Press Release

Belfast City Council support welcomed by #ArtsMatterNI

### At the Belfast City Council meeting, held on Monday June 4th, a motion supporting the Arts Matter NI Campaign demands for equality of access to the Arts and parity of investment across the islands and neighbouring jurisdictions was passed unanimously.

The council also agreed to send an all-party delegation to discuss the matter with the Department for Communities.

Alliance group leader Michael Long introduced the motion,

*"This council asserts the value of the arts in our everyday lives, including our wellbeing, education, inclusion as well as our creative and evening economy and our tourism offering. Accordingly, the council extends its formal support to the Arts Matter NI campaign for equal funding and agrees that an all-party delegation meet the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Communities to demand more funds for the arts."*

saying that arts organisations were facing “very difficult financial circumstances” given the cuts to the sector over the last few years and that it was necessary to support the campaign demands.

Other councillors outlined the important work the arts sector does to encourage inclusivity, the creation of shared spaces as well as ensuring when people come to visit Belfast they have a cultural offering which allows them to experience the city in the most positive way.

Conor Shields, #ArtsMatterNI convenor said,

“After many months of campaigning, the unprecedented, unanimous, cross party support from the Belfast City Council for the demands of the #ArtsMatterNI campaign is very welcome.

Last week, the member organisations of the campaign met in the Grand Opera House to agree the campaign demands.

The key issue for the campaign was that people in Northern Ireland receive less with regards expenditure on the arts than their counterparts elsewhere.

It was agreed that the campaign would demand parity of expenditure on the Arts as is received by our closest neighbours.

As councillors acknowledged in the discussion, the arts sector plays a substantial role in all aspects of the life of the city and needs to receive more recognition for the great work being carried out, despite the substantial cuts to the sector’s budget allocation.

Councillors argued that more funding must be found because many of our leading organisations will find it difficult to continue without that support.

This is very much the argument our campaign has been making for some time so we greatly appreciate the support afforded our sector by the council.”

To contact Conor Shields for interview - 02890 923 493/07790021754

See information about #ArtsMatterNI at the following link - <https://www.artsmatterni.co.uk/>

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