



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Consultation: Arts Council Five-year Strategic Plan

Date: 23 April 2013

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

Contact Officers: Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>The Council has been asked to respond to the public consultation on Ambitions for the Arts: A Five-year Strategic Plan for the Arts in Northern Ireland 2013–18. The strategy aims to build on recent success and increase the contribution of arts to the economy, social inclusion and equality, health, education and the environment. In particular, it aims to deepen the value of arts to individuals and wider society; target resources to meet social and community challenges; deliver improved access; reach new audiences and enhance community engagement.</p>
1.2	<p>There are three main themes within the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Champion the Arts– Promote Access– Create a resilient sector
1.3	<p>There are seven main ambitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– To place high-quality arts projects within the grasp of socially excluded groups– To support individual artists– To core fund arts organisations– To help arts organisations deliver benefits to our community– To build partnerships– To support skills development– To encourage voluntary activities in the arts
1.4	<p>The draft strategy and equality impact assessment are attached in the appendix and also available online:</p> <p>http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/compliance/2012-2013/strategic_plan_consultation_draft.pdf</p>

	http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/compliance/2012-2013/eqia_consultation_document.pdf
1.5	We were made aware of the consultation on 30 Jan 2013 and comments are required to be returned by the 29 April 2013.
1.6	The consultation documents were distributed to officers across Council and their responses have been included in the provisional draft response attached as Appendix 3.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Council Officers attended a consultation session with the Arts Council and arts sector on 9 April 2013. The reaction to the draft strategy was negative, and the sector stated that it had not been consulted prior to the publication of the public consultation document. Belfast City Council's consultation on the Cultural Framework for Belfast, published October 2012, was cited by the sector as an example of best practice.
2.2	While we acknowledge the concerns of the arts sector and some of these issues are reflected in the draft consultation response (Appendix 3), we also recognise that a strategy by its nature is top-line and that it does offer numerous opportunities for partnership working. If the Arts Council succeeds in gaining the buy-in of the sector and we work together to achieve shared aims, Ambitions for the Arts is considered likely to have a positive impact on the city and the sector.
2.3	Members are asked to review the Council's draft response to the Arts Council's public consultation included at Appendix 3 and raise any additional issues related to the consultation document they would like include.

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations implications attached to this report.

4	Recommendations
4.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report and approve the draft response to the Arts Council's consultation on Ambitions for the Arts.

5	Decision Tracking
Timeline: 29 April 2013	
Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay	

6	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - Ambitions for the Arts: A Five-year Strategic Plan for the Arts in Northern Ireland 2013–18 (Arts Council of Northern Ireland 2013).	
Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment of the Ambitions for the Arts: A Five-year Strategic Plan for the Arts in Northern Ireland 2013–18 (Arts Council of Northern Ireland 2013).	
Appendix 3 - Draft response to the public consultation on Ambitions for the Arts.	