



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Membership of the Forum for Local Government and the Arts
<b>Date:</b>	11 June 2008
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Tim Husbands, Managing Director, Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls, ext 1400 Siobhan Stevenson Culture and Arts Manager, ext 3586

### Relevant Background Information

The Forum for Local Government and the Arts (FLGA) was established in November 1994 to formalise structures and relationships through which the Arts Council could engage with local government in Northern Ireland to further the development of the arts at both a local and regional level.

An extensive review to the structure of the FLGA was implemented in 2004 including the establishment of an Executive Committee and the appointment of staff.

Members considered Membership of the Forum for Local Government and the Arts at the Development (Arts) Sub-Committee of 4 October 2006 and agreed that the Council participate on the Forum for Local Government and the Arts for a trial period of one year, with a report in relation to the Council's participation in future years being submitted after that period.

The Council is currently represented by a Councillor, Officer and Arts Activist on the FLGA. It was further agreed that Belfast City Council should be represented on the Forum by the Chair of the Arts Sub-Committee. The Culture and Arts Manager and a representative from among the Culture and Arts Multi Annual Funding clients are also represented on the Forum.

It was agreed, at that time, that the fee will be waived for the remainder of the 2006/7 year and that a membership fee of 50% of the yearly rate would then be payable for the 2007/8 financial year. Full membership would be payable thereafter should Belfast City Council continue to be a member.

Belfast City Council agreed to host a meeting of the Forum in Belfast as an in-kind contribution and as an opportunity to profile the development of the cultural offer in the City. This was held in January 2007 and was well attended.

### **Key Issues**

The Forum has appointed an Arts Policy Officer and has established a website. It holds regular Plenary meetings and produces a newsletter. The restructuring has assisted the Forum in its aims to:

- take on a greater role as a co-ordinating and lobbying organisation, ensuring that arts are a prominent feature in local politics.
- play increasingly instrumental roles in raising awareness of the value of the arts and developing arts provision at local community level, by building partnerships between local councillors, council officers and arts representatives.

Plenary meetings are organised on a quarterly basis. The Forum for Local Government and the Arts Annual Conference is proposed to take place on 4 November 2008 at the Braid Arts Centre, Ballymena. The theme is 'Growing Communities through the Arts' and it will focus on the contribution that the arts and creative industries are making to the building of sustainable mixed communities across the UK.

The membership fee of £3324 for the Forum for the 2008/9 year is now due. The fees are established on a per capita basis.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

A membership fee of £3324 is payable for 2008/9. This has been included within the revenue estimates for Culture and Arts.

The delegate fee for attendance at the FLGA Conference is £80.00

#### Human Resources

Attendance at meetings will be included within the work plan of the Culture and Arts Unit.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members

- 1) Agree to continue membership of the Forum for Local Government and the Arts
- 2) Agree to the Council being represented on the Forum by the Chair of the Development Committee or his nominee, an Officer and an Arts Activist;
- 3) Approve the attendance and expenses incurred by BCC representatives to attend FLGA meetings
- 4) Approve the attendance and expenses incurred of Members of the Development Committee and a maximum of two officers at the FLGA Conference on 4 November 2008.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

FLGA – The Forum for Local Government and the Arts.