



<b>Subject:</b>	Cultural Mapping for Culture, Arts and Heritage
<b>Date:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
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<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	The purpose of this report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The purpose of this report is to update Members on Cultural Mapping for Culture, Arts and Heritage</li></ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Note the content of Phase One report on Cultural Mapping</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>Background and Strategic Context</b> <p>As a key action of Belfast's ten-year cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i>, the Culture Unit, in partnership and the Department for Communities, jointly commissioned a report on Belfast's cultural infrastructure. The aim of this report is to analyse what physical space is available for residents to experience culture, and to examine current physical resource allocation for the cultural sector across the city.</p>

	<p>The overall cultural mapping project, of which this report is stage one, is key to the delivery of the city's cultural strategy and the city's community plan (the Belfast Agenda). It will have significant contribution to existing and emerging Programme for Government outcomes and will make a strong contribution to achieving the objectives of other key city and regional plans. The Culture Team are committed to delivering a cultural mapping of the city within A City Imagining implementation plan 2020-2023.</p>
3.2	<p>This work will enable the collation of a large amount of information and utilise it in wide reaching operational and strategic contexts to benefit the city, our broader cultural sector, our strategic and operational partners, visitors and residents. This work is also important to other initiatives across Culture and Tourism, including includes heritage development, our Tourism Strategy - Make Yourself at Home, the development of neighbourhood tourism offerings and of course the collection of Belfast Stories for the forthcoming visitor attraction.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Cultural Mapping</b></p> <p>To date, the approach to cultural mapping and understanding gaps in cultural infrastructure in Belfast has been piecemeal. A number of studies of varying size and scope have been completed at city and neighbourhood level. However, a whole city approach in terms of a critical analysis of physical resources for cultural activity, identifying gaps and models of good practice is required – starting with a study of the physical resources for culture.</p>
3.4	<p>The Cultural Mapping project addresses the existing and future needs of our cultural and creative industries sector by ensuring that policy is informed by up to date and accurate data whilst also providing a valuable resource for the public to increase engagement and participation. Furthermore, this data has the potential to be utilised by residents, visitors, artists, cultural and creative organisations, funders and planners. This report is Phase One of a major cultural mapping project which includes the following phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase One - A review and analysis of Belfast's hard cultural infrastructure.</li> <li>• Phase Two – Study &amp; Scoping of the soft infrastructure, identifying cultural resources, networks links and patterns of cultural practice. Research with partners and community networks, wide-reaching public engagement and cluster engagement, crowdsourcing ideas.</li> <li>• Phase Three – An interactive digital cultural map product that will allow residents to browse the city's cultural offerings. This will be similar in concept to Dublin's 'culture near you' project.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>The report, available in Appendix 1, provides strategic recommendations for improving Belfast's creative provisions in the short and long term and can be seen as a tool that can inform broader plans for the city alongside other areas, including, but not limited to, regeneration, heritage, and economic development.</p>

## Recommendations

- 3.6 A key recommendation in this phase one report focuses on addressing the shortage of affordable artist studio space in Belfast. Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in February 2022, members agreed to open a new funding scheme for artist led organisations to provide financial and development support for this sector. As part of this support, members also agreed a strategic review of artist studios and maker-spaces in Belfast which would identify examples of best practice and potential solutions to this issue. This research to be conducted over the coming months, with a number of long-term recommendations presented to Committee in March 2023.
- 3.7 The report identifies 2 Royal Avenue as a space which could accommodate artists. On 15 April 2022, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approved the proposal around Meanwhile Use until the end of 2023 at our recently acquired 2 Royal Avenue building, with a focus on cultural, animation and creative activities. The proposal was to create a non-commercial space in the heart of the city and provide citizens and visitors with a free and accessible place to relax and enjoy arts programming and a cultural offering, whilst developing long term strategy use. In July 2022, Council submitted an application to the Levelling Up Fund, proposing a 'Creative Hub', for the building at 2 Royal Avenue. The concept was based on a mixture of complimentary commercial, creative and cultural activities across the building to create one holistic offer.
- 3.8 Recommendations in this Cultural Mapping report also focuses on Cultural Entrepreneurship as it relates to physical space. As members will be aware, The Vacant to Vibrant, 2 year pilot, Capital Grant Scheme has allocated £1m to seek to support local independent businesses and SME's, social economy businesses and creative and cultural organisations that would provide a unique or distinct offer for the city centre and transform vacant spaces to become vibrant. This scheme has garnered interest from the cultural sector. At the Expression of Interest stage, approximately 33% of the submissions by businesses/organisations were from cultural sector. Many from the cultural sector Eols have indicated that they are seeking maker space and their property requirements also may not align with the parameters of this grant, which will primarily seek to occupy and activate vacant ground floor space in prominent areas of the city centre.
- 3.9 Long term recommendations in the report include a hotel levy. As members will be aware, this was considered in the tourism plan for Belfast, "Make Yourself at Home", presented to Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Within this plan, it was acknowledged that while areas like passenger duty and visitor levies are not within the remit of the Council, we will adopt policy positions based on up-to-date research, consultation and evidence.

3.10	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <p>Phase Two of this Cultural Mapping work will delve deeper into research and scoping of the infrastructure identified in this initial phase. The phase will create a holistic view of the cultural sector and identify networks and artistic and cultural practice patterns. This will also include looking into public participation, cluster interaction, research with partners and community networks, and the people and groups that use these spaces as their workplace. This work is due to be commissioned in November 2022, with a report presented to Committee in May 2023. The overarching objective of this work is twofold to increase and understanding of cultural infrastructure, drive use and participation and secondly to seek to agree long term remedies with partners in areas where gaps in provision are demonstrated. We also continue to work with organisations across the city to locate and source suitable properties where there is an immediate or emergency need.</p>
3.11	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are currently no financial implications attached to this report.</p>
3.12	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA).</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p> <p>Appendix 1 – Cultural Mapping - An audit of Belfast’s cultural infrastructure.</p>