



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Community Festivals Fund 2012/13

Date: 10 January 2012

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officers: Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>Belfast City Council accepted the commission from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) to administer the Community Festivals Fund in the Belfast area. At the Development Committee in August 2008, Members agreed to delegate the authority to award grants under this fund to the Director of Development. In October 2008 Members agreed that the Fund be delivered on a quarterly basis. Delegated authority was granted to the Director for this Fund. Grants range from a minimum of £2,500 to a maximum amount of £10,000. The fund is 50 per cent funded through DCAL and 50 per cent through Council revenue.</p>
1.2	<p>Belfast City Council and DCAL both recognise that community festivals can contribute to social cohesion, the celebration of cultural identity and the strengthening of community relations. The fund was set up not just to fund festival events, but to help build capacity within the community and ensure that festivals are more sustainable. Festivals supported under this fund must ensure that the community has ownership of it and plays a strong part in the development and delivery of the festival.</p>
1.3	<p>The Community Festivals Fund has demonstrated strong value for money for the Council. In 2010/11 we funded 33 festivals, to a total of £142,700. £289,861 was requested, so demand as usual far outstripped supply. The average grant was £4,461. This support helped to fund audience numbers of 266,689 and participant numbers of 9,449. From a Belfast City Council investment of £79,000, this is a cost per head of 0.28p. This investment also helped to sustain 46 full time jobs, 33 part time jobs, 225 freelance posts, and 462 volunteer posts. In terms of distribution across the city, 51.5% of the Festivals took place in the North of the city; 18.25% in the West; 18.25% in the South; 9% in the East, and 3% across Northern Ireland.</p>

1.4	<p>In the current year the Community Festivals Fund has supported a wide range of Festivals across the city. Information about these can be found in Appendix 2. There has been a total distribution of funds of £147,200. £509,003 was requested across the 4 tranches, which was almost three and a half times the funds available, demonstrating once again that demand for this Fund is extremely high. Thirty eight festivals were funded and the average grant was £3873.68, a reduction from the average grant in the previous year. This is a reflection of the reduction in grant from DCAL – a drop of 7% from 2010/11. Further statistical information about the grants distributed in this current year will be presented to a future Committee; many of the grants within this financial year are currently still live or have not yet submitted final report information.</p>
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2	Key Issues									
2.1	<p>DCAL have indicated that the monies available for 2012/13 are likely to be around the same as this current year which is £73,600. DCAL's contribution to the Community Festivals Fund 2012/13 is subject to the outcome of the central government budget consultation. Confirmation of their subvention is expected by mid-March 2012. £73,600 is therefore included in the Department's budget estimates for 2012-13.</p>									
2.2	<p>It is recommended that the Community Festivals Fund for 2012/13 opens on 3 February 2012 so that festival organisations can apply for funding for festivals taking place from April 2012. No funding will be formally approved prior to confirmation of an offer from DCAL and ratification of the 2012/13 budget estimates.</p>									
2.3	<p>It is also recommended that the Community Festivals Fund reduce its deadlines from four to two, and that the grant is split evenly between the two tranches. The main reasons we wish to make this change are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Festivals Fund is run through local councils throughout Northern Ireland; most have one funding deadline per year. We are the only council to run four deadlines. - Having four deadlines can be very inconvenient for festival organisations. We have already received feedback that a longer lead-in time would allow festivals to plan and budget more effectively. - Having four deadlines is very time consuming for the Council, which reduces the time that we can spend helping to develop Festivals through advice, training and support. Having more time for development would help us to help festivals increase their capacity, which is the primary aim of Community Festivals Fund. - Monies have not been evenly split between 4 Tranches, meaning that the fourth Tranche had less money to distribute to Festivals taking place between January–March, which some Festivals felt was unfair. <p><u>Current application dates 2011/12</u> Applications to the Community Festival Fund have been open four times a year (4 'Tranches'). The four dates for applications in 2011–12 were:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Applications open</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Closing date</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Eligible festival dates</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2 March</td> <td>23 March</td> <td>April–June 2011</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28 March</td> <td>22 April</td> <td>July–September 2011</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Applications open</u>	<u>Closing date</u>	<u>Eligible festival dates</u>	2 March	23 March	April–June 2011	28 March	22 April	July–September 2011
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	24 May 20 September	1 July 14 October	October–December 2011 January–March 2012									
	<p><u>Proposed application dates 2012/13</u> We propose changing the application dates in 2012/13 to have 2 'Tranches' with dates as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Applications open</u></th> <th><u>Closing date</u></th> <th><u>Eligible festival dates</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3 February 2012</td> <td>24 February 2012</td> <td>April – September 2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 July 2012</td> <td>10 August 2012</td> <td>October - March 2013</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>An Equality Screening process is taking place and so far there is 100% support for the amount of deadlines per year to be reduced from four to two. Members of the Festivals Forum were consulted at a recent Forum meeting and are generally supportive of the change. DCAL have confirmed that they are happy for us to proceed with the administrative change.</p>			<u>Applications open</u>	<u>Closing date</u>	<u>Eligible festival dates</u>	3 February 2012	24 February 2012	April – September 2012	20 July 2012	10 August 2012	October - March 2013
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	Funding is included in the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit's draft budget estimates for 2012–2013.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	An Equality Screening process is being completed by 4 January 2012.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - note the contents of this report and agree to reduce the deadlines from 4 to 2 per year pending a positive equality screening outcome - agree to open applications to Community Festivals Fund 2011–12 - grant retrospective approval to funds distributed within this current financial year, as shown in Appendix 2.

6	Key to Abbreviations
	DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure

8	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Community Festivals Fund Application Form and Guidance Notes Appendix 2 - Community Festivals Fund Grants for 2011/12</p>