



19<sup>th</sup> March, 2010

RE: Culture Night Belfast 2010

Councillor William Humphrey  
Chair, Development Committee  
Belfast City Council

Dear Councillor Humphrey,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further information about how Culture Night can expand in 2010. We understand that the Development Committee has discussed our funding request and is concerned about expansion plans for the event.

The Culture Night Belfast committee looks forward to broadening participation to include activities that are supportive of and complementary to a re-integration of Belfast's cultural life focused on shared space in the city centre. In other cities, Culture Nights typically radiate from the city's cultural heart. For Belfast's Culture Night to grow into a distinctive annual event based on this model we need to develop a network of partners committed to supporting a concentrated core event as well as showcasing the rich cultural diversity of the city.

The key to the success of Culture Night 2009 was the concentration of cultural activity in Cathedral Quarter, enabling the public to walk from one event to another, taking in as much as the journey's path allowed. Our goal is to promote this kind of shared experience and to encourage cultural exploration and experimentation. As organisers, we also have a responsibility to drive footfall to the activities that participating groups and venues contribute to the programme.

We propose two types of expansion for the 2010 event. We are currently assisting organisations based in other parts of the city to host activities in Cathedral Quarter by, for example, offering them stage time in the marquee in Custom House Square. We are also proposing that interested organisations outside Cathedral Quarter consider programming an activity in tandem with a Cathedral Quarter-based activity and/or schedule an activity earlier in the evening so that participants and audiences can then travel to Cathedral Quarter and attend the night's activity there. Doing so will allow new partners to experience more of Culture Night themselves, and will avoid parallel programming that could dilute the impact of the concentrated core event.

## Appendix 1

We have gained preliminary commitments from Gaeltacht Quarter, Belfast Festival at Queens, Trans Festival and Library Quarter to help us develop these proposals for the 2010 event. We will be seeking similar input from Queens Quarter, Titanic Quarter and others. In promoting the neutrality of the Cathedral Quarter's shared space, we are offering the most accessible means for the public to attend as many events as possible.

This expansion of Culture Night will require additional administration, management and marshalling in order to match the expectations of participating organisations and stay within available resources and capacity. We also wish to broker a new relationship with Translink, so that participants from the widest geographical area of Belfast have every opportunity to access core activities.

We are delighted that other organisations are keen to take part and open their doors to the public. We wish to harness that good will and the incredible opportunity it represents to maximise the impact and benefit to not only arts and cultural producers but to the citizens of Belfast.

We look forward to working with the Development Officers in Belfast City Council to deliver a successful event which will increase our cultural tourism offering to visitors and highlight the depth, vitality and diversity that the city's cultural life represents.

Yours Sincerely,

Culture Night Belfast Committee