

## Key information

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Primary Event Solutions
<b>Project number:</b>	Section 40.2
<b>Amount requested:</b>	£480,072

## Management of Covid-19 impact

**1. Tell us how you have managed the impact of Covid-19 so far, and why you are unable to transition to viability and sustainability from 1 July 2021 without additional support.**

*(up to 4,000 characters including spaces, approximately 700 words)*

### **Applicant prompts:**

- how your organisation was financially viable before the Covid-19 pandemic took hold
- whether you have taken advantage of other Government schemes and measures which have been introduced since the pandemic began
- how you have exhausted all other reasonable options to cover your anticipated shortfall for April-June 2021, including affordable lending, viable alternative options for commercial, contributed and philanthropic income, and using your own resources
- tell us what your reserves position was on 1 April 2020, whether you rebuilt reserves using funding from Culture Recovery Fund round one, and to what extent you plan to deploy your reserves between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.
- how you have managed financial risk in your organisation during this period and, if appropriate, how you have adapted your plans as the public health context has changed
- if you have received a Culture Recovery Fund grant, how you used it wisely and prudently, including, if appropriate, how you repurposed it as the public health context has changed
- if you are a for profit parent company applying on behalf of a group, what steps you have taken to provide additional support to the companies within your group

**Assessment comments** - you should use **no more than 500 words**

**Taking account of the applicant prompts above, use the text box below to note:**

- Has the applicant sufficiently addressed the prompts? Please note any particular strengths or weaknesses.
- Is there any missing information that would have strengthened the application? This should be noted and considered when a rating is applied.
- Based on the information provided, does the application demonstrate a credible and reasonable case?

*Add assessment statements here:*

Primary Event Solutions Ltd are requesting £480,072 for staffing, overhead and operational costs, marketing, Covid compliant PPE purchase, Covid19 debt and a contribution to 8 weeks reserve reflation (£252,190). The applicant sufficiently addresses all the prompts. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic taking hold, the organisation was profitable, this is supported by financial statements 2018/2019. However, the latest audited accounts submitted clearly evidence the organisation did not retain any reserves in 2018 and 2019 after Director dividends were paid. The applicant has demonstrated they have proactively received funding from other sources including the Government furlough and flexi furlough scheme and have secured a bounce back loan (BBLs) of £50,000. Other measures taken include a number of redundancies, agreeing deferred VAT payments and successfully negotiated a 1-year premises rent deferral (£36,000). They did not apply for CRF1 funding but state their current reserves have been severely depleted by the continued absence of trading and at June 2021 without support they will be in a financially precarious position. The organisation's current reserve policy, detailed in the application, is £247,000. The attached cashflow and budget support the applicant's case funds will be severely depleted as at March 21, falling to a level of -£5,189.79.

There are some inconsistencies with the narrative and the supporting financial statements provided. The applicant states the reserve position as at April 20 was £20,000. The last filed accounts submitted only run to March 2019 and therefore it is unclear what the actual surplus/reserves amount was in April 20, or how the organisation has deployed them. However, the trial balance sheet to Dec 20 does reflect a positive figure of £85,566.43 supported by the cashflow b/f cash at bank figure of £86,121.43 as at Jan 21. This gives confidence the Directors have not taken any dividends since Qtr 1 2020 therefore it appears highly likely the organisation has been using its own resources between April 20 and March 21 to support the company's shortfall between income and expenditure. Financial risk monitoring has been increased to bi-monthly meetings with the Senior Management team and advisory board. Members of the advisory board include: [REDACTED]

## Section 40.2

[REDACTED] giving confidence financial risk is being adequately managed. Missing information: The applicant cites in the narrative '**We are shortlisted for a Manchester City Council Covid Recovery Grant for our cultural significance (amount TBC)**'. More detail is required as to the level of this funding and could be included as a payment condition should CRF2 funding be awarded.

**Apply a 'Management of Covid-19' assessment rating, as below:**

- **Not met:** *The application does not meet the criteria*
- **Met:** *The application meets the criteria*

A score of Met would indicate that to date, the organisation has clearly managed the impact of the pandemic and taken advantage of all reasonable options available to them.

A score of Not Met would indicate that the organisation does not sufficiently demonstrate that they have managed the impact of the pandemic and taken advantage of all reasonable options available to them.

**Note that there is no option to score this question 'Strong'**

**Rating:** Choose an item.  
**MET**

## Supporting your cultural operation

**2. Tell us how you will use this grant to support your cultural operation between April-June 2021 in a way that represents value for money.**

*(up to 4,000 characters including spaces, approximately 700 words)*

**Applicant prompts:**

When answering this question, you should look to demonstrate that the costs associated with the plan you outline are proportionate to the needs of your organisation and are cost effective. You should not include a significant volume of new cultural activity that is not necessary to your business to return to financial sustainability, or which represents additional financial risks.

Please factor in the assumptions about restrictions for April-June at the point of application based on the Culture Recovery Fund: Programme specific Government Covid-19 guidance on [page 14](#).

You will need to tell us:

- the current status of your organisation: are you operating, partially operating or have you temporarily closed/ceased trading

- what cultural activities you plan to deliver between April-June 2021, and how that is the most appropriate way for you to transition to a full operation
- what conclusions you have drawn about likely consumer behaviour during this period, and its impact on your plans
- how you have minimised the gap between your income and expenditure
- any necessary one-off costs your organisation will incur during this period that are essential to your current plan, including rebuilding reserves to the equivalent of eight weeks' turnover pre-Covid

**Assessment comments - you should use *no more than 500 words***

**Taking account of the applicant prompts above, use the text box below to note:**

Need to consider refer to in statement:

- The 4,000 character text answer to the question within the application form
- The Delivery plan table within the application form
- Whether there are any activity or cultural costs included in the Expenditure table of the application form
- The 1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021 period of the budget attachment
- The 1 April – 30 June 2021 period of the cashflow attachment
- Culture Recovery Fund: Programme specific Government Covid-19 guidance (included below)
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- Has the applicant sufficiently addressed the prompts? Please note any particular strengths or weaknesses.
- Is there any missing information that would have strengthened the application? This should be noted and considered when a rating is applied
- Based on the information provided, does the application demonstrate a credible and reasonable case?
- Do proposed plans offer value for money?

*Add assessment statements here:*

The applicant addresses the prompts with some weaknesses to tell us how they will use this grant to support the organisation between April-June 21. The organisation is currently partially operating, with two clients and a reduced workforce. The April-June period of activity, as set out in the delivery plan, is focussed on forward planning for a number of events due to take place later in the year. These events are high profile and include New Order (Sept 21) Manchester International Festival, Parklife, Latitude, Creamfields and Leeds/Reading festivals. These events are all outdoor events and the applicant states building customer confidence in the outdoor events sector with advanced information and messaging is key. There is an appropriate amount in the budget included for marketing (£13,500). Strengths: There is a good understanding of Covid19 measures. This is not limited to purchasing PPE equipment. The organisation has considered and included the cost of new Covid safety training for its staff and this is reflected in an appropriate amount of spending in this area. One off costs have been appropriately budgeted for including the reflating of reserves to 8 weeks pre-Covid turnover. The applicant states they have cut staff, negotiated rent and VAT deferrals and Directors have not taken dividends to since Jan 2020 to minimise the gap in income and expenditure.

Weaknesses: The budget, cashflow and expenditure section of the application include costs that appear to relate to physical events. For example, staffing costs (Section 40.2) are broken down as follows:

- 15% Onsite project management,
- 40% security related
- 15% bar staff,
- 20% Technical Production and crew
- 10% cleaners include (Section 40.2 NI and pension contributions)

There are inconsistencies in the expenditure budgets and the delivery plan. The delivery plan does not include any physical event programming, detailing a series of planning meetings and training sessions in line with the application narrative. It appears likely some of these staffing costs relate to those staff retained for training during the planning period in readiness for physical events returning. However, there are additional freelancer staff costs of (Section 40.2) for external bar staff and security teams with no detail in the narrative to explain why they are essential. Total operational costs appear high (£66,350) and whilst most are reasonable, website redesign (£10,500), travel/accommodation/staff refreshments (£5,050) and safety subsidies (£1,500) do not appear to offer value for money or demonstrate essential expenditure to support the organisation transition between April-June 2021 to a full operation. Therefore, it is recommended, should funding be awarded, these costs amounting to a total of £36,150 be deducted from the request (£480,072). **This equates to a reduced offer of £443,922**

**Apply a ‘Supporting your cultural organisation’ assessment rating, as below:**

- **Not met:** *The application does not meet the criteria*
- **Met:** *The application meets the criteria*
- **Strong:** *The application meets the criteria and shows strong qualities*

**Rating: Met**

*Choose a rating from the dropdown*

## **Adaptable Plans**

**3. Tell us how you will adapt your plans if restrictions do not ease during the period as set out in the assumptions**

*(up to 2,000 characters including spaces, approximately 350 words)*

**Applicant prompts:**

You will need to tell us:

- how you will adapt your plans in response to potential ongoing changes, including a scenario where consumers are slower to return to cultural venues or cultural activities than you’ve planned for
- what measures you have in place that allow your organisation to react to and mitigate risk, and their effectiveness
- how alternative scenarios can be managed

**Assessment comments - you should use *no more than 500 words***

**Taking account of the applicant prompts above, use the text box below to note:**

- 

*Add assessment statements here:*

The applicant has addressed the prompts. They have carefully considered organisational scenario planning for their own events and for the clients who use their services. For example: A reduced capacity team will be maintained by the organisation until there is more stability in the sector, They anticipate this will be in July and the cashflow and budget support this statement with salaries increasing substantially in Qtr 3 and 4. Management have agreed to go down to a 4 day week if necessary and the recruitment of a special Covid Safety Officer is planned to oversee event planning adheres to government guidance. Flexi- ticket pricing has been introduced should consumers be slower to return to cultural activities or if the events can only go ahead with reduced capacity. This gives confidence the organisation can flex and adapt to change should it be necessary. Strengths: The organisation's ability to move all planned activity online has successfully been trial tested working in partnership with ACE NPO, Bury Met. Between April-Dec 2020 the organisation was commissioned to transform Bury Met's studio into an online platform and develop their 'United We Stream' programme, resulting in the successful hosting of 358 artists playing to 20million viewers, worldwide.

Weaknesses: The narrative refers to 'regular dialogue with local, regional and national partners in order to ramp up activity as soon as is legal and sensible' as a response to risk mitigation. However, this is not supported by any level of detail therefore it is not clear who these partners are or if these measures will be fully effective. Cashflow and budget for the April-June period, with the exception of some staffing and expense costs addressed in Q.2, are covering overheads and costs associated with forward on planning and training. This is further evidenced by the delivery plan. The applicant has clearly demonstrated they are using the April-June period to allow an appropriate amount of time to mitigate risk and plan how alternative scenarios will be managed should physical events not go ahead. This gives strong confidence the organisation is well placed to adapt and deliver events should ongoing changes be necessary. Therefore, this section of the application is marked Strong.

**Apply an 'Adaptable plans' assessment rating, as below:**

- **Not met:** *The application does not meet the criteria*
- **Met:** *The application meets the criteria*
- **Strong:** *The application meets the criteria and shows strong qualities*



**Rating: Strong**

*Choose a rating from the dropdown*

**Future Viability and Sustainability**

**4. Tell us how you plan to ensure your viability and sustainability for the period 1 July 2021 - 31 March 2022**

**assessment comments - you should use *no more than 500 words***

**Taking account of the applicant prompts above, use the text box below to note:**

- Has the applicant sufficiently addressed the prompts? Please note any particular strengths or weaknesses.
- Is there any missing information that would have strengthened the application? This should be noted and considered when a rating is applied.
- Based on the information provided, does the application demonstrate a credible and reasonable case?

- after the grant has been spent, what measures you are taking to control expenditure
- how any future income or fundraising plans will contribute, and how realistic these plans are
- whether there are any risks associated with your current plans, and how you intend to mitigate those
- After the grant has been spent, what measures you are taking to control expenditure
- how any future income or fundraising plans will contribute, and how realistic these plans are
- whether there are any risks associated with your current plans, and how you intend to mitigate those
- what reserves you expect to have on 1 July 2021

The applicant sufficiently responds to most prompts. Strengths: A comprehensive exercise had been undertaken to streamline costs and control expenditure. The organisation has cut the amount of permanent, full time staff and this is evidenced by the attached budget and cashflow projections. For example: cashflow and budget demonstrate salaries for Qtrs 1 and 2 are substantially lower than Qtrs. 3 and 4 in line with the narrative. Employing freelancers on a supply and demand basis ensures staffing costs are appropriate. Internal financial controls are in place with all expenditure over £500 signed off at Director level. Strengths: The applicant cites significant high value contracts are still in place for activities cancelled in 2020 including Reading, Leeds, Parklife, Latitude Festivals with a value of £1.1million. Cashflow and Budget evidence this with income significantly increasing from Jul 21. At March 22 total income projected from July is £1,893,912 giving confidence recovery post June 21 is realistic should CRF2 funding be awarded. The applicant is confident the organisation will return to pre-covid levels of income generation citing upcoming shows such as New Order (Sept) reaching £25k of ticket sales in one month and Parklife pre-sale standing at 12,000 sales suggesting demonstrable audience appetite to engage with cultural, particularly outdoor, activities.

The organisation is currently trialling a future streaming paywall as a progression from the success of the 'United We Stream' project partnered with Bury Met that attracted 20m viewers over a 10 -week period during lockdown. Risks have been appropriately recognised and addressed. Weaknesses: The applicant cites the projected reserves position on July 1st, 2021, without funding will be -£274,000 Without the requested additional reflating of reserves, the organisation would be financially unviable. The supporting cashflow and balance sheet support this. It is noted the organisation operated without any reserves in 18/19 as evidenced in the attached Financial statements after the deduction of Director dividends. However, it is evident from the supporting financial documents, Directors have not taken any dividends throughout 2020 opting to c/f (£86,121.43) profit as at Jan 21 to support the financial sustainability of the company. This clearly is not sustainable beyond March 21 -(£5,190) and therefore this section of the application is marked Met.

**Apply an 'Future viability and sustainability assessment rating, as below:**

- **Not met:** *The application does not meet the criteria*
- **Met:** *The application meets the criteria*
- **Strong:** *The application meets the criteria and shows strong qualities*

**Rating: Met**



## Cultural Significance

### 5. Tell us about your organisation's work and how it is considered to be culturally significant and/or how it contributes to providing cultural opportunity in England

*(up to 4,000 characters including spaces, approximately 700 words, split across two text boxes of maximum 2,000 characters)*

#### Applicant prompts:

You will need to tell us about:

- a) your national and international significance within the cultural sector **and/or**
- b) your key role in providing cultural opportunity in a community in England

You only need to answer option a) or b), although you are welcome to respond to both if you prefer.

a) the following prompts will help you to tell us about your national or international significance in the cultural sector, if that is most relevant for your organisation:

- that you are an organisation which makes a major contribution to the national and international reputation of the cultural sector in England, and that you can demonstrate your commitment to excellence and innovation in the way you create, present and distribute content and to building national and/or international partnerships
- that your organisation has national or international reach, relevance and impact, for example whether you care for and provide public access to buildings or collections that are nationally or internationally significant or that your activity is important for the development of your artform or discipline and/or
- that you offer public access to nationally or internationally significant artistic, curatorial and/or cultural training or employment, including the development of a diverse and growing talent pipeline provision or content and/or

- that you fulfil a national or international leadership or development role within an artform/sub-artform or discipline that could not be easily replicated or replaced

b) the following prompts will help you to tell us about your role in providing cultural opportunity in a community in England, if that is most relevant for your organisation:

- that you are located in a place where there is a relatively low number of cultural organisations, and whose loss would further reduce cultural engagement opportunities for the public, particularly for people from underserved groups in society and for young people
- that you are located in a place where there are relatively low levels of cultural engagement, as per the Active Lives survey, and that, as an organisation, you work with people there, particularly those from underserved groups, to help them develop and express their creativity throughout their lives
- that you are a vital cultural organisation in a place, because of the employment opportunities you provide, the contribution you make to economic agendas such as tourism, the important role you play in enhancing local creative skills, and/or your organisation's presence at the centre of a high street, place or community. You may wish to set out local support of your role such as from a Council or Councillors, Local Enterprise Partnership, MP
- that, as an organisation, you play an important role in supporting a collaborative approach to the cultural ecology within a place, through partnership with other cultural organisations, and/or with organisations in other sectors (for example, a Cultural Education Partnership)
- that, if your organisation is a museum, you care for collections which have important regional, local or community resonance, and/or the loss of that collection would impact disadvantaged communities, and/or our understanding of diverse communities across England.

**Assessment comments - you should use *no more than 500 words***

**Taking account of the applicant prompts above, use the text box below to note:**

- Has the applicant sufficiently addressed the prompts? Please note any particular strengths or weaknesses.
- Is there any missing information that would have strengthened the application? This should be noted and considered when a rating is applied.
- Based on the information provided, does the application demonstrate a credible and reasonable case?

Where the application specifically references support from their MP, this should be noted in the assessment narrative.

*Add assessment statements here:*

The applicant sufficiently addressing the prompts and overall is able to demonstrate strong evidence that Primary Event Solutions play a key role in providing and supporting cultural opportunities in a community in England. The organisation provides event coordinators, managers, production managers, assistants, technicians, sound engineers, lighting engineers, AV, bar staff, security staff, merchandise, cleaners for a significant number of the most respected and loved cultural events in the UK. Clients include Lovebox, Isle of White Festival, Latitude and Hull City of Culture. Whilst the applicant can make a case for its wider national cultural significance via the client list, it is its local and regional impact that is of particular importance. Clients and in-house productions include: Parklife, Manchester Pride, Kendal Calling, Ariana Grande One Love and MIF. Strengths: There is strong evidence within the narrative the organisation plays a vital role contributing to employment and economic/tourism agendas. The applicant breaks down the 6,016 number of people it employs annually, and data obtained from GMCA estimates Warehouse Project and Parklife contributes £41,000,000 to the local economy per year. In 2019 the organisation booked 628 hotel rooms across the region. The narrative includes supporting statements from high profile event Directors such as [Section 40.2](#) and Alex Knight (EN4 Crew).

The charity arm, Parklife Foundation, raises between £100k-£120k for local communities and United We Stream (in conjunction with NPO Bury Met & GMCA)) Just Giving page raised £600,000 for local cultural organisations & freelancers. The organisation has partnerships with Manchester Metropolitan University, Bolton University, Bury College and Wigan College training future promoters and event staff. Weaknesses: Whilst it is evident the organisation is one of the largest players in the event and production services sector across the region, it is not the only organisation providing these services. Its central city location in Manchester, means the case for providing cultural engagement in a place where there's low

numbers of other cultural organisations and engagement is weak. However, the applicant has demonstrated the organisation is committed to supporting local communities through its charitable fundraising and its work with the the Kyso Collective. The scheme provides performance opportunities and free tickets to music and theatre experiences for children and young people from socio-economically challenged circumstances in Moss Side and Hulme. Overall, the applicant has provided a strong and credible case to support the part it plays in providing cultural opportunities in its place; therefore, this section of the application is marked Strong.

**Apply an ‘cultural significance’ assessment rating, as below:**

- **Not met:** *The application does not meet the criteria*
- **Met:** *The application meets the criteria*
- **Strong:** *The application meets the criteria and shows strong qualities*

**Rating: Strong**

*Choose a rating from the dropdown*

## Opening up Access

**6. Please tell us how you will open up access by improving the diversity of your audiences, visitors, participants, workforce and governance?**

*(up to 2,000 characters including spaces, approximately 350 words)*

**Applicant prompts:**

You will need to tell us:

- what steps you will take to broaden the diversity of your workforce and governance, including socioeconomic diversity, and the impact of those changes
- what steps you will take to broaden the diversity of your audiences, visitor base and participants, including socioeconomic diversity, and the impact of those changes

**Assessment comments - you should use *no more than 500 words***

**Taking account of the applicant prompts above, use the text box below to note:**

- Has the applicant sufficiently addressed the prompts? Please note any particular strengths or weaknesses.
- Is there any missing information that would have strengthened the application? This should be noted and considered when a rating is applied.
- Based on the information provided, does the application demonstrate a credible and reasonable case?
- 

*Add assessment statements here:*

The applicant has sufficiently addressed the prompts, with some weaknesses relating to workforce and governance. The narrative details a list of actions currently underway designed to improve diversity amongst staff, advisory team, partners and suppliers and how the organisation is currently transitioning to instil these changes. For example: Working with Pride Festival on diversity training and by April all staff will be certified. An Equality Action Plan will also be signed off by April and by June the Advisory Board will be developed to include increased 50% Black, Brown and/or Asian artists, LGBTQ+, Accessible and Female representation. However, more information about existing workforce and governance diversity data, specifically around protected characteristics, would lend credibility and support this statement. Strengths: The organisation demonstrates a commitment to broadening the diversity of audiences and participants, including socio-economic diversity and has provided data to support the statements. In 2019, 27% of all artists were Black, Brown and/or Asian and targets are set to



increase this by 10% in 2021. The organisation has committed to programming 20% of LGBTQ artists across existing events in addition to stand alone events such as Homobloc and Manchester Pride.

Parklife, has been awarded with an Access All Areas Silver Accreditation for providing accessible bars, audience platforms, an accessible website, onsite information and specialised helpers. The organisation will continue to realise its ambition to achieve Gold status. Free tickets are offered for Carers and via outreach community work with organisations such as Kyso Collective. The applicant cites they have a demonstrable policy of working with female-strong artists and that 46% of audiences across all events are female. However, there is no detail or clarity on how this data is collected and/or what processes are in place to measure success. Overall, the organisation has demonstrated it understands the need to broaden the diversity of its workforce, governance, audiences and participants and there is evidence in the narrative there are steps in place to help achieve these ambitions. The organisation has a demonstrable track record of programming a diverse range of events and artists, therefore, on balance, this section of the application is marked Strong.

**Apply an ‘Opening up access’ assessment rating, as below:**

- **Not met:** *The application does not demonstrate sufficient plans for improvement*
- **Met:** *The application demonstrates sufficient plans for improvement*
- **Strong:** *The application demonstrates strong plans for improvement*

**Rating: Strong**

*Choose a rating from the dropdown*