



Events & Festivals Sponsorship 2026-27

Guidance for Applicants



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

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1. Introduction

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) recognise the vital role that events and festivals play in animating places, strengthening communities, and projecting a positive image of the district as a vibrant destination. Events can generate significant economic, tourism, social, community, and cultural benefits, supporting local businesses, attracting visitors, and enhancing quality of life for residents.

This document provides guidance for event organisers applying for Events & Festivals Sponsorship from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to deliver medium and large-scale events within the district.

2. Purpose of Sponsorship

Council sponsorship is strategic investment, aligned to the Council's Events & Festivals Strategy, designed to support medium, large-scale and high-impact events that deliver the greatest return on investment in terms of economic growth, tourism impact, and positive social outcomes.

Strategic sponsorship focuses on events and festivals that attract visitors to the district, increase dwell time and spend, strengthen the district's reputation, and deliver measurable benefits for local communities and businesses. Tourism and destination led events are particularly important, as these generate strong economic impacts for the area.

The Council's support is intended to attract and enable new large scale events and festivals and to support the growth, enhancement, or extended duration of existing events. Sponsorship is not intended to continue to fund events at their existing level without demonstrable development or added value.

Sponsorship will support event organisers who deliver sustainable, safe, and well-managed events, including but not limited to niche, specialist, local, regional, national, and international events and festivals within the district that:

- ✓ Deliver tangible benefits to the local economy.
- ✓ Attract visitors and encourage day trippers from outside the district and overnight stays.
- ✓ Provide positive social and community outputs.
- ✓ Generate media coverage and promotional value.
- ✓ Enhance the profile of the district as an 'Event Friendly' destination.

3. Strategic Fit

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will support events and festivals that demonstrate a clear and measurable contribution to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and its wider strategic priorities.

In assessing Strategic Fit, the Council will consider how an event aligns with, and contributes to, the outcomes of the following strategic frameworks:

- **Visitor Experience Development Plan** – enhancing the quality, range, and appeal of visitor experiences across the district.
- **Place Shaping Plans** – animating places, strengthening local identity, and supporting town centre, early evening, and night-time economies.
- **Inclusive Economy Action Plan** – supporting sustainable economic growth, local businesses, and increased participation and opportunity.
- **Events & Festivals Strategy** – delivering high-quality, impactful events that generate strong economic, tourism, and social returns.
- **Council's Heritage Plan** – celebrating, protecting, providing access to, and promoting the district's natural, built, and cultural heritage.
- **Community Health and Wellbeing through Active Together Strategy** – supporting physical activity, social connection, and improved wellbeing outcomes.

Alignment with these frameworks helps ensure that Council-supported events contribute to economic growth, enhance the visitor offer, strengthen local identity, and deliver positive social and community outcomes for Fermanagh and Omagh district.

Applicants are not required to reference these strategies directly. Instead, applicants are asked to describe their event, its purpose, scale, and the impacts and benefits it will deliver. The Council will assess strategic alignment using the information provided, in line with the Investment Criteria, which consider economic, media, social, and environmental impact, as well as overall value for money.

In assessing Strategic Fit, priority will be given to events and festivals that:

- Introduce new or enhanced events delivering significant economic impact.
- Reflect and enhance the character, identity, and distinctiveness of place.
- Provide a strong and compelling reason to visit the district.
- Offer immersive and high-quality visitor experiences.
- Drive economic benefits, particularly during the shoulder season or by extending the tourism season.
- Make sustainable and responsible use of outdoor and public spaces.
- Celebrate arts, culture, heritage, and creativity.
- Focus on specialist or seasonal themes such as music, food, or markets.
- Support the early evening and night-time economy.
- Deliver clear and measurable positive social impact for local communities.

4. Sponsorship Programme

The Sponsorship Scale Programme is specifically designed to support medium and large-scale events only. These events are expected to deliver high levels of attendance, participation, and economic impact.

Small-scale events and activities should apply through the Council's Grant Aid Funding programme. Further information can be accessed via the [Council website](#).

- Applications for new events delivered by experienced event organisers with a proven track record are particularly welcome.
- The maximum sponsorship available under this programme is £15,000 per event, subject to the event's scale, quality, and strategic impact.
- Events seeking more than £15,000 in sponsorship must engage with FODC at an early stage and submit a developed business plan and marketing plan as part of the sponsorship application process.

Events and Activities Not Eligible for Sponsorship.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Sponsorship Programme provides financial sponsorship only and does not offer in-kind support. The programme does not support the following activities or organisations:

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| × Small-scale events and activities, which should instead apply through the Council's Grant Aid Funding programmes. | × Residential courses or training programmes |
| × Events that are the responsibility of a statutory authority, agency, or public sector body | × Activities that exclude or discriminate against sections of the community. |
| × Sponsorship of a political party or individual candidate | × Retrospective funding applications for events that have already taken place or commenced. |
| × Activities or sponsorship that discriminate against individuals or groups based on protected characteristics. | × Trade or professional conferences, conventions, or associated events |
| × Religious organisations, where the primary purpose of the event is religious activity or promotion. | × Events that are primarily social or internal events for a company or organisation |
| × Organisations in financial, legal, or contractual dispute with the Council | × Events where development and delivery are the responsibility of a governing body, including league or cup championships, challenge games, clubs' core operational activities, competitions, or running costs. |
| × Organisations with a political purpose, including pressure groups and trade unions. | × Gala dinners or banquets |
| × Organisations involved in the production or sale of weaponry, including firearms. | × Fundraising activities or charitable donations, where the primary purpose is fundraising rather than event delivery. |
| × Demonstrations | |

The Council reserves the right to determine eligibility for sponsorship based on strategic fit, value for money, and alignment with Council priorities.

5. Eligibility for Sponsorship

Eligibility for sponsorship is open to legally constituted organisations and groups operating within the public, private, and voluntary sectors. This includes constituted community groups, social enterprises, and private sector event organisers. The Council will actively support events that align with its corporate vision, values, and strategic priorities. To be considered eligible, applicants must demonstrate the following:

- Appropriate governance arrangements, management structures, and decision-making processes are in place.
- Clear financial evidence of need, with any deficit funding clearly identified and justified.
- Compliance with safeguarding standards, policies, and procedures
- How the event will benefit the local economy and support local businesses
- Delivery of positive social outcomes and tangible benefits for local communities
- Effective use of media coverage and promotional activity to raise the profile of the Council and the district as an 'Event Friendly' destination.
- Demonstrable economic benefit to the district, including evidence of how visitor numbers, visitor spend, and, where appropriate, overnight stays and bed nights will be generated.
- A commitment to social and environmental responsibility, including sustainable event practices.
- Confirmation that the event will take place within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area.
- Evidence that the event is open, accessible, and inclusive for all to attend.
- Charitable organisations are eligible to apply for sponsorship; however, Council sponsorship must be used solely for the delivery of the event. Any surplus generated by the event must not be distributed as a charitable donation or used for charitable fundraising purposes.

6. Applying for Sponsorship

This Sponsorship Scheme is open for Events & Festivals taking place between 01 April 2026 and 31 March 2027. **Sponsorship closes at 5pm on Wednesday 18 February 2026**

Event Category Section

- **Event Type:** Tell us what type of event is it? Events and festivals Sponsorship includes Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Heritage, Community, Niche, Arts & Culture or Agricultural events.
- **Event Category** This considers the size of the event; Medium, Large, Major or Signature. Please select the most appropriate Tier.

Selecting the Correct Event Category

Please use the events matrix within this guidance to select the most appropriate event type, category, and range for your event.

- You will be required to provide evidence of attendance and/or participation as part of the application and post-event evaluation.
- Event categories are used to place events into funding tiers, each with a maximum funding value. Applicants should not inflate attendance or participation figures to access a higher funding tier. If attendance or participation targets are not met, the level of sponsorship awarded may be reduced or withdrawn.
- Please ensure that your attendance and participation estimates are realistic and achievable.
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) reserves the right to reclassify events during assessment or post-event review, based on the information provided in the application and the overall impact of the event.
- Please see additional information for applicants in Section 10 of this guidance document.

Event Type	Event Category	Event Impacts	Event Sponsorship Ranges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community ✓ Arts ✓ Cultural ✓ Heritage ✓ Specialist ✓ Niche ✓ Tourism ✓ Sporting ✓ Recreational ✓ Agricultural 	Medium Scale Events & Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract visitors from outside the local area. Deliver clear economic benefits for local businesses and services. Generate positive media coverage at a local or regional level. Provide meaningful social and community benefits, particularly where the event is community-led. Support tourism outside of peak periods, where possible, by taking place in the shoulder season or extending the visitor season. 	Attendance 1,000 – 3,000 Participation 300 - 500
	Large Scale Events & Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract significant visitor numbers, including visitors from outside the district. Deliver strong and measurable economic impact, particularly through visitor spend. 	Attendance 3,001 – 15,000 Participation 501 - 1000

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve wide regional media coverage and raise the profile of the district as an event destination. • Encourage longer stays and increased visitor activity, where appropriate • Support tourism growth by extending the visitor season or attracting visitors during quieter period. 	
	Major Events & Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract large numbers of visitors, including a significant proportion from outside the district. • Deliver substantial and measurable economic benefits, particularly through increased visitor spend and overnight stays. • Generate strong national media coverage and contribute positively to the district's profile and reputation. 	15,001+ Attendance Participation 1,001 +

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver clear social and community benefits alongside economic outcomes. • Demonstrate strong organisational capacity, planning, and risk management due to the scale of delivery. • Major events require a longer planning period and may be asked to submit a detailed business and delivery plan. An indicative lead-in period of 8 months to 1 year is expected. 	
	Signature Events & Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract very large visitor numbers, including visitors from outside Northern Ireland • Deliver exceptional economic impact, with clear benefits for accommodation, hospitality, retail, and local services. • Achieve extensive national and international media 	25,000+ Attendance

		<p>coverage, positioning the district as a high-profile event destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as flagship events that significantly enhance the district's reputation and visitor appeal. • Demonstrate a strong track record of delivery, partnership working, and financial sustainability. • Signature events require significant advance planning and will normally be expected to submit a comprehensive business and marketing plan. An indicative lead-in period of at least 1 year is expected. 	
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7. Investment Criteria

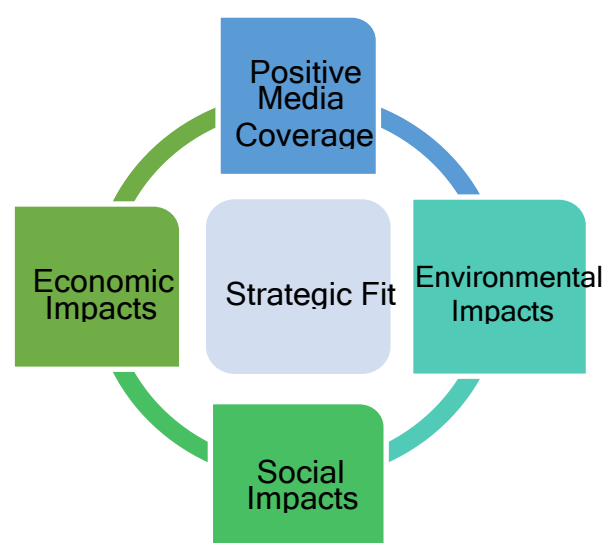
Event Impact and Assessment

Sponsorship investment is based on the overall impact an event will deliver for Fermanagh and Omagh district. Event sponsorship is a competitive process, and all applications are assessed to ensure fairness, consistency, and value for **money**.

Applicants are asked to describe their event, its scale, delivery, and the benefits it will provide. Applicants are not required to reference Council plans or strategies. The Council will assess how the information provided aligns with its priorities as part of the evaluation process.

Applications are assessed against **five key impact areas**:

1. Strategic Fit
2. Economic Impact
3. Media Impact
4. Social Impact
5. Environmental Impact



1. Strategic Fit (Application Question 11)

Strategic fit will be assessed by the Council using information provided throughout the application, in particular the sections on:

- Purpose and distinctiveness of the event
- Target audiences and reach
- Attendance levels and visitor profile
- Economic, social, media, and environmental impacts

Applicants should clearly explain what their event delivers and why it is important for the district. The Council will assess alignment with its priorities as part of the evaluation process.

In assessing strategic fit, priority will be given to events that:

- Introduce new or enhanced events delivering significant economic impact.
- Reflect and enhance local character, identity, and sense of place.
- Provide a compelling reason to visit the district.
- Offer immersive, high-quality visitor experiences.
- Drive economic activity during the shoulder season or extend the tourism season.

- Use outdoor and public spaces responsibly and sustainably.
- Celebrate arts, culture, heritage, and creativity.
- Focus on specialist or seasonal themes such as music, food, or markets.
- Support the early evening and night-time economy.
- Deliver clear, measurable positive social impact for local communities.

Returning Events

If you are applying for an event that has previously received sponsorship, please note that funding is not intended to support events at their existing level without demonstrable development, growth, or added value.

Applicants are required to explain in **Application Question 18** how the event has been improved, expanded, extended, or otherwise developed compared to previous years. This information will be assessed as part of the Strategic Fit criterion.

2. Economic Impact (Application Question 13)

Economic impact will be assessed using information provided in the application, including:

- Expected attendance and participation levels.
- Visitor origin and behaviour (local, regional, external visitors; day or overnight stays)
- Visitor spend, particularly in accommodation, food and drink, retail, and local services.
- Use of local suppliers, artists, contractors, and the wider local supply chain
- Overall value for money relative to the sponsorship requested.

3. Social Impact (Application Question 14)

Social impact will be assessed based on:

- Delivery of engaging, accessible, and inclusive event experiences
- Positive contributions to health, wellbeing, and social connection
- Community involvement, participation, and cohesion
- Benefits for local communities and underrepresented groups, where relevant

4. Media Impact (Application Question 15)

Media impact will be assessed based on:

- Promotion and acknowledgement of Council sponsorship support
- Visibility of the event and the district through online, print, and broadcast media
- Social media activity and digital reach

5. Environmental Impact (Application Question 16)

Environmental impact will be assessed based on:

- Application of Green Your Festival sustainability principles
- Practical actions taken to minimise environmental impact.
- Responsible use and protection of venues, outdoor spaces, and public areas

Measuring Event Impact

- Surveys or third-party evaluations will be required, depending on the scale of the event and the level of sponsorship awarded.

Application Process and Assessment

- Sponsorship is a competitive process.
- Applications must achieve a **minimum score of 60%** to be considered for funding.

Other Funding

Applicants must declare any previous funding received from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and list all other funding sources and amounts secured or applied for.

Insurance

Applicants must provide evidence of all required and appropriate insurance cover relevant to the event. If you are using Council estate or venues, you may require an activity licence or a hire contract. You will be advised on this if successful.

Income and Expenditure

- A detailed breakdown of projected income and expenditure is required.
- The sponsorship amount requested must represent the funding gap between income and expenditure.
- The Council may review organisational accounts and reserves to assess financial need.
- Applicants must confirm any additional funding secured and its value.

8. Eligible and Ineligible Costs

The following outlines costs that may or may not be supported through Council sponsorship.

Eligible Costs

- Marketing and promotion (costs must be clearly detailed)
- Health and safety costs, including first aid and stewarding.
- Event production and delivery
- Venue hire, including preparation, restoration, and marquee hire.
- Production costs, including staging, sound, lighting, equipment hire, communications, toilet hire, and waste management.
- Accommodation and travel related to event delivery.
- Security services
- Performance and artist fees
- External resource support (e.g., marketing or evaluation), subject to prior approval and procurement, and where clear added value is demonstrated

Ineligible Costs

- Staff salaries and core operational costs
- Capital expenditure, capital works, or equipment purchases.
- Fundraising activities or charitable donations
- Hospitalityⁱ, rates, fuel, electricity, or rent.
- Membership fees
- VAT, tax payments, loan repayments, bank charges, bad debt, or arrears
- Flags or bunting
- Alcohol
- Celebrity appearances
- Gifts or donations

9. Appeals Process

If your application is unsuccessful, or you are not satisfied with the recommendation, you can contact the Sponsorship team to request more information. If you are still not satisfied and wish to appeal a decision, please find appeals process below:

- Appeals must be made in writing within 10 working days of date of written decision.
- Should you decide to appeal the Sponsorship decision, you must identify your reasons for requesting an appeal.
- An appeal process does not entail a re-assessment of an application containing new or additional information.
- The appeal process provides applicants with the opportunity to seek reconsideration of a Sponsorship decision where evidence suggests that a procedural error has occurred during the assessment of an application.

- Please note where an application is incomplete or does not meet the eligibility criteria, therefore deemed ineligible; an appeal will not be considered.
- A meeting of the Sponsorship team will be convened to consider your appeal.
- The outcome will be communicated to you.
- The appeals decision is final.

For further details, visit: <https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/events-and-festivals/>

10. Additional Information for Applicants.

Event organisers should consider potential future actions under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, otherwise known as Martyn's Law. While the Act has received Royal Ascent, it will not be enforced until an implementation period has ended, currently April 2027.

The new legislation requires premises and events, which meet a set threshold, to take steps to prepare for potential terrorist attacks and to help keep people safe in the event of an attack.

The measures required will depend on whether the venue or event is considered to fall under the 'Standard Tier' or 'Enhanced Tier'. More information can be found by visiting - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/terrorism-protection-of-premises-bill-2024>

Once the Act is enforceable, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council may require event organisers to confirm (and if necessary, provide evidence) that they have put in place all the relevant required measures stipulated under the legislation.

¹ Hospitality should not be included as part of sponsorship support unless it is a core and integral element of the event and has been explicitly approved by Council as eligible. Where approved, hospitality costs must be proportionate and must not exceed 20% of the total sponsorship support