

Subject: Response to Arts Council Northern Ireland Strategy Public Consultation

Dear [Recipient],

On behalf of Belfast City Council, we appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the Arts Council Northern Ireland's strategy public consultation. Our response aligns closely with our ten-year cultural strategy, "A City Imagining," which aims to foster a vibrant and inclusive arts and cultural landscape in Belfast.

Firstly, we commend the Arts Council NI for their dedication to supporting and promoting the arts sector in Northern Ireland. As a key stakeholder in the cultural development of Belfast, we recognize the importance of strategic alignment to maximize the impact and effectiveness of both our efforts and those of the Arts Council NI.

In alignment with "A City Imagining," we advocate for:

Increased Investment: We support efforts to secure additional investment for the arts sector, particularly initiatives that promote accessibility, diversity, and innovation. We welcome joint strategic efforts in seeking ways to increase investment from wider sources to ensure the long term stability of the sector.

Community Engagement: We emphasize the importance of community engagement, co-creation and collaboration in cultural projects, ensuring that the arts are inclusive and accessible to all residents of Belfast. This is a central tenet within our investment criteria and strategic initiatives such as Belfast 2024.

Creative Economy: We endorse strategies to strengthen the creative economy, recognizing the arts as a valuable driver of economic growth, tourism, and job creation in Belfast.

Cultural Infrastructure: We advocate for investments in cultural infrastructure, including venues, studios, and public spaces, to support the growth and sustainability of the arts sector.

Arts Education: We emphasize the significance of arts education in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness among Belfast's youth, and we support initiatives to enhance arts education in schools and communities, and the arts' contribution to lifelong learning

Digital Innovation: We encourage the integration of digital technologies into arts programming and engagement strategies, recognizing the potential of digital platforms to enhance accessibility, reach, and audience engagement.

Diversity and Inclusion: We prioritize efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts, supporting initiatives that amplify underrepresented voices and address systemic barriers to participation and representation.

Sustainability: We advocate for sustainable practices in the arts sector, including environmentally friendly initiatives and efforts to reduce carbon footprint and promote environmental stewardship. We are currently supporting the Green Arts Collective NI to lead from grass-roots to promote sustainable approaches across the sector.

International Collaboration: We support active participation in networks and collaboration with partners on joint initiatives to foster international collaboration and exchange in the arts, promoting cultural diplomacy and showcasing Belfast's cultural richness on the global stage.

Evaluation and Impact: We emphasize the importance of robust evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact and effectiveness of arts initiatives, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement. We would welcome more collaboration in this area in order that we can better expose and share the deep and wide impact of our investment. This will enable us to advocate for increased recognition and investment from a broader range of beneficiaries.

In conclusion, we believe that strategic alignment between Belfast City Council and the Arts Council Northern Ireland is essential for realizing our shared vision of a vibrant, inclusive, and culturally rich Belfast. We look forward to continued collaboration and partnership in advancing our mutual goals for the arts sector.

Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Position/Title]

Belfast City Council