



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Multi-Annual and Annual Funding for Culture and the Arts
Date:	7 March 2008
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Relevant Background Information

Annual Funding for the Arts was established by Council to assist arts and heritage organisations by providing financial support on an annual basis. Multi-Annual Funding was established by Council to introduce a degree of longer term sustainability to some of the city's flagship arts organisations.

This report provides the Development Committee with recommendations on applications made to Annual Funding for Culture and the Arts 2008/9 and Multi-Annual for Culture and the Arts 2008/2011. The closing date for applications under both schemes was Friday 14 December 2007. Assessments of applications received for Multi-Annual and Annual Funding in the next financial year 2008/09 can be found in **Appendix D and E**.

Multi-Annual Funding for Culture and Arts

At the Development Committee meeting of 14 November 2007, Members agreed the selection of 14 Multi-Annual Funding clients. Multi-Annual Funding incorporates a three year funding term, and an anticipated minimum annual funding level of £30,000.

These 14 successful clients were then invited to submit an application by the deadline of 12 noon on Friday 14 December 2007. The total now requested by the 14 Multi-Annual Funding clients, for year one 2008/9 of their three year funding agreement, is £805,705. Scores and recommendations for multi-annually funded organisations can be found in **Appendix B**.

Annual Funding for Culture and Arts

The 2008/9 deadline for applications was also 12 noon on 14 December 2007. A total of 64 applications were received, compared to 54 (excluding those organisations who are now multi annually funded) in 2007/8.

The applications received requested a total of £996,585.08. In 2004/5, the total requested by organisations (excluding those organisations who are now multi-annually funded), is £1,415,287.00 Scores and recommendations for Annual Funding can be found in **Appendix C**.

Criteria for Multi-Annual and Annual Funding for Culture and Arts 2005/6

The Culture and Arts Eligibility Criteria (shown in **Appendix A**), approved by Members at the Development (Arts) Sub-Committee of 20 September 2004, were devised in order to assist the Council to work in partnership with arts and heritage organisations in achieving its objectives. They reflect the themes of the Development Department and the Integrated Cultural Strategy.

Level of Applications

Requests for grants this year has far outstripped available resources. Taken together, the total request for multi annual and annual grants for the coming year equates to £2,167,220.16. This is the equivalent of two and a quarter times the total projected budget of £960,000.

With few exceptions, the level of applications has been strong and Annual Funding applicants have put considerable effort into demonstrating how they meet the criteria.

As expected and without exception, the multi-annually funded organisations submitted excellent applications each with dynamic plans for the next three years.

Members are requested to note that income and expenditure is presented in this report as a summary of the information submitted. As agreed previously by the Development (Arts) Sub-Committee, officers have not returned to applicants to request any additional details in relation to their applications. This includes clarification of budgets in some cases the budgets presented contain discrepancies.

Principles of the Reporting Process

Organisations submit a lengthy application including supporting documentation such as strategic and business plans, annual reports, financial statements, policy documents and procedure. Officers undertake a lengthy assessment of all applications, scoring them against each of the criteria identified for the scheme.

A summary of this information has been compiled by Officers in order to:-

- Highlight the main strengths and weaknesses in the application,
- ensure optimum transparency as to how decisions on their applications have been reached, and
- familiarise Members with the nature and variety of arts and heritage programmes in which the Council invests

The comments in the summary of assessments aim to outline for Members areas where applicants performed particularly well against specific criteria or where there were weaknesses in the application. The comments relate to both the strengths of the proposed programme and the evidence supplied within the application. It should be noted that where there is limited information supplied to address a specific area of the criteria this is highlighted as a weakness.

Members are requested to use these assessments in tandem with the scores provided in **Appendices B & C**.

Grant Histories

For ease of reference full grant histories for Culture and Arts funding programmes for the last 4 years are provided at **Appendix F**.

Minimum Grant

The minimum Annual Funding grant offered is £3,000.

Rationale for Funding Decisions

The following rationale for awarding funding is based on the following factors, previously agreed by the Development (Arts) Sub-committee:

- Previous levels of funding
- Strength of the proposed programme as assessed against agreed funding criteria
- Impact of the project including anticipated audiences/participants, impact in the Belfast area, range and scope of the proposed programme.
- Level of Council funding when compared to the overall costs of the programme
- Viability of the proposed programme within the funding offered

Key Issues

Multi-Annual Funding

Members will note from the scores tables (attached as **Appendix B and C** to this Introduction) that overall scores against the Culture and Arts Criteria were very high, particularly amongst Multi-Annual Funding clients. This shows extremely strong potential for development of the cultural product and for developing the city-wide regenerative impacts of the arts.

The total level of funding recommended for 14 Multi Annual Funding is £612,000 (63.7% of overall funding). Details of rationale for funding allocations are as follows and individual awards are provided in **Appendix D**.

The recommendations to the Multi-Annual Funding clients are for the first year of a three year funding scheme and for all but one organisation (see below) incorporate an 4% uplift or the amount requested which ever is greater (rounded to the nearest £250). It is recommended that the three year funding agreement for Multi-Annual funding includes a yearly increase in the level of funding in the further two years by a minimum of 3%.

The Lyric Theatre scored slightly lower than other Multi Annual organisations. This is in part due to the closure of the existing Lyric theatre in advance of the major capital project. There was considerably less detail provided on the programme during the off-site period. This off site period has a significant impact on the proposed recurrent programme including reduced programme costs, reduced employment and reduced anticipated audiences. They are also likely to tour beyond Belfast which weakens the impact of the programme within the City. A high contingency was also included within the budget. This does not allow officers to see a clearly specify breakdown of costs towards aspects of programme. A clearly broken down budget which includes a breakdown of the contingency figure will be requested as a condition of funding, however, in the light of the comments above we have recommended that the offer is reduced from previous years. The revised offer takes account of half of the proposed contingency and would therefore be £36,500.

The Lyric Theatre is subject to a one year review. It is therefore suggested that the grant offer is reviewed at this stage.

The organisations who have only recently achieved Multi Annual Funding are recommended to receive £30,000 which reflects an uplift of considerably more than 4% in all cases.

It should be noted that Belfast City Council funding, as a proportion of overall programme costs for Multi-Annual Funding clients, is low. Belfast City Council funding represents 4.2% of the collective turnover for MAF Organisations. This equates to a direct return for investment of 1:24. It is felt that this underlines the value for money that these flagship organisations represent and supports the impact of increased investment in these organisations.

Annual Funding

The total level of funding recommended for Annual Funding is £348,000 (36.3% of overall funding). Details of individual awards are provided in **Appendix E**. The rationale for funding decisions is outlined below. Organisations who have previously received Annual Funding were awarded grants based on previous funding levels.

Organisations Scoring - Over 80%

Only one AF organisation scored over 80%. Queen's Film Theatre have received a lower level of funding over last few years to reflect difficulties with structure and temporary relocation. It is therefore recommended that they are awarded an increase of £2k to recognise the strong programme and position.

Organisations Scoring - 70% - 80%

Most of the organisations scoring between 70 and 80% are recommended a 4% increase in funding (rounded to nearest £250). More substantial increases are recommended to recognise substantial growth and increased impact of the programmes for several organisations. The rationale for these increases is as follows:

Youth Action have strengthened and expanded their arts programme considerably and have become a major part of the arts infrastructure in Belfast due to their relocation to a new building in central location which includes a purpose built performance venue.

Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival has been a rapidly expanding festival with the new Out to Lunch Festival in January and increasing audience figures and a reputation for excellent and innovative events.

Cahoots Northern Ireland have an expanded programme of performances and increased Belfast focus and are currently on a comparatively low level of funding

Cultúrlann McAdam O Fiaich have a strengthened and expanded arts programme and have a growing role in the arts infrastructure for the City.

In the case of Dance Resource Base and Dance United the awards have been rounded upwards to allow a minimal increase to be awarded.

Organisations Scoring - 65-70 %

Recommended 3% rounded to nearest £250. Ormeau Baths Gallery were awarded an increased level of funding to reflect their revised structure and enhanced programme, their funding had been previously reduced during transitional arrangements while their management was under the Arts Council NI and during the transitional governance arrangements.

Organisations Scoring - 60-65%

These organisations are recommended no increase on 07/08 figures.

East Belfast Art Collective which submitted a very borderline application and while there are strengths to the programme it was felt that the award need to acknowledge the weaknesses in strategic planning and outreach activities. They therefore were recommended a reduced award of £5,000.

Organisations Not Funded In 2007/08

The following organisations who did not receive Annual Funding in 2007/08 were recommended grants of £3k.

Artscare
Belfast Philharmonic Society
Catalyst Arts
Educational Shakespeare Company
Music Theatre 4 Youth
Naughton Gallery
New Lodge Arts Forum
Partisan
Photoworks North/Source
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
Ulster Youth Choir

Resource Implications

Financial

A provisional budget of £960,000 was agreed by Development Committee of October 2007.

Human Resources

This will be covered within the work programme of the culture and Arts Unit.

Recommendations

Members are asked to agree recommendations in:

Appendix B - Scores and Recommendations for Multi-Annual Funding

Appendix C - Scores and recommendations for Annual Funding

Documents Attached

Appendix A – Eligibility Criteria

Appendix B – Scores and Recommendations for Multi Annual Funding

Appendix C – Scores and Recommendations for Annual Funding

Appendix D – Multi Annual Funding Assessments

Appendix E – Annual Funding Assessments

Appendix F – Grant Histories

Key to Abbreviations

AF – Annual Funding

MAF – Multi-Annual Funding

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