



Subject:	Freedom of the City – Frontline Workers and COVID Response
Date:	17 June 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Sandra Robinson, Protocol and Public Affairs Manager Eimear Henry, Strategic Lead, Belfast Stories

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- An update for Members on a public facing event to recognise the work of the city's frontline during the COVID19 pandemic.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note the contents of the report including the outline of the event to take place on 25th August 2022.
3.0	Main report
3.1	At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 22nd May 2020 it was agreed to award the Freedom of the City to healthcare workers and all those working tirelessly on the

frontline to care for vulnerable citizens during the COVID pandemic, with Members agreeing that a report outlining proposed arrangements for this to be submitted in due course. A further report was submitted to committee on 23 April 2021 which agreed a proposed programme, to include both a reflective event of commemoration as well as a citywide recognition event with community participation.

Participative Programme aligned to UNESCO City of Music - completed

3.2 From September 2021 to March 2022 Council delivered a participative music programme with a variety of groups across Belfast to explore their experiences of pandemic via musicians in residence programme. This programme has resulted in each of the groups working with a local musician to compose a new piece of music. The creative outputs of this programme will now be showcased through:

- Celebratory event at 2 Royal Avenue
- An exhibition of the project to be toured to locations across the city including local festivals
- A documentary capturing personal stories of life through the pandemic
- An album of the music recordings

3.3 There will also be an opportunity for some of these elements to form part of the Belfast Stories project.

**Honouring the contribution of city's frontline workers and communities
Waterfront Hall, 25 August 2022**

3.4 A concert will take place at the Belfast Waterfront on Thursday, 25 August 2022 to include a ceremonial element marking Freedom of the City. Council officers have been working in partnership with BBC NI on this project. Music has played an important part in people overcoming the challenges of COVID-19 and creatively it is the ideal artform to signal the city's ongoing recovery. This also celebrates Belfast achievement in becoming a UNESCO City of Music in November 2021.

3.5 The official Freedom of the City ceremony will take place as part of this music event commemorating this unique project. This main stage event will include profiled acts, breakthrough artists, the Ulster Orchestra and live performance of the songs produced with the participants of the musician in residence programme. There will also be involvement from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust choir. The full artist line-up for the event is being finalised and will be released in due course.

3.6 The concept for the evening is to focus on songs that have a particular meaning to the city and associated with the city's Covid response. These songs will form a Belfast Mixtape and have been selected by frontline workers and community participants.

3.7	<p>In addition, there will be a screening of a specially commissioned film that captures the city's response to COVID and personal stories through this unique project.</p>
3.8	<p>The final outputs from the overall programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Direct Community Participants: 60 participants across 6 groups over 6 months of workshops and engagement – 3 Story-gathering facilitators aligned to Belfast Stories – Core musician team of 5, with a lead Music Director – Ulster Orchestra and headline music acts for the closing event at Waterfront Hall – Film produced capturing the individual 'Belfast Stories' of COVID – Broadcast of event with BBC NI – Podcast and ancillary content – Immersive and commemorative exhibition about the project and stories
3.9	<p>This special Freedom of the City project seeks to reflect the remarkable efforts of the city throughout the pandemic and has at its core an ethos of being both a caring and a creative city.</p>
3.10	<p>Event Delivery:</p> <p>Given that the event marks the conferment of the Freedom of the City. It is proposed that the process is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The wording of the Notice of Motion will provide the context for organisation to be awarded tickets. - It is proposed that partner organisations, including Belfast City Council, receive an allocation of tickets to the concert. - Each organisation will be responsible for managing their own allocation directly with the Waterfront Box Office, with tickets made available online or hardcopy and dispersed as appropriate by each organisation. - It will be up to each organisation to decide on their own criteria for which staff members can access tickets.
3.11	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>No additional resources are required. The programme costs will be met from within existing budgets due to existing plans for a city event to mark the bid for UNESCO designation.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Equality & Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The overall programme of events include elements that have been open to all and as such has the potential to promote good relations and equality by bringing together people from a wide range of backgrounds. City of Music Events are part of the cultural strategy for Belfast that has been subject to EQIA.</p>

4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None