



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Presentation to the NI Assembly's Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee on European Funding
Date:	20 January 2015
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard. European Unit Manager, ext 3577

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	As Members will be aware, Belfast City Council established a European Unit in 2004, as the first dedicated resource for European engagement within Local Government, on the island of Ireland. Since this time, in 2012, the unit Manager assisted Derry City Council to establish a similar unit, and interest in European funding opportunities has grown extensively within all sectors in Northern Ireland.
1.2	Belfast City Council also established the successful NI European Regional Forum which now operates in partnership with OFMDFM, and provides advice and coordination of EU events for over 130 members across the region.
1.3	Interest in EU affairs continues to grow in NI, particularly given the opportunities that now exist for sectors within the new EU funding period 2014-2020, and the current budget cuts across all sectors. Due to this growing focus on European funding, the Council's European Manager is regularly asked to deliver EU funding information workshops to a programme of bodies including Councils, community and voluntary groups, business umbrella groups and government departments.
1.4	A request has been received by the European Manager from the NI Assembly Committee for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to give evidence at the Committee meeting of 12 February 2015.
1.5	The request specifically asks that the Manager provides an overview of Belfast City Council's strategic approach to EU engagement including targeting funding, developing relationships and participating in networks, particularly from the perspective of arts, culture, leisure and sport.

