



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Digital DNA Summit – request for sponsorship
Date:	21 st October 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that a key priority for the Council is development of the Creative, Digital and Technology sectors within the city. To continue to support this high growth sector, the Council supported the Digital DNA Summit in 2013, which was aimed at exploring trends and opportunities in digital media technology and disseminating best practice on how to promote business growth within and outside Northern Ireland.
1.2	Digital DNA was founded in 2013 by the MBA Association of Ireland, in partnership with organisations such as the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, Invest NI and the University of Ulster. The aim of Digital DNA is to provide businesses, organisations and individuals an insight into the role digital technology can play in their success
1.3	The event brought together over 270 local small businesses, predominantly those working in the IT, software and digital sectors. Following the success of the inaugural event in 2013, Digital DNA is hosting a second digital summit in Titanic Belfast and Belfast City Hall over a full week from 3 rd – 7 th November 2014.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The week long summit will include networking events with CultureTech and a tourism conference at the Crumlin Road Gaol which will examine the role of technology in the tourism sector in relation to customer experience, attracting customers and delivering a quality service.
2.2	Organisers have requested a funding contribution from Council of £7,500 compared to 2013 when £2,500 was awarded by the Council. Given budget pressures and the short lead-in time for associated benefits to be accrued from the sponsorship engagement, it is considered that a contribution of £2,500 is

	proportionate to the economic profile the Council will achieve from the 2014 event.
2.3	Speakers confirmed to date include representatives from Google, Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter and Deloitte Digital and the summit will be based on the core themes of informing and inspiring young people (13 – 18yrs old) to understand the opportunities that technology can present and showcasing local SMEs.
2.4	It is recommended that the council supports Digital DNA 2014, with the aim of presenting and promoting the council's super connected cities project and voucher scheme. The timing of the event can also assist the Council in further articulating and evidencing support from within the sector for the CQ Creative Hub development within the city. Equally, it can support work to develop the hospitality sector within Belfast and can link with other activities that the council is supporting to encourage young people to consider careers within the creative and digital sector.
2.5	As part of the sponsorship package, the council will also be able to avail of a number of free places at the event and will benefit from the positive media and communications associated with the event.
2.6	Digital DNA is one of a range of conferences relating to the creative and digital sector that take place in Belfast each year. While they are all very positive in their own right, the competing demands that they place on council budgets when sponsorship is requested means that it is difficult to take a strategic approach to our engagement in these events. It is therefore proposed that a review of the relevant events is undertaken with a view to taking a more strategic and targeted approach to supporting these activities. This may mean some prioritisation of activities and/or establishment of eligibility criteria in order to secure funding and to determine the appropriate level of support required.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	£2,500 from the existing Economic Development Unit budgets.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality and good relations considerations at this stage.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider sponsorship of the Digital DNA event at a cost of £2,500. - Note the proposal to undertake a review of the economic impact of engaging in respective events and to consider eligibility criteria in order to determine whether the sponsorship represents value for money and is appropriate for the council.

6	Key to abbreviations
	CDI – Creative Digital Industry CQ – Cathedral Quarter