



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	RPA Transfer of Funding for Local Arts
<b>Date:</b>	9 March 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kerrie Sweeney, Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager, ext 3586

### Relevant Background Information

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure wrote to Belfast City Council on 18 January 2010, regarding the transfer of local arts to the new councils under RPA. This correspondence is attached as Appendix 1. In summary, their proposal is as follows:

- Funding for local arts to be transferred to the new district council by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- Allocations for Belfast and Derry to be weighted to take account of their strategic positions; however, it is also the intention to disburse funding for local arts more equitably across the new councils
- A potential requirement from new councils to match allocation of funding for local arts as per the Community Festivals Fund
- ACNI current allocation in 2009–2010 for local arts in Belfast is £628,024 and the proposed allocation under RPA is £322,372 (a 50% reduction). This figure is based on allocation by population with a 10% deprivation weighting to Belfast and Londonderry/Strabane.

DCAL's proposed definitions for local, regional and national arts are as follows:

- Local arts is operating within its own boundary
- Regional is operating beyond its own council boundary but within Northern Ireland
- National is operating within Northern Ireland and touring/offering programmes to the rest of the United Kingdom and/or Republic of Ireland

DCAL is recommending that the Arts Council of Northern Ireland will lead on regional and national arts.

### Key Issues

Belfast's unique position is not addressed in this proposal.

Belfast City Council plays a unique role in Northern Ireland's culture and arts infrastructure as many of the regional and national arts are based in the city and are currently supported by both Belfast City Council and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Belfast City Council invests £1.3 million per annum into approximately 73 culture and arts organisations. This funding sustains 295 full-time jobs; 134 part-time jobs; 1278 freelance; and 553 voluntary posts. The Council's subvention accounts for an average 11.7% of the organisations' annual income which represents a return on investment of 1:7. The total audience and participation figure for funded organisations is 6,184,305. Most other councils across Northern Ireland invest in the arts through purpose-built council owned venues – the majority do not tend to operate culture and arts funding programmes.

Whilst Belfast-based arts organisations run programmes in Belfast, they also extend these across Northern Ireland (in the case of theatre productions and other performances, this means that they often pay other councils for the use of their local arts centre). In many instances, the audience attracted to Belfast-based events are from outside of the Belfast area. This is reflected in the annual audience/participant figures of over 6million. A list of organisations that we support through Annual and Multi-annual Funding is attached as Appendix 2. This highlights which organisations are local, regional or national based on the definitions provided by DCAL.

In relation to local arts, while the move to assign this responsibility to Belfast City Council is welcome, the level of funding should remain consistent with that previously given to the local arts sector in the city, i.e. £628,024, not £322,372. Given the considerable investment that Belfast City Council makes already, we would have no additional funding to address any reductions in support to local arts unless the Arts Council increases its investment in regional/national arts, allowing the Council to redirect its funding.

Belfast City Council is also making considerable investment in capital projects, such as the Lyric (£1.25m) and MAC (£550k) to develop the cultural infrastructure of the city. This is not recognized within this proposal.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

None

#### Human Resources

This will be covered within the work programme of the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and agree that the Outline Response in Appendix 3 be forwarded to DCAL.

### **Decision Tracking**

DCAL will receive a response to its proposals by letter following Committee approval.

Timeframe: March 2010

Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

<b>Documents Attached</b>
Appendix 1 - Copy of letter
Appendix 2 - List of organisations funded by Belfast City Council
Appendix 3 - Outline Response to DCAL

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