



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Festival @ Queen's Request
<b>Date:</b>	18 February 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Belfast Festival @ Queen's is an established event in the cultural landscape of the City, 2013 was the 51<sup>st</sup> annual festival.</p> <p>The vision for the festival is:</p> <p>'to provide the best total arts experience in Ireland, portray a positive image of Belfast and act as a catalyst for creative initiative'.</p> <p>The Festival receives £39,000 per year for 3 years (2012 - 2015) via Council's Core Multi-annual Funding programme. This is delivered through the Tourism Culture and Arts Unit. This is supplemented by additional funding from the Parks Department for delivery of events in Botanic Gardens.</p> <p>The festival is aligned with Belfast City Council's Cultural Framework; The vision for the Cultural Framework is that:</p> <p>'By 2020, everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's diverse and distinctive culture and arts. Arts and heritage are valued for enriching quality of life and creating wealth, and the city's culture and creativity is renowned throughout the world.'</p> <p>In support of this vision in 2012-13 Belfast City Council's Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit invested just over £1.4m to support arts activity. The majority of this funding was distributed through the Annual and Multi-annual Funding schemes which gave core support to 53 local arts organisations and in addition, there were three other grant schemes.</p>

Belfast Festival @ Queen's is committed to delivering a positive international cultural profile for Belfast. There is strong evidence that they wish to connect with the distinctiveness of the City and this is apparent within their previous programme.

In total during the 2013 festival 45,924 tickets were distributed.

A total of 28,685 tickets were made available to City residents free-of-charge across 14 events.

Innovative programming included 'Wish' in 2013 which was visible from the air flying into Belfast City Airport.

Belfast Festival @ Queen's is a strong brand in the annual International marketing efforts of Tourism Ireland and Visit Belfast to encourage visitors into the City. The potential is for the festival to have a similar profile to the key festivals in Edinburgh, Dublin, and Manchester. This is an important element in any City's brand proposition.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>																												
	<p>In 2014 Belfast Festival @ Queens has had a major reduction in funding, in the main from its core Sponsor, Ulster' Bank.</p> <p>The reduction from Ulster Bank equates to a £212,500 shortfall from private sector sponsorship. This has created a pressure on finances for the 2014 festival.</p> <p>The festival hosted a meeting of key stakeholders on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February to discuss how the funding shortfall can be addressed.</p> <p>2013-14 funding and projected funding for 2014-15 is as in the table below;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="325 1330 1402 1946"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="325 1330 687 1397"></th> <th data-bbox="687 1330 1046 1397"><b>2013-14</b></th> <th data-bbox="1046 1330 1402 1397"><b>2014-15</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1397 687 1464">Arts Council Northern Ireland</td> <td data-bbox="687 1397 1046 1464">£189,150</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1397 1402 1464">£189,150</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1464 687 1532">Belfast City Council</td> <td data-bbox="687 1464 1046 1532">£57,000 (£39,000 Core Funding)</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1464 1402 1532">£57,000 (£39,000 Core funding)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1532 687 1599">British Council</td> <td data-bbox="687 1532 1046 1599">£30,000</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1532 1402 1599">£30,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1599 687 1666">EU</td> <td data-bbox="687 1599 1046 1666">£80,000</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1599 1402 1666">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1666 687 1733">NI Screen</td> <td data-bbox="687 1666 1046 1733">£55,333</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1666 1402 1733">£60,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1733 687 1800">NITB</td> <td data-bbox="687 1733 1046 1800">£60,000</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1733 1402 1800">£175,000 (TBC after economic appraisal)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1800 687 1868">Ulster Bank</td> <td data-bbox="687 1800 1046 1868">£312,500</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1800 1402 1868">£100,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="325 1868 687 1946">Queens University</td> <td data-bbox="687 1868 1046 1946">£259,011</td> <td data-bbox="1046 1868 1402 1946">£259,011</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	Arts Council Northern Ireland	£189,150	£189,150	Belfast City Council	£57,000 (£39,000 Core Funding)	£57,000 (£39,000 Core funding)	British Council	£30,000	£30,000	EU	£80,000	-	NI Screen	£55,333	£60,000	NITB	£60,000	£175,000 (TBC after economic appraisal)	Ulster Bank	£312,500	£100,000	Queens University	£259,011	£259,011
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	<p>In terms of Belfast City Council's core funding, £39,000 is exactly the same amount of funding granted to comparable festivals such as Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival and Feile.</p> <p>There is a recognition from the Festival Organisers and the wider stakeholder group that there is a need to review the festival. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has agreed to fund this review looking towards a revamped festival in 2015.</p> <p>Part of the review will see the festival adopt a more city- wide approach. There will be more emphasis in engagement with existing festivals such as Feile, East Belfast Arts Festival and the use of venues across the City.</p> <p><b><u>Finances</u></b></p> <p>The total shortfall for the festival at present is £369,821. The application to NITB is for £175,000 and that is currently out to economic appraisal.</p> <p>NITB have indicated that it is likely that the full £175,000 will be secured for the festival with the proviso that the additional funding required is secured from other partners.</p> <p>Arts Council NI and Queens University have been requested to consider a further £50,000 each. Other funders have been asked for a smaller additional amount.</p> <p>The request is that Belfast City Council provides an additional £25,000 towards the delivery of the festival.</p> <p>The £25,000 would be a one-off contribution for 2014. This would in part help fund the transition in 2015 to a more City-wide approach for the festival.</p>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
	<p>The request from the festival organisers is for an additional £25,000 from Belfast City Council for the delivery of the 2014 festival.</p> <p>Core Multi-annual funding is fully committed to the 53 organisations.</p> <p>The additional funding can be found in existing Departmental budgets.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
	There are currently no implications.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	<p>Members consideration is requested as follows;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That £25,000 is agreed to help secure the festival in its current format in 2014, with a view to a reviewed business model being considered in 2015. This is subject to funding being secured from other partners to deliver the festival in its entirety.</li> <li>2. That further discussions be pursued at officer level with regard to the longer term sustainability of the festival</li> </ol>