

Community-led regeneration is a challenge but it can be done if communities are enabled through the right capital funding and right support. Based on early observations and lessons from the Space & Place programme, a number of important considerations are recommended for funders and those wishing to support capital projects and regeneration of community assets.

### Programme delivery

- **Programme targets** – Programme targets need to be realistic and reflect the capacity of the community and voluntary context, especially in Northern Ireland.
- **Rolling programmes** – Rolling programmes all too often run the risk of being back-ended. This needs to be considered when devising programme timescales and budgets.
- **Administration & staffing** – Building in a higher revenue or development support budget, as well as budgeting for more staff on the ground helping the groups, could reduce some of the administrative burdens and balance the quality of projects with staff time invested.
- **Innovation & creativity** – The programme application stage and development stage need to allow projects to grow. Application requirements and administrative processes need to be balanced to encourage innovation & creativity – allowing a test bed for the ‘wow’ factor.

### Project applications

- **Application support is necessary** – to ensure that the right type and quality of projects are coming forward and making the most of the funding opportunity.
- **Application development timescales** - A longer development phase (currently 12 weeks including Flagship applications) between Stage 1 and Stage 2 would give groups the opportunity to better address recurring issues such as poor community consultations. 24 weeks would give a better opportunity to build in innovation and improve project quality and impact.

### Project development

- **Development support is vital** – Focused development support would greatly impact on improving the capacity of grantees and the quality of the projects. One-to-one mentoring or facilitator support during the application development phase would vastly improve the overall capacity and quality of the programme.
- **Getting projects off the ground** – Project timescales need to be considered in detail, as a longer lead-in period is often required for capital projects (due to delays relating to planning, weather etc.). This can impact project progress & match-funding opportunities.

### Project legacy

- **Legacy and long term sustainability** – this needs to be considered throughout the programme and projects. Groups require specific training when it comes to the long term planning for their project especially when it comes to the maintenance and management of a community asset. Sustainability Grants are a good mechanism for providing grantees with an additional ‘buffer’ or contingency in their project budget to plan for the future.