



<b>Subject:</b>	South by Southwest (SXSX) 2018
<b>Date:</b>	11 October 2017
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Colin McCabrey, Economic Development Manager

<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>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<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 or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Update Members on planned activities as part of Council's support for the business mission to South by Southwest (SXSX) in partnership with Invest NI, Generator NI and Digital Catapult</li><li>Agree Member and Officer representation at the event, to support the programme of activity.</li></ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Agree the outlined programme of activity for SXSX 2018 in partnership with Generator NI, Invest NI and Digital Catapult. The budget for this was previously approved at City Growth and Regeneration Committee in April 2017 as part of the programme of support aimed at 'Creative and Tech Profile and Development'.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree, given the increased profile of activity, that the Lord Mayor or Chair of Committee along with two officers to manage operational arrangements attend the event</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Members will be aware that, at the April 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, approval was given to support a programme of activity supporting the development and growth of the creative, digital and tech sectors in the City. This support is profiled and supported under the banner of “Output Belfast”. It encompasses a broader programme of work supported by our key partners including Invest Northern Ireland, Generator NI and Digital Catapult.
3.2	While this report concentrates on SXSW, the Council has also engaged in other activities including supporting participation by local companies in events such as The Great Escape in Brighton (May 2017), AVA Output Belfast Conference (June 2017) and the Output Belfast Conference (Feb 2017). The Council’s support in these areas has levered investment of £70,000 from Invest NI towards a music entrepreneurship programme as well as support to converge music with screen industries in order to develop new export opportunities. This collaborative approach is creating a more strategic sectoral approach to supporting businesses in this sector and maximising the return on investment for all partners.
3.3	The City’s interactive and convergence sectors will continue to grow over the coming years and the Council is working with its partners to ensure that local businesses are well placed to take advantage of these opportunities. This work will include the development of the Immersive Tech Hub at the former Belfast Telegraph building which was recently approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
3.4	A flagship calendar event for Output Belfast is South by Southwest (SXSW). SXSW takes place in Austin, Texas each year and is seen as the premier global event focusing on the creative industries through conference keynotes, networking events and conference exhibition. By day, the 15,000+ conference registrants do business in the SXSW Trade Show in the Austin Convention Centre and partake of a full agenda of industry-specific panel discussions featuring hundreds of speakers of international stature. SXSW remains the key US showcasing, deal striking, networking and media forum for the international creative digital industry. Attendance is typically by those in the business of film, music, technology and creativity.

3.5	<p>Five local businesses were supported by the Council to take part in the event last year. Some of the key outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales of £185k identified;</li> <li>• One company establishing links with Sony Playstation, Mattel group and Spotify;</li> <li>• One company now developing creative audio visual product as part of SXSW 2018;</li> <li>• One company established links with Amazon Prime to identify new workflow patterns to help secure ongoing work for a second season of a hit Amazon Prime TV show;</li> <li>• One company collaborating with Kieron Pepper (The Prodigy) now ACM regarding working together on a programme to help students develop stronger visual brands.</li> <li>• One company established a relationship with High Snobiety magazine for provision of video content (2million Facebook followers).</li> </ul>
3.6	<p>The dates for SXSW are the 9–18 March 2018. Taking account of the key dates within the programme, it is proposed that the Output Belfast activity and engagement will be 12-16 March.</p>
3.7	<p>Belfast City Council presence at SXSW in 2018 will have the dual purpose of showcasing Belfast talent and providing capability support to business participants. It will also present an opportunity to profile Belfast as a dynamic, creative City that is a magnet for talent and innovation. We are aiming to increase the city profile at the event in 2018. We will invest in specialist support to help Belfast-based businesses to maximise the opportunities presented at the event and we will host a number of showcasing and networking events with the aim of profiling Belfast to the international marketplace in terms of investment, skills, technology and innovation.</p>
3.8	<p>For SXSW 2018, the Council will work in partnership with Invest NI, Generator NI, Digital Catapult and the Department of International Trade (DIT) as well as other international trade partners. Through our contribution to the business mission, Belfast City Council will support the attendance of six local companies. We will also deliver the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated one to one networking events, demo days and pitching events for participating digital companies;</li> <li>• Engagement and participation as part of the DIT exhibition stand in the main convention centre (details currently being finalised with DIT);</li> <li>• 5 days of music showcasing and business networking in the UK Music embassy;</li> <li>• 1 “Output Belfast” networking and profiling event to promote Belfast as an investment</li> </ul>

location and to provide participating Belfast companies the opportunity to invite and network with key international buyers and companies. This event has grown year on year. At SXSW it was unfortunate that we had to turn delegates away from the event as it was over-subscribed so this year the event will be increased to accommodate up to 250 attendees;

- An “Output Belfast” music showcase and networking event with a focus on promoting the music industry in Belfast and supporting the participating bands and musicians. This event will be delivered in partnership with DIT. Whilst this is primarily a music event, it provides a unique opportunity for businesses to network with 500 SXSW delegates and identify immersive and convergence opportunities;
- A Belfast city showcase and networking event to promote Belfast as an investment location and to provide participating Belfast companies with the opportunity to invite and network with key international buyers. This will be an invitation-only networking event targeting up to 100 key influencers. The invitation list will include civic stakeholders and partners/associates from the City of Austin, our Sister Cities of Nashville and Boston and key industry contacts. The event will showcase the vibrancy and innovation in Belfast, exemplified through our Smart Belfast approach. The City of Austin has agreed to help us prospect the right clients to network with our businesses and showcase the potential of the city as a dynamic business and investment location;
- A potential business pitching event at Capital Factory, Austin for the 6 local businesses supported by Council to attend SXSW;
- Participation on the business panel as part of the “Cities Summit” during the conference programme (awaiting final confirmation). This panel will be in partnership with the City of Austin and key Belfast and Austin based creative digital companies;

3.9

In the run-up to the event, we will work with the six participating businesses to provide them with the necessary support to maximise the impact of their time in Austin. This will include prospecting for SXSW, sales skills development, pitch and marketing support, development of specific itineraries, development of an export plan and follow-up support and coaching following the event. As part of Global Entrepreneurship Week (13 – 19 November) there will be a pitching competition with a prize of enhanced support for attendance at SXSW 2018, mentor support and a year’s free membership of Innovation Factory. This is included within the 6 Belfast-based businesses supported.

Invest NI and Generator NI will support participating companies and a select number of artists again in 2018 by providing up to 50% of the travel, accommodation and conference

3.10	<p>pass costs. As referenced above, Belfast City Council will contribute to the cost for up to 6 Belfast-based creative and digital companies that will benefit from participation in SXSW. The companies supported would not meet the criteria for benefitting from Invest NI support. It is anticipated that the NI delegation will consist of up to 20 local creative digital companies and 4 musicians selected to showcase. Given the volume of activity – as well as the potential profiling opportunities – it is proposed that the Lord Mayor or Chair of Committee attend along with two officers to look after operational arrangements.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>Belfast City Council will select the six participating companies who will be in receipt of Council support. As part of the application process, equality and good relations will be considered. Recruitment of participants will be sector-based and targeted at the industries best suited to SXSW.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The overall cost of delivering the programme detailed above is in the region of £40,000 and is met from the existing Economic Development Budgets. The City Growth and Regeneration Committee in April 2017 approved an overall budget for Creative and Tech sector profile and development, supporting export and international trade and business incentivisation.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None