| Report to: | Development Committee |
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| Subject: | Creative Industries Update |
| Date: | 14 January 2014 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 |
| Contact Officers: | Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459 |

| 1 | Relevant Background Information |
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| 1.1 | Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been playing a key role in supporting the development of the Creative, Digital and Technology sectors in Belfast, since 2004, through the work of the Economic Development Unit including the Council's Super Connected Cities project and Belfast Tech - the first Council led trade mission to the west coast of America. |
| 1.2 | To continue to support this high growth sector and build on the momentum created through the Belfast Tech Mission, we are now in the process of developing a series of new initiatives for 2014. |
| 1.3 | The recent Belfast Tech mission saw over 50 SMEs apply for 20 places to participate and resulted in new sales, clients and partnerships secured among local companies and venture capital organisations and businesses in San Francisco and Silicon Valley.  Following the success of this mission, discussions have taken place with the participating companies, the University of Ulster, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Invest Northern Ireland and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in relation to opportunities for further development and support. |

| 2 | Key Issues |
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| 2.1 | It is now recommended to Members that Belfast City Council take the lead in scoping out and implementing a number of projects which are outlined as below. |
| 2.2 | Health Hack 2014<br>Health Hack NI is a Weekend event that brings together clinicians, developers, designers, business people and other interested parties to work on problems or ideas that improve health.  The 2014 event is due to take place on the 22 and 23 February at the Northern Ireland Science Park and will engage with clinicians (including consultants, GPs, Nursing Staff and NHS managers), technologists and entrepreneurs to produce high quality software that improves health. Clinicians will be encouraged to bring problems and ideas and technologists, their skills.  In advance of the weekend, these ideas and problems will be |

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| | captured, discussed and prioritised using online collaborative tools (e.g., a Wiki). Developers may form teams in advance to address a selected problem or they may be matched with an appropriate clinician on the day. All software will be produced using freely available technologies and will be released to the clinical community on a flexible Open Source license. |
| 2.3 | The project will support 20 local SMEs from the developer community and will help increase engagement between NHS, industry and universities; expose the NHS to applications of modern and emerging technologies and expose industry/students to the real challenges of the NHS. It will also provide good PR for the Council and the Super-connected Belfast project; create reusable technology components for Healthcare and provide opportunities for local SMEs to access new funding through the Small Business Research Initiative with a focus on Health and well being. The total cost of the project is £6050 and is being delivered in partnership with Queen's University and Kainos Software. The finance requested from Council is £4450. |
| 2.4 | Belfast Technology Conference 2014<br>The inaugural Belfast Technology Conference event is due to take place on the 2–4 April 2014 at the Europa Hotel/NYSE Offices and aims to be the premier high tech event of 2014. The event is being organised by Aisling Events Ltd. |
| 2.5 | The aim of the conference is to inform technology professionals and businesses of the emerging technologies and approaches that will allow them to innovate and compete effectively at a global level. It will also educate and inspire kids/parents/teachers about the potential of a career in Technology, thereby building the NI digital skill base and reinforcing Belfast's global lead in this area. |
| 2.6 | Overall, it will showcase the best NI talent and achievements and will illustrate how Belfast is the perfect location to create and grow digital businesses. The conference will bring together tech and business leaders as well as politicians from Belfast, USA and Europe including Julie Hanna, IdeaLab/Socialtext, San Francisco; Mike Bracken, Executive Director of Digital, UK Government, and Sheree Atcheson, Founder Women Who Code, Belfast. |
| 2.7 | "BelTech 2014" will run over 3 days in key Belfast locations and will feature a series of half day Masterclasses and conference keynotes and panels for local tech/digital businesses covering topics such as Big Data and Analytics, Agile Project Delivery, Emerging Technologies and Starting a Tech Business. |
| 2.8 | Outside of the core conference, an exhibition will be held on days 2 and 3 allowing attendees to get a more detailed understanding of the people, products and innovations covered in the conference and a chance for Belfast based tech entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services. BelTech will also provide an opportunity for secondary school children, their parents and teachers to participate in a mix of engaging technology demos and conversational sessions as above. |
| 2.9 | The aims of the conference for local SMEs and for Belfast City Council are as follows:<br><br>- Gain an awareness of emerging technologies and practices that will improve their effectiveness and career development.<br>- Interact with highly successful tech/business leaders and role models<br>- Build their personal network and enhance career prospects<br>- Contribute to building a vibrant Technology community and culture in Belfast and NI. |

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| | - Building on success of Belfast Goes to Silicon Valley in Oct 2013<br>- Enhanced profile for Council as a supporter of Digital skills and opportunities<br>- Contribute to building a vibrant Tech culture in Belfast<br>- Contribute to the delivery of the NI Innovation Strategy<br>- Exemplar event that can be referenced during FDI investment discussions |
| 2.10 | The total cost of the project is £66,000 and other project partners include Invest Northern Ireland, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, University of Ulster and private sector companies.  The finance requested from Council is sponsorship of £15,000 towards the cost of the event. |
| 2.11 | South by Southwest (SXSW) 2014<br>For the past four years, the Council has been part of a delegation that has attended South by Southwest in Austin, Texas with a specific focus on promoting the City's music industry and promoting Belfast as a key investment location. |
| 2.12 | SXSW has seen a significant growth in the digital/tech and film elements of the conference and as such is now seen as key business development initiative for companies in the priority sectors of Film, Television, Digital Media, Music and Design. It involves a conference and exhibition as well as a series of pre-arranged meetings, seminars, networking events and creative showcases.  The 2014 event will be held from 7-16 March. |
| 2.13 | South by Southwest (SXSW) is the premier global event focusing on the creative industries through conference keynotes, City/Regional networking events and conference and exhibition. By day, the 10,000+ conference registrants do business in the SXSW Trade Show in the Austin Convention Centre and partake of a full agenda of informative, provocative panel discussions featuring hundreds of speakers of international stature.  SXSW remains the key US showcasing, deal striking, networking and media forum for the international media industry and attendance at the event remains a key priority for all of those interested in the business of media and creativity. |
| 2.14 | For the 2014 event, Invest Northern Ireland have agreed to support 50% of the costs for local businesses to attend with 20 of these predicted to be from Belfast. In addition, through the new music support programme run by Generator NI, 4 bands/artists will be supported to participate.  To build on the success of the Belfast Tech Mission and Belfast Music Week, it is recommended that Belfast City Council support a networking/demo showcase event and contribution to the exhibition in partnership with UK Trade and Investment. |
| 2.15 | The networking event will take place in Latitude 30, the UK Trade and Investment official venue for the duration of SXSW. The 'Creative Belfast' event will provide the opportunity for participants to showcase their digital content, film and music products to an invited audience of international businesses and provide a 'City' specific platform to showcase selected artists performing at the event. |
| 2.16 | The 'Creative Belfast' event will be the main showcase and networking event for the delegation as part of the conference and local businesses will use the venue and the event as their main meeting and showcase space. The event will also be used as an opportunity to promote Belfast as a whole, specifically under the themes of tourism, creative industries and foreign direct investment, with additional support from Tourism Ireland. |

The event will target key individuals who can help support the growth of participating businesses by developing new partnerships, providing access to capital or creating new networks and distribution channels.

It is proposed that that Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee (or nominees) along with two officers attend the SXSW event and conference. The total cost per delegate for travel, accommodation and conference registration is up to a maximum of £2000. The total amount of finance requested from Council is £20,000, with £3k secured from Tourism Ireland.

| 3 | Resource Implications |
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| 3.1 | Financial<br>Members are asked to approve up to £39,450 towards a number of key support initiatives for the creative industries in the coming year, namely Health Hack 2014, Belfast Technology Conference 2014 and SXSW 2014. |

| 4 | Equality and Good Relations Considerations |
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| 4.1 | There are no specific equality and good relations implications attached to this report. |

| 5 | Recommendations |
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| 5.1 | Members are asked to:<br>- Approve the proposed activities and associated budgets<br>- Approve the attendance of Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee (or nominees) along with two officers |

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

| 7 | Key to Abbreviations |
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| SXSW – South by Southwest<br>NHS – National Health Service<br>NYSE – New York Stock Exchange | |