

# Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

To: Leisure & Development Committee

## Public Consultation on DCAL Community Festival Fund Revised Policy and Guidance Framework 2015

12<sup>th</sup> May 2015

For Decision

Report to Committee

Linkage to Interim Corporate Plan	
Strategic Themes	Transition and Transformation Prosperity Cohesive Community
Lead Officer	Richard Baker - Director of Leisure & Development Louise Scullion – Community Services Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

The purpose of this report is seek approval of Members for the draft response to Consultation on DCAL Community Festival Fund Revised Policy and Guidance Framework 2015.

### Background

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) is seeking views on its draft revised Community Festivals Fund Policy and Guidance Framework. The deadline for submission of responses to DCAL is 18<sup>th</sup> June.

The Community Festivals Fund (CFF) has been in existence (in various forms) since 2006. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has overall responsibility for the CFF while responsibility for making awards to individual festivals rests with individual Councils.

In 2012, an evaluation considering various aspects of the Fund including the pattern of funding over time, how funding has been distributed, effectiveness and impact, was undertaken by DCAL's Economic Services Unit. Organisations who have applied for CFF funding were also consulted to inform the evaluation.

As a result of this evaluation, DCAL has drafted a revised Community Festivals Fund Policy and Guidance Framework which, once agreed and finalised, will replace the existing framework which has been in operation since 2007. The consultation paper can be accessed at <http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/quick-links/consultation.htm>.

A draft consultation response from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has been prepared, which takes on board comments from Elected Members at the last Council meeting and feedback from local community organisations, Annex A.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves the draft response to Consultation on DCAL Community Festival Fund Revised Policy and Guidance Framework 2015 and submits a response to DCAL prior to deadline of 18th June.

## DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE ARTS AND LEISURE

### Public Consultation on DCAL Community Festival Fund

#### Revised Policy and Guidance Framework 2015

##### A Public Consultation

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) is seeking views on its draft revised Community Festivals Fund Policy and Guidance Framework.

The Community Festivals Fund (CFF) has been in existence (in various forms) since 2006. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has overall responsibility for the CFF while responsibility for making awards to individual festivals rests with individual councils.

In 2012, an evaluation considering various aspects of the Fund including the pattern of funding over time, how funding has been distributed, effectiveness and impact, was undertaken by DCAL's Economic Services Unit. Organisations who have applied for CFF funding were also consulted to inform the evaluation.

As a result of this evaluation, DCAL has drafted a revised Community Festivals Fund Policy and Guidance Framework which, once agreed and finalised, will replace the existing framework which has been in operation since 2007.

We would welcome your comments on any aspects of the draft revised Framework. The consultation paper can be accessed at <http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/quick-links/consultation.htm>

##### FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

The 2012 evaluation of the CFF acknowledged the positive outcomes of the Fund but also highlighted shortcomings. Included in the evaluation's recommendations is that DCAL should:

- have a clearer, defined ambition and purpose for the CFF;
- not fund large tourism driven festivals;
- revise the criteria and policy framework; and
- set more specific objectives for CFF.

It was also recommended that Councils should dedicate more resources to training and support, that the application process should be simplified and standardised, and that more applications from deprived areas should be encouraged.

The evaluation found that the support provided by CFF is valued. Festival organisers and district councils reported on various ways in which local communities have benefited, and the number of festivals benefiting has grown significantly, from 42 each year in 2006/07 and 2007/08 under the administration of the Northern Ireland Events Company, to an average of 376 per year in 2008-11. The amount of money allocated to festivals has also grown significantly, from an average of just under £400k to an average of over £900k, largely due to match funding from local councils.

Without the CFF, many festivals would not take place or would be on a smaller scale. The evaluation concluded that for festivals to continue on the same scale, public subsidy is

necessary.

The Department will usually publish a summary of responses following the completion of the consultation process. If you would prefer your response to be treated as confidential, please let us know, stating your reasons clearly. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will be taken to apply only to information in your response for which confidentiality has been specifically requested.

If we are asked to disclose responses under freedom of information legislation, we will take any requests for confidentiality into account. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

We will handle appropriately any personal data you provide in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office or see DCAL website. Closing date for responses is 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

## **Objectives of the Community Festivals Fund as included in the draft revised framework**

- a) to support the community and voluntary sector in promoting equality and target poverty and social exclusion;
- b) to enable communities to celebrate their cultural identity;
- c) to enhance community relations;
- d) to enable partnership working between the community and voluntary sector and local Councils; and
- e) to improve the capacity of community festivals by providing support and training in addition to funding towards the cost of events.

### **1. Do you agree with the objectives of the Community Festivals Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?**

*Agree – in agreement with the objectives of the Community Festivals Fund.*

*We welcome the overall approach to revise and improve the policy framework to support Community Festivals across NI and the introduction of a clear set of objectives for the fund. The objectives proposed are in broad agreement with provision of support since 2008 for community festivals by the four legacy Councils of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Moyle and Limavady reaching across the newly established Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.*

## **Definition of a Community Festival as included in the draft revised framework**

A community festival is a series of events (or a single event with several elements) with a common theme and delivered within a defined time period. It is developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what the community represents.

Community festivals are about participation, involvement, and the creation of a sense of identity and are important in contributing to the social wellbeing of a community.

They must be initiated and led by, or in partnership with a community organisation. The community must play a strong part in the development and delivery of the festival and have ownership of it.

For the purposes of the Community Festivals Fund the following will apply:

- all Festivals must be culture based, where culture is defined as ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or social grouping;
- all festivals must demonstrate their commitment to promoting social cohesion, social inclusion, equality of opportunity and good community relations.

**2. Do you agree with the definition of a Community Festival as provided in the draft revised framework?**

**Agree – in agreement with the definition of a Community Festival**

*We recognise that the proposed definition is broadly in line with the original definition stated in the policy framework to support Community Festivals across NI first issued in 2007 and welcome the further clarification provided that there be a strong community basis for the overall themes of proposed events in support of social inclusion, equality of opportunity and good community relations.*

**Targets of the Community Festival Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework**

In order to be considered successful, the Community Festivals Fund will have to meet the three targets listed a) to c) in the draft revised framework. Councils will be expected to contribute towards the achievement of those targets and to provide the necessary information to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure for measurement.

**3. Do you agree with the targets for the Community Festival Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?**

**Agree – in general agreement with the targets for the Community Festival Fund**

*We consider the targets set to be realistic and achievable. With reference to weighting of assessments towards those areas where deprivation is highest there has clearly been a history of success amongst the four legacy Councils in reaching out to ‘deprived areas’ in relation to Community Festival Funding – particularly the Neighbourhood Renewal areas of Churchlands, Millburn and Ballysally in Coleraine. Since Neighbourhood areas were located only in Coleraine and Limavady and given the large areas of rural population in the Borough, we welcome the inclusion of an alternative indicator i.e. Access to Services for predominantly rural areas.*

*For the purposes of implementation towards the target of achieving at least 80% of capacity requirements support or training needs identified through the application process, financial resources will need to be set aside, taking away from the funding set aside for community organisations to host festival events. The existing ‘funding pot’ for Community Festivals Fund is already stretched to support existing Community Festivals. With the cut to funding from DCAL in 2015-16, potential further cuts next year and then the extraction of an amount of the funding for training, some Community Festivals may be at risk of continuing. Timing may also prove problematic. The turnaround of assessment of applications to the actual occurrence of events particularly those held in early summer is already quite tight and a stretch on resources. Also from an implementation point of view local government are already having to put in quite a bit of resource in staff time etc. to manage the festival fund.*

General Principles which apply to the Community Festivals Fund are included in the draft revised framework.

**4. Do you agree with the principles which apply to the Community Festivals Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?**

***Agree – in general agreement with the principles which apply to the Community Festival Fund***

***We recognise that the proposed principles are broadly in line with the original principles stated in the policy framework to support Community Festivals across NI first issued in 2007. These have been followed in each of the legacy Council's approach to delivering Community Festival Funding to date and have been embedded in the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council funding programme.***

The assessment criteria are included in the draft revised framework.

**5. Do you agree with the Assessment Criteria outlined in the draft revised framework?**

***Agree – in general agreement with the assessment criteria which apply to the Community Festival Fund***

***We recognise that the proposed assessment criteria both core and desirable are broadly in line with the original criteria stated in the policy framework to support Community Festivals across NI first issued in 2007. These have been followed in each of the legacy Council's approach to delivering Community Festival Funding to date and have been embedded in the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council funding programme. However the new policy framework now includes 10 rather than 8 previous assessment criteria and concerns have been expressed by local groups and through elected member representation that the resulting application forms designed to gather information for each of the assessment requirements of the DCAL assessment criteria are too complex and lengthy for groups to complete, particularly those groups that request assistance for smaller more localized events. Efforts to encourage increased applications from areas of deprivation will not be assisted by lengthier application forms.***

The Community Festivals Fund will not normally provide funding for the activities listed under exclusions in the draft revised framework.

**6. Do you agree with the exclusions as outlined in the draft revised framework?**

***Agree – in general agreement with the exclusions which apply to the Community Festival Fund***

***We recognise that the proposed exclusions are broadly in line with the original exclusions stated in the policy framework to support Community Festivals across NI first issued in 2007. These have been followed in each of the legacy Council's approach to delivering Community Festival Funding to date and have been embedded in the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council funding programme.***

## **Administration of the Community Festivals Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework**

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has overall policy responsibility for the Community Festivals Fund while responsibility for making awards to individual festivals rests with individual councils. The Department will make an annual allocation to each Council based on population with a weighting for multiple deprivation.

Each Council will be required to adhere to the overarching policy framework set out in the revised document. Councils will have flexibility to develop their own application processes and detailed criteria for funding provided it is consistent with the policy framework. Template application and evaluation forms demonstrating best practice are available from the Department and can be tailored to suit the needs of each Council. Councils will be required to carry out the ten functions listed a) to j) in the revised framework.

### **7. Do you agree with the proposals for the administration of the Community Festivals Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?**

**Agree – in general agreement with the proposals for the administration which apply to the Community Festival Fund**

*Again we recognise that the proposals for the administration are broadly in line with the original proposals stated in the policy framework to support Community Festivals across NI first issued in 2007. These have been followed in each of the legacy Council's approach to delivering Community Festival Funding to date and have been embedded in the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council funding programme. However we find that the demands/resources on staff time associated with CFF in terms of implementing and managing the scheme are high in relation to the finance/support offered by DCAL and in light of the obvious value to CFF in return for their investment in local government community activity. The DCAL Evaluation Reports year on year since transfer to Council in 2007 show this very clearly. Recognition of this in the form of increased support is something that should be reconsidered for 2016 onwards.*

### **8. Please provide any other comments relating to the draft revised Community Festivals Fund Policy and Guidance Framework.**

*Any other comments: **None***

### **9. Is there any other data or information that might be drawn upon to help us to assess the equality impact of the proposals?**

**No**

### **10. Do you consider that the Community Festivals Fund will have any positive or negative equality impacts on any of the groups included within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and if so, how?**

**No**

**11. Do you consider that there are any other actions in relation to the Community Festivals Fund that would better promote equality of opportunity and if so, what are they? **No****



