



Department for

Communities

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**From: Leo O'Reilly
Permanent Secretary**

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**Your Ref:
Our Ref: PSC 1090.17
Date: 28 December 2017**

**Jim Hanna
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council
Chief Executive's Department
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

Dear *Jim*,

Thank you for your letter of 6 December requesting a meeting to discuss the current financial position of The MAC with an All-Party deputation from Belfast City Council.

As you are aware, financial support for the arts sector is the responsibility of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

The Department provides Grant in Aid to support the Arts Council in exercising its responsibilities in this regard. However the Department does not interfere with the Arts Council's exercise of its artistic judgement in deciding whether to provide financial assistance to any person or body in any particular case.

The Arts Council has made representations to the Department concerning its funding allocation to The MAC and these are currently being considered.

More generally, overall funding provided from DfC to the arts sector (though the Arts Council) has been reducing in recent years and this is likely to continue into next year when on current forecasts we will face very significant financial pressures arising from the need to transfer money from a reducing public expenditure pot to support priority public services. Therefore the overall disposition of the arts bodies supported by the Arts Council, and voluntary and community organisations more generally, must be one of planning to live with a reducing public sector subvention in the coming few years.

Given that the Arts Council is taking the lead in discussions with The MAC on the current position and on the organisation's future financial sustainability, I do not believe



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there is anything further the Department could contribute to a meeting, given the parameters and funding constraints outlined above.

I am copying this correspondence to the Chair and Chief Executive of the Arts Council.

Yours sincerely,



LEO O'REILLY
PERMANENT SECRETARY