



<b>Subject:</b>	Investment in City Festivals: Belfast International Arts Festival and Culture Night, Pipe Bands 2019
<b>Date:</b>	9 May 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Clare Mullen, Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts 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>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<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</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update Members on regional, national and international profiling opportunities for Belfast via two of the city's landmark festivals</li><li>• Request support to enhance the festivals' ability to reach additional international audience and contribute positively to city positioning.</li><li>• Update on the Pipe Band Championship bid</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>• Note the global profiling opportunities presented by Belfast International Arts Festival and Culture Night Belfast, in line with the emerging city narrative</li> <li>• Agree the release of £25,000 towards the delivery of Belfast International Arts Festival and £20,000 towards the delivery of Culture Night Belfast, in order to support additional audience development and international profiling for both events in 2018, as in previous years.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members will be aware of the increased focus of the Council and its partners in promoting Belfast as a business and investment location. On the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) side, the Council works closely with Invest NI in supporting that organisation’s work in bringing new investment to Northern Ireland. As set out in a separate report, working relationships are extremely positive between the organisations and we are in the process of putting in place an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set out our parameters of engagement on Foreign Direct Investment support.</p>
3.2	<p>On the capital investment side, the City Centre Development Team has been leading on a number of initiatives to create confidence in the investment market and to bring forward new investment schemes. This includes Council support for the £18.7million City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF) as well as proposals for the development of a new City Centre Visitor Attraction and regeneration frameworks for key development zones in the City Centre and surrounding areas.</p>
3.3	<p>One of the key factors in any investment decision – either capital investment or Foreign Direct Investment – is the wider City “offer” in terms of quality of life, city ambition and vibrancy. A City’s cultural provision is a key pillar of that “offer” as it gives confidence to investors that it is a City that is open to attracting people in and catering for the range of cultural tastes and interests. Recognising that this is a critical factor in our efforts to sell Belfast internationally, the marketing materials and messaging draw attention to the fact that Belfast is a dynamic, vibrant location with a sense of energy and ambition. The city narrative – “Energy Unleashed” – emphasises this sense of vibrancy and uniqueness in a very competitive investment market.</p>

3.4	<p>The sense of momentum and ambition created through the development work on the European City of Culture (ECoC) bid and the commitment to exploring opportunities to maximise the cultural investment as well as the success of some of the major cultural events and initiatives that take place across the City each year highlight the ambition and potential of the City's cultural sector. Recognising this potential, there is an opportunity for the Council to support a number of profiling opportunities in which the cultural offer is in the lead but where it is supported by the wider City proposition.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Belfast International Arts Festival</u></p> <p>Belfast International Arts Festival (BIAF) – by its nature – is international both in terms of the acts and performances that take place during the festival and also, increasingly, in its audience reach. Over the last few years, BIAF has engaged in a targeted marketing campaign in the Republic of Ireland, GB and USA markets and this is now beginning to bear fruit in terms of an increasingly international audience profile. The draft Festivals and Events Strategy that was presented to this Committee in March 2018 considered that the Belfast International Arts Festival had the potential to become a Signature Event for the city.</p>
3.6	<p>In early Autumn 2017, the Belfast International Festival organised launch events for the festival in both Dublin and New York. These events helped generate significant profile for the event – and for the city of Belfast. The Lord Mayor helped to launch the event in New York and this event was also supported by both the NI Bureau and Tourism Ireland. The event was attended by a number of specialist and bespoke tour operators who were presented with information on the festival and the city as a cultural tourism destination.</p>
3.7	<p>The 2017 Belfast International Arts Festival ran for more than three weeks and comprised 191 events, taking place all across the city. It attracted a total audience of 180,000 visitors – over half of whom were from outside the Belfast City Council area. More than 11,000 of those visiting Belfast to take part in the festival were out of state visitors. This generated an economic impact for the city in excess of £4million. In addition to the direct economic impact of the visitors to the city, the international profiling of the event included coverage by NBC News in USA and this generated media value equivalent to more than £620,000.</p>
3.8	<p>Planning work is well advanced for the 2018 event which will take place from 16 October to 3 November 2018. While the programme has not yet been published, it is understood that there are to be a number of international showcase events that will feature at the festival.</p>

One event that has been announced is a shared artistic project led by US artist Suzanne Lacy entitled "Across and In-between". This project investigates how the border frames identity and intervenes in the routine of everyday life. For this commission, the artist has been working with residents from both sides of the border to create a series of localised gatherings and individual reflections on visible and invisible borders. This project is part of 14-18 NOW: a five-year programme of arts experiences connecting people with the First World War. The Poppies: Weeping Windows which was presented at the Ulster Museum during last year's BIAF was also part of this programme.

3.9 In order to build on the international profiling work that has taken place in recent years, BIAF intends to repeat the Dublin and New York launch events for the festival and has already secured Tourism Ireland and NI Bureau support for this activity. BIAF is seeking £25,000 match-funding from Belfast City Council towards this international promotion and profiling activity. This presents the Council with an opportunity to consider how we can work alongside the festival to promote the city messaging, and to support the commitments made by this Committee to develop the "City of Music" proposition, which will be showcased from Autumn 2018. In parallel, there will be opportunities to consider the wider city positioning message in these cities: both Dublin and New York have been identified as key partner cities for Belfast, particularly in terms of our international development work.

3.10 Culture Night Belfast

Members will be aware of Culture Night Belfast: a one-night cultural showcase event that takes place in the city every September. The 2018 event will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Culture Night in Belfast and the organisers are working on ambitious plans to develop the event – including considering how it can attract additional audiences (including those from out of state). Similar to the Belfast International Arts Festival, Culture Night was identified as a potential "signature" event as part of the draft Festivals and Events strategy that is currently being developed.

3.11 Culture Night 2017 attracted over 100,000 visitors to the city, including 18,000 visitors from outside Northern Ireland. For the first time, the event moved beyond its core boundary in Cathedral Quarter and there was a programme of activity running from City Hall down to Ulster University. The organisers were successful in generating more than one third of their income from sponsorship and this allowed them to extend the programme of activity and to have a number of "anchor points" at key locations including the City Hall and Bank Square – as well as the Cathedral Quarter.

3.12	<p>In terms of economic impact, Culture Night generated around £875,000 for the local economy in terms of additional spend, particularly within the leisure and hospitality sector – as well as the retail sector to some extent. The event also generated around £870,000 of media coverage – with a significant profile on social media in particular.</p>
3.13	<p>More than 96% of those attending Culture Night 2017 suggested that they would come to Culture Night again and this provides a very strong platform from which to build into the 2018 tenth year event. Culture Night is run by the Cathedral Quarter Trust and organisers are currently developing the 2018 programme. They have been engaging with the City Council to ensure that the event can support some of the animation and cultural development activity that we are investing in for this year and to take account of some of the learning from last year. They are proposing an increased focus on a number of key cultural events as “anchors” across a wider programme of activity – starting from City Hall again this year.</p>
3.14	<p>In order to develop the quality of the cultural offer and to support some of the logistical requirements associated with widening out the coverage of the event, organisers are seeking £20,000 match-funding from Belfast City Council towards the overall costs of the event (likely to be in the region of £300,000). This investment presents the Council with an opportunity to look at how large-scale events such as this can be used to encourage participation in the arts (77% of those attending the 2017 event said that it brought them to venues that they had not previously visited). There are also lessons to be learned about how we can lever private sector finance into events. Both of these are important principles in the emerging work on festival and events.</p>
3.15	<p>Members will be aware that the Council has recently committed resources to Visit Belfast for the 2018/19 financial year. One of the key areas of activity will be to consider how the tourism campaigns can reflect the cultural message. This is likely to include an Autumn campaign which will profile the cultural offering in Belfast (including these events).</p>
3.16	<p>Belfast was not successful in the recent bid for the Pipe Band Championships for 2019/2020/2021. A report will be brought back to committee on how we can build on signature events such as this in the future (including bidding for the World Championships) as part of an overall events and festivals update.</p>
3.17	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>

3.18	<p>The proposed Council contribution to Belfast International Arts Festival for international profiling work is £25,000, and to Cathedral Quarter Trust to deliver enhanced Culture Night Belfast audience development is £20,000. These funding allocations have been set aside within the Development Department's budget for the financial year 2018/19.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None.