



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

**Report to Arts, Culture, Leisure
and Recreation SPC**

17th May 2021

Item No. 10

Dublin City Council Outdoor Event Funding and Evaluation Research Report

Introduction

Dublin City Council Events Unit issue an annual events funding programme for funding outdoor events with the ultimate function to increase footfall into the City Centre whilst also assisting local business, the events industry and artistic services in the city centre. With the onset of Covid-19 unfortunately the call for outdoor events funding for 2021 was temporarily suspended due to the fact that public health restrictions prevented organised outdoor gatherings in the public domain.

It is the intention of the Events Unit to issue a call for funding in September 2021, in order to assist event organisers to plan and initiate an outdoor events programme in the public domain from Jan-Dec 2022.

During the period of Covid-19 health restrictions the Events Unit took upon itself to review how a selection of other cities across the world, fund outdoor events. A report has been produced and based on the report it is proposed to issue an improved funding application form based on this reports findings.

This report is based on the following criteria;

1. Identify the policies that influence the funding schemes researched.
2. What are the aims/targets of the event funding schemes?
3. Post Event; do authorities use specific targets to assess if funding achieved its goal?

Funding schemes in a number of cities have been researched for this report including Glasgow, Sydney, London, Manchester and Calgary. The first section of this report will discuss and outline the policies of each city one by one. The post event section will discuss measures which are used to evaluate outcomes of funding schemes, and the outcomes which they feel necessary to evaluate. The report in its conclusion will look for similarities between the different cities and compare them to Dublin City Councils event funding programme.

Glasgow

Glasgow Life is a charitable organisation that runs events and festivals along with a plethora of other cultural and leisure activities on behalf of Glasgow City Council. The organisation was set up in 2007 to run these activities on behalf but not exclusively for Glasgow City Council. The funding on offer from their 'Glasgow Community Events Fund', is significantly lower than the funding on offer from Dublin City Councils events funding programme, but for the purpose of this report their policies that influence their funding scheme will be outlined below. One of the main criteria that influence their funding is:

- **Financial viability and value for money**

In addition, the assessment panel look for events that:

- **Support health and well-being**
- **Are aimed at children and families**

Manchester

Manchester is a city in Northern England that is relatively similar in size to Dublin. Manchester City Councils event funding programme is named 'Community Events Funding 20/21'. While the name would lead you to believe that, it is like Glasgow's funding programme, this is not the case. Their community events funding programme is in place to support events that are:

- **Large scale** celebratory cultural events involving 5,000 or more participants/audience
- Events which can demonstrate a **citywide reach and impact**
- Groups who can **demonstrate a track record** in event delivery and community engagement

There is a separate fund in place in Manchester to support local area events. One of the common characteristics of events successful under Manchester's events funding programme would be Events defined by ethnicity, country of origin, heritage, shared identity, belonging etc. (This would be similar to Dublin City Council's annual Hotter than July musical event)

Similarly, to Dublin City Council Manchester City Council does not accept applications from religious or political entities. They also do not accept applications from conferences and commercial/for profit events. Applications are assessed on several criteria. Below is a list of some of the criteria they use to assess their applications. This is in relation to proposed outcomes from the events under the headings Community Leadership, Community Celebration, Community Led Regeneration and Environmental Impact:

- **Civic pride** by bringing people together to share common interests
- **Citywide level of community participation**
- Promoting **social inclusion**
- Celebrating a community's distinctive **cultural identity**
- **Enhancing the cultural experience of people who live, work or visit** Manchester
- **Developing the use of public spaces** and delivering economic benefits to the city through supporting skills, jobs and generating new visitor spend
- **Engagement and support from the city's business community** and key stakeholders and development of strategic partnerships and collaborations
- Supporting Manchester City Councils commitment to a shared plan to **tackle climate change** in making Manchester a zero carbon city by 2038
- Demonstrate a commitment to implementing a range of **sustainable event practices** as part of the management of your event in order to support MCC's Carbon reduction target

London

The Greater London Authority is the overarching body for London's councils. Their 'small grant/ flagship event funding application programme' offers applicants the chance to apply for event funding under the auspices of the 'Public Realm Festival', which is an opportunity for events to animate public spaces. The Greater London Authority hope they can entice events to help in improving perceptions and engagement with London's outdoors, in both green and urban spaces. They hope that the knock-on effect of this will be families and others using

public space more frequently in the future. This can be achieved by a fostered sense of pride of place. They also hope to increase visitor spend across the local economy.

The criteria that applicants must meet include:

- **Free or low-cost event/activity**
- **Animating outdoor public spaces** such as parks (including pocket parks), green spaces, natural areas, squares and high streets
- **Inclusive and accessible**, with a focus on family friendly
- **High quality and innovative** – showcasing the best London's creative communities have to offer

Sydney

Sydney is a city of over 5 million people in Eastern Australia. Sydney City Council see outdoor events funding as a 'valuable method of supporting artistic and creative endeavour in their city, helping foster initiative, experimentation and enterprise by creative workers and providing new opportunities for audiences to engage in the city's cultural life'. The funding on offer from Sydney's grant programme ranges from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

One of the interesting aspects of Sydney's programme is their focus on their own governance. They stipulate that as part of its commitment to continuous improvement, 'the City will ensure there are systems and opportunities for feedback on the City's grant processes. We support grantees to be able to evaluate their projects in ways that are aligned with our Evaluation and Learning Framework and also add value to the grant recipient'.

Sydney also recognises the important contribution that festivals and events make to the economy and cultural ecosystem of the city, locally and internationally. They also state that festivals and events can provide forums to share knowledge and create opportunities for community participation.

Sydney have two separate strands for their programme, Artform and Village/Community. For profit entities can apply for the artform category only. For-profit organisations requesting support through the artform category must match the funding requested with cash. Value-in-kind is not accepted. This program includes value-in-kind support in the form of street banners and venue hire fee waiver for City-owned facilities. The criteria outlined for the Artform strand include:

- **Improved sustainability** for Sydney's cultural sector through the creation of opportunities, such as employment or professional development, for local creative practitioners and cultural organisations
- **Development of new and diverse audiences**, and opportunities for participation and attendance by the City's residents, workers and visitors
- **Increased participation** and accessibility for audiences through **free or low-cost opportunities**
- Increased opportunities for international collaborations and **knowledge sharing** between visiting and local creative practitioners.

Applicants for the Village and Community strand can apply for up to \$30,000. Festivals and events can contribute to one or more of the following outcomes under the strand:

- **Increased participation** in community and civic life
- **Strengthened social cohesion** and diverse communities
- **Strengthened local business** and community connection
- **Increased community awareness of environmental issues** and solutions.

New Orleans

New Orleans has an interesting titled office in the city which accepts event funding applications. The office is titled the Office of Cultural Economy. On their website they outline how five employees read through each application. The applications are scored by the employees based on the following criteria. The criteria are very broad.

- **Community Impact:** Creates a deep and lasting effect on the community and the means to maintain that impact
- **Economic Impact:** Significantly impacts the economy through training, networking, and creating lasting contributions to individuals and businesses' development in their field
- **Cultural Contribution:** Deeply aligns with the culture of the community, enhances it and recognizes its diversity, and works with those qualities to contribute to the culture
- Alignment with the missions of the Cultural Economy and Economic Development Offices

Summary Observations

Evidence on how individual councils evaluate their events post event is not readily available. There are a number of areas of discussion on post event evaluation. It is clear from the research undertaken, that event funding programmes across the board look to align their policies and guidelines with their application forms for their events to hit specified outcomes.

Sydney was one of the better examples researched in terms of their evaluation process. It is interesting to see the outcomes that the city looks for in their event sponsorship. In their 'Standard Performance Measures: Festivals and events (Village and Community)' document they outline the performance measures and evidence required for each measure. Each applicant is required to use these performance measures and evidence examples to show they are hitting the programmes outcomes criteria. An example of a chart with outcomes and performance measures is outlined below; each participant has to adhere to the measures applicable to their event, agreed beforehand in an agreement.

Increased sense of identity, sense of belonging and connection to place

Project outcomes	Performance measures	Types of evidence
People Increase their sense of inclusion and belonging	Number and percentage of participants who report that they feel welcome and accepted in their community as a result of this project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity summary • Participation register • Participant surveys • Case Studies and testimonials • Social media post reach and engagement • Program literature and outlines • Photos and video • Access plan and accessible communications • Evidence of other sponsorships/partners

In a Dublin City Council context, the events strategy in Smithfield has proved excellent in helping to create a sense of place. It has been massively positive for residents, local stakeholders and the business community alike, helping to change the perception of the area for the better.

Professor Donald Getz (Tourism and Events management, University of Calgary, Canada) has proposed “The Event Impact toolkit” ‘comprising some key guidance and good practice principles for evaluating the social, economic, environmental and media-related impacts associated with staging major sporting and cultural events’. The toolkit is organised around nine impact areas:

- Attendance
- Economic Impacts
- Environmental Impacts
- Social Impacts: Satisfaction
- Social Impacts: Identity Image & Place
- Social Impacts: Participation
- Social Impacts: Volunteering & Skills
- Social Impacts: Children & Young People
- Media

An example from the toolkit’s website on the identity and image impact area states:

‘Social Impact → Identity and Image → Enhanced Image/Reputation → Event Attendees
 Assuming that enhancing the image of a place is important to event stakeholders, data from event attendees can be collected at or following an event in order to quantify the proportion of non-local people who report that an event:

- had a positive effect on their perception of the host area.
- has had a positive effect on their decision to re-visit the host area and recommend the place to others; and/or

As with other impact areas, the measurement of identity, image and place should be linked into the specific aims and objectives of the event and its stakeholders.'

This can also be achieved from people local to an area too, and in some ways could be more beneficial, in that local people will have a better understanding of their local area.

Something noticeable in both Sydney and Calgary is their criteria around post event analysis. In Sydney, event organisers have to show evidence of a program or event evaluation plan. While in Calgary it is necessary 'to provide a post event summary within 90 days, must be in writing and include actual revenue and expenditure, attendance figures and a brief summary of what was achieved with the event.' If organisers don't respect this, they won't be considered for future applications.

Conclusion

While it has to be noted that no city is the same culturally, and thus will have differing outcome criteria, it is clear from the research that positive social outcomes are something events are used for in many places. This has also been the case in Dublin, with Smithfield given as an example of where positive social outcomes have been achieved in the past.

Many cities support events for immigrant populations, ethnic minorities and minority communities. Dublin also supports events of this nature with the Dublin Pride, Lunar Chinese New Year, and Hotter than July celebrations being examples of minority groups being supported through festivals/events.

It is clear that any outdoor events funding scheme should strive to promote creativity, innovation, and entertainment within the city which would generate interest amongst the wider public, and ultimately increase footfall in the city centre. Funding application forms should be simple and clear as to what is being asked of event organisers, and most importantly state clearly what Dublin City Council requires and expects from the organiser should it decide to invest public funds in a particular event. Consequently, it has been proposed to review the current outdoor events funding application form with a view to launching the new form in Sept 2021.

Link to the Application for Financial Assistance (Terms & Conditions) and Closing Date below:

<https://dublincity.sharefile.eu/share/view/s921c0899d9ab4822848ed28651be9fce>

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