



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Culture Night 2009
Date:	13 May 2009
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

Relevant Background Information

The Temple Bar Cultural Trust has developed and delivered a Dublin Culture Night annually since 2006. In 2008 Dermot McLaughlin, Chief Executive of Temple Bar Cultural Trust approached members of the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group and Arts Council Northern Ireland to explore the development of a Belfast Culture Night. On 27 November 2008 the CQSG hosted a meeting to give the Temple Bar Cultural Trust team the opportunity to make a presentation on Culture Night Dublin and highlight key benefits which the project has achieved for Dublin's cultural life. The meeting was attended by the CQSG and key partners including Department for Social Development, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Tourism Ireland and Belfast City Council.

The Belfast Culture Night Committee, comprising of Sean Kelly (Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival), Kieran Gilmore (Open House Festival) and Patricia Freedman (CQSG), is now seeking support to develop a Belfast Culture Night in 2009 and have submitted a proposal (Appendix 1) seeking support for the project. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has committed £25,000 towards the project and Belfast City Council is being asked to contribute match funding of £25,000.

Belfast City Council has already been involved in researching the concept of a Culture Night project. The Culture Night is a similar event to what is also titled 'Light Night' - a popular event which originates from a traditional European phenomenon commonly known as the 'White Night' festival. The 'White Night' festival takes place in cities throughout the world including: Paris, St Petersburg, Berlin, Amsterdam, Sicily, Como, Milan, Turin and Toronto. Each city's festival is celebrated in a range of ways including illuminating buildings, key public buildings being open throughout the evening, and cultural, sporting and arts events programmed from early evening to late night/early morning. Local cities such as Glasgow (Radiance Festival) and Leeds (Light Night) have realised the potential of re-creating the 'White Night' concept/experience to attract visitors, generate interest, spend and showcase culture and arts and historic and iconic venues.

Light Night UK is a national programme of events covering the whole of the UK and is supported by Association of Town Centre Management.

In 2009 six cities are expected to offer their residents and visitors the opportunity to experience their city from a fresh perspective with cities encouraging families and

individuals into their city centres throughout the evening. Belfast City Centre Management and BCC have been engaged with ATCM on this programme which is a major tool to reinvigorate the night time economy, reduce city centre crime and boost the city centre economy. It often involves a number of public and private sector partners and is a great opportunity for a business to get involved in a national programme that is already generating a large amount of press interest.

Light Night events have already taken place in Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham. A recent Light Night Nottingham event saw 57,000 recorded visitors on the street between 6pm and midnight; this is double the usual number for a Friday night in February.

The first Belfast Culture night will serve as a pilot for the city, and will take place around the Cathedral Quarter and Custom House Square, the space outside the Waterfront Hall, Writers Square and Buoy Park.

It is hoped that over 50 organisations will take part in the first year which is planned for Friday 25 September 2009, coinciding with a series of Culture Nights taking place in other European cities. BCNC propose that Belfast Culture Night 2009 will deliver a programme of events to run from ~~3pm to 9pm~~ (-5pm to 10pm approximately?). If the pilot is successful, the intention is to expand in 2010 to include other cultural institutions and quarters across Belfast.

Belfast Culture Night 2009 aims to provide a free, city centre based, family focused, arts and cultural event that brings together arts and cultural providers, the hospitality industry and local businesses.

Resource Implications

Financial

Belfast City Council is being asked to contribute match funding of £25,000.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee consider the proposal to contribute match funding of £25,000 and support the delivery of Belfast Culture Night 2009.

Decision Tracking

Should Committee agree to contribute the match funding, this will be paid to The Belfast Culture Night Committee prior to the Belfast Culture Night 2009 event in September 2009.

Timeline: September 2009

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key to Abbreviations

ACNI	Arts Council of Northern Ireland
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
TI	Tourism Ireland
BCCM	Belfast City Centre Management
CQSG	Cathedral Quarter Steering Group
ATCM	Association of Town Centre Management
DSD	Department of Social Development
BCNC	Belfast Culture Night Committee

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Proposal from CQSG Culture Night Committee