

Community Festivals Fund	9th May 2017
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Community and Culture Community Development Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	£71,499 (already approved)

The purpose of this report is provide Council with an update on the Community Festival Fund (CFF) grant awards for 2017-18 and to obtain Council approval to issue letters of offer to successful applicants, in the absence of confirmation of funding from Department for Communities (DfC) for the period beyond 30th June 2017.

Background

Council receives an annual award of funding from DfC to operate the Community Festivals Fund grant programme. In 2016-17 the total budget for the programme was £71,499, with a contribution of £30,900 from DfC and the remainder from Council.

Council sought applications from local community organisations to the Community Festivals Fund for 2017-18, subject to confirmation of funding from DfC. The applications were assessed and maximum grant awards approved in principle at the Leisure and Development Committee meeting on 14th March and full Council meeting on 28th March. The maximum grant awards were based on the assumption of a budget similar to 2016-17.

Council also agreed that 'If confirmation of funding is not received from DfC by 1st April, to issue letters of offer to events taking place in April and May, with the remainder of the letters of offer to be issued when confirmation of funding is received from DfC'.

On 11th April Council received an Interim Community Festivals Fund Grant Letter of Offer from DfC for £7,725 for the period up to 30th June. As per Council decision, letters of offer were issued to the successful CFF applicants for events taking place in April and May. Letters will also be issued at the start of May to those applicants with events taking place in June. Holding letters have been issued to all other successful applicants advising them of the maximum amount that Council has approved and indicating that letters of offer will be issued when Council receives confirmation of funding from DfC.

Due to the exceptional circumstances of budgets not being in place at regional level, officials from the Department for Communities have advised that they are unlikely to be in a position to offer Councils further Letters of Offer prior to the end of June. There is also no guarantee that Council will receive the same amount of funding as was received last year.

Since the CFF applications are for stand-alone time bound events, applicants require timely confirmation of funding in order to make the necessary arrangements for their events to proceed. A large number of these events take place in July and August and Council does not have a secured match budget to cover these events.

In light of the current circumstances Council may wish to consider issuing, at risk, letters of offer to all successful applicants in order to allow them to make the necessary arrangement for their events to take place. The current amount of unsecured budget is £23,175.

For information, as per the decision approved at the March Leisure and Development Committee meeting, Council agreed the following in relation to the other Community Development grants ie. Community Development Support Grant and Social Inclusion Grant:

'If confirmation of funding is not received from DfC by 30th April, issue offers of grant for 50% of budget to successful applicants, to be followed by a second letter of offer for the remainder of the available grant award when confirmation of funding is received from DfC.' Letters of offer for 50% of grant awards will be issued to successful applicants in early May.

Recommendation

Issue letters of offer to all successful applicants to the Community Festivals Fund for the maximum eligible amounts approved by Council in March 2017, with the understanding that Council is operating at risk of unsecured budget to the value of £23,175.