

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Tourism Event Funding Programme (TEFP) - Growth &amp; Large Events Fund 2025-2026</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Leisure &amp; Development Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>18 March 2025</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>To be discussed In Committee</b>	<b>NO</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Promote our tourist offer locally and internationally
Outcome	Improve prosperity
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation Funding Unit Manager Tourism Events Manager

<b>Estimated Timescale for Completion</b>	
Date to be Completed	

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	£400,000.00
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>NO</b> (budget planned for 2025/26)
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	1331/62560
Staffing Costs	n/a

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>N/A</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)			
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

**The purpose of this report is to present the results of the assessment process for the Tourism Events Funding Programme 2025-2026.**

### 2.0 Background

The Tourism Events Fund is administered as a competitive process via the Council's online funding hub. The fund is established for the purpose of supporting new and existing event organisers, with outputs that align with the broad aims and objectives of the Council's Destination Management Strategy.

### 3.0 2025 - 2026 Application Process

This process is facilitated by the Funding Unit, utilising Council's online funding hub. Advertisements were placed in local newspapers, the Council's website and social media channels. Mailshots were also distributed to Council's mailing lists.

The application process opened on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 with the following key dates and deadlines:

- 1-1 Sessions with Council's Events Team were available to new and returning applicants between 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 to outline the changes to the fund criteria and answer questions pertaining to the parameters.
- Applications closed on 24 January 2025.

### 4.0 Event Funding Eligibility Criteria 2025-2026

The Tourism Event Funding Programme provides two grant options, namely the Tourism Events Growth Fund and Tourism Large Events Fund. The outline criteria for both funds are listed below for information.

4.1 **Tourism Events Growth Fund** – Events with an overall budget of between £10,000 and £30,000 which attract more than 600 visitors to the Borough, takes place over a minimum of 2 consecutive days (minimum of 5 hours on each day) and encourages overnight stays. Applicants must demonstrate how they will promote the Borough as a tourism destination through branding and marketing activities. In addition, they must demonstrate economic support / benefit from hosting the event and how they will promote the area to the domestic market. The level of grant award available is up to 50% of total project costs, up to a maximum grant award of £15,000.

4.2 **Tourism Large Events Fund** – Events with an overall budget in excess of £30,000 which attract more than 3,000 visitors to the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough, takes place over a minimum of 2 consecutive days (minimum of 5 hours on each day) and encourages overnight stays. Applicants must demonstrate how they will promote the Borough as a tourism destination through marketing activities. In addition, they must demonstrate economic support / benefit from hosting the event and how they will promote the area to the domestic market and appeal to international visitors. The

level of grant award available is up to 50% of total project costs, up to a maximum grant award of £100,000.

## 5.0 Assessment Process

The assessment panel, made up of Officers from the Tourism Events Team and the Funding Unit, met between 28 January and 6 February 2025 and applications were assessed against the agreed criteria, including full event details and delivery (including event management plan), event sustainability and skills retention, economic support / benefit, media and marketing impact (including marketing plan), options for further event development and enhancing the visitor experience connected with the event.

Each criteria within the scoring matrix is weighted and a minimum threshold pass rate is applied at 65%. Successful applicants must attend a project initiation meeting and are offered feedback on their application and areas that could be improved on in the future. Unsuccessful applicants are offered an opportunity for feedback on improvement if they wish to apply in the future.

## 6.0 Summary of Applications

A summary of the applications received with scoring achieved can be seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1**

Application ID	Organisation / Project Title	Score	Eligible Requested Amount	Recommended after scaled reduction
812513	Coleraine and District Motor Club – North West 200	81%	£100,000.00	£94,539.20
815601	Northern Ireland International Youth Football Tournament Ltd – Super Cup NI	83%	£100,000.00	£94,539.20
830396	Stendhal Festival Ltd	79%	£100,000.00	£89,539.20
814025	Armoy Motorcycles Road Racing Club	66%	£40,000.00	£33,815.66
828944	Derry & District Youth FA – Foyle Cup	72%	£30,000.00	£26,861.76
800506	North Antrim Agricultural Association Ltd - Ballymoney Show	75%	£19,350.00	£17,325.83
813719	Heart of The Glens Festival	93%	£15,000.00	£14,930.88
784974	Sam Henry Weekend (North Coast Trad)	69%	£14,998.18	£12,679.34
833565	The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association Northern Ireland Branch (RSPBANI)	65%	£9,872.50	£8,346.13
808352	Ulster Tennis – Ballycastle Tennis Tournament	80%	£8,290.00	£7,422.80
824824	County Londonderry Agricultural Show Society Ltd	50%	£0.00	0
			<b>£437,510.68</b>	<b>£400,000.00</b>

Council received 11 applications. There were 6 successful applications from the Large Fund and 4 successful from the Growth Fund, requesting a combined total of £437,510.68.

## **7.0 For Consideration**

In the period 2024/25 the allocated budget for the Tourism and Recreation Tourism Event Funding Programme (TEFP) was £400,000. The following allocations are based upon a planning assumption that this sum remains the same for 2025/26.

After assessment of all applicants, a shortfall of **£37,510.68** has been identified.

In 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2024/25, when the Tourism Events Fund was oversubscribed, Council applied a consistent approach to reducing monies through a sliding scale.

## **8.0 Application of Sliding Scale**

Officers have applied a sliding scale as detailed in **Table 1** above.

- For applications scoring between 91% and 100% - award 99.5392% of eligible amount requested.
- For applications scoring between 81% and 90% - award 94.5392% of eligible amount requested.
- For applications scoring between 71% and 80% - award 89.5392% of eligible amount requested.
- For applications scoring between 65% and 70% - award 84.5392% of eligible amount requested.

## **9.0 Maximising Sustainability**

The purpose of Council's Grant Funding Policy is *'To have a consistent, customer focused process with relevant assessment and evaluation procedures with appropriate appeal and monitoring systems in place.'*

As per **section 5.2** of the Policy, one of the objectives is to ensure that all funding and grants allocated will:

- Maximise sustainability (economic, environmental and social).

In order to help achieve this, during the 2024/25 budget period, it was proposed that tourism events are encouraged and supported to develop an Event Reserve. It is noted that Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) have adopted this approach to event sustainability.

All funded events must demonstrate how they will move towards sustainability or how they intend to grow. Consideration will be given when events are building cash reserves for financial sustainability.

Events which show a profit will be considered on a case by case basis and funding may be reduced in line with the principle of "additionality" and "sustainability". Profit should be carried forward into the next year's event reserves; this should be clearly shown in the financial statements.

If the event income or expenditure changes from the budget submitted, this could have an impact on the final payment amount. If the budgeted expenditure drops by 10% or more, Council reserves the right to reduce the funding offer and final payment.

## **10.0 Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends to Council;

That funding is awarded, under the Tourism Events Funding Programme, as outlined in **Table 1**, with a sliding scale applied based on scores totalling £400,000.00.