



A CITY IMAGiNING



Belfast

Cultural Strategy for
Belfast 2020 - 2030

Draft
Implementation
Plan 2020-2023

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Introduction

On 17 April 2019 a public consultation opened on the draft ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast, *A City Imagining* 2020-2030.

The timing of this work was in response to a number of important developments and milestones including:

- End of participation in the European Capital of Culture bidding process
- A review of Events and Festivals in the city
- Current Cultural Framework due to end in March 2020
- Current Tourism Strategy due to end in March 2020
- Core multi-annual funding programme for arts and heritage organisations due to end in March 2020
- Culture and tourism led regeneration as a key strand in the Belfast Region City Deal; including proposals for a new visitor attraction, the Destination Hub

The strategy builds on the extensive public engagement that began in 2017 and this has continued throughout the consultation phase. It is also a consolidation of the foundations, commitment and objectives of several preceding strategies and frameworks and is the beginning of the city's commitment towards an integrated, culture-led phase of development with the citizen at the heart of this process. As well as consideration of specific priorities required to support the Belfast Agenda's vision for a culturally vibrant city, the strategy also addresses a number of interrelated areas including:

- Long-term sustainability of the cultural sector
- A new approach to events and festivals
- Strengthening the tourism proposition in the city through greater understanding of the city's cultural narrative and international appeal
- Integration of planned major developments, such as the Destination Hub, into a citywide approach maximising inclusive growth opportunities for this investment

Transformation

The global context for this strategy is the increasing recognition that cities of culture can drive transformation. Culture has a critical role in shaping great places through increasing cohesion and permeability; building identity and confidence; attracting investment and retaining talent.

The Belfast Agenda identifies five outcomes for the city:

- Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
- Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all
- Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential
- Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing
- Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city

This cultural strategy has the potential to make a contribution to each of these outcomes as well as responding to and supporting other priority areas such as the Local Development Plan, City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, Good Relations Strategy, Open Spaces Strategy and Resilience Strategy.

We recognise that *A City Imagining* is ambitious and we have not underestimated the challenges of delivering this strategy in uncertain times and in the context of ongoing public funding cuts. However the extensive engagement carried out has revealed hope and aspiration for the future. Critical to its success will be the ability of Council and partners to deliver on phase one of implementation as set out in this document.

Two external bodies of work have shaped the proposed approach and each of these demonstrate the importance of culture in addressing our most complex social and economic challenges. The first is Agenda 21 for Culture, an international methodology that supports cultural development in cities and regions. The focus of Culture 21 is to embed culture as the fourth dimension of sustainable cities alongside existing economic, social and ecological pillars. Belfast will participate in the Culture 21 pilot cities programme and this will provide important support for the implementation of the cultural strategy - www.agenda21culture.net

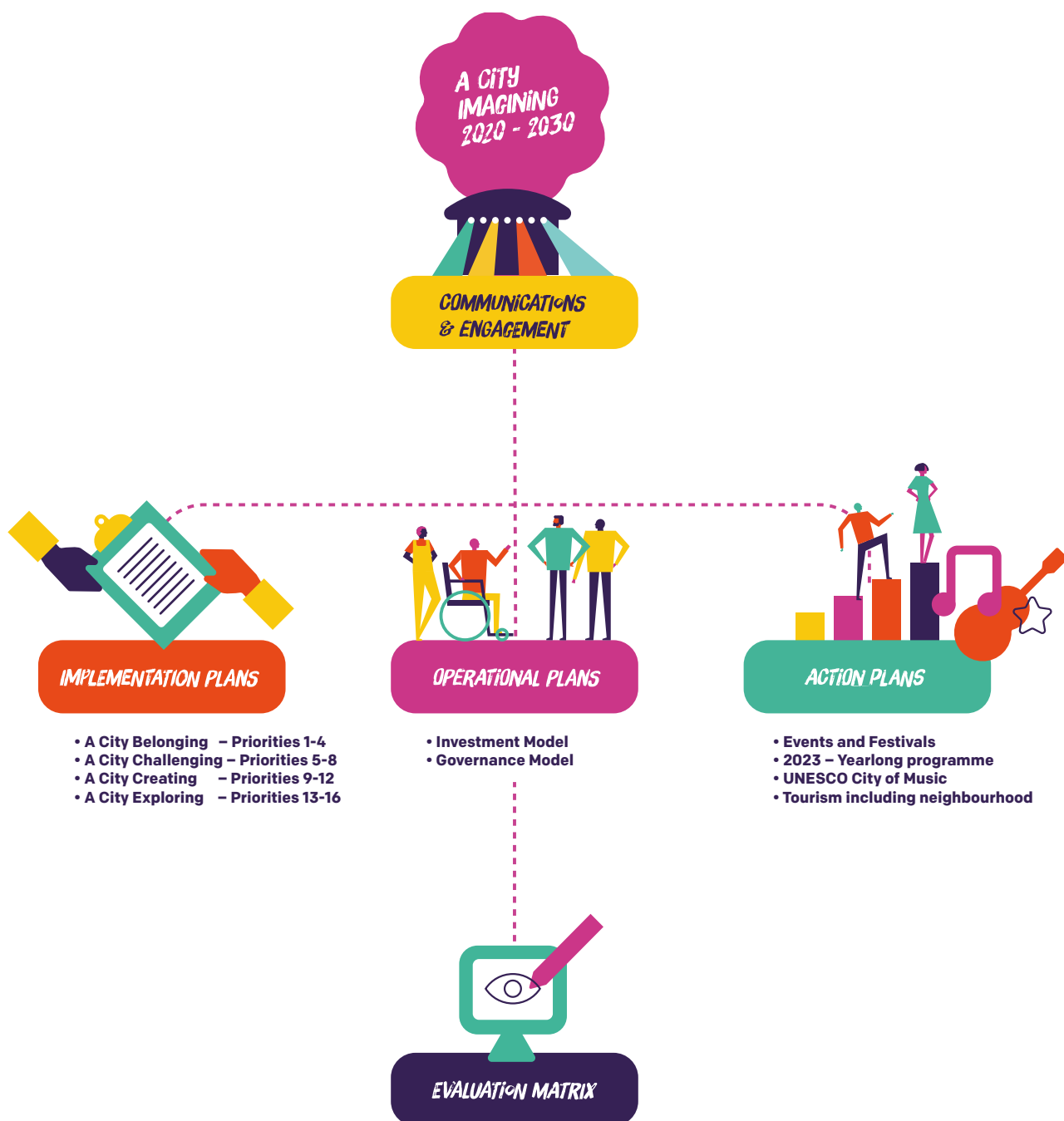
The second set of recommendations that have helped inform this strategy, and the associated implementation plans, is the Cultural Enquiry by the Core Cities network - www.corecities.com/cultural-cities-enquiry. This enquiry presents a number of practical recommendations on investment and governance of culture in cities, centred on a collaborative model that complements the community planning process and helps identify shared priorities for culture in cities.

Implementation

From the outset we have recognised the need for a long-term commitment through a ten year strategy. However this approach must be supported by shorter implementation phases that can support the overall vision while responding to constantly changing local and global environments. The first implementation phase will be 2020 -2023 and this document sets out the actions to be delivered during this period.

The following areas are covered in this document and will be closely monitored and updated on annual basis:

- Implementation plans to support the 16 strategic priorities set out in *A City Imagining*
- Operational plan to support a new governance and investment model
- Action plans to support specific strategic projects or areas of focus such as UNESCO City of Music and At Home in 2023
- Proposed approach to communications and evaluation





Section 1

A City Imagining - Strategic Priorities

A City Imagining sets out four strategic themes with each theme presenting a number of priorities. These themes and priorities have been informed and shaped by the engagement process that underpinned the development of the strategy.

Theme 1: A City Belonging

Open our doors and celebrate our diverse lifestyles, traditions and attitudes.

The focus of this theme is the role of the individual. When we explore notions of active citizenship and participation this is in the context of being an inclusive city recognising the role of many people in civic society. Therefore active citizenship and participation should include residents, non-residents and visitors.

Active citizenship and participation

The strategy defines cultural belonging as an individual's feelings in relation to their sense of identity, their relationship to other people around them and their sense of place. Agenda 21 for Culture states that cultural rights guarantee the ability of everyone to identify with one or several cultural communities and to adapt this choice throughout their life. The exercise of cultural rights is essential for the development of a sustainable city however central to this must be respect and increased understanding for other people's cultural expression. We believe that arts and creative practices can foster the confidence to imagine diverse senses of belonging in Belfast.

The priorities under this theme support citizens to be active agents of change and co-creators of cultural activity. The actions under each priority are designed to create opportunities for participation and engagement in the cultural life of the city.

Theme 2: A City Challenging

Make Belfast a city where you feel at home and can express yourself culturally.

The focus of this theme is how cultural and public space should support and strengthen diversity in the city helping to create opportunities for shared experiences. *A City Challenging* recognises the importance of the connection between cultural identity and sense of place.

Diversity

Globalisation and migration have increased diversity in cities across the world. Different dimensions of diversity intersect in multiple ways between individuals and communities. One of the city's challenges is to foster the necessary conditions whereby Belfast's open spaces and cultural venues offer opportunities for diverse encounters across and beyond different cultures, lifestyles and attitudes.

The priorities under this theme aspire to cultivate creative environments for dynamic co-creation and synergy in our approach to place-making and city life. The actions under each priority contribute to increasing the sustainability and quality of the city's urban environment through exploring the relationship between infrastructure and programming.

Theme 3: A City Creating

Allowing creativity to push boundaries.

The focus of this theme is how we can better support our cultural sectors and in doing so strengthen the role of innovation and creativity in our society. The balance that must be achieved is allowing existing organisations to adapt to change whilst also creating the space for new cultural leaders.

New approaches

A culturally vibrant city must take risks. The citizens of Belfast have indicated that they are ready to challenge traditional mind-sets and take a culture-led leap into the future. Cultural, arts and heritage organisations have a key role to play as creative leaders, innovators and challengers. However, cultural vibrancy can only be achieved when there is also stability and sustainability for the wider cultural sector.

The priorities under this theme will facilitate and explore new ways of working, taking more risks and helping artists to have more autonomy to engage with people in creative ways. The actions under each priority are intended to achieve greater stability and create the environment that enables greater innovation and experimentation.

Theme 4: A City Exploring

Strengthen our place in the world by building upon our cultural networks and partnerships locally, regionally and internationally.

The focus of this theme is Belfast's relationship to the rest of the world. We recognise that this should be an exchange of ideas, information and people. A connected city welcomes inwards investment and visitors whilst also supporting people to make their own global connections.

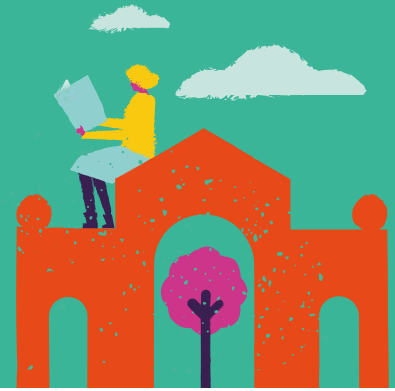
Our place in the world

The depth and breadth of existing partnerships and networks between a range of cultural players is already evident. The positive impact of these connections has ripple effects across many sectors at a city and regional level as well as securing Belfast's place within the global creative economy. Belfast will facilitate, support and maintain city, regional and international networks and collaborative partnerships on a range of levels, from the individual to established cultural institutions.

The priorities under this theme will sustain and strengthen the city's cultural ecosystem. The actions under each priority will help to make the city more connected and vibrant through highlighting the role of culture in tourism, environmental sustainability and the wider economy.

A City Belonging

Priority 1



Developing a people focussed approach to cultural development by facilitating citizen and sector participation in setting priorities, decision-making and in the evaluation of cultural policies.

Overview: In this priority we want people in the city to take the opportunity to be involved in setting our priorities and in making decisions on culture policy and development. The engagement process that has supported this strategy has clearly demonstrated the civic energy that exists in our city and people's desire to feel more connected and valued.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
1.1	Living Here	Establish a participative forum open to those resident or working in Belfast	Internal and external partners	Number of people involved; breadth of representation	where everyone fulfils their potential
1.2, 5.1	Living Here	Develop and deliver a co-design model for all cultural programmes	Internal and external partners including public and private sectors	No of programmes adopting approach; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
1.3	Living Here	Develop and deliver a Cultural Ambassadors scheme ensuring representation from culturally diverse backgrounds	Internal and external partners with recruitment via an open call	No of people engaged; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential
1.4, 2.2	Living Here	Commission report into cultural democracy and implement recommended initiatives	Commissioned via competitive process with requirement for public & sector engagement	Publication of report; progress against taking recommendation forward	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, air and inclusive for all;
1.5	Living Here	Commission research and publish annual insights into cultural participation	Internal and external partners	Publish report; establish baseline and monitor both quantitative and qualitative data	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
1.6	Living Here, Growing the Economy, City Development, Working & Learning	Publish an annual report on the impact of culture	Internal with support from external partners through sharing of data & collection of case studies. Potential to collaborate with academic partner	Publish report and consider longitudinal study	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing
1.7	Living Here	Include culture related questions in citywide/ household surveys	Internal and external partners	Publish results and evaluate over period	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing
1.8	Living Here, Growing the Economy, City Development, Working & Learning	Co-ordinate an annual sector presentation to Committee	Cultural sector	No of individuals and organisations involved; breadth of representation	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing

A City Belonging

Priority 2



Building creative capacity of our citizens and cultural sector to allow people to express their own cultural identities and respect and learn about other cultures.

Overview: In this priority we want people to have the confidence and opportunity to express themselves and their identity through culture and creativity. The public consultation revealed that an important dimension to this should be the opportunity to share experiences through learning about, and respecting the cultural diversity of, our city and beyond.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
2.1	Living Here, Working & Learning	Deliver eight 3-year (Y)our Home Projects to include projects led by and working with LGBTQ++ groups, new communities, disabled people, older people, schools and multi-lingual communities	Cultural sector, individual practitioners, voluntary sector	No. of participants, qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
2.2, 1.4	Living Here	Support local neighbourhoods to deliver Fun Palaces or similar cultural democracy initiatives	Local community partners, voluntary sector, cultural organisations	No. of events delivered; breadth of engagement; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
2.3, 3.3	Living Here, Working and Learning	Design and deliver <i>Telling the Belfast Story</i> public engagement programme	Cultural sector; heritage partners, public authorities, private sector	No. of participants; breadth of engagement and representation; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
2.4	Living Here, Working and Learning	Develop a co-design and civic participation approach to the delivery of City Events	Internal and external partners	No. of events delivered; breadth of engagement; qualitative feedback	that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
2.5	Living Here, Working and Learning	Increase the involvement of the cultural sector in the delivery of City Events	Cultural sector	No. of cultural partners; qualitative feedback	that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
2.6	Living Here	Complete cultural mapping of Belfast	Commissioned via competitive process or Internal with support from external partners.	Presentation of data	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
2.7	Living Here, Working and Learning	Develop and support a volunteer programme based on best practice models	Cultural sector; voluntary sector	No. of volunteers; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
2.8	Living Here, Working and Learning	Deliver tailored initiative to foster creativity in young people e.g. roll out of <i>Artpack</i>	Cultural sector; education sector; children and young people sector	No. of young people; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all

A City Belonging

Priority 3



Protecting, promoting and using cultural heritage in all its dimensions, both tangible and intangible, including the plurality of the city's cultural narratives.

Overview: In this priority we want to create environments where people can tell their stories and discover the stories yet to be uncovered. In doing so we celebrate the richness of our city's past, present and future. An important part of this should be developing skills and creating the spaces to tell these stories. This requires a partnership approach to heritage development recognising opportunities to increase access to the city's diverse heritage.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
3.1, 5.2	Living Here, City Development	Develop a heritage plan for the city with cross-cutting actions	Internal departments; public authorities, cultural (heritage) sector, private sector	Publish plan with agreed targets	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
3.2	Living Here, Working and Learning	Deliver a heritage skills development programme	Heritage sector and community & voluntary sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
3.3, 2.3	Living Here, Working and Learning	Deliver a co-created and co-designed heritage programme to tell the story of people and places	Heritage sector and community & voluntary sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
3.4	Living Here, City Development	Create shared spaces and connect people to buildings by strengthening and sustaining partnerships between the community and heritage sectors	Heritage sector and community & voluntary sector	No. of partnerships; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
3.5	Living Here, Working and Learning	Deliver access to artefacts programme	Heritage sector and community & voluntary sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
3.6	Living Here, Working and Learning	Deliver a co-created and co-designed programme focussed the diversity of language in the city, telling the story of people and places through language	Heritage sector and community & voluntary sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all

A City Belonging

Priority

4

A City Belonging



Enabling a sense of belonging and sense of place through cultural engagement to help encourage a strong civic identity that people can share and celebrate.

Overview: In this priority we want to support people to participate in cultural life and to create a sense of belonging within the places and spaces of our city. We recognise that there continue to be barriers to participation, often brought about by societal inequalities; while some of these are well understood and researched, others are the result of a rapidly changing society.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
4.1	Living Here	Support a minimum of five artist-in-residence programmes across Belfast	Cultural sector; individual artists; community and voluntary sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
4.2	Living Here, City Development	Complete feasibility on <i>Playstacks</i> - an engagement led approach to the design of creative and cultural space in local communities	Queen's University Belfast, Voluntary Arts Ireland, Private sector partners	Evaluation of pilot; roll out of programme; quantitative and qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
4.3	Living Here, City Development	Deliver a series of design pavilions in the city centre, communities and neighbourhoods in the lead up to 2023	Cultural sector; creative industries; private sector partners; community and voluntary sector	No. of pavilions; no. of creative partners; no. of community partners; no. of participants; qualitative feedback	that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
4.4	Living Here, City Development	Develop and implement a Public Art Policy	Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Department for Communities	Publish report including engagement led approach (quantitative and qualitative feedback)	that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
4.5	Living Here, City Development	Further develop a <i>City as a Gallery</i> or Art in the Public Realm Initiative including scoping international collaboration	Local and international partners from public and private sector	No. of partners; quantitative and qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable

A City Challenging

Priority 5



Embedding cultural impact in city development and local place-making.

Overview: In this priority we want to recognise the role of people in place-making and how they shape spaces into places that reflect our creativity and character. This can be achieved by promoting and sharing best practice. In particular there is an opportunity to demonstrate leadership through our commitment to engagement led design.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
5.1	City Development, Living Here	Deliver cultural place-making programme in minimum of 6 locations	Cultural sector; individual artists; heritage practitioners; community and voluntary sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
5.2, 3.1	City Development, Living Here	Develop a heritage plan for the city with cross-cutting actions	Internal departments; public authorities, cultural (heritage) sector, private sector	Publish plan with agreed targets	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
5.3	City Development, Living Here	Publish character and style studies	Internal departments; public authorities, cultural (heritage) sector, private sector	Publish report including engagement led approach (quantitative and qualitative)	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
5.4	City Development, Living Here	Develop and implement design guidelines for city lighting and dressing through civic engagement and co-design approaches	Internal departments; public authorities, cultural & heritage sectors, private sector	Publish report including engagement led approach (quantitative and qualitative feedback)	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
5.5, 8.3	City Development, Living Here	Deliver playful city initiative to improve the quality, accessibility and openness of public spaces	Internal departments; public authorities, cultural & heritage sectors, private sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable

A City Challenging

Priority 6



Investing in connected, resilient and sustainable infrastructure of quality cultural spaces across the city. This will also include digital spaces.

Overview: In this priority we recognise the importance of creating spaces that help support a more sustainable and connected city where people feel they can express who they are. This must achieve a balance between increased interaction through digital spaces and infrastructure and more traditional forms of social engagement.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
6.1	Living Here, Growing the Economy	Complete feasibility study into ticketing platform for the city including options for civic and visitor passes. Implement recommendations	Department for Communities, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Tourism NI, Visit Belfast	Publish report and produce business case for further investment in any recommendations	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
6.2	Living Here	Support local neighbourhoods to deliver <i>Fun Palaces</i> or similar cultural democracy initiatives	Local community partners, voluntary sector, cultural organisations	No. of events delivered; breadth of engagement; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
6.3	City Development, Growing the Economy	Investing in digital platforms for culture in the city and region	Internal partners, Department for Communities, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Tourism NI, Visit Belfast	Publish data	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
6.4	City Development, Growing the Economy	Examine the potential to safeguard infrastructure through new social financing models and partnerships to support cultural organisations to purchase premises or increase security of lease agreements	Trusts and Foundations, Voluntary Sector	Financial health of organisations supported; contribution to local economy	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
6.5	City Development, Growing the Economy	Design multi-annual grant model to effectively support and anchor existing cultural infrastructure	Other funding bodies	No. of orgs supported, monitoring grants, programme evaluation	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
6.6	City Development, Growing the Economy	Commission an audit of cultural infrastructure including a gap analysis in order to inform future investment	Department for Communities, Arts Council of Northern Ireland	Publish report	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
6.7	City Development, Growing the Economy	Commission review of current licensing on the impact of cultural vibrancy including the night-time economy	Private sector, hospitality sector, industry bodies	Data relating to potential contribution to local economy	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
6.8	Living Here, Growing the Economy	Complete an accessibility audit of cultural venues to publish accurate access information on an online platform (potentially in partnership with the ticketing platform)	Disability support orgs (University of Atypical), Department for Communities, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Tourism NI, Visit Belfast	Publish report and produce business case for further investment in any recommendations	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

A City Challenging

Priority 7



Supporting high quality cultural events and activities that are accessible, diverse and inclusive.

Overview: City events have an important role within the wider cultural offer of Belfast. Events can tell stories, connect people and present new perspectives on our place. In this priority, we recognise the need to increase the diversity and inclusivity of our celebrations, festivals and events as research continues to indicate that current programming and participation do not effectively represent diversity of language, disability or ethnic minorities

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
7.1	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Design new investment programme including multi-annual and project grants for festivals and events	Other funding bodies	No. of organisations supported, monitoring of grants, programme evaluation (quantitative and qualitative)	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
7.2	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Develop and review direct delivery of Council events in line with the priorities of the strategy including but not limited to Maritime Festival, St Patrick's Day, Halloween and Christmas	Internal and external partners	No. of events, profile of audience, breadth of programming, return on investment (cultural, social and economic impact)	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
7.3	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Ensure a creative programming approach to City Events that reflects and promotes cultural diversity	Cultural sector, individual artists, creative practitioners, organisations representing minority ethnic groups	No. of events, profile of audience, breadth of programming	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
7.4	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Develop schemes to support higher participation and representation at cultural events by disabled people. This could include specific initiatives such as <i>Gig Buddies</i>	Cultural sector including Black Box (pilot), disability sector, voluntary and community sector	No. of events, profile of audience, breadth of programming, qualitative feedback	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
7.5	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Support the delivery of events in public spaces through streamlining advice and developing toolkits	Department for Communities	No. of events, profile of audience, breadth of programming, qualitative feedback	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all

A City Challenging

Priority 8



Transforming underused public spaces into vibrant and diverse cultural destinations

Overview: This priority focuses on how creativity can help bring our streets, parks and public spaces to life. This requires more effective working across Council services as well as further developing city-wide partnerships. These actions support a number of cross-cutting initiatives that encourage better use of existing spaces and a more innovative approach to new infrastructure

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
8.1	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Deliver a lighting and dressing strategy for the city through an engagement and design led approach	Public and private sector including Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure, BIDs, heritage sector	Quantitative and qualitative feedback against programme outcomes e.g. footfall, change in perceptions	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
8.2	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Pilot rooftop initiatives to increase cultural and green space in the city including scoping potential for partnership project with other European/ international cities	Internal and external partners including public and private sector	No. of buildings, quantitative and qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
8.3, 5.5	City Development, Living Here	Deliver playful city initiative to improve the quality, accessibility and openness of public spaces	Internal departments; public authorities, cultural including heritage sector, private sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
8.4	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Commission proof of concept for a brokering service to transform empty or vacant spaces into cultural and civic use through one pilot in the city centre and one pilot in a neighbourhood. Implement recommendations as appropriate	Cultural partners, private sector including existing proposal from Voluntary Arts Ireland	No. of units, no. of partner organisations, no. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all

A City Creating

Priority 9



Increasing the autonomy of the creative sector to explore and shape the city's evolving, rich and multiple cultural narratives.

Overview: In this priority we acknowledge and support the role of creativity in shaping our city's future. This will require a new approach to investment that supports both longer term development and experimentation. Equally important is ensuring that our creativity and culture is reflected in wider city positioning by increasing the visibility, value and profile of our creative and cultural sectors.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
9.1	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Design investment programme to support established organisations to adapt to change and to support new organisations and practitioners to take longer term risks in programming or creative development	Other funding bodies, resource organisations and cultural partners	No. of organisations supported, monitoring and evaluation of grants against impact model	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
9.2	Growing the Economy, City Development	Involve cultural sector in the promotion and positioning of the city	Internal and external partners including cultural organisations and individual practitioners	No. of cultural organisations & practitioners involved in cross-sector initiatives	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
9.3	Growing the Economy, City Development, Living Here	Involve creative and cultural practitioners in service design across Council	Internal and external partners including cultural organisations and individual practitioners	No. of cultural organisations & practitioners involved in cross-sector initiatives	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
9.4	Growing the Economy, City Development	Provide tailored and city-level support in audience development, marketing and communications	Cultural partners, private sector, Visit Belfast, thrive	No. of organisations supported, marketing, communications and audience data (quantitative and qualitative)	where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
9.5	Growing the Economy, City Development	Invest in media monitoring for Belfast's culture, arts and heritage	Contract in place via competitive process	Publish report, measure variances and change over period	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

A City Creating

Priority 10



Supporting cultural excellence, cultural planning and cultural entrepreneurialism by providing support for artistic innovation and improved networking.

Overview: This priority is about creating an environment that brings forward ideas that spark imagination and innovation and enables these ideas to flourish. An important dimension of this is to facilitate greater connectivity by supporting a more open and diverse cultural sector. This can be achieved by recognising the importance of investing in initiatives that actively promote collaboration.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
10.1	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Establish a transnational working programme to build capacity in developing cross-sector and cross-border cultural co-productions and collaborations	Arts Council of Northern Ireland, British Council	No. of projects supported; qualitative and quantitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
10.2	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Support innovative and interdisciplinary research and practice in contemporary arts	Universities	Publish research and use insights to inform programme design	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
10.3	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Support employability skills and capacity building programmes for disabled artists and those from minority ethnic groups	Cultural partners, disability support organisations, migrant support organisations, Arts Council of Northern Ireland	Publish research and use insights to inform programme design	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
10.4, 11.4	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Design new investment model to support long-term development and innovation	Other funding bodies	No. of projects supported; monitoring and evaluation of grants against impact model	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

A City Creating

Priority 11



Investing in a stronger and more sustainable cultural sector by supporting established and new creative practitioners to work beyond boundaries. This will create the environment where risks can be taken across a broader range of activities, sectors and disciplines.

Overview: The cultural and creative sectors are some of the most effective ambassadors of this city. In part, this is about having the necessary confidence to let new ideas take hold and giving space to those who want to take creative risks. Cultural vibrancy is a key dimension in quality of life. This is important for our citizens but also for ensuring we continue to increase investment in our city.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
11.1	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Deliver training, educational and professional development programmes for practitioners at all stages of their careers	Universities, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, resource organisations, cultural partners	No. of practitioners supported; qualitative and quantitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
11.2	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Deliver new support programme to showcase (inward and outward) Belfast's arts and heritage product through local, national and international opportunities	Arts Council of Northern Ireland, British Council, cultural partners, international partners	No. of local, national and international partnerships supported; qualitative and quantitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
11.3	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Establish co-working spaces, that are accessible and inclusive, to further enable collaborative and cross-sector working and encourage multi-disciplinary, inter-cultural and multi-lingual partnerships	Cultural partners, creative industries, private sector	No. of cross-sector partnerships supported; qualitative and quantitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
11.4, 10.3	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Design an investment programme that supports opportunities for research and development and longer term experimental projects	Other funding bodies	No. of projects supported; monitoring and evaluation of grants against impact model	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

A City Creating

Priority 12



Empowering the innovative capacity of the creative economy to connect technology and society.

Overview: The potential of our cultural and creative sectors is not currently matched by their capacity to fully embrace the digital world. However, creativity should be one of the most effective ways of strengthening the links between society and technology. This priority focuses on increasing the professional skills of the sector as well as exploring innovative approaches in supporting young people to discover their creative potential.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
12.1	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Increase the digital capacity of the sector by improving skills and creating opportunities for virtual collaboration, networking and new user experiences	Cultural partners, creative industries	Publish report including case studies and toolkit	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
12.2	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Facilitate learning connections between enterprise, micro-enterprise and culture	Cultural partners, creative industries, private sector	No. of connections, qualitative feedback, publication of case studies	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
12.3	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Develop a Continuing Professional Development programme for teachers that equips them with the knowledge and skills to become creators-in-residence within their own schools	Cultural partners, education sector	No. of teachers participating, qualitative feedback of programme	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
12.4	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Support innovation and development in technological interventions that address the barriers of language and accessibility in cultural participation ie – automated/mobile audio description of events/exhibitions	BCC Equality and Language Team, cultural partners, creative industries	Production of prototype and pilot schemes, qualitative feedback of programmes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

A City Exploring

Priority 13



Strengthening our city, regional and international cultural networks.

Overview: In this priority we want to connect our city to the world around us. We will do this by increasing opportunities for the creative and cultural sector and the people of the city to participate in local, regional and international networks. Where we have previously facilitated networking the results have strengthened our local sector and helped to build relationships.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
13.1	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy	Support participation in relevant cultural networks including but not limited to IETM, Eurocities, Culture 21	Cultural partners, international partners, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, British Council	No. of individuals and organisations supported; no. of connections; no. of long-term collaborations	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
13.2	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy	Deliver a collaborative project as part of Galway 2020	Galway 2020, Belfast International Arts Festival, Sister Cities, Cultural partners	Quantitative and qualitative feedback relating to return on investment including bed nights & PR generated	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
13.3	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy	Build a network of practitioners, scholars, and various cultural institutions across Europe and internationally	Cultural partners including international partners	Repeat audit commissioned as part of 2023 bid preparation and publish findings; no. of connections; impact of connections	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
13.4, 11.2	Growing the Economy, Working and Learning	Deliver new support programme to showcase (inward and outward) Belfast's arts and heritage product through local, national and international opportunities	Arts Council of Northern Ireland, British Council, cultural partners, international partners	No. of local, national and international partnerships supported; qualitative and quantitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

A City Exploring

Priority 14



Growing our sustainable cultural tourism product through a creative approach that respects the city's heritage and communities.

Overview: Research reinforces the importance of cultural vibrancy for a thriving visitor experience. This priority will support initiatives that immerse visitors in our authentic Belfast experience. Actions to be taken forward will support a more integrated tourism offer that recognises the need for investment in major infrastructure alongside the importance of local and cultural development.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
14.1	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy	Develop cultural tourism through building capacity and opportunity for citizen & culture led approaches to tourism development and infrastructure	Visitor-facing neighbourhood tourism agencies; cultural sector	No. of partnerships; no. of products; market testing; qualitative and quantitative feedback	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
14.2	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Develop a visitor experience plan for the city including neighbourhood tourism framework	Tourism NI, attraction managers and visitor-facing businesses, heritage sector	No. of partnerships; no. of products; market testing; qualitative and quantitative feedback	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
14.3, 5.1	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Deliver cultural place-making programme in minimum of 6 locations	Cultural sector; individual artists; heritage practitioners; community and voluntary sector	No. of participants; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all; that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
14.4, 2.3, 3.3	Living Here, Working and Learning	Design and deliver <i>Telling the Belfast Story</i> public engagement programme	Cultural sector; heritage partners, public authorities, private sector	No. of participants; breadth of engagement and representation; qualitative feedback	where everyone fulfils their potential; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all

A City Exploring

Priority 15



Encouraging environmental responsibility and resilience by understanding and adapting cultural behaviours.

Overview: This priority focuses on the need to take responsibility for our environment and the role of culture in changing behaviours. Some of these actions will support our cultural sector to be proactive in making organisational change. Other initiatives support creative approaches that will encourage our citizens to lead our city's response to sustainability.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
15.1	City Development, Living Here	Develop a Green Policy' for festivals in Belfast	Festival and Events sector, Belfast Festivals Forum	No. of organisations adopting policy; impact of policy through qualitative and quantitative feedback e.g. reduction in use of plastics	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
15.2	City Development, Living Here	Introduce criteria on green credentials as part of multi-annual and project grants	Cultural partners	Establish baseline, monitor variance and progress against agreed targets	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
15.3, 8.2	City Development, Growing the Economy, Living Here	Pilot rooftop initiatives to increase cultural and green space in the city including scoping potential for partnership project with other European/ international cities	Internal and external partners including public and private sector	No. of buildings, quantitative and qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
15.4	City Development, Living Here	Support environmentally focussed cultural projects through specific 'experiment' project funding	Cultural partners	No. of projects supported; qualitative feedback against programme outcomes	that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy; that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all

A City Exploring

Priority 16



Increasing the contribution of both public and private cultural sectors to inclusive economic growth.

Overview: Culture plays an important part in achieving our goal to be a more inclusive city. Cultural engagement supports active citizenship and this in turn increases the likelihood of people being in the position to take up the opportunities presented by an inclusive growth economic agenda. The cultural strategy also presents the scope for greater collaboration between the public and private sector.

	Alignment to the Belfast Agenda	Action	Key partners	Measures	Outcomes: A city...
16.1	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy	Support cross-sectoral entrepreneurial opportunities in the supply chain in areas such as production, design and product evaluation through a new creative start up programme	Cultural sector, creative industries, private sector	No. of businesses supported; qualitative and quantitative feedback against programme outcomes	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
16.2	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy	Facilitating business engagement to embed creativity and innovation meeting business objectives across sectors	Cultural sector, creative industries, private sector	This will include pilot projects, networking, case studies and a skills bank to match and exchange creative and business expertise	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
16.3	Working and Learning, Growing the Economy	Leverage investment from the private sector through long-term resourcing of partnership development	Internal resource; Arts and Business NI	Levels of private sector investment; no. of sustained partnerships; qualitative feedback and case studies	where everyone fulfils their potential; where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy

Section 2

Lift Off - Strategic Projects

A City Imagining supports a culture-led vision for development in Belfast. The strategy identifies a number of important strategic projects that will be key to delivering this transformation. At Home in 2023, a new landmark Destination Hub for visitors and a commitment to support UNESCO City of Music status for the city - are all pivotal to Belfast's evolution as a cultural destination. The strategy also presents the city's first visioning narrative for tourism and four key themes which have been drawn from this narrative. This piece has been co-designed through stakeholder workshops and will be the cornerstone of continuing to develop the visitor experience.

It's important that Belfast feels ownership of this narrative and themes if we are to bring to maturation the city's potential as a unique, urban cultural destination which is underpinned by a place-making agenda. The opportunities to make the 'Belfast welcome' and experience truly stand out locally, nationally and internationally will only be compelling if we are all on board for the journey.

This section sets out an overall approach and series of actions associated with each of the strategic projects presented in the strategy. These projects require long-term commitments. The success of each one of them is dependent on building and sustaining partnerships and creating the space to allow them to evolve over time.

At Home in 2023

This will be a yearlong celebration of culture in the city. From 2020 onwards we will work collectively to build the resources and capacity to deliver on this ambitious programme.

Events and Festivals

Events and Festivals are an important part of a culturally vibrant city helping to express diversity and connect locals to visitors. Our approach is to support homegrown authentic Belfast experiences.

City of Music

Working with partners from across the city and beyond bidding for the designation of UNESCO City of Music signals a renewed commitment to music in Belfast.

Destination Hub

The public consultation on the strategy endorsed plans for a new Destination Hub in the city centre comprising the Belfast Story visitor experience. However feedback highlighted the need to ensure that these stories are driven and shaped by the people of the city.

Tourism Development

Belfast has enjoyed significant growth in the visitor economy in recent years however there is still much work to be done. We have identified a number of priority strands to support this ongoing development.





At Home in 2023

Throughout the development of the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*, the engagement and consultation process has revealed high levels of support for 2023 being designated as a year of culture. There has been recognition that in order to maintain civic momentum, secure buy-in from city partners and build the capacity of our cultural sector then a well-considered and planned for programme of the scale and ambition for 2023 is critical. Any concerns over funding have been alleviated with the understanding that *At Home in 2023* will help build a competing case for investment and can help broker a new relationship between the public and private sector. It is also an experiment that follows the success of other cities that have demonstrated that home-grown authentic cultural product can have significant international appeal.

The development of the European Capital of Culture bid in 2017 demonstrated the richness of our cultural offer and the creative potential of our city that could be realised if we created the environment where ambition is to be encouraged and rewarded. The programme for *At Home in 2023* will build on the work undertaken as part of the bid process. Selection of projects will be transparent and will follow an agreed process.

Programme development will begin in 2020 to ensure that cultural content, management and deliverability are fully supported. Projects will be chosen based on the following set of criteria. Each project will be assessed against the proposed contribution it will make to the 2023 year as well as the priorities set out in the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*.

The two main criteria respond to the concept and artistic vision:

1. Substantial contribution towards examining cultural belonging with a focus on public space
2. International dimension

A combination of the following criteria will also be applied:

3. Artistic or cultural excellence
4. Citizen involvement through development, participation, co-creation and co-production
5. Respect towards traditional resources and heritage in combination with contemporary practice

For the programme, we will also prioritise projects that demonstrate elements such as:

6. Sustainability and legacy in concrete terms
7. New quality and innovation
8. Multicultural dialogue

In regards to other support programmes, such as capacity building and education, we will expect all projects to include:

9. Track record of the project partners
10. Potential of the project to leverage additional resources
11. Time and space considerations including multi-annual approaches

In terms of programme management, we plan to deliver four categories of projects, each with different levels of financial, production and marketing support.

All projects are expected to have a strong partnership dimensions however the main categories are planned as follows:

- a) In-house produced projects led by Belfast City Council
- b) Co-produced or commissioned projects with substantial support from Belfast City Council
- c) Grant scheme supported projects that meet the above criteria and will be awarded a grant through an open and competitive scheme
- d) Communicated projects with marketing support. Projects will be expected to meet the above criteria and will be branded as part of our 2023 programme, however are largely small enhancements to existing annual projects

A programme of this scale will need a dedicated delivery team as well effective partnership working. Initial financial projections have been prepared and are included in the overall financial considerations for 2020-2023 strategic implementation phase. A full resource and funding strategy will be developed in 2020.

At Home in 2023 Actions

Strand 1: Governance and Delivery structures

1.1 Establish a multi-stakeholder project board as part of the overall City Compact

1.2 Recruit project team

Strand 2: Investment

2.1 Develop financing plan including commercial strategies

2.2 Maximise the alignment between existing funding programmes and the delivery of 2023

Strand 3: Capacity building and support

3.1 Map out the connections between programme delivery in 2023 and long-term priorities set out in the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*

3.2 Map out and plan partnership opportunities for delivery of Language-based projects in 2023 in line with Council's Language Strategy objectives

3.3 Deliver multi-annual support programmes to support the deliverability, management and quality of projects in 2023

Strand 4: Marketing and communications

4.1 Develop and implement a strategic communications and marketing plan in a timely manner that ensures effective positioning in the international market

4.2 Ensure a multi-stakeholder approach working with Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland

Strand 5: Programme development

5.1 Develop programme from 2020 onwards in line with agreed criteria and the following categories:

In-house produced projects

Co-produced or commissioned projects

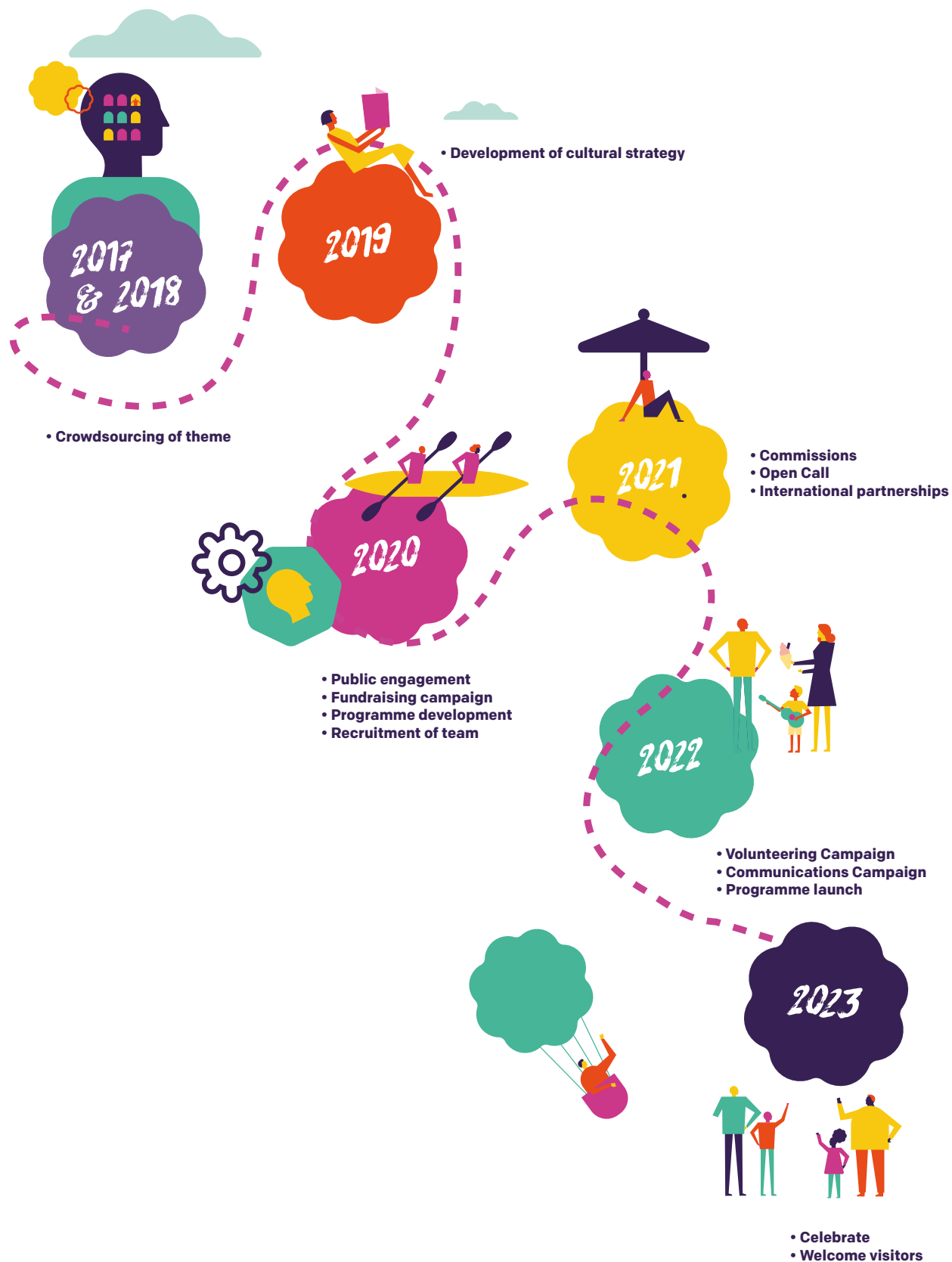
Grant scheme supported projects that meet the above criteria and will be awarded a grant through an open and competitive scheme

Communicated or enhanced projects

Strand 6: Evaluation

6.1 Commission an independent evaluation of the year with published evaluation criteria. This should include longitudinal studies

At Home in 2023 road map

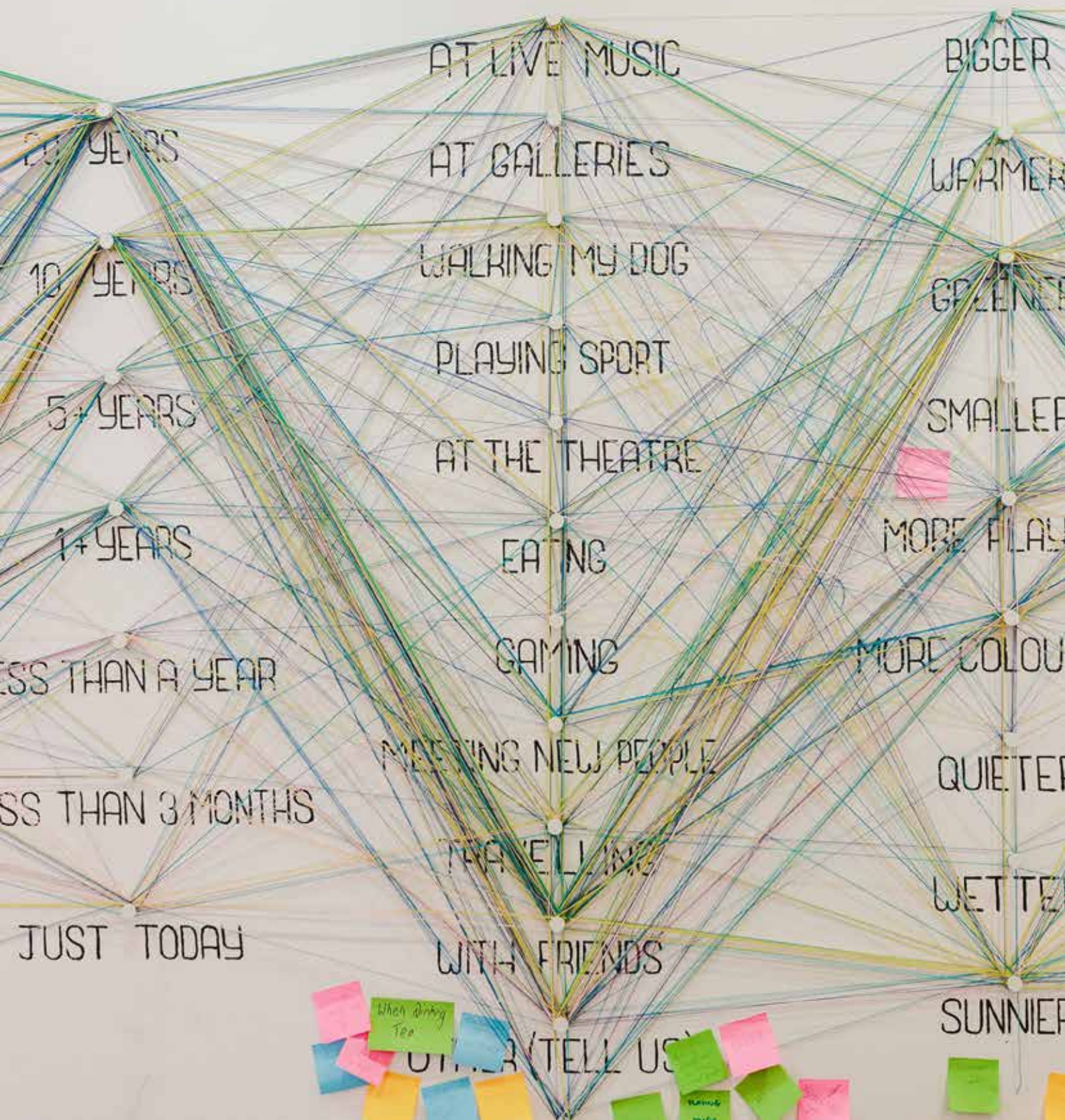


THIS IS OUR BELFAST

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN BELFAST FOR...

I FEEL MOST AT HOME WHEN I'M...

I WISH BELFAST WAS...



Events and Festivals

In 2018 an independent review of events and festivals in Belfast was completed. The purpose of this review was to support Council in evolving options and making recommendations for the identification, securing, funding and delivering of events and festivals in Belfast. The brief included:

- **A review of current portfolio**
 - Consultation with stakeholders, events and festivals
 - Benchmarking how events and festivals are funded and delivered in other cities
 - Consideration of pre and post event impact modelling
 - Consideration of future structures for delivery

The approach to events and festivals set out in the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*, and in these implementation plans is informed by this review. A phased approach to introducing a number of recommendations will now be taken forward.

The central recommendation centres on a more effective investment model for events and festivals. This includes simplifying the complex and fragmented funding of festivals and events in Belfast by reducing the number of individual grant programmes and developing a multi-annual grant. This will be further supported by introducing a classification system common in other cities. The purpose of the system is to recognise that one size does not fit all. In order to increase the cultural, social and economic impact of our events and festivals we must better understand the contribution different categories make to the overall cultural ecosystem. Repositioning investment in events and festivals to maximise the return on investment will enable the events to better support the priorities of the Belfast Agenda and help to position the city as an events destination.

A strategic approach to investment alone will not transform Belfast into a recognised destination for events and festivals. In addition to more effective investment programmes there is a need to support capacity building and skills development. This will be delivered through a partnership approach offering a centralised package of training and support appropriate to the scale and ambition of the event.

During this first implementation phase of the cultural strategy the focus will be on developing fit for purpose investment programmes and delivery structures. 2023, as a designated international year of culture, will be an important milestone that will help to demonstrate the progress that has been made. Future implementation phases will consider longer term changes required to securely establish the city's reputation as an events destination.

Consideration has also been given to role of Belfast as a regional driver. As well as producing home-grown Belfast events that will have international appeal, the city must work collaboratively with other partners to bid for and secure major external events. Prioritisation will be given to those events that offer both a direct economic return and can contribute to the longer term cultural transformation of the city.

The approach to events and festivals will be underpinned by a more robust evaluation model. The levels of monitoring and evaluation for individual events will be commensurate with scale. Criteria will be simplified to demonstrate value against the Belfast Agenda. Working with partners, Council will commission independent research on an annual basis.

The actions set out in these plans will be supported by further programme design and implementation. Key performance indicators will be agreed and reported to Council on a regular basis.



Events and Festivals Actions

Strand 1: Governance and delivery structures

1.1 Establish an internal Belfast City Council working group

1.2 Establish a Belfast Strategic Events Partnership as part of the City Compact to include Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Sport NI

1.3 Review the existing Festivals Forum and support appropriate sector level structure

Strand 2: Investment

2.1 Develop commercial strategies and maximise other fundraising opportunities to support the city's portfolio of events

2.2 Introduce a clear approach to long-term investment that includes a mixed model consisting of:

- Bidding for events
- Commissioning of events
- Direct delivering of events
- Grant funding of events

Strand 3: Capacity building and support

3.1 Take a portfolio approach with all events having Council relationship officers arranged under thematic clusters

3.2 Develop a central package of support, training and capacity building for festivals and events appropriate to their scale and ambition and delivered in partnership with relevant partners

3.3 Support event and festival producers in finding appropriate locations, production partners, liaison with the Council and other government agencies responsible for permits, transportation etc. This should include producing a guide to organising events in Belfast which incorporates guidance on accessibility, inclusivity and diversity for events and festivals in the city (ref: Council's Inclusive Events Guide)

3.4 Scope out the potential to create a commissioning programme to maximise the role of festivals in profiling Belfast's cultural sector. This could be delivered in partnership with other funding bodies such as Arts Council of Northern Ireland and British Council

3.5 Facilitate networking and include non-festival organisations; support networks, develop contacts and enable both local and international collaborations and co-productions

Strand 4: Marketing and communications

4.1 Producing and promoting the annual Belfast Festival Calendar as both a planning tool for producers and as a public facing 'what's on' guide

4.2 Offer other collaborative marketing opportunities in liaison with city, regional and national tourism marketing agencies

Strand 5: Programme Development

5.1 Adopt the proposed Investment/Evaluation criteria for all festivals funding and simplify annual evaluation based on demonstrating value against the Belfast Agenda, ensuring level of evaluation appropriate to scale of event

5.2 Produce a public-facing annual festival and event report, based on data collected from evaluation, which is used to advocate and raise support, ensuring that events and festivals are properly acknowledged for their input

City of Music

These plans support the strategic project set out in *A City Imagining* that commits to applying for the designation of UNESCO City of Music.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) aims to strengthen cooperation with and among cities that have recognised creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable development with regard to social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects. Member cities come from diverse regions and work towards a common mission: placing creativity and cultural industries at the core of their urban development plans to make their cities safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on us to imagine more sustainable and more creative cities. Sustainable Cities are inventive cities that can act as a catalyst for progress at economic, social and environmental levels by developing shared living spaces that fulfil the needs of their inhabitants, enriched by their diversity and respectful of all cultures. Belfast will seek to join the UNESCO network of cities, which involves commitment to encouraging active citizenship, dialogue and mutual understanding. Stimulating collective and creative intelligence is one of the founding missions of the UNESCO Creative Cities Programme and its Network, which recognises and reinforces the role of creativity as a catalyst for building more sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities. UNESCO Creative Cities world-wide utilise creative potential to find innovative solutions to the economic, social and environmental challenges of the modern world. There are clear synergies between UNESCO Creative Cities and the priorities set out in our strategy. These connections can also reach out beyond the sphere of culture to embrace the challenges and opportunities presented in our emerging work on resilience.

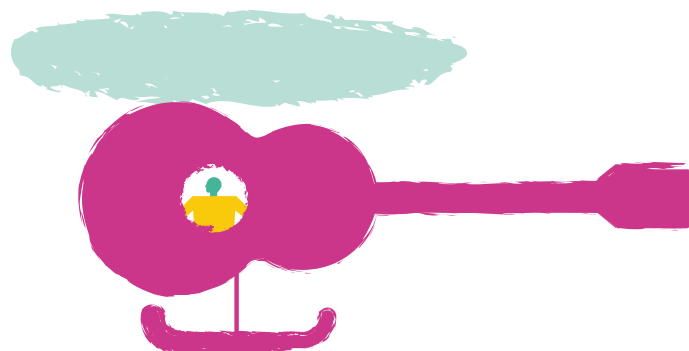
To become a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, candidate cities must submit a detailed application clearly demonstrating their willingness, commitment and capacity to contribute towards the objectives of the Network. The Network covers 7 creative fields, which can be chosen by the cities according to their preference for a specific creative industry or sector to which they devote their talent and energy.

These are Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music and Media Arts. Following an initial scoping exercise and assessment against the criteria as well as support from the sector, it was agreed that music is the most appropriate designation for Belfast at this stage. This will involve a development process culminating in an official application to be led by the Local Authority in partnership with the music sector and other stakeholders.

Joining the network is a longstanding commitment which must involve a participative process and a forward-looking approach. Cities must develop and present a realistic action plan including specific projects, initiatives or policies to be executed in order to implement the objectives of the Network. Work towards and after the designation will focus cultural policy and activity in relation to music in Belfast; delivering a more joined-up and visible music offer whilst also increasing opportunities for production and civic engagement in music across the city on a permanent basis.

Music is recognised as a distinctive aspect of Belfast's cultural profile with audience research indicating high levels of engagement locally as well as strong linkages to the city's international profile. Engagement with citizens during and after the European Capital of Culture bid process, and through initiatives led by partner organisations across the city, has indicated that there is considerable support for strengthening the role that music has in helping to make Belfast a culturally vibrant place to live, work and visit. In March 2018 as a result of the coalescence of many conversations which were happening in the city at the same time, Council backed a proposal for the city and its partners to make an application for the endorsement of UNESCO City of Music status.

For Belfast, the possibility of a designation is not about a title: it's about using music to drive a new era of collaboration between the city's citizens and its institutions, about exploring how we all make music more relevant to people, and about putting both cultural and economic development at the heart of the city's future.



City of Music Actions

Strand 1: Governance and Delivery structures

- 1.1** Establish an internal Belfast City Council working group
- 1.2** Develop Terms of Reference for City of Music Steering Group & develop a roadmap for the bid 2019- 2021
- 1.3** Establish a Belfast City of Music Steering group with representation from a variety of stakeholders including Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and Arts Council of Northern Ireland as well as cultural organisations, musicians, business owners, emerging artists and producers.
- 1.4** Build relationships and connections with UNESCO Creative Network Cities such as Glasgow, Liverpool, Galway and Dundee.

Strand 2: Sustainable action planning, capacity building and resourcing

- 2.1** Support the City of Music steering group in the co-design of a music development action plan 2020 - 2024
- 2.2** Support the City of Music steering group to consider longer term strategic priorities for music in Belfast 2020 - 2030
- 2.3** Explore fundraising and investment opportunities to support strategic development in music. Leverage investment from other partners to support City of Music plans
- 2.4** Co-design mentorship and career development schemes for emerging artists/producers
- 2.5** Co-design a civic engagement and participation strategy for music including audience development
- 2.6** Commission asset mapping of the music industry in Belfast to include venues, artists, producers, engineers, studios etc. This should also strengthen the city's regional role in driving the creative industries
- 2.7** Ensure strategic development of music in the city contributes to sustainable urban development, building on culture and creativity as a lever to achieve development goals in the city as a whole

Strand 3: Exchanges, co-operation and partnership working

- 3.1** Scope out and develop international opportunities and partnerships across the UNESCO Creative City Network - UK, Ireland, Europe and further afield
- 3.2** Facilitate networking opportunities for music stakeholders such as annual Music Forum, enabling both local and international collaborations and partnerships to develop
- 3.3** Design and develop new investment initiatives that enable commercial and not-for-profit music organisations/producers to work in partnership on projects and development schemes

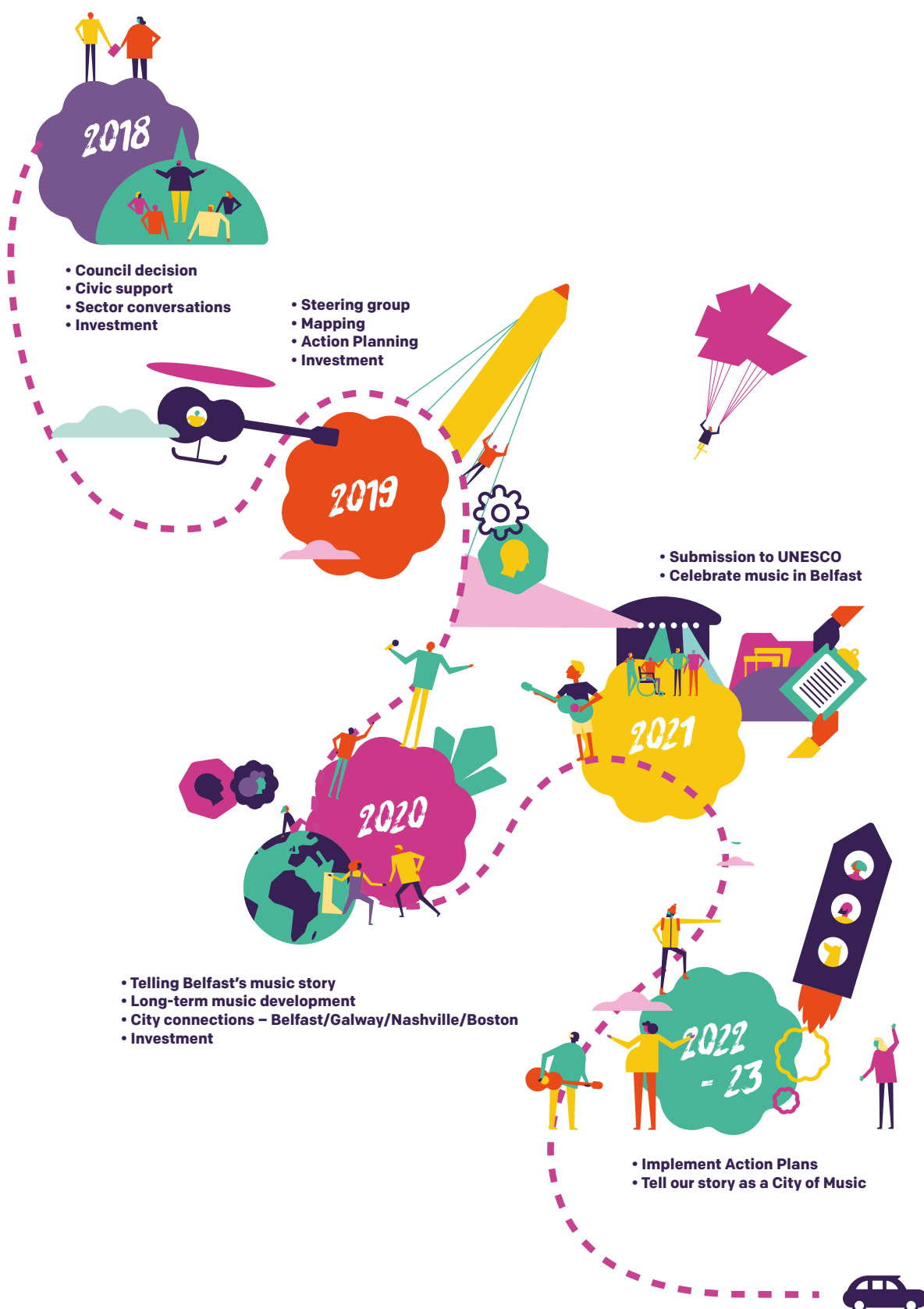
Strand 4: Marketing and Communications

- 4.1** Produce and promote the annual Belfast Music calendar as both a planning tool for producers and as a public facing 'what's on' guide
- 4.2** Offer other collaborative marketing opportunities and liaise with city, regional and national tourism marketing agencies to ensure that music is effectively positioned as part of the tourism offer
- 4.3** Work with partners to develop and promote the Belfast Music/City of Music brand.
- 4.4** Develop a city level marketing and communications strategy for music

Strand 5: Evaluation & Long Term Commitment

- 5.1** Measure contribution of music to the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda
- 5.2** Set evaluation criteria and key performance indicators for achieving UNESCO City of Music Designation in 2021 and no later than 2023
- 5.3** Ensure that effective governance and delivery structures continue to operate beyond the City of Music Designation and delivers on the longer-term commitments

Roadmap to City of Music





Section 3

Tourism Development

Belfast has evolved into a successful and increasingly popular visitor destination over the last decade or more. This development hasn't gone unnoticed in the global tourism market. In 2018, the Lonely Planet identified Belfast and Giant's Causeway as the top place to visit. A rich and authentic blend of natural assets coupled with a unique cultural heritage, a vibrant cultural scene and a long-renowned warmth of welcome means that visitors are increasingly being drawn to the city.

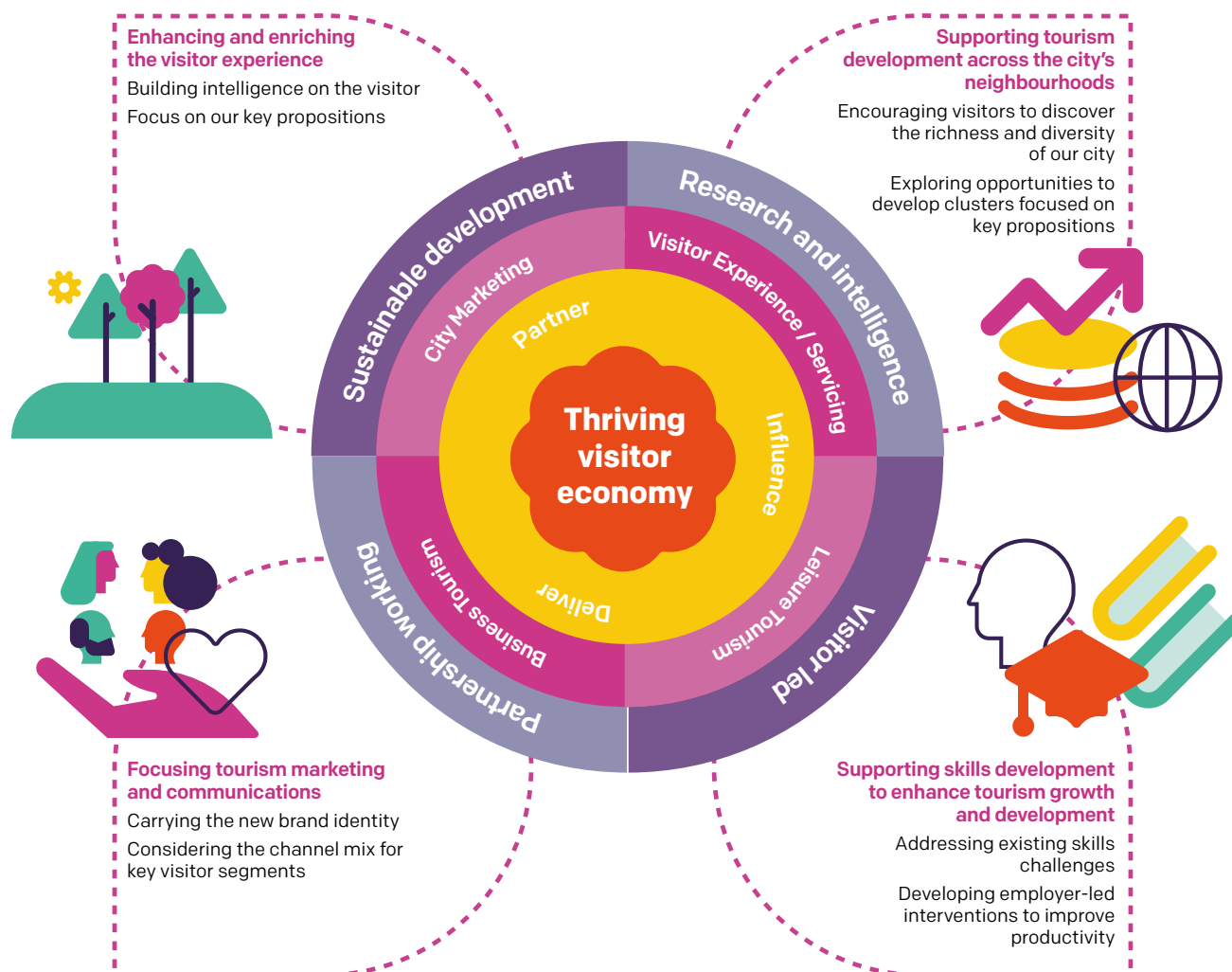
With recent investment in tourism infrastructure and improvements to connectivity, as well as the development of new areas of stand-out such as screen tourism and an award-winning hospitality offer, the key foundations stones are in place to support the development of the tourism sector in the city.

But there is much more room for growth. This ambition is recognised and shared by the key partners from both the public and private sector. They believe that the growth will only be delivered if there is a focused approach to tourism development in the city that is built on exploiting the recognised stand-out by developing new products and experiences for a growing number of visitors to share and enjoy.

The inclusion of tourism as a key growth sector in the recently-agreed City Deal validates and supports this view. It acknowledges the fact that the sector is already a significant economic generator but recognises the need for significant additional investment in order to move to the next level.

Our engagement with partners in developing *A City Imagining* identified the following four priorities for tourism development in the context of this new cultural strategy:

- Enhancing and enriching the visitor experience
- Supporting tourism development across the city's neighbourhoods
- Focusing the tourism marketing and communications
- Supporting skills development to enhance tourism growth and development



Visitor experience

Enhancing and enriching the visitor experience

The early development of the tourism industry in Belfast was largely organic - driven by the culturally curious visitor, keen to see and try and do something that was different and unique. And Belfast clearly has that in some measure.

But tourism is a global business, and Belfast is competing with cities and locations all across the world. It is therefore essential that there is a more coordinated approach to growing the value of the tourism market in Belfast and to making sure that, when visitors come to our city, their experience is a positive one, that they plan a return visit and that they recommend to their friends that they do the same. Enhancing and enriching the visitor experience is therefore a central pillar of our strategy for tourism development in the city.

To know what visitors need and expect, we really need to find out more about them. This means understanding who comes here, when they like to come here, what they like (and even what they're not so keen on), what they would like more of and what would make them return. We also need to consider how we can attract new visitors to Belfast - those who don't currently have Belfast on their radar when planning their next holiday.

As a first step, we are proposing the development of a Visitor Experience Plan for Belfast. This will allow the city's tourism partners to agree on a number of unique selling points (USPs) that are truly authentic to Belfast and to invest in a series of experiences that will give substance to those USPs.

For the visitor, this will mean that there is clarity about Belfast's compelling offer in a competitive tourism market, and that they can be guaranteed that their experience will at least live up to their expectations in terms of quality and value for money. For the tourism partners, it will mean that investment becomes more focused, with a greater potential for return and more opportunities for packaging and developing new experiences.

While Belfast's visitor market has been largely focused on the leisure visitor, there has been a significant growth in business tourism in Belfast over the last number of years - driven largely by the investment in the ICC Belfast and the associated tourism infrastructure development. Belfast's compact city centre means that there is an opportunity to expose business tourists to the breadth of experiences that the city has to offer in order to encourage them to extend their stay or inspire a return visit.

Visitor Experience Actions

Strand 1: Develop a Visitor Experience Plan for Belfast

- 1.1** Work with partners to agree a terms of reference for specialist support to develop a Visitor Experience Plan for Belfast
- 1.2** Oversee development of the Plan, ensuring input by all relevant partners
- 1.3** Ensure that the findings of the Plan are shared with all partners to encourage a comprehensive and consistent approach to interpretation and visitor servicing city-wide

Strand 2: Ensure access to relevant visitor insights in order to shape future investment

- 2.1** Undertake a scoping exercise across all current research to identify gaps in knowledge
- 2.2** Consider commissioning of relevant insights to inform future investment
- 2.3** Explore, in particular, opportunities to lever new technological solutions to generate real-time and near-time data in order to evaluate the impact of investment and ensure ongoing visitor insights

Strand 3: Establish an investment framework to lever Council and partner resources

- 3.1** Ensure alignment with the key recommendations from the Visitor Servicing Plan, in terms of Unique Selling Points, key clusters and signature experiences
- 3.2** Secure resources to ensure that there is the appropriate technical and financial assistance in place to help bring forward new visitor experiences and to enhance the quality of existing experiences
- 3.3** Explore opportunities to align investment with existing approaches e.g. Tourism NI cluster development model

Destination Hub

The Destination Hub is a major transformational project with the overall aim of providing a new tourist destination in Belfast city centre that would serve as a catalyst for the economic, social and cultural regeneration of Belfast City Region. It will include the Belfast Story (a dynamic, interactive and immersive visitor experience using cutting edge technology, which tells the story of the city and its people), The Space (a flexible gallery, exhibition and performance space, unique to the island), Creative and Digital Skills spaces, the Belfast Film Centre as well as high quality public realm, retail space and food and drink outlets.

The Destination Hub will deliver significant economic benefit to whole of the regional economy by enhancing the

tourism offer. There is a need for new tourism products and a visitor attraction of scale that could link together the wider tourism offering in Belfast, and beyond. However central to the success of the Destination Hub will be whether it reflects an authentic Belfast experience. The public consultation on the cultural strategy indicated a high level of support for the Hub but with this came a strong message that the project must be driven by the stories of the people of the city. The overall capital project will be supported by the Belfast Region City Deal. In these implementation plans for *A City Imagining* we will focus on a wider engagement opportunity to place people at the heart of the project.

Destination Hub Actions

Strand 1: Building civic momentum and buy-in for the project

- 1.1 Develop an engagement led programme to develop the Belfast Story through a place-based, thematic and creative approach
- 1.2. Deliver the engagement programme in partnership with cultural sector including key city stakeholders such as BBC, NI Screen, National Museums

Strand 2: Addressing any issues of displacement and ensuring connectivity with existing tourism and cultural projects in the city

- 2.1 Develop a visitor experience plan for the city and position as part of Tourism NI's wider experience brand for the region
- 2.2 Engage with cultural and tourism providers to identify and take forward opportunities for collaboration including clustering and programming

Strand 3: Communicating the Belfast Story

- 3.1 Develop a specific strategy to deal with the complexity of 'what is the Belfast Story' by creating a compelling, contemporary, authentic and evolving narrative through a creative led approach

Strand 4: Ensuring support from business sector

- 4.1 Develop a messaging framework and visual content to help articulate the project
- 4.2 Create content and opportunities to engage with business sector and private investors through a programme of activities and events

Strand 5: Raising the international profile of the project

- 5.1 Scope out opportunities to develop connections with international cultural organisations
- 5.2 During the development phase build relationships by supporting:
 - Touring exhibitions
 - Artistic co-commissions
 - Cultural exchanges and residencies

Priorities for developing the Belfast Story

Integrative Cultural Tourism Project

- Engage in an open process with wider creative and community stakeholders
- Explore linkages with current strategies and future policies - the Hub as an enabler
- Maximising social & cultural capacity building

Communication

- Naming - a hook for the project
- Audiences, messages, tools - leading that space
- Engagement, participation and buy-in - a city owned project

Neighbourhood Tourism

Supporting tourism development across the city's neighbourhoods

Like many cities, the Belfast of today is a rich tapestry of local districts and neighbourhoods that have evolved over time and that all have a unique and compelling part to play in telling the story of the city.

Visitors to Belfast come here to experience the city's unique and complex story. It is a cultural city, a vibrant evening city, a maritime river city, a university city, a foodie city and a historic city. And its neighbourhoods have their part to play in telling all of these stories.

Given the focus on authentic visitor experiences in this plan, there is a commitment to work at local level to draw out the local assets and stories and to help develop these into viable, sustainable, high quality visitor experiences.

While anchor investments such as Titanic Belfast have been critical in acting as a magnet for visitors, there is an opportunity to extend dwell time and enhance visitor spend by bringing forward complementary visitor experiences, aligned to the key elements of the city narrative. There is also an opportunity to consider how these major attractions can act as a "hub" with supporting activities across other locations representing the "spokes" of the wider visitor experience along the main tourism themes.

A priority area for investment in this implementation plan will be the support for tourism development across the city's neighbourhoods. This work will align with the visitor experience plan, drawing out the key assets and exploring mechanisms to help bring forward new products whilst enhancing the quality of the existing assets. In this approach, business sustainability will be key. This will provide opportunities for local entrepreneurs to lead successful businesses and create opportunities for employment and economic return. It will also support the Belfast Agenda commitments around inclusive economic growth.

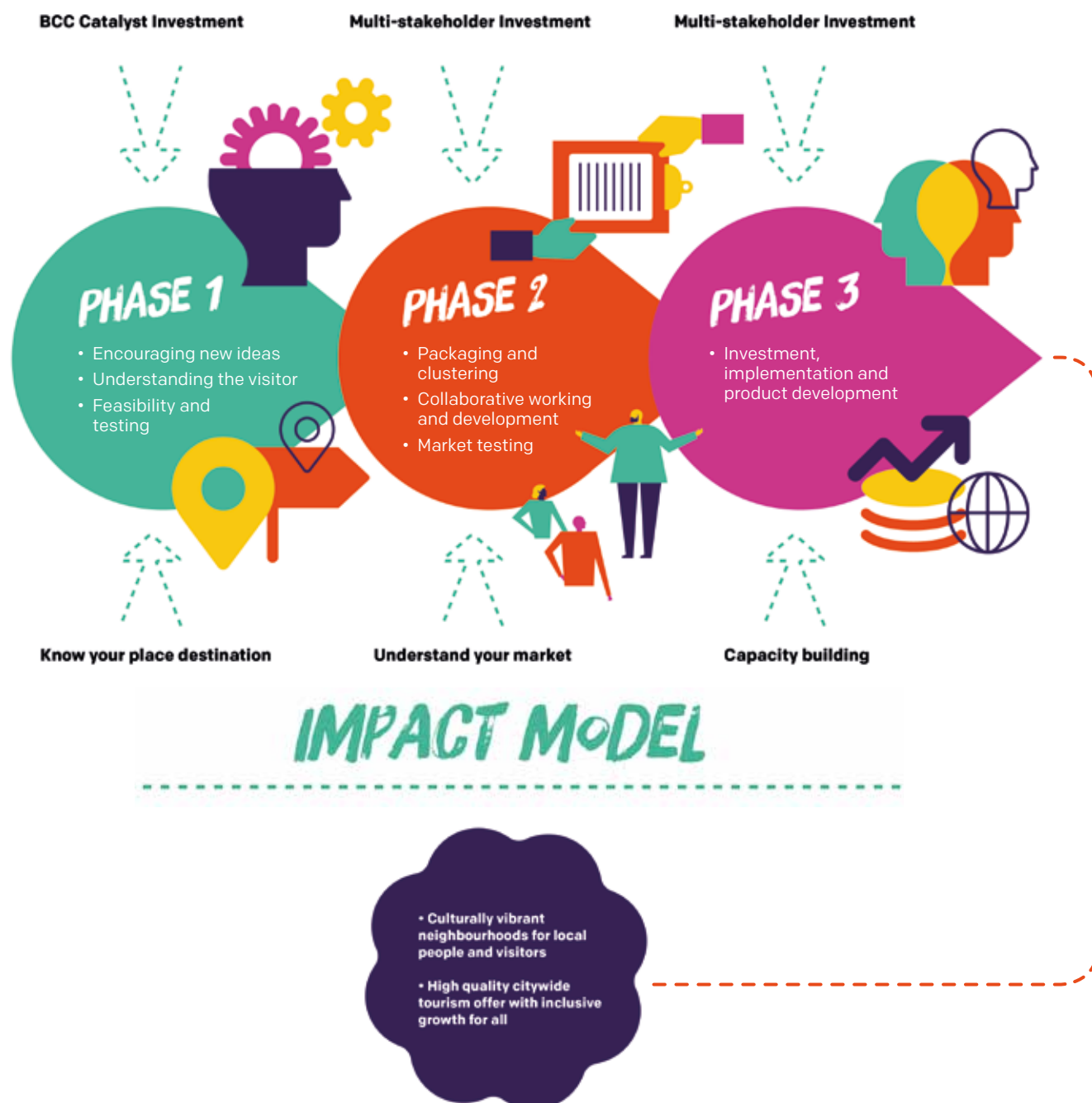
The Council's investment is likely to form part of a wider package of support, working alongside other partners, particularly Tourism NI. It is likely to act as a catalyst - drawing out new ideas, supporting early-stage feasibility and testing and refining the business model and idea to provide a firm basis for further support and investment. Visitor insights will be a critical element of this work and we will work with a number of research partners to ensure that our approach to product development is fully informed by and responds to visitor needs.

It is likely that the experience development and neighbourhood tourism development work will see the emergence of "clusters" of activity - bringing together complementary activities that can be packaged together to provide the visitor with a range of experiences in line with their relevant areas of interest.

Strand 1: Develop a sustainable Neighbourhood Tourism Framework and Investment Plan

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 1.1 | Consider how the Visitor Experience Plan can support the development of new experiences and improve the quality of the offer across the city's neighbourhoods |
| 1.2 | Ensure that partners have access to relevant visitor insights and technical support to bring forward new, high-quality experiences |
| 1.3 | Secure agreement with Tourism NI and other partners on an sustainable approach to investment, maximising the impact of available resources |
| 1.4 | Ensure that there is a flexible programme of support to meet local needs in order to ensure that all parts of the city are appropriately represented in the city tourism offer |

Developing a sustainable neighbourhood tourism framework



Marketing and communications

Focusing the tourism marketing and communications

In order to inspire visitors to make a journey and share your story, it is essential that there is a consistent application of key messages and an engaging approach to destination marketing which keep audiences emotionally connected to the ideas and experiences that underpin it. The most successful destinations have excelled in making this connection; in drawing the visitor in to the spirit of the place and moving them from passive engagement to immersing themselves in entire experience and making a unique and unrivalled connection.

The visioning narrative and themes contained in *A City Imagining* will both underpin the Visitor Experience Plan and provide the foundation on which to develop memorable and emotive marketing and promotional campaigns which appeal to key target markets.

Based on an enhanced understanding of the key customer segments and their preferences, the Council will work closely with Visit Belfast to build on the City's dynamic experience brand 'energy unleashed' and develop key propositions beneath the brand which align to areas of strategic importance within the destination. Alignment with Tourism NI's destination brand, 'Embrace the Giant Spirit' will be intrinsic to the positioning of Belfast as a regional

driver for Northern Ireland. Both brands draw heavily on energy, passion, people, natural assets and rich cultural heritage - and the marketing and communications for the city's tourism offer needs to reflect these themes.

As the channel mix changes with an increased focus on social media, we need to ensure that we are flexible and that our campaigns - while planned to support key events, activities and seasons - can respond to changing demand as well as market availability. This underlines the need for strong and continued communication with the wider tourism and cultural sector, as well as consideration of issues such as seasonality, demand management and media management. Belfast is still a relatively under-developed tourism destination. The activities set out in this tourism development plan will aim to bring forward more development and raise the profile of the city, particularly in new and emerging markets.

Whilst GB and RoI remain the largest out-of-state markets for tourists, there is significant potential in new markets, particularly China. The US market remains important but there are opportunities to work with Tourism Ireland to enhance the profile of the city in these and other key markets. Belfast has an important role not only as a gateway but also as a must-see destination in its own right and the marketing and communications activity needs to reinforce this story.

Strand 1: Develop an agreed and coherent approach to destination marketing that reflects the city narrative and associated products and experiences

- 1.1** Ensure early engagement with Visit Belfast to consider planned marketing approaches, taking account of the Visitor Servicing Plan research and insights
- 1.2** Consider how the marketing offer can reflect both the dynamic city branding and the emerging Tourism NI brand Embrace a Giant Spirit
- 1.3** Build an understanding of the marketing approach of key partner organisations - particularly Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI - and ensure that Council investment is complementary
- 1.4** Consider opportunities for a more strategic approach to investment in destination marketing in the city in order to maximise the impact of available resources

Strand 2: Consider the relevant marketing and communications mix for the key visitor segments

- 2.1** Develop a clear understanding of the key market segments and their communications preferences, and ensure that all campaigns are developed with these insights in mind
- 2.2** Support ongoing visibility of the destination through attendance at key industry and consumer-focused events, ensuring clarity of messaging in line with the agreed approach

Strand 3: Consider how a digital marketing and communications approach can support investment in new products and experience

- 3.1** Explore opportunities for better use of digital marketing and communications tools among city marketing partners, ensuring consistency of approach and alignment of content
- 3.2** Build the capacity of local businesses and organisations to enhance their online presence and do more business through digital platforms

Skills Development

Supporting skills development to enhance tourism growth and development.

The Belfast Agenda has, at its core, an ambition to create 46,000 employee jobs by 2035. The continued growth of the tourism sector will be a key element of this commitment.

Around 18,000 people are currently employed in the hospitality sector in Belfast - around 8% of all jobs in the city. As previously noted, there is a collective commitment and ambition to grow this number. This can be seen through initiatives such as the Belfast Region City Deal which has a "tourism" pillar comprising a number of strategic investment projects aimed a "moving the dial" on the tourism sector in the City Region area.

Investment in large-scale tourism products such as the Destination Hub will not only provide job opportunities within the hub itself but create indirect benefits across key related tourism sectors. At present, the GVA generated by the tourism and hospitality sector is below some other sectors. However it remains an important part of the city's economic strategy as it is an employer of volume and can also offer opportunities across a range of skills levels. This is in keeping with the Belfast Agenda commitments to support inclusive economic growth and can be an important contributor to government commitments to address the economic inactivity and low skills challenges in the city.

Representatives from the tourism sector regularly raise concerns about skills shortages within the industry, and the potential for these shortages to constrain further development and expansion. Given the scale of opportunity and the complex range of needs, it is likely that the approach to supporting skills development to enhance

tourism growth and development will comprise a number of approaches, namely:

Focusing on entry and lower level skills: labour market data suggests that sectors aligned to tourism such as restaurants, hotels, arts and entertainment are expected to grow with over 5,000 jobs over the next ten years. A significant proportion of these jobs is expected to be in entry-level, positions providing a relatively accessible route into employment for those with low skills. It is important to recognise that these roles need to offer remuneration at a level that will support people to move from benefits into work

- Technical and higher level skills: the tourism sector offers a breadth of employment opportunities including technically specific roles, for example chefs. To ensure the sector can access the breadth and talent they require within the labour market there is a need to retain talent within the industry through upskilling, encourage and support vocational pathways for technical occupations suffering skills shortages and invest in leadership and management skills.
- Increasing the attractiveness of the sector: the hospitality sector continues to be associated primarily with entry level positions, sometimes offering low levels of pay. However whilst the industry does have a relatively high volume of lower skilled roles, there is a breadth of opportunities available. There is a clear need to work with the education sector to change perceptions and increase awareness of the range of opportunities available and the skills required.

Strand 1: Ensure access to relevant and high quality skills data to inform future investment

- 1.1** Identify specific skills needs for the sector from the Belfast Skills Barometer and other relevant data sources
- 1.2** Consider appropriate mechanisms for engaging with industry representatives to ensure that the research is supported by industry insights
- 1.3** Engage with government partners (particularly Invest NI; Department for the Economy) as well as the education sector (Belfast Metropolitan College and both universities) to build an understanding of available research and analysis, as well as any investment plans

Strand 2: Consider opportunities to share best practice and ensure that training and skills development support meets employer requirements

- 2.1** Explore opportunities to scale up successful investment approaches, such as the Hospitality Academies and Assured Skills programmes
- 2.2** Consider targeted approaches for areas of particular shortages e.g. chefs and key vocational roles
- 2.3** Explore with employers alternative entry routes to widen the opportunities for people to join the sector
- 2.4** Explore opportunities for additional investment in upskilling and in-work progression and consider how this can be supported by Council and other partners

Strand 3: Consider the development of a more strategic approach to investment in skills to enhance tourism growth and development

- 3.1** Consider the potential for a strategic engagement forum to address skills issues in the hospitality sector for Belfast-based businesses, taking account of existing structures and ongoing conversations
- 3.2** Consider how the sector can enhance its engagement with education partners, focusing on the breadth of opportunities and the potential to build a successful career



Section 4

A City Connecting

The ten year cultural strategy for Belfast 2020-2030, *A City Imagining*, makes a commitment to developing a new governance model for culture in the city. An important dimension to this model is support for priority one of the strategy and the connected actions that will be taken forward.

- Developing a people focussed approach to cultural development by facilitating citizen and sector participation in setting priorities, decision-making and in the evaluation of cultural policies
- The other part of a new approach to governance will be the setting up a City Compact (strategic partnership) for culture in line with the recommendations presented in the Cultural Enquiry commissioned by the Core Cities network. We have given consideration to the following elements:
 1. Terms of reference for the City Compact
 2. A model for the City Compact
 3. Key performance for the City Compact

Further work will be undertaken in 2019 to ensure that we are in a position to introduce the City Compact in support of the implementation of the cultural strategy from April 2020 onwards.



Belfast Cultural City Compact

Terms of Reference (DRAFT)

The Cultural Cities Enquiry (2019) champions the power of cultural investment to drive growth in cities. The Enquiry's aim was to develop an adaptable new model to help culture flourish in cities and drive change in all areas of regeneration. The model recommended by the Enquiry is a City Compact, which proposes a step-change in governance to support the delivery of a local vision for culture. The model aims to build capacity and maximise the investment and collaboration required to deliver a shared city vision.

Each compact can be adapted. The Belfast Compact will support the delivery of *A City Imagining*.

Purpose:

The Compact will support collective, coordinated action to grow and sustain the cultural ecosystem. This will include aligning activity and funding, and leveraging additional human, financial and property resources, in support of an agreed purpose.

The vision is to activate a step change in the sustainability and contribution of culture to the life of the city. It will link the cultural sector to broader aspirations and priorities for Belfast and secure partnerships between the cultural sector and other sectors.

The Compact will be the primary vehicle for discussion between local partners and with government, about how best to deploy culture for the city. The Compact will have specific purpose and aims, and it will evolve according to need and opportunity.

Through implementing the Compact model, Belfast will aim to attract new investment using the strength of our cultural resource and the potential of our collaborations and partnerships. Belfast will renew its approach to supporting and strengthening the cultural sector. Culture will be integral to the development of the whole city and there will be a broad understanding of its potential to enhance the city's education and skills, health and wellbeing, urban fabric and public spaces, community cohesion, competitiveness and tourism revenue.

Initial Arrangements

In the first instance, attendance at the Compact meetings will be by invitation through the City Council (as the initial Accountable Body). The secretariat for the Compact will be delivered by Belfast City Council whilst long-term resourcing of the Compact is considered.

During the first year of operation, the Compact will;

1. Recruit a Chair via a formal recruitment exercise and elect a Vice Chair
2. Appoint a Compact Coordinator (Administrator)
3. Confirm its Terms of Reference and membership
4. Establish a work programme (Business Plan)
5. Commission and contract organisations as required e.g. research, legal advice etc.
6. Share learning with other early adopter compact cities
7. Report back to funding partners
8. Conduct a governance review, to cover membership, tenure, appointment process and retirement, as well as any specific roles to be undertaken

Membership:

The Compact will be chaired by a senior independent professional from the business sector and supported by a Vice Chair - to be elected from the Compact membership.

The membership seeks to be representative of different sectors in the city, but at the core of the Compact must be a membership that reflects the breadth and potential of the cultural sector in Belfast.

The composition of the Compact will include;

- cultural sector representatives
- private sector representatives
- public sector representatives
- a mix of representatives with different backgrounds and knowledge of different forms of culture

And they will be supported by:

- Subject experts responsible for delivering on critical areas of the city's ambitions such as health and wellbeing, tourism, innovation, creative industries such as screen and digital, broader skills development, inward investment, place-making and city centre development, regeneration and transport.

Membership of the Compact will be reviewed annually.

Role and Functions of the Compact

1. To provide strategic and visible leadership in the development of the cultural sector in Belfast
2. To create, develop and support collaboration where this enhances effectiveness and efficiency, for example in maximising the benefits of major initiatives such as Belfast 2023 and UNESCO City of Music Bid
3. To be the lead advocate for the cultural sector in relation to local, regional, national, European and global policy and networks
4. To co-ordinate key inward investment activities relating to the cultural sector and to explore the potential for new approaches to investment and partnerships such as those identified in the *A City Imagining* and the Cultural Enquiry
5. To encourage a sustainable, innovative, entrepreneurial and diverse cultural sector which is accessible to all residents and visitors
6. To support and influence culture-led city and infrastructure planning and investment by championing best practice to the public, private and voluntary sectors and media
7. To contribute towards the delivery of the Belfast Agenda and priorities set out in *A City Imagining*
8. To collate and disseminate relevant user insight or research which supports future investment and support for the cultural sector
9. Where it adds value, the Compact may help develop regional synergies to enhance bids for additional external investment

City Compact Model (Draft)

KEY PARTNERS

Belfast City Council (various relevant departments)

Cultural sector including individuals, organisations and development bodies

Department for Communities

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland

British Council

NI Screen

Sport NI

Private sector - represented through BIDs, Belfast Chamber and relevant alliances

Further and higher education bodies

Health & wellbeing agencies

Translink

Core Cities UK

KEY ACTIVITIES

The form, function and activity will be co-created and co-delivered. Activities may promote health & wellbeing, integrated communities, increase cultural opportunity, develop tourism economy, grow creative industries, regeneration, innovation, digital adoption, supporting skills, lifelong learning etc. Initial focus on 2023 & UNESCO as shared city initiatives.

KEY RESOURCES

Commitment from BCC as a key deliverable of the *A City Imagining* cultural strategy (financial and HR). Potential support from Department for Communities.

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

As part of the *A City Imagining* cultural strategy 2020-2030 we want to develop a Belfast Cultural City Compact to create an ambitious step change in our city's strategic governance of culture.

The Cultural Cities Enquiry report (Feb 19) provides a set of practical proposals to support cities in increasing cultural investment and becoming more sustainable and add value to the social, economic and cultural impact of that investment.

Belfast will be an 'early adopter' of this compact model. We will focus on the benefits of culture and how this intersects with the priorities and ambitions of wider groups. The compact will secure the partnerships and resources necessary to realise the vision of the strategy.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

The compact will consolidate and re-focus strategic relationships. It should be conceived as a new purpose-driven step-change mechanism. There needs to be ambitious and meaningful targets established, and very senior representation of the partners to ensure the level of influence required to mobilise support and resources.

STAKEHOLDER SEGMENTS

City leadership, via full support and effective engagement by BCC is key. This will help to mobilise the public, private and voluntary resources required to deliver change and establish a new way of working.

Membership will connect those organisations and sectors beyond the cultural that have a direct interest in the ambitions of the compact. Views of citizens and communities must be at the heart of the compact and meaningful engagement and communication will be key.

Membership of the compact must reflect its vision and ambition, and may evolve over time in form and function.

COST STRUCTURE and REVENUE STREAMS

2019 - 2021: Initial investment has been secured from Belfast City Council of £20,000 included in 2019/20 budgets. In kind contribution (in house administrative, marketing and other services) valued at £10,000. Match funding of £20,000 will be requested from Department for Communities or other partners. Additional investment from partners will be negotiated for programme delivery as per Compact agreed requirements. Total investment in year 1 is £40,000 to establish compact and make the model fully operational.

CHANNELS

An independent chair, appropriate members, terms of reference, business plan and staff resource required. BCC initial lead & secretariat support. An informal partnership may evolve into a constituted body.

The Belfast Cultural City Compact will have a practical and influential role in developing and supporting the key performance indicators for the cultural strategy. By April 2020 a baseline growth target will be established for the indicators outlined below.

1. Cultural Impact

- Stronger cultural sector
 - Projects aimed directly at developing skills and competencies
- Stronger regional, national, European and international relations
 - Projects with a partner or cultural exchange within Ireland, UK, Europe or internationally

2. Social Impact

- Activation of citizens through volunteering
 - Number of volunteers
 - Number of core volunteers
 - Diverse demographics of volunteers
- Activating citizens as audience
 - Levels of participation and audience
 - Number of people attending Belfast programme of activities from across NI (outside Belfast)
- Activation of young citizens to lead cultural projects
 - Small scale projects developed and delivered by young (<35yrs) project owners of cultural projects

3. Economic impact

- More visitors to Belfast
 - Increase in overnight stays
 - Increase in overnight stays by international visitors
- Increase in turnover
 - Increase in turnover in the private sector
 - Increase in turnover in the cultural sector
- Stronger creative sector
 - Creative businesses in Belfast reported level of optimism regarding improved business situation, increasing turnover and increasing employment

4. Image and identity impact

- Enhanced visibility and awareness
 - Regional awareness of activity
 - Citizens' success rating
 - Regional media coverage in 2020
 - International media coverage in 2020
 - Website visits
 - Social media followers

5. Political and organisational impact

- Financial resources available
 - Fundraising
 - In-kind sponsorships
 - Stronger relations across sectors and between institutions
 - Projects working on a cross-institutional, cross-sectoral and / or interdisciplinary basis
- Enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation
 - Partnerships with and across the cultural, tourism, education, business, health, media, transport and other sectors at local and international level established and developed

Section 5

A City Investing

The investment model

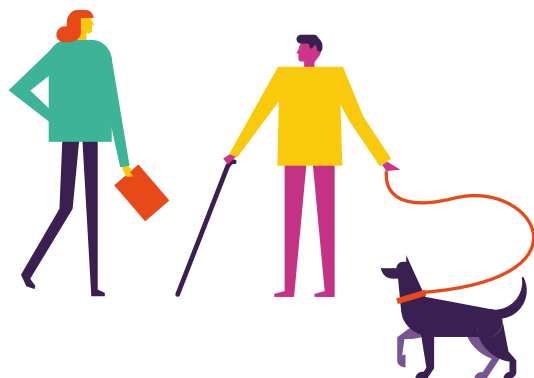
The ten year cultural strategy for Belfast, *A City Imagining*, commits to delivering a cultural investment programme for the city. This investment approach takes the long view required to deliver transformation for the city. It recognises that the first priority must be to invest in a healthy cultural ecosystem.

The aims of the investment model are set down in the draft strategy:

- Support the cultural life of the city by enabling our citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change
- Invest in our cultural and creative sectors to develop the skills and capacity for production and innovation
- Position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and place-making
- Establish Belfast as a cultural destination

There are also four published investment priorities:

- **Anchor:** support the cultural infrastructure for a thriving cultural ecosystem
- **Activate:** empower civic and sectoral engagement, skills and capacity building in order to support inclusive growth
- **Experiment:** facilitate innovation, catalyst projects and new ideas
- **Open:** support outward-facing opportunities, including marketing and international cooperation



The Belfast agenda

The Belfast Agenda's vision for 2035 is:

A city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone. Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant [...] offering opportunities for everyone. A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit.

Participation in sports activities, participation in arts and engagement in cultural activities are direct indicators of outcomes 3 and 5:

- *Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential*
- *Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city*

There are a number of other indicators and outcomes that cultural development and *A City Imagining* in particular can contribute to, including:

- City competitiveness
- Jobs and earnings
- Visitor numbers and spend
- Proportion of people who agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together and who believe their cultural identity is respected by society
- Educational attainment
- Volunteering
- Self-efficacy
- Satisfaction with Belfast as a place to live

An immediate priority for the city is inclusive growth. This is about cultural and social, as well as economic, conditions: *"It is also about making sure that people have the best life chances and the best living experience no matter where they are born or live in Belfast"*.

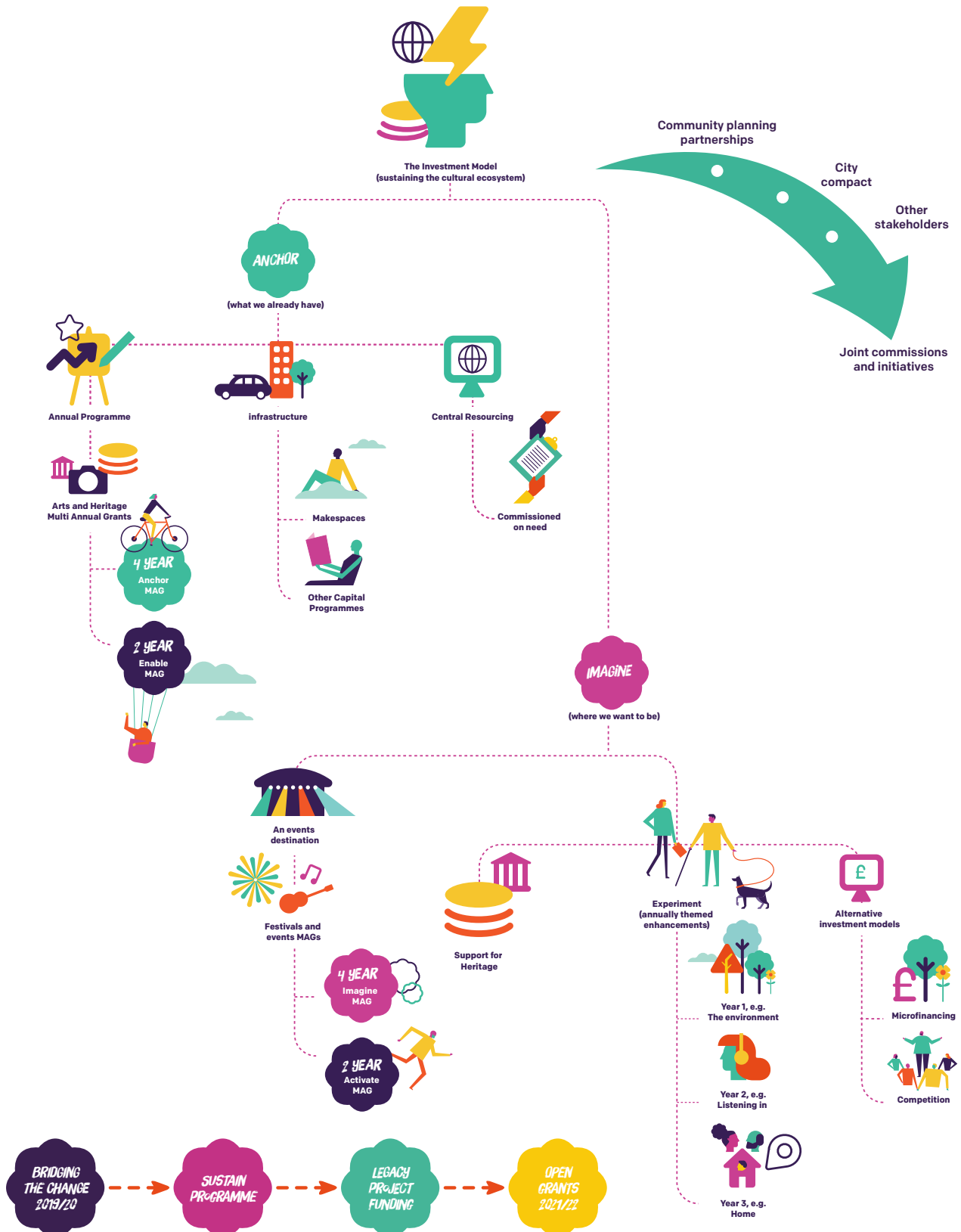
Like the Belfast agenda, *A City Imagining* was built on the ethos of community planning: its rights-based approach to inclusive engagement places people at its heart; and the investment model will be achieved by working better together with the city's different agencies, organisations, groups and communities.

This recommended approach imaginatively re-interprets the strategic priorities of *A City Imagining* and proposes a new, four-year investment model (2020/21 to 2023/24) to deliver cultural transformation for the city.

Further detail on the proposed investment model is available in the document *Our approach to investing in culture in Belfast*.

The investment model

The following diagram summarises the different components of the draft investment model.



Please note - we are seeking approval to proceed with Multi-Annual Grants in October 2019. All other programmes are subject to further resource and/or feasibility

Section 6

Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is central to the programme development and project management that will support the delivery of the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*. The Belfast Agenda sets out clear outcomes and indicators. We propose to build on these foundations to design a plan that measures progress against our objectives and provides clear evidence of what works, as well as what does not work.

Our monitoring and evaluation plan will add value in a number of ways:

- It will be transparent and open - in order to maximise ownership we propose to use a 'co-design' approach involving all the partners in the city - citizens, artists, audiences, businesses - so that objectives and indicators are co-designed and understood by everyone
- It will be based on best practice - we propose to use an evaluation model that uses the latest techniques of civic analytics, geo-tracking, digital mapping, big data, media blogging, story-telling
- It will focus on the links between culture and the Belfast Agenda- our plan needs to reflect how culture plays an important part in wider city development

Goals and long-term impacts for *A City Imagining*

Cultural	Social	Economic
Our goal: C1: Strengthening our regional cultural network and building the cultural capacity of our citizens and of our cultural sector	Our goal: S1: Contributing to social cohesion and connectivity through cultural interventions	Our goals: E1: Supporting the inclusive growth agenda
The long-term impacts: • Diverse and deeper cultural networks across the widest possible range of communities with European and international cultural collaborations that engage local communities • Strengthened capacity of citizens across demographic groups to engage and participate in contemporary cultural activity at local, regional and international level • A stronger and more sustainable cultural sector	The long-term impacts: • A positive recognition by our citizens of cultural diversity at local, regional, European and international level and the contribution this makes to an inclusive and connected city • Enhanced image and pride in the city by residents through trans-local connections • An autonomous cultural sector that develops the capacity of the sector and facilitates citizen engagement • A positive contribution to social inclusion through opportunities for greater social and economic engagement across all demographic groups	The long-term impacts: • A better connected and more sustainable cultural and creative industries sector with more and better jobs • A significant cultural tourism sector based on enhanced visitor perceptions that are recognised internationally • A network of creative, digital and cultural connections linked to a fast-growing wider digital economy
Urban development impacts: • Strong cultural policy embedded in city developments supporting citizen participation through local place-making strategies	Urban development impacts: • Transformation of under-used public spaces into shared places with meaning associated with cultural participation	Urban development impacts: • An interconnected and sustainable infrastructure of good quality cultural spaces across the city and the web

Proposed Approach

In advance of the implementation of the strategy commencing in April 2020 we will draw up a clearly articulated Evaluation Plan covering:

- Model - objectives and indicators
- Function - body responsible
- Process - methodology and communication
- Expertise
- Timetable
- Budget

We envisage the following key milestones over the lifetime of the strategy with an initial focus on the first implementation phase:

Milestone	Date
Appointment with terms of reference for external support in developing the evaluation plan	October 2019
Completion of evaluation plan	December 2019
Completion of 'ex-ante' baseline evaluation	March 2020
Adjustment to evaluation plan and monitoring data requirements	April 2020
Start data mining and tracking	April 2020
Completion of interim evaluation	September 2021
Review and adjustment to monitoring data requirements	January 2022
Publish in depth phase one of evaluation	June 2022
Phase two estimations of impact	September 2022
Delivery of evaluation report	March 2024
Agree approach to phase 2 evaluation	June 2024

We will set up a monitoring information system to track the agreed indicators. The monitoring system will be dynamic; quarterly reports will be shared with a panel of citizens, artists and businesses and will be used to adjust and tweak the programmes of activity so that they can be more effective. This would also be agreed with funders as part of the process.

We propose to use some innovative monitoring techniques to enhance the evaluation:

- a database of 'stories' of individuals and groups and their experience of programmes associated with the strategy such as *At Home in 2023*. This database will be used to bring the evaluation to life and can also be analysed for keywords as part of the evaluation
- geo-tracking and chip technology to track movements and interactions of participants in spaces, activities and events
- mobile phone apps that allow real time interaction with participants used as part of the cultural interaction during an event and also stored for evaluation

In addition to the cultural, social and economic indicators outlined we will also include governance arrangements in the evaluation plan and monitoring framework. This would cover monitoring of:

- representativeness of governance
- reporting arrangements to funders
- openness and transparency
- efficiency and effectiveness of decision making



Methodology and measurement

This table provides examples of how certain goals will be measured and includes indicative indicators. This is an illustration of the methodology to be adopted. A full framework will be developed as part of the evaluation plan.

Overall goal: Exploring through regional collaboration on culture the sense of belonging and multiple identity in a European context in order to contribute to peace-building and social and economic progress in the city and wider region		
Cultural	Social	Economic
C1: Strengthening our regional cultural network and building the cultural capacity of our citizens and of our cultural sector	S1: Contributing to social cohesion and connectivity through cultural interventions	E1: Supporting the inclusive growth agenda
Citizen awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity	Number of active volunteers	National/international recognition of Belfast as being culturally vibrant
Citizen sense of belonging to common cultural space	Number of underused public spaces brought into activity, including formerly contested spaces	Increase in employment and GVA in Belfast's cultural, creative and tourism sector
Total number and value of events	Ranking of city/region as place to visit	Estimated multiplier effects on other sectors e.g. transport, event management, marketing etc
Number of activities highlighting diversity	Views of citizens of city and region as place to live	Increase in tourist visits and volume of tourist revenues
Attendance at events	Citizen and artist involvement in decision-making	Volume and % of positive media coverage of Belfast
% of residents attending/participating in events	Number of cultural social enterprises	Number of people trained in cultural and tourism activities
Development of strong cultural policy as part of city development and local place making strategies	Indicators of 'belonging'	Number of creative entrepreneurs
Value of investment in cultural infrastructure and facilities	Perceptions of identity	Ranking of Belfast as 'creative city'
Awareness of cultural policy amongst citizens	Perceived safety and security in public spaces and buildings	Number of arts/business partnerships and value of investment in arts by business
Number of community/cultural partnerships and collaborations	Contribution to reduction in social and physical segregation and increased integration	Investment in digital platforms for culture
Number of international cultural collaborations	Indicators of mental health and wellbeing	Number of cultural tourism initiatives including those that are community-led
Number of 'maker spaces' created for collaboration on cultural projects	Contribution to reduction in poverty and social exclusion	Investment in projects and infrastructure levered from outside Northern Ireland
Number of regional partnerships	Levels of tolerance and openness to other cultures	Number of people who have heard of cultural flagship projects (e.g. At Home in 2023)
Number of partnering organisations on island of Ireland and in other parts of UK	Levels of inter-personal trust	
Number of cultural managers skilled at recognised level		

Section 7

Strategic Communications

A Strategic Communications Plan will be developed to support the delivery of the cultural strategy.

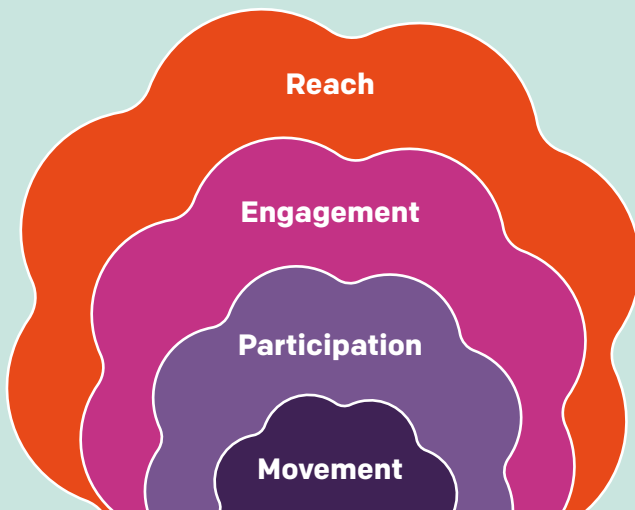
We will deliver a multi-channel communications plan designed to engage with audiences across the city, and position the city's cultural and tourism offer regionally, nationally and internationally using both traditional platforms and social media.

Addressing the four year implementation period and delivering an action plan for each of the long-term cultural programmes, and large scale strategic programmes such as City of Music and At Home in 2023 - the communications plan will develop, and then embed the cultural strategy's key messages across each project and programme. This consistency through all internal and corporate channels will ensure a clearly identifiable "tone of voice" associated with our city brand.

From launch we will aim to transmit our passion for the programme amongst a core group of influencers, journalists, media outlets, partners and cultural

ambassadors to create energy around a new "movement". Through online content, planned media coverage and direct marketing we will seek to engage the citizens of the city during each strategic project, recruiting "participation" from new collaborators; and building on the positive engagement already undertaken through the strategy's consultation process.

Each project will have an identified target audience designed to widen our reach year on year build and momentum and awareness through and across each programme or project. Whilst traditional metrics such as coverage and ad-value will continue to be measured, we will also assess sentiment, engagement and reach - and seek partnerships using new technology, personalising content to best attract new and existing audiences, and engage them in the cultural programme.



Reach - a connection with audiences

- Algorithmic targeting to reach audiences online through social media and other platforms
- Traditional print and broadcast media coverage in UK, Ireland, Europe and internationally
- Placed advertising media, billboards and outdoor marketing across Belfast, the region, UK and Ireland

Engagement - an exchange or connection

- Person-centred content and placed-based content using methods such as augmented reality
- Network events to engage our local and international partners
- Video and visual-based driven communication content and real-time responses

Participation - involvement in a programme or event

- Co-design of projects and initiatives
- Peer-to-Peer meet-ups, and business-to-business events

Movement - an awakening of civic energy

- Recruit cultural ambassadors and digital content creators to deliver marketing and online content across UK, Ireland, Europe and beyond.
- Formation of 'civic forum' to shape and communicate key messages

Next steps

These draft implementation plans are designed to set out the level of commitment, resource and partnership working required to deliver the new cultural strategy for Belfast, *A City Imagining*. Their purpose is to prepare us for the work that lies ahead. They also demonstrate the value of the public consultation process as we have taken on board this extensive feedback and allowed it to shape proposals.

This is only the start. In the coming months we will continue to engage with people across the city and beyond to refine and develop these plans. In March 2020 we will bring back a final set of actions in advance of the strategy becoming fully operational from April 2020.

BELFAST IS READY...



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