

Appendix 1 – 2025-2026 Music Strategy Initiatives

Theme 1 <i>Placing Artists at the Heart</i>	1.4	Gradam Ceoil bursary scheme (multi year commitment)	Partnership with Duncairn Arts Centre. Including 3 bursaries for emerging musicians	February 2026	£18,000
Theme 1 <i>Placing Artists at the Heart</i>	1.4	Micro bursaries programme, available to individual musicians, to assist with costs incurred within their artform.	Following a successful pilot round with 20 musicians supported, continue to partner with the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival to provide grants for local music creators.	October 2025 to March 2026	£25,000
Theme 1 <i>Placing Artists at the Heart</i>	1.7 4.1	Support and enhance initiatives which provide instruments for local communities across Belfast to ensure individuals, regardless of age, sex or background, have the opportunity to learn or engage with music	Partnership with the Ulster Orchestra to identify former Crescendo pupils from Years 8 and 9 (as of Sept 24) who wish to avail of a free bursary scheme providing tuition and instruments which the school and/or pupils cannot access otherwise. Support for approximately 70 pupils who would not have the means to own an instrument or have tuition beyond primary education.	June 2025 to March 2026	£20,000
Theme 1 <i>Placing Artists at the Heart</i>	1.8 2.8	Co-design with sectoral stakeholders and fund a programme of practical wellbeing events and initiatives to ensure the physical and mental health of music creators is safeguarded and protected throughout the year.	Partnership with key organisations such as the Fit to March programme, Help Musicians and Tonic Rider	June 2025 to March 2026	£10,000

Theme 1 <i>Placing Artists at the Heart</i>	1.7 2.2 3.2	Co-design with sectoral stakeholders a series of projects that will allow for the Priorities within Theme 1 that require ongoing activity to be addressed.	Partner with key stakeholders and groups to launch initiatives that address an array of Priorities across Theme 1, such as ensuring there is enhanced inclusivity in music , seeking investment and export opportunities for artists and industry representatives at varying stages of their career and continuing to engage with young people to expand their understanding of the world of music.	June 2025 – March 2026	£12,000
Theme 1 <i>Placing Artists at the Heart</i>	1.7 4.4	Teenage Kicks: Youth Music Programme	Programme targeting young people (under 18s). This programme will encourage attendance and increase awareness of music events in the city by young people. Concerts in a range of venues will open up the diversity of the music scene and foster a community of young audiences for acts in the city. The programme will ensure buy-in from the sector through a pilot of micro grants (up to £2,000) open to promoters, venues and festivals, to run high quality music events for under-18s in Belfast.	Start date October 2025	£20,000
Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	2.5 3.3 5.3	NI Music Prize & Sound of Belfast	Event celebrating the very best of new, established and emerging Northern Irish music. Additional support to include enhanced support for musicians and increased marketing elements.	November 2025	£55,000
Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	2.1	Music Connections Website – a one-stop-shop online Music Directory to promote and connect all facets of the music business and those working in it	Continuation of the Music Connections website and online directory and support service for musicians.	February 2026 to February 2027	£30,000

Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	2.1 14.1	Continuation of Belfast Music Social Channels and platforms	Continuation of the “OurBelfastMusic” social channels.	September 2025 to September 2026	£15,000
Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	2.4 2.5	Output Belfast	Direct partnership with Score Draw Music. Output is Ireland’s biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase. Delivered as a key event within the City of Music programme, the conference features a full programme of panels, workshops and conferences, followed by an evening showcase of live music for free to the public.	September 2025	£33,000
Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	7.1 5.3 6.2 2.3 2.5	Music Business Accelerator Programme	Working with colleagues in Economy we are developing a Music Business Accelerator Programme tailored to a spectrum of needs in the music industry, repackaging existing support programmes and connecting to specific industry events across 2025/26.	Start date June 2025	Costs met with existing budgets allocated to Enterprise and Business Growth
Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	2.4 2.5	City of Music Industry Sessions	Continued programming of free and accessible educational events around an array of topics within the music industry. A space to allow local music creators and entrepreneurs to network together.	June 2025 to March 2026	£10,000
Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	5.4	Allocate programming funding to support organisations who seek to develop and promote diverse and under-represented genres	Continue to support projects, including a partnership with BLAKMEX, that develop and promote diverse and under-represented genres where gaps are identified.	June 2025 to March 2026	£15,000
Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	1.1 5.2 5.4	Allocate programming funding to support organisations who seek to provide opportunities for disabled musicians in performance spaces across Belfast	A partnership with University of Atypical that will support the charity in continuing a fund for the d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse community within music to run accessible music events.	September 2025 - March 2026	£30,000

Theme 2 <i>Nurture the Sector</i>	6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 7.4 7.7	Co-design with sectoral stakeholders a series of projects that will allow for the Priorities within Theme 2 that require ongoing activity to be addressed.	Partner with key stakeholders and groups to launch initiatives that address an array of Priorities across Theme 2, such as providing pathways for artist and industry representative attendance at international conferences to develop new networks, sourcing alternative education opportunities for continuous upskilling of the local music sector and creating pathways for local music businesses to be nurtured.	June 2025 – March 2026	£15,000
Theme 3 <i>Igniting the Live Experience</i>	9.1 9.3 9.4 9.5	Music Venue Trust	Continuation of Strategic Partnership with the Music Venue Trust to support the survival of grassroots music venues in Belfast and the ways in which these challenges can be addressed.	July 25 to March 2026	£12,000
Theme 3 <i>Igniting the Live Experience</i>	12.2 7.5	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions, delivery and rollout of “Go Green” Sustainability toolkit with Native Events	Roll out of phase two and implementation of Music Sustainability Toolkit for music sector.	June 2025 to March 2026	£10,000
Theme 3 <i>Igniting the Live Experience</i>	10.3 11.1 11.2 11.6	Co-design with sectoral stakeholders a series of projects that will allow for the Priorities within Theme 3 that require ongoing activity to be addressed.	Partner with key stakeholders and groups to launch initiatives that address an array of Priorities across Theme 3, such as enhancing Belfast’s night-time economy, culture and governance to ensure the city is fulfilling its economic and cultural potential after dark, as well as ensuring our venues are safe and accessible for audiences and artists.	June 2025 – March 2026	£12,000
Theme 4 <i>Unlock the unifying Power of UNESCO</i>	16.1	Music as a key asset for the outward promotion of NI	Collate Belfast music-focused imagery and videos that can be utilised when promoting Belfast on a global platform, such as during UNESCO City of Music forums.	Ongoing	£5,000

Theme 4 <i>Unlock the unifying Power of UNESCO</i>	UNESCO City of Music Commitments	Work internationally with the UNESCO Cities Network to deliver shared music, skills and learning opportunities.	<p>Support active participation in UNESCO cultural networks with reciprocal benefits between the cities including but not limited to partnership with UCoM cities Kansas City (US) Hannover (Germany) Daegu (South Korea), Conde (Brazil), Ghent (Belgium) and Bologna (Italy).</p> <p>Includes BCC representation on UNESCO Music subnetwork meetings and UNESCO Celebration Day hosted by the Belfast International Arts Festival.</p>	June 2025 to August 2024	£30,000
Theme 4 <i>Unlock the unifying Power of UNESCO</i>	15.2 16.1	Co-design with sectoral stakeholders a series of projects that will allow for the Priorities within Theme 4 that require ongoing activity to be addressed.	Partner with key stakeholders and groups to launch initiatives that address an array of Priorities across Theme 4, such as supporting the sector to develop assistive and interactive technologies to increase the accessibility of music for all, enhancing the visibility of Belfast globally as a key music destination and working with the film and design sector to weave music throughout the city across different outputs and artforms.	June 2025 – March 2026	£15,000