



Subject:	Update on Music Strategy
Date:	5 th April 2023
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
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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	At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in December 2022, members agreed the music strategy, "Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast" including its corresponding priorities. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress to date and seek approval to the allocation of funding to a number of important strands of the music strategy.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note the contents of this report and the progress made against areas of the music strategy, "Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast"- Approve the allocation of £20,000 towards the Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues- Approve the allocation of £50,000 for the creation of a digital music support service and marketing channels

	<p>- Approve the allocation of £30,000 towards the development of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24.</p>
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in December 2022, members agreed the final “Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast”. These Mirroring the A City Imagining cultural strategy the music strategy has 4 strategic themes, each having 4 strategic priorities. There are a number of actions and recommendations given for each priority catering to many areas of need across the music sector.</p> <p>Theme 1: Place artists at the heart - Recognising the value of creators</p> <p>Theme 2: Nurture the sector - Strengthening the structures to support those who guide and invest in creators</p> <p>Theme 3: Ignite the live experience - Liberating the live music sector as a major catalyst for cultural and economic growth</p> <p>Theme 4: Unlock the unifying power of UNESCO - Sharing the gift of music with the people of Belfast</p>
3.2	<p>Update on Music Board</p> <p>The Music Strategy sets out governance recommendations for Belfast Music, including the formation of a Belfast Region Music Board, comprising between 15 and 20 members, to bring to life the UNESCO City of Music designation.</p> <p>The board will help to embed music in all communities across the city to make music a sustainable career option for creators and people who support them. Following agreement of the full Music Strategy in December 2022, an open call was launched for applications to join the Belfast Region Music Board with applications closing in February 2023.</p> <p>A total of 60 applications were received from across a range of disciplines. After an extensive shortlisting and scoring process, 18 board members have been selected to participate on the board. After preliminary shortlisting by the Culture Team, with final selection was decided on with a wider panel including external moderation from key partners in the Music Strategy, namely the British Council NI and Thrive NI.</p> <p>Following the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair at the inaugural meeting in early April, the board will begin work to review and agree the remaining implementation plan for 23/24. This full implementation plan and corresponding budgets will be presented to members in June 2023.</p>
3.3	<p>Support for Venues</p> <p>Theme 3 of the Music Strategy has a focus on supporting venues, with priority 9.5 including a commitment to review current support for venues to upgrade the quality of their event</p>

spaces and equipment. As a key stakeholder in the strategy, officials from the Culture Team have been in discussions with the Music Venue Trust, a UK registered charity which acts to protect, secure and improve Grassroots Music Venues, to explore opportunities to enhance support for venues in Belfast.

In 2022, the Music Venue Trust established the Pipeline Investment Fund (PIF), a new grant-giving fund to support venues. PIF is open for small-scale grant applications (up to £5,000) from UK-based grassroots music venues to support two areas of work:

- Small-scale capital applications; including lights, sound, access, ventilation and minor building alterations
- Staff & training; diversifying your workforce, succession planning, skills development, and strengthening local community ties

The fund will prioritise support for organisations who may be excluded from other available funding and PIF is open to all venue operators and organisations that meet any of the three definitions of a Grassroots Music Space, namely Grassroots Music Pub (GMP), Grassroots Music & Arts Space (GMAS) and Grassroots Music Venues (GMVs).

3.4 To expand upon the scheme’s success in England, it is proposed to allocate £20,000 and work in conjunction with the Music Venue Trust to run a programme specifically targeted at venues in Belfast. This funding, which will support a minimum of four venues, will be administered through the Music Venue Trust PIF process with scoring and final decisions made via a panel consisting of MVT staff and Belfast City Council. This initial pilot programme will be reviewed in-year to assess the impact of this programme, with a view to potentially expanding this work to support more venues.

3.5 **Communications and website**

The draft roadmap was published in the wake of Belfast being named a UNESCO City of Music, wherein six core commitments were set out for the City to deliver upon One of these – a local initiative – was the commitment to “launch a dedicated music support service providing professional development, networking and music entrepreneurship advice, reaching 1500+ musicians and music businesses annually

3.6 Theme one of the Music Strategy has a focus on exploring and developing professional development opportunities to educate and equip music creators with the critical knowledge, contacts, and tools for building a sustainable career within the sector. The Belfast music roadmap sets out a number of recommendations for action, several of which an online platform can help to deliver. These include:

- 2.1: Develop a Music Support Service (initially a digital space/website) which will act as a point of contact for all questions arising from within the music community (new, emerging and tipping point artists), deliver and promote educational and development

opportunities, and facilitate connections amongst and beyond individuals and organisations working within the music sector.

- 7.2: Create a one-stop-shop online Music Directory to promote and connect all facets of the music business and those working in it.
- 14.1: Create a one-stop listing service for venues, organisations and the hospitality sector to promote their music activity to the city's locals and visitors

3.7 It is envisaged that an online presence will

- provide a wealth of information for creators and professionals, from membership associations and charities offering health support to the latest news, views and events relating to the development of NI's music sector.
- Hosts a Directory, allowing individuals and organisations to find each other for mutual support and engagement.
- Provide a monthly newsletter
- Become the go-to place for future consultations, charters, or Council resources, complementing and amplifying related information on the Council's website.
- Be used to host the toolkits outlined in recommendations 7.4 (sponsorship toolkit) and 12.2 (green toolkit).

3.8 To begin the development of this online platform, it is proposed to allocate £50,000 toward the creation of a digital space, website and the continuation of a dedicated Belfast Music social media channels.

Music Industry Mentoring Programme

3.9 Point 6.1 within Theme One of the Music Matters strategy recommends investment in *“the delivery of a specially designed mentoring programme for individuals working in music, including continued professional development for senior or experienced individuals working in music”*

The public Consultation for the Music Matters roadmap stressed the importance of developing the infrastructure around the music creators of our city by addressing skill gaps and providing opportunities for knowledge and mentoring. It is proposed that a tender will be created to invite interested parties to design a short course of training and mentoring for individuals currently working or considering working in areas such as the following:

- Agents
- Managers
- Labels
- Marketing & PR

The course must be able to upskill participants to be able to provide greater support to the wider music community in these currently under-developed areas of the sector. It is proposed to allocate £30,000 towards the development of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24.

3.10	<p>Output Conference Update</p> <p>Established in 2016, Output Belfast has earned its reputation over the last 6 years as Ireland’s biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase. Delivered as a key event within the City of Music programme, the conference will take place on 1st June 2023 and feature a full programme of panels, workshops and conferences, followed by an evening showcase of live music for free to the public. Activity includes music and creative digital showcasing and networking events, business development panels and workshops and meetings and networking with key international creative digital companies,</p>
3.11	<p>As part of our commitment to priority 2.5 within the music strategy, which reads “Develop regular music business touchpoints throughout the year using existing conferences to offer more regular but bitesize opportunities for micro learning”, we have increased elements of the Output Conference activities for 2023 to ensure that there is a day taking place after the main conference that is focused on community engagement and networking. It will capture the incoming industry delegates the day following the conference for engagement in 1-1s / speed-networking while other activities will be planned throughout the day.</p>
3.12	<p>Update on City of Music Industry Sessions</p> <p>Theme one of the Music Strategy focuses on the development of musicians, including action point 2.4 which seeks to “provide opportunities via events and programmes to provide regular access to professional associations in music to deepen existing relationships and create new ones”.</p> <p>To build towards this wider goal of increasing networking and knowledge of the local sector, officials have developed the City of Music Industry Sessions, a series of free monthly information sessions for the local music community. Hosted in 2 Royal Avenue, this series features panel discussions and advice from experts across a range of disciplines, preceded by networking opportunities and advice clinics hosted by the Culture Team. Each event will offer learning opportunities for both the music creators and music industry personnel to ensure development of both in tandem. The first event, which focused on how to get tracks played on radio as well as how to access careers in this field, took place on 21st March with 35 industry professionals in attendance to receive advice from featured experts from BBC Radio 1 and BBC Radio Ulster.</p>
3.13	<p>Six more sessions are planned for the coming months, including more informal networking sessions prior to the panel discussions. Officials are engaging with colleagues in Enterprise and Business Growth and other teams across Council to ensure alignment with other support packages provided across Council and explore opportunities to add further value to the industry sessions through advice clinics in relevant industry areas.</p>

3.14	<p>UNESCO City of Music Opportunities</p> <p>Relationships with other cities within the UNESCO City of Music network continue to be developed through attendance at UCoM cluster meetings. Learning from strategies employed by these cities has allowed the Culture Team fresh insights into best use of the Music Matters roadmap as well as support on achieving UNESCO aims.</p> <p>Opportunities for the Belfast music community continue to be developed through the network. An agreement with the city of Hannover, Germany, will see an exchange of music industry personnel between the cities to provide skill and network development for those involved. This exchange will begin in early June as representatives from Hannover come to Belfast to engage with the Belfast music community during the Output Conference, in which they will actively participate.</p> <p>An exchange is being arranged with UCoM City London, Canada, that will begin in July 2023. This opportunity will allow for two folk-music artists to be provided with attendance at a song-writing camp, two pre-festival performances, one main-stage performance at Home County Music and Art Festival, as well as music industry 1-1 meetings across Ontario with agents, bookers and other personnel that will benefit the Belfast artists. Priority 2.2 within Theme 1 of the Music Matters strategy relates to sourcing performance opportunities for Belfast music creators to perform internationally and the UCoM Network will benefit the fulfilment of this goal.</p>
3.15	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the allocation of £20,000 towards the Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues • Approve the allocation of £50,000 for the creation of a digital music support service and marketing channels • Approve the allocation of £30,000 towards the development of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24. <p>These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.</p>
3.16	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>This music strategy is part of the overarching cultural strategy for Belfast that has been subject to EQIA. An equality screening has been completed and mitigating actions will be considered as part of any initiatives.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None