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**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item(s) will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 5.15 pm on Wednesday, 8th May, 2024.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN WALSH

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

4. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

(b) UNESCO Creative Cities Network Annual Conference (Pages 1 - 4)

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Subject:	UCCN Annual Conference
Date:	8 th May 2024
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Chris McCreery, Culture Development Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Call-in	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	
1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise members of the planned UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) conference which takes place in early July 2024 and to seek approval for council engagement in and representation at the event.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the contents of report and agree the attendance of the Lord Mayor and relevant officials, up to a to a maximum estimated cost of £5000
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast gained UNESCO City of Music Status and membership to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in November 2021. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) promotes cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.</p> <p>Officials have received the invitation letter to the XVI Annual Conference of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) to be held in Braga (Portugal), from 1 to 5 July 2024, under the theme “Bringing youth to the table for the next decade”.</p>
3.2	<p>About the UCCN Conference</p> <p>Launched in 2004, the UCCN comprises 350 cities in more than 100 countries and aims to strengthen cooperation between cities that have identified culture and creativity as strategic levers for sustainable urban development. The UCCN Annual Conference, a key component of the Network, offers all member cities a unique platform for dialogue and cooperation which has led to the establishment of long-term, impactful international partnerships and initiatives.</p>
3.3	Organized this year in Braga, a UNESCO Creative City of Media arts since 2017, the 2024 Annual Conference will present an opportunity for member cities to share their respective experiences, create new synergies within the Network, and exchange with UNESCO, Mayors, municipal decision-makers and other stakeholders. The Conference is also an unparalleled moment to share good practices that have been successfully developed and implemented locally, and to discuss how to adapt and streamline them across cities around the world.

3.4	<p>Under the theme "Bringing youth to the table for the next decade", the Annual Conference will bring together Creative Cities to discuss how the voice of youth can be amplified as a vector for dialogue and change, and how the transformative power of culture and creativity can be leveraged to develop meaningful intergenerational collaborations to address global challenges. Through various plenary sessions, thematic panels and other sessions and activities, the Conference will explore ways in which local stakeholders can further foster an active participation and contribution of youth, to boost urban sustainability.</p>
3.5	<p>This year's Annual Conference will also reflect on the opportunities brought about by the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - MONDIACULT 2022, to support UNESCO's advocacy for the full recognition of culture as a global public good, notably with a view to including culture as a stand-alone goal in the post-2030 international development agenda.</p>
3.6	<p>Belfast involvement</p> <p>Whilst Belfast has been a member of the UCCN network since November 2021, the Creative Cities conference took place online and in person in 2022 and did not take place in in 2023 after the event was cancelled. This event therefore represents the first opportunity to participate in the full UCCN network with all creative cities in attendance.</p>
3.7	<p>The first day of the conference will also include a formal induction session with the official secretariat of UNESCO. This induction will be held in person for all cities (including Belfast) that have joined the network since 2021 and will require the attendance of the UCCN focal point, namely the Culture Development Manager. Alongside responding to reporting exercises, including the Membership Monitoring Report due in 2025, active participation in the UNESCO Network is a mandatory element of membership. Attendance at the conference is also mandatory for any city wishing to bid to host the event in future years.</p>
3.8	<p>As part of our UNESCO status and corresponding Music Strategy, an officer in the Culture Development Team is employed to lead on music development and relationships with other UNESCO cities. Through active participation in the Music Cities Cluster, this has resulted in a wide range of initiatives and music exchanges with international cities. As well as participating in supplementary events with the music cluster, the music officer has been asked to present on the wide range of exciting partnerships that Belfast has led on since joining the network.</p>

3.9	<p>In addition, the Lord Mayor has been invited to take part in the conference including the dedicated “Mayors Forum” taking place on 3rd July. This element of the conference includes a full day of workshops and collaborative dialogue with Mayors across all cities in the UCCN network. The Lord Mayor is also invited to deliver a presentation on Belfast’s contribution and actions since becoming a UNESCO City of Music.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Members are asked to agree the participation of the Lord Mayor alongside relevant officers, up to a maximum estimated cost of £5,000. The above costs are set aside within the existing budgets allocated to music development.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct Equality or Good Relations implications associated with this report. No specific rural impact.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	None