



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Special Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Arts Council of Northern Ireland Presentation
<b>Date:</b>	25 January 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Acting Director of Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kerrie Sweeney, Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager, ext 3586

### Relevant Background Information

Members will recall that they agreed to receive a presentation from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in order to gain a greater understanding of the Arts Council's contribution to Belfast's Culture and Arts sector, to determine their future priorities for arts development in Belfast, and to progress towards establishing a collaborative and integrated approach towards new opportunities, especially in light of the Review of Public Administration. Rosemary Kelly, Chairman, and Roisin McDonough, Chief Executive, will be in attendance.

Date of presentation  
4:30pm Monday 25 January 2010

### Key Issues

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with current issues relating to the culture and arts sector in Belfast and relevant background on the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

#### Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure Inquiry into the Funding of the arts in Northern Ireland

DCAL made the decision to hold an inquiry into the funding of the arts on 8 January 2009 and agreed the terms of reference for the inquiry on 29 January 2009. Advertisements requesting submissions by 27 February 2009 were placed in the local newspapers on 3 February 2009. In addition, the Committee agreed to write to 134 individuals and interest groups, to request submissions on a number of areas set out in the terms of reference, and establish how and to what level the arts are funded in Northern Ireland by the public and private sectors, the impact of this funding, and how monies are allocated across the various artforms. Belfast City Council actively

participated in this process.

The Committee came to the conclusion that there was a lack of information regarding how much money the public sector invests in the arts and that research was required to ascertain how much Government Departments, other than the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, spend on the arts.

It also concluded that in order to increase funding for the arts, an inter-departmental approach was required, as the social and economic benefits of the arts met the objectives of a range of Departments. The Committee also concluded that more money should be reallocated to community and voluntary arts, given their impact on regenerating communities and providing people with opportunities for participating in arts activities. There was also a particular concern that arts groups in communities without a history of arts funding should be proactively encouraged to access available monies and to that end recommended that the Start Up programme operated by ACNI continued and be developed. A full list of recommendations is outlined in Appendix 1.

#### Culture and Arts Impact in Belfast

According to the recent CAL Committee Inquiry into the funding of the arts in Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council has the highest per capita spend at £28.94 (see Appendix 2 for full breakdown of per capita spend). It should be noted that Belfast City Council's approach differs from many other local authorities in that it provides direct funding to arts organisations as well as managing arts venues.

In 2008/09, Belfast City Council's direct investment in culture and arts organisations resulted in audiences of 6,128, 571 and 177,165 people participating in the arts. It also supported 1,830 jobs – 304 of which were full time as well as 961 cultural volunteer positions.

#### Arts Council of Northern Ireland Strategy 2007-2012

The Arts Council is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland and offers a range of funding opportunities through the Exchequer and National Lottery funds. ACNI is a non-departmental public body of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and is governed by a board, 'the Council', which sets the strategic direction for the Arts Council and oversees the work of the Executive (see Appendix 3 for biographical detail on Council Members and Chief Executive, Roisin McDonough).

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's vision is to place the arts at the heart of Northern Ireland's social, economic and creative life.

The Arts Council's current strategy focuses on the following four themes:

#### Theme 1: Art at the heart: promoting the value of the arts

- improve recognition of the contribution of artists and arts organisations make to society
- influence Government regarding the contribution the arts make to the achievement of a range of policy objectives
- gain broad acceptance of the need for increased funding for the arts in NI
- achieve international recognition for the arts in NI

#### Theme 2: Strengthening the arts

- improve the wellbeing of individual artists
- strengthen and develop arts organisations
- strengthen and develop the arts infrastructure

### Theme 3: Growing audiences and increasing participation

- expand the range of opportunities for people to enjoy the arts
- expand the range of opportunities for people to take part in the arts
- encourage more young people to experience the arts

### Theme 4: Improving our performance

- become a more client focused organisation
- develop structures and processes to achieve business objectives
- develop people in line with business strategy
- strengthen governance and accountability within ACNI

The Arts Council takes an artform specific developmental approach, dedicating resources through staff and action plans in the following areas: drama and literature, visual arts, community and participatory arts, music, dance, traditional arts and youth arts. Further resources are invested through Re-imaging Communities, the Creative Industries Innovation fund, the Cultural Olympiad initiative and Connections, a £1.78 million programme funded by Legacy Trust UK, an independent charity set up to help build a cultural and sporting legacy from the 2012 Olympic Games. The Creative and Cultural Skills Council is also based at ACNI – providing a link between industry, government and education to identify skills gaps and develop solutions.

ACNI is currently conducting a mid-term evaluation of its 5 year strategy.

### Integrated Cultural Strategy 2007 – 2010

Belfast City Council's Integrated Cultural Strategy was developed following extensive consultation and has been implemented in partnership with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure. It has moved culture and arts to a more central position on the urban regeneration agenda.

Key outputs have been:

- the establishment of Multiannual Funding for flagship cultural organisations to introduce greater sustainability
- the development of a public art framework and installation of a series of public art pieces through the Artist in Residence
- the creation and support of a Festivals Forum for the City through delivery of a Festivals Action Plan
- delivery of the 'Test Drive the Arts' initiative in partnership with Audiences NI to remove barriers to accessing the arts for people living in the most deprived areas of Belfast
- Capacity building training with A&B
- Establishment of the Cultural Capital Infrastructure Fund

Belfast City Council has a close working relationship with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in a number of areas including:

- RISE – the landmark sculpture for Broadway Roundabout by Wolfgang Buttress
- Reimaging Communities and Renewing the Routes Public Art
- Culture Night – ACNI and Belfast City Council each invested £25K in this highly successful pilot festival in September 2009 providing free, family focused arts and cultural events in Cathedral Quarter
- Nashville – since 2009 ACNI has sat on the Belfast Nashville Sister Cities Steering Group

- Test Drive the Arts / Audience Development

And there will be further partnership work taking place in 2010 on Music and Literary Tourism initiatives.

We would now recommend that Belfast City Council agrees a process for engagement with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in developing the new Integrated Cultural Strategy for Belfast.

#### Cultural Infrastructure

Three key infrastructure projects are receiving support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland:

- £1.45m towards the £7.2m refurbishment of the Crescent Arts Centre, which when it reopens in Spring 2010, will have twice the amount of space available previously.
- £5.25m towards the new £17.5 million MAC arts centre in Cathedral Quarter. When it opens in 2011, the six storey high centre will house two theatres, a large visual space, dance and rehearsal studios, café and public access areas. (BCC contribution £550k approximately)
- £2.25m towards the new £18m Lyric Theatre. Scheduled to open in 2011, the new six storey venue will house new auditoria, a flexible performance studio, lobby areas and bars. (BCC contribution £1.25m)

ACNI is also currently lobbying for the creation of a National Gallery for Northern Ireland.

The Arts Council has also worked with Belfast City Council to provide support for the Black Box as a temporary cultural space in Cathedral Quarter in the interim period whilst the new MAC is built.

Some questions/discussion topics attached as Appendix 4.

#### **Resource Implications**

There are no resource implications.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee seeks to agree a process for engagement with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in developing the new Integrated Cultural Strategy for Belfast.

#### **Decision Tracking**

A process for developing the new Integrated Cultural Strategy for Belfast will be developed by March 2010.

Date: March 2010

Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

**Key Abbreviations**

A&B – Arts and Business

ACNI – Arts Council of Northern Ireland

CAL – Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

DCAL – Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure

MAC – Metropolitan Arts Centre

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 - Recommendations from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure Inquiry into the Funding of the arts in Northern Ireland

Appendix 2 - Breakdown of Local Authority per capita spend on the arts

Appendix 3 - Pen Portrait of Roisin McDonough, Chief Executive Arts Council of Northern Ireland & Council Members

Appendix 4 - Suggested Questions/Discussion Topics

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