



Subject:	Music Strategy and UNESCO City of Music update
Date:	7 August 2024
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Chris McCreery, Culture Development Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Call-in</b>	
	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>							
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>						
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on the work relating to the UNESCO City of Music plan and seek approval to the allocation of funding to several important strands 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>Note the contents of this report and the progress made against areas of the music strategy, “Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast”</li> <li>Agree the actions for remainder of 2024/25 as set out in the report and in Appendix 1 including budget implications to be met from existing departmental budgets</li> </ul>						
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>						
3.10	At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in December 2022, members agreed the final “Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast”. Mirroring A City Imagining cultural strategy the music strategy has 4 strategic themes, each having 4 strategic priorities. There are several actions and recommendations given for each priority catering to many areas of need across the music sector.						
3.11	UNESCO Music delivery is funded from existing recurring and non-recurring departmental funds. At the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee in April 2021, members agreed an allocation of resources to the delivery of the music strategy. £900k has been allocated towards City of Music and the Music Strategy for delivery on key developmental activities across 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively. Members received updates and approved allocations of spend against various initiatives in April, June, August and September 2023. There has been substantive progress against each of these initiatives, including:						
3.12	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Programme/Action</u></th> <th><u>Status</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Recruitment and selection of the Belfast Region Music Board</td> <td>Completed in April 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expansion of the Output Conference, Ireland’s biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase</td> <td>Completed in June 2023</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Programme/Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	Recruitment and selection of the Belfast Region Music Board	Completed in April 2023	Expansion of the Output Conference, Ireland’s biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase	Completed in June 2023
<u>Programme/Action</u>	<u>Status</u>						
Recruitment and selection of the Belfast Region Music Board	Completed in April 2023						
Expansion of the Output Conference, Ireland’s biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase	Completed in June 2023						

Continuation of Gradam Ceoil bursaries	Launched in March 2023 and continuing to March 2024
Micro bursaries programme, available to individual musicians, to assist with costs incurred within their artform. Delivered in Collaboration with Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival	Launched in December 2023. 18 musicians received awards of up to £1,000 in January 2024.
The Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues through a partnership with Music Venue Trust	Completed in September 2023 with 5 Grassroots Music Venues in receipt of funding to upgrade equipment
Belfast Music marketing channels	New supplier appointed July 2023
Implementation of Access Riders to improve disability access	November to September 2024
The NI Music Prize	Event took place on 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
City of Music Industry sessions – series of free information sessions for the local music community	Delivered 6 sessions to date
Creation of a digital music support service developed in collaboration with Music Connections	Launching in September 2024
Music Industry Mentoring Programme for 2023/24	Launching in September 2024
Programme to develop the production skills of women, female-identifying and non-binary music creators in a safe and trusted studio environment.	Contract appointed in March 2024
Health and Wellbeing sessions for musicians and the industry	Ongoing throughout 2024
“Go Green” toolkit with tangible recommendations and measures for implementation	Launching November 2024
Music Matter Internship Programme – Supporting 7 internships across the music industry	Supplier appointed in August 2024, programme launching in September 2024.

Support for international exchanges with other UNESCO Cities of Music.

Exchanges held with Hannover, Germany, Brno, Czech Republic, and London, Ontario Canada

3.13 **The Belfast Music Board**

The Music Strategy sets out governance recommendations for Belfast Music, including the formation of a Belfast Region Music Board. The overarching role of the Board is to oversee the implementation and prioritisation of the music roadmap, anchoring the city's commitment to music and ensuring its composition represents the varied interests and needs of both the music sector and the people of Belfast.

The board was appointed in April 2023 and consists of 24 individuals from across a wide variety of disciplines, industries, and interest. The Belfast Music board has been meeting regularly alongside officials in the culture team to map out programmes and initiatives against each theme and priority in this Music Strategy. This engagement has been vital in informing and shaping the projects contained in this paper.

3.14 **Theme 1 - Placing Artists at the Heart**

Theme One of the Music Matters strategy focuses on "Placing Artists at the Heart". The most basic – or foundational – needs of musicians, music creators and performers are the focus of this theme with a range of initiatives including funding, creative and professional development and opportunities to collaborate and create with others.

Building on the success of previous initiatives in this area, a range of programmes are recommended. These include:

3.15 **The NI Music Prize/Sound of Belfast** – The Northern Ireland Music Prize honours 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. 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.

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.

The 2024 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. Belfast City Council has supported the event since its inception and provided £30,000 of support in 2023.

3.16 At the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023, members also agreed to provide support to conduct an independent review of the NI Music Prize and Sound of Belfast. This independent review considers 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 has involved 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. This review is currently concluding, and a further update and full report will be presented to members in Autumn 2024.

3.17 Officials have received an interim report and recommendations from the review based on the research undertaken and the discussions held to date. This interim report recommends that funding is increased to enhance, scale and strengthen the activities being delivered at Sound of Belfast, including the NI Music Prize, in its 10th anniversary year. This additional resource would be ringfenced for a dedicated marketing and communications campaign to champion artists, promote the events and engage new audiences with Sound of Belfast and the NI Music Prize. Based on the recommendations from this interim report, it is recommended to allocate £45,000 to the NI Music Prize and Sound of Belfast.

3.18 Output Belfast- Established in 2016, Output Belfast has earned its reputation over the last 7 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 event is directly related 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". The conference features a full programme of panels, workshops and conferences,

	<p>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>
3.19	<p>In December 2023, members agreed to allocate £28,000 to Score Draw Music Ltd to continue the delivery of the Output Conference in 2024. This conference was originally planned for April but due to logistical challenges with the April date, council officials and Score Draw Music explored alternative dates later in the year. The event will now take place on Tuesday 12th November to coincide with, and celebrate, the 10-year anniversary of Sound of Belfast.</p>
3.20	<p>This will be the first time that the Output Conference and showcase will take part during the same week as Sound of Belfast and the NI Music Prize and represents a unique opportunity to test the impact of combining both events and create a critical mass of activity throughout the city.</p>
3.21	<p><u>Continuation of the Micro-Bursaries scheme</u> – This programme provides up to £1,000 to individual musicians, to assist with costs incurred within their artform. In 2023, this programme was delivered in Collaboration with Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival, through enhancing their existing bursary programme to include a music micro-bursary. This initiative proved to be highly successful, with over 160 applications from musicians with 18 musicians receiving support. It is proposed to continue this scheme in 2024/25 with an allocation of £20,000 to the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival.</p>
3.22	<p><u>Continuation of the Gradam Ceoil bursary scheme</u> - At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on Wednesday 8 September 2021, members agreed to support the Gradam Ceoil bursary scheme of a five-year period (2021 – 25) and contribute £15,000 each year.</p> <p>The Gradam Ceoil Bursary Scheme is a series of three annual awards awarded to young (18–25-year-old) traditional musicians in Belfast, in partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre, Red Shoe productions and TG4. Each award is valued at £3,000 each and the programme aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide support, training and mentoring</li> <li>• To support creativity and cultural expression</li> <li>• Build capacity in online/broadcasting presentation skills (in acoustics and visuals)</li> <li>• Develop capacity and profile for the traditional music sector in Belfast.</li> </ul>
3.23	<p>The 2024/25 scheme aims to launch in January 2025 and will select three young Belfast traditional musicians to receive an award in March 2025. Highlights from the 2024 awards</p>

	<p>included the recipients performing at the Gradam Ceoil awards in Limerick for the Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, as well as a special performance at the Fleadh Cheoil and an invite to the Lord Mayor’s parlour for a reception to celebrate. It is proposed to continue this important partnership with a £15,000 contribution in 2024/25.</p>
3.24	<p><u>Health and wellbeing</u> – In 2023/24, officials have worked on a range of partnerships with key organisations such as Tonic Rider and Help Musicians NI to co-design practical wellbeing events and initiatives focusing on the physical and mental health of music creators. This has manifested as a number of practical schemes, including a partnership with Help Musicians NI that will see hearing health care and greater awareness of hearing health in the local music industry. In addition, a pilot programme with NI Alternatives entitled “Fit to March” will launch in September 2024. This programme is targeted at the marching band community and will focus on physical and mental well-being of marching band members. It is recommended that this important element of the music strategy continues in 2024/25 with an allocation of £15,000 towards additional co-designed and targeted programmes.</p>
3.25	<p><u>Music Mentoring Programme Stage Two - Point 6.1</u> 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” In 2023/24, members agreed an allocation of £30,000 towards the development of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme to upskill participants including agents, managers, PR professionals and labels. This programme is currently at procurement stage and will be delivered throughout Autumn 2024.</p>
3.26	<p>It is proposed to continue this programme with an allocation of £30,000 for Stage Two in early 2025. Stage two of the programme will allow the music industry entrepreneurs that have been through the programme thus far to continue their educational development by putting into practice with a cohort of artists, the latter of whom will be the focus of this continuation of the opportunity. The output of this second stage will be a group of local music creators who can progress through their careers with greater confidence in how they manage their individual businesses alongside a stronger team of individuals working in the spheres of management, PR and other complimentary roles.</p>
3.27	<p><u>Music Industry Sessions</u> - 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</p>

programmes to provide regular access to professional associations in music to deepen existing relationships and create new ones”.

In 2023/24, officials delivered 6 industry free industry sessions for musicians. It is proposed to continue this important sessions throughout 2024/25 with an allocation of £10,000 towards an additional 6-8 events. Proposed events thus far include focuses on women in sound design, meeting the Tallinn music industry, managing your vocal health, PR and connectivity in the digital sphere.

3.28 **Theme two – Nurture the sector**

Theme two of the Music Strategy focuses on strengthening the structures to support those who guide and invest in creators. Through prioritising the sustainable growth of the music business sector, initiatives in this theme support entrepreneurialism, meaningful business development, professional development and sustainable career pathways within the sector. A range of initiatives are proposed within this theme including:

3.29 **Educating the Educators** To support and promote sustainable career pathways within the music sector, it is proposed to run a Pathways Into Music programme in 2024/25. This programme will work directly with the Pathways into Music Foundation and is based on a successful scheme delivered in England supported by Arts Council England.

This programme for music educators, education hubs and talent development organisations will consist of a two-day in-person event in Belfast in autumn 2024, plus three accompanying webinars. These events will focus on careers and trends in the music business, providing music educators with the information, knowledge and contacts they need to advise and support students who seek to pursue a career in music.

The programme will be open to anyone involved in educating or supporting young people making music from key stage three (aged eleven) or above, including: music teachers, instrument tutors, and FE and HE lecturers, plus people working for music education hubs and talent development organisations. This programme will be delivered directly with the Pathways into Music Foundation, in collaboration with the Education Authority. It is proposed to allocate £20,000 towards this programme, reaching between 50-100 education professionals.

3.30 **Supporting Accessibility in Music –** Theme two of the Music Strategy includes a commitment to allocate programming funding to provide opportunities for disabled musicians in performance



spaces across Belfast. In addition, there are several commitments to ensuring that music programming takes an inclusive approach at all times and that music activities are made available in safe spaces for all ages, where the needs of those with disabilities can be met.

To ensure greater opportunities for showcasing musicians with disabilities or additional needs, as well as to provide music activities that are accessible to all, it is proposed that BCC partner with the University of Atypical to develop a pilot a new support scheme that would allow recipients to host activities and events that would develop, promote and provide platforms for those within the d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse music community. This programme would be developed through a strategic partnership with the University of Atypical for Arts and Disability (UofA), a disabled-led lead sectoral organisation for arts and disability.

It is envisaged that these grants would support not just costs associated with the running of the potential events but also costs that ensure access needs are met. It is proposed to allocate £30,000 to the University of Atypical for this pilot programme.

3.31 **Theme 3 - Igniting the Live Experience**

Theme three of the music strategy focuses on supporting the live music sector as a major catalyst for cultural and economic growth. This theme recognises the importance of live music to Belfast for creators and performers, for freelancers and those working in music, and for the people of the city, our audiences. a range of programmes are recommended for 2024/25, including:

3.32 **Strategic Partnership with Music Venue Trust –** The Music Venue Trust is a UK wide charity which acts to protect, secure and improve Grassroots Music Venues. The organisation has been a key partner during both the formation of the Music Strategy and at implementation stage. In 2023/24, Council collaborated with the Music Venue Trust to run a Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues. This scheme resulted in five Belfast venues receiving capital grants to improve their facilities.

3.23 Priority 9 of the Music Strategy focuses on deliver a series of measures that would facilitate the development of a thriving, sustainable and strong live music sector, including a commitment to “engage with the Music Venue Trust to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing the survival of grassroots music venues in Belfast and the ways in which these challenges can be addressed”.

3.24	<p>Through meaningful discussions with the Music Venue Trust as to how best to benefit the Belfast Music venues, it is agreed that prolonged engagement would have the most lasting impact upon the sector and would allow for the long-term fulfilment of five Music Matters strategic priorities. Through this engagement, the Music Venue Trust will work closely with venues throughout Belfast, including a co-designed series of events and workshops bringing together venue staff and leaders from local music venues with experienced counterparts and stakeholders from across the UK.</p>
3.25	<p>These events will focus on development opportunities for local Belfast music venues, education and knowledge sharing of best practice and utilisation of the annual report to compare and contrast regional statistics. A key aspect of the day will be information gathering to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing the survival of grassroots music venues in Belfast and the ways in which these challenges can be addressed (9.4). They will be able to utilise this direct engagement with the sector to also develop a strong awareness of the current entertainment licencing processes and how they impact local venues (9.3) as well as their event space and equipment needs (9.5) and other challenges facing venues. This research will go on to inform best practice at Council when supporting local venues as well as future partnerships with the sector and advocacy work undertaken by the charity. It is proposed to allocate £20,000 towards this strategic partnership with the Music Venue Trust.</p>
3.26	<p><u>Greening the Sector</u> - Priority 12 of the Music Strategy focuses on greening the live music sector, embedding sustainability at the heart of its approach to business operations.</p> <p>To deliver on this priority, it is proposed to allocate up to £5,000 towards an event and launch of a toolkit in November 2024. This event will be focused on sustainability in creative productions, particularly within the music sector, featuring a panel discussion with key Belfast creatives who will explore practical strategies and innovative approaches to making creative productions more environmentally sustainable, alongside experts in the field from organisations such as Native Events, specialists in looking at new ways of working more sustainably. The conversation will be live-streamed to reach a broad audience and later made available online as a valuable digital asset. In addition to the panel discussion, it is proposed to launch the Green Arts Toolkit for Belfast, a comprehensive resource designed to help artists and cultural organisations implement sustainable practices. This toolkit, developed in collaboration with Native Events, will provide actionable guidelines and best practices for reducing the environmental impact of creative activities. The event offers a unique opportunity to introduce this critical resource to the music community, with the support of Belfast City Council underscoring the city's commitment to</p>

	<p>sustainability and cultural leadership. The event will be produced by NI Science Festival and Nerve Centre and promoted through each organisations own channels, as well as the Belfast 2024 channels.</p>
3.27	<p><u>Safety in Music</u> – Priority 11 of the Music Strategy aims to support venues and performance spaces in implementing initiatives to ensure the health and safety, both physically and in terms of mental wellbeing, of performers and attendees at live music events.</p> <p>To support a safer night-time environment for those working in or attending music events across the city, it is proposed to partner with and support Equity NI’s ‘Safe Home’ campaign through a series of events and training with local venues with the inclusion of the Musicians’ Union and relevant stakeholders in night-time safety. It is proposed to allocate up to £10,000 to this programme which will include practical training and events for local venues and the creation of video and print assets that will further increase knowledge and uptake of the campaign across the city.</p>
3.28	<p><b><u>Theme 4 – Unlocking the unifying power of UNESCO</u></b></p> <p>Theme 4 of the Music Strategy aims to create a sense of ownership of the UNESCO title for the people of the city, recognising the vital role they have played in our musical past and the exciting role they can play in our music future. This roadmap aims to provide more opportunities for embedding music in all corners and communities of the city and also seeks to position the Belfast City of Music brand on the international stage as a gateway to visitors and investors.</p>
3.29	<p>As part of Belfast’s application and status as a City of Music, member cities are committed to <i>“work internationally with the UNESCO Cities Network to deliver shared music, skills and learning opportunities.”</i>. In 2023/24, support was provided for local music creators and industry to undertake international exchanges with other UNESCO Cities of Music such as Hannover, Germany, Brno, Czech Republic, and London, Ontario Canada. In addition, a partnership with the Belfast International Arts Festival provided a platform for a special UNESCO day featuring acts from other UNESCO cities at the Festival. It is proposed to continue this partnership with the Belfast International Arts Festival through hosting a UNESCO City of Music day on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2024, featuring artists from City of Music Kansas, USA.</p>
3.24	<p>As well as collaboration between cities, UNESCO Member cities are also expected to take part in official UNESCO events, including the annual UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)</p>

	<p>conference and UNESCO Music subnetwork meetings. Officials and the Lord Mayor were in attendance at the UNESCO conference in July which featured over 250 cities across the globe. Following this conference, officials have received expressions of interest from 11 different UNESCO cities to collaborate on a range of opportunities. Officials are actively considering each opportunity and exploring meaningful opportunities for artists and music entrepreneurs from that will allow our local talent to be showcased on a global platform and increase opportunities for music tourism.</p> <p>3.25 Finally, it is important to note that 2025 will mark four years since Belfast was awarded the title of UNESCO City of Music. As part of this year, Belfast City Council will be expected to complete and submit its Membership Monitoring Report highlighting each Creative Cities' contribution to UCCN's implementation. This report is mandatory for member cities every four years and will require a detailed analysis of progress against commitments in the music strategy alongside a plan and budget for the following four years.</p> <p>3.26 <b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no new financial implications. The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2024/25 budget from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development for the Culture and Tourism section of the Economic Development division of the Place and Economy.</p> <p>3.27 <b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> and the Music Matters Music Strategy have both been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). Specific initiatives as required will be subject to a further equality screening.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	Appendix 1 - Music Workplan 2024-25