



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Festivals Action Plan
Date:	10 June 2009
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development ext. 3470
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Relevant Background Information

As Members will be aware on 6th August 2004, Members of the former Arts Sub Committee agreed to the establishment of a Belfast Festivals Forum to act as a mechanism to engage with the spectrum of festivals in Belfast, in order to grow and develop the festival product offering in the City.

The Belfast Festivals Forum has received positive endorsement from large and small scale festival organisations within the City and from its inception has grown considerably. There are currently over 100 members of the Forum from a wide range of organisations, including professional and community-based festival groups and other sectoral bodies. The Forum meets approximately four times a year aiming to:

- Address the needs of festivals within the City.
- Further development of the festival offering in Belfast
- Encourage relationships and collaborations between festival organisers
- Ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken towards planning, programming, management, marketing, fundraising and monitoring & evaluation.
- Develop a platform for raising awareness of and profiling the generic festival product in the City
- Develop skills for members including: management and governance, planning and marketing.
- Act as a lobbying mechanism for relevant issues
- Deliver improved and diverse audience attendance
- Encourage sharing of resources

Achievements of the Festivals Forum to date include the development of a Belfast Festivals Calendar disseminated throughout Northern Ireland in January and June each year, a wealth of promotional materials and an annual programme of tailored skills development and training designed to build capacity within festival organisations.

Key Issues

Through the Festivals Forum a Draft Festivals Action Plan for 2009-10 was developed. Building on the activities and actions of 2008-09, areas for development were identified including:

- Training & skills development
- Networking opportunities
- Sponsorship

The budget for festivals development has been set at £30,000.

This will be used to action the following:

Training for Festival Organisations to include:

- Carnival training
Bespoke training in carnival skills in order to develop the carnival product of the City.
- New and innovative marketing for larger scale festival organisations.
Tailored training in new and innovative methods of marketing including viral marketing that will be effective and strategic in the current economic climate.
- Bespoke training for small-mid-level festivals
10 organisations will receive a tailored mentoring service in the area that they feel will most benefit them.
10 organisations will receive a tailored marketing training in partnership with Arts & Business.

Sponsorship Convention:

A scheduled training and networking event looking at sponsorship, its viability as an option in times of economic downturn and its potential for festival organisations. With a capacity for 150 delegates areas to be explored will include:

“The reality of sponsorship in tough economic times”

“Arts sponsorship from the sponsor’s point of view”

“How to grow a festival through sponsorship”

Economic Impact Assessment

An assessment of the economic impact of festival activity within Belfast will be carried out in partnership with Milward Brown Ulster.

Festival Promotional Material

To update the design of Belfast Festival Calendar Jan-June 2010 and create a promotional DVD.

Festival Forum Meetings

Festival Forum meetings for the year have been booked and scheduled for July, November and February 2010.

Resource Implications

Proposed activity will be resourced from within the Culture and Arts Unit current staffing and allocated budget for 2009-10.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that Members agree to the allocation of £30,000 to support the implementation of the Festival Action Plan.
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Documents Attached

Appendix 1 Festival Forum Action Plan
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