



<b>Subject:</b>	Music Strategy
<b>Date:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Chris McCreery, 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</b>
1.1	At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2022, it was agreed that the draft Music Strategy would complete a 12-week public consultation. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of feedback and present the final strategy for approval.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Note the contents of this report and feedback received as part of the public consultation.</li><li>- Agree the final music strategy, “Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast” including the priorities</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2022, it was agreed that the draft Music Strategy would complete a 12-week public consultation.

### 3.1 **Becoming a UNESCO City of Music**

As members will be aware, Belfast submitted an application in June 2021 and was officially awarded the title of UNESCO City of Music on 8 November 2021, bestowing upon the City the international recognition that music is part of our identity – past, current, and future. We became only the third city in the UK to be awarded the status, with Liverpool receiving it in 2016 and Glasgow in 2008, and we are the first city on the island of Ireland to be granted the prestigious accolade.

#### **Development of the Draft Music Strategy**

The development of a new music strategy is aimed at supporting the ambitions submitted in Belfast's UNESCO application, delivering a more joined-up and visible music offer whilst also increasing opportunities for production and civic engagement in music across the city on a permanent basis.

In 2020, Council contracted Sound Diplomacy to develop an analysis of the Belfast music ecosystem; exploring how best to support its evolution and recovery from COVID-19, and its application to become a UNESCO City of Music. Following this, The Fourth Pillar, Morgan Young Consulting and Score Draw Music worked with Council to develop Sound Diplomacy's research into a roadmap for music and the associated strategic recommendations. This included:

- 27 City of Music Steering Group meetings with 20 members representing various genres & city stakeholders such as Tourism NI, BBC, British Council and Arts Council NI.
- An online survey on music (both for audiences and sector workers) 1500+ responses
- 45 one to one meetings with music and city stakeholders representing a variety of expertise
- 6 round table workshops about music recovery for artists and music sector workers

### 3.2 **Music Strategy – strategic themes and priorities**

We want to reshape music in Belfast, so it is characterised by quality, sustainable projects, and accompanied by long-term strategic investment. This strategy constitutes a response to the challenges, concerns and, indeed, opportunities that exist and is intended to take a foundational approach – one which will deliver the fundamental needs of individuals working in or engaging with music and one which has identified the shortfalls in the local music ecosystem and sought to eliminate them. In our approach, we have chosen to put musicians, performers and music creators first for, without them, Belfast would be a culturally and economically poorer place.

Mirroring the A City Imagining cultural strategy the music strategy has 4 strategic themes, each having 4 strategic priorities. There are a number of actions and recommendations given for each priority catering to many areas of need across the music sector.

**Theme 1: Place artists at the heart** - Recognising the value of creators

**Theme 2: Nurture the sector** - Strengthening the structures to support those who guide and invest in creators

**Theme 3: Ignite the live experience** - Liberating the live music sector as a major catalyst for cultural and economic growth

**Theme 4: Unlock the unifying power of UNESCO** - Sharing the gift of music with the people of Belfast

### 3.3 **Public Consultation**

Following approval by City Growth and Regeneration Committee, the draft Music Strategy completed a 12-week public consultation. As part of this process Council engaged directly with over 162 stakeholders including:

- Online citizens and stakeholder engagement: The council carried out an online 12-week consultation via the Council's YourSay engagement platform to gather information, and this provided an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to review proposals, provide feedback and help shape the final plan. Results indicated 327 visitors and 112 full responses to the survey.
- 5 public events held in venues across the city, namely Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, the Oh Yeah Music Centre, The Duncairn Centre, 2 Royal Avenue and Vault Studios
- 2 online sessions for the general public plus 2 online sessions with both the Disability Advisory Forum and the Sign Language Users Forum.

The overall feedback on the plan was very positive with a great deal of useful insight that we can utilise when shaping our implementation plans. Key elements of the draft strategy which received strong support in the consultation include:

- More artist development opportunities
- Greater accessibility for artists and audience members with disabilities
- More spaces for musicians to thrive / perform / practice
- A need to consult the sector about the current licensing laws
- A more inclusive city and music sector
- Music education, information sharing and signposting
- Increasing the perception of the value of music
- More accessible funding structures
- A review of funding currently available to the music sector
- A music hub
- Preventing venue closure
- A safer night time economy and the Get Home Safe policy
- Greater mental health support for musicians
- An expansion of the Gig Buddies scheme

- Engagement with the wider media sector to explore opportunities for locally created music to be featured across platforms
- A professional looking one-stop website with well managed information about what is happening throughout Belfast
- Filling vacant spaces with creative endeavours

3.4 **Theme 1: Place artists at the heart.**

This theme focused on recognising the value of creators. Several respondents indicated the need to ensure that opportunities for development are not just limited to younger people and that the needs of older people are reflected and understood. To reflect these concerns, this theme contains a new action point, namely:

- 4.5 Action - Engage with community groups such as the Over the Hill music collective to develop a greater understanding of the needs of older and retired music creators as well as any potential barriers to older audiences participating in music.

Engagement also highlighted other key areas which will be considered and incorporated into the final implementation plan, namely:

- Inclusion of information sharing and education around matters such as rights, monetising music, utilising marketing and PR and the use of collection societies while ensuring artists are able to advise us on what is most important
- Ensuring that we understand particular needs within areas of music that have more barriers to typical engagement
- More music engagement possibilities within public spaces

3.5 **Theme 2: Nurture the sector**

This theme was focused on strengthening the structures to support those who guide and invest in creators. Feedback highlighted several key areas which will be considered and incorporated into the final implementation plan, namely:

- Ensure the inclusion of nightclubs and DJs when exploring development and support schemes
- Look at the possibility of developing apprenticeships as one option for upskilling the sector
- Host regular masterclasses for music creators and people involved in the music sector to develop and learn new skills
- Better encouragement of Musicians' Union rates of pay as the norm for what music creators deserve
- More opportunities for cross-genre and multi-disciplinary collaboration

**Theme 3: Ignite the live experience**

3.6 This theme focused on liberating the live music sector as a major catalyst for cultural and economic growth. Within this section of the consultation, we received several responses

regarding grassroots music venues within our sector. Respondents highlighted the need for the venues within our city to have improved equipment and spaces as this would benefit their sustainability, the quality of music output as well as the attractiveness of Belfast to touring acts and booking agents. To reflect this feedback, this theme contains two new actions to show further support for the need to preserve and better understand the needs of our grassroots music venues:

- 9.4 - Engage with the Music Venue Trust and the Music Venues Alliance to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing the survival of grassroots music venues in Belfast and the ways in which these challenges can be addressed
- 9.5 - Review current support for venues to upgrade the quality of their event spaces and equipment. Work with partners to explore additional financial support strategies where necessary.

Feedback also highlighted several key areas which will be considered and incorporated into the final implementation plan, namely:

- A review of the effect of the current public and private transport infrastructure on the music economy and steps that can be taken to support more transport availability in the evenings and night.
- Engage with organisations such as the Musicians' Union to create a fairer sector with a higher standard of care for music creators

### 3.7 **Theme 4: Unlock the unifying power of UNESCO**

This theme focused on sharing the gift of music with the people of Belfast. Feedback highlighted several key areas which will be considered and incorporated into the final implementation plan, namely:

- Opportunities to better utilise the networks within our sister cities to expand reach of local music creators
- Explore opportunities to improve public awareness of events, festivals and conferences taking place within the city
- Work with both the local community and external industry to boost Belfast as an international touring destination

### 3.8 **Governance Model**

As part of our consultation with the sector we also requested feedback regarding The Belfast Music Leadership Model and the Governance recommendations. Feedback highlighted several key areas which will be considered and incorporated into the final implementation plan, namely:

- Ensure there is representation of individuals with an understanding of the night-time economy within the Belfast Region Music Board

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage members of the music education sector within the leadership model, such as those from local universities, colleges and schools as well as private tutors and trad groups</li> <li>- Ensure diverse representation of backgrounds, genres, ages and skills</li> <li>- Ensure no conflicts of interest in decision making</li> <li>- Ensure music consumers and audiences are represented</li> <li>- Conduct a regular review to assess the effectiveness of the board's objectives</li> </ul> <p><b>3.9 Next steps</b></p> <p>Following agreement on the final strategy, next steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dec 2022 – Strategy published</li> <li>- Jan 2023 – Recruitment and meeting of Belfast Region Music Board</li> <li>- Jan 2023 – Publication of implementation plan and delivery of recommendations and actions</li> <li>- Feb 2023 – Delivery of comms strategy – new website, social media, newsletters</li> </ul> <p><b>3.10 <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are currently no financial implications attached to this report. Phase 1 delivery has been agreed as part of approvals for UNESCO City of Music. The additional resources required have been considered and agreed as part of the structural review for Economic Development.</p> <p><b>3.11 <u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>This music strategy is part of the overarching cultural strategy for Belfast that has been subject to EQIA. An equality screening has been completed and mitigating actions will be considered as part of the public consultation.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Our City, Our Music: Music Matters: A Roadmap for Belfast