



Department for
Communities

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Commonities

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Evaluation of the Community Festivals Fund (CFF) 2019/20

June 2021

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1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. The Community Festivals Fund (CFF) was established in recognition of the positive contribution that festivals can make to communities, the local economy, and wider Government priorities.
- 1.2. The CFF Policy and Guidance Framework (2015) states that festivals must be 'developed from within a community and... must be initiated and led by, or in partnership with a community organisation.' Festivals must also be culture based.
- 1.3. In 2019/20 demand continued to be high for Community Festivals funding however the overall target number of festivals of 350 was missed for the second year. This could be attributed to the reduction in funding applied but also by the way in which Mid Ulster Council has now decided to allocate their funds. These are investigated further within this report.

2. About the Department

- 2.1. The Department for Communities makes an annual allocation to each Northern Ireland council through a Letter of Offer, specifying their budget for festivals and indicating the conditions which apply.
- 2.2. The CFF budget is divided between the 11 Councils based on population distribution, with a 10% weighting for deprivation. The allocation to the fund for 2019/20 was £369k, which was the same as the previous year. This funding is match funded by the local Councils.
- 2.3. Letters of Offer were issued to the Councils in April 2019. The delay was due to confirmation of available budget. It was accepted that this could cause difficulties for Councils funding festivals early in the year, however, the delay was outside of the Department's control.
- 2.4. In line with previous years, a decision was made that reallocation of any unclaimed or underspent funding would not go ahead due to other budget pressures across the Department. In order to sustain the festivals in their areas, some Councils chose to provide over and above the match funding figure required for the operation of the scheme.
- 2.5. A summary of the allocations to each Council is set out below in Table 1. All Councils accepted their full allocation.

Table 1: Allocation to Local Councils 2019/20

| Council | Allocation (£) |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 27,400 |
| Ards & North Down | 31,400 |
| Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon | 41,900 |
| Belfast City | 66,800 |
| Causeway Coast & Glens | 28,800 |
| Derry City & Strabane | 30,200 |
| Fermanagh & Omagh | 23,300 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh | 27,400 |
| Mid & East Antrim | 26,900 |
| Mid Ulster | 28,900 |
| Newry Mourne & Down | 35,900 |
| Total | 368,900 |

3. Strategic Context

- 3.1. The main impact of CFF relates to PfG Outcome 5 – **‘We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential’**. Specific indicators are: ‘Percentage engaging in arts/cultural activities’ and ‘Confidence’, both of which are led by DfC.
- 3.2. The CFF also links strongly to the indicator **‘% of the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society’**, which relates to Outcomes 7 (We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other), 9 (We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity) and 10 (We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest). The Executive Office is leading on this indicator.
- 3.3. The CFF also links to **Outcome 4 – ‘We live long, healthy, active lives’**, with the activity potentially impacting on mental health (DoH led) by encouraging social inclusion and equality, and also on the ‘confidence of the population aged 60 & older’ (DfC led) by providing targeted activity.
- 3.4. The current CFF Policy and Guidance Framework places a focus on promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion. The objectives of the fund centre around supporting communities to work together and celebrate their identity, while enhancing community relations, promoting equality and targeting poverty and social exclusion. The Fund also aims to improve the capacity of festivals by providing support and training as well as funding.
- 3.5. Community Festivals can also contribute to ‘A Shared Future’; People and Place – A strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

4. Operational Context

- 4.1. The Fund is a competitive scheme and applications are open to all festivals which meet the core criteria of the scheme.
- 4.2. Councils are required to adhere to the Department's Policy and Guidance Framework on Community Festivals, but are free to develop their own application form and criteria. However, they are required to publish their assessment criteria, application process and procedures for making awards. This allows Councils in different areas to ensure that they meet the needs of the local population in the most effective way.
- 4.3. The Department includes a condition that each Local Authority must provide match funding equal to the amount provided by the Department to support festivals, to ensure that there is a significant pot of funds to support the wide range of festivals taking place.
- 4.4. Each Local Authority determines the level of grant aid to each organisation. Decisions on whether or not to fund a festival and the level of funding are entirely a matter for the Council to decide.
- 4.5. The Department makes payments of Financial assistance on receipt of a certified claim giving details of expenditure incurred in respect of the following:
 - Awards to Community Festivals
 - Contribution to Running Costs (max 10%)The Department's contribution will be 50% of the claim.
- 4.6. Each Council is required to provide an annual report to the Department, detailing the festivals supported and the awards made, together with an assessment of the impact in the community. This is based on evaluations provided by the festivals themselves.

5. Expenditure Analysis

- 5.1. In total £270,558.12 was drawn down from the Department by the end of the financial year (March 2020). The remaining balance was accrued into the 2020/21 financial year for subsequent drawdown. The primary cause for this level of accrual is the Councils' requirement that all paperwork and receipts, etc. be provided by festival organisers prior to payment of CFF funding. As the Councils allow a period of time post event for receipt of this, cash for the events taking place in March must be drawn down in the next financial year. This causes an unavoidable delay in relation to the completion of 4th quarter drawdown requests for Councils affected.
- 5.2. In the final quarter of 2019/20 two Councils advised the Department that they were unable to spend all of their allocations, with a total underspend of £1449.37. Table 2 below sets out the details.
- 5.3. They cited their reasons for underspend as a lack of final claims from organisations within the deadlines or that organisations were unable to deliver projects as planned.
- 5.4. Previous underspends were £8409 in 2018/19 and £12,697 in 2017/18.

Table 2: Underspend 2019/20

| Council | Amount Returned/ Declined | Underspend |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Fermanagh & Omagh | - | £1420.96 |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh | - | £0.05 |
| Newry, Mourne & Down | - | £28.36 |
| Total | | £1449.37 |

6. Findings - Promoting Equality and Targeting Poverty and Social Exclusion

- 6.1. As part of their marketing and application processes, Councils are required to promote equality and encourage applications from those in poverty and social exclusion. Most Councils addressed these issues during the application assessment process by applying the required weightings.
- 6.2. All Councils advertised CFF in their local press, Council websites and social media, and Council literature.
- 6.3. Examples of targeted marketing, particularly in areas of deprivation, included:
- Marketing through secondary or umbrella organisations and partnerships, e.g. NICVA, CAP, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, Policing and Community Safety Partnership, Rural Support Network, Community Networks, Arts Forum and Community Centres;
 - Circulating information using existing community databases, e.g. Community and Voluntary Sector Databases, previous CFF (and other) grant recipients informed, and Community Support Newsletter;
 - Council Officers provided information to groups when they were working with them in other capacities;
 - Funding fairs; and
 - Meetings held in deprived areas and with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships to promote the fund and explain how to access it.
- 6.4. Many festivals offered free events to make them accessible to all and those that did charge kept costs to a minimum. This encourages attendance by low income families who may not otherwise attend.
- 6.5. Some festivals offered advice at information stands on services for those on the poverty line and Councils also reported that festivals were held in areas of deprivation, encouraging attendance from those who would not normally travel to events. In one Council a holiday meals club for primary school children was a way of targeting families living in poverty, who would otherwise struggle to feed their children during the summer holidays.
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- 6.6. Community Festivals allow people to access arts and culture in their own community, in an environment where they feel comfortable. Accessible venues were used by festivals and 'neutral' and 'shared' spaces were chosen to ensure that the entire community would feel welcome.
- 6.7. Many Councils reported that a high number of festivals took place in rural areas helping to reduce social isolation, particularly in older people. In order to reach these areas some festivals reported advertising in local shops and leaflet drops as well as online. CFF gives the local community the opportunity to tailor projects to the needs of their community, reaching more people. In quite a number of cases transport was provided. One Council reported that grant aid review mechanisms include geographical distribution of grant aid across rural settlements, another reported that their festivals provide activities and services to communities who may normally have difficulties accessing services and score highly in the Multiple Deprivation measures in this category. Another council reported that festivals can target outlying areas, car shares were encouraged and local businesses offered low cost nightly stays.
- 6.8. Some of the festivals were specifically based on a multicultural or intergenerational theme thereby increasing awareness locally and helping to improve relations in those areas. Schools were also invited to participate in some festivals.
- 6.9. Organisers, volunteers and festival goers all benefit from sharing new experiences, learning from each other, and forming new links. By increasing 'visibility' of different groups within the community and enabling them to share their experiences, stereotypes can be challenged, building trust and understanding. Council examples of this included LGBTQ and BME groups.
- 6.10. Other new themes for this year which also reflect this included Sensory Saturdays - a festival offering an opportunity for the Autism community to come together in a safe and fun environment - a Sensory Kids Fun & Colour Run Day and a Recovery Festival, which involved people affected by addictions or at risk of addictions working in their community through a series of different programmes and artistic activities.

7. Findings - Training, support and capacity building

- 7.1. All Councils offered training to their festival applicants, with each Council taking a different approach. Most offered information sessions or seminars as well as one-to-one support from officers during the application process. Other forms of support included guidance notes, workshops, funding fairs, you tube videos and training courses (one Council made some training mandatory for new applicants). Another Council included a training needs assessment form, along with their application form.
- CPR and Defibrillator training;
 - Steward Training;
 - Arts & craft; and
 - Identifying alternative sources of funding.
- 7.2. Topics covered in training courses included:
- Health & Safety / first aid;
 - Event management;
 - Promotion and marketing;
 - Social media and website design;
 - Child protection;
 - Committee skills;
 - Food hygiene/licensing requirements;
 - Risk assessments;
 - Dementia Awareness;
 - Registering as a charity;
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- 7.3. Belfast City Council continues to hold a regular festivals forum with membership continuing to increase. This forum has helped festivals network, share ideas, skills, resources, staff; as well as avail of free marketing support and free training available throughout the year.
- 7.4. Belfast City Council also continues to offer an in-depth de-brief with unsuccessful candidates, including advice on strengthening future applications and alternative sources of funding and support. This year again they held approximately 10 de-brief meetings.
- 7.5. Another council this year offered a similar service to those not reaching the scoring threshold by providing a programme of support to develop a stronger application for the following year.

- 7.6. One Council reported working with three Community Networks to create a Training Toolkit to help community groups to complete application forms, promote governance and provide a range of information from volunteering to financial management.
- 7.7. Councils reported that training is having an impact on the quality of applications from community organisations, on how festivals are run, with groups becoming more effective and more sustainable in terms of the capacity of organisers, enhanced quality of events, and maximising opportunities for income generation. Again, whilst most festivals provided some information about the format or subject matter of training offered, they did not report against the required target of supporting at least 80% of capacity requirements and training needs identified during the application process.
- 7.8. Training provided has an impact on the community as a whole, as it is transferable and provides continued benefits throughout the year and for future festivals, therefore increasing sustainability. Informal training and up-skilling can also lead people back into education/workplace.
- 7.9. Derry City and Strabane District Council reported that they are looking at how the value of CFF can be shown and how the funding programme delivers the outcomes of its Community Plan. They invited community groups to a Grant Aid session in November 2018 in both Derry and Strabane. The session provided an opportunity to talk about the value the projects funded by CFF and the impact they make to the local area.
- 7.10. One council reported that Funding Seminars included the issue of Festival Sustainability. Groups were asked to focus on other monetary and non-monetary ways of financing their events into the future. Methods identified included: Fundraising, Sponsorship, Small Admission Charge, Purchasing Equipment rather than renting each year, Upskilling the Community in Festival Activities like face painting, balloon modelling etc. which could be used at future events with no charge incurred.
- 7.11. In terms of capacity building, some Councils have reported that festivals, which have been in receipt of CFF funding for a number of years, appear to be benefitting from the ability to innovate to remain attractive, and being able to then leverage greater amounts

through other sponsorship and fundraising. Longer running events are also able to refresh, develop and improve their festivals with continued funding as well as attract better known and popular acts to their events, thus drawing in larger audiences.

- 7.12. Through CFF, organisers have been able to provide quality acts and performances which increases audience participation, ticket sales, merchandise

sales and sponsorship and therefore they become less reliant on government funding.

- 7.13. Organisers are becoming more aware of the need to source and introduce additional support. In the current economic climate, this will help festivals to cope with future budgeting, given the potential demands on public funding. The ability to innovate allows events to remain attractive.

8. Findings - Impact on the community and/or community relations

- 8.1. Councils advised that community festivals develop community cohesion, promote a sense of belonging, a sense of pride, encourage community participation (through a sense of ownership) and promote good relations. Most festivals have a family focus and are as inclusive as possible encouraging the whole community to come together. Festivals can provide the heart to a community.
- 8.2. Festivals promote intergenerational working and knowledge-sharing, not only through activities, but in the planning and development of the festival as a whole.
- 8.3. A number of long running festivals have become an expected regular part of community life and a focus for community groups. Many events have a strong focus on local interest / local history / local connections, building a sense of community identity, passing on legends, knowledge and traditions to future generations.
- 8.4. Networking and partnership opportunities also allow relationships to be built with local artists and arts organisations, creating a focus on better quality art/carnival festivals within communities.
- 8.5. One Council specified that groups applying must include a good relations plan with their application, to ensure full and complete community participation for all sectors of society. Another Council stated that groups in receipt of a grant had to identify how their festival would improve community relations and participation levels, and another advised that their application form and the guidance notes are specifically tailored to monitor the impact on Section 75 groups.
- 8.6. Specific outcomes reported included:
 - An increase in cross-community interaction/cohesion between schools, churches, community groups, sports clubs and businesses

- A reduction in social isolation, attracting people who would not attend events outside the area
- Increased community participation and developing a sense of ownership
- Improved relations with local businesses through sourcing and purchasing items locally
- A reduction in anti-social behaviour
- The easing of tensions at politically volatile times of the year
- Increased links within and between communities developed through partnership working
- Improved local community relations
- Increased awareness of local issues and developed a strong local interest
- Increased sense of community and belonging
- Increased sense of pride by showcasing local area
- Create a sense of place, connecting the community with the local built environment

9. Findings - Cultural expression

- 9.1. Festivals are an expressive way to celebrate heritage, culture and traditions. Arts and culture can be brought directly into communities, reaching new audiences by attracting non-traditional arts audiences.
- 9.2. Councils report that CFF facilitates the public promotion of different cultures and traditions in a positive and engaging manner, therefore providing educational opportunities for the local community at the same time. Communities come together to share experiences and break down barriers in a safe and shared environment, increasing the sense of belonging, inclusivity and acceptance.
- 9.3. Cultural festivals are also a conduit to pass the legends, knowledge and traditions onto the next generation.
- 9.4. Festival themes this year included: Farming / country life; cultural traditions including Ethnic and Minority groups, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Irish, Ulster-Scots, etc.; a wide variety of music; comedy; Commemorations; Intergenerational / Family events; Heritage, history and traditions; Sports e.g. football, Gaelic, sailing, bowling, golf, cycling; and seasonal events such as Christmas, Halloween and St Patrick's Day. They were spread widely across the Council areas, in both urban and rural settings.
- 9.5. Many were held on culturally significant dates – to allow and encourage communities to celebrate safely and with a positive community atmosphere and discourage anti-social behaviour around 'flash point' areas and dates. CFF allows cultural events to develop, remain innovative, and to be delivered more professionally.
- 9.6. The variety of festival activity allows for the celebration of cultural expression to be shared with and between communities.

10. Other benefits reported

10.1. Additional benefits to communities include:

- Increased footfall leading to economic benefits for local businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector
- Festivals provide an opportunity for free advertising for local businesses
- Some festivals included a small market for local producers enabling them to sell and showcase their products
- Increase in number of visitors to the area, and in particular to areas not on immediate tourist trails
- Increase in tourism by drawing people to Northern Ireland, particularly the larger festivals such as Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival, Belfast Mela and Feile an Phobail.
- The annual timescale of the festivals provides an incentive for visitors to return
- Local media attention promoting positive images
- Contributes to the sustainability of local arts, cultural and creative industries
- Developing arts, cultural, and community participation in areas of deprivation
- Supporting local tradesmen / musicians / artists (Belfast estimated over 3200 artists contracts and over 1596 non artistic)
- Increase in local partnership working and developing a cross-community approach
- Many Community Festival activities have community fundraising or charitable benefits as a core element and outcome, benefiting a multitude of good causes
- Return to the local economy
- Increase in occupancy rates in local hotels/B&Bs

11. Value for Money

In 2019, 417 applications were made in total to the fund across all local Councils in Northern Ireland (compared to 461 in 2018). Of these, 338 (81%) were successful in securing funding. This shows a slight decrease in the number of applications but an increase in the number of festivals supported, when compared to 2018, when 326 (71%) were supported. The target contained in the CFF Policy and Guidance Framework is 350 festivals per year. This has not been exceeded this year which could be attributed to the reduction in funding applied however it is only by a small margin (12 applications). It could also be explained by the recent change to the way in which Mid Ulster Council has now decided to allocate their funds. The Council decided to allocate DfC monies to their Strategic Events Fund, as opposed to their small grants, resulting in less staff resources required and no admin claims, therefore all monies going directly to

support the community. DfC monies represent approx. 36% of all funding allocated.

The estimated number of attendees overall also saw a slight decrease on the previous year, approximately 1.1million (although quite a number of festivals this year did not return their attendance figures). This however continues to represent excellent value for money for the Department against an investment of £369k, and has the potential to contribute significantly to the PfG target in relation to the percentage engaging in arts and culture.

Details of the applications, along with the rationale behind rejections, are contained in the individual evaluation reports prepared by each Council. Summary figures for applications made to each council is set out below in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Summary of applications by council area

| Council | Applications | Successful | Approx no. of Attendees |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------|--|
| Antrim & Newtownabbey | 23 | 22 | 52,037 |
| Ards & North Down | 39 | 32 | 77,470 (no attendance given for 1 event) |
| Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon | 14 | 10 | 120,119 |
| Belfast City | 45 | 25 | 323,083 (no attendance given for 2 events) |
| Causeway Coast & Glens | 50 | 42 | 97,191 (no attendance given for 18 events) |
| Derry City & Strabane | 29 | 17 | 86,554 (no attendance given for 3 events) |
| Fermanagh & Omagh | 30 | 25 | 76,878 (no attendance given for 3 events) |
| Lisburn & Castlereagh | 30 | 29 | 19,616 (no attendance given for 1 event) |
| Mid & East Antrim | 40 | 36 | 30,500 (no attendance given for 1 event) |
| Mid Ulster | 17 | 15 | 92,000 |
| Newry Mourne & Down | 100 | 85 | 123,259 (no attendance given for 4 events) |
| Total | 417 | 338 | 1,098,707 |

12. Lessons Learned

Councils are asked to note the lessons learnt and encouraged to communicate with each other where information can be shared:

What worked well:

- Include a training needs assessment form with applications forms to tailor training programmes appropriately
- The Belfast Festivals Forum continues to attract a good take-up of new membership by funded festivals, and the benefits of membership were seen through billboard advertising and improved marketing by those festivals.
- A tiered grant system.
- A requirement that festival organisers all work through the Council's Safety Advisory Group to ensure festivals had completed all necessary risk assessments and had adequate staff and volunteers at the event.
- A high level of knowledge and experience was gained by Council Officers through their attendance at each of the events supported.
- Support programme to help support and develop festivals for those groups which didn't meet the scoring threshold.
- Upfront payments assist with cashflow issues with balance paid upon provision of all post-project paperwork.
- Attendance at mandatory training for new applicants.
- Encourage early drawdown to avoid any non-award of funding.
- Open channels of communication between council and project managers. This helps to develop a good rapport, a cohesiveness and a joint up approach to delivering festivals and events in general throughout the Council area year round. Community Groups feel they have a place in the bigger scheme of things in terms of the annual calendar of events in the area.
- 'Diversionary' events held at locations / times of the year which could be considered contentious.
- The use of a You-Tube video as a guide to completing the application form.
- Encouraging groups to positively market their event.
- Links between CFF and other council services and publications worked well.
- Co-operation and partnership working between festivals has many benefits. Groups can save money, reach more people, share ideas and avoid duplication if they work together.

- Some community festivals maximise the potential of public spaces, such as parks, community centres, arts venues and even forests.
- Grants Officers again worked more closely with the groups with a view to identifying any threats to festivals in advance and addressing them accordingly.

Areas for improvement:

- Again it was highlighted that a longer lead in time would allow better planning and publicity. Especially for those festivals taking place during the early summer months. If funding is available going forward, the Department will make every effort to make Councils aware of funding figures, and issue letters of offer, as soon as possible. Councils are free to advertise and assess applications in advance of confirmation of funding, as long as these circumstances are made clear in any publicity material
- A number of councils have reported that the quality of applications continues to vary considerably. Further training is required for new groups.
- One council has planned a review of their questions at application stage.
- One council reported that due to the limited budget, as in previous years, the threshold for funding was very high and they had to turn away some potentially good festivals which scored well under the criteria
- Successful applicants were awarded in most cases, a proportion of their request, as in most cases there were budget areas which weren't deemed relevant /

necessary / eligible spend to deliver the festival. This meant that in some cases, festival programming had to be reduced to cut back on costs.

- Ongoing issues around organisers returning paperwork in time, particularly small events
- One council reported that as their community groups were paid their grant 100% upfront, it subsequently proved difficult to get the claim forms and monitoring & evaluations returned from the groups involved. Information is still outstanding as a result of this and the difficulty contacting groups due to Covid-19. Lack of staff resources has also delayed this process this year due to staff being re-deployed to other departments within the council due to covid-19.
- There continues to be challenges around the uptake of offers of help or guidance at the pre-application stage despite well-advertised opportunities to access this service.
- One council intends to plan networking opportunities for festival organisers given the wide geographical area that the Borough covers.
- Festivals must demonstrate additionality. This could be extremely important in a restricted public funding environment.
- One council reported that the majority of groups are still seeking the maximum award and as one of the priorities outlined in the Policy and Guidance Framework was to encourage long term sustainability this is an issue which needs to be addressed in the next financial year.

- One council reported that many applicant groups still appear to be working in isolation with little or no communication with other groups of a similar nature or working within a similar area. Promotion of greater partnership working between groups and areas needs to be a priority in 2020 – 2021.
- One incident of fraud was reported to the Department in 2019/20 – a reminder to Councils of the need to be vigilant when checking paperwork.

13. Overall assessment

- 13.1. There remains a sense that CFF makes cultural events accessible for everyone, promotes cultural diversity and encourages shared celebration. CFF continues to support the arts and communities and allows festivals to promote and sustain the diverse culture within and across all communities. One Council reported that the fund is a huge asset to the borough and contributes significantly to the cultural and economic fabric of the region.
- 13.2. Councils continue to report that match funding from DfC is critical to the success of the programme and that the majority of festivals could not go ahead without the funding. All evaluations demonstrated that there is demand for continued support, and Councils also reported that grant aid helps festivals to leverage other funding. One Council also reported that the funding provided by the Department supports the rationale for match funding provision by the Council.
- 13.3. There is a continued reliance on CFF funding, and indeed the increased attendance and growing festivals which result from the initial funding may create a pressure for future funding, if the long term community benefits are not to be lost, especially given the current funding climate and the recent funding cuts to the fund over the last few years.
- 13.4. A high level of repeat applications also indicates that festivals remain reliant on public funding although this may also reflect the current economic climate and wider funding environment with a reduction in private sponsorship and a greater reliance on volunteers and in-kind donations.
- 13.5. The fund has again supported new events, alongside helping existing events to grow and build a reputation. Many funded festivals are now established annual events.
- 13.6. Overall Councils have continued to demonstrate that the fund has promoted equality and good relations. The new festivals themes which have emerged this year are a reflection of this, for example sensory festivals, school meals festivals and recovery festivals.
- 13.7. Attendance figures indicate a significant contribution to PfG targets in relation to engagement with arts and culture, with the estimated number of attendees in excess of one million. This figure indicates a slight decrease on the previous year however continues to represent excellent

value for money for the Department against an investment of £369k, and has the potential to contribute significantly to the PfG target in relation to the percentage engaging in arts and culture. This contribution is not highlighted in the Policy and Guidance Framework, which was produced before the PfG targets were agreed, and this may need to be addressed in future.

13.8. Festival activity is extremely varied and CFF makes a contribution to community life across all Council areas and in both urban and rural environments. A number of councils have extensive rural areas and continue to report that CFF manages to reach across all rural settlements.

13.9. Council evaluations again indicate a wide range of positive impacts arising from CFF funding, including improved access to and development of arts and culture, increased community cohesion, positive PR for the area, an economic boost to the area, capacity building within communities, and a sense of pride and belonging. In line with the new Policy introduced in 2015, Councils have taken steps to ensure that the Fund reaches those within their communities who might be disadvantaged or excluded which in turns aids the development of arts, culture and community participation in those areas.

13.10. One council reported that the funding received from the Department is essential in adding value to the support which the council provides to local groups. Often local groups would not be able to deliver these much needed festivals, or at least not on the scale that they currently do, without the funding they receive. This particular council is reviewing its festival funding programme at all levels to ensure that their community planning outcomes are achieved moving forward. They state that as 'a council our collective purpose is to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the City and District. This could not be done without the Department's funding'.

13.11. One council reported that CFF is visible and tangible proof of DfC's interest in and commitment to supporting neighbourhood based arts activity. It is also visible proof of partnership working between local and central government. They stated that many festivals commented on this positive aspect within their feedback.

3.12. Overall 2019/20 has demonstrated that, despite the CFF funding allocation remaining the same as the previous year, there has been a 4% increase in the number of festivals being supported, although a 2% decrease in the number of festival attendees. This however continues to represent excellent value for money for the Department against an investment of £369k.

Evaluation Completed

Are there any emerging issues identified?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Signed: Claire Russell

Dated: 14 January 2021

Evaluation Checked

I am satisfied that there are no emerging issues

☒

or

Comments

☐

Signed:



Dated: 12 May 2021

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