



<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>South by Southwest 2012</b>
<b>Date:</b>	8 November 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been playing a key role in supporting the development of the creative industries in Belfast, since 2004, with a key focus on the film, television, digital media, music and design sectors.
1.2	A key project within this support plan has been participation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) music and media conference in Austin, Texas. SXSW is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business which takes place in Austin, Texas each year. It involves a conference and exhibition as well as a series of pre-arranged meetings and music shows. The 2012 event will be held from 12-17 March 2012.
1.3	Over the course of the last three years, we have helped local musicians and music businesses to secure new contracts to the value of more than \$500,000 with international labels and publishing companies. These include international partnership agreements between music publishers; US licensing deals for local bands and contracts with broadcasters for the use of local music in their programmes.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The creative industries have been identified in a number of recent economic strategies and studies as being central to the future economic growth of Northern Ireland. Recent research undertaken by Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) suggests that gross value added (GVA) for the sector was almost £800million. There are over 2,500 creative businesses employing in excess of

	<p>30,000 people. The majority of creative businesses are based in Belfast and recent investments in the creative infrastructure – e.g. development of two new studios at Titanic Quarter, redevelopment of Paint Hall studios – are central to capitalising on this potential growth.</p>
2.2	<p>Belfast City Council's work in supporting creative businesses has focused on business development initiatives, capability development programmes and infrastructure investment. South by Southwest is a key business development initiative for companies in the priority sectors of Film, Television, Digital Media, Music and Design.</p>
2.3	<p>In recent years, Belfast City Council has been part of a collaborative attendance at SXSW by partners from Northern Ireland. Other organisations taking part include Invest NI and DCAL. This has proved to be a cost-effective method of engagement and has enhanced the profile of the individual companies and organisations taking part.</p>
2.4	<p>Discussions are currently under way with DCAL, Invest NI and Digital Derry – an umbrella organisation bringing together infrastructure and production companies working in the digital sector in the city of Derry/Londonderry – with a view to planning a potential collaborative presence at SXSW in 2012.</p>
2.5	<p>To date, funding has been secured from Invest Northern Ireland to enable 15 digital media companies and 15 music businesses to participate as business delegates on the investment visit. DCAL have offered funding in relation to the overall project management of the trade mission while Digital Derry have secured funding to help contribute to the conference exhibition stand, attendance by musicians and contribution towards the hire of the venue for the networking events.</p>
2.6	<p>In order to increase the number of Belfast-based organisations taking part in the event, it is proposed that up to £20,000 be set aside from the Council's creative industries budget to match the funding already in place from the other partners. This will be used towards costs for the hire of the exhibition stand, networking venue, PR, marketing and delegate passes.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u> Up to £20,000 requested from Belfast City Council to contribute to the overall budget for the delegation. The financial allocation has been set aside as part of creative industries budget for the current financial year.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	<p>There are no specific equality and good relations considerations attached to this report.</p>

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the proposals to engage in a collaborative trade mission to the SXSW event in Austin, Texas in March 2012</li> <li>- Approve a budget of up to £20,000 towards costs for Belfast-based participants and shared costs for the conference, exhibition and networking event.</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
<p>Progress report on outcomes will be presented to Committee in June 2012.</p> <p>Timeframe: June 2012 <span style="float: right;">Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay</span></p>	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
<p>DCAL – Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure  SXSW – South by South West</p>	