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BACKGROUND & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Belfast 2024 is our year-long celebration of home-grown culture and creativity featuring new and exciting events, theatre, music, and art developed through innovative co-design and partnership models with the city stakeholders, the creative sector, and the citizens of Belfast. The objective is to deliver on the aims of the City Council’s Cultural and Tourism strategies, UNESCO City of Music status, Belfast Agenda, Bolder Vision and Belfast Stories development – all founded in a belief and a commitment from Council that culture, sustainability, collaboration, partnership and people should be at the heart of the city’s development.

As outlined below, delivering on our own major cultural celebration this year has already delivered a range of impacts which we believe will be felt across the cultural, tourism and hospitality sectors over the coming months/year as well as at a wider civic and international level and will bring about legacy for the city as a place and for its people.

The Belfast Agenda provides a long-term framework for how community planning partners *will* work collaboratively to deliver an ambitious and inclusive vision that will create a better quality of life for all citizens in Belfast. Catalysed by the European Capital of Culture Bid development in 2017, which involved the largest and most significant public engagement programme Belfast City Council had undertaken, Council underwent significant strategic development in Culture & Tourism from 2018 onwards. The results of which are 3 new strategies for the city – *A City Imagining* Cultural Strategy, *Make Yourself at Home* Tourism Plan and *Music Matters* Roadmap - putting creativity, and the people of this city, at the heart of Belfast’s development and growth opportunities.

A City Imagining launched in April 2020, was developed with the people of Belfast and places culture and creativity at the heart of civic development. Belfast 2024 was a key commitment in *A City Imagining* and directly delivers on the strategic priorities within this plan with objectives such as:

- **Supporting the cultural life of the city by enabling our people to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change**
- **Investing in our cultural and creative sectors to develop the skills and capacity for production and innovation**
- **Positioning Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemaking**
- **Establishing Belfast as a cultural destination**
- **Working towards Belfast becoming a more ‘attractive’ place to live and work**
- **Addressing city dereliction, by increasing vibrancy and civic pride**
- **Recognising the climate crisis, develop awareness & change cultural behaviours**
- **Re-activating Belfast’s Tourism Sector and develop our Cultural Tourism offer**
- **Delivering a distinct portfolio of city events connected to citizens and attracting international visitors promoting Belfast as a world-class cultural destination**

Delivery of our ambitious year of cultural celebration in 2024 is needed more than ever as our city is still recovering from the effects of the covid crisis, whilst also facing unprecedented economic pressures in the current financial climate. We recognise the profound socio-economic impacts of these crises across the city, especially for the culture and arts sector. Belfast 2024 will address several sectoral issues such as:

- **Improving well-being of artists and cultural organisations with increased opportunities for long-term contracts and larger-scale opportunities from 2022-2024**
- **Putting Belfast’s creative talent on the map nationally and globally, raising our reputation as a world-class cultural destination and advocating for further cultural investment**
- **Seeking to avoid the creative talent exodus – people are leaving the sector or choosing to join other sectors due to funding challenges, better terms and conditions and greater job-security**
- **Improving European partnership opportunities for cultural exchange.**

Council’s Culture Team have also been pivoting their programmes and to help recover and build the capacity of our cultural sector whilst maintaining our commitment to a year of cultural celebration in our city, originally planned for 2023 it was decided due to the negative effects of the pandemic we would move our plans for this ambitious programme to 2024.

In continuing to deliver our home-grown year of cultural celebration in 2024 we’ve built much needed capacity and ambition in our creative sector whilst delivering on our strategic priorities for civic participation in cultural development as well as placing Belfast on the map internationally as a culturally vibrant destination.

BELFAST 2024 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Belfast 2024 Guiding Principles - our people, our place, our planet

People & Place are at the heart of our cultural strategy *A City Imagining* and our tourism plan *Make Yourself at Home*. Placemaking is a people-centred approach to delivering a local and shared vision. People shape places. Culturally vibrant cities are places where people negotiate their sense of belonging and where the

private sphere connects to the public. Local government is ideally positioned when it comes to placemaking, with an ability to connect with and bring together a diverse range of people and sectors across the city. *Belfast 2024* is a manifestation of this vision for putting people and place at the heart of what we do. It also recognised the need to focus on our role as facilitators, strengthening collaborations between sectors in this city, using creativity and the ambitions of 2024 as our vehicle. Our planet, how we care for it and creatively address the climate crisis through cultural intervention and behaviour change is also a core principle of Belfast 2024's programme.

Timeline for Belfast 2024

Date	Milestone
April 2020	Signed off as a core strategic goal of cultural strategy
June 2021	Decision to delay Belfast 2023 to 2024
November 2022	Launch of Open Call to city – ongoing Direct Commission Development
March 2023	Open Call Stage 1 closes – 194 ideas received
March 2023	Open Call Stage 2 opens – 55 shortlisted
May 2023	Open Call Stage 2 closes – 17 commissions selected on scoring
June 2023	First Programme plan presented to CGR & SPR
July 2023	16 Creative Bursary artists funded
August 2023	Detailed Programme Plan presented to SPR
September 2023	Belfast 2024 Programme Board established
October 2023	Marcomms Officers recruited dedicated to Belfast 2024
November 2023	Final Programme Plan presented and approved by SPR
November 2023	17 Open Call commissions contracted for delivery from February 24 onwards
January 2024	Marketing and Comms – Belfast 2024 website & social media launched
February 2024	Full Belfast 2024 Programme Public Launched
May 2024	Belfast 2024 Main Programme begins with Little Amal Weekend
May 2024 – Dec 2024	Programme delivery

Our Open Call to the city

- Core programme needed to come from the people of Belfast
- All ideas had to have creatives working with citizens and city partners to co-design the project
- All ideas had to prove they delivered on the principles of – co-design, new ideas, public space, sustainability and shared planet
- New procurement model via design contest – open to all, staged and paid for time for R&D
- 178 one to one advice sessions where conducted for Stage 1-2 across the city and sectors
- 291 new registrations on Council's eSourcing procurement system for the design contest
- 194 submissions from across Belfast/NI for Belfast 2024 - £28million overall ask
- 55 Shortlisted ideas brought to final stage - £7.8million overall ask - £2k each for full project planning and R&D
- 17 commissions recommended for contract following scoring
- Each commission partnered with Council Officer in Belfast 2024 team as a co-producer to support delivery and guide the developmental process including creative development, resourcing, H&S, event planning, engagement
- Range of scale and ambition of commissions from £30k to £250k
- 17 commissions contracted in October/November 2023 for delivery between January – December 2024

8 MONTH PROCESS
LAUNCHED
DECEMBER 2022

291 NEW
REGISTRATIONS
COUNCIL
ESOURCING

233 ONE-TO-ONE
ADVICE SESSIONS
WITH BIDDERS

194 SUBMISSIONS
£28 MILLION
OVERALL ASK

55 SHORTLISTED IDEAS
£7.8 MILLION
OVERALL ASK

£110,000 INVESTMENT IN R+D
INVESTMENT IN R+D

INVESTMENT IN R+D FOR
SHORTLISTED
55 PROPOSALS

17 RECOMMENDED FOR
CONTRACT
TOTAL £2.7 MILLION
COMMISSIONS



Final Open Call Selection - Artist / Statgenic Partner Collaborations



New Collaborations

Existing Collaborators

Not Specified

Stage 1 - Open Call Bids

76% Funded / Established Organisations

24% Individual Artists / Non Funded Collectives

Stage 3 - Final Open Call Selection

59% Funded / Established Organisations

41% Individual Artists / Non Funded Collectives

Direct Commissions

Successful cities of culture have shown that investment in homegrown talent has long-term and measurable impacts. It is also recognised that to develop local talent, and importantly raise their ambition, our creative sector needs to be inspired by and work in collaboration with international creative and cultural partners on a long-term and meaningful basis to raise the bar locally, as well as garnering Belfast’s reputation as a cultural and global destination.

Belfast 2024 has established two **key international partnerships, Little Amal and Eden Project**. Eden Project have been working with the team since 2022 to develop sustainable and climate-conscious practice

within the delivery of the Belfast 2024 programme Their team of experts have directly mentored 6 of our commissions who have a focus on climate and green consciousness. We have and continue to encourage all commissioned programmes, projects and events via our Open Call to connect nationally and internationally and have international partners. This emphasis on working beyond ourselves is helping to support a legacy of the programme and developing long-term relationships with globally recognised creative and cultural brands. Our 3rd International partnership has been delivered with **British Council NI** whereby they've **funded 6 international artists to work with communities across Belfast** over a 2yr period to produce their co-designed showcase Red Sky at Night in November.

Belfast Stories Partnership

Belfast 2024 is also partnering with Belfast Stories on their engagement from October to December by working with them to enhance and expand a number of our commissions that strategically link to target demographics for Belfast Stories such as Solab's North Star, and Nerve Centre's work the Our Stories Festival itself. Belfast 2024 and Belfast Stories are inter-related strategic projects identified in both *A City Imagining*, Cultural Strategy for Belfast and *Make Yourself at Home*, A Vision for the future of tourism. These projects have been designed to ensure that opportunities are maximised to support long-term sustainable change in the city. A collaborative programme of work has been developed to include:

- **Stories based programming to showcase cultural heritage and identity**
- **Activations at Belfast Stories site - engagement with local communities and businesses**
- **Strategic partnerships between Belfast Stories and specific**
- **Launch of citywide and diaspora Story Gathering Programme supported by public engagement campaign**
- **Skills based legacy programme of creative ambassadors, facilitators, participants and volunteers**

Civic Engagement & Co-design

A new approach to civic cultural engagement was developed for Belfast 2024. By putting civic participation at the heart of Belfast 2024, citizens see themselves and their creativity reflected in this programme, supporting active citizenship and participation. To achieve this, we developed new processes in areas such as procurement, communications, governance and working cross-departmentally and cross-sectoral, showing our dedication to Belfast 2024 being an accelerator for new approaches to feed into the delivery of the Culture Strategy. The civic engagement elements of Belfast 2024 have used several methodologies including participatory budgeting and community-driven creative initiatives. In so doing we are encouraging people to reach their full potential and have a say in the cultural life of their city.



Orangefield Park Mural Project with Belfast Alternatives

The Bank of Ideas funded 29 projects, delivering 73 workshops and events throughout the city with 1,735 participant and over 2,000 attendees for activities to date. Additionally, 2,253 people cast votes in the process. The average award under the scheme was £2,000.

BELFAST 2024 PROGRAMME:

- £2.7m directly to creative and cultural sector commissioning
- £960k to Direct Commissions including Little Amal, Eden Project, BBC concert, International Artist Project
- £0.9m towards strategic and music-based events to celebrate and embrace UNESCO City of Music designation
- 600+ contracts have been created for B24 delivery in the creative and cultural sector – including production staff and artists, designers, facilitators.
- 500+ workshops and events have taken place across the city with more to come by December
- 16 artists supported on Creative Bursary programme
- 6 International Artists working in residence with communities for 2 years with British Council partnership funding
- 35,000 participants and attendees to end of September.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY TO END SEPTEMBER:

Belfast 2024 Commissions ¹	Emerging Outcomes / Legacy
<p>An Droichead – Nobodaddy Contract £175K Partnership commission for largescale Irish-language based dance and performance touring show with international cast between Belfast, Dublin and London premiering in Belfast with a lead in engagement programme focussed on storytelling, Irish language and cultural heritage in Belfast that inspired the final show’s content with nearly 200 participants. Nearly 250 people attended the engagement programme and the 2 large-scale dance and theatre performances in the Waterfront Hall with 440 attendees.</p>	<p>Legacy of Irish Language engagement approaches and model leading into Belfast Stories development</p> <p>First time Belfast dancer in international high-profile cast with Teac Damsa.</p> <p>First time Teac Damsa has premiered work in North of Ireland/Belfast</p> <p>International reputation builder with shows in Dublin/London</p>

<p>Another World Belfast – Greenhouse Contract £99K New creative community venue in Belfast led by local charity that supports people living in hardship across Belfast providing creative workshops, skills in upskilling in textiles, recycling and media. Open 10am to 6pm every day. In addition to the shoppers there have been 31 events involving almost 1,500 attendees.</p>	<p>New and affordable creative workspace scheme for membership to support skills and career pathway development.</p> <p>Refugee/Asylum seeker weekly support group</p> <p>Monthly fashion skills workshops</p> <p>BBC Sunday Show coverage</p> <p>Support schemes for disadvantaged communities</p>
<p>ArtseKta/The Walk - Little Amal Contract £469K Largescale international commission to open Belfast 2024 programme designed in partnership with local communities and migrant/new communities in Belfast culminating in 14 major events across a weekend in May with over 8,000 attendees.</p>	<p>One of the largest collaborative cultural events delivered in Belfast – with over 174 creatives involved over 14 events.</p> <p>Largest welcome event Little Amal has ever had across 160 cities worldwide with over local 200 performers</p> <p>Engagement with refugee/asylum organisations</p> <p>Cross-border/NI wide partnership with Dublin CC, Louth, Causeway Coast/ Derry/Strabane and Newry, Mourne and Down</p>
<p>Bank of Ideas £50K Cultural Participatory Budgeting programme for Belfast 2024 funded involving 76 work shops and events with almost 3,000 attendees. Neighbourhoods, communities and civic groups were invited to submit creative project ideas which were voted on by the local communities.</p>	<p>125 submissions, local citizens vote on what they want in their area.</p> <p>9 projects funded to take place across North, South, East, West and City Centre.</p> <p>Legacy of future participative funding approaches</p>
<p>BBC Concert Contract £80K Legacy partnership with BBC from Freedom of the City concert in 2022 to deliver a broadcast concert with approximately 1,700 attendees celebrating BBC Centenary in NI. BCC B24/Belfast City of Music commissioned local artists to create new work as part of this concert performance with Ulster Orchestra</p>	<p>4 new commissioned pieces with local musicians and Ulster Orchestra as part of UNESCO City of Music development.</p> <p>Broadcast on BBC1 – 80,000 viewers</p> <p>Legacy opportunity with BCC/BBC</p>

<p>Boom Clap Play - Wiggle Room Contract £215K</p> <p>Digital interactive playroom based at the MAC for 10weeks designed by children with local media companies Big Motive and Boom Clap Play exploring the future of museum and gallery exhibitions and play. Open daily 11am to 6pm, no booking required Tues- Sun It is anticipated that by the end of its run Wiggle Room more than 750 will have attended or participated in the interactive play experience.</p>	<p>First of its kind in Belfast</p> <p>Embracing new technology for museums/galleries to learn and adopt</p> <p>Request for touring options to British Museum, showcase with UK delegates</p> <p>Long-term legacy for permanent exhibition in Belfast</p> <p>Legacy of good-practice in co-designing art and exhibitions with young people and children</p>
<p>Eurocities Cultural Forum £15K</p> <p>A three-day event welcoming cultural policy makers from cities across Europe and UK, visiting a selection of 16 Belfast 2024 projects and artists across the city and to learn about Belfast's approach to cultural strategic development and delivery through <i>A City Imagining 2020-30</i></p>	<p>130 delegates attended, including Senior Politicians, working in Cultural Policy across Europe</p> <p>Positive Feedback – one of the best conferences so far for the network</p> <p>Showcasing local work – touring opportunities for Drift/Shadowdock</p> <p>UNESCO Creative Cities partnership development</p>
<p>Feile - Conflicting Narratives Contract £50K</p> <p>International project in partnership with Kabosh and Belfast International Arts Festival and Palestinian artists exploring how culture and creativity can help with resolution in communities affected by conflict. Project involved specialist training workshops, talks and learning sessions for performers, community workers and theatre makers and 4 public performances with a total of almost 900 attendees</p>	<p>International artist programme at Black Mountain Shared Space with creatives from Palestine and Rwanda</p> <p>Legacy project for BIAF/ Feile partnership in 2025 and beyond</p> <p>Career development workshops and opportunities for local theatre makers and community workers on-going</p>
<p>Lyric - Midsummer at the Lyric Contract £250K</p> <p>Outdoor multi-cultural and inclusive largescale theatre performance led by Lyric with a professional and community cast of young performers with learning disabilities. Involved community engagement programme of events with local people as well as 7 performance with overall attendees of more than 2,600</p>	<p>First inclusive professional production for Lyric with disabled artists and communities</p> <p>First outdoor show for Lyric</p> <p>New attendees to theatre</p> <p>Legacy opportunities for outdoor/ accessible events</p>

<p>Nerve Centre - Oliver Jeffers Exhibition Seen Contract £20K Public exhibition at Waterfront showcasing Oliver Jeffer's portraits of refugee and asylum seekers in Belfast and Northern Ireland as part of Little Amal's welcoming weekend programme.</p>	<p>Showcasing refugee/ asylum seeker work in public</p> <p>Legacy programme – exhibition now housed in hospitals across BHSCT</p>
<p>Off the Rails – Roots Contract £175K ROOTS is an immersive performance blending dance, poetry, and captivating sound design. Wearing individual headphones, audiences are invited to move through the garden to watch, listen, and connect in a sensory journey, sparking fresh conversations about past traditions, our relationship to nature, and dreams of a collective future. Choreography and content is based on engagement and storytelling from local community incorporated into the launch of a dedicated community garden, designed with Eden Project, at new Black Mountain Shared space. ROOTS involved 10 engagement workshops and 12 performance events with more than 700 attendees</p>	<p>Opening event for Black Mountain Shared Space Centre</p> <p>Long-term legacy of community garden for locals</p> <p>Local engagement and co-design in the content development and delivery of performance</p> <p>Legacy of audio trail, and stories from local communities feeding into Belfast Stories</p> <p>Pitching at the Culture Ireland Showcasing event November 2024</p>
<p>OGU - Drift New public space on the River Lagan to engage people with the River Lagan in new ways - a floating pavilion hosting a variety of events including film screenings, art workshops, yoga, star gazing and music - situated at Stranmillis then down into the more urban setting beside the Waterfront Hall. 22 events including workshops, working with 'moving on Music' artists to provide unique performance space. Over both venues 1,769 people attended the installation.</p>	<p>First water-based events platform for Belfast/Lagan</p> <p>Flexible, adjustable, and multi-functional design</p> <p>Legacy with Waterfront animation – Maritime Mile, Maritime Festival</p> <p>Touring opportunities to EU cities</p>

<p>Ps2 – Waterworks Contract £186K Largescale-city wide engagement programme involving over 100 events with more than 7000 attendees encouraging our communities to re-engage with our maritime heritage culminating in a large scale creative boat-building programme and river-celebration event in partnership with LORAG.</p>	<p>Over 100 workshops and events in lead up to celebration event</p> <p>6000+ boats created</p> <p>2 Bespoke largescale commissioned boats</p> <p>Curragh donated to LORAG Community for use at the Lagan</p> <p>Maritime Festival and Maritime Mile.</p> <p>Legacy programming and content development for authentic, bespoke-co-designed animation</p>
<p>Studio Idir - 9ft in Common Contract £170K City-wide programme of 16 events with over 750 attendees exploring the potential of our alleyways as public and community shared spaces to host gardens, events, music and art co-designed and led by local neighbourhoods. End product will be a Manifesto for the Alleyways - following an extensive mapping exercise of all 202KM of Belfast’s alleyways, online video resources to show 'how to' transform your alleyway. Participatory budgeting provided funding for 45 participants, working across 7 Alleyways N/S/E and W Belfast. Project extensively documented and filmed by Simon Mills, including a screening at Strand Cinema of the film 'Breaks and Join's'.</p>	<p>Partnership working with Council’s CNS and Resilience Team</p> <p>Long-term change and intervention for local communities to create new public spaces across the city</p> <p>National collaboration and learning with Manchester City Council</p> <p>Policy recommendations emerging</p> <p>Some elements still to be delivered- detail will be available for final report.</p>
<p>Sykes Studio – ShadowDock Contract £190K Ambitious and largescale immersive light and music spectacle housed at Thompson Dry Dock, the birthplace of the Titanic with Below and above Deck viewed by nearly 3000 people. Bringing life and cultural animation to this underused but vital piece of Belfast's built heritage.</p>	<p>World-class showcasing of Titanic’s birthplace and our built heritage</p> <p>Immersive experience at the Dock – prove of concept for future events use</p> <p>Legacy potential with Maritime Mile and Maritime Festival animation and events</p> <p>Tourism legacy – work with TNI/TI to explore.</p>

<p>Ulster Orchestra – Soundlinks Contract £145K Multit-faceted engagement programme with local residents, 305 participants took part in 10 workshops based in Townsend Street exploring the areas' heritage and history and potential for its future culminating in a full-day street party with music and food and a bespoke commissions inspired by this engagement performed by Ulster Orchestra and musicians with approximately 3000 people attending on International Peace Day in September.</p>	<p>Legacy of Ulster Orchestra having authentic and long-term relationship building with local community</p> <p>Legacy of future cross-community cultural events for Townsend St</p> <p>Legacy of UO working with other musicians and community-led design</p> <p>BBC broadcast opportunities</p> <p>UNESCO City of Music delivery</p>
<p>Wild Belfast - Safari in the City Contract £70K Programme of 19 events and workshops attended by 900 and creation of living murals exploring, celebrating and supporting our city's hidden biodiversity. Utilising art to promote wildlife issues - this project has produced living murals throughout the city (1 complete with 3 to go), it has enabled artists to respond to the 'beer mat' competition to get artworks into common areas, engaged writers in 'Making Space for Nature' Creative writing events and provided talks, walks and tours informing the urban plant, bird, animal and bug life living with us in Belfast.</p>	<p>Collaboration between sciences and arts</p> <p>Cultural output for climate/ecological data and engagement with communities</p> <p>Discovery of Belfast's own native Weevil</p> <p>Living Murals across city – giving space and habitat for endangered species in our city through street art</p> <p>Showcasing new and up and coming artists</p> <p>Inspiring content for other projects – Eco Arcade</p>
<p>Zeppo Arts - An Irish Goodbye Mural and Screening Contract £18K Mural commissioned to celebrate the Oscar winning artists behind An Irish Goodbye.</p>	<p>Celebration of Oscar-winning talent from Belfast</p> <p>Showcasing diversity and inclusivity in creative industries</p> <p>Inspiring next generation</p> <p>Significant media coverage</p>

MAIN EVENTS : POST SEPTEMBER

October

Bounce Culture - North Star

Programme inspired by anti-slavery abolitionist Frederick Douglas's time in Belfast looking at contemporary Black Culture in Belfast and what it means to belong in Belfast culminating in a music performance spectacle with leading artists in Belfast.

November

Culture Ireland International Delegate Showcase

31st October – 2nd November

In partnership with Belfast International Festival and Theatre & Dance NI Belfast 2024 hosted over 35 international cultural producers and programmers from Europe, South America, Canada to showcase our projects across Belfast 31st October – 2nd November to seek out international touring opportunities from 2025 onwards.

DaisyChain - Nothing

On-going workshops – conference on 4th November

Small-scale programme of engagement with estimated 750 attendees across 4 events exploring opportunities for people to take time out for their mental health, to network and make connections with people and community beyond work life.

BIAF - Hear/Touch/Feel

1-4th November

Dance performance led by visually impaired artist and communities exploring how people with visual disabilities can take part in and witness performance-based work through other senses commissioned with Belfast International Arts Festival.

Household Belfast - Red Sky at Night

1st – 4th November

Residency programme with 6 international artists who have worked with communities in Belfast over 2 years to co-design art installations and public realm works in neighbourhoods across the city, supported by British Council. Artworks will be available to view at Carlisle Memorial Church (Benign Land by Leandros Nicolas), The Palm House (Possession by Kanick Khajohnsri), Waterworks Park (Stargazing by Aisling O'Brien), Bank of Ireland Building (Lament by Zuza Golinska), Riddels Warehouse (the Sound we Longed for by Dina Mimi) and 2 Royal Ave (Common Point Exercises by Irmina Rusicka and Kasper Lecnim).

Outburst - Are you on the Bus?

16th Nov – 1st December

Multi-faceted arts programme exploring our city's LGBTQIA+ heritage and stories with audio trails, performances on a bus, a bookshop in the city centre and publications

Nerve Centre/NISF - Our Stories Festival

21st – 24th November

Belfast 2024 and Belfast Stories has partnered with the Nerve Centre and NI Science Festival to explore the themes of Our People, Our Place, Our Planet and reflect on our year of creativity while looking forward to Belfast Stories. Our Stories Festival will bring together artists, thinkers, designers, and musicians for a series of talks, workshops, creative events, conversations and interventions across Belfast's City Centre in the last weekend of November.

Household Belfast - Right to the Night

Monthly

Project encouraging communities to engage with night-sky and dark sky initiatives celebrating night-based biodiversity and nature such as Bat Watching and Star Gazing events in local parks.

December

Belfast Film Fest – Hearth

12th Dec

A film of Belfast, for Belfast made by the people of Belfast. Led by international film Director Mark Cousins (Belfast-born) the city has been working with Belfast Film Festival over this year to gather and create footage telling a portrait of our city in 2024.

Eco Arcade**Opening early December til January 2025**

Opening in December our outdoor largescale arcade game projected by laser onto the façade of Ulster Museum and The MAC inviting people to play in real-time at large scale. Games will also be available via app download to play on users phones. Designed in partnership with National Trust and children exploring our local bio-diversity.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

To raise awareness and engage with audiences, a fully integrated marketing and communication plan is being implemented by the Belfast City Council team alongside Belfast 2024 programme roll out. To date, there have been three campaigns delivered and there is one more campaign due to go live w/c 7 October.

Delivered: Teaser campaign 26 February - 24 March: The role of this campaign was to build anticipation and excitement for Belfast 2024 and a mix of media was used including outdoor advertising, radio and social media.

Delivered: Little Amal Campaign 6 May- 19 May: This was an awareness campaign for Little Amal's visit to Belfast. High impact creative was developed, and an integrated media plan was rolled out including outdoor advertising, radio and social media. Post campaign research highlighted the success of the campaign with a **high 62%** of the public in Belfast recalling communication related to Little Amal.

Delivered: Summer 2024 campaign 29 July- 11 August: This was an integrated marketing campaign, with creative featuring 3 of the Belfast 2024 projects: Shadowdock, ROOTS and Wiggle Room. Media included outdoor, radio, digital and social media.

In progress: Autumn 2024 campaign- due to go live w/c 7 October: This campaign will go live on 7 October and will last for 2 weeks, and it will focus on the October and November programme activity, featuring projects across outdoor, radio, social media and press. The projects that will feature include: North Star, Are you on the bus? and Touch, Hear, Feel.

Alongside all campaign activity to ensure there is a consistent flow of promotion for the programme, there have been Belfast City Council media releases wrapping up all the activity coming up within the programme at key points, an always on approach to the Belfast 2024 social media channels, features on Belfast City Council social media platforms, city dressing and marketing collateral produced, email marketing, Internal communication and work with the destination agencies to feature and promote Belfast 2024 to destination audiences.

Media: Each Belfast 2024 project is responsible for delivering their own PR plan for their project – this is part of their T&Cs. Belfast City Council media output is high level to complement projects media activity - 'rounding up' events, highlighting key milestones and focusing on specific themes. The output so far has been 20 media releases linked with Belfast 2024 plus there are features and input from the team on project media releases. The collective effort has result in over 400 online pieces, TV and radio features and over 150 media pieces. Further media activity is planned until programme end.

Social media: Belfast 2024 channels: These channels are always on, with content being generated to promote the overall programme and to tell the story of the many artists, producers, organisations, projects and partners involved.

Facebook- 1.3k followers, highly engaged users with a rate of engagement at 1.47% (Facebook's average engagement is 0.04%)

Instagram- 3.1k followers, highly engaged audience and growing.

BCC (corporate) social media channels: Belfast 2024 milestones and events are also amplified on the corporate social media channels. This allows for an extending reach for the programme given the corporate channels following, while signposting people to the main Belfast 2024 platforms for more project-specific info: Twitter/X – 120.5K followers, Facebook – 89K followers, Linked In – 25K followers and Instagram – 25.1K followers.

Brand activation/City Dressing/ Marketing collateral: Brand guidelines and a brand toolkit were shared with all Belfast 2024 projects and stakeholders to encourage them to embrace the brand across all their channels. The Belfast 2024 brand has been rolled out with city dressing activity- some examples include: George Best Belfast City Airport, flags across key sites in the city, Belfast sign at the front of City Hall (Belfast 2024 brand colours and design), 2 Royal Avenue brand fit out and dressing, street art jam features, Belfast 2024 impact wrap bus stop and more. Various marketing collateral materials were created and are used in programme promotion including brochures, branded tote bags and lanyards given away at key engagements.

Digital- website and email marketing: The Belfast 2024 website launched in December 2023. All campaign activity and communication provide a call to action for people to visit the website for further information and reading on the programme. There have been approx. 50k views and there are over 11k unique users on the website from the launch in December 2023 until the beginning of September 2024. There are over 600 subscriptions on the email database for Belfast 2024. So far three email newsletters have been issued as part of the wider campaign activity: Little Amal/ Bank of Ideas, Belfast 2024 Summer Season, Belfast 2024 Autumn season and there are further email campaigns planned in for key programme updates in October and November.

Internal communication: Belfast 2024 programme key activity regularly features through all internal communication channels. These channels tell the story of co-creation and collaboration between departments as part of the programme. These channels also extend the reach for programme awareness and engagement and projects have offered discounted ticket rates for Belfast City Council Staff. Activity so far has included: Over 10 features and stories on Interlink, Internal screen features across sites, CX weekly update email features and further activity is planned until programme end.

Destination agencies/ partners: Visit Belfast have worked with the team and have delivered an integrated marketing plan during summer 2024 to promote the Belfast 2024 programme to the destination audience. The campaign was rolled out across NI/ROI/GB, celebrating Belfast's vibrant arts, culture, and heritage, with creative featuring Belfast 2024 branding. Visit Belfast have embraced the 2024 branding and programme information across all their channels including in visitor guides, e-zines, website, Visit Belfast events and media days and branding within the visitor centre. These relationships have provided the opportunity to profile the Belfast 2024 programme to destination audiences and these agencies have supported with media features, newsletters, social media and web.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

Strategic Context for Partnership in Cultural Strategy/Belfast 2024

Belfast's ten-year Cultural Strategy *A City Imagining* encourages us to 'imagine a collaborative city with a shared vision for culture' and within the strategy, we commit to taking forward a City Compact and to working with partners to deliver on strategic priorities.

This commitment was emphasised through Belfast 2024's vision and mission, of encouraging cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership in creating new cultural work. All Belfast 2024 commissions have

had to incorporate an element of partnership, civic engagement and co-design in their approach to ensure relevance and authenticity in the stories they tell, and also enhance opportunities for project legacy.

Belfast 2024 Partnership approach in procurement

‘Collaboration, partnership and co-design’ were key criteria for the Belfast 2024 Open Call process. Bidders to the Open Call were asked to detail what partners, outside of the traditional cultural sector, they would be working with on the creative, developmental and delivery stages of their commissions. Diverse partnerships were encouraged during project development discussions to ensure breakdown of silos and a more collaborative approach to cultural delivery.

This criteria and approach was supported by networking meet ups, bidding assessment processes and has been an important part of project development plans. The Belfast 2024 team have guided bidders in terms of suggesting and identifying suitable partners as required as well as engaging with Arts & Business NI to connect partners.

Within the final Belfast 2024 programme there are over 200 named and actively collaborative partners from across sectors in the city delivering on the commissions with the creatives and communities including universities, mental health charities, wildlife trusts, health trusts, engineering and law.

Key partners and stakeholders of Belfast 2024 represent several complementary categories:

FUNDING PARTNERS

- These partners are the investors in Belfast 2024 and support specific areas of the programme and include the National Lottery Heritage Fund; British Council Northern Ireland; Dublin City Council; Newry Mourne and Down District Council; Causeway Coast & Glens Council.
- We are in ongoing dialogue with each of the top three funding partners in terms of outputs, outcomes and legacy of their investment. Some concrete examples include Belfast Stories’ future work with The National Lottery Heritage Fund; British Council MoU refresh and future artist exchange programme.

PROGRAMME PARTNERS

- These partners were those organisations and bodies that we worked with closely to deliver certain programme elements, including access and inclusion training, sustainability, specific and targeted marketing, wayfinding and communication.
- These partners’ in-kind support and / or services provided, borne of existing or newly established communication supported by MoU’s or partnership agreements, was invaluable in increasing the quality of the audience and participant experience.
- This collaborative, mutually beneficial work also greatly increase the opportunities for legacy projects and strands of ongoing partnership, which we can capture in our City Compact development and in the context of future large scale cultural projects.
- Belfast 2024 have been working closely with Belfast Stories team to develop and deliver engagement focussed on storytelling through our commissioned programme including North Star and Nerve Centre.
- These partners include for example, the Eden Project, Belfast Stories, University of Atypical. Belfast Health Trust, Maritime Belfast Trust, 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast Stories, ArtsEkta, Queens University Belfast, Belfast Harbour, Eurocities

MEDIA AND MARKETING PARTNERS

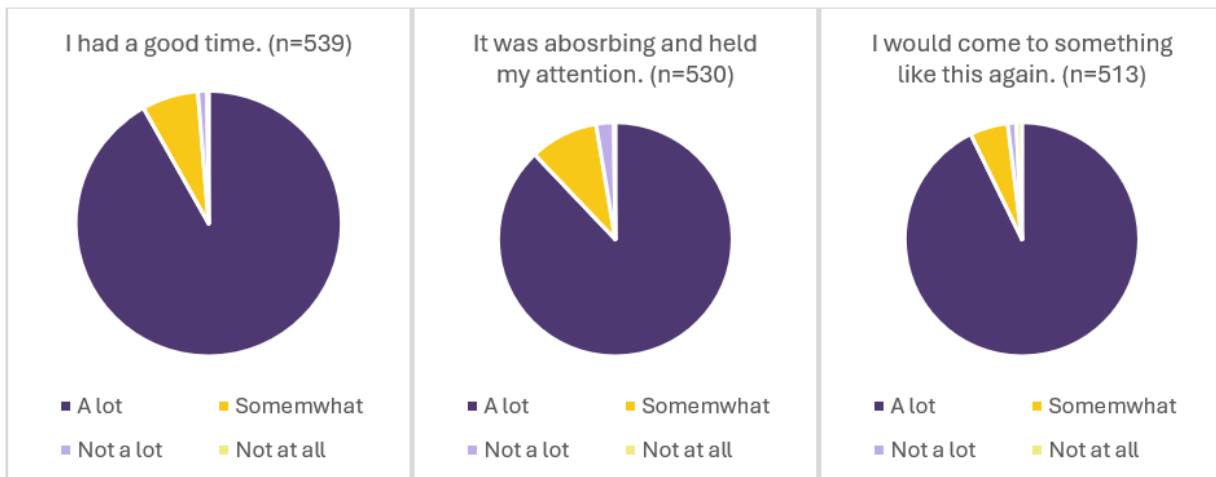
- These partners have worked with Belfast 2024 and BCC’s communication team to ensure that the audience reach for Belfast 2024 was maximised and include Visit Belfast, Tourism Northern Ireland, Tourism Ireland.

COMMISSION PARTNERS

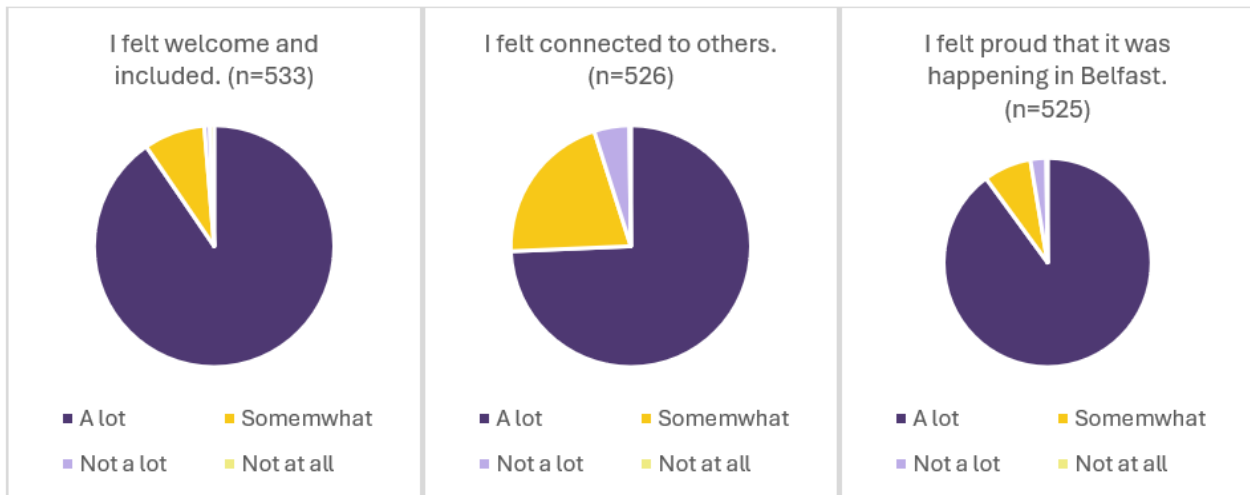
- These partners were instigated by the commissions and are numerous, with on average four collaborative partners per commission. They may have been new or established partners of the lead organisations or artists. From the outset they have been essential to the successful delivery of all stages of the projects.
- Each Commission has had a number of partners who they have worked with from an early stage, who have enabled them to deliver the project, and some contributed in kind support and / or contracted service provision. In many cases these partners have consolidated longer term relationships with the commissions that will contribute to the legacy impact of Belfast 2024.

EVALUATION, IMPACT & FEEDBACK SO FAR

The Evaluation of the programme is ongoing, below is some important feedback received as part of our Evaluation Framework for events up until end of August 2024 - this evidences the impact this ambitious programme is having for citizens, communities, the creative and cultural sector and city partners so far and looking ahead to the expectations of the legacy. Key findings based on 600 audience/contractor surveys analysed to end of August.;



- **99 % of attendees agreed they had a good time**
- **97 % agreed the activity was absorbing and held their attention**
- **98 % agreed they would come to something like this again**



- 98 % of attendees agreed they felt welcome and included
- 95 % agreed they felt connected to others
- 97 % agreed that they felt proud that it was happening in Belfast
-

Impacts for Commissioned Organisations & Artists

“Building key relationships has been a huge impact on us. We have extended our partnerships beyond the arts ecology of Belfast and seen this cross into education, heritage and community sector.”

“we’ve got to meet and collaborate with many organisations and individuals that we would’ve otherwise not approached or known how to approach.”

“Working with international artists and learning from them and how they see our city.... it has been both fascinating and exciting.”

“They [the Belfast 2024 team] have been an excellent support to us – through the good times and the harder times – they are on top of everything and have been a great sounding board and advice hub over the course of the project.”

“it’s wonderful to have a contract for a full 12 months in a v precarious sector”.

Impacts for audiences:

“I’ve lived my whole life in Belfast, and never seen an outside performance. It was lovely to see people from all demographics, all having a great time together. Pleasure from start to finish. Hope there’ll be more in the future!”

‘I shall remember those moments for rest of my life’.

‘I learned so much about the culture of our city and felt connected to the people around me’

‘will help my children to grow up to be more accepting, tolerant and empathetic.’

‘It was lovely to see people from all demographics, all having a great time together.’

‘Totally relatable and fun.’

‘that Belfast is transforming its pain from the past into love and compassion.’

‘Truly a world class event of excellence.’

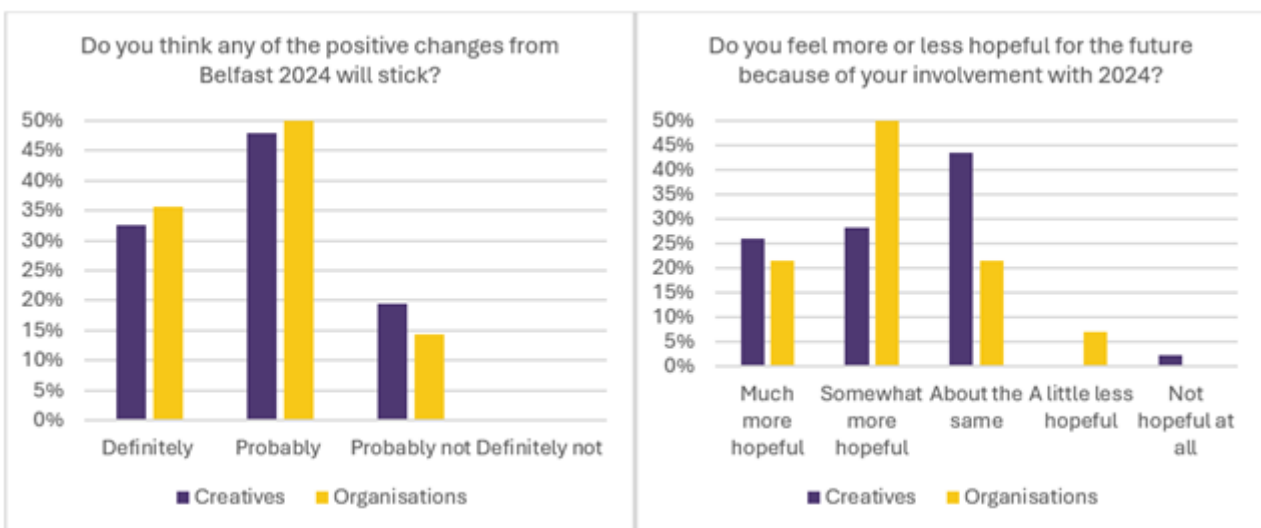
‘Discovered a brand-new venue in a part of Belfast I really don’t know.’

‘It happened to the backdrop of racists rioting a few streets away and seeing people of Belfast from all different backgrounds sharing a wonderful joyous day reminded me that Belfast has grown so much and will not let hate take over again’

‘It made me think that we need to be better at using our river, it is an asset, and more events should focus on it.’

‘Art brings people together. It’s a crucial part of our society and should be better valued’

Change created by Belfast 2024 programme



Comments related to change:

‘It’s the right path forward and exciting.’

‘I want my city run with creative thinking at its’ heart. This programme feels like the beginning of that of that way of thinking.’

“You cut cloth to what you have. This bumped us up a level, helped us experiment and highlight our work – but we’re not sure how take that forward if it’s only a one-off.”

“2024 funding has been ring fenced for number of years for a 'special year' of added arts and culture. When the money is spent, is it back to 'normal'? [...] I look forward to seeing how the rest of the events pan out over the remainder of the year, and hearing how BCC plan to learn from this process and how it will inform the funding and curation of arts events in the future.

LESSONS LEARNED & LEGACY PLANNING

The vision for the year of cultural celebration in 2024 was to bring about transformational change for Belfast and to facilitate the city to build its creative capacity to better understand our identity, our relationships with each other, and our place in the world through creativity and culture.

Belfast 2024 was at its core an 'accelerator' project for our Cultural Strategy 2020-30, create the conditions to support capacity building, test new ways of working, strengthen existing and forge new connection between cultural delivery within the council and the wider city. The legacy of this significant project is critical to show the return on investment, to ensure lessons learnt are captured, and to embed critical elements of the programme into 'business as usual'

Work is ongoing to capture and learn lessons both positive and negative in relation to the planning and delivery of Belfast 2024 and to consider how these can be applied to future programmes and plans, including through application of co-design models for delivery of City events and Tourism and to ensure that there is an effective legacy from the programme. Emerging Themes for legacy development include:

- Informing Implementation Plan for Second Phase of Cultural Strategy A City Imagining 2025-2030
- Supporting the delivery of Belfast Stories, including through Our Stories Festival
- Supporting legacy of the projects and artists /creators

Further detail on lessons learned and legacy will be included in the final evaluation report.