



<b>Subject:</b>	Culture Update – 2022/3 Work Programme
<b>Date:</b>	9 March 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager – Culture and Tourism

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current status of the ten-year cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> and seek approval for key actions in 2022/23 aligned to the implementation of year 3 of the strategy.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Note the contents of this report and progress against the delivery of the cultural strategy priorities.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree the actions for 2022/23 as set out in the report and in appendix 1 including the budget implications at 3.16 to be met from existing departmental budgets.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2019 the final ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast <i>A City Imagining</i> was agreed. This included draft implementation plans for a three-year period to be reviewed and finalised on an annual basis.
3.2	Despite the challenges of Covid-19 significant progress has been made in delivery against strategic targets in year one and year two of the strategy. The strategy made a commitment to publishing an annual report in order to demonstrate the impact of cultural development on the city's wider agenda. Due to the pandemic this was not completed in 2021 however a report will be presented to Committee in quarter one of the new financial year that summarises 2020/1 and 2021/2 with a view to it being circulated to key city stakeholders.
3.3	<p>In 2021/22 this work included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £3.08m funding through 117 awards via the following schemes: Cultural multi-annual funding including support for Arts/ Heritage organisations and Festivals/Events – 51 organisations supported; Transition funding for 11 organisations that had previously been in receipt of multi-annual funding; four Pathfinder awards for organisations not in receipt of core public sector support; Creative Bursaries for 10 individuals; 14 A City Imagining targeted cultural leadership grants; five Access and Inclusion grants in partnership with DfC; 20 Community Festivals Fund in partnership with DfC and four Creative Development Awards.</li> <li>- Additional investment was also made through the Creative Communities programme as part of Peace IV.</li> <li>- Completion of cultural mapping of the city including infrastructure audit.</li> <li>- Development of Co-design Framework for culture, arts and heritage.</li> <li>- Strategic Delivery Body for Festival 2022 including commissioning of <i>Our Place in Space</i> and support for four additional projects.</li> <li>- Securing UNESCO City of Music Designation and developing of music strategy.</li> <li>- Delivery of meanwhile use at 2 Royal Avenue.</li> </ul>

3.4	<p>As the city hopes to emerge from the pandemic, year 3 of the strategy will seek to combine cultural recovery with renewal in line with the commitments and priorities set out in <i>A City Imagining</i>.</p> <p><u>Investing in the cultural sector</u></p>
3.5	<p>At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration in February 2022 recommendations for core-multi annual funding were agreed providing support to 42 organisations for two years as well as continuation of four-year scheme that supports a further 13 organisations. This funding amounts to £2,430,010.</p>
3.6	<p>A further £79,768 was agreed in relation to <i>Pathfinder</i> development funding for four organisations. Approval was also granted to re-opened small grants (project funding) that had been suspended during the pandemic.</p>
3.7	<p>In addition to these established funding schemes, the cultural strategy committed to a broader investment model that considered the diversity of the city’s cultural landscape. In response to detailed consultation with the sector and further evidenced by the impact of COVID-19, Committee agreed in February 2022 to bring forward a specific funding programme for studios and artist-led organisations.</p> <p><u>Sectoral Development</u></p>
3.8	<p>In addition to funding, Belfast City Council fulfils an important role in leading and supporting sectoral development initiatives. In 2022/23 it is proposed that these will continue to build on work undertaken to date as part of the implementation of the cultural strategy as outlined below and further detail is included at appendix 1. These include bespoke programmes designed in partnership with sectoral organisations to specifically meet the priorities of the cultural strategy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belfast Audience Panel</li> <li>- Heritage Action Plan</li> <li>- Disability Action Plan</li> </ul>
3.9	<p>Council also operates a number of sectoral Forums: Belfast Festivals Forum and Belfast Visual Arts Forum. To complement this work, new partnerships with Theatre and Dance NI and Craft NI are proposed.</p>

3.10	<p>Members will be aware the Council has commissioned a report LGBTQIA+ visibility and representation in Belfast’s Culture, Arts and Heritage. Recommendations will be brought back to Committee and developed into an action plan. A similar report is due to be commissioned on minority ethnic representation.</p>
3.11	<p>As well as these Belfast focussed sectoral and participation programmes, Council also provides partnership funding to larger strategic programmes such as <i>Blueprint for the future – a capacity and financial growth programme for the arts</i>. Blueprint is a bespoke programme designed to meet the unique needs of arts organisations and is based on a four-year programme of research led by Arts &amp; Business NI and delivered by Small Change NI. Belfast City Council has engaged with partners throughout this development phase. It is designed to support small to mid-scale arts and cultural companies from across Northern Ireland. It will support and develop a cluster of organisations, investing in them over a five-year period to strengthen long term financial sustainability. Council’s invested in year one ensured that the diversity and breadth of Belfast’s sector was recognised in the programme. Council support is £30,000 per year amounting to 10% of total project costs and it is recommended that this level of funding is maintained in year two of the programme.</p> <p><i>Further wraparound support programmes</i></p>
3.12	<p>In addition to these bespoke programmes, Council officers will continue to engage with the sector and respond to challenges and opportunities throughout the year. This wraparound support will be provided to all organisations in receipt of funding. In addition, leadership mentoring will be offered working with external specialists. Advice, training and capacity building will also be provided to organisations who have been unsuccessful in securing Council funding.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Cultural Participation and Engagement</u></p> <p>As well as sectoral support for culture, arts, heritage and events, Council also delivers initiatives designed to increase accessibility and cultural participation. Research and development projects were completed in 2021/22 and this will be further developed into targeted initiatives in 2021/22. Included below is an outline of this workstream.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities to engage with heritage and arts with specific focus on support for telling Belfast Stories through skills development programme.</li> <li>- In 2021 toolkits were developed to support the activation of public space through community and cultural led programming. As part of ongoing city recovery, it is</li> </ul>

proposed that additional support is offered to organisations seeking to use these spaces across the city.

- Designing capacity building programmes to improve accessibility of cultural initiatives in the city through initiatives such as Gig Buddies and how this can be expanded to venues and events across the city.
- Promoting cultural diversity in Council led events through new programming approach in partnership with the cultural sector.
- In addition to local engagement the cultural strategy also recognised the importance of supporting the cultural sector and practitioners to engage and connect globally ensuring opportunities for Belfast to participate in international networks.

#### Strategic Initiatives

##### 3.14 *2024: Designated Year of Culture*

2024 marks the beginning of the second implementation phase of *A City Imagining*, a ten-year strategy. It is also the year that has been earmarked as potential for strategic cultural and tourism programmes that will specifically support recovery of the international market. The cultural strategy committed to a year of culture to ensure that the energy, creativity, ambition and potential that had been harnessed as part of this European Capital of Culture process could be followed through on, to the benefit of the people of the city and region. This is envisioned as a yearlong programme of home-grown authentic cultural products with significant international appeal. It will demonstrate how *A City Imagining* is delivering against the five outcomes for the city as identified in the Belfast Agenda.

3.15 Added to the established strategic context, there is now an opportunity to pivot these plans in the context of city recovery from Covid-19 in terms of both social cohesion but also in terms of the repositioning of Belfast internationally. As part of recovery plans it is proposed that the 2024 programme is launched in 2022. It had been planned to launch the initiative in 2021 however this was delayed due to the pandemic. This will require programme development building on work already underway such as the development of *Urban Forest* in partnership with the Eden project. Ongoing engagement will be required with the cultural sector to bring forward a co-designed commissioning approach. Further detail will be presented to Committee throughout 2022 as emerging plans develop.

#### Financial & Resource Implications

3.16 There are no new financial implications. The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2022/23 budget for the Culture and Tourism section of the Economic

3.17	<p>Development division of the Place and Economy Departmental budget in line with existing approvals. A breakdown of specific areas of spend are included in Appendix 1.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). Specific initiatives as required will be subject to a further equality screening.</p>
4.0	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	Appendix 1: Cultural Strategy Year 3 Priority Actions