

ABERDEEN 365 EVENTS STRATEGY

BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events



Overview:

- Belfast City Council (BCC) in-house events team produces and manages major festivals and events portfolio, and provides funding for independent and community events
- Directorate provided with delegated responsibility to take events out of political arena
- BCC sets aside investment to attract international high profile events to city
- Long term strategy to build strong events sector and support development of confident creative sector
- Significant level of funding from BCC - £5M.

Topic Area	Findings	Learning for Aberdeen
Introduction – Background	<p>Belfast is the capital and largest city of Northern Ireland, the second-largest city on the island of Ireland after Dublin. A port city, its population is 280,962. Belfast has a significant, self-confident creative community. It is considering bidding for European Capital of Culture 2023.</p> <p>City cultural venues transferred to operate under Council and Community Owned (CoCo) model.</p> <p>Over the past decade BCC has built up an annual programme of cultural and sports events that it either funds or manages directly. Many of these events have become firmly established within the fabric of the city and its communities, and they play a key role in attracting visitors to the city.</p>	<p>Supports and harnesses significant creative capacity to deliver wider range of events in City.</p> <p>Long term strategy for development with clear objective of building strong programme to support tourism.</p> <p>Emphasis on high profile events but City benefits from year round buzz of community events.</p>
How City engages with festivals and events	<p>BCC directly produces in-house 9 – 12 events pa. BCC provides funding for major independent produced events and approx. 80 community festivals and events.</p> <p>3 tier classification system for festivals and events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International events • Signature events (high-profile regional and national impacts) • Events and festivals for local residents (neighbourhood and city level) <p>Large-scale events include: St Patricks Day, August Féile, Belfast Orangefest, Belfast Film Festival, Cathedral Arts Festival, Pride, Belfast International Arts Festival (formerly Belfast Festival at Queen's) and Belfast City Marathon.</p>	<p>Major events produced in-house by large events team.</p> <p>Clarity on classification of events structure.</p>

	<p>There are also a number of niche events which include the Open House Traditional and Contemporary Music Festival, and Belfast Children's Festival.</p> <p>BCC has successfully bid for, secured and delivered a range of major international events for the city usually in collaborative partnerships e.g.: Visit Belfast, Tourism Northern Ireland Northern Ireland Tourist Board - which has a bid fund for events) Tourism Ireland, Sport NI, Arts Council NI.</p> <p>Recent events include: MTV Music Awards, BBC Sports Personality of the Year, Tall Ships (£2.5m) and 2014 Giro d'Italia 2014 (£4.5m) + considering pitch for World Road Race Championship . Future events won; World Ice Hockey Championships & World Pipe Band Championships.</p>	<p>BCC sets aside investment to attract international high profile events to city. Pools resources with other city, regional and national partners to achieve major events aims.</p>
Governance & management	<p>Events, along with Culture and Tourism, sit within Economic Development. The Directorate has delegated authority - enables a tight strategic approach, and avoids partisan or local political interference</p>	<p>Directorate with delegated responsibility for decision making - politicians at ease with arms-length role.</p>
Services provided by Events Office -Team and Responsibilities	<p>Managing the event function from identifying to securing to funding to delivering events.</p> <p>Events Team provides advice to event organisers and liaison across NI infrastructure partners and facilitating Safety Advisory Group (SAG)</p>	<p>Events Team has significant in-house expertise to produce events at highest level.</p> <p>SAG team retains public representation to ensure beneficial resident communications.</p>
Funding Policy of City to culture	<p>Belfast's Cultural Framework vision is supported by four key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctly Belfast • Inspiring Communities • Attracting Audiences • Strengthening the Sector 	<p>Clear strategy for supporting cultural sector.</p>

	<p>BCC Events Strategy currently has 2 aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic benefits - to achieve increase in visitor numbers with associated revenue and employment; promoting and showcasing Belfast to encourage business, international publicity, and tourism for summer and shoulder 'short/city-breaks' markets. • Social & Cultural benefits - portfolio of exciting and enjoyable events for residents and visitors; widen participation; build capacity through activities such as workshops, volunteering, and skills training 	
Funding Themes / Criteria	<p>BCC expenditure of £5m across its events portfolio including £1.1m on its annual programme and £1.2m for multi-annual funding. £300k for community events.</p> <p>Major events criteria need to fulfil BCC Events Strategy aims of Economic benefits & Social & Cultural benefits.</p> <p>Separate reserve fund for pitching for major events.</p> <p>Community events can be applied for through the Belfast City Council's Online Funding Hub www.belfastcity-grants.com. BCC currently has 19 grant funding schemes events can apply to (planning to reduce to 3!)</p> <p>Criteria for festival and events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animating the city • Promoting social inclusion • Community Development • Quality of how you deliver the festival <p>+ Additional weighting for activities in top 10% deprived areas</p>	<p>Major investment in events.</p> <p>Well defined strategic criteria.</p> <p>Open and transparent access to funding and clear criteria for community events.</p>

Promotion & Marketing	<p>The Integrated Tourism Strategy for Belfast 2015-2020 has the aim of doubling the value of tourism for the city over the next 5 years - the contribution that culture, arts and heritage makes to the international positioning of Belfast is considerable.</p> <p>Two key objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract 1 international event per annum• Develop 6 Belfast Signature Events - new or grown from existing events designed in line with the city narrative, internationalisation, and target markets. <p>To meet objectives there is in planning a tourism events and festivals scheme as a grant programme, with a three year rolling programme of activity</p>	<p>Tourism strategy has major events as a key driver to attract visitors.</p> <p>Recognises importance and growth potential of existing events.</p> <p>Specific funding pot for growth events that fulfil tourism objective</p>
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