



**unesco**

Member of  
the Creative Cities Network



**City of  
Music**

# MUSIC MATTERS

A roadmap for Belfast



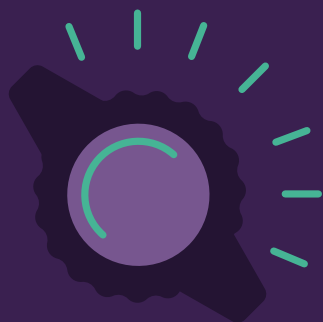
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# SHARED VISION TO BUILD A THRIVING & SUSTAINABLE MUSIC SECTOR IN BELFAST

Leadership & Advocacy

## STRATEGIC

Theme 1:  
Place artists  
at the heart

Artists  
Musicians  
Creators

Theme 2:  
Nurture the  
Sector

Freelancers  
Businesses  
Organisations

## STRATEGIC

Invest  
& fund

Creative  
professional  
development

Local national  
international  
collaboration

Opportunities  
for everyone  
across  
community

Invest  
& fund

Professional  
development

Business  
growth  
& export  
support

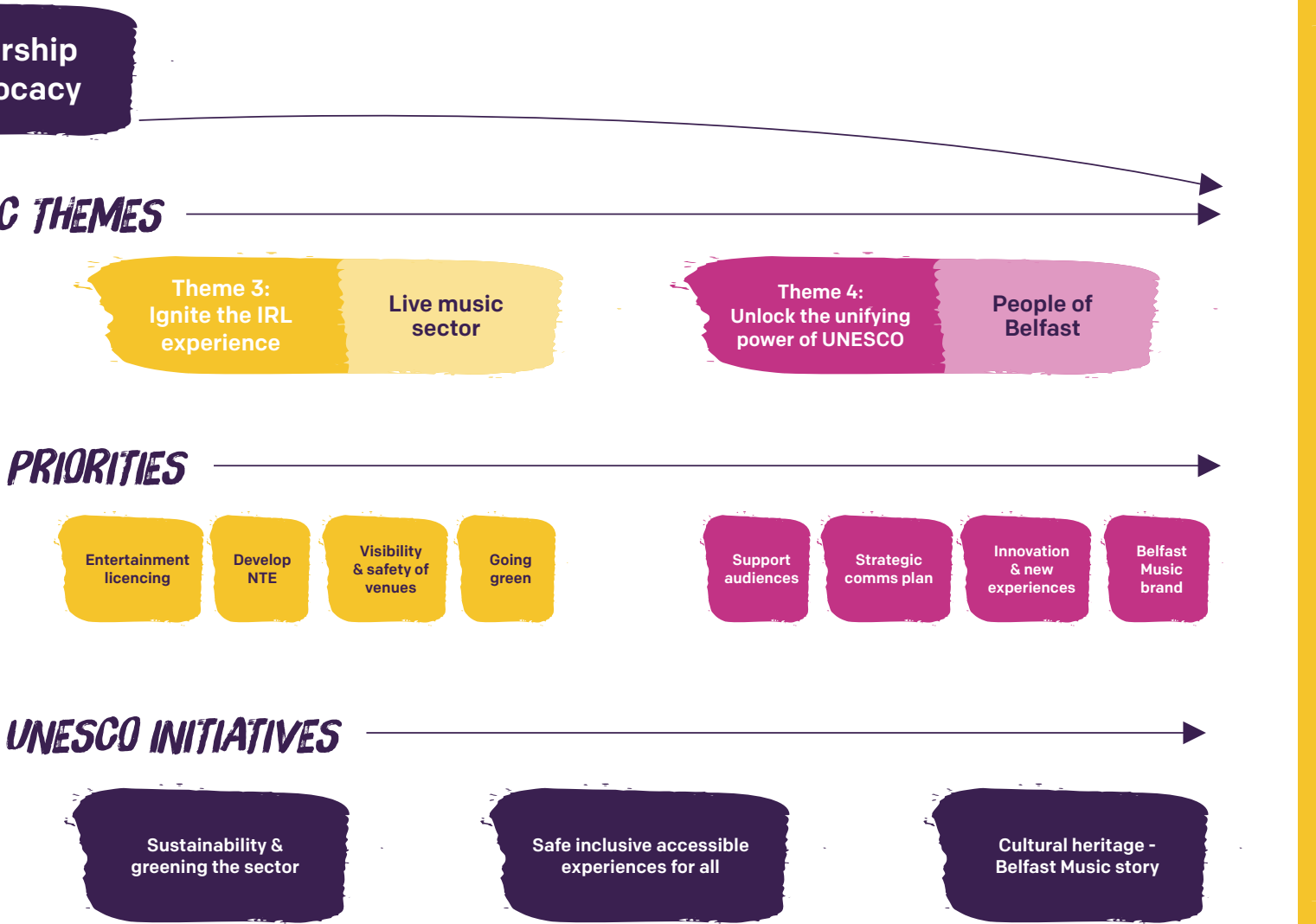
Next  
generation  
business  
pipeline

## UNDERPINNED BY 6

Music support

Learning skills  
talent development

Transform spaces  
& places with &  
for creativity



# BELFAST IS A CITY OF MUSIC

However, if we are to chart this very specific journey towards developing the first ever music strategy for the city then the story begins in 2017 with one of the largest public engagement programmes it has ever undertaken. We asked 20,000 people one question: 'what does home mean to you?' What quickly emerged was that, for many, home is an emotional connection, a sense of belonging.

And as we began to examine the tangible expressions of such a concept, more often than not, music was there, right at its heart because our lives are punctuated by music moments. From the deeply personal to societal shifts. In a city characterised by division, music has always kept us connected to each other and to the world.

**Music has value.** As a city, we must embrace, harness, reinforce and strengthen its potential.

**Musicians have value.** As a city, we must appreciate, invest in, and cultivate their talent.

**Music workers have value.** As a city, we must recognise, develop, and support their ambitions.

**Music venues have value.** As a city, we must create conditions to facilitate the revitalisation of their business.

**Music audiences have value.** As a city, we must encourage, educate, and engage audiences in memorable experiences.

This belief is our starting point; and this strategy is our roadmap. A work-in-progress but a significant step in the right direction. A new hymn sheet for the city to sing from.



# BELFAST CITY OF MUSIC PATRONS

“ **Music is woven into the DNA of Belfast.**

That's the thing about this city, there are so many incredible bands and artists, and more every single year. I've watched in these last 25 years of relative peace the music scene grow and then thrive and now burst at the seams with fearless and limitless talent. I would put Belfast now, without bias (or at least with as little bias as possible) at the level of one of the great music cities in Europe. We have all fought hard for our culture to thrive and the results are so plain to see. **Belfast's heart beats fervidly with music** and the entire music scene has helped raise Belfast up and out of the darkest of times. ”

**Gary Lightbody, Snow Patrol**  
UNESCO City of Music Patron



“ **Belfast is an alive, vibrant and a musically powerful city.** Now is the time to celebrate those that are making a difference in music, in culture. We are so much more than what has gone before; there is female empowered punk, new wave, BRIT nominated EDM, jazz and an abundance of classical music that runs through the veins of this city and yet to the wider world, it is all unheard of, underground, eclipsed by its past but still supplying a pulse and vibrancy that needs to be lauded for the future. There is so much creativity here in Belfast to celebrate today. It is the only place I can think of, that with support, the difference made will echo nationally. ”

**Hannah Peel**  
UNESCO City of Music Patron











# THE STORY SO FAR...

Music is recognised as a distinctive aspect of Belfast's cultural profile with audience research indicating high levels of engagement locally as well as strong linkages to the city's international profile. Engagement with citizens during and after the European Capital of Culture bid in 2017 also indicated that there is support for strengthening the role that music has in helping to make Belfast a culturally vibrant place to live, work and visit. In March 2018, as a result of the coalescence of many conversations which were happening in the city at the same time, Council backed a proposal for the city and its partners to make an application for the endorsement of UNESCO City of Music status in 2021.

This music roadmap is the culmination of years of strategic engagement which have laid the foundations for placing music at the heart of Belfast to make the city a better place to live, work and visit.



## THE BELFAST AGENDA

Music is embedded in the daily lives of the city's people, and is, right now, being harnessed to create a shared vision for the city. Investing further in music and creativity will catalyse this. This is particularly relevant following the impact of COVID-19. We believe that culture and music should be an intrinsic part of Belfast's recovery. And it is through a shared vision with music at the core that Belfast will develop a sustainable and resilient society and economy.

The shared vision we hold was set out in the Belfast Agenda. Created by a strong civic partnership led by Belfast City Council, the Belfast Agenda is our city's first community plan. It sets a vision for 2035 that imagines a culturally vibrant city.

# THE STORY SO FAR...

We asked for the city's feedback in sharing their hopes for the future and for the city they live in.

## THE RESPONSES?

- Belfast is already a place of optimism and ambition.
- Belfast is a place where we take care of each other; a place that celebrates diversity. No-one in Belfast should be left behind.
- Belfast can be proud of its natural and built environment. Belfast should take care of its beautiful places - now and for future generations.
- Belfast has a place in the world's story, its vibrant cultural life and its unrelenting energy. Belfast needs to be outward-looking and confident on the world stage.
- Belfast should be a city where everyone has a good start in life, a good education and a good job – where everyone has safe, good quality places to live, work, play and learn, where people get on with each other.

## We agree.

And we believe music has a central role to play in achieving these ambitions. We are a confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit.

## Belfast will be a city:

- where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy.
- that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all.
- that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable.
- where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing.
- where everyone fulfils their potential.

**This is our time to be ambitious.**

**This is our Belfast Agenda.**

**This is our commitment to music.**



# A CITY IMAGINING

The Belfast Agenda is expanded upon in Belfast's Cultural Strategy 2020-30, *A City Imagining*. It is focused on promoting cultural rights, sustainably growing Belfast's cultural ecosystem, expanding local and international connections and increasing competitiveness. Supported initiatives include a green policy for festivals, a visitor experience plan harnessing Belfast's uniqueness, and a start-up programme for creative entrepreneurs, all of which complements the city's music strategy.

It acknowledges that change requires ambition, long-term commitment and a sustainable and adaptable approach. We believe that change is happening. This is our commitment to embedding cultural policy across wider city development. Our issues are complex and long standing but creativity and resilience are in the very fabric of our city and our people. *A City Imagining* has been the catalyst for the urgency and agency required to encourage innovation, new connected thinking and greater collaboration.

## **Music is a core component of delivering the city's cultural strategy which imagines:**

- an inclusive city where everyone actively participates in cultural life.
- a diverse city with vibrant public and cultural spaces.
- a city where creativity pushes boundaries.
- a city confident of our place in the world.





# BECOMING A UNESCO CITY OF MUSIC

**Belfast officially became a 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. As a result, we now join 59 other Cities of Music around the world in belonging to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). This Network recognises the importance of music to Belfast – and Northern Ireland; it tells the outside world that music is part of what makes our communities stronger, it's what our people are passionate about, and it lets everyone know that we have real talent, which is important not just to our economy but to our identity.

Whilst all the members of the Network will work towards putting music at the core of making their cities better places to live, work and visit, we are also saying that we take pride in our music sector.

We are thankful to everyone who plays a role in using music to make Belfast and Northern Ireland the place it is, and we want to safeguard and strengthen the role of music today and in the future.

The UNESCO bid was driven by the people of the city through co-design, led by our City of Music Steering Group and facilitated by City Council and our partners in the public and private sectors. The Steering Group was formed in 2019 with 20 members representing different sectors and genres including artists, managers, venues, studios, festivals, community organisations, heritage, business, and statutory partners.

Meeting monthly for more than two years, including throughout the pandemic, they co-designed and spearheaded this process in partnership with Council. The application process was underpinned by extensive engagement with the music sector, facilitated by **The Fourth Pillar, Morgan Young Consulting and Sound Diplomacy.**

We thank all of those who engaged with us through the six Belfast Music Forum sessions, more than 25 one-to-one meetings, and online engagement through our dedicated Belfast Music website and social media platforms.





# BECOMING A UNESCO CITY OF MUSIC

## The resulting commitments made as a UNESCO City of Music are:

- To work with the music sector to develop a strong model for safe, inclusive, and accessible music experiences for audiences and musicians, through our wellbeing initiatives reaching 15,000 people.
- To launch a dedicated music support service providing professional development, networking and music entrepreneurship advice, reaching 1500+ musicians and music businesses annually.
- To collaborate with stakeholders, as well as the film and design sectors, to transform multiple vacant and public spaces for cultural use.
- To work internationally with the UNESCO Cities Network to deliver shared music, skills and learning opportunities.
- To host a Global Music Convention on Sustainability reaching 4,000 delegates worldwide.
- To share our incredible music story and create new music stories with collaborative projects reaching young people around the world and close to home.

These commitments are woven into our inaugural music roadmap and will be delivered over the course of the next five years. The UNESCO City of Music title is ours for as long as we continue to uphold the values of UNESCO and show a meaningful and long-lasting commitment to the transformative power and value of music. **We hope you will join us in amplifying the impact that this status will bring to all corners of the city.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### Belfast is also a UNESCO City of Learning!

In 2018, Belfast committed to work in partnership with city stakeholders to develop a learning city plan. The aim of the plan was to address barriers to learning and extend opportunities to all citizens in the city, regardless of age or background, and to deliver a better Belfast for all. Moving forward, there is sizable and scalable potential for the music sector to work with Belfast Learning to place music at the heart of skills and education programmes within communities, both locally and globally.

# MUSIC COUNTS

SOUND  
DIPLOMACY

In 2020 Belfast City Council contracted **Sound Diplomacy** to carry out a body of work researching and analysing the music sector in Belfast, including an analysis of the Belfast music ecosystem and engagement with the music sector on recommendations for recovery post-covid and for sectoral development. Sound Diplomacy is the global expert in developing long term and self-sufficient music strategies. Its work focuses on exploring how best to support the evolution and recovery of the sector from COVID-19, and their body of research and engagement work has fed into the content of our first ever strategic music roadmap for Belfast.

This engagement was built upon by The Fourth Pillar, Morgan Young Consulting and Score Draw Music in developing this roadmap and its strategic recommendations.

More than 30 meetings and video calls across three months were held with the Steering Group and its stakeholders, music and community organisations, experts in the field of equity, access and inclusion, audience development, indigenous music and more, as well as one-to-one sessions with interested parties.



# ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY

TYPE OF IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (NUMBER OF JOBS)	OUTPUT MILLION £	GROSS VALUE ADDED MILLION £
Direct	1,781	180	84.27
Indirect	562	89.18	43.15
Induced	787	77.63	46.96
Total Impact	3,131	346.81	174.38

Direct, Indirect, Induced  
and Total Economic Impact.

## THE BIG NUMBERS

As part of its contribution to the roadmap, the company conducted an economic impact analysis, the results of which are shared in this chapter. The figures relate to 2019, prior to global pandemic and the devastating impact that COVID brought to the lives and livelihoods of many.

In 2019, the Belfast music ecosystem delivered a total economic impact of 3,131 jobs – representing 2.05% of the city’s employment. It generated a total output of £346.8 million and a total gross value added (GVA) of £171.4m.



# TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT...

## EMPLOYMENT IN MUSIC

To put the size of the Belfast music ecosystem into perspective, the direct employment generated in 2019 (1,781 jobs) represented 1.16% of the workforce in Belfast, which is a bigger contribution than other sectors such as Construction of Buildings (1,300 employees) and Advertising Market Research (458).

## SECTORAL STRENGTHS

The majority of the direct economic value of the sector is created by the Live Music and Touring sub sector (72%), while Recording / Publishing and Radio Broadcasting represent 12% and 9% respectively; the remaining percentage groups are Music Creation (3%), Instruments and Equipment Stores (2%) and Music Education (2%).



## THE WIDER ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MUSIC

In 2019, the indirect economic impact of the music ecosystem in Belfast reached an output of £89.2 million and a GVA of £43 million. At the same time, it is estimated that 563 jobs in Belfast were indirectly supported by the music ecosystem in 2019. The induced economic impact is the economic value (output, GVA and employment) derived from the spending of workers whose wages are supported directly and indirectly by the Belfast music ecosystem (e.g. money spent on services, food, entertainment, and transportation). The induced output of the music ecosystem in the city reached £77 million, a GVA of £47 million in 2019, and supported 787 jobs.

## THE INCOME OF MUSIC WORKERS

According to the NISRA Business and Employment Survey 2019, the average income of music ecosystem workers in Belfast was £19,127 – 27.09% smaller than the average income for all Belfast employees. Both employees and freelancers in the ecosystem are mainly working full-time (45%) and, prior to COVID-19, their music-related activities constituted 69% of their total income. The main type of contract is as a freelancer (51%).

# TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT...

## THE IMPACT OF COVID IN 2020

At the time of the economic study, Sound Diplomacy was able to estimate the losses at that moment in time in the direct economic output of the music sector in Belfast. Calculations show that losses reached £126 million during 2020 (70%). Live Music and Touring was the most affected segment, with estimated losses of £121 million (96% of total losses), while the losses of the other segments (Recording & Publishing, Music Creativity, Instruments & Equipment, Supporting Industry, and Education) reached an estimated loss in output of approximately £5 million.

Furthermore, around 950 employees (53% of the direct music ecosystem employees) were negatively affected by the pandemic. However, thanks to job retention schemes the loss of jobs was not so drastic; by 2020 only 2% of the music ecosystem employees were made redundant, while 12% and 39% suffered permanent reductions in working hours or went into furlough respectively. The survey also revealed that the majority of employees and freelancers in the sector (64% and 82% respectively) suffered a considerable decrease in their annual incomes during 2020.

Prior to COVID-19, music venues had as their main source of revenue the sale of tickets (26.8%) and bar or food sales (21.4%); however, following the onset of COVID-19, 78% had to cancel music performances altogether, making most live music venues (89%) highly dependent on government support.

Since the onset of COVID-19, the average decrease in income for the music ecosystem was 70.29%. Regardless of the size of the business or the average annual income, the impact was significant. The decrease was more accentuated for live music venues (95%) and the recording industry (e.g. label, publisher, distributor, etc.), with an average decrease of 82.5%, compared to artist management (50%), music/instrument retailers (40%) and sound recording companies (3.3%).





# INTRODUCING THE BELFAST MUSIC ROADMAP

We acknowledge that there is much work to be done in order to develop a stronger and more sustainable music ecosystem which is both anchored and adaptable to change. This roadmap therefore does not constitute a blueprint, but rather supports a philosophy of enablement with a view to creating a fluid, permeable place which values music and an 'anything is possible' attitude.

Our vision is to wholly support musicians and those working in music with the development of their talent and ideas, whilst embedding music and access to it in all parts of the city. This aim is underpinned by a set of core values which will inform our actions and commitments – belonging, collaboration, fairness, inclusion and respect.

We are not starting from scratch. As shown by the UNESCO City of Music status, Belfast is already a city bursting at the seams with music and creativity. Our foundations are strong. There is a solid sense of community and a willingness for individuals and organisations in music to work together.

The small size of Belfast has created a collegiate atmosphere with an impressive DIY-mentality which has spawned the creation of exciting, diverse and authentic scenes. There is a strong music heritage and not just in the recent past; the amount of young people learning to play indigenous music is increasing with more than 5,000 over 18s engaging in it. There is active community participation in music as well as a professional music industry base, albeit the latter is under-developed. And there is existing support from public funders and local businesses and an appetite to do more.

All of this has created a strong international profile where local music regularly punches above its weight, as other countries connect with and look to us.

**But we recognise that we can do more,  
do better, and be bolder.**



# INTRODUCING THE BELFAST MUSIC ROADMAP

We have listened extensively to the feedback and the views from the sector and the city's people, and we want you to know that we have truly heard you.

- We know there is a great need for additional spaces and resources to support musicians and creators across all genres – not just the commercially popular ones.
- We know we need to strike a balance between recognising and celebrating our music heritage whilst driving a forward-thinking and modern -day music identity.
- We know we need to safeguard talent retention and development, particularly in light of COVID-19, to create a more accessible music scene for artists and audiences.
- We know there is a gap in the value chain from grassroots to international, whether in infrastructure, opportunity, agency, or management.
- We know we are good at identifying and working with musicians when they are emerging but that upon reaching a tipping point, they often leave, disappear or are unable to fulfil their potential.

- And we know that we need to engage equally with both the private and not-for-profit sectors, valuing both music in the community as well as the commercial music potential.
- Historically, we acknowledge that there has been a dichotomy in Belfast, either economy or culture, but as a UNESCO City of Music, this is our opportunity to bridge the two.

We want to reshape music in Belfast, so it is characterised by quality, sustainable projects, and accompanied by long-term strategic investment. This roadmap 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.





## THEMES & PRIORITIES

# THEME 1: PLACE ARTISTS AT THE HEART

### RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF CREATORS

Music creators must be at the heart of any music strategy for a UNESCO City of Music. Were it not for the musicians and creators, the broader sector would have no talent in which to invest, live music venues would hear only the sound of silence, and audiences would have no musical activity to uplift their spirits.

The most basic – or foundational – needs of musicians, music creators and performers are the focus of this theme, with funding, creative and professional development, opportunities to collaborate and create with others, and the talent pipeline emerging as the challenges to overcome and the opportunities to embrace. By putting these individuals first, regardless of their socio-economic background, personal protected characteristics, genre or musical ability, we have sought to show deep appreciation and recognition of their talent and its immeasurable contribution to our community, society and economy.

**Priority 1:** Increase the financial investment by reviewing and enhancing funding programmes for music creatives and making careers in music in Belfast more accessible and sustainable.

**Priority 2:** Explore and develop professional development opportunities to educate and equip music creators with the critical knowledge, contacts, and tools for building a sustainable career within the sector.

**Priority 3:** Open up the Belfast music sector by creating opportunities for music creatives to connect and collaborate with their peers locally, nationally and internationally

**Priority 4:** In partnership with local communities, design & implement a series of initiatives to ensure that music is inclusive, accessible and open to everyone in our city.

## THEME 2: NURTURE THE SECTOR

### **STRENGTHEN THE STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO GUIDE AND INVEST IN CREATORS**

The structure of the music sector is often explained by comparing it to an iceberg: the artist is the most visible part of the sector, putting themselves out to market for everyone to see and engage with; whilst under the surface there is a team of skilled, knowledgeable and connected individuals who provide the support and guidance required to navigate the artist through often-choppy waters. These individuals make it possible for music to be rehearsed, recorded, released and then promoted far and wide through digital services, tours, and media opportunities.

Music is complex; it requires an understanding of intellectual property; it requires an understanding of how to monetise copyright; and it requires an understanding of specialist skills and techniques specific primarily to music. And that's before creativity for marketing campaigns and PR moments or political knowledge for lobbying Governments and influencing policy comes in. There is a wealth of experience in Belfast, and indeed Northern Ireland, across these various facets and individuals and organisations need to be able to access the support required to continue building the infrastructure for the music sector.

This roadmap places great emphasis on the freelancers, organisations, trade bodies and businesses who embody the pivotal role of enabling creators to be just that – creators.

**Priority 5:** Increase the financial assistance available to freelancers, organisations and businesses whose primary role is to enable, support and develop creators.

**Priority 6:** Explore and develop professional development opportunities to educate and equip music organisations and businesses to build sustainable career pathways within the sector.

**Priority 7:** Prioritise the sustainable growth of the music business sector through initiatives supporting entrepreneurialism, meaningful business development and export opportunities.

**Priority 8:** Working stakeholders to drive forward the creation of funded opportunities to engage and support the future generation of creative freelancers, cultural leaders and music business entrepreneurs.



## THEME 3: IGNITE THE LIVE EXPERIENCE

### *LIBERATE THE LIVE MUSIC SECTOR AS A MAJOR CATALYST FOR CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH*

As clearly outlined in Sound Diplomacy's findings, live music is the most significant contributor to Belfast's music sector. It provides employment, attracts visitors and is, for many people across Belfast and Northern Ireland, the primary way of engaging with artists and performers of all genres. The pandemic saw the growth of the live music economy halted, with audiences only able to access performances remotely, if at all.

As we emerge carefully from lockdown, the live sector is presented with a set of new challenges, which only add to those experienced before COVID-19. At the same time, the drive to re-engage audiences and open live music up further to the people of Belfast and beyond presents a set of new opportunities. If ever there was a moment for embracing bold ambitions, creating unique experiences, building upon the assets the city already has, and promoting these to the world, it is now.

This roadmap recognises the importance of live music to Belfast for creators and performers, for freelancers and those working in music, and for the people of the city, our audiences.

**Priority 9:** Deliver a series of measures that would facilitate the development of a thriving, sustainable and strong live music sector in the wake of COVID-19 including a review existing licensing frameworks that impact upon the potential for growth of Belfast's live music sector.

**Priority 10:** Enhance Belfast's night-time economy, culture and governance to ensure the city is fulfilling its economic and cultural potential after dark

**Priority 11:** Support venues and performance spaces in implementing initiatives to ensure the health and safety, both physically and in terms of mental wellbeing, of performers and attendees at live music events.

**Priority 12:** Lead the charge in greening the live music sector, embedding sustainability at the heart of its approach to business operations.

## THEME 4: UNLOCK THE UNIFYING POWER OF UNESCO

### SHARE THE GIFT OF MUSIC WITH THE PEOPLE OF BELFAST

Belfast's people are as important to this roadmap as the creators, workers and spaces where music lives. They inspire, encourage and support our creators and performers; they educate and motivate our cultural leaders; and they fill our venues with the joy that they experience when engaging with music. And so, as a UNESCO City of Music, it is important that any strategy meets the needs and responds to the experiences of the people who told us that music matters to them.

This roadmap aims to create a sense of ownership of the UNESCO title for the people of the city, recognising the vital role they have played in our musical past and the exciting role they can play in our music future. They can help to embed music in local communities, get involved in managing or organising music activities, and be part of Belfast's music story which we can – and should – promote the world over.

This roadmap aims to provide more opportunities to feed their passion for music and to truly embrace the potential for embedding music in all corners and communities of the city. It also seeks to position the Belfast City of Music brand on the international stage as a gateway to visitors and investors.

**Priority 13:** Give the people of Belfast greater ownership over, and involvement in, music activities and events across the city

**Priority 14:** Through improved and enhanced strategic communications, make it easier for locals and visitors to find out about the music events and activities taking place across Belfast

**Priority 15:** Take an innovative and creative approach to music activities, ensuring citizens and visiting audiences have access to incredible and unique music experiences which reflect the culture, heritage and ambition of Belfast.

**Priority 16:** Partner with tourism bodies, Sister Cities and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to promote Belfast, and Northern Ireland, as a must-visit destination for any music lover.





# LEADING THE WAY THE BELFAST MUSIC GOVERNANCE MODEL

**In order to deliver the recommendations set out in this roadmap, Belfast City Council plans to enhance and amplify its leadership for and within the local music sector.**

This roadmap demonstrates that music is a primary pillar of the city's commitment to improving quality of life, providing greater music and cultural offerings, and developing the city economically. It offers a visionary understanding of music's role in placemaking and acknowledges that, in order to create a more dynamic music economy and city, the needs of musicians and those who support them must first be met.

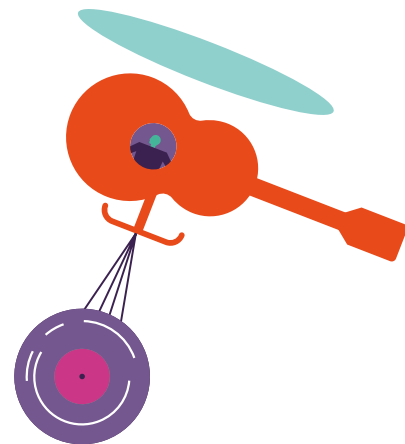
But Council itself is not immersed in the ever-changing needs of the sector nor wholly connected to recognise the opportunities that may arise. This reality creates a need for dedicated music leadership, with representation from and engagement with the music community in its broadest sense.



## *GUIDING PRINCIPLES*

**Whilst Council will work closely with the city's music sector, it is important to outline the role of Council in supporting music activities and initiatives and the parameters within which its officers can and should operate.**

At the highest level, and over the next four years, the litmus test for progressing with any music-related activity will be (a) the provision of clear evidence demonstrating the need for any proposed activity or initiative and (b) the clear demonstration and quantification or qualification of the outcome or benefit to the intended recipient (i.e. creators, workers, the live music sector and/or the people of Belfast, taking into consideration at all times diversity, inclusion and belonging in respect of under-represented communities, individuals and genres).



### **Recommendation: Recruit a Belfast Music Officer**

Whilst engagement with and support for music in Belfast clearly sits across Economic Development within Council, music should have a permanent and fixed home to ensure one team takes ownership of the overall implementation and prioritisation of this roadmap and the city's deliverables as a UNESCO City of Music.

It is recommended that the home for music is that of the Culture and Tourism team, where a dedicated Music Officer should be employed and will be responsible for co-ordinating relationships working closely with colleague in Business Growth and Enterprise.





## *THE ROLE OF A MUSIC OFFICER*

The dedicated Music Officer will provide the music sector, music communities and all music stakeholders with a clear point of contact for all music and UNESCO-related enquiries. The individual will serve as a liaison between the city, the private sector and the third sector within the music ecosystem. They will be an advocate for music, will seek to build relationships that benefit the ever-increasing role of music within the city, and will be mindful of the goal to protect and amplify Belfast's designation as a veritable City of Music.

Whilst the delivery and implementation of this roadmap will be the priority for this role-holder, the following responsibilities will be critical to their effectiveness and eventual success:

- Acting as a resource to local stakeholders and a first point of contact to national and international stakeholders;
- Advocating for the local musicians, venues, community groups, music organisations, and music businesses;
- Ensuring consistent communication between the local music sector and the city's leadership (news, funding and grants, opportunities, best practice);
- Fostering collaboration with other creative hubs and sectors in Belfast and beyond; and,
- Identifying opportunities for amplifying the UNESCO City of Music brand as well as opportunities for outwardly promoting Belfast music.



### **Recommendation: Develop a Belfast Music Office**

The recruitment of a Music Officer represents a significant opportunity to show the commitment of Belfast City Council to the artform which is vitally important to the future of the city. However, one sole Officer will not suffice as Belfast's journey as a UNESCO City of Music evolves and grows, bringing with it exciting opportunities for all those who engage in music.

Belfast City Council will explore the development of a dedicated Music Office in collaboration with various city stakeholders and music partners, drawing on best practice from other Music Cities, to ensure adequate support for meeting the needs and expectations of the city as music visibly becomes a core pillar of its economic growth, community engagement and cultural offering.



# TAKE BACK THE CITY THE BELFAST MUSIC LEADERSHIP MODEL

This music roadmap represents a genuine opportunity to uplift the voices of those to whom music matters; to ensure that the needs of the sector and the city are met whilst the expertise and experience of individuals is drawn upon to guide Council in its actions. The following proposals are being recommended to ensure a collective, collaborative, and cohesive approach in the delivery of the roadmap.

A phased approach is being proposed to allow each new body ample time to find its rhythm, adapt to joint working, and assess its effectiveness. This measured and logical approach will give these structures the best chance of success in delivering tangible benefits for all stakeholders.



# TAKE BACK THE CITY THE BELFAST MUSIC LEADERSHIP MODEL

## GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATION 1:

### Create a Belfast Region Music Board

Drawing on best practice from other dedicated Music Cities around the world and following on from the successful implementation of the city of Music Steering Group to drive forward the UNESCO application process, the city should develop a Belfast Region Music Board.

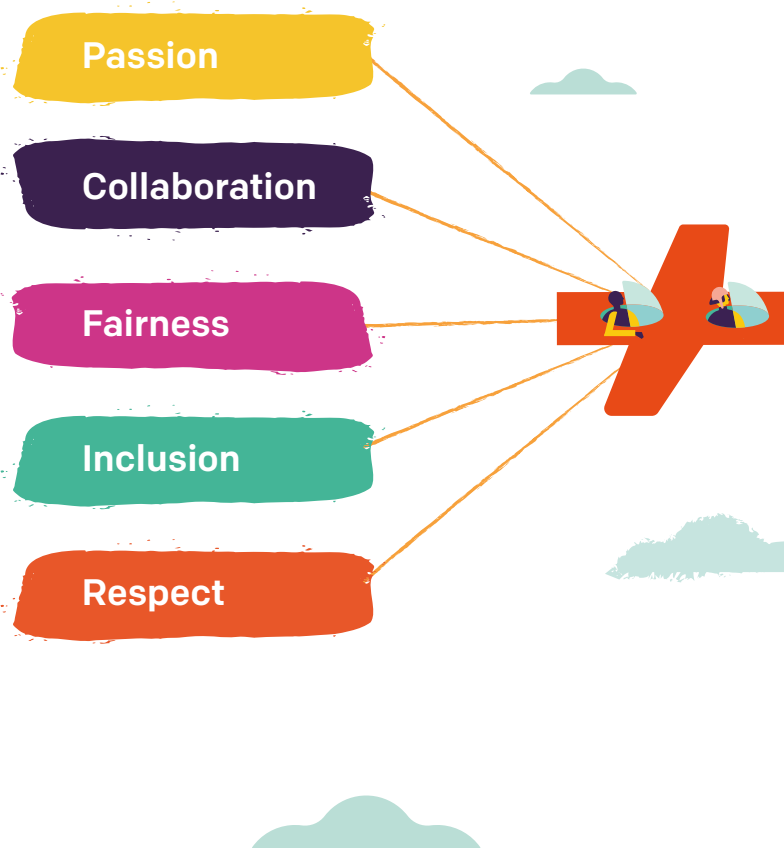
#### ITS VISION?

To bring to life the UNESCO City of Music designation, embedding music in all communities across the city and underpinning both strategic ambition and tangible delivery with the need to make music a sustainable career option for creators and those who support them.

#### ITS PURPOSE?

The overarching role of the Board is to oversee the implementation and prioritisation of this roadmap, anchoring the city's commitment to music and ensuring its composition represents the varied interests and needs of both the music sector and the people of Belfast.

#### ITS VALUES?



## RECRUITMENT

The recruitment of between 15 and 20 members of the Belfast Region Music Board should be done via an open recruitment call with selection determined by three primary factors:

- **Professional Experience:** The level of professional experience in a candidate's chosen field will be important to the overall composition of the Board.
- **Representation:** The Board must reflect the communities of individuals which this roadmap seeks to support, i.e. creators, sectoral workers, the live music sector, and the people of the city. In addition, a Reserved Seats Policy is recommended to ensure that individuals from diverse and under-represented communities (People of Colour, Disabled, LGBT+, Woman) and under-represented genres have a voice in the discussions relating to the future of music in Belfast. This approach has been inspired by the Musicians' Union approach to its Section Committees.
- **Skills audit:** Belfast City Council should undertake a skills audit to identify the skill sets required to support the work of an effective Belfast Region Music Board. Any specialist skills required will be set out explicitly in the recruitment materials.

The positions of Chair and Vice Chair will be selected by those eventually appointed to the Board. Up to five seats will be made available for any existing Steering Group members who wish to re-apply to ensure continuity in the process. It will be important to ensure that a fair, open and transparent recruitment process is observed, underpinned by respectful communication with candidates.

## REPORTING

The Board will appoint a Chair and Vice Chair who will be responsible for liaising with the City Council. The initial point of contact for any and all reporting will be the Music Officer in the Culture and Tourism Unit who will then perform a vital triaging role to ensure the information, request or feedback reaches the appropriate individual or Unit within Council.

## TRANSPARENCY

In order to communicate the core activity from the Board to the wider sector, a three-fold approach is recommended:

- The publication of minutes from Board meetings;
- A quarterly newsletter to recipients who express an interest in the work of the Board; and,
- A dedicated website or section on an appropriate website to publicise members, responsibilities, key initiatives and policies.



# TAKE BACK THE CITY THE BELFAST MUSIC LEADERSHIP MODEL

## GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATION 2:

### **Create additional fora for creators, the live sector and young people**

The strategic recommendations that have been devised for this roadmap have been inspired by evidence; both the evidence of need to support creators first and foremost and the economic evidence which demonstrates the scale and importance of live music to Belfast's economy and culture. As such, it is recommended that, 18 months after the Belfast Region Music Board is officially in operation, it should – in partnership with Belfast City Council – seek to create a dedicated Music Creators' Forum and Live Music Forum.

#### ***A) MUSIC CREATORS' FORUM (T • 18 MONTHS)***

It is recommended that the Music Creators' Forum comprise musicians, songwriters, composers, producers and any other creatives involved in the process of music creation. Meeting twice yearly with the Belfast Region Music Board and feeding into the ongoing work of the Board through a dedicated music creator representative, this forum will allow for open and honest discussion around the needs of music creators in the city and will provide an opportunity for their voices to be heard by Council.

#### ***B) LIVE MUSIC FORUM (T • 18 MONTHS)***

It is recommended that the Live Music Forum comprise venues, promoters, festivals, events' organisers, technical freelancers and any other individuals involved in live music in Belfast. This forum will provide an opportunity to discuss any ongoing challenges and opportunities for the sector, whilst also facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practice between attendees.

In recognition of the importance of music to young people's lives and aspirations, regardless of their intention to pursue a career in the sector, it is being recommended that a further sub-group of the Board be created to engage the next generation in the Board's discussions and actions relating to music in Belfast.

#### ***C) YOUTH MUSIC FORUM (T • 24 MONTHS)***

It is recommended that the Youth Music Forum be developed in partnership with youth and community organisations across Belfast. This forum will provide an opportunity for young people aged 14 – 21 to think about the positive role of music in their local communities, establish and lead music initiatives to respond to the needs of their peers, and to explore a future role in music artistically or within music business.

### ***GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATION 3:***

#### **Create a Music Council to engage the wider sector**

To complement the aforementioned governance structures, it is recommended that Belfast City Council, together with the Belfast Region Music Board, develop a Belfast Music Council. This process should follow the establishment of the aforementioned groups.

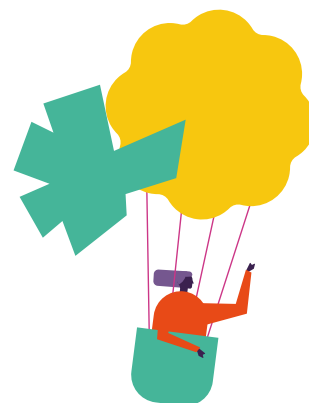
The Music Council initiative has been inspired by The Ivors Academy Senate, which allows 40 voted-for members from across the songwriting community to feed into the work of the Board and establish ad-hoc working groups dedicated to specific challenges and opportunities for this important part of the music sector.

It is proposed that The Belfast Music Council would adopt a similar approach to recruitment and responsibilities ensuring that, in the longer term, a wide and varied range of voices have an outlet for their issues and ideas and that democracy is truly in action within a diverse and welcoming sector where everyone has a sense of belonging.





# ***FRIENDS OF BELFAST MUSIC PARTNERS AND ALLIES***



An ever-evolving City of Music requires support from a broad range of partners and allies, from specialist trade bodies and interest groups to the private sector and public funders. Whilst the responsibility for delivering on this roadmap rests firmly with Belfast City Council, it is imperative that delivery is aligned with the plans and priorities of other organisations and stakeholders where there is a shared interest or common goal.

The Music Leadership Model outlined for Belfast City Council should be supported by Observers from a number of organisations, including but not limited to:

- **Arts Council of Northern Ireland**
- **BBC**
- **Belfast Chamber**
- **British Council NI**
- **Free The Night**
- **Help Musicians NI**
- **Invest Northern Ireland**
- **Music Venue Trust**
- **Musicians' Union**
- **Northern Ireland Screen**
- **Thrive**
- **Tourism NI**
- **UK Music**

## ***THE ROLE OF AN OBSERVER IS THREE-FOLD:***

- 1.*** To listen to sectoral feedback via the Belfast Music Board, UNESCO Music Business Ambassador, UNESCO Musicians in Residence and other voices as appropriate to learn and understand the needs, challenges of and opportunities for the development of the Belfast music sector and the embedding of music across the city.
- 2.*** To support the delivery of the Belfast Music Roadmap through their respective organisations, identifying opportunities for collaboration and joint working as well as any available funding, research projects or promotional mechanisms to strengthen the role of music in Belfast.
- 3.*** To advocate for Belfast Music, acting as a champion and an ambassador for the power of music and its importance to the city, both within their respective organisations and in engagements with their own stakeholders.

# *FRIENDS OF BELFAST MUSIC*

## *PARTNERS AND ALLIES*

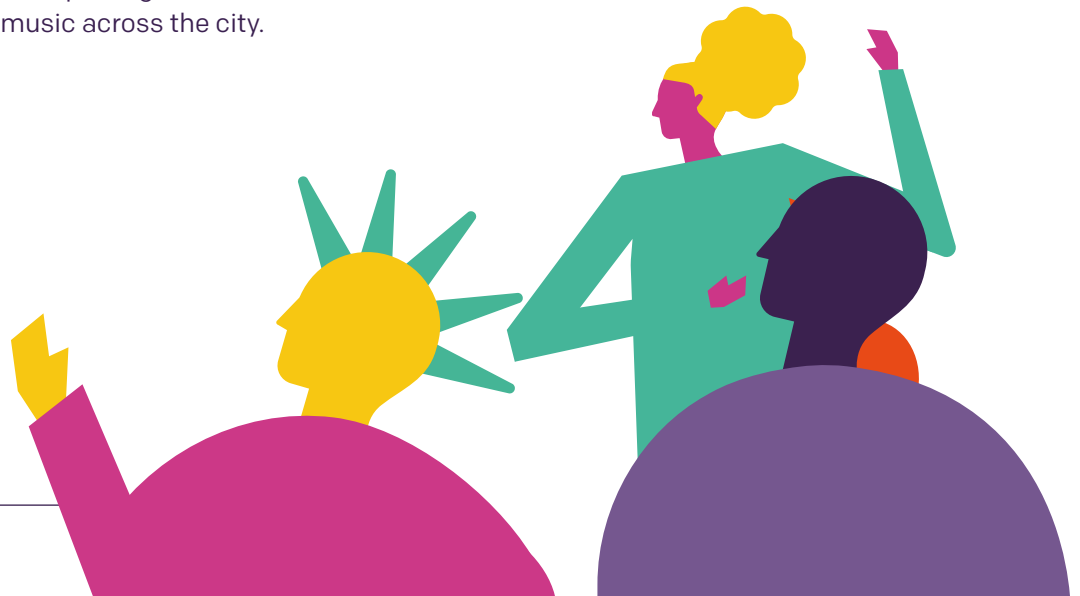
Observers are encouraged to attend all meetings of the Belfast Region Music Board to listen, learn and lend support; outside of the Music Board meetings, the Observers Group (OG) should meet quarterly with Belfast City Council.

**The aims of the meeting include but would not be limited to:**

- **Strategic work programme:** planning to ensure alignment and avoid crossover between Observer organisations.
- **Tactical events and initiatives:** sharing updates on forthcoming music-related activities.
- **Marketing and communications:** inputting into communications planning for music across the city.

### *INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS*

In addition to our local partners, we are excited to have joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) on becoming a UNESCO City of Music. The Network aims to strengthen cooperation with and among cities that have recognised creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable development. Member cities work towards a common mission: placing creativity and cultural industries at the core of their urban development plans to make their cities safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable. We will look forward to going on this journey with their support and to working with other cities, including our existing Sister Cities, to create opportunities to develop and promote Belfast music around the world.





# ***SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT BELFAST MUSIC BRANDING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY***

**Securing the UNESCO City of Music designation has been the key to unlocking the potential of music for influencing Belfast's future. Belfast is a City of Music and, moving forward, what is needed is a coherent brand to promote Belfast's new title and all accompanying music activity to the world.**

But UNESCO isn't just about Belfast. The city has benefitted for years from musicians, creative freelancers, cultural leaders and audiences who have come from beyond Belfast's borders. This important fact needs to be recognised as the UNESCO brand is also a result of their passion, energy and commitment.

**Recommendation:** Belfast City Council, with the permission and agreement from UNESCO, should develop a UNESCO City of Music brand identity which can be embraced not just by those engaging with music in Belfast but by those individuals and organisations (in or outside of Belfast) who partner with Belfast to deliver joint activities and initiatives. Whilst the resulting brand will be owned by Belfast City Council, the output should result in the delivery of a visual identity and accompanying brand strategy and branding toolkit which is unique to music produced in Northern Ireland and open to be used by those who embrace the power of the UNESCO brand to music across Northern Ireland.

Developing a brand is an integral part of the internal housekeeping of any initiative, organisation, or company. With the visual identity agreed and applied to a number of assets, it is then appropriate to consider how to promote, market and communicate Belfast's music status externally to ensure key messages resonate with the intended audiences. The rationale for doing so is to attract the input of others who can support the work of Belfast City Council and the Belfast Region Music Board and to facilitate meaningful connections and collaborations for and with our creatives and wider communities.

**Recommendation:** Belfast City Council should devise and deliver a comprehensive strategic communications plan over the next four years, leaving no stone unturned in its bid to promote music and the power of music to a wealth of audiences, influencers, and potential partners. The plan should elevate Belfast and, where appropriate, Northern Ireland as a whole, as a natural home for music - a place where music is embraced, developed, and celebrated; a place where music enhances and transforms people's lives; and a place where music is recognised as an ever-growing contributor to the economy.

# ***SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT BELFAST MUSIC BRANDING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY***

**Any communications plan should include, but not be limited to, the delivery of the following assets:**

- **Messaging:** having identified the core audiences with whom City Council wishes to engage, set out the relevant audiences for each set of messaging and align with the activity proposed in the following elements of a communications strategy:
- **Advocacy:** a proposal for using the Sound Diplomacy research to strengthen the narrative relating to the economic importance of music.
- **Branded assets:** a plan that proposes the creation of sustainably produced merchandise or assets for use by City Council and third parties to champion and promote the UNESCO brand and the broader importance of music.
- **Content strategy:** a strategy to inform the production of content to help communicate important messages about music in the city to audiences.
- **Communications toolkit:** a toolkit to be shared with stakeholders, observers, and audiences to ensure all parties are aligned in their music messaging.
- **Community engagement:** a plan to facilitate the greater involvement of the music sector and the people of Belfast with City Council on ideas and initiatives related to UNESCO to instil ownership of the brand across the city.
- **Digital communications:** a plan that encompasses the creation and ongoing management of a dedicated website for music in Belfast, a social media strategy and social media toolkit for use by third parties, the creation of regular newsletters or communications related to developments in music, and streaming playlists to champion and promote local talent.
- **Events:** a plan that facilitates the integration of the UNESCO City of Music designation and/or wider music brand into existing and new events held by City Council and appropriate third parties.
- **Marketing:** a plan which aligns with and feeds into that of external-facing bodies, such as Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland, to promote the role of music in Belfast to both local and overseas audiences.
- **Networks:** a plan to ensure City Council's employees are engaged in the appropriate industry networks, locally, nationally and internationally.
- **Patrons:** a plan to maximise the input and support of the City of Music Patrons, Gary Lightbody and Hannah Peel, locally, nationally and internationally.
- **Press:** A media plan to champion all UNESCO-related and wider music activity being delivered and supported by City Council.



# NEXT STEPS

## April 2022

Consult with the public and partners



## July 2022

Public consultation closes



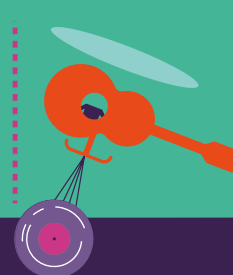
## Dec 2022

Strategy goes live



## Feb 2023

Activate communications - website, social media, newsletters



## May 2022

Put in place music support team



## Oct 2022

Make final changes



## Jan 2023

Recruitment of Belfast Region Music Board



## 2023 onwards

Music Matters - delivery and transformation



# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We are delighted that you are engaging with us as part of our public consultation on this new roadmap for music in Belfast. There will be different ways for you to get involved and let us know what you think. As well as the ambition and priorities set out in the document the next section also gives you an idea of the types of programmes and initiatives that could form part of our delivery plan.

Over the coming weeks we will be continuing to engage with partners to refine these actions and agree commitments that will form part of our final agreed strategy.



# MAKING *MUSIC MATTER*

The following proposed actions are indicative of the types of initiatives we believe will be meaningful and impactful in supporting the future of music in Belfast. It is important to note that Belfast City Council will seek to enhance and build upon existing initiatives that may fall under the proposed actions below, whilst striving to collaborate with stakeholders across the city.

Stakeholders include but are not limited to Arts Council NI, BBC, British Council, Invest NI, and Tourism NI. Through the public consultation these will be further refined and developed into a delivery plan.







# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 1- PLACE ARTISTS AT THE HEART

**Priority 1: Increase the financial investment by reviewing and enhancing funding programmes for music creatives and making careers in music in Belfast more accessible and sustainable.**

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
1.1	Review existing funding processes, increasing access for those with additional, neurodiverse or accessibility needs.	Funding programmes which are accessible to and by all
1.2	Continue to deliver the Creative Bursaries scheme for musicians and expand this to include other music roles including producers, composers and conductors. The first year should focus on developing the creative talent; whilst a new second year should focus on the professional development of the individual and building business skills, knowledge and contacts.	Funded opportunities for creators accompanied by professional development
1.3	Consult the live music sector to create a “UNESCO Fair Play Charter” which recognises the value of musicians and their talent to venues, hospitality and tourism and remunerates them fairly.	Fair pay for play across all UNESCO-branded performance spaces in the city
1.4	Commit to funding up to two initiatives per year to alleviate the costs incurred by music creators in Belfast. These could take the form of a subsidised Studio Voucher Scheme, Rehearsal Voucher Scheme, or Plug and Play programme at Belfast City of Music partner venues across the city.	Easing the financial burden on creators

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 1- PLACE ARTISTS AT THE HEART

**Priority 1: Increase the financial investment by reviewing and enhancing funding programmes for music creatives and making careers in music in Belfast more accessible and sustainable.**

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
1.5	Liaise with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to explore a “UNESCO rate to create” to provide musicians and their teams with support cost-effective travel and accommodation packages when touring nationally and internationally	Further easing the financial burden on creators and their teams
1.6	Create a Belfast City of Music Musicians in Residence programme with a special focus on both indigenous music and diverse / under-represented genres and/or communities to elevate the role of musicians across Belfast, deliver educational initiatives and reach new audiences	A city where all forms of music and the uniqueness of individual creators is appreciated, recognised and promoted
1.7	Ensure music programming takes an inclusive approach at all times and provides annual opportunities for showcasing musicians with disabilities and / or additional needs. Ensure music activities are made available in safe spaces for all ages, where the needs of those with disabilities can be met	An inclusive music programme for the city
1.8	Alongside any financial assistance granted to creators, provide recipients with the opportunity to undertake a health and wellbeing one-to-one session with trained medical experts	A healthier music community with the tools to be a creator in Belfast – especially post-COVID

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 1- PLACE ARTISTS AT THE HEART

**Priority 2:** Explore and develop professional development opportunities to educate and equip music creators with the critical knowledge, contacts, and tools for building a sustainable career within the sector, while also ensuring that these opportunities are not limited by age.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
2.1	Develop a Music Support Service (initially a digital space/website) which will act as a point of contact for all questions arising from within the music community (new, emerging and tipping point artists), deliver and promote educational and development opportunities, and facilitate connections amongst and beyond individuals and organisations working within the music sector	A more informed and better-connected community of musicians and music creators
2.2	Research, devise and implement a programme aimed at supporting artists at various stages of their career, including developed acts across multiple genres who demonstrate readiness to tour and perform nationally and internationally	Pathways and performance opportunities for talent outside of NI
2.3	Identify and financially support the recruitment of a partner to deliver a music business education course for music creators to further their understanding of how to sustainably develop a career in music	An educated sector of musicians and creators with essential knowledge of the business
2.4	Working with the sector, seek to provide opportunities via events and programmes to provide regular access to professional associations in music to deepen existing relationships and create new ones	A more engaged community of music creators in the nuts and bolts of the business

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 1- PLACE ARTISTS AT THE HEART

**Priority 2:** Explore and develop professional development opportunities to educate and equip music creators with the critical knowledge, contacts, and tools for building a sustainable career within the sector, while also ensuring that these opportunities are not limited by age.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
2.5	Develop regular music business touchpoints throughout the year using existing conferences to offer more regular but bitesize opportunities for micro learning	The integration of business and creative elements of music for creators
2.6	Identify and financially support the recruitment of a partner to deliver a programme to develop the production skills of women, female-identifying and non-binary music creators in a safe and trusted studio environment	Greater access to technical opportunities in the music sector for an under-represented community
2.7	Consult the live sector to encourage the implementation of Access Riders to ensure the needs of disabled musicians and performers are understood and met	Tangible support for disabled performers across the city's venues
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. This should include a mechanism for reporting and dealing with inappropriate behaviour	A safe, healthy and inclusive sector where all musicians have a sense of belonging



# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 1- PLACE ARTISTS AT THE HEART

**Priority 3: Open up the Belfast music sector by creating opportunities for music creatives to connect and collaborate with their peers locally, nationally and internationally.**

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
3.1	Create more physical spaces for music in the city which adds to and complements existing spaces and provides a safe, healthy and cost-effective environment for creators to meet, collaborate and create new music	A destination for creativity and genuine collaboration
3.2	Identify flagship events and opportunities nationally and internationally that will enable creators to connect and collaborate with their peers. This includes, but is not limited to, residences, exchanges and showcasing opportunities. Provide creators with advice and support to maximise the new opportunities created	Strategic promotion of Belfast and NI music globally
3.3	Seek to provide opportunities for creators to engage with other creative individuals and art forms beyond music. e.g. film and screen, to increase collaborations, opportunities and export potential	Music everywhere across the city
3.4	Work with stakeholders, including other local authorities, to develop opportunities for NI and Ireland-wide NI touring for musicians and performers	A connected community of music creators in NI and Ireland
3.5	Explore the use of interactive technology to facilitate artistic collaborations locally, nationally and internationally	The breaking down of borders to promote local music

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 1- PLACE ARTISTS AT THE HEART

**Priority 4:** In partnership with local communities, design & implement a series of initiatives to ensure that music is inclusive, accessible and open to everyone in our city.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
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. Consider the role of traditional / indigenous instruments in this objective	Democratised access to music
4.2	As part of the UNESCO Musicians in Residence programme, work with local schools and community groups as well as Belfast City of Learning to deliver a UNESCO Schools Tour	An inspired generation of future musicians and audiences
4.3	Explore the potential of interactive and assistive technology within communities to ensure those with additional needs have the opportunity to engage in any music-related programmes being delivered	A truly open sector where the joy of music can be experienced by all
4.4	Work with stakeholders to develop a Youth Music Forum comprising 14-21 year olds to amplify and encourage young people's impact on the music sector	An informed music sector to safeguard it for future generations
4.5	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	A better-supported music sector across all ages and decreased barriers to cultural participation



# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 2: NURTURE THE SECTOR

**Priority 5: Increase the financial assistance available to freelancers, organisations and businesses whose primary role is to enable, support and develop creators.**

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
5.1	Review existing funding processes, considering those with additional or accessibility needs	Funding programmes which are accessible to and by all
5.2	Continue and expand upon core funding for organisations, ensuring beneficiaries include organisations who support diverse and under-represented communities or genres and those with disabilities or additional needs	Financial security for organisations who support musicians, including the under-represented
5.3	Identify, select and allocate funding for a three-year period to support the development, delivery and promotion of a set of core music business flagship events	Identification of Belfast as a home for developing music business knowledge and skills
5.4	Allocate programming funding to support organisations who seek to develop and promote diverse and under-represented genres and provide opportunities for disabled musicians in performance spaces across Belfast	A broader range of music programming and greater visibility for diverse and under-represented genres

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 2: NURTURE THE SECTOR

**Priority 6:** Explore and develop professional development opportunities to educate and equip music organisations and businesses to build sustainable career pathways within the sector.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
6.1	Invest in the delivery of a specially designed mentoring programme for individuals working in music, including continued professional development for senior or experienced individuals working in music	A better supported music business sector
6.2	Undertake a skills audit of the sector, identifying the gaps and working with stakeholders to deliver upskilling programmes and initiatives	An upskilled workforce in music; the creation of new skills and roles to plug existing gaps in the sector
6.3	Create more opportunities for cultural leaders and business owners to learn from and share best practice with international counterparts	A deeper networked and connected music business sector
6.4	Allocate funding to support the attendance and representation of Belfast music individuals at international conferences	An international reputation as the home of talented cultural leaders
6.5	Pilot the creation of a UNESCO Music Business Ambassador (MBA) – a recurring two-year role to guide City Council in identifying the needs of workers in music and the opportunities for personal development and growth	A champion for the ongoing development of music business professionals



# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 2: NURTURE THE SECTOR

**Priority 7:** Explore and develop professional development opportunities to educate and equip music organisations and businesses to build sustainable career pathways within the sector.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
7.1	Develop a music business accelerator programme to grow micro-businesses into small businesses and beyond	A better supported music business sector
7.2	Create a one-stop-shop online Music Directory to promote and connect all facets of the music business and those working in it	A visible and well-connected music sector working more closely together
7.3	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions - transform a disused space into a dedicated music business hub to facilitate co-working and hot-desking for music business workers	A dedicated and well-equipped home for music business professionals to work collectively
7.4	Develop a Sponsorship Toolkit to help music organisations attract private funding and educate leaders on pitching best practice. Create opportunities for third sector and private sector matching and meet-ups	Enhanced private investment in the music sector and more financially sustainable organisations
7.5	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions - Support all parts of the sector in “going green” through practical initiatives, training and financial incentives	A climate conscious music business sector
7.6	Develop an export strategy to support the promotion of music businesses alongside the promotion of musical talent	A more internationally visible Belfast music sector
7.7	Promote Belfast nationally and internationally as a destination for music start-ups, attracting inward investment and building up the sectoral infrastructure	A more technologically innovative Belfast music sector; job creation

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 2: NURTURE THE SECTOR

**Priority 8:** Working stakeholders to drive forward the creation of funded opportunities to engage and support the future generation of creative freelancers, cultural leaders and music business entrepreneurs.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
8.1	Allocate funding to increase the number of paid internships and apprenticeships in music businesses	Greater opportunities for the next generation of cultural business leaders
8.2	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions - Weave music business into a Belfast City of Music Schools Tour to introduce young people to the myriad of behind-the-scenes roles in music	An inspired and educated next generation; more informed teachers and careers advisors
8.3	Co-create a Belfast City of Music Youth Music Forum to engage young people across Belfast in music and to input into the Belfast Region Music Board	An engaged youth music sector whose voices are heard and respected



# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 3: IGNITE THE LIVE EXPERIENCE

**Priority 9:** Deliver a series of measures that would facilitate the development of a thriving, sustainable and strong live music sector in the wake of COVID-19 including a review existing licensing frameworks that impact upon the potential for growth of Belfast’s live music sector

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
9.1	Lobby for implementation of the Agent of Change principle to prevent the closure and protect the future of Belfast’s live music venues and performances spaces.	A protected and supported live music sector
9.2	Review the current arrangements in place for busking and clarify the process for obtaining licences to play music in public	A thriving music scene in the streets of Belfast; greater performance opportunities for musicians
9.3	Consult the live music sector on all entertainment licensing processes which affect the ability of venues to operate at their full economic potential	Greater dialogue between Council and the live music sector
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	Increased sustainability of local grassroots music venues and a stronger NI demographic within the Music Venues Alliance
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	High quality, sustainable grass roots music venues

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 3: IGNITE THE LIVE EXPERIENCE

**Priority 10:** Enhance Belfast’s night-time economy, culture and governance to ensure the city is fulfilling its economic and cultural potential after dark.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
10.1	Create and implement a Get Home Safe initiative to ensure those working or partaking in music and other cultural activities in the evening can return home safely at any hour	A safer night-time environment for those working in or attending music events across the city
10.2	Join the Cities After Dark initiative to learn from and share best practice with culturally vibrant cities around the world	A modern approach to the night-time economy, culture and governance; putting Belfast’s night-time economy on the international map
10.3	Appoint a champion or ambassador to ensure the needs of the night-time sector are understood and that a strategy is co-designed across Council with input from all relevant city stakeholders	A Council strategy which commits to creating a thriving and safe night-time economy



# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 3: IGNITE THE LIVE EXPERIENCE

**Priority 11: Support venues and performance spaces in implementing initiatives to ensure the health and safety, both physically and in terms of mental wellbeing, of performers and attendees at live music events.**

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
11.1	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions - Create a Belfast City of Music Live Music Charter to ensure minimum standards are met in terms of safeguarding, servicing and supporting performers and audiences, including those with disabilities and additional needs	High standards of safety and support for performers and audiences in live music venues
11.2	Provide financial support to help venues make the necessary capital changes in a post-pandemic environment, taking into account the specific needs of those with disabilities and additional needs	Safe, healthy and welcoming live music spaces across the city
11.3	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions, create an international venues circuit to facilitate co-curation and co-promotion of music events	Internationally renowned venues in Belfast; global audiences for local talent
11.4	Develop and deliver an educational safeguarding campaign and programme to ensure performers and audiences are signposted to support services in times of distress or unease at live music events	Educated and supported live music community
11.5	Support venues and events' organisers in making venue-specific information available online ahead of events to educate and inform those attendees who may have access needs or other needs arising from a disability	A confident, reassured and well-informed audience
11.6	Support for venues, technical staff, and events' organisers in providing training and awareness on the needs of disabled musicians and audience members, including support for signing, captioned performances and audio descriptions	A music experience that can be enjoyed by all, whether performing or viewing

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 3: IGNITE THE LIVE EXPERIENCE

**Priority 12:** Lead the charge in greening the live music sector, embedding sustainability at the heart of its approach to business operations.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
12.1	Host a conference on sustainability in music, drawing on international expertise and best practice	An educated sector with real-life examples of how to deliver change and progress
12.2	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions - Provide a practical "Go Green" toolkit with tangible recommendations and measures for implementation	A well-equipped sector and an ever-growing knowledge base on sustainability
12.3	Make available dedicated and ongoing support within Council to the live music sector to ensure meaningful and lasting change in terms of sustainability	A supported sector with a direct line to a sustainability expert



# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 4: UNLOCK THE UNIFYING POWER OF UNESCO

**Priority 13:** Give the people of Belfast greater ownership over, and involvement in, music activities and events across the city within the sector.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
13.1	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions - Develop and deliver Gig Buddies scheme across the city to support those with learning disabilities who wish to attend live music events	Live music experiences for all
13.2	Create a cohort of Belfast City of Music Volunteers, ensuring opportunities are available to those with disabilities or additional needs, with opportunities for individuals to be trained as Gig Buddies and/ or Mental Health First Aid responders	Opportunities for music fans across the city to get involved; training and upskilling opportunities
13.3	Drive forward the development of an audience relationship and development strategy to understand the barriers to accessing music in Belfast and respond with initiatives to deepen and broaden engagement	Music experiences that can be enjoyed by all socio-economic backgrounds
13.4	Undertake an audit of disused or partially used spaces across the city that could be used for cultural purposes within communities and compile a Directory to make this information publicly available	The transformation of local spaces and places to fill with music

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 4: UNLOCK THE UNIFYING POWER OF UNESCO

**Priority 14:** Through improved and enhanced strategic communications, make it easier for locals and visitors to find out about the music events and activities taking place across Belfast.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
14.1	Create a one-stop listing service for venues, organisations and the hospitality sector to promote their music activity to the city’s locals and visitors	An informed audience which can support and engage with the music community
14.2	Design an interactive Belfast Music Map to guide locals and visitors to music hot spots across the city	The promotion of the wealth of music hotspots in the city
14.3	Provide a comprehensive social media and communications toolkit to the sector to help them proactively promote Belfast music on their owned channels	A sector speaking with one voice to champion music in all its forms
14.4	Develop a city-wide marketing campaign aimed at promoting the value and importance of music to all communities	An impassioned City of Music which respects and understands the power of music



# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 4: UNLOCK THE UNIFYING POWER OF UNESCO

**Priority 15:** Take an innovative and creative approach to music activities, ensuring citizens and visiting audiences have access to incredible and unique music experiences which reflect the culture, heritage and ambition of Belfast. Belfast.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
15.1	Weave music into the delivery of Council’s Rooftops initiative, through its own programming as well as that of individuals or organisations who wish to take part in a pilot	Unique experiences for music fans and the people of the city
15.2	Explore the potential of both assistive and interactive technology in venues to enhance the live music experience for audiences, both physically and virtually	Innovative music experiences which can be enjoyed by all
15.3	Make music a core component of all Council-owned events across sports, screen, food, and other creative art forms	Opportunities for musicians to perform to wider audience groups
15.4	Increase the frequency and consistency of programming for traditional / indigenous music as well as diverse and under-represented genres, with a view to building stronger audiences to support their growth and popularity	Increased pride in the music that has historically put Belfast on the global music map

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

## THEME 4: UNLOCK THE UNIFYING POWER OF UNESCO

**Priority 16:** Partner with tourism bodies, Sister Cities and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to promote Belfast, and Northern Ireland, as a must-visit destination for any music lover.

	ACTION	OUTCOMES
16.1	Develop a music tourism strategy for the city to ensure Belfast is promoted globally as a music destination	Music as a key asset for the outward promotion of NI
16.2	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions - Develop a music brand to promote Belfast and/or NI music globally	A strong music identity to attract visitors
16.3	Make music a core component of the Belfast Stories project being driven forward by Council	A tangible music attraction at the centre of Belfast’s newest visitor attraction
16.4	Aligning with UNESCO ambitions Work with the film and design sectors to bring the Belfast music brand to life across the city	Music woven into the DNA of Belfast City







# THE LAST WORD...

On behalf of Belfast City Council, thank you for taking the time to read this roadmap. We hope that you will engage in the consultation process and provide us with constructive feedback and guidance on priority items so that we can hit the ground running at the earliest opportunity.

We would like to thank the **City of Music Steering Group** for their commitment and dedication to working with us over the last three years, particularly at a difficult time for the sector as it sought to navigate the challenges of a global pandemic on local livelihoods. A special thanks goes to Charlotte Dryden as Chair of the Group during this period.

Our thanks go to **Sound Diplomacy** who started this journey with us and engaged extensively with the music sector, providing us with the vital insight needed to propose the recommendations. A further thank you goes to **The Fourth Pillar, Morgan Young Consulting and Score Draw Music** on bringing the Sound Diplomacy intel to life, consulting further with the sector, and creating this roadmap and leadership structure to guide the work of Council over the coming years.

Thank you to all the artists, freelancers, organisations, businesses, venues, audiences, music fans and wider stakeholders who contributed in any way to this critically important piece of work. It has been a pleasure working with you on this first phase. And we hope you will join us as our journey continues.

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