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| Title of Report: | Tourism and Recreation Tourism Events Recovery Fund Grant Programme (TERF) Key Dates and Process Update for 2021-2022 Applicants |
| Committee Report Submitted To: | The Leisure & Development Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 16th March 2021 |
| For Decision or For Information | For Decision |

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| Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23) | |
| Strategic Theme | Promote our tourist offer locally and internationally |
| Outcome | Improve prosperity |
| Lead Officer | Head of Tourism and Recreation |

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| Budgetary Considerations | |
| Cost of Proposal | £400,000 Revenue Cost |
| Included in Current Year Estimates | All costs included in the 21/22 Budget |
| Capital/Revenue | Revenue |
| Code | |
| 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 present findings of the assessment process for the 2021/22 Tourism Event Recovery Programme. Recommendations for the allocation of funding to eligible applicants are included in this report.

2.0 Background

Since 2016, the Council's Tourism and Recreation service, in conjunction with the Funding Unit, administer a Council financed funding programme to provide financial assistance to events taking place throughout the Borough. This fund is called the Tourism Event Funding Programme and targets tourism and recreation event organisers under two separate packages, the Large Events Fund and the Tourism Events Growth Fund.

At the December 2020 Leisure and Development Committee meeting, approval was given to replace the Tourism Event Funding Programme, for one year only, with a Tourism Event Recovery Fund.

The rationale for the development of the Tourism Event Recover Fund was discussed at the October 2020 Leisure and Development meeting, after early consultation with the event organisers, who normally benefit from TEF highlighted concerns regarding the future sustainability and survival of the events from 2021 onwards. There has also been consultation on the difficulty to deliver the outputs set as part of the funding programme with regard to visitor numbers, overnight stays, economic return and target markets.

In recognition of the potential damage to the range of events, the Tourism Events Recovery Programme has been developed as an alternative approach for 2021/22. This takes an adaptive and more flexible approach to the programme delivery for the incoming year and make allowances for the difficulties that event organisers have, and are likely to experience.

Key features include:

- A non-competitive approach to the application process.
- A reduction in the economic outputs required at assessment.
- Definition of core costs widened.
- Application restricted to successful applicants within the past two years.
- An increase in percentage funding on total project costs.
- A single application process for both the previous Growth Fund and Large Events Fund applicants.

3.0 An Overview of the Fund

The purpose of the programme is to support former successful TEF applicants to assist with core running costs for those who wish to 'moth ball' their event for one year, or to assist organisers who wish to run their event in full or in a reduced format in 2021/22.

Only event organisers previously funded through TEF in the last two financial years (2019/20 and/or 2020/21) are eligible to apply based upon the following agreed criteria.

- a. Funding Parameters. The lower event budget range set out in the previous Tourism Events Growth Fund and the Large Tourism and Recreation Events Fund no longer applies (this allows for small levels of expenditure to take place if appropriate). The maximum grant award is £100,000.
- b. Visitor Numbers. The need to demonstrate that the event attracts visitor numbers has been removed (previously the Growth and Large Funds required 1000 and 5000 visitors respectively).

- c. Number of Days. Applicants must demonstrate that the event still takes place over a minimum of 2 days although these are no longer required to be consecutive.
- d. Economic Benefit. No requirement to demonstrate return on investment. (In previous years a 5:1 return for the Large Tourism Event Fund and 3:1 return for the Growth Fund on Council funding was expected).
- e. Levels of Award. Up to 75% of total project costs can be offered (previous levels were up to 50%).
- f. Marketing and Communication. Events will be expected to ensure that any marketing or communications showcase the Causeway Coast and Glens as a destination for visitors. This applies to the domestic market only.
- g. What Can Be Funded? Eligible costs include:
 - Insurance.
 - Programming Costs including virtual.
 - Venue Hire.
 - Performance/Artist Fees.
 - Transport.
 - Equipment Hire/Purchase.
 - Consultancy Costs (that relate to health and safety planning in respect to COVID19).
 - Advertising/Communications.
 - Premises/Rent.
 - PPE and social distancing equipment.
 - Administration (stationery, postage etc).
 - Utilities.

4.0 2021 / 22 Application Process

On Friday 18 December 2020, all 12 of the eligible TERF applicants received a verbal update from Council's Events Development Officer informing them of the process and the proposed 20 January opening date and Mandatory Workshop date on the 25 January.

Each applicant was then asked to email / contact Council's Events Development Officer before Monday 4 January to express their organisations interest in being considered for the Tourism Events Recovery Fund 2021-22.

By 8 January 2021, all eligible applicants had provided correspondence either expressing their interest in the grant programme or whether they were unlikely to be applying for any funding.

Applicants were then issued with further updates via email on the 19 January from the Events Development Officer advising them of the opening date of the 20 January. The correspondence also included details regarding the mandatory workshop for all applicants on the 25 January and that the Funding Unit would then inform them when their application would go live along with details regarding guidance notes and submission details.

On the 20 January, all eligible applicants received an email from Council's Funding Development Officer inviting each organisation to submit an application to this 'closed call' competitive process by 12noon on Friday 19 February 2021. The instructions included a link

to the Council's online funding hub facilitated by the Funding Unit, the fund guidance notes along with event management and marketing plan templates. The email also reminded applicants about the submission process, date of the mandatory workshop and availability of one to one tutorial sessions.

5.0 Funding Eligibility

Each of the 12 successful applicants from the last two years was issued an application pack with guidance notes. They were asked to attend a mandatory workshop with Council Officers to determine whether or not their event was likely to take place in some form during 2021/22 or whether it required to be 'moth balled' for this period. Organisers were given a choice to either complete:

- Option 1 – Application to seek financial assistance to cover core costs for an event that will not run.
- Option 2 – Application to seek financial assistance to cover eligible costs for events that can run either in full or in a reduced format.

6.0 Mentoring and Training for Applicants

With the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the change from the Tourism Event Funding Programme, the Council's Tourism Events Team and Funding Unit spent a significant amount of time working on a 'one to one' basis with event organisers. On 25 January 2021, applicants were presented with the following detail at an online workshop:

- Differences between TERF and TEF parameters.
- Changes to the application process.
- Detail of new questions (eg. Current status, scenario planning and delivery options).
- Level of detail required in responses to obtain acceptable scores.

Criteria was also presented at the workshop for applicants and included: Impact of Covid-19, Event Management (including Covid-19 mitigations), Media and Marketing Impact (Domestic Market), Understanding Road Closures and Street Trading Legislation, Event Development, Visitor Experience, Event Sustainability and Skills Retention and Economic Support / Benefit to Events Sector.

All applicants had the opportunity to ask questions relating to the process and all the presentations and templates delivered at the workshop were shared to each applicant.

This was followed by four opportunities for virtual one to one sessions for applicants. These were made available before the TERF application closure deadline with Council's Events Development Officer. These sessions presented the opportunity for both guidance and clarity and enabled relevant questions in relation to the application to be asked before submission of the application. Below is a list of dates that were made available for one to one sessions for all applicants:

- Wednesday 3 February 2021.
- Thursday 4 February 2021.
- Monday 8 February 2021.
- Tuesday 9 February 2021.

The following events booked in and attended the one to one sessions:

- Super Cup NI.
- Stendhal Festival.

- Co. Londonderry Agricultural Show.
- Heart of the Glens Festival.
- Ballylough Living History Trust.
- North West 200.

7.0 Assessment Process

The Tourism Events Recovery Fund uses a single approach as detailed in 5.0 of this report, at the point of application, event organisers were prompted on the online funding hub to choose one of two grant options. The questions differed depending on the option selected.

7.1 Application Questions (Option 1) for events that will not run in 2021/22:

Applicants were asked to respond to questions on the following:

- Event position for 2021 / 2022 including reason(s) for cancellation decision.
- Event budgetary position (impact on budget, sponsorship / funding reductions etc).
- Details of request for Council support - Breakdown of eligible fixed costs.
- Details of how Council funding on eligible fixed costs will assist with event sustainability, retain volunteer / staff, knowledge and skills within the organisation for 2021 / 2022.
- Details of how Council funding for 2021 / 2022 will assist with planning for event delivery for 2022 (eg. Early development of marketing campaign, event development).

7.2 Application Questions (Option 2) for events that will take place in 2021/22:

Applicants were asked to respond to questions on the following:

- Event position for 2021 / 2022 including reasons (s) for wishing to proceed.
- Event budgetary position (impact on budget, sponsorship / funding reductions etc).
- Outline proposal of the various event delivery options (scenario planning) including costs and grant request associated with each (in line with Covid-19 restrictions).
- Details of the event management plan.
- Details of how Council funding will assist with event delivery, sustainability and skills retention within the organisation for 2021 / 2022.
- Details of how the event would support local artists and suppliers in their Covid-19 recovery.
- Details on media and marketing impact.
- Details of how the event will promote a quality visitor experience and be promoted to the domestic market.
- Details of how Council funding for 2021 / 2022 will assist with planning for event delivery for 2022.

The Scoring Panel met on the 24 and 25 February 2021 and each submission was assessed against the criteria within the scoring matrix which was weighted accordingly. The minimum threshold pass rate was applied at 65% as per Council policy.

8.0 Summary of Applications

A summary of the applications received with scoring is detailed in **Annex A**. All successful applicants will be asked to attend a project initiation meeting, issued with a Letter of Offer and details on COVID 19 conditions and restrictions.

The total amount of grants requested through eligible and qualifying applications was £396,538.50.

For the period 2021/22 the allocated budget for the Tourism Recovery Fund is £400,000 (reference Leisure and Development December 2020)

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9.0 Recommendation

Elected Members are asked to approve the allocation of the Tourism Event Funding to successful applicants as detailed in **Annex A** with the reductions outlined.

Annex A

| Application ID | Organisation | Score | Total Cost | Amount Recommended |
|----------------|---|-------|--------------|--------------------|
| 6690 | Heart Of The Glens Festival | 80% | £2,574.00 | £1,930.50 |
| 6691 | CO LONDONDERRY AGRICULTURAL SHOW SOCIETY LTD (Limavady Agricultural Show) | 72% | £2,402.00 | £1,801.50 |
| 6692 | Coleraine And District Motor Club Ltd. | 72% | £79,850.00 | £59,887.50 |
| 6693 | The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association Northern Ireland Branch (RSPBANI) | 72% | £35,600.00 | £3,600.00 |
| 6894 | North Antrim Agricultural Association Ltd (Ballymoney Show) | 88% | £13,259.00 | £9,644.00 |
| 6686 | Armoy Motorcycle Road Races Club | 67% | £108,650.00 | £50,550.00 |
| 6687 | Ballylough Living History Ltd T/A Ballylough Living History Trust | 65% | £93,500.00 | £70,125.00 |
| 6695 | Northern Ireland International Youth Football Tournament Ltd. STATSports SuperCupNI | 65% | £515,221.00 | £100,000.00 |
| 6696 | Stendhal Festival Ltd | 67% | £512,355.00 | £99,000.00 |
| | | | Total | £396,538.50 |