



<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Music Strategy – NI Music Prize
<b>Date:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Chris McCreery, Culture Development Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the allocation of funding to the NI Music Prize alongside a strategic review of these events to deliver on objectives of the music strategy.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree the allocation of £30,000 to the NI Music Prize</li> <li>- Agree the allocation of £15,000 for an independent Strategic Review and Roadmap for Development for the NI Music Prize/Sound of Belfast</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>NI Music Prize</b> The Northern Ireland Music Prize honors and celebrates the very best of new, established and emerging Northern Irish music and is a key music event for the city of Belfast and its

UNESCO City of Music status. It is an annual awards night organised by the Oh Yeah Music Centre and takes place in the Ulster Hall during Sound of Belfast Festival every year.

The prize is a high-profile celebration of music from Northern Ireland. Five main awards are available, namely:

- PPL Album of The Year
- Single of The Year
- BBC ATL Artist of The Year (BBC Introducing award)
- Live Act of The Year
- YouTube Video of The Year

There is also two special awards, namely:

- Outstanding Contribution to Music presented by PRS
- Oh Yeah Legend Award

3.2

Over 100 music industry professionals are invited to take part in the nomination process of the awards. The general public are invited to vote for the winner of Single, Live and BBC Introducing Award whilst an invited industry panel selects the winning video and the winning album. All genres are eligible and a diverse mix of acts are invited to perform each year to showcase the wealth and variety of music Belfast has to offer including Trad, Folk, Indie, Rock, Electronica, Punk, Singer Songwriters, Pop, Hip Hop, Soul and R&B. Supporters include Arts Council of Northern Ireland, PPL, PRS Foundation, Help Musicians, BBC Introducing, Arts and Business, Music Venues Trust, IMRO, Shine, Music Video Marketplace and Destination CQ.

3.3

The NI Music Prize was established to support the growth and build the profile of NI Music and reflect similar work and recognition of regional music in other parts of the UK and Ireland. It is a significant event and key milestone for Belfast as the regional driver for the music industry in Northern Ireland.

3.4

The 2023 Music Prize will host an audience of 1,000 people including music industry guests from all over the UK and Ireland, Europe and the USA, as well as musicians, artists and music fans. The event will be broadcast live on BBC Radio Ulster and is filmed by a production company for YouTube. Many key industry professionals that attend are also involved in presenting and running panels at the Sound of Belfast conference earlier that day, including 200 young emerging artists who attend these panels which are streamed live on YouTube.

3.5

This is an important event for music in Belfast and to complement and strengthen the initiatives and ambitions laid out in the UNESCO City of Music. It will be an investment in our world class and strong emerging diverse talent and is also an opportunity to showcase our local talent through extensive online reach and will demonstrate that Council is committed to supporting and investing in music long term.

3.6

### **Sound of Belfast**

Sound of Belfast is a festival that showcases the Belfast music scene and sector with gigs, panels, talks, workshops, discussions, exhibitions, showcases and special events at various venues across Belfast. The event traces its roots to a previous programme from Belfast City Council entitled Belfast Music Week, which ran 2010 to 2013.

3.7

The event is a unique offering in the cultural landscape, with a sole focus of turning up the spotlight on our world-class talent by promoting Belfast as music city by celebrating the artists, venues, promoters, studios, performances spaces and record stores of the city. 2023 will be the tenth year of the festival and the plan is to host a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary festival in 2024 to align with Belfast 2024.

3.8

The programme includes a community focus that leans into encouraging people from all backgrounds to enjoy the music of the city. So far 26 venues are on board for Sound of Belfast with around 50 events – showcasing the capability of places and spaces of the city for live music across the grassroots venues, arts centres, pubs and cafes as well as the palm house, Titanic distillery a library, cinema, church and hotel. The event will feature venues in every part of the City – North, South, East and West.

3.9

The programme will also feature a series of storytelling events called “Echoes of a Music City”, involving people with stories to tell in each community on different genres and scenes that made an impact on Belfast. They will take place all over the city and cover everything from Trad to Electronica – across cafes, in shops, arts centres and other key spaces. Belfast City Council has supported the NI Music Prize since its formation, with funding ranging from £15,000 to £30,000. The loss of Tourism NI National Events Fund has had a detrimental impact on the delivery of both the Sound of Belfast programme and the headline event, the NI Music Prize.

3.10

To ensure success of these events in 2023 and to build towards 2024, it is proposed to allocate £30,000 toward the NI Music Prize/Sound of Belfast for the November 2023 programme.

3.11

### **Strategic Review and Roadmap for Development**

The NI Music Prize has been supported annually via Committee approval due to their wider impact on the music industry and the city. However, there is a desire amongst organisers and council officers to explore longer-term approaches to ensure this event can continue to grow and achieve its full potential.

3.12

With the continuing implementation of recommendations from the Music Strategy, these events have the potential to play a central role in the delivery of objectives within the music

<p>3.13</p> <p>3.14</p> <p>3.15</p> <p>4.0</p>	<p>strategy. Similar to Belfast City Councils support of the Output Conference, which takes place in the springtime, it is hoped that the development of both Sound of Belfast and the NI Music Prize will provide a key touchpoint in the year for wider music initiatives and opportunities.</p> <p>With a view to maximising the impact of the event, it is proposed to conduct an independent review of the NI Music Prize and Sound of Belfast. This independent review will consider alignment to music strategy and role that it can play in achieving objectives through a longer-term strategic partnership and the value that it would take to achieve this. It will involve consultation with peers including benchmarking against similar events both nationally and internationally and produce a series of ‘recommendations’ or ‘next steps’ as part of a roadmap for development.</p> <p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The financial support requested from Belfast City Council is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI Music Prize/Sound of Belfast - £30,000</li> <li>• Strategic Review and Roadmap for Development - £15,000</li> <li>• These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Officers will work with event organisers to ensure that a wide range of groups and artists across the city are engaged with. There are no Rural Needs implications.</p> <p><b>4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
<p></p>	<p>None</p>