



<b>Subject:</b>	Culture Night update
<b>Date:</b>	10 June 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Keith Forster, Director Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager Culture, Tourism & events Rachael Campbell-Palmer – Culture Development Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of the report is to update on the planning and preparation for Culture Night Belfast 2026, to take place on Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2026
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: - Note the updates provided
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>Culture Night 2026 – Programme Development Update</b>

Following Committee approval in February 2026 of the proposed approach to the delivery of Culture Night 2026, officers have commenced implementation of key programme development milestones. A delivery contract has been awarded and formally commenced on 12 May 2026, followed by an inception meeting on 14 May 2026 and a subsequent marketing meeting on 20 May 2026 to agree initial communications and engagement activity. Weekly project management meetings have also been established between Belfast City Council and delivery partners to support ongoing coordination and delivery.

### 3.2 **Programme Development and Engagement**

As part of the early engagement process, an open call for participation in Culture Night 2026 opened on Monday 1 June 2026, accompanied by targeted communications to the cultural sector.

A programme of in-person information and planning sessions has been scheduled across the city between 4–11 June 2026. These sessions aim to:

- Support awareness of Culture Night 2026
- Encourage participation from artists, venues and organisations
- Facilitate collaboration and co-creation of programme activity
- Inform the development of geographically balanced programming across North, South, East and West Belfast

An additional online engagement session is also being explored to maximise accessibility for those unable to attend in person. It is anticipated that these sessions will support the establishment of localised working groups, strengthening place-based programming and supporting continued city-wide participation.

#### **Key Milestones**

### 3.3 Key delivery milestones for Culture Night 2026 are as follows:

- Open call for financial assistance closes on 19 June 2026
- Open call for programme submissions closes on 26 June 2026
- Successful participants to be confirmed in mid-July 2026
- Online Health and Safety support sessions scheduled for 22 and 23 July 2026
- Deadline for submission of Health and Safety documentation: 14 August 2026
- Strategic Advisory Group meeting scheduled for 1 September 2026
- Official Culture Night Belfast launch planned for 27 August 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture Night Belfast 2026 will take place on Friday 18 September 2026</li> </ul> <p>To further strengthen the geographic spread and sustainability of Culture Night Belfast 2026, officers are exploring opportunities to enhance engagement with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across the city.</p> <p>Building on place-based programming and the development of localised working groups in North, South, East and West Belfast, engagement with BIDs presents an opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support increased participation from venues, businesses and cultural organisations within BID areas</li> <li>• Enhance local programming through coordinated activity aligned to existing BID priorities and audiences</li> <li>• Contribute to animation of key commercial districts during Culture Night, increasing footfall and dwell time</li> <li>• Provide potential supplementary funding or in-kind support to participating artists, venues and events</li> </ul> <p>Officers will continue to explore opportunities to formalise BID involvement as part of the evolving delivery model, with a view to enhancing both the scale and sustainability of Culture Night in future years.</p> <p><b>Other Considerations</b></p> <p>3.4 A request for the use of City Hall for Culture Night activity is currently being prepared and will be submitted for Committee approval in line with standard procedures. Engagement will continue with other stakeholders who may wish to provide support for the activation of further enhanced programming.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.5 All other expenditure is within existing departmental budgets and approvals.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.6 The cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). Specific initiatives as required will be subject to a further equality screening.</p> <p>4.0 <b>Appendices</b></p>
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4.1	None
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