



Subject:	Festival Development Budget
Date:	April 2016
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for a range of proposals designed to maximise the impact and economic return of events and festival taking place in 2016/17 and beyond.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Approve the proposal to allocate £150,000 (non recurrent) in 2016/17 towards the promotion and enhancement of a number of festivals in order to improve the economic benefits for the city in 2016/17 and beyond.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Festivals and events play a key role in developing our local economy; and in particular our tourism and hospitality sectors. They are a prime opportunity for visitors to experience the city and often create a window for positive media coverage. For the residents themselves, they are also a unique occasion to celebrate local culture and interact within the community.
3.2	Key to the success of many festivals is a clear alignment with the city 'brand' and the ability for the city to deliver a coordinated visitor offering. Perhaps the best example of this is the Edinburgh Festivals, which in 2010 generated £245m for Edinburgh; with the Fringe alone

contributing £142m of this. The Festivals play a key role in the profile of the city and its tourism economy; with 82% of visitors stating that the Festivals were their sole or an important reason for coming, 93% stating that the Festivals are part of what makes Edinburgh special as a city, and 82% agreeing that the Festivals make them more likely to revisit Edinburgh in the future. Visitors to Edinburgh spent on average £35 each for every £1 in public subsidy.

3.3 Committee will be aware that a strategic review of events and festivals is currently ongoing. Proposals will be brought to Committee for consideration in coming months, however, officers have identified a number of existing events/festivals that have the potential to be developed in order that they broaden their current offering, attract greater visitor numbers and contribute to the animation of the city as a whole. In doing so it is suggested that this will generate improved economic outcomes and reinforce our emerging Place Positioning Strategy. Specific recommendations include:

St. Patrick's Day

3.4 It is suggested that there is merit in developing a more joined up, city-wide offering on St Patrick's Day that would attract local and international tourists alike; and would compete with the successful events held in neighbouring towns and cities.

3.5 The larger events in the city are currently independently organised by the Council and Féile an Phobail. It is therefore proposed that £50,000 should be made available to facilitate work with event organisers to develop a broader programme of events and initiatives for future years; as well as to support promotion of the event and the city's broader tourism offering. This will enable events to be promoted on an international stage and will in turn boost the local economy, and support key sectors such as hospitality and tourism. Resources would be met through existing departmental budgets.

Orangefest

3.6 Another key event in the city is Belfast Orangefest which takes place in July each year. Alongside the traditional parade event organisers have sought to develop a festival atmosphere that welcomes locals and visitors alike. It is proposed that there is scope to also develop the range of events and initiatives provided and in doing so attract a wider audience.

3.7 As such it is proposed that £50,000 should be made available to facilitate work with event organisers to develop a broader programme of events in future years; as well as to support promotion of the event and the city's broader tourism offering. This will enable events to be promoted on an international stage and will in turn boost the local economy, and support key sectors such as hospitality and tourism. Resources would be met through existing departmental budgets.

Month of September

3.8 A number of high-profile events are scheduled to take place across the city in September and it is proposed that these could be promoted as a cohesive package. By doing so it is

	suggested this would attract greater numbers of visitors for longer periods; thus bridging the tourism and the hospitality sectors and creating opportunities for increased spend.
3.9	High profile events/festivals taking place in September 2016 include MTV Crashes Belfast, 16 th -18 th September, Culture Night, 16 th September, Autumn Fair, 17 th -18 th September, and the ICONS festival, 20-21 September (<i>tbc</i>).
3.10	It is recommended that £40,000 should be made available in 16/17 to support the above proposal and that the Council should work with event organisers and relevant external stakeholders to develop a coherent city offering during the month of September; that both promotes individual events and the city's broader tourism offering. Resources would be met through existing departmental budgets and support would be provided by officers.
	NCAA, Friendship Four
3.11	The Friendship Four college ice hockey tournament is returning to the SSE Arena in November 2016. Over 20,000 fans attended the games, and hundreds of thousands more watched on TV, in 2015. Alongside the games a programme of events linking sport with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) study and careers is also delivered to pupils and students throughout NI.
3.12	Following the success of the ice hockey tournament it is recommended that there is scope to enhance the reach and impact of this event; for example the inclusion of additional sporting events such as basketball and the potential to align with the Thanksgiving holiday period.
3.13	It is therefore proposed that £10,000 should be made available to facilitate the development of this programme in future years in order that it, and the broader city tourism offering, can be promoted on a wider scale. Once again, this would be met through existing departmental budgets estimates.
3.14	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> It is recommended that a total of £150,000 should be made available in 2016/17 to support the above proposals. As noted, resources are non-recurrent and would be met through existing departmental budgets.
3.15	<u>Equality & Good Relations Implications</u> None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	None