



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Community Festivals Fund
Date:	11 March 2009
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Key Issues

The Culture and Arts Unit update to Committee on the following:

1. Community Festivals Fund

Belfast City Council has accepted the commission from the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) to manage the Community Festivals Fund (formerly managed by the NI Events Company) in the Belfast area. DCAL allocated £77,300 to BCC under the Community Festivals Fund which was considered wholly inadequate by BCC. DCAL were challenged by BCC over the level of funding and an increase in financial support was requested but not positively responded to by DCAL. Subsequently BCC agreed to an additional allocation of £120,000 which was approved through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20 June 2008. The Minister of DCAL was asked by BCC to review the 'Belfast' allocation before the scheme would be reopened in 2009.

In February 2009 DCAL announced that the amount to be awarded to BCC will remain at £77,300, which represents a standstill of funding. The DCAL response letter is attached as Appendix 1.

Committee should note that a sum of £77,300 is already contained in the Departmental Budget for the Community Festivals Fund.

The total fund value for the Community Festivals Fund 2009/2010 is £154,600. From this an operating budget of 10% £15,460 has been set aside for the administration of the scheme.

In October 2008, Development Committee Members agreed the Community Festivals Fund 2009/2010 scheme be delivered on a quarterly basis. The first tranche of Community

Festivals Fund for 2009/2010 opened on 9 January and closed 20 February. The number of applications submitted is considered exceptionally high for the Spring season of festival activity in Belfast (01 April- 30 June).

24 applications have applied since the scheme opened. The amount of funding requested totals £195,098. This equates to 6 times the available resources for this period which had previously been allocated at £32,000.

Resources

Co-ordinated internally by Culture & Arts Unit with additional external assistance from Julieanne McCormick Associates, external assessors for the Community Festivals Fund.

A sum of £77,300 is already contained in the Departmental Budget for the Community Festivals Fund.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee accept the DCAL letter of offer, and approve the match funding of £77,300 already contained in the Departmental budget.

Key to Abbreviations

DCAL - Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Response from DCAL