

Title of Report:	Tourism Event Funding Programme (TEFP) - Growth & Large Events Fund 2024-2025
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	20 February 2024
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	NO

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

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£399,989
Included in Current Year Estimates	NO (budget planned for 2024/25)
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	1331/62560
Staffing Costs	n/a

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

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 the results of the assessment process for the Tourism Events Funding Programme 2024-2025.

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 2024 - 2025 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 11th December 2023 with the following key dates and deadlines:

- 1-1 Sessions with Council's Events Team were available to applicants between 9th – 12th January 2024 to outline the changes to the fund criteria and answer questions pertaining to the parameters.
- Applications closed on 26 January 2024.

4.0 Event Funding Eligibility Criteria 2024-2025

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 30 January and 5 February 2024 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
214491	Coleraine and District Motor Club	81%	£100,000.00	£94,880.00
217983	Northern Ireland International Youth Football Tournament Ltd – Super Cup NI	75%	£100,000.00	£92,380.00
229599	Stendhal Festival Ltd	79%	£100,000.00	£92,380.00
247601	Armoy Motorcycles Road Racing Club	71%	£35,000	£32,333.00
233267	Derry & District Youth FA	65%	£30,000.00	£26,964.00
228742	North Antrim Agricultural Association - Ballymoney Show	67%	£17,755.00	£15,958.19
222116	Heart of The Glens Festival	93%	£15,000	£14,607.00
229372	Sam Henry Weekend (North Coast Trad)	69%	£14,365.00	£12,911.26
247576	Kilrea Community & Fairythorn Association	78%	£11,471.00	£10,596.91
218172	Danny Boy Jazz & Blues Festival	Withdrawn	0	0
220691	Ulster Tennis	76%	£7,555.00	£6,979.31
233386	European Blackball Association	45%	£0.00	0
			£431,146.00	£399,989.67

Council received 12 applications. Danny Boy Jazz & Blues Festival withdrew its funding application. There were 6 successful applications from the Large Fund and 4 successful from the Growth Fund, requesting a combined total of £431,146.

7.0 For Consideration

In the period 2023/24 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 2024/25.

After assessment of all applicants, a shortfall of **£31,146** has been identified.

In 2018/19 and 2019/20, 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 90% and 100% - award 97.38% of eligible amount requested.
- For applications scoring between 80% and 89% - award 94.88% of eligible amount requested.
- For applications scoring between 70% and 79% - award 92.38% of eligible amount requested.
- For applications scoring between 65% and 69% - award 89.88% 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, it is 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;

- a) That funding is awarded, under the Tourism Events Funding Programme, as outlined in **Table 1**, with a sliding scale applied based on scores totalling £399,989.67.
- b) That Tourism Events are permitted to build event reserves to maximise sustainability and meet the future needs of events.