



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Culture Night
<b>Date:</b>	14 April 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

### Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that at a meeting of the Development Committee held on Tuesday 9 March 2010, Committee agreed to defer for one month consideration of a report regarding Culture Night 2010 to enable the officers to discuss with the organisers the Council's position that the event should be delivered across the City and in particular on the arterial routes rather than being restricted to the city centre.

Culture Night 2009 far surpassed expectations with galleries, artists studios, venues, cultural organisations, historic buildings, churches and creative businesses having offered over 100 performances, talks, tours, presentations, films, exhibitions and workshops for audiences of all ages, highlighting the Cathedral Quarter as a thriving cultural hub and giving the public the opportunity to meet the artists and learn about what they have to offer throughout the year.

To complement the core activities programmed by participating organisations and businesses and to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, the Culture Night organisers animated the streets and public spaces of Cathedral Quarter with live music, walk about performers, exhibitions, circus performances, giant puppets and more. An estimated 15,000 people attended. Please see attached a full evaluation in Appendix 2.

The overall concept of Culture Night fits well within Belfast City Council's current strategies. Under the theme of Good Relations, the one night event promotes a unique opportunity of shared cultural space within the city centre, attracting a broad mix of audiences (in 2009, it is worth noting that the event attracted a large number of families with young children). The final draft Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework for Belfast 2010 – 2014 identifies culture and arts as the 'essence of Belfast' and one of the main priorities is to explore ways in which to engage with the sector and develop greater visitor access to culture and arts activities. Culture Night provides a unique opportunity to showcase Belfast's culture and arts product to not only local citizens but visitors. The current Integrated Cultural Strategy for Belfast, produced in partnership with the Arts Council for Northern Ireland, identifies that the culture and arts sector can

often be fragmented, however key events such as Culture Night develops partnerships across the sector, promotes cross selling and strengthens their overall capacity to deliver. Culture Night also contributes to the general development of the City's Evening Economy.

### **Key Issues**

Following further discussions to ensure the Council's position that the event should be delivered across the City, the organisers have developed a network of partners capable of showcasing work across the city. Please see Appendix 1 for details. They have since gained preliminary commitments from the Gaeltacht Quarter, Queen's Quarter, Waterfront, Library Quarter and will be seeking input from the Titanic Quarter.

Events in these areas will be programmed so that they will not compete with each other or dilute the impact of the city's cultural offering. The organisers will also ensure that audiences from the widest geographical area of Belfast have every opportunity to access core activities by brokering new relationships with transport providers such as Translink.

Should the Development Committee agree to the request from Belfast Culture Night Committee to support the event in 2010, the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit will work with the organisers to ensure that the above objectives will be met as conditions of funding.

As in 2009 the Arts Council NI has been approached to match the request to BCC.

### **Resource Implications**

Match funding of £25,000 to be allocated in 2010/2011 from within the existing Departmental budgets

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to provide support for Culture Night 2010 of match funding of no more than £25,000. This has been included and approved within the Departmental estimates 2010/2011.

### **Decision Tracking**

Further to ratification payment of no more than £25,000 be made towards the Belfast Culture Night 2010.

Time line: May 2010

Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 - Letter to the Development Committee  
Appendix 2 - Evaluation of Culture Night 2009