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| Title of Report: | Community Festivals Fund 2020-21 |
| Committee Report Submitted To: | Leisure and Development Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 18th August 2020 |
| For Decision or For Information | For Decision |

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| Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23) | |
| 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 Community Development Manager |

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| Budgetary Considerations | |
| Cost of Proposal | £35,730 net cost to Council |
| Included in Current Year Estimates | YES/NO |
| Capital/Revenue | Revenue |
| Code | 13201 |
| Staffing Costs | n/a |

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

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an update on the current position and to request a decision about the Community Festivals Fund for 2020-21.

2.0 Background

In March of this year Council approved recommendations for funding for the three Community Development Grant Programmes for 2020-21, *subject to receipt of offers of match funding to Council* from the Department for Communities (DfC).

Applications are invited each year in advance of confirmation of DfC match funding to allow sufficient time for preparation of applications and so that successful applicants can be advised of their funding awards in advance of, or early in the financial year.

Match funding for the Community Development Support Grant and Social Inclusion Grant come from DfC's Community Support Programme. Match funding for the Community Festivals Fund (CFF) comes from a separate DfC Community Festivals Fund Programme.

3.0 Current Position

The proposed CFF grants budget for 20-21 was £64,530. This included expected match funding of £28,800 from DfC, based on previous year's figures. This resulted in a proposed net cost to Council of £35,730 which was agreed in Council's budget for 20-21.

The other two grant programmes progressed with confirmation of DfC match funding received. Following several requests from Council officers for clarification, DfC issued a letter to Council on 17th July to advise that due to the uncertainty created by the last four months, the difficulty this has created for delivering events, combined with the overall financial pressures resulting from the emergency response, it will not be possible for DfC to run the Community Festivals Fund Programme this year. A copy of the letter is attached at Annex A.

The Community Development team undertook engagement with applicants to the programme in June to find out if they still intended to organise a community festival this year. Of the 38 successful applicants, at the time of contact, eight had made a definite decision to cancel their festival. The remainder of the successful applicants suggested they may wish to run their festival on a different date, if the Government guidance at the time allowed.

If these 30 successful applicants, who wish to still organise a community festival at a later date or in a different format during this financial year, were to do so, and assuming that their costs were the same as applied for, then the uptake of the grant offers would be £40,370.

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| Proposed CFF Grants budget for 20-21 | £64,530 |
| Expected match funding from DfC (based on 19-20 figure) | £28,800 |
| Proposed Net Cost to Council (agreed in Council budget for 20-21) | £35,730 |

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| No. of successful applications (scoring 65% and above) | 38 |
| Total value of CFF funding approved in principle by Council in March '20 | £52,270 |

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| No. of community festivals cancelled | 8 |
| No. of organisations that would like to reschedule festivals (if Government guidance allows) | 30 |
| Value of CFF funding approved for those festivals that would like to reschedule | £40,370 |
| Shortfall in budget for amount required by festivals wishing to proceed (£40,370- £35,730) | £4,640 |

4.0 Options for Consideration

Two options have been identified and a consideration of the benefits and issues of each are detailed in Table 1. In summary these options are:

Option 1: Operate a Community Festivals Fund for 20-21, without DfC match funding, using only Councils agreed budget of £35,730. Issue letters of offer to those Festival organisers who wish to organise a Festival within current Government guidance before 31st March 2021.

Option 2: Suspend the Community Festivals Fund for 20-21, in line with the policy direction of DfC. Allocate the budget of £35,730 towards meeting the budget deficit in the Leisure & Development directorate.

Table 1

| Option 1 | Benefits | Issues |
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| Operate a Community Festivals Fund for 20-21, without DfC match funding, using only Councils agreed budget of £35,730. Issue letters of offer to those Festival organisers who wish to organise a Festival or other community events, within current Government guidance, before 31 st March 2021. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would allow communities to fulfil the objectives of the CFF i.e. contribute towards community participation and improving sense of community and addressing social isolation. • Would lift community spirit and benefit communities that have suffered job losses, reduction in income, food poverty, isolation and loneliness as a result of the pandemic. • Flexibility could be provided to allow groups to use alternative means of delivery of planned community events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total amount of CFF funding awards approved for the festival organisers that would like to reschedule is £40,370, and there is a confirmed Council budget of £35,730, resulting in a shortfall of £4,640. If groups were awarded 88% of what was recommended then all 30 could be funded within available budget. • There are a number of uncertainties, particularly the potential for a second wave of Coronavirus or the potential for local outbreaks. • As a result it is very difficult for community festivals organisers to properly plan ahead and so there is no guarantee that all 30 of these events will definitely take place. • Training and guidance would be required to ensure that groups were aware of public health guidance and able to undertake risk assessments and put necessary health and safety measures in place etc. |
| Option 2 | Benefits | Issues |
| Suspend the Community Festivals Fund for 20-21, in line with the policy direction of DfC. Allocate the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would allow other Council priorities to be supported. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community groups would have to cancel plans for festivals, unless they were able to source and secure funding from another source in time. |

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| budget of £35,730 towards meeting the budget deficit in the Leisure & Development directorate. | | |
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5.0 Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the options identified and make a recommendation on a preferred option.

**Annex A: Letter from DfC to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council re
Community Festivals Fund (CFF) 2020/21**



From: Tracy Meharg
Permanent Secretary

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Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 90 823301
E-mail: tracy.meharg@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our Ref: PSC 0304.20
Date: 17 July 2020

Mr David Jackson
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin
88 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY

Email: david.jackson@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Dear David,

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS FUND (CFF) 2020/21

I write to update you on the situation regarding the Community Festivals Fund for the financial year 2020/21. I know you are alive to the uncertainty created by the last four months, and the difficulty that this created for delivering events. Unfortunately this uncertainty, combined with the overall financial pressures resulting from the emergency response have meant that it will not be possible to run the fund this year.

While it is disappointing that these festivals will not go ahead this year as normal, I hope that I can rely on your continued support as we work together with the Arts Council and the sector to develop our recovery strategy for arts, culture and heritage. You will be aware that the Minister has announced recently a £4m fund for the arts sector. We are also hopeful of additional funds being available for these recovery efforts as a result of the £33m Barnett Consequential from the Treasury Support Package for the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sectors.

I know that you will agree that a thriving arts sector is critical for our social and economic recovery, and I look forward to our continued partnership working on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Meharg".

**TRACY MEHARG
PERMANENT SECRETARY**