

**LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2021**

Table of Recommendations

No	Item	Summary of key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	<i>Nil</i>
2.	Declarations of Interest	<i>Councillor Anderson and Holmes</i>
3.	Any other relevant business notified in accordance with Standing Order 12 (o)	
	<i>(j) Portrush Recreation Grounds Provision: To ask the Director for details on what provisions will be made within the proposed works at Portrush Recreation Grounds to accommodate children with disabilities? (Councillor Wilson)</i>	<i>Clarity provided by Director of Leisure and Development</i>
4.	Minutes of Leisure and Development Committee Meeting held Tuesday 21 September 2021	<i>Confirmed</i>
	FOR DECISION (Items 5-16)	
5.	Sperrins Future Search	<i>To recommend that Council continues to fund the Sperrins Partnership Project up until March 2023 and, subject to review, until October 2023. The review will take place prior to March 2023. The cost for Council is £22,000 per annum</i>

6.	Alchemy 'Activate' Pilot Programme	<i>To recommend to Council that following the success of the pilot ACTIVATE programme that this be included in the future business development plan and budget allocated accordingly at £10k per annum.</i>
7.	Town Centre Experience Fund	<i>To recommend the Town Centre Experience Fund is run as a pilot scheme for the current financial year with call for applications opened during the 2021 financial year;</i>
8.	Town Centre Recovery Funding	<i>To recommend to Council that the Covid Recovery Revitalise Programme projects continue as per letter of variance received and with the additional outputs listed.</i>
9.	Grant Funding Policy Review	<i>To recommend that Council agree the Grant Funding Policy to include the updates and amendments as detailed; At 6.2 - Remove reference to 'individual'; Funding Unit Manager to report to elected members on 14 day turnaround figures achieved.</i>

10.	Landfill Community Grant Review	<i>To recommend to Council Option 1: No change to the current Policy</i>
11.	Annual Grants Programme	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>To recommend:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The Tourism Events Large Fund and the Tourism Events Growth Fund as outlined in Section 4 for the 2022-23 grant funding period.</i> <i>2. Community Development Support Fund - Option 3, and apply an annual CPI increase.</i> <i>3. Council 17 x grant programmes for the 2022-23 grant funding period, along with the assessment criteria and scheduling as detailed in Table 2 and summarised in Annex A, excluding the Technical Support Grant.</i>
12.	DfC Additional Covid Community Support Funding	<i>To recommend that Council approve the proposed amendments to the report provided to committee in August 2021 to reflect the reduced timeframe for delivery of the DfC Covid Recovery Programme, provided to council through additional DfC Community Support Programme funding.</i>

13.	Riverside Theatre	<i>To recommend to Council that the Item be deferred subject to a workshop.</i>
14.	Installation of Artwork, Portstewart	<i>To recommend that Council consider the options provided in the report, and considering the risks and benefits associated with each, proceed with option D, namely investigate the potential to develop a broader programme which reflects the sentiment of the correspondence.</i>
15.	SWB Minor Capital Works at Ballykelly Bushmills	<i>To recommend that Council approve the progression of these two projects with anticipated expenditure of £56,000 as listed in this report.</i>
16.	Festive Fund Grants Awards 2021	<i>To recommend that Council award grant-aid to projects numbered 1-11 listed in Annex 1 at a total cost of £2,750.</i>
	FOR INFORMATION (Items 17-23)	
17.	Public Rights of Way Investigations	<i>Information</i>
18.	Market Led Experience Development Programme	<i>Information</i>
19.	NI 100 Working Group	<i>Information</i>

20.	Community and Culture Annual Report	<i>Information</i>
21.	Prosperity and Place Annual Report	<i>Information</i>
22.	Funding Unit Annual Report	<i>Information</i>
23.	Tourism and Recreation Annual Report	<i>Information</i>
24.	Correspondence	<i>Noted</i>
25.	Matters Reporting to the Partnership Panel	<i>None</i>
26.	Consultations	<i>None</i>
	CONFIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION (Item 27)	
27.	Sale of the Dunluce Centre	<i>Defer for consideration by Full Council</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF
THE LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HEADQUARTERS AND VIA VIDEO
CONFERENCE, ON
TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2021 AT 7:00 PM**

In the Chair: Councillor McAuley (C)

Members Present: Alderman Baird (C), Duddy (C), Hillis (C), Knight McQuillan (R), Councillors Anderson (C), Bateson (R), Callan (R), Holmes (C), McCaw (R), MA McKillop (R), C McShane (R), Nicholl (R), Schenning (R), Watton (C)

Non Committee Alderman Robinson

Members In Attendance: Councillor McCandless, Wilson, P McShane

Officers Present: R Baker, Director of Leisure and Development (C)
P Thompson, Head of Tourism and Recreation (R)
J Welsh, Head of Community & Culture (R)
N McGurk, Interim Head of Prosperity and Place (R)
L Scullion, Community Development Manager (R)
R Gillan, Coast and Countryside Manager (R)
H Perry, Museum Services Development Manager (R)
P O'Brien, Funding Unit Manager (R)
J Elliott, Town and Village Manager (R)
N McGurk, Interim Head of Prosperity and Place (R)
D Connolly, Arts Manager (R)

I Owens, Committee & Members Services Officer (C)

In Attendance G Clarke/ R Sturgeon, Riverside Theatre (R) (Item 13)
A Lennox, Mobile Operations Officer (C)
C Thompson, ICT Operations Officer (C)

Press 4 (no) (R)

Public 3 (no) (R)

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

The Chair read the remote meetings protocol at the beginning of the meeting:

Welcome to the Leisure and Development Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 19th October 2021.

All those in attendance should be aware that the meeting will be audio recorded.

This includes when the meeting is in committee. The public session of the audio recording will be published on Council's website within 2 days of the meeting.

Elected Members are reminded that they are personally responsible for any comments that they make at the meeting.

Members of the press and public will be required to leave when the meeting goes into committee.

If anyone loses connection, please call the number which was sent to you by Democratic Services. The number can be found in the email with the meeting link sent yesterday, 18th October 2021.

Members, please use the chat facility if you wish to speak. For those in the Chamber, please wait until your microphone is switched on before speaking.

I would also remind all in attendance that the taking of photographs of proceedings or the recording of proceedings, other than by authorised officers, is prohibited.

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

The Chair advised that Item 26 – Any other relevant business notified in accordance with Standing Order 12 (o) from Councillor Wilson would be considered as Item 3 and that submission from Alderman S McKillop had been withdrawn.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies recorded.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Holmes declared an interest in Item 5 – Sperrins Future Search, Councillor Holmes left The Chamber during consideration of the Item.

Councillor Anderson declared an interest in Item 6 – Alchemy ‘Activate’ Pilot Programme. Councillor Anderson left The Chamber during consideration of this Item.

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

3.1 Portrush Recreation Grounds Provision (Councillor Wilson)

To ask the Director for details on what provisions will be made within the proposed works at Portrush Recreation Grounds to accommodate children with disabilities?

The Director of Leisure and Development explained that a pro-active approach had been taken by officers and consideration given to individuals requiring accessible facilities and that this project was one dedicated to adventure of which 20% accommodated wheelchair users. The Director of Leisure further explained that this project was subject to a consultation the outworkings of which were considered in the design.

***Councillor Watton joined the meeting at 7.10 pm**

4. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

Summary minute, previously circulated.

Item 5 – Tourism and Recreation Managed Events

Alderman Duddy sought clarity from the Director of Leisure and Development that there would be no deviation from the proposals for Atlantic Link within the minute which had been ratified by Council. The Head of Tourism and Recreation explained that due to an issue with licencing there was a requirement to re-site this event, deliver virtually and divert the funding accordingly with the dates remaining as planned.

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 21 September 2021 are confirmed as a correct record.

- * **Councillor Holmes, having declared an interest, did not participate in the item.**

5. SPERRINS FUTURE SEARCH

Report, previously circulated was presented by The Head of Tourism and Recreation.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is update Elected Members on the work of the Sperrins Partnership Project and to request an extension of the funding until April 2023.

Background

In December 2018, Elected Members agreed to contribute £21,210 for the financial periods 2018/19 and 2019/20. Due to delays in recruiting staff, financial support was not apportioned for the year 19/20 until the 20/21 financial year as the Project Officer and Admin Support did not take up their Posts until Oct 2020. At a recent Sperrins Partnership Project Board meeting, Directors from the representative Councils agreed that a request would be put to the 4 lead Councils asking for 3 year's funding to allow the extension for the contracts for the Project Officer and Admin Support. See Annex A (previously circulated)

Progress to Date

A Sperrins Partnership Project Officer and part time Administrative Support have been appointed and took up their respective roles in October 2020.

Work completed or progressing since mid-October 2020 includes:

- Approval and sign off of the Sperrins Partnership Agreement between the partner councils;
- A Governance Structure for the project drawn up and agreed at Board level;
- The formation of a Sperrins Partnership Board;
- The development and launch of a new website dedicated to the project www.sperrinspartnershipproject.com;
- An official Launch of the Sperrins Future Search Report and Action Plans;
- A review and update of the Brand and Tourism Action Plan;
- The formation of the Brand and Tourism Thematic group;
- Engagement with Statutory Agencies;
- Support, assistance and promotion of collaborative projects including, the Sperrins Sculpture Trail and IAT (International Appalachian Trail) projects.

Current Projects and Priorities

Moving Forward

There are a number of projects each of the partners councils are leading on that will support the collaborative work of the partnership and enhance the product offering in the region.

- The Sperrins Sculpture trail will consist of 3 iconic pieces of artwork positioned in spectacular settings within the Sperrins. The sculpture trail is designed to promote the natural and built heritage of the region and encourage rural tourism and out of state visitors whilst preserving the natural assets of the rural community. This project is a working partnership between Derry City and Strabane District, Mid Ulster District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.
- The International Appalachian Trail (IAT) links the mountains in West Donegal through to Larne in Co. Antrim along the geological Appalachian trail. The route crosses 6 different council areas which include the 4 Sperrins partnership councils with varying distances in each council.
- The OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory located in Davagh Forest recently opened its doors to visitors and is the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland. The park is an initiative by Mid Ulster District Council and sits within the Sperrin AONB.
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council recently secured external funding for enhancement works at Banagher Glen. Once complete, the project will improve and enhance the visitor experience at this stunning location. The project will create opportunities for the local community and visitors to enjoy the site on a year round basis, and also create opportunities for visitors to explore the high Sperrins on foot.
- Garvagh Forest Trails has proved to be a very popular attraction. The project has created a community outdoor recreation hub in Garvagh Forest through the development of a multi-use walk and off-road family cycling trails. Within the Branding and Tourism element, Garvagh will feature as a Sperrins attraction.
- In Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area recent improvement work was completed at Gortin Glen Forest Park. The redevelopment of Gortin Glen Forest Park has transformed it into a family friendly outdoor experience and includes a destination play park, trim trail, additional parking and the creation of mountain biking trails.

Sperrins Partnership Project has several priorities over the coming months which

include:

- Commencing work on the delivery of the short- and long-term actions contained within the Brand and Tourism Action Plan.

- Identifying funding opportunities and creating the respective business cases (HLF, RDP, Peace Plus etc).
- Completing an audit of the tourism product of the Sperrins region.
- Forming strong cross boundary partnerships.
- Researching and identifying the best practice delivery structure for Sperrin region.
- The formation and development of the remaining Thematic Groups.

Each council was delegated to co-ordinate the thematic group meeting as outlined in the table below.

Thematic Group	Lead Council
Environment & Heritage	Mid Ulster
Infrastructure	Fermanagh & Omagh
Brand & Tourism	Causeway Coast & Glens
Community	Derry & Strabane
Management Structures	Mid Ulster

The Sperrins Partnership Project is presently funded by 4 councils at a total annual cost of £88,000. It is anticipated that the annual operating cost will remain the same for the next number of years and these costs will be purely attributed to the management and administration functions of the Sperrins Partnership Project.

With regards to implementation of projects across the thematic groups, Additional Funding will be sought from external sources. At the Director Coordinating Group meeting, held on Friday 17 September 2021, it was agreed by partners present to ask respective Councils to extend the project for 3 years. Previously circulated for members consideration:

- Sperrins Partnership Board - Terms of Reference – Annex B.
- A Project Road Map up until 2023 – Annex C (previously circulated)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends to Council that it continues to fund the Sperrins Partnership Project up until March 2023 and, subject to review, until October 2023. The review will take place prior to March 2023. The cost for Council is £22,000 per annum.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
 Seconded by Councillor Schenning and

AGREED to recommend that Council that it continues to fund the Sperrins Partnership Project up until March 2023 and, subject to review, until October 2023. The review will take place prior to March 2023. The cost for Council is £22,000 per annum

* **Councillor Anderson, having declared an interest, did not participate in the item.**

6. ALCHEMY 'ACTIVATE' PILOT PROGRAMME

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Town and Village Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform Members about a successful pilot programme created and delivered this summer through the Alchemy mentoring programme called 'ACTIVATE' and to recommended that the ACTIVATE programme is be included in the future business development plan for Prosperity & Place and budget allocated accordingly.

Background

In June 2021, the ACTIVATE pilot programme was created to support start-up businesses that have participated in Invest NI's 'Go For It' programme with operationalising their business plan, in particular guiding them with the knowledge of how to do this. Focus was given to business set up, finance, HR, sales, marketing and social media.

Upon completion, the programme participants were provided with a six-month action plan outlining the next steps needed to be undertaken to bring their business idea to reality and/or grow their business. Some participants had begun trading early to midway through the programme and were provided with more niche mentoring support tailored to specific areas in particular marketing and business growth.

Council invited all past participants of the 'Go For It' programme in the last 2 years to complete a survey if interested to apply for the pilot scheme. 50 responded with over 20 being referred to the current Alchemy LITE and Growth programmes (as they were more established and could benefit from business growth support). The remaining 30 respondents were offered the new pilot ACTIVATE programme.

Progress / Plans

The pilot programme progressed with 18 business owners at varying stages of the start-up lifecycle. Knowledge gaps that were acting as a barrier across the areas of business set up, finance, HR, marketing, sales

and social media were identified. These were addressed through a series of two-hour workshops and seven hours of one-to-one mentoring.

Programme content:

1. Business status review audit was carried out with each participant by an Alchemy mentor to assess the status of their business journey and to provide a series of recommended strategic actions for the business.
2. Six workshops-
 - a. Workshop one – Becoming Self Employed and employing people.
 - b. Workshop two – Basic book-keeping and reducing business costs.
 - c. Workshop three – Creating an effective marketing strategy.
 - d. Workshop four – Selling your product or service.
 - e. Workshop five – Using Facebook for business.
 - f. Workshop six – Photography, video, and graphics for social media.
3. One day (7hrs) of one-to-one mentoring was provided for each participant based on the needs of the business. Outputs included mentoring sessions via Zoom and a six-month start-up action plan.

Key outputs:

- 18 participants registered and completed the programme.
- Eight participants have started to trade because of Activate support.
- Seven participants are planning to start trading within the next six months.
- One participant is planning to start trading within the next 12 months.
- One participant was referred and is now participating in Innovate US because of Activate.
- Four participants were referred and are now participating in Digital Causeway because of Activate.
- Seven participants that plan to start trading within the next six months are likely to register for Alchemy and/or Digital Causeway in the future.
- Workshops were delivered live via Zoom and recorded with links to the recording being shared after the workshop. For those not able to attend online workshops, they watched via Zoom at a time convenient to them.

Programme Costs

Total programme costs were £9150 plus VAT and officers would be keen to deliver the programme again.

Recommendation

It is recommended that following the success of the pilot ACTIVATE programme that this be included in the future business development plan and budget allocated accordingly at £10k per annum.

Councillor Holmes welcomed this report given the tough times experienced by business during the pandemic.

Alderman Duddy suggested this may be a lifeline for some businesses and congratulated staff on bringing this report.

Proposed by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

AGREED to recommend to Council that following the success of the pilot ACTIVATE programme that this be included in the future business development plan and budget allocated accordingly at £10k per annum.

7. TOWN CENTRE EXPERIENCE FUND

Report, previously circulated, presented by The Town and Village Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed Town Centre Experience Fund and the application process for this pilot initiative contained within the Prosperity & Place Business Plan 2021-2022.

Background

Developing initiatives that create a vibrant and sustainable town centre offer is crucial to the sustainability of our town centres.

The introduction of the pilot town experience grant in the main towns and villages is about bringing different ideas together and attempting to develop some cohesive thinking around activities which can improve the town centre experience for town centre users.

Town centre perception surveys have been conducted across the 4hubs and 8 towns as per the Northern Area Plans Settlement Hierarchy. The resultant sentiment mark awarded within the surveys will be used as a measurement for our town centres going forward.

Creating diverse town centre experiences through this grant programme will be conducive to sustaining and developing positive perceptions of our town centres as we emerge from the recent pandemic restrictions.

Project breakdown

The project will open for grants, up to a maximum of £4,000, and groups of traders/town centre stakeholders will be encouraged to work together to

introduce new experiences, activities, marketing or event development within their respective town centres.

The grant will be confined to the 4 main hubs; Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and 8 town centres; Ballykelly, Bushmills, Cushendall, Dungiven, Garvagh, Kilrea, Portrush, Portstewart, as defined in the Northern Area Plan within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

The pilot programme will be open for applications by December 2021

Grant Guidance Notes refer to Annex A (previously circulated)

Proposed outcomes:

- Increase promotion and awareness of the retail offer within our towns to contribute to the residential and visitor experience.
- Promote the town centre businesses to encourage growth.
- Keep spend within the Borough.
- Promote town centres as multifunctional places and make them places to be.

Budget available for the programme is £40,000.

Recommendations

The L&D Committee consider the following recommendations:

- The Town Centre Experience Fund is run as a pilot scheme for the current financial year with call for applications opened during the 2021 financial year.
- The Town Centre Experience Fund is run on an annual basis through the funding grants programme.

The Town and Village Manager asked elected members to note that for this year, due to time constraints that this would be considered as a pilot scheme.

At the request of members The Town and Village Manager clarified that this project welcomed initiatives which incorporated partnership in many forms including neighbouring towns, community and/or business partnerships.

Proposed by Councillor Schenning

Seconded by Alderman Baird and

AGREED to recommend to Council that:-

- The Town Centre Experience Fund is run as a pilot scheme for the current financial year with call for applications opened during the 2021 financial year.

- The Town Centre Experience Fund is run on an annual basis through the funding grants programme.

8. TOWN CENTRE RECOVERY FUNDING

Report, previously circulated was presented by The Town and Village Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the progress of the second tranche of the Town Centre Covid Recovery Programme, funded by DfC, DAERA and DfI for town centres and rural businesses, and to recommend to Council that the Covid Recovery Revitalise Programme projects continue as per letter of variance received, and with the additional outputs listed in Annex A (previously circulated)

Background as per the August Report

In July 2020 Council was awarded £894k in funding for Town Centre and Rural Business Recovery to be delivered in two tranches. The Department for Communities [DfC] £394k; Department for Infrastructure (DfI) £395k and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) £109k.

The first tranche of funding was administered by Council as Covid grant-aid to town centre businesses and rural businesses.

The second tranche of funding was allocated to support medium to longer term recovery/actions, with the following criteria being applied by the Government Departments:

- Project spend must be capital.
- Funding aimed at helping town centre recovery.

A Steering Group comprising of Council, DfC and DAERA Officers has been formed and meets monthly to monitor project progress.

Progress / Update

Monitoring Assessment reports are completed and filed with DfC quarterly.

Tranche 1 complete as follows:

DfC – Urban town centres : 432 urban letters of offer issued of which 75 applicants withdrew and 64 claims were not submitted. Total of 293 urban grants complete total £250,794.

DAERA – Rural town centres : 175 rural letters of offer issued of which 29 applicants withdrew and 23 claims were not submitted. Total of 123 rural grants complete total £122,367.

Projects in Tranche 2 continue, and an update is provided on all projects in Annex A (previously circulated)

A revenue fund for the programme has allowed for a library of videography and photography to be created. Following the success of the Street Art project, a Digital trail is to be commissioned of all the images along with the process and story behind each one. This project outcome will be a valuable marketing tool for a new town centre experience. The extension to the project deadline will also allow time to investigate a potential SHOP EAT ENJOY LOCAL App to be developed to promote the Shop Local message for the borough.

A request for a letter of variation was submitted to DfC in August 2021. DfC issued a Letter of Variation 30th September for acceptance as follows:

- The end date of the Project is extended to 31st March 2022 to reflect delays occasioned by the Covid-19 crisis;
- The reallocation of DfC Tranche 1 funding underspend, amounting to £128,869.43 with associated additional output*, as outlined in Council's extension request dated 24th August 2021, is agreed, subject to the maximum level of grant from the Department not being exceeded; and
- The reallocation of DAERA Tranche 1 underspend, amounting to £44,633.39, for additional rural revitalise work is agreed, subject to the maximum level of grant from that Department not being exceeded.

[*List of additional outputs is contained in Annex A, page 8.]

The Letter of Variation will allow for the additional outputs to be completed including the provision of a mobile accessible changing facility for use at council events.

Recommendation

It is recommended to Council that the Covid Recovery Revitalise Programme projects continue as per letter of variance received and with the additional outputs listed in Annex A (previously circulated).

Alderman Baird and Councillor C McShane questioned the positioning and location of the light boxes and suggested that these could be located outside of the borough where there are higher levels of population thus promoting Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. The Town and Village Manager said that the light boxes could be relocated within the borough, in conjunction with Estates Team and would be available to community groups at a cost.

At the request of Councillor Callan, The Town and Village Manager explained how data was captured, advised that currently the process is

being calibrated and confirmed that a report would be brought back to elected members with statistical information including how the town is performing in terms of footfall, etc. The Town and Village Manager said that she would be reporting also to Town Teams in this regard.

Councillor Callan enquired about cleaning schedules and the Town and Village Manager confirmed that this was under the remit of Environmental Services but that there would be more frequent cleaning scheduled in summer months.

Councillor C McShane expressed disappointment that there had not been sufficient uptake of the Tranche 1 monies which resulted in the allocation of funds.

At the request of Councillor Callan The Town and Village Manager agreed to speak with PCSP regarding continued anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of Blackburn Path.

Alderman Knight-McQuillan welcomed the street art within the town centres and asked that the Town and Village Manager would engage with her further regarding the chosen location for one of the designs given the dereliction in the vicinity.

At the request of Alderman Duddy the Town and Village Manager confirmed that 'parklets report had previously been presented to elected members and was hopeful this would progress. Alderman Duddy was disappointed that no engagement had taken place between The Town and Village Manager and WISE contractors.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Councillor Anderson and

AGREED to recommend to Council that the Covid Recovery Revitalise Programme projects continue as per letter of variance received and with the additional outputs listed in Annex A (previously circulated).

9. GRANT FUNDING POLICY REVIEW

Report, previously circulated was presented by The Funding Unit Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members that Council's Grant Funding Policy has been reviewed for the incoming year and make recommendation on changes.

Background

Council is committed to distributing available grants fairly, efficiently and effectively. The purpose of Council's Grant Funding Policy is to outline the agreed approach to Grant Funding in relation to resourcing external bodies to assist in the delivery of its strategic objectives and priorities.

Council annually review and approve the Grant Funding Policy for the distribution of grants. The policy was reviewed and agreed in October 2016, November 2017, October 2018, October 2019 and September 2020.

The policy is attached as Annex A (previously circulated) with proposed changes highlighted.

Grant Funding Policy

The policy sets out a framework for the processing of grants. The overall aim of the funding process outlined in the policy is:

"To have a consistent, customer focused process with relevant assessment and evaluation procedures with appropriate appeal and monitoring systems in place".

Principles

- Grant funding awards are at the sole discretion of Council but will be dependent on the Council's available and agreed level of funding which is determined in the annual budget.
- Activities grant funded must be fully consistent with the strategic aims and priorities of the strategies to be addressed.
- Due regard will be given to equality considerations in accordance with Section 75 and any other statutory duty.
- All funding applications will be determined on their objective merits. No organisation is entitled to funding because it may have been granted funding in the past or for any other reason.
- Council must ensure proper, prudent and effective use of Public Money.
- Contracted services must be tendered in adherence to the Council's Procurement Process.
- Eligibility for funding is enabled through the grant programmes with specified criteria. This allows Council to focus on supporting organisations to achieve their best and to meet clearly identified needs, which must all be bound by Council's strategic priorities.

Grant Funding Policy Changes / Amendments

Section 1: Introduction; updated to include:

The policy will operate in conjunction with the relevant grant programme guidance documents.

Section 3: Definitions; updated to include:

This policy is relevant to the definition of grant funding, which should not be confused with sponsorship, advertising or any supply of goods or services directly to Council. Sponsorship, advertising and direct benefits received by council are a payment for which the sponsor receives something in return and therefore falls within the context of a Contract for Services.

Section 4: Accountability and Responsibilities; updated to include

The Council's Funding Unit is responsible for ensuring the agreed administration, verification, reporting and monitoring arrangements are implemented.

Council employees are required to adhere to this policy and to take appropriate action to ensure the policy aims and objectives, together with all Conflict of Interest procedures, are fulfilled.

The responsibilities of Grant Aid recipients are detailed within the Letter of Offer.

The Finance Team and the Funding Unit will consult on any VAT related payments provided to the Grantee.

The Grantee has responsibility for reviewing HMRC guidance to satisfy themselves that the application falls within a Grant and not a Supply of a Service. Guidance can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/vat-supply-and-consideration/vatsc06310>

Section 5.4: Eligibility-Exclusions;

Replace

“Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere (e.g. VAT)”

with

“Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere (e.g. VAT. If the applicant is VAT registered, and can claim back VAT, eligible grant will be calculated using the Net amount of eligible invoices provided using the net amount. If the applicant is not VAT registered, and cannot claim back VAT, eligible grant will be calculated using the Gross amount of eligible invoices provided.

The amount of grant awarded per the Letter of Offer is the maximum payment an applicant can receive).

The following link from HMRC is a useful point of reference in relation to VAT and grant-aid:

<https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/vat-supply-and-consideration/vatsc06317>

Section 5.5: Breach of Letter of Offer (Clawback)

Updated to include: If funding is withdrawn the Grantee has no legal redress to have funding reinstated.

Section 6: Fraud and Corruption – At its meeting on 10 March 2021 the Audit Committee recommended that the Grants policy be updated to include a block of groups/organisations where they has been an attempt to obtain ineligible funds from Council. The policy has been updated as follows:

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to carrying out business fairly, honestly and openly and has a zero tolerance towards fraud, bribery and corruption. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council expects full compliance with the requirements of both the Fraud and Corruption Policy and Bribery Act 2010 from Groups or Individuals applying for, or in receipt of grant aid. This is also relevant to Councillors, Employees, Agents, Partners and Suppliers involved in your project/event. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to developing, implementing and maintaining effective procedures and controls to prevent any occurrence of fraud and corruption. The Fraud and Corruption Policy can be found on the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council website.

All cases of irregularities or anomalies involving attempted or suspected fraud will be reported to appropriate authorities, including the Northern Ireland Audit Office, PSNI and any other relevant funding body (if applicable) or departments within the Council (if applicable).

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council reserves the right to disallow any other grant applications and claims submitted by a group or an individual member of a group in respect of the financial year and to apply a moratorium on Council funding to any group or individual member of a group where fraudulent activity has been identified within the current financial year and for at least two forthcoming financial years. This also applies to individuals applying or claiming for bursaries.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will inform the group's Chairperson where attempted or suspected fraud has been identified.

Section 7: Review of the Policy; Updated as follows:

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months. *The Council will also monitor the implementation of the Policy at regular intervals and will respond to emerging issues and/or changing circumstance.*

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members agree the Grant Funding Policy to include the updates and amendments as detailed.

Substantive Proposal

Proposed by Councillor MA McKillop

Seconded by Councillor Schenning

To recommend that Members agree the Grant Funding Policy to include the updates and amendments as detailed.

Councillor Holmes asked for information on events sponsored by Council and The Director of Leisure and Development confirmed that there were legacy arrangements which were being addressed.

Alderman Duddy said it was unclear from the report that payments would be expedited as quickly as possible, suggesting it was unfair to smaller community groups and asked for the timeline from approval of monies to groups taking receipt of same. The Director of Leisure and Development agreed to engage with Alderman Duddy if he wished to raise an issue on behalf of a particular group.

Referring to 6.2 Alderman Duddy felt that a group should not be penalised due to the actions of an individual and suggested this reference should be removed.

Alderman Duddy pointed to issues experienced by some groups in terms of connectivity and capacity.

The Funding Unit Manager confirmed the process in place to assist groups in the form the Community Development Team and confirmed that targets of 14 day turnarounds were consistently met by the Funding Unit where no issues arose in respect of the claim. The Funding Unit Manager said that if groups had an issue their claim could be prioritised if contact made with the team who are always available during business hours.

Amendment

Proposed by Alderman Duddy

Seconded by Councillor Watton

To recommend that:-

Council agree the Grant Funding Policy to include the updates and amendments as detailed; At 6.2 - Remove reference to 'individual';

Funding Unit Manager to report to Elected Members on 14 day turnaround figures achieved.

The Chair put the Amendment to the Committee to Vote

9 Members voted For; 5 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained

The Chair declared the amendment carried.

10. LANDFILL COMMUNITY GRANT REVIEW

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to review the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) Policy.

Background

In Feb 2016 Council agreed the Landfill Communities Fund Policy. The policy sets out a framework for the processing of Landfill Communities Fund applications. The overall aim of the process outlined in the policy is:

“To ensure a consistent and transparent process with proper and accountable procedures is in place”.

In April 2016 Council agreed the Ulster Wildlife Trust as the Environmental Body to administer the fund. The LCF Policy is reviewed annually by Council.

Policy Review 2019

The purpose of the Landfill Communities Fund Policy is to outline the agreed approach to approval of the funding in relation to LCF applications. In determining the policy Council should be mindful of the likely remaining life of the Craigahullier landfill site. There is an annual reduction in tonnage going to the site. This will continue to impact on the amount of funds available through LCF which will reduce accordingly each year as the tonnage going to landfill is reduced.

A desktop review of the policy has been carried out by Council’s Funding Unit and an option for members to amend the eligibility criteria is presented:

The policy currently states:

‘To be eligible the proposed project must be located within a 10 mile radius of a licensed landfill site within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. (Programme currently states that the project must

be located within a ten mile radius of either Craigahullier Landfill Site, Portrush or Craigmore Landfill Site, Garvagh)

Members should consider changing this to:

‘To be eligible the proposed project must be located within a 10 mile radius of the Craigahullier landfill site owned and operated by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council’.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Elected Members give consideration to the two options presented:

Option 1: No change to the current Policy.

Option 2: Amend the eligibility criteria to state that projects must be located within a 10 mile radius of the Craigahullier Landfill Site, Portrush.

The expected value of the fund for 2022/23 is in the region of c£80k net of fees.

The Landfill Communities Fund Policy is attached at Annex A (previously circulated)

Proposed by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Councillor Schenning and

AGREED to recommend to Council Option 1: No change to the current Policy.

11. ANNUAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to recommend the annual grant funding programmes to Council for the 2022-23 period.

Background

Every year Council agrees an annual programme of grants. The grant funding programmes target resources to meet identified need and further Council’s objectives as outlined in Council’s Corporate Plan and individual Service Strategies.

In the 2021-22 Grant funding period the following grant programmes are being delivered:

Table 1

	Grant Programme	No of applications	Amount Requested	No of LoOs	Sum of LoOs
1	Building a United Community Fund	1	£1,200	0	0
2	Community Development Support Grant	62	£113,561.89	54	£93,592.60
3	Community Festivals Fund	23	£38,595.50	18	£26,110
4	Culture, Arts and Heritage Grant Scheme	14	£14,360.00	11	£11,000
5	Creative Practitioner Bursary Scheme	2	£1,370	2	£1,370
6	Enterprise Fund	34	£183,810.47	16	£62,381.83
7	Landfill Community Fund	7	£101,587.50	5	£71,587.50
8	Social Inclusion Grant	20	£10,518.37	15	£7,390
9	Tourism Events Recovery Fund	9	£1,380,411.00	9	£334,038.50
10	Rural Business Development Grant	82	£394,420.99	40	£119,000
11	Rural Revitalise Grant	159	£381,787.54	97	£146,597.58
12	Town Twinning Grant	0	0	0	0
13a	Policing and Community Safety Grants	9	£37,119.00	0	£0.00
13b	Policing and Community Safety Small Grants	4	£1,984.50	2	£984.50
14	Live Smart Environmental Grant	33	£16,277.74	23	£10,438.59
15	NI100 Small Grants	44	£140,598.03	38	£107,379.53
	Totals	503	£2,817,602.53	330	£991,870.63

Grant Funding Programmes 2022-23

The Annual Review of Grant Programmes Workshop for Elected Members was held on 23 August 2021 at which the proposed grant programmes for the incoming year were presented and discussed.

A summary of the proposed grants programmes for 2022-23 is attached at Annex A (previously circulated), which includes a brief overview of each proposed grant and the criteria to be used for assessment.

The Grant Funding Programmes available for the 2022/23 period are as follows:

Table 2

	Grant Programme	Revenue / Capital	Council Funding Contribution	External Funding Rate	Project Intervention Rate	Maximum Award
1.	Culture Art and Heritage Grants Programme	R	100%	0%	100%	£1,000
2.	Creative Practitioners Bursary Scheme	R	100%	0%	100%	£1,000
3.	Youth Creative Skills Bursary Scheme	R	100%	0%	100%	£200
4.	Building a United Community Fund	R	25%	75% - The Executive Office	100%	£1,500
5.	Community Development Support Grant	R	50%	50% - DfC	75%	Under Review To be agreed
6.	Community Festivals Fund Grant	R	53%	47% - DfC	75%	£750 / £1,500 / £3,000
7.	Social Inclusion Grant	R	50%	50% - DfC	85%	£500
8.	Tourism Large Event Fund	R	100%	0%	50%	£100,000
9.	Tourism Growth Event Fund	R	100%	0%	50%	£15,000
10	Christmas Festive Fund	R	100%	0%	100%	£250
11.	Enterprise Fund	R	100%	0%	100%	£10,000

12	Landfill Communities Fund	Landfill Tax	0%	100% HMRC	75%	£15,000
13	Town Twinning Fund	R	100%	0%	100%	£5,000
14	PCSP	DoJ	0%	100%	100%	TBC
15	Rural Business Capital Grant Scheme	DAERA	0%	100% - DAERA	50%	£4,999
16	Livesmart	R	100%	0%	100%	£500
17	Technical Support Grants for Capital Projects	R	100%	0%	100%	TBC
18	Town Centre Experience Fund	R	100%	0%	100%	£4,000

Tourism Events Fund Programme (TEFP)

The Covid19 pandemic caused disruption and cancellations to Council's Tourism Events Fund. In 2020-21 the Events submitted as part of the Tourism Events Funds were all cancelled and the late cancellation resulted in the project promoters incurring costs which Council agreed to cover at a total cost of £165,943.78.

In the 2021-22 grant funding period Council adapted to a Tourism Events Recovery Fund which allowed applicants to plan for events proceeding, or to mothball events with core costs being eligible for grant aid. In total £334,038.50 was issued in LoOs. For the incoming year it is recommended that Council proceed with the Tourism Large Events Fund and the Tourism Growth Events Fund in line with the following parameters:

- Both funds will have further relaxations of parameters as part of post-Covid recovery which will allow event organisers to have flexibility in outputs.
- Funding **only** for events which are proceeding.
- Event Project Costs **only** (no core costs).
- Reverting to previous Levels of maximum grant awards (50% up to maximum of £15k and £100k).
- Revert to the 2 Stage Application Process as introduced in 2020/21:

Mandatory Workshop to provide support and guidance for applicants when preparing plans and developing the full application for submission at Stage 2.

- Stage 1 - To determine eligibility and signpost applications to the relevant fund.

- Stage 2 – Full application with event details.

4 x one to one sessions with Stage 2 applicants before submission deadline.

Community Development Support Grant (CDSG)

The Community Development Team has undertaken an in-depth review of the CDSG Grant programme, and a number of changes are recommended for the incoming year.

On average 50-55 CDSG awards are made annually with a budget of circa £94,000.

Issues to be considered:

- Currently the grant award is a blanket rate and does not take into consideration the scale of the community premises and resultant operating costs, or the services that are provided from the premises.
- The level of grant award has remained the same for the past 6 years and does not reflect the rising operating costs that community groups have experienced.
- The cost of annual insurance has increased in the past 5 years with an average increase circa 23%.
- The cost of utilities has increased substantially and in some instances of the groups surveyed the increase equates to circa 67%.
- During the pandemic many groups had to upgrade their Wi-Fi or install broadband which has resulted in increased annual operating costs.
- Increased cost of cleaning materials and equipment needed to maintain safe operating practices in their centres.

Options for consideration:

Members are being asked to consider 3 categories of awards which will allow a differentiation between differing sized premises and differing scale of activities.

Category 1: Community development groups directly providing a programme of activities. The group has its own premises including a hall/space adaptable for a range of activities with one or more meeting rooms, hired by at least 3 other groups on a regular (at least monthly) basis.

Category 2: Community development group directly providing a programme of activities with a premises for their own use which is hired out by less than 3 other users on a regular basis.

Category 3: Community development group that provides a programme of activities without their own premises.

Table 3 shows the likely impact an increase in awards will have on the budget. The amount has been calculated based on assumptions using the current number and types of groups applying on an annual basis.

Table 3

Option	Group Categories	PROPOSAL	Likely Impact on Budget
Option 1 Do Nothing	Category 1	Grant remains at £2,000	None
	Category 2	Grant remains at £2,000	
	Category 3	Grant remains at £1,000	
Option 2	Category 1	Increase grant from £2,000 to £3,000	£20,000
	Category 2		£5,000
	Category 3	Increase grant from £2,000 to £2,250	£1,875
		Increase grant from £1,000 to £1,125	<u>£26,875</u>
	TOTAL		
Option 3	Category 1	Increase grant from £2,000 to £3,500	£30,000
	Category 2		£10,000
	Category 3	Increase grant from £2,000 to £2,500	£3,750
		Increase grant from £1,000 to £1,250	<u>£43,750</u>
	TOTAL		
Option 4	Category 1	Increase grant from £2,000 to £4,000	£40,000
	Category 2		£15,000
	Category 3	Increase grant from £2,000 to £2,750	£7,500
		Increase grant from £1,000 to £1,500	<u>£62,500</u>
	TOTAL		

Note: There are early indications from DfC that the level of funding Council receives through the Community Support Programme **may** increase next year due to a new formula being considered to calculate each Council's allocation.

