

COMMUNITY FESTIVAL FUND: REVISED POLICY AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

1. Introduction

In March 2015 the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) published for consultation a revised draft Policy and Guidance Framework for the Community Festivals Fund (CFF). Notices were placed in a number of local newspapers encouraging people to respond. The document was accessible from the Department's website www.dcalni.gov.uk or on request from DCAL Arts Branch. Responses could be submitted by email, post, or through an online survey. The consultation period lasted for twelve weeks from 27 March to 18 June 2015.

2. Background

The CFF has been in existence (in various forms) since 2006. DCAL has overall responsibility for the CFF whilst responsibility for making awards to individual festivals rests with local councils.

In 2012, an evaluation that considered various aspects of the Fund including the pattern of funding over time, how funding has been distributed, effectiveness and impact, was undertaken by DCAL's Economic Services Unit. Various stakeholders, including organisations who had applied for CFF funding were consulted to inform the evaluation.

DCAL has, in response to that evaluation, drafted a revised Community Festivals Fund Policy and Guidance Framework which, once agreed and finalised, will replace the existing framework which has been in operation since 2007.

3. Consultation

The main consultation document asked participants to indicate the level to which they agreed with each individual section of the revised Policy and

Guidance Framework and if they had any alternative suggestions. It also included a number of questions about the equality impact of the document. The questions were designed to assess the level of support for the revised document. This document provides a high level summary of the collective response.

DCAL is grateful to all those who took the time to respond to the consultation and will consider the responses in full before finalising the revised Policy and Guidance Framework.

4. Number of responses

A total of 31 full responses were received from a range of stakeholders. Of these, 27 used the survey format and 4 provided comments in narrative form. Illustrations showing the level of agreement with any particular section of the draft document are therefore based solely on the responses received in survey format. Other comments will be reflected in the narrative summary. A list of respondents is provided in **Appendix 1**.

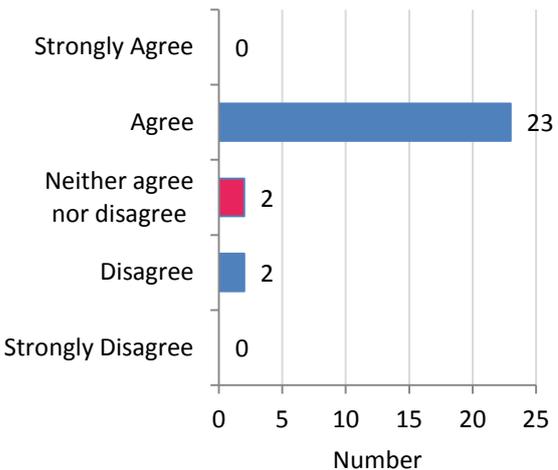
The responses can be broken down as follows:

- 6 responses from individuals
- 13 responses from organisations
- 12 responses with no indication as to whether they are from an individual or an organisation.
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5. Analysis of responses

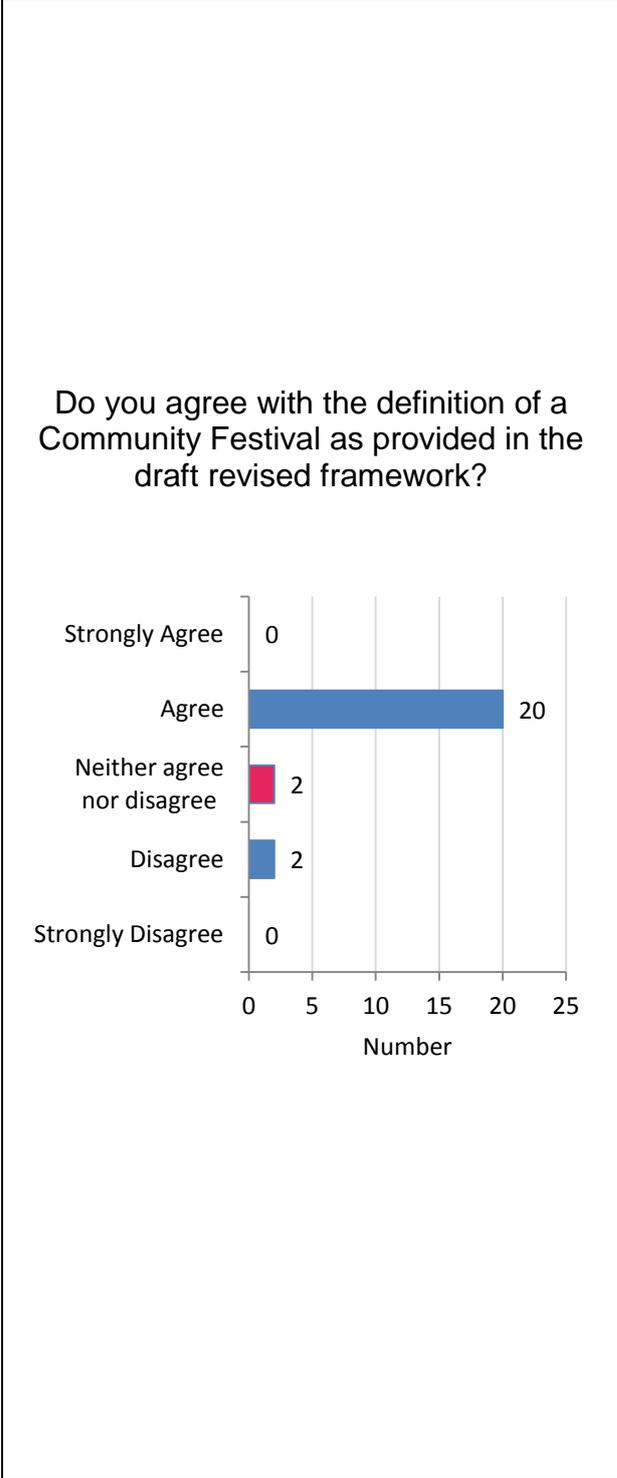
The following table provides an analysis of responses, set out under the headings:

Objectives; Definition of a community festival; Targets; Principles; Assessment criteria; Exclusions; Administration; Other Comments; and, Equality Impact Assessment.

	Comments												
<p data-bbox="225 230 842 271">Objectives</p> <p data-bbox="225 772 842 884">Do you agree with the objectives of the Community Festivals Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="255 974 813 1444"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither agree nor disagree</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	Strongly Agree	0	Agree	23	Neither agree nor disagree	2	Disagree	2	Strongly Disagree	0	<p data-bbox="842 271 1465 560">Respondents welcomed the overall approach to revise and improve the policy framework and the introduction of objectives. There were mixed views on the focus on tackling poverty and social exclusion, with some respondents welcoming it while others disagreed with its inclusion.</p> <p data-bbox="842 560 1465 817">It was suggested that the objectives should be focused and clearly reflected in the rest of the framework and vice versa, for example, economic impact is mentioned in the general principles section but is not an objective of the fund.</p> <p data-bbox="842 817 1465 862">On the specific objectives:</p> <ul data-bbox="909 862 1465 2004" style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives b and c (celebrating cultural identity and enhancing community relations) could be contradictory depending on how they are interpreted. • There is a need for a definition of community relations. • There was an objection to the term ‘cultural identity’, as it was felt that this fused culture and identity in an unnecessary way. It also may exclude interculturalism. • There is a need to include reference to Good Relations. • Objective d (about partnership working with Councils) could be unnecessary. Councils distribute the funding so organisations have to work in partnership with them. • Objectives could be more outward facing, e.g. include an objective around driving investment, economy, encouraging business development, population growth. • Framework could include an objective re potential of event to grow and develop. • One respondent felt that the objectives and targets did not provide a basis for the delivery of the stated aims of the fund.
Response	Number												
Strongly Agree	0												
Agree	23												
Neither agree nor disagree	2												
Disagree	2												
Strongly Disagree	0												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that there should be more focus on improving the quality of festivals. • An additional objective regarding connecting a community to the built environment & encouraging a sense of place was suggested.
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Definition of a community festival



There were mixed views on the definition of a community festival, with some respondents feeling that the definition was too loose while others felt it was too restrictive. Those who felt the definition was too restrictive suggest that:

- All festivals do not need to be cultural and that the definition of cultural is inappropriate.
- It was suggested that a definition of 'community' was required, and clarification as to whether this includes communities of interest as well of geography and identity.
- There was concern at whether the definition should be clarified to show that it included music and sport based events.
- Neutral organisations that are not 'community' based may not be able to avail of the funding.
- A wider definition is required to allow for the potential for events to grow and contribute to the local economy.
- If a festival promotes community involvement, social cohesion and inclusion and good community relations it should not need to be culture based.

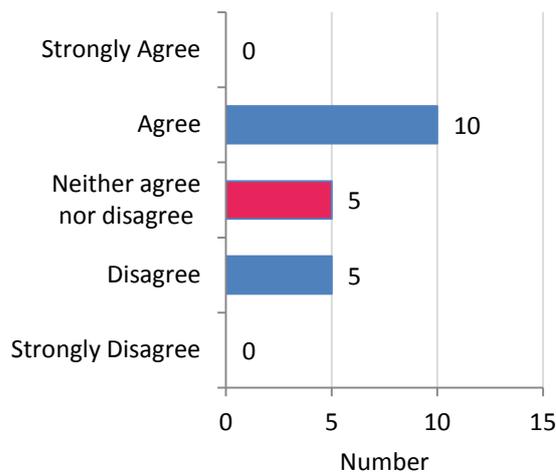
Those who felt the definition was too loose suggested that it should include what activity is fundable and what is not, or key areas that should be demonstrated should be established. It was also suggested that all festivals should actively encourage a sense of place through engaging with the built environment.

One respondent disagreed with the

inclusion of 'a single event with several elements' in the definition.

Targets

Do you agree with the targets for the Community Festival Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?



There were mixed views on the targets. Some respondents agreed with the targets and felt they were realistic and achievable. They also welcomed the inclusion of the use of Access to Services for rural areas. However, others objected to the weighting of the 10% most deprived wards, either completely or suggested using 20-25% instead. It was also suggested that festivals should be resourced to attract audiences from areas of deprivation. It was suggested that the addition of the weighting might exclude previous grant recipients, including those festivals targeting people living in areas of deprivation but taking place in the city centre.

Clarification was requested on whether all events in the festival must target social exclusion or if this could be an element of the programme. Some felt that the target of 350 festivals was too ambitious. It was also suggested that the new framework was a move away from the original ethos of the Community Festivals Fund of simple processes, accessibility, community participation and cultural celebration. Some respondents noted that the new targets would require more resources to be set aside for training, marketing etc, which could result in a reduction of frontline funding to the festivals. It was also felt that more staff time would be required to administer the fund, and that the level of evidence required would be disproportionate to the level of funding. In addition, it was suggested that the requirement to identify training needs may present a barrier to festivals, and a budgeting challenge to Councils who would not be aware of requirements until applications were received. It was suggested that there should not be a specific target round this initially to allow

Councils to develop training. A sample training needs analysis was requested. One respondent felt that small pockets of deprivation outside of an urban setting might not be reflected by the use of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure.

It was suggested that excellence, quality, arts and creative expression could be included in the targets.

One respondent suggested introducing an awards scheme for successful festivals.

Another suggested developing a training programme targeting capacity issues for the fund. It was noted that capacity issues could be overlooked given the limited funds to deliver events.

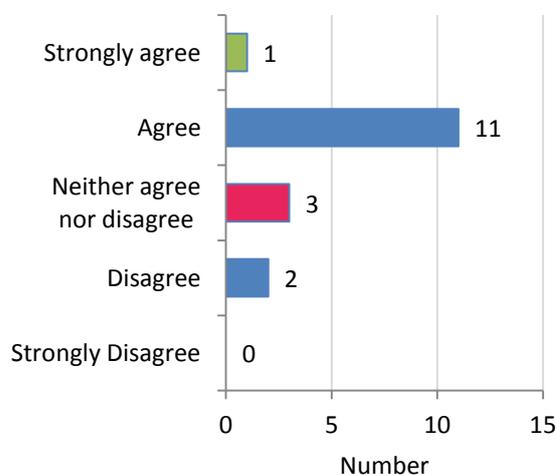
It was also noted that there was no detail as to the consequences to councils should targets be missed or exceeded.

It was suggested that the target in relation to section 75 equality obligations should include good relations.

It was suggested that a target in relation to use of neglected public spaces should be included.

Principles

Do you agree with the principles which apply to the Community Festivals Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?



Most respondents agreed generally with the principles. However, it was highlighted that the principle around income generation would be particularly difficult for festivals, especially if they were targeting areas of social need. Capacity building and monitoring were also mentioned as areas of concern.

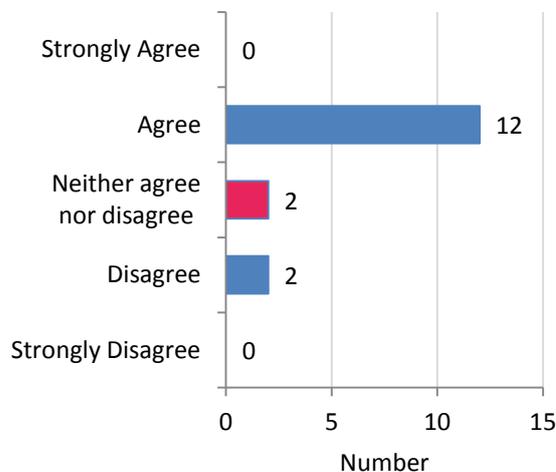
A number of further 'guiding principles' for community festivals were suggested, including participation; openness; shared ownership; representative; mutual respect; compliance with section 75 requirements; equity, diversity, and interdependence; demonstration and nurture of tolerance, pluralism, respect and inclusion in the public space; and, welcoming accessible, of good quality and safe.

There was concern that the level of training required by small festivals may

not be commensurate with the value of the grant.
It was also suggested that festival organisers should be required to demonstrate the effective use of and enhancement of public places.

Assessment criteria

Do you agree with the Assessment Criteria outlined in the draft revised framework?



Respondents agreed generally with the assessment criteria, with some caveats:

- There are too many criteria and this would ultimately lead to longer application forms with the potential to discourage applications from small events or those in more deprived areas.
- Some suggested that the desirable criteria should be essential, or that they should become essential for festivals that have received funding for 5 years or more.
- It was also suggested that the requirement for all festivals to be culture based should be included in the assessment criteria.
- Some respondents disagreed with the core criterion regarding targeting poverty, and suggested that this should have the qualification 'where applicable'.
- It was felt that the desirable criterion regarding attracting visitors would not be appropriate to many festivals.
- Clarification was requested on 'diversity of activities' in the context of development.

There was a suggestion that festivals should be aware of other festivals and work together to maximise impact and better utilise resource.

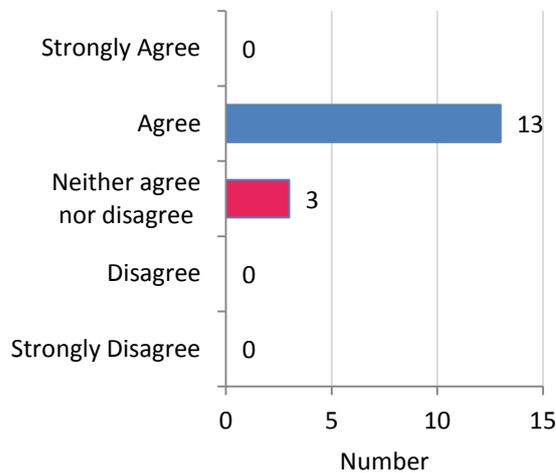
One respondent suggested that supporting material be produced that gives additional information and guidance regarding community relations, for both Councils and festivals.

There were a number of detailed suggestions regarding identifying good relations opportunities and shared ownership, and festivals in contested spaces.

Further criteria in relation to encouraging a sense of place and targeting unused and abandoned spaces were suggested.

Exclusions

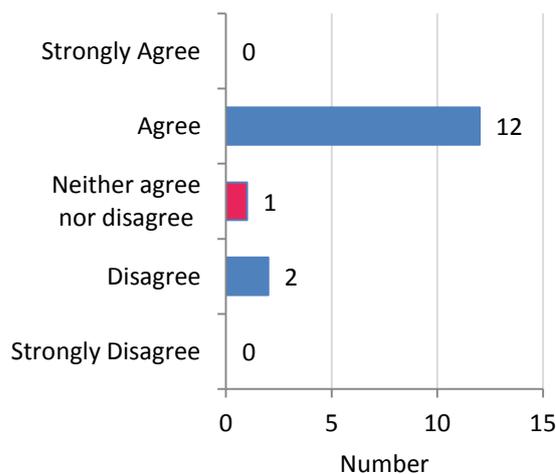
Do you agree with the exclusions as outlined in the draft revised framework?



Respondents generally agreed with the exclusions stated in the revised framework. There was one suggestion that organisations that charge for admittance to their properties, and thus can generate a lot of income, should also be excluded. It was also suggested that there should be clarification around the role of tourism, as the exclusion could be considered contradictory to the desirable criteria. It was suggested that Councils should be able to add further exclusions with the agreement of DCAL.

Administration

Do you agree with the proposals for the administration of the Community Festivals Fund as outlined in the draft revised framework?



It was noted that the demand on staff time/resources within councils was high in comparison with resources provided by DCAL. There was concern raised around the flexibility of councils to set their own criteria as this could result in inconsistency of approach. One respondent was concerned that the level of administration required would discourage small festivals from applying. Concerns were also raised that the weighting of the most deprived wards may exclude pockets of deprivation, particularly in rural areas. There were concerns raised around the requirement to demonstrate how festivals have targeted poverty. One respondent was concerned at the methodology applied to the distribution of funding to local Councils. Again, there were concerns around the levels of training required and how need would be assessed. One respondent suggested that additional training be provided in utilising public spaces.

6. Other comments

Respondents are generally supportive of the Community Festivals Fund. However, there were a number of suggestions made for further development:

- Use of an independent arms length body to administer the fund rather than the councils.
- Single application for 2/3 years to allow festival organisers to grow and develop the festival.
- Two separate strands for 'culture and arts' and 'leisure activities'.
- Attention should be given to community relations training.
- Use existing skills within the festivals sector, e.g. Belfast Festivals Forum provides training and support. Also, consider networking and partnership opportunities.
- The Department should cover the cost of evaluation.
- DCAL should seek to provide additional evidence of the community benefit of the fund.

7. Views on the equality impact assessment

Other data

There were only two responses that suggested other data which could be drawn upon to help assess the equality impact of the proposals. One suggested the use of soft outcomes, while the other stated that the 2011 Census could help to identify areas that need extra support.

Impact on Section 75 groups

The general feeling was that the funding would have a positive equality impact on the groups included under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. However, a couple of respondents cautioned that this was dependent on how the funds were allocated and how each festival was run. It was noted that there must be adequate conditions in relation to promotion of good relations and inclusion for each festival, and that this should be monitored.

There was one comment regarding the potential negative impact if community is defined only as a geographical area, as this could exclude some groups. Another respondent felt that the weighting towards the 10% most deprived wards in each area could disadvantage section 75 groups who fall outside of these areas.

Other actions to better promote equality of opportunity

Again, there were only two respondents who provided suggestions in this area. One respondent felt there was a need for good training and guidance as well as robust assessments of the success of festivals. The other suggestion was in relation to the appropriate promotion of the fund to ensure the community festivals that are supported are reflective of the 'make-up' of the wider community.

Appendix 1

Demographics of the individuals who responded to the survey

Profile of the respondent	Number
Gender	
Male	4
Female	2
Age	
Under 45	2
45 and over	4
Religious background	
Catholic	2
Protestant	3
Neither Protestant nor Catholic	1
Marital status	
Married/cohabiting	4
Other	2
Disability	
Have a disability	0
Do not have a disability	5
Dependants	
Have dependants	3
Do not have dependants	2

Organisations who responded to the survey

Organisation
ArtsEkta
Belfast City Council
Belfast Comedy Festival
Benburb & District Community Association
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Community Arts Partnership
Community Relations Council
Derry City and Strabane District Council
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Festivals Forum
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment