

Arts Council of Northern Ireland's 'Local Government Challenge'	10th January 2017
To: The Leisure & Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture Cultural Services Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	£0 - £150,000

The purpose of this report is to confirm if Council wish to make application to the Arts Council for Northern Ireland's 'Local Government Challenge Fund', and if so, to confirm the amount of additional budget as match funding within the Community & Culture budget for the 2017/18 period.

Background

The Arts Council NI (ACNI) has had a longstanding relationship with local councils, supporting the development of capital provision, funding locally based individual artists and arts organisations and delivering a range of funding programmes aimed at delivering benefits to local communities through the arts.

ACNI wrote to councils in 2016 to inform them that they were developing a Local Government Challenge Fund '*to underpin and strengthen arts provision in a community setting and to stimulate long-term change*'. The Council linked the importance of the arts as an important tool in responding to local need, and as such have required that applications reflect local priorities contained within Community Plans.

The scheme, which has now been launched, invites applications from local authorities **with the proviso that funds are matched and that Council contributions are *additional* to the current levels of funding provided by each Council.**

The Programme

Finance - The Arts Council is making £1.5m available within this Fund which is open to the 10 council areas outside Belfast. The Arts Council will match each council's contribution, up to a maximum of £150,000.

Deadlines & delivery - The Arts Council require that applications are clearly linked to/embedded within Local Community Plans which have a deadline of delivery by April 2017. To facilitate this, Councils may submit their application up to 31 March 2017. Applications will be considered by the Arts Council within a maximum turnaround period of 3 months. It is anticipated that delivery of the programme will normally take place over a 12-month period.

Aims - Under this programme the Arts Council are seeking to support programmes which:

- Evidence a strategic approach to arts delivery in the area;

- Strengthen and underpin local measures;
- Build on existing activity;
- Are grounded within the themes of the area's community plans.

Eligible activity - The Arts Council have stated that they will be flexible in terms of what can be funded locally, dependent on local need articulated through the Community Plan.

They have clearly stated however that programmes and/or events must be additional to those already directly provided by the council and/or funded by the council for delivery by third party organisations and that applications must be supported by a costed audit of council activity in the 15/16 financial year.

Ineligible activity -The Arts Council will **not** make funds available to councils to run their own grant programmes.

The Arts Council will **not** make funds available to pay overheads, but rather programme delivery. Funds will **not** augment the direct running costs or programming of council-owned premises.

Programme criteria includes:

- Relevance of application to local community plans and emerging themes.
- Artistic Quality.
- Public/Community Benefit.

Causeway Coast & Glens Context

In terms of eligible activity there may be potential to facilitate community based arts programmes which fulfil the relevant programme criteria as per above, including contributing to the Community Plan's draft intermediate outcome that 'the people of the Causeway Coast and Glens will participate in increased levels of social and creative activity' as well as the strategic priorities contained within Council's Cultural Strategy, *specifically 'investing in creative learning & skills development' and 'participation, inclusion and equality'*. Should Council wish to proceed in principle with an application, a draft programme will be presented prior to submission and may include the following broad activities:

- Projects which increase health and wellbeing and participation by groups, including section 75 groups, who have had limited access to arts activities in the past.
- Projects to enable young people to develop their creative skills eg. music/drama/dance summer school activity.

Resources - In terms of how such an application would be resourced, the Council is faced with prioritising its resource commitments and has committed, within its Corporate Strategy, to drive efficiencies within service provision within the short to medium term, in what is a challenging financial context. ACNI require Council to match fund with monies **additional** to existing budgets. Should Council wish to avail of this funding opportunity, the following should be considered:

- a) Budgetary pressures - For example to deliver additional arts activities/schemes to the value of £50,000 would require an additional £25,000 of match funding from Council, in effect add an additional 2.4% onto the Cultural Services budget for the 2016/17 period
- b) Additional arts provision through Peace IV over a two year period – circa £96k for music, drama and arts projects for young people and circa £268k for reimaging local spaces with communities through, for example public art works, providing

considerable additional resources (£364k) and associated pressures to deliver/programme such, from within Council.

- c) Additional investment of circa £95k from the inheritance sum, left to Flowerfield Arts Centre, to be used for additional arts educational purposes within the centre itself, the use of which is to be determined through the ongoing review of the arts centres.
- d) Timeframe – applications must be submitted by the 31st March 2017 and must clearly link to the Community Plan, which has yet to be completed. Projects will be required to deliver within a 12 month period and will therefore be operational at the same time as the Peace IV Local Action Plan projects within the Borough.

Recommendation

That Council consider the detail and issues raised within the report and subsequently consider the following options:

- a) To decline the opportunity to apply to the ACNI's Local Government Challenge Fund and utilise the investment from other sources, as outlined above, to support the delivery of the Culture, Arts and Heritage Strategy.
- b) To approve an application to the ACNI's Local Government Challenge Fund for the period 2017-2018 and consequently agree the level of additional budget to be made available to the Community & Culture budget, up to £150,000 as match funding in the 2017/18 period.