



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	MTV Belfast Music Week
<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
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### Relevant Background Information

#### Tourism, Culture and Arts – Music Tourism

Members will be aware that the final draft Integrated Strategic Framework for Belfast Tourism 2010-2015 identifies high profile events as a development lever to establish a strong reputation as a vibrant capital city with unique and exciting experiences that, once visited and enjoyed, will compel return visits time and time again. The strategy's new product development highlights that music tourism should be developed, packaged and promoted as an authentic experience to ensure that Belfast has a competitive edge.

At a Development Committee Meeting held on 10 December 2008, Members noted that Visit Britain's research shows that 21% of potential visitors are inspired to choose a destination because of the music or bands of that country, and approved a Music Tourism Action Plan in order to celebrate Belfast's rich musical heritage. Belfast's music receives high international praise and our latest generation of musicians are playing a crucial role in revitalising the city. The series of products included the Belfast Music Coach Tour, the Belfast Music Exhibition at the Oh Yeah Centre, a new music listings website [Belfastmusic.org](http://Belfastmusic.org), the first ever i-phone application for music, and international showcasing and marketing of Belfast's musicians in Nashville and SxSW (South by South West). The plan has been significantly enhanced through the successful application to NITB's (Northern Ireland Tourist Board) Tourism Innovation Fund which contributed a further £138,750 and new partnerships that have been formed with ACNI (Arts Council of Northern Ireland), BBC and Tourism Ireland.

A recent report 'Exploring the Music Festival Tourism Market', commissioned by NITB using Mintel, highlighted that music is a key part of our cultural offering, and foreign and domestic tourists now spend in excess of £100 million on cultural and recreational events in NI each year.

This includes domestic tourists spend of over £32 million on tickets to concerts and music festivals. Tourism Ireland launched their 2010 Marketing Plans in Belfast in December 2009 and identified Music Tourism as a key driver for Belfast.

#### Creative Industries – Music Development

Members will be aware that BCC's current Local Economic Development Plan includes the following key themes: Business Competitiveness, Talent and Community Economic Regeneration. The new local economic development plan states that in order for Belfast to stay competitive it must nurture those sectors which can create high value-added products and bring new wealth to the city. The Creative Industries is one of major significance for Belfast as it is one of the most rapidly growing sectors. After extensive consultation from the private sector, BCC identified that there needs to be increased emphasis placed on the key sectors of Film & Television, Digital Media, Music, and Design. Priority areas for BCC include the provision of tailored information, guidance and mentoring with regard to business start up and business development. Other key areas identified include access to finance, sales and international marketing, infrastructure and export development.

The Music sector in Belfast has grown significantly over the past three years and now plays a key role in the overall economic development of the city. With a rise in musicians and bands making waves in the international marketplace and new and innovative music businesses based in Belfast, BCC is playing a supportive role for this industry.

With the demise of the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission in November 2009, BCC has been playing a crucial supportive role for the music sector in Belfast, specifically with participation at the prestigious South by Southwest Media Conference and showcase. The SxSW project is deemed as one of the most ambitious and successful showcasing events to date in relation to the creative industries and returns of over \$500,000 are leveraged each year for participating artists.

#### **Key Issues**

The Tourism, Culture and Arts, Creative Industries and Events Units have been investigating the opportunity to partner with MTV in order to deliver a Belfast Music Week with a final A-List Concert to showcase Belfast's talent on the world stage and promote Belfast as a world-class music destination. MTV is the world's largest television network, the leading multimedia brand for youth and are experts at staging international events. It reaches over 213 million households in Europe through 28 different MTV channels and they receive 8 million unique visitors each month to MTVN Music websites. 65% of MTV's adult viewers in Europe are aged 15-34.

The aims of the initiative are:

- To host a world-class music event in September 2010 in partnership with MTV.
- To attract an audience of 6000, 1500 of which are out-of-state, to generate an overall direct income of £719, 360 to Belfast.
- To gain the equivalent of £9million media coverage for Belfast aimed at actively travelling young adults.
- To showcase and strengthen Belfast's position on the world stage as a primary destination for music, entertainment and culture.

- To increase the profile of Belfast as an exciting weekend break destination to actively travelling young adults across UK, ROI and Europe.
- To establish Belfast on all new media platforms via MTV.
- To increase visitor satisfaction levels of Belfast's cultural offer from 39% to 45%
- To promote and enhance a confident, positive, exciting image of Belfast through delivering world-class events
- To host the MTV EMA's in 2012.
- To bring together all sectors of the community from Belfast and across the region whilst improving community cohesion

Satellite gigs would take place in music venues across Belfast leading up to a free ticketed A list event in the grounds of City Hall. This is the first year of a three year event plan. The key objective is to put Belfast on everyone's destination wish list, ahead of our competitors. MTV's industry knowledge, experience to maximize an event of this nature and their connections will ensure that top level talent can be secured that will garner the most interest and media coverage.

This event will profile Belfast as a world-class music destination, a place which has a new, modern and exciting future. We will concentrate on the promotion of our indigenous musicians to show our rich musical heritage, thriving contemporary musical scene and promote and highlight our distinctiveness.

Through our Creative Industries programme, we will continue to showcase Northern Ireland's music talent in the international marketplace to highlight Belfast and its artists to the widest international audience, and contribute to creative industries by increasing the number of Belfast musicians doing business internationally.

This event offers the opportunity to leverage an internationally recognized brand and build a relationship with MTV. The brand recognition associated with MTV will provide a global marketing reach coupled with a kudos that is taken seriously by the target audience and key consumer groups.

This event and the surrounding programming that will be broadcast on the MTV network will provide the opportunity to show that NI is a modern and young destination that is 'confidently moving on'. Our audience is 'authentic' and planned programming including a rock history of Belfast and vignettes of locals will be broadcast which will demonstrate all of the above and our authenticity. Such programming and vignettes will allow us to uncover our stories and let others experience our awakening.

The prestige associated with the MTV brand means that we can reach demographics both internationally and locally that we have not had the opportunity to reach before. This is key to developing the youth market, especially in terms of Europe and easily reaching an international market with an event of international stand out appeal.

We will focus on the 15 – 34 years market and any consumer across Europe with an interest in contemporary music.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Finance

The overall budget for this project is £500,000. MTV have confirmed they will secure £250,000 through commercial sponsorship. The remaining budget will be committed from the Events budget (£80,000 was approved at February's Development Committee) and £170,000 has been applied for from DCAL's Major Events Fund. A

decision on this will be made in March 2010.

### **Recommendations**

Subject to DCAL's Major Events Funding being secured, it is recommended that Members note the contents of the report and agree to:

- Endorse the event
- Approach the P & R Committee for use of the City Hall grounds on 18 September 2010
- Officers approaching further partners, including DETI, ACNI, NITB, Tourism Ireland, NI Screen and commercial sponsors, in order to leverage further funding for Belfast Music Week.

### **Decision Tracking**

Further to ratification, an update will be brought to Committee regarding the outcome of the application to DCAL's Major Events Fund.

Time line: April 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1: Economic Analysis of Liverpool's MTV Music Week

### **Key to Abbreviations**

NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board  
SxSW – South by South West  
ACNI – Arts Council of Northern Ireland