



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Creative Industries
Date:	21 August 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3463

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been playing a key role in the development of the creative industries since 2004, (with a key focus on film, television, digital media, music and design) and the sector has been identified as a priority area of work for the Council's Economic Development team.
1.2	The Department of Culture, Media and Sport have defined the creative industries as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent, and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property." This definition is being used by cities who have placed the sector as an economic priority, such as London and Edinburgh, and is the definition adopted by Belfast City Council.
1.3	For some time now, the creative industries have been on the policy agenda in Northern Ireland in one guise or another. From the economic growth potential of the sector to recognition of the value of cultural tourism, the creative sector has long been considered a valid and important focus for policy and action.
1.4	The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government 2011-15 includes a commitment to support innovation in creative industries through the Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF).
1.5	The Northern Ireland Economic Strategy outlines measures to boost the level of innovation and R&D across the NI economy, as well as investing in skills and the economic infrastructure that can support future growth. Within this, a number of areas are of particular relevance to the creative industries:

1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the focus on innovation within SMEs, and on collaborative models of innovation, priorities that fit well with innovation models and needs in the creative sector; – emphasis on export growth and engagement in international markets; – investment in telecommunications infrastructure, an area of crucial importance for the creative industries; – the wider role of creativity in boosting innovation and economic competitiveness; and – the identification of tourism as a key opportunity for the province, again an area in which the creative industries have an important contribution to make. <p>In line with the new regional economic strategy, we have taken the opportunity to review our support for the creative sector and, in conjunction with our partners, have developed a draft strategy and support plan for this work over the next three years.</p>
-----	---

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Since 2008, Belfast City Council has delivered over 35 industry specific projects covering areas such as games development, intellectual property, trade missions and meet the buyer events, targeting specifically the film, tv, digital media, music and design sectors. We have also developed numerous partnerships to help drive the creative agenda for Belfast forward and to ensure a collaborative approach to the development and support of this sector.</p>
2.2	<p>Council's activity to date has been focused on the following three broad areas:</p> <p><u>Business development and growth - 'Creative Economy.'</u> Covering issues such as increased start-up and growth initiatives for target companies.</p> <p><u>Capability development – 'Creative Talent.'</u> Covering issues such as supply and demand, training services and facilities, increased liaison between university and industry, mentoring approaches, retraining and attracting indigenous talent.</p> <p><u>Infrastructure development – 'Creative Space.'</u> Covering issues such as incubation and all aspects of physical and cyber networking and clustering.</p> <p>Highlights of our work and support in this sector over the past three years include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Over £2 million of new business secured for local companies – Raised over £500,000 funding from external sources – Created 47 jobs – Supported over 400 companies through networking and business development programmes – 17 new companies supported through the development of Blick Studios

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Over 550 businesses supported through the MTV European Music Awards and Belfast Music Week 2011 industry programme
2.3	To facilitate and influence our future support for the sector, it was necessary to evaluate what we have done in the past and to determine what role Council should play in the future development of the sector.
2.4	EKOS consulting Ltd were appointed to evaluate the work previously undertaken and to develop a new creative industries strategy and action plan for the Council that will help provide the road map in realising Belfast City Council's role – alongside that of other partners - in the future development of the sector. A summary of the report is attached in Appendix 1.
2.5	After consultation with the private sector and the key third party stakeholder organisations, a summary of the key findings and recommendations are outlined below.
2.6	90% of all those that were consulted reported that the support they received from Belfast City Council to be essential/important in helping to develop the sector as a whole and the Council is seen as a trusted partner to the local industry. The greatest impact reported was an increase in turnover among participating companies, a key target and outcome for Council's work in this sector. Following on from this, companies felt that the stated impacts would not have happened at all, or were unlikely to, if support from the Council was not available.
2.7	Other impacts reported as a result from Council's support for the sector are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New industry contacts identified – Access to new funding opportunities – Expansion into new markets – Greater confidence in implementing change – Greater confidence to grow as a business
2.8	Companies suggested that there was a need to simplify the business support provision and that the Council should focus its efforts on a smaller number of initiatives with more impact.
2.9	In moving forward, industry were asked to identify the key areas of intervention for future support and this has been outlined as follows:
2.10	<u>Support for micro-businesses/start-ups</u> This includes working with universities and colleges to encourage more wealth-generating creative start ups and providing specialised mentoring to small creative companies.
2.11	<u>Infrastructure development</u> This includes promoting the investment from the super connected cities work and investigating new facilities such as the creative hub.
2.12	<u>Strategic co-ordination at city level</u> This includes ongoing collaboration with key agencies to identify and agree priority areas of focus across the sector.

2.13	Members are being asked to note the attached report and to approve the content and financial resources of the Creative industries action plan in Appendix 2.
2.14	The total cost for programme delivery is estimated at £210,000 and with 75% of this cost to be secured through the European Regional Development Fund and partner organisations.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> Request for £210,000 to the development and implementation of creative industries related projects, of which £52,500 will be funded by Belfast City Council.
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> To be delivered by Creative Industries Officer

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no specific Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	To note the creative industries research and strategy report and approve the creative industries action plan 2012 and allocate £52,500 to identified projects and services estimated to total £210,000.

6	Decision Tracking
There is no decision tracking attached to this report.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
CIIF - Creative Industries Innovation Fund	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Executive Summary and Recommendations – Creative Industries Belfast City Council Appendix 2 – Creative Industries Action Plan 2012	