



**Report to:** Development Committee

**Subject:** **Cartoon Finance Conference 2013**

**Date:** 9 April 2013

**Reporting Officer:** John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

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<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 element of the Council's investment programme is to help support the development of the key growth sectors in Belfast and with the recent investments in the film, television and animation sectors, Belfast is rapidly building a profile as a growth area in these industries.
1.3	Invest Northern Ireland and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) are currently working on a proposal to bring a major conference to Belfast in November and have approached BCC to explore their interest in being a partner in this venture.
1.4	'Cartoon Finance' is one of four global business events that CARTOON, the European Association of Animation Film, has been organising for the last 24 years with the support of the MEDIA Programme of the European Union
1.5	The Cartoon Finance conference regularly attracts around 250 European animation professionals and addresses topics around sources of financing and how producers can increase revenues from their animated TV series. Public and private funding, new business models, licensing and merchandising, legal issues are also explored to allow professionals to capitalise on their investment and maximise opportunities for economic return.

<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. The majority of creative businesses are based in Belfast and recent investments in the creative infrastructure – e.g. opening of two new studios at Titanic Quarter, redevelopment of Paint Hall studios – are central to capitalising on this potential growth.
2.2	Belfast City Council’s work in supporting creative businesses has focused on business development initiatives, capability development programmes and infrastructure investment. With the growing importance and investment in the local animation and television industry and the development of new animation and visual FX courses in our colleges and universities, there exists a real opportunity for Belfast to become a centre of excellence in this field. Hosting a renowned conference such as Cartoon Finance, will help further Belfast in achieving this ambition.
2.3	Cartoon Finance is a 2 and half-day conference that is aimed at covering financing topics linked to animation TV series. Around 17 – 20 speakers from the professional world come and present on a range of topics with the aim of exploring ways to diversify sources of financing and increase revenues for animated TV series.
2.4	Cartoon Finance has been running for more than 20 years and has taken place in many cities around Europe with last year’s event hosted in Dublin with great success.
2.5	By hosting the Cartoon Finance conference in Belfast, local animation companies will have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills, and help them understand the market to maximise the return of their productions. The conference will also provide the opportunity for local studios and production companies to attend high level training at a reduced cost and animation students also have the opportunity to attend the sessions and face the key issues of the industry.
2.6	The conference offers the opportunity to promote Belfast as an investment location for the creative sector and also enables local businesses in this sector to present the leading-edge initiatives in which they are engaged.
2.7	The total cost of hosting the Cartoon Finance Conference is 60,000 euros. Invest Northern Ireland and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure have each committed 20,000 euros to help bring the event to Belfast and have approached Belfast City Council to confirm whether we can make a similar allocation towards the event.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>It is recommended that Belfast City Council support the funding for the conference up to a maximum of 20,000 euros, with match funding provided by Invest Northern Ireland and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
	No specific equality and good relations considerations.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the contents of report.</li> <li>- Approve a maximum of 20,000 euros to hosting Cartoon Finance in Belfast from the 27 – 29 November 2013.</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	Progress report on outcomes to be presented to Committee in December 2013.