



Subject:	Other Voices Event
Date:	14 June 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Clare Mullen, Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to provide financial support towards the organisation and delivery of an “Other Voices” event in Belfast at the end of October 2017. It is intended that this event will be a precursor to a larger event which will take place in the city annually from 2018 onwards, linking in with other, more established creative events.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note the content of the report, including the proposal to bring the “Other Voices” event to Belfast for the first time in October 2017 – as a precursor event to a potentially larger event in 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree to a budget allocation of £40,000 from the existing development department budget towards the October 2017 event.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background to Other Voices</u>
3.1	Other Voices started as a one-off music event in a small church in the west of Ireland in 2002. Since that time, the event has grown to become one of the most significant music events in Ireland. Its reach has also extended beyond its Dingle base. In 2013, the event moved to Derry-Londonderry as part of the UK City of Culture celebrations. In 2016, Other Voices recorded live from Austin, Texas, as part of the SXSW international music event. In Summer 2017, there will once again be an “Other Voices” stage as part of the annual Electric Picnic concert. The event has also been produced in New York.
3.2	This enhanced profile has enabled the event to attract a range of well-known acts over the years. These include Willie Nelson, Ellie Goulding, Gregory Porter, Amy Winehouse and Mumford and Sons. In addition, the event has attracted many indigenous acts and has provided a platform for showcasing up-and-coming talent. The event is currently broadcast on Irish broadcaster RTE’s television and digital platforms.
3.3	In addition to the live performances, the event also involves a wide range of outreach and engagement activity with local residents and those involved in the culture and arts sector. Events include workshops, tours and trails, musical showcases, school engagement activities and local concerts.
3.4	Event organisers have, for some time, been exploring the opportunity of bringing the Other Voices Festival to Belfast. Given the decision to make an application for the European Capital of Culture in 2023 with Derry-Londonderry, and the commitment to build the city’s cultural profile and showcase its creative talent, it is considered that this would be an appropriate time to consider an event in Belfast.
3.5	Early discussions have identified the potential to use this event to position Belfast as a unique musical destination as well as a smart, creative, tech city. This is in keeping with the emerging City Positioning brand and narrative that Members considered at the May 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. It also aligns with the Cultural Framework, particularly in terms of the themes of “Attracting Audiences” and “Inspiring Communities”. Finally, the “City Development” theme of the Belfast Agenda focuses on supporting the cultural

regeneration of the City as a means of supporting inclusive growth and profiling Belfast as a dynamic business location.

3.6 At this stage, a number of key partners have been identified and further work is underway to scope the detail of the programme. The initial view of the organisers is that the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts would be a good “hub” for the 2017 event but that there would be a number of satellite venues across the city. This is in keeping with the heritage of the event which began in a small church. It also underlines the unifying power of culture and ensures that the event is firmly rooted in the community. An indicative date of end October 2017 has been pencilled in. Organisers are keen to focus on the “current Belfast” narrative, particularly the success of the City in the areas of technology and media. They have been engaging with a number of local events such as Digital DNA which profiles the importance of technology across all business sectors and have identified opportunities for greater alignment with this and other local events for future years.

3.7 Although at the early stage of planning, it is proposed that the event will encompass live indoor concert performances, classes and workshops, mentoring, talent development, a music trail and extensive filming and editing of high quality digital content for broadcast and global digital transmission. Community engagement is key to the success of Other Voices. The team will work closely with community groups and local delivery partners, to deliver an ambitious and wide-reaching programme of events in October 2017 in the build up to a wider festival event to be held in the City in 2018. Discussions are under way with local broadcasters to ensure that the event is profiled locally and internationally and this will provide an opportunity to relay a positive narrative about Belfast’s vibrant cultural scene as well as its global technological capacity. There will also be extensive use of digital platforms as a means of engaging young people (who tend to consume material in this way) as well as international audiences. Both are key target audiences for the City Positioning work.

3.8 Experience from previous events suggests that the Other Voices event can have a significant economic, social and cultural impact on the local area. The organisers have provided examples from their work in Derry-Londonderry where they worked closely with a mixture of schools, community groups, local music organisations and venues including the Glassworks, the Apprentice Boys’ Hall, St Augustine’s Church and the Craft Village, as well as the hospitality sector. Other Voices commissioned economic impact research in Dingle, Co Kerry, which showed that the festival had a significant impact on business and turnover in the hospitality sector, particularly at a traditionally dormant period (early December). It also

	<p>showed that Other Voices was effective in positioning and promoting awareness of the destination brand “The Wild Atlantic Way” and this is widely carried in all Tourism Ireland promotion of the area.</p>
3.9	<p>At this stage, the organisers have identified funding of more than £100,000 from a number of partner organisations towards the event. They expect that the overall costs associated with organising the event will be in the region of £200,000. They have approached Belfast City Council to request a contribution of £40,000 towards the event. If this is approved, an updated programme will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee, in advance of the event.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The cost of the event in October 2017 is likely to total around £200,000. This will include all production costs, development and delivery of the outreach programme and broadcasting costs. Funding of £100,000 has been identified and secured by the event organisers. They have approached Belfast City Council to ask for a contribution of £40,000 towards the costs of hosting the event. These funds have been set aside within the Development Department budget for 2017/18 that was approved as part of the budget estimates process.</p>
3.11	<p>Subject to satisfactory delivery of the October 2017 event, the organisers are planning ahead for a more significant event to take place in Belfast in 2018. Work is already underway to explore potential funding partners as well as building the local networks at community level to create a solid foundation for future activities. No specific funding request has been made from the Council at this point.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>The event programme will be equality proofed and there will be a significant programme of outreach and engagement which will be open to all communities.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None