

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Tuesday, 24th February, 2026

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor I. McLaughlin (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor; and
Councillors Black, Bunting, de Faoite,
S. Douglas, Duffy, Groogan, Hanvey,
Lyons, McAteer, McCabe, McCallin, McCormick,
McDonough-Brown, McKay, R. McLaughlin,
Meenehan, Nelson and Ó Néill.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to the item 'City Imagining Investment Programme - Cultural Multi-Annual Grants', Councillor McCabe declared an interest in that she was employed by an organisation which had applied for funding and left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion. Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in relation to the same item in that she was a freelance volunteer for an organisation which had also applied for funding and did not take part in the discussion.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

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**City Imagining Investment Programme –
Cultural Multi-Annual Grants**

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 11th February, 2026, it had agreed to defer consideration of the Cultural Multi-Annual Grants for 2026-28 to enable further information to be provided. The Director submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided further information on the Cultural Multi-Annual Grants process, proposals and options.

The Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism, presented the Committee with an overview of the two strands of the funding programme, namely Festivals and Events, and Arts and Heritage. She also outlined the principles of the assessment process and set out a range of potential options and financial implications.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development and the Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism, answered a range of Members' questions on the funding assessment, scoring criteria, and options set out within the presentation.

In response to issues raised by the Members during discussion, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy suggested that a report be submitted to the Committee's next meeting which would provide further information on the issues raised.

A Member also highlighted that, at its meeting on 20th February, 2026, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting on general grant funding processes, eligibility criteria and thresholds, and requested that the issues raised by Members in relation to the Cultural Multi-Annual Grants also be considered as part of that wider report.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed:

- i. to defer consideration of the Cultural Multi-Annual Grants 2026-28, to enable further information to be submitted to its meeting on 11th March, 2026; and
- ii. to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the issues raised in relation to the Cultural Multi-Annual Grants be considered as part of the wider report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on general grant funding processes, eligibility criteria and thresholds.

Minutes of the Belfast Stories Working Group

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Belfast Stories Working Group of 18th February, 2026.

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Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 14, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 2nd March, 2026, for ratification.

Chairperson