FROM THE MINISTER

Department of Culture. Arts

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Your Ref: M-TMcG/TH/AS Our Ref: COR/377/2008 DIREC DEVE 3⊘September 2008 神経・み Ms Marie-Therese McGivern

Willy.

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ACTIONACOMMENTS

Director of Development **Belfast City Council** The Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast

BT2 8BP

Dear Ms McGivern,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 28 August 2008 requesting that the Department enhances its contribution to the establishment of the Community Festival Fund for the City of Belfast.

As you indicate, a significant number of community festivals are held in the City each year. The festivals are highly valued by the people of Belfast and beyond and play an important part in promoting a positive and dynamic image of Belfast.

I recognise that, notwithstanding the social and economic value of community festivals, there is a significant demand for financial support to organise such events successfully and would commend the Council for the support it has given in ensuring the successful delivery of community festivals thus far.

You will be aware that the allocation of funds to the various Councils was determined on the basis of population distribution, with a 10% weighting applied for deprivation. Whilst Councils across Northern Ireland were advised that they could accept lesser amounts than that allocated, all Councils have accepted their allocations in full and the entire CFF budget for the current year has now been allocated. However, it is possible that some reallocation of funding may be required as the fund is rolled out over the remainder of the financial year.

My officials will be reviewing the operation and performance of the Fund later this year and the review will include an assessment of expenditure against individual allocations. In light of the review findings, and the identification of any potential underspend, the Department may be in a position to reconsider your request for an additional allocation through the Fund.

Please keep me informed of progress with the allocation of funding in the GREGORY CAMPBELL MP MLA

Belfast City Council area. It may be the case that Belfast City Council may not be required to expend its full allocation as, I understand, that only those festivals being held from 1 October 2008 onwards can apply to the Council for support. However, on a without prejudice basis, I would be willing to consider any additional evidence from Belfast City Council in support of an increase in the CFF allocation for 2009/10. It would be helpful if this evidence could be provided as soon as possible.

I hope that this is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

GREGORY CAMPBELL MP MLA Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure