



Development Department

Your reference:

Our reference: #112931

Being dealt with by: David Purchase

Date: 9th December 2010

Tel: 02890 320202 ext 3792

Jim Millar
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Dear Mr Millar,

RE: Consultation Funding for Music & Dance Tuition Services to Communities

Please find attached our Committee's response to this consultation document. Though please note it is subject to final approval at our next full Council meeting.

General Comment

The general aim and ethos of the revisions appear to be sound, especially in relation to openness and transparency. However, it is not always clear how the programme links with the overall strategic aims of the Agency itself. Section 6.1 also refers to the need to reflect diversity, which does not appear to be accounted for within the main body of the consultation paper.

Within any new framework, we suggest that the application process should be proportional to the level of grant and the capacity of the communities, while endeavouring to further develop their capacity.

More interaction with other funding bodies, as well as between community groups, is encouraged to ensure synergies.

The Council is currently undergoing a review of its community and arts funding approach with a view to developing a new culture and arts strategy. Some of the findings from the Council's review may be of interest to the Ulster-Scots Agency and we would be happy to discuss these.

Specific Questions

Question 1: What sort of help should we offer new groups?

In addition to financial assistance, in-kind advice is invaluable to new organisations. This should include signposting to other relevant funding schemes through Council, Arts Council and other bodies. However, it may be more effective to concentrate on developing existing groups and strengthening ties with other cultural providers working in this area e.g. Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association Northern Ireland and the Highland Dance Association.



Question 2: What steps should we take to help established groups?

Sustainable viability is very difficult for arts and community groups to achieve and is likely to become more difficult in the current financial climate and so it is to be hoped that existing groups will respond to this consultation request and so answer the question directly. Additionally there may be some benefit in facilitating increased dialogue and cooperation between groups. This might help identifying opportunities to share resources, transport, venues, equipment etc. This dialogue might also help to avoid timetable clashes for events and training, potentially increasing the availability of volunteers and teachers.

Question 3: How do you think the programme should be split?

We have no specific preference. However, unless there are other agencies that could help with one activity more than another and thus release the pressure on the USA, it would seem sensible to split the programme based on demand for funding actually received.

Question 4: Is tuition needed in other musical or dance disciplines or in other areas of Ulster-Scots cultural activity?

Yes and some of this could be delivered by RSPBA and Highland Dance Association.

Question 5: Do you think tutors are best placed to organise tuition classes?

No because it may become purely monetary. The need and demand should come from the communities to maximise impact. Again umbrella bodies such as RSPBA and Highland Dance Association might be better placed.

Question 6: How far would students travel to take part in tuition classes?

Nil response

Question 7: Do you agree that funding should be targeted at a smaller number of quality projects?

Generally yes and perhaps funds could be filtered via groups like RSPBA and Highland Dance Association.

Question 8: How would you choose projects for support?

Clear criteria based on USA goals and objectives. Perhaps using a combination of option 3 and 4 might be effective. Consideration could also be given to providing assistance to groups to develop project planning and management skills, which would build capacity among new and established organisations. Projects should ensure a good fit with the Agency's overall strategy.

Under option 3, consideration should be given to whether the need for an increased contribution from established groups will create a financial barrier for participants, e.g. through increased class costs.

Working in partnership should be a criterion for support, rather than a model.

Question 9: Do you agree that a proportion of the budget should be ring-fenced for new groups or disciplines under-represented across the programme? If so, what proportion?

Applications from new groups should be selected on merit.

See Q1 response.

Question 10: What might the Ulster-Scots elements of the programme include?

Dance, drumming, pipes and musical/dance history.



Question 11: Are your organisation's member groups likely to work in partnership to deliver tuition?

There may be possibilities to link into programmes we support such as the European Pipe Band championships and any attached festival.

Question 12: Do you agree with the proposed changes to the payment process? Are there other improvements that you would suggest for 2012?

Nil response

Question 13: Are there other issues that we should consider to improve tuition services in communities?

Nil response

Thank you for asking us to respond to the proposals.

Yours sincerely

David

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