



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Special Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Culture Night Presentation
<b>Date:</b>	21 June 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 on 12 May 2010, Committee agreed to defer the consideration of a report in relation to Culture Night 2010 to enable a special meeting to be held. Culture Night organisers have been invited to provide details of how they intend to deliver the 2010 programme, particularly along the city's arterial routes.

Members will also be aware that at the Development Committee meeting on 13 May 2009, approval was given to provide match funding of £25,000 to support a pilot Belfast Culture Night 2009.

Culture Night 2009 far surpassed expectations, with 100 galleries, artists studios, venues, cultural organisations, historic buildings, churches and creative businesses providing over 100 performances, talks, tours, presentations, films, exhibitions and workshops for audiences of all ages. This promoted the Cathedral Quarter as a thriving cultural hub, giving the public the opportunity to meet artists and learn about what cultural organisations 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 at appendix 1.

The 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, 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 not only to local citizens, but to 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 develop partnerships across the sector, promoting cross-selling and strengthening its overall capacity to deliver. Culture Night also contributes to the general development of the City’s Evening Economy.

Culture Night 2010 will promote Belfast as a vibrant cultural space, welcoming and accessible to all. The event will coincide with a series of Culture Nights taking place in other European cities.

### **Key Issues**

Culture Night brings together arts and cultural organisations, the hospitality industry and local businesses to provide a free, family-focused arts and cultural event. The Cathedral Quarter will host the core of activities, with satellite events taking place throughout the city.

Following discussions with Councillors, Council officers and key stakeholders, Culture Night organisers have recruited partner organisations in the Shankill and in North, South, East and West Belfast who will showcase the rich cultural diversity of these areas and the city as a whole. Culture Night organisers will also continue to seek additional arterial partners in the run up to the event. Further information on these proposals is available at appendix 2.

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 Committee agree to provide funding towards Culture Night, the Council’s Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit will work with Culture Night organisers to ensure that the Council’s objectives to deliver on arterial routes are met as a condition of funding.

As in 2009, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland has been approached to match the request of £25,000 to Belfast City Council.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

Match funding of £25,000 has been included and approved within the Departmental budget for 2010–11.

#### Human Resources

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

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee consider match funding of no more than £25,000 towards Culture Night 2010.

**Decision Tracking**

Further to Council ratification, payment will be made towards the cost of Culture Night 2010.

Time line: July 2010 Reporting Officer: Kerry Sweeney

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 - Evaluation of Culture Night 2009  
Appendix 2 - Culture Night 2010 proposal