rent and heat, and so on.
Spend profile	An analysis of how much money you are going to spend and when
Stakeholder	A person with an interest in or influence over your organisation or activities
Strategy	A high-level plan that describes your long-term vision, objectives and how you will achieve these
Target	An indicator of success, measured in numbers
Vision	An aspirational description of what your organisation wants to achieve in the mid- or long-term
Visitor	A visitor is a person who does not live or work in Belfast visiting the city for leisure or business purposes.
Volunteers	Staff or helpers who receive no wages or salary or who receive no more than basic expenses.