

# TOOLS FOR TOGETHERNESS

Stage 1 and 2 Guide



## **WHAT IS TOOLS FOR TOGETHERNESS?**

The Belfast City Council Culture team and Belfast Stories project are inviting proposals from the creative sectors to commission a series of pilot projects based around the concept of an 'Artist-led Library of interventions; as shared Citizen Resource'. We're excited to empower creatives to create thoughtful interventions which align with fostering community togetherness in public spaces. For example, a table which empowers neighbours to host a shared meal, a projection-based game or a pop up cinema etc. These artist-led actions are designed to spark connection, reflection, and collective creativity.

Once realised, the interventions will be transferred to a new ownership under 'The Tools for Togetherness Library'. Whilst the details around this are still to be defined, it is the hope of the Council that the library will have a physical presence within our city. Longer term, the Council hopes to explore the feasibility of a space for the Tools for Togetherness Library in the Belfast Stories building.

This library will invite residents to engage with, reinterpret, and reimagine the interventions in ways that resonate with their own experiences, nurturing an ongoing cycle of participatory art and communal expression. This project seeks to find continued relevance for art interventions' beyond their initial commissioning. It represents a bold exploration of how public art can act as an experimental playground for the mixing and mingling of cultural behaviours and shared stories.

The project lays the groundwork for deeper, more diverse participation in how Belfast's stories are told, owned, and reimaged over time.

This is a new and evolving programme of work, with the initial commissioning, production and piloting of resources taking place this year (2025-2026) and the sharing and management of a library to be scoped out for the following year (2026-2027).

## **WHO CAN APPLY?**

This project was created for the artists and creatives of the city. It seeks to champion the value of artist-led interventions and explore a new model for 'gifting' art and cultural experiences to the city.

This brief is intentionally broad, to encourage the mixing of new ideas and experimentation. We are seeking bold and imaginative proposals that challenge conventional uses of public space and invite new forms of engagement. Proposals should aim to explore, disrupt, or reimagine how we play, interact, and interpret shared environments.

We welcome proposals from across the cultural and creative sectors. While cultural sector organisations are also invited to submit proposals, we ask that all submissions remain artist-led.



## Submission

### Stage 1 and 2

The submission welcomes proposals from companies (including individuals, organisations, sole traders, artists, cohorts, collectives) to develop a project or initiative that aligns with the ambitions and principles of Tools for Togetherness. We strongly encourage all interested parties to have a conversation with us before submitting their proposal via the eSourcing NI portal.

Submissions must be sufficiently developed to allow us to assess them against the provided scoring matrix. This will enable us to shortlist proposals for the next phase of funded Project Planning where selected ideas will be further explored for feasibility and developed into a full project plan for consideration.

### The Principles

#### 1 Togetherness:

We are searching for resources that provide new ways for people to come together – to celebrate, to congregate, to take up their local space, to share their stories and make new ones.

#### 2 Quality/Artist-Led:

The interventions will be artworks in their own right and will lead to many more artworks being made, enabling citizens to access and take part in high quality art in their own area. Each commission should be driven by an artists' skills, thinking and vision, a Tool for Togetherness that is unique because it's borne out of an artist's (or artists') practice and approach to co-design.

#### 3 Sustainability:

We encourage artists to use sustainable materials and consider the environment in what they are making, as well as the durability and how the piece can be looked after and maintained for future use.

### Stage 3

Provide a written response to social value question, regarding legacy.

A presentation to scoring panel to cover;

Exploration of a project which inspired the ethos of your proposal

Present your research, developed in tandem with a local group, how have you identified and developed your moment of togetherness

Outlined Proposal - Methodology and approach to delivery including safeguarding methodology (where relevant)

#### 4 Share-ability:

Tools for Togetherness are made to be shared. This idea should be at the core of artwork conceptually. It will influence the design of these interventions, how they are handled and installed should be practical, accessible and also feel simple, intuitive to use with a little guidance.

#### 5 Adaptability:

Every citizen or community who borrows a Tool for Togetherness will bring something new to it. These interventions should be adaptable, programmable or customizable, whether it's set up to accommodate different uses or to grow over time. It will also shape the artists' relationship to the commission, as it takes on many lives and many artists while still maintaining its original idea.

# TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

The intervention complies with the minimum requirements outlined below:

## Durability

Installations must be constructed using robust, weather-resistant materials suitable for repeated use in both indoor and outdoor public settings and withstand wear and tear. Proposals should outline how the piece will withstand wear and tear, as well as varying environmental conditions over time.

## Transportability

Designs should be easily transportable and the ability to move the intervention between sites is essential with consideration and instructions on how the piece is packed, handled and relocated with minimal risk of damage.

## Modular / Flat Pack Approach

Where possible, interventions should adopt a modular or flat-pack design to enable easy assembly, disassembly and storage. This approach supports mobility, simplifies logistics, and ensures the piece can be reconfigured or repaired with ease.

## Repair/ Maintenance

A maintenance plan is provided including use of replaceable or standard parts, clear instructions for basic repairs or upkeep and use of sustainable or locally accessible materials where possible.

Successful bidders will be asked to submit a maintenance plan.

## Weathering

Proposals must take into account how materials age or change in response to weather exposure with consideration for how the installation will perform over time (e.g., fading, rusting, warping) and what measures will be taken to preserve its functionality and appearance.

## Accessibility

Interventions must be accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Consideration is given to physical access e.g., wheelchair users, children, sensory accessibility e.g., visual contrast, tactile elements, clear signage or instructions if interaction is required.

## Power Requirements

If the intervention includes powered elements, consideration is given to how it will be powered (e.g., battery, solar, mains), safety, weather-proofing, and ease of powering in various settings.

## Storage

When not in use, the intervention is able to be stored safely and compactly. Storage instructions and preservation of intervention when not in use for periods of non-use e.g. during winter months, transport etc are provided. Proposals should outline storage requirements and demonstrate how the intervention can be preserved during periods of non-use (e.g., during winter months or transport).

*Interventions produced as part of this Contract must comply with relevant product safety regulations applicable in Northern Ireland. It is the Contractors responsibility to ensure adherence and compliance to the specific legislation. Please note depending on what is produced, details of the requirements of the relevant legislation can be further refined.*

## Funding

The Council has allocated a budget of 15k-40k per successful Bid. The council anticipates up to four service contract(s) will be awarded based on budget available.

The bidder is asked to indicate an estimated cost as part of Stage 1 and 2, with the opportunity to develop a full project plan and costing at Stage 3. Those shortlisted to Stage 3 will be awarded £500, to develop their idea.

Whilst a funding bracket of 15k-40k has been set for the final proposals, consideration will still be given to proposals which fall outside of this range.

**This is a three-stage process. Stage 1 and 2 is the submission of the form on eSourcing. Successful bidders from this stage will receive funding to develop their idea out to a full project plan in stage 3.**

## Our Relationship

This programme operates under a standard commissioner relationship.

Throughout the contract period, we will hold regular meetings to offer guidance and support. The council will work closely with the selected artist or organisation, providing oversight and maintaining open communication to support the development of the project.

The project plan and methodology will be agreed collaboratively, and we will provide templates to support both project and evaluation reporting.

Payments will be processed in accordance with the agreed schedule.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We will host an online session on Wednesday 23rd July at 12pm. This session will give an overview of the scheme, the submission process and we will welcome any queries from the sector.

Following this online session, all bidders are invited to book a 30 minute meeting with the team. This can be facilitated either in person at 2 Royal Avenue or online through a MS teams line.

These sessions will be on a one-to-one basis and give you a chance to explore your idea with the team. This is also an opportunity to ask any question you have around your proposal or the process.

### Key Dates

**eSourcing Open - 4th July 2025**

**Online Session - 23rd July 2025**

**Advice Clinics - 28th July - 15th August 2025**

### Online Session

The online session will be held for all interested bidders at 23rd July. Please register your interest and confirm your attendance by emailing to [culture@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:culture@belfastcity.gov.uk) no later than 22nd July 2025. A MS Teams link will be emailed to you on receipt of confirming your attendance.

### Book a Meeting

You can request a meeting Tuesday to Thursday between 10am and 1pm. Email [Culture@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:Culture@belfastcity.gov.uk) with your name, number and the date and time that suits you. We will do our best to accommodate your request. If we can't, we'll offer you an alternative.

## Questions and Scoring

### Stage 1 Compliance Criteria Evaluation

(Stage 1 evaluation involves assessment on general company information and declaration form.

**Mandatory  
Response-**

### Stage 1 Selection Criteria Evaluation

Company Experience (In the past three years)  
Company experience, insurance etc.

Pass/ Fail

### Stage 2 Programme Proposal Criteria Evaluation

#### Tools For Togetherness Proposal

Please outline your concept, highlighting how it aligns to the project principles.

Response to this question must be limited to 5 sides of A4 in Arial Font 11.

**Quality Weighting  
(out of 100%)**

100%

Score	Label	Rationale
5	Excellent	Excellent response that meets the requirements. Response is clearly explained and provides detailed, unequivocal supporting evidence and no weaknesses. Demonstrates detailed understanding and strong ability to deliver requirement.
4	Good	A good response that meets the requirements with good, convincing supporting evidence. Demonstrates good understanding and ability to deliver requirement. Minor reservations in one area.
3	Acceptable	Response generally meets requirements but with minor reservations in more than one area. Demonstrates reasonable understanding and suggests the Bidder can deliver the requirement but lacks sufficient detail to award a higher mark.
2	Poor	A response with some material reservations. Response does not convincingly demonstrate that the Bidder understands the requirement and/or the response lacks detail and/or evidence for the solution to be applied. Response raises some concerns that the proposed approach might not be acceptable and might not deliver the requirements.
1	Very Poor	A response with serious reservations. Limited detail and supporting evidence for the solution to be applied. High risk that the proposed approach will not be acceptable and will not deliver the requirements.
0	Unacceptable/ No Response	No response Response fails to address the question in virtually all areas.

## Speculative Timetable Activity/ Milestone

## Date(s)

Issue of ITT - Stage 1 and 2	4th July 2025
Online Session	23rd July 2025 at 12pm
Advice Clinics for interested suppliers	28th July -15th August 2025
Deadline for receipt of clarifications from bidders	As Indicated on eSourcing NI
Tender Return Date and Time for Stage 1 and 2	As Indicated on eSourcing NI
Evaluations of Stage 1 and 2 Tenders Completed	29th August 2025
Issue of Stage 3 ITT (Invite Only)	11th September - 3rd October 2025
Presentation	6th- 17th October 2025
Evaluation of Stage 3	By 22nd October 2025
Self Declaration Checks	w/c 20th October 2025
Contract Award	3rd November 2025
Contract Start Date	17th November 2025

Above is a speculative timeline (Subject to change)