

Title of Report: Access & Inclusion Programme Update	Officer Presenting: Head of Culture Author: Arts & Culture Manager
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To update Members on the projects submitted to the Department for Communities (DfC) led Access and Inclusion programme.
- 1.2 To seek approval for the delivery of an International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2020.

2 Background

- 2.1 The DfC Access & Inclusion programme provides capital grant funding, through local Councils and the Northern Ireland Museums Council, aimed at promoting a more inclusive society by enabling disabled people to participate more fully in arts, cultural and active recreation activities.
- 2.2 The Department for Communities has provided £500,000 to the programme with a further contribution of £300,000 from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
- 2.3 The programme provides grants of up to £30,000 towards both physical improvements at facilities and works that will enhance the experience on offer to disabled people.
- 2.4 International Day of Persons with Disabilities falls on the 3rd of December each year, with the aim of promoting empowerment and helping to create real opportunities for people with disabilities. In recent years the Access and Inclusion Coordinator based in the Culture department has established the International Day of Persons with Disabilities as a key event in the cultural programme for the City and District.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The DfC led Access & Inclusion Programme was launched on Monday 3rd August 2020 with a deadline for receipt of proposals given as Friday 11th September 2020. As this did not allow sufficient time for the design, promotion and roll out of an external call the Access and Inclusion Coordinator facilitated a cross departmental scoping exercise to identify suitable projects. All departments were given the opportunity to submit projects for inclusion in the overall Council bid to DfC.
- 3.2 The 2019 International Celebration of Persons with Disabilities Day was delivered by DCSDC in partnership with the Western Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency. The programme consisted of a week long programme of events around the District including performances from the Strabane Brass Band with Knockavoe School and Class Act in The Alley Theatre. The programme also focused on the work of Strabane Town Businesses in the pursuit of JAM Card Friendly status with 300 employees from a range of town businesses signed up for the training and 28 businesses taking part. The current Covid-19 crisis will necessitate an adjustment to the 2020 programme format with a greater emphasis placed on online engagement and the creation of smaller scale, socially distanced interventions across the week.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications

- 4.1 The key objectives of the DfC Access and Inclusion Programme were to; Improve access to arts, culture and active recreation venues across NI for people with disabilities; Make arts, cultural and active recreation venues more inclusive across society; and Increase participation in arts, culture and active recreation activities by people with disabilities.
- 4.2 DfC required Councils to submit their project proposals in rank order based on their ability to meet the programme objectives detailed above. To fulfil this requirement Council Officers convened a cross departmental panel to assess the proposed projects on the basis of the DfC scoring matrix. This assessment defined the priority order of Council projects as follows:
 - Inclusive Park Seating @ £30,000 (accessible seating in rural and urban settings throughout DCSDC)
 - Alley Theatre @ £30,000 (developing an outdoor accessible hub for accessible cultural programming during and beyond Covid)
 - Tower Museum @ £10,584.58 (accessible product for blind/people with visual difficulties)

- Strathfoyle Play Park @ £30,000 (accessible play park equipment)
 - Guildhall @ £10,000 (portable staging to support pan disability performers and audiences)
 - St Columb's Park @ £30,000 (accessible seating for pan disability community)
 - Regional Application @ £30,000 (Accessible toolkits to conduct accessibility audits)
- 4.3 The total value of these projects is £170,584.58. The total budget made available by DfC to all local authorities is £800,000. The DCSDC submitted projects as well as those submitted by the other local authorities will now be subject to assessment by DfC.
- 4.4 The required budget for the International Celebration of Persons with Disabilities celebration programme will be approximately £25,000. Of this, £5,000 will be allocated from the Public Health Agency (PHA) supported Access & Inclusion Programme with a further application for the remainder to be submitted to the PHA in the coming weeks.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members note the projects submitted to DfC for accessibility funding.
- 5.2 Members approval for Officers to submit a funding application to the PHA in order to advance the planning, resourcing and delivery of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities programme in December 2020.

Background Papers

None.