



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Support for Wheelworks ArtCart

Date: 20 January 2015

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officer: Brian Johnston, Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts Manager, ext 3586

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	As Members will be aware, a decision was taken at the January meeting of the Council to refer a request for funding towards a new Wheelworks “ArtCart” back to the Development Committee in January. Members were seeking additional information on the current programme of work undertaken by Wheelworks and the activity that would be made possible through this grant.
1.2	Belfast City Council provides revenue funding to 52 core-funded arts and heritage organisations to support the delivery of their annual programmes of activity. This includes £10,000 per year for three years to Wheelworks, a Belfast-based youth arts organisation.
1.3	Wheelworks is the 2014 winner of the Allianz Arts and Business Awards Young People Award. Its programme of activities includes “multiple realities”, which uses digital and traditional arts to address issues facing marginalised and at-risk young people; and “dealing with difference”, a training programme for youth workers and arts facilitators promoting diversity and disability awareness. Wheelworks’ Multiple Realities programme was included as a case study to accompany the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012-15 and this is included in appendix 3.
1.4	A key tool in Wheelworks’ repertoire is also the ArtCart, a purpose-built mobile arts hub fitted with a darkroom, sound recording studio, stage and workstations. As well as taking part in festivals and events such as Culture Night, Disability Pride and Belfast Day, the ArtCart enables Wheelworks to bring high-quality, cutting-edge arts provision to areas and communities that lack arts infrastructure and where levels of engagement are below average.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The original ArtCart is now 14 years old and needs to be replaced. Wheelworks has received an offer of £200,000 capital funding via the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) from Together: Building United Communities. This funding is subject to delivery of the project by March 2015. However some partnership funding is required in order to lever the ACNI resources.
2.2	This funding is considered necessary to ensure continuation of the ArtCart's unique portability and year round work in frontline communities, interface areas and with cross community groups. Currently, approximately 3245 participants engage with the ArtCart each year in a range of art forms and projects from graphic design to comic performance. Through an outreach taster programme, Wheelworks is starting to explore and build new relationships with a diverse range of community groups and the launch of the new vehicle will be an opportunity to establish new partnerships across the city with groups that have not previously accessed the ArtCart.
2.3	Wheelworks has 2.5 full-time equivalent staff working at capacity to deliver their core programme of activity. The request from Wheelworks to Belfast City Council is for £12,000 to support the cost of a project manager to oversee all aspects of the design and build, as well as deliver business and communications plans. This funding, which equates to less than 5 per cent of the total project cost, would enable Wheelworks to buy the time and expertise to successfully deliver the capital project. Once operational, the new cart can be utilised effectively to ensure further engagement by marginalised communities in cultural and arts-based activities.
2.4	Details on the current programme of activity are provided in Appendix 1. Essentially, the organisation had three main strand of work, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The ArtCart outreach and festivals programme – Multiple realities – a development programme using digital and traditional arts to address issues facing marginalised and at-risk young people – A wider community engagement and training programme – training and engagement activity with young people, providing an introduction to digital arts techniques to support their personal development.
2.5	Last year, the art cart visited 27 events and venues across Belfast – full details are provided in Appendix 2. With the refurbishment of the new cart, there will be additional capacity to develop new contacts as well as generating additional programmes of activity as a follow-up to the taster sessions offered.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> This can be funded out of the Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts (TCH&A) Unit's 2014/15 budget.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality and good relations implications attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree to fund £12,000 towards the cost of Wheelworks' new ArtCart, as part of a £212,000 funding package, with the remaining resources agreed by ACNI.

6	Decision Tracking
There is no Decision Tracking attached to this report.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
TCH&A – Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts ACNI – Arts Council of Northern Ireland	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 - Additional information on Wheelworks Appendix 2 - Locations visited by ArtCart in 2014 Appendix 3 - Cultural Framework case study	