



Subject:	Summer Community Diversionary Programme Assessments
Date:	21st March 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director, City & Neighbourhoods
Contact Officer:	Pól Hamilton, Lead Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input 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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the detail of the assessments undertaken by officers and seek approval to award funding for the 2025 – 2027 Summer Community Diversionary Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine which projects are awarded funding, totalling the amounts within the scope of the programme, £300,000 for projects focused on 11th July and £300,000 for projects focused on 8th August as outlined in Tables 1 and 2.• Note that any funding awarded is subject to further engagement with groups and analysis of projects and associated budgets in line with Council due diligence

	<p>procedures, this will include any outstanding financial and monitoring returns with regards to other Council funding. Funding will not be awarded until approved contracts are issued and signed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve permission for those organisations which are successful to use Belfast Parks for their event or activity and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following: • Negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' & take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The completion of an appropriate management plan, - The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction; - The promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>Background</p> <p>Members agreed to deliver an updated Summer Community Diversionary Programme (SCDP) for 2025 – 2027. Changes were agreed and implemented for the 2025 application process including the definition of 'Community Diversionary Activity', the criteria against which application would be assessed and the introduction of a 3 year funding model.</p> <p>Applicants were expected to adequately demonstrate how their programme meets the following criteria at each assessment stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How the proposal will be diversionary around the two specified contentious periods of the summer. ○ How the proposed diversionary activity will reduce summer community tensions and anti-social behaviour. ○ Provide evidence and a clear rationale of what 'key areas' the programme will work within and why. ○ Provide evidence and a clear rationale of which bonfire site/s and/or issues linked to bonfires it is seeking to address. ○ How the proposal will reduce anti-social behaviour or reduce community tension in the areas where the proposal is being delivered. ○ How the project will promote positive cultural expression by increasing participants sense of community belonging and celebrating cultural diversity.

- Providing evidence of project planning and management arrangements for the proposal including project expenditure.

3.3 **Definition of ‘Community Diversionary Activity’**

The Summer Community Diversionary Programme (SCDP) provides support for the delivery of community-based diversionary and festivals programmes. All funded activity must make a significant contribution to the reduction of anti-social behaviour linked to key areas, bonfires and dates over the summer period specifically 11th July and 8th August.

3.4 **Eligibility Criteria 2025 - 2027**

- Applications must be received by constituted community/voluntary organisations based in the Belfast City Council area.
- The total programme budget is £600,000, with £300,000 allocated to the July programme and £300,000 allocated to the August programme.
- £25,000 (min) and £100,000 (max) funding is available for successful applicants.
- Groups were asked to identify which timeframe their programme would be delivered within, either the 11th July or 8th August, with a 14-day window before and a 7-day after those dates to deliver activities.

3.5 **Two stage Eligibility Assessment Process**

Officers undertook a two Stage assessment process for 2025.

- **Stage 1 (minimum benchmark score 60)**
 - Capacity to deliver
- **Stage 2 (minimum benchmark score 50)**
 - Contribution to objectives of the programme

Applicants need to score at least **60** out of 100 at stage 1 to progress to Stage 2. Failure to reach this benchmark, will result in the proposal not being recommended for funding.

3.6 **Process**

The following process has been followed to deliver the 2025 - 2027 SCDP;

- The programme was advertised via an open call;
- Programme Opened – 31st January 2025
- Programme Closed – 28th February 2025
- 50+ Application Forms & Guidance Notes Issued

- 2 Information Sessions Held - (30 Groups/Individuals Registered to attend)
- Completed Applications Received – 15
- July – 11 & August – 4
- Assessments Completed 5th March 2025
- During the open application process, officers were available to advise groups on the necessary due diligence requirements that must be met to enable groups to be considered suitable for funding;
- Officers held Information sessions for groups who were interested in applying, these were delivered online;
- All applicants submitted an application form by an agreed date;
- Officers have undertaken a preliminary assessment of each application against the agreed criteria and are now seeking a decision from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on projects that are awarded funding.

3.7 **Officer Assessments - July Programme**

11 applications were received for the July programme. Following assessment using an agreed scoring matrix, reflecting the agreed changes to the 2025 – 2027 programme, 6 applications reached the threshold to be recommended for funding.

The total amount available for programmes delivering in July is **£300,000**. The total funding requested by groups meeting the threshold is **£395,634.32**, an oversubscription of **£95,634.32**

Table 1 outlines groups who have met the threshold and the amount of funding they have requested. Applicants have been ranked 1 – 6 in relation to their overall score.

Please note, this is only a proposed amount to be awarded to groups, as in previous years, the SCDF is a member's led programme, final decisions on allocated amounts will be made by the SP&R committee.

Table 1 – Overview of Assessment

July Applications	Organisation Name	Amount Requested
1	Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association	£100,000.00
2	Lower Oldpark Community Assoc (LOCA)	£26,957.00
3	EastSide Partnership	£73,676.80
4	C.H.A.R.T.E.R for Northern Ireland (Charter NI)	£65,684.00
5	Upper Springfield Development Trust - Newhill Youth & Community Centre	£29,650.00
6	Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)	£99,666.52
	Total	£395,634.32

6 groups have reached the threshold to be recommended for funding however demand for funding exceeds the available budget, members may wish to consider the following options.

Option 1 – 100% Funding

- Fund groups 1 – 5 (Table 1) at 100% requested
- Total Budget Requested **£295,967.80**

Option 2 – 75.8% Funding

- Fund groups 1- 6 (Table 1) at 75.8% of requested budget
- Total Budget Requested **£299,890.81**
- Financial impact on each application outlined below in table 1a

Table 1a

	Organisation Name	Amount Requested	75.8% Funding
1	Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association	£100,000.00	£75,800.00
2	Lower Oldpark Community Assoc (LOCA)	£26,957.00	£20,433.41
3	EastSide Partnership	£73,676.80	£55,847.01

4	C.H.A.R.T.E.R for Northern Ireland (Charter NI)	£65,684.00	£49,788.47
5	Upper Springfield Development Trust - Newhill Youth & Community Centre	£29,650.00	£22,474.70
6	Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)	£99,666.52	£75,547.22
Total		£395,634.32	£299,890.81

3.8 **Officer Assessments - August Programme**

4 applications were received for the August programme. Following assessment using an agreed scoring matrix, reflecting the agreed changes to the 2025 – 2027 programme, all 4 applications reached the threshold to be recommended for funding.

The total amount available for programmes delivering in August is **£300,000**. The total funding requested by groups meeting the threshold is **£299,212**, which is **£788** under the available budget.

Table 2 outlines groups who have met the threshold and the amount of funding they have requested. Applicants have been ranked 1 – 4 in relation to their overall score.

Please note, this is only a proposed amount to be awarded to groups, as in previous years, the SCDF is a member's led programme, final decisions on allocated amounts will be made by the SP&R committee.

Table 2 - Overview of Assessment

August Applications	Organisation Name	Amount Requested
1	<i>Féile an Phobail</i>	£100,000.00
2	<i>Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG)</i>	£75,000.00
3	<i>Ashton Community Trust</i>	£98,723.00
4	<i>Saints Youth Centre</i>	£25,489.00
Total Amount Requested		£299,212.00

3.9	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Officers are requesting members approve the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. August - Approve 4 applications for August Activity at 100% requested amount 2. July – Consider options 1 & 2 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Option 1 – Groups 1 – 5 at 100% Requested amount b. Option 2 – Groups 1 – 6 at 75.8% Requested amount <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.10	<p>Budget is included within this year’s revenue estimates.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.11	<p>This programme is being included as part of an equality screening process for our overall approach to Bonfires</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Programme Summary