

**LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 21 MARCH 2023**

Table of Recommendations

No	Item	Summary of key Recommendations
	Chair to be taken	Councillor Watton
1.	Apologies	Councillor McAuley
2.	Declarations of Interest	Councillor Schenning
3.	Minutes of Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 21 March 2023	Confirmed as a correct record
4.	Community Festival Fund	to recommend that Council Approve awards for funding through Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex B (circulated), subject to confirmation of funding from DfC. If confirmation of funding has not been received from DfC by 1 April, issue letters of offer to the applicants whose festivals are due to take place in April and May
5.	Culture, Arts and Heritage Fund	to recommend that Council approves awards for funding through the Cultural Arts & Heritage Fund as detailed in Annex B (circulated), Option 2, total £20,017.43
6.	Alchemy Business Mentoring Programme	to recommend that Council approves a six-

		month extension to the Alchemy business mentoring programme via the existing Multiple Supplier Framework agreement from 01 April 2023 – 30 September 2023 at a cost of £84,000
7.	Small Settlement Regeneration Programme Update	Noted
8.	Draft Leisure Facilities PB Minutes February	Noted
9.	Draft Autism Working Group Minutes	Noted
10.	Correspondence	Nil
11.	Matters Reporting to the Partnership Panel	Nil
12.	Consultations	Nil
	FOR CONFIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION (Items 13-14 inclusive)	
13.	Sport and Wellbeing Facilities Essential Works	to recommend that Council approves the expenditure of £471,015 for the projects listed in this report. As appropriate for each project further reports will be brought back to Council for approval of tendered costs.
14.	Sport and Wellbeing Play Park Action Plan – Megaw Park	to recommend that Council approves the progression of the Megaw Park project to Stage 1, at a current estimated cost of £100,000, for further development of concept design. This process will also include continued engagement with relevant

		<i>stakeholders and the local community</i>
15.	Any other relevant business notified in accordance with Standing Order 12. (o)	<i>Nil</i>

UNCONFIRMED

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIA VIDEO
CONFERENCE ON TUESDAY 21 MARCH 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

In the Chair: Councillor Watton (C)

Members Present: Alderman Baird (R), Hillis (C), Knight McQuillan (R)
Councillors Holmes (R), McGurk (R), MA McKillop (R),
McMullan (R), Peacock (R), Schenning (R)

Officers Present: R Baker, Director of Leisure and Development (C)
N McGurk, Head of Prosperity and Place (R)
W McCullough, Head of Sport and Wellbeing (R)
L Scullion, Community Development Manager (R)
P O'Brien, Funding Unit Manager (R)
J Keen, Committee & Member Services Officer (C)

In Attendance: C Thompson, ICT Operations Officer (C)
A Lennox, Mobile Operation Officer (C)

Public 1 no. (R)

Press 1 no. (R)

Key: (C) Attended in the Chamber
(R) Attended Remotely

Chair To Be Taken

The Director of Leisure and Development advised that as an apology had been received from the Chair and the Vice-Chair did not have enough notice to attend in the Chamber, the Committee was required to appoint a Chair for the meeting.

Proposed by Alderman Hillis
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

AGREED – to recommend that Councillor Watton take the position of Chair for the Leisure and Development Committee meeting.

Councillor Watton assumed the Chair and advised Committee of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded; and with the remote meetings protocol.

The Director of Leisure and Development undertook a roll call of committee members present.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor McAuley.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were declared by Councillor Schenning in Item 4 Community Festivals Fund. Councillor Schenning did not participate in the Item, nor vote.

3. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2023

Summary previously circulated.

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 21 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

* **Having declared an Interest Councillor Schenning did not participate nor vote on Item 4 Community Festival Fund.**

4. COMMUNITY FESTIVAL FUND

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Funding Unit Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the outcome of the assessment of the applications received to the Community Festivals Fund 2023-24 for approval.

Background

The Community Festivals Fund (CFF) was established by the Department for Communities (DfC) in recognition of the positive contribution that festivals can make to communities and to the local economy. A key priority of Department for Communities is 'to enable communities to enhance their quality of life through participation/engagement in culture, arts and leisure activities.' (Department for Communities Community Festivals Fund Revised Policy and Guidance Framework October 2015).

Council receives funding from DfC on an annual basis to operate a Community Festivals Fund which it is required to match. Confirmation of grant funding for 2023-24 has not yet been received from DfC and so in order for a decision to be made in principle, the assumption is made that the DfC funding award to Council will be at the same rate as 2022-23.

The CFF grant programme was opened for applications on 12 December with a closing date of 3 February. The grant opening was publicly advertised as part of

Council's annual grant programme. Online grants roadshows were held to provide potential applicants with details of the grant programmes.

Applications were received from 46 organisations, a 28% increase in applications compared to last year. An assessment panel of Council Officers assessed the applications received against the criteria as stated in the Guidance Notes for the programme. Applicants were required to attain a score of at least 65% to be recommended for funding, in line with Council's Grant Funding Policy.

An extract from the Guidance Notes for the grant programme, detailing eligibility and assessment criteria, is attached at Annex A (circulated).

Applications Received

No. of applications received	46
No. of ineligible applicants	1
No. of successful applications (scoring 65% and above)	45
Total value of CFF funding recommended	£62,650
Total budget available (incl anticipated £28,600 from DfC similar to 2022-23)	£64,530
Surplus budget	£1,880

A list of the applications received, the assessment scores and the grant amount recommended are listed in Annex B (circulated).

Detailed feedback will be provided to the unsuccessful applicant to explain the reasons for ineligibility and support will be offered, if relevant, to source other appropriate funding.

Recommendation

- i. Approve awards for funding through Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex B (circulated), subject to confirmation of funding from DfC.
- ii. If confirmation of funding has not been received from DfC by 1 April, issue letters of offer to the applicants whose festivals are due to take place in April and May

In response to questions, the Funding Unit Manager advised that confirmation for funding from the Department for Communities was always late, the only year funding was not granted was during Covid in 2019, where funding was redirected to Covid Support, otherwise funding had always been provided.

Proposed by Councillor MA McKillop
Seconded by Councillor McGurk and

AGREED – to recommend that Council Approve awards for funding through Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex B (circulated), subject to confirmation of funding from DfC. If confirmation of funding has not been received from DfC by 1 April, issue letters of offer to the applicants whose festivals are due to take place in April and May

5. CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE FUND

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Funding Unit Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the outcome of the assessment of the applications received to the Culture, Arts & Heritage (CAH) Grant Programme for 2023-24 and to provide recommendations in relation to grant awards to be made through the programme, subject to the outcome of the budget process.

Background

The Culture, Arts & Heritage grant programme forms part of Council's Cultural Strategy strategic priority 4 'To ensure increased access to, and participation in, culture, arts and heritage for marginalised and excluded groups' adopted by Council in 2016.

The primary objective of the cultural strategy is to ensure that both local ratepayers and visitors to the area have continuous access to high quality, accessible, inclusive and affordable cultural services, including arts, museums and heritage.

The introduction of the Culture, Arts & Heritage Grant Scheme in 2016 was in direct response to the findings from the consultation process which highlighted the need to support local groups to promote and develop cultural, arts and heritage projects and activities in the area.

The Culture Arts and Heritage grant scheme has been designed to support, promote and develop cultural, arts and heritage events, projects and activities. It has been devised to support local community and voluntary groups to promote and develop projects which broaden cultural access throughout the council area. An extract from the Guidance Notes for the grant detailing eligibility and assessment criteria is attached at Annex A (circulated).

As part of the business planning process, a report was brought forward to Council in November 2022 to approve all grant funding programmes for the 23/24 period, inclusive of the Culture, Arts & Heritage grant programme. As a result, the Culture, Arts & Heritage Grant programme was opened on 12TH December 2022 with a closing date of 27th January 2023 for receipt of completed applications. Virtual Information Roadshows were held in December to provide potential applicants with detailed information and guidance regarding individual grant programmes.

A total of 25 applications were submitted by the closing date with one application ineligible and one application unsuccessful. The grant assessment panel of relevant Council officers assessed the grant applications against the criteria as stated in the Guidance Notes. Applicants were required to attain a score of at least 65% in order to be considered for funding, in line with Council's Grant Funding Policy.

Applications Received

A list of the applications received, assessment scores, maximum eligible funding amounts are listed in Annex B (circulated).

Due to the high number of successful applications, recommended amounts offered are reduced according to amount requested/eligibility and scoring as follows:

Option 1

- Applications that scored 100% get 100% of grant amount recommended.
- Applications that scored 90% - 99% get 95% of grant amount recommended.
- Applications that scored 80% - 89% get 90% of grant amount recommended.
- Applications that scored 70% - 79% get 85% of grant amount recommended.
- Applications that scored 65% - 69% get 80% of grant amount recommended.

Total £20, 245.28

Option 2

All successful applications get 87.779% of grant amount recommended.
Total £20,000.00

In summary:

No. of applications received	25
Total value of applications received	£24,401.50
No. of ineligible applicants	1
No. of withdrawn applications	0
No. of unsuccessful applications (scoring less than 65%)	1
No. of successful applications (scoring 65% and above)	23
Total value of funding Option 1 (eligible amounts)	£20,245.28
Total value of funding Option 2 (eligible amounts)	£20,017.43
Total value of funding Option 3 (eligible amounts)	£20,000.00

Total amount eligible for funding £20,245.28
Indicative budget 22/23 £20,000.00

Detailed feedback will be provided to the unsuccessful applicants and developmental support will be offered where relevant to these applicants to source other appropriate funding.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves awards for funding through the Cultural Arts & Heritage Fund as detailed in Annex B (circulated), Option 2, total £20,017.43.

Proposed by Councillor Schenning
Seconded by Councillor MA McKillop and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approves awards for funding through the Cultural Arts & Heritage Fund as detailed in Annex B (circulated), Option 2, total £20,017.43.

6. ALCHEMY BUSINESS MENTORING PROGRAMME

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to request a six-month extension of the Alchemy Business Mentoring Programme, delivered via the Multiple Supplier Framework Agreement. This is to enable provision of mentoring support to local businesses from 01 April 2023 to 30 September 2023, in the period following the end of the existing European-funded support, pending mobilisation of the new NI Enterprise Support Service.

Background

Since 2013, Alchemy has been operating across the Council area as a model to stimulate economic growth by providing support to local businesses, enabled by funding from both the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Council.

Alchemy aims to support start-ups, stimulate growth and increase the competitiveness of the local economy by making local economic development support accessible, individual, meaningful and flexible for participant local businesses. The programme delivers one-to-one bespoke business mentoring to meet identified needs, in line with growth ambitions.

This additional budget would enable delivery to continue under the Alchemy banner up until 30 September 2023. This represents a six-month extension of the current programme, prior to the launch of the new NI Enterprise Support Service which will support local businesses thereafter.

Examples of some of the specialist areas of support are:

- Strategic Growth
- Financial Management

- E-commerce
- Export/Import
- Product Development/Intellectual Property
- Tendering & Procurement
- Business Operations & Logistics
- Marketing & Sales

Programme Delivery Year To Date

2022-2023: -

- 142 businesses supported to sustain and grow.
- 6 workshops delivered (77 participants attending).
- 21 jobs created to date*
- 88 referrals to on route businesses to further support e.g., Invest NI, local colleges.

* Further job creation realization anticipated by end September 2023

In 2022/23, Alchemy has also delivered sector specific support for local businesses via Tourism and Town & Village initiatives.

In respect of collaboration with external stakeholders, a key output for local businesses has been the partnership with Northern Regional College (NRC) which has enabled delivery of bespoke courses in response to local business needs identified via Alchemy. 42 businesses have accessed this free training support under the auspices of NRC's Skills Focus Programme.

In addition to this, Alchemy has assisted: -

- 20 businesses accessing Digital Acceleration Plans.
- 22 businesses awarded Innovate NI Accreditation.
- 11 businesses accessing Innovate Us support.

Members should note that, in the closing weeks of the current ERDF funded programme, a waiting list of businesses requesting business mentoring support is being collated and there is currently no provision in place after 31 March 2023.

Cost

The cost of £84,000 will enable up to three days (21hrs) mentoring support per participant business at a maximum cost of £1,050 each. This will allow up to 80 local businesses to benefit from one-to-one mentoring from 01 April - 30 September 2023, consistent with the current level of requests for support that the Alchemy programme realises.

Members should note that a procurement exercise is not required, as Council has already approved an extension of the Multiple Supplier Framework which will be utilised in the delivery of this support.

Council has also previously approved an extension of the supporting architecture used within the Alchemy programme, in the form of a website and customer relationship management system (CRM).

Future Delivery Model

As members are aware, the NI Enterprise Support Service funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund is expected to mobilise in September 2023 and will be utilised as the future delivery model for all NI Councils' pre-start, start, growth and scaling support.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends to Council a six-month extension to the Alchemy business mentoring programme via the existing Multiple Supplier Framework agreement from 01 April 2023 – 30 September 2023 at a cost of £84,000.

Proposed by Alderman Hillis
Seconded by Councillor Schenning and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approves a six-month extension to the Alchemy business mentoring programme via the existing Multiple Supplier Framework agreement from 01 April 2023 – 30 September 2023 at a cost of £84,000.

7. SMALL SETTLEMENT REGENERATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report, previously circulated, presented as read.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme [SSRP]

Background

In January 2022 Council approved the three-strand approach for the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme (SSRP) which was submitted to the funding body for approval and a Letter of Offer was accepted March 2022.

The Covid Recovery Small Settlement Programme will deliver the following projects under each theme:

- **Project A** - 14 regeneration projects across 10 villages.
- **Project B** - 6 buildings brought back to economic use through Restore & Reactivate Programme.
- **Project C** - 4 active travel projects

Update

Progress on each of the individual projects is contained within Annex A (circulated).

The impact of inflationary construction costs has been recognised by the funding departments DEARA, DfC & Dfl and an additional £311K has been

provided to assist with these increases only. The letter of variance has been issued and accepted.

Furthermore, DfC has agreed the reallocation of £212,000 underspend from Project B (Restore and Reactivate) towards Project A.

Following Council's decision to apply Net Zero requirements to new buildings the impact is currently being assessed in relation to the projects at Burnfoot and Drumsurn both in terms of cost and planning permissions. The total cost is still to be determined.

As per previous report to Leisure & Development in January 2023, the combined impact of both Net Zero and inflation is estimated to increase the total programme cost to £3,510,824. The original estimated programme cost was £2,500,000. Estimated increase of £997,912.

Considering Council's existing agreed match funding amount of £250,000, a shortfall in available funding for the Scheme still exists. Based on current estimates the total matched council contribution may need to be increased to circa £500,000 subject to the completion of the procurement process. Tender processes have been completed on both the Rasharkin access path and the Cushendall path enhancements under Project A. Forecast is to have work started in Cushendall early April with completion within 8 weeks. Rasharkin path will be able to commence once planning permission has been received.

Project B – 6 projects are progressing in the towns of Bushmills, Cushendall, Garvagh, Greysteele, and Kilrea. Underspend has been reallocated to Project A.

Project C – this project is in 2 parts; both are progressing with a few issues to be resolved.

- Project C1, core path networks: Historical Environment Department now on board with proposals for the Dungiven Priory walking loop.
- Project C2: Garvagh All ability cycling: phase 1 of the masterplan is being designed in preparation for the procurement process. Permission to create access gate from Jim Watt Centre to Clyde Park still to be resolved but will not prevent phase 1 from proceeding.

Committee NOTED the report.

In response to questions, the Head of Prosperity and Place advised that in relation to an agreement with the landowner at Clyde Park negotiations were ongoing. The Head of Prosperity and Place advised what Council's preference would be and that a detailed phase 1 design and costings were being prepared, confirming that planning permission was not required. The Head of Prosperity and Place advised he would respond directly to Alderman Knight McQuillan, who had asked questions, with further details.

8. DRAFT LEISURE FACILITIES PB MINUTES FEBRUARY

Notes of the Leisure Facilities Board meeting held Monday 15 February 2023 were circulated.

Committee NOTED the report.

9. DRAFT AUTISM WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Notes of the Autism Working Group meeting held Thursday 23 February 2023 were circulated.

Committee NOTED the report.

* **Councillor McMullan joined the meeting remotely at 7:22pm**

10. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

11. MATTERS REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters to report to the Partnership Panel.

12. CONSULTATIONS

There were no consultations.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Alderman Hillis
Seconded by Alderman Knight McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that Council move '*In Committee*'.

* **Public and Press were disconnected from the meeting at 7:24pm.**

The information contained in the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

13. SPORT AND WELLBEING FACILITIES ESSENTIAL WORKS

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Head of Sport and Wellbeing.

Purpose of Report

To update Members on priority works / maintenance / repair required at Sport & Wellbeing Facilities and seek approval for expenditure of more than £10k at a number of sites / facilities.

Recommendation

Members are requested to approve the expenditure of £471,015 for the projects listed in this report.

As appropriate for each project further reports will be brought back to Council for approval of tendered costs.

In response to questions, the Head of Sport and Wellbeing confirmed how the essential works would be funded and the timeline for the works to be completed.

Proposed by Alderman Knight McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Schenning and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approves the expenditure of £471,015 for the projects listed in this report. As appropriate for each project further reports will be brought back to Council for approval of tendered costs.

14. SPORT AND WELLBEING PLAY PARK ACTION PLAN – MEGAW PARK

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Head of Sport and Wellbeing.

Purpose of Report

To update Members on the implementation of the Play Strategy Action Plan and its recommendation for the upgrade of Megaw Play Park and ancillary facilities to ensure it is fully accessible. Also, to seek approval to progress to Stage 1 development of an upgraded Megaw Park into an Accessible site.

Recommendation

Members are requested to approve the progression of the Megaw Park project to Stage 1, at a current estimated cost of £100,000, for further development of concept design. This process will also include continued engagement with relevant stakeholders and the local community.

In response to questions, the Head of Sport and Wellbeing provided estimated figures for the cost of the planned works and that the Mae Murray Foundation had been consulted regarding plans for the park.

Proposed by Councillor Schenning
Seconded by Alderman Knight McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approves the progression of the Megaw Park project to Stage 1, at a current estimated cost of £100,000, for further development of concept design. This process will also include continued engagement with relevant stakeholders and the local community.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Councillor Schenning
Seconded by Alderman Hillis and

AGREED - to recommend that Council move '*In Public*'.

**15. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS NOTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
STANDING ORDER 12. (O)**

There were no items of Any Other Relevant Business.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7:38pm.

Chair