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| <p>Title of Report:</p> <p>Fashion and Textile Hub - Smart Creative Hubs Proposal</p> | <p>Officer presenting: Head of Business</p> <p>Author: Programme Manager</p> |
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 That members' approve DCSDC partner status in a funding submission to Interreg's North West Europe Programme in collaboration with the Fashion & Textile Design Centre (F&TDC). The project is entitled Smart Creative Hubs.

2 Background

- 2.1 Members will previously be aware that in September 2014 Council supported the F&TDC by way of grant (£21,500) to support the establishment of the centre at 31-33 Shipquay Street. The aim of the centre is to support those designers in early stage development and up skill those who are looking to progress and grow their operations. The centre has been operational for over a year and during this time has established:

- A stitchery; Design room & creative lounge; Hot desk facilities; Self contained design work studios; Creative meeting rooms; Event & exhibition space

- 2.2 In terms of service provision the centre supports creative producers by providing: Business support, mentoring, workspace, business planning, paths to commercialisation, access to sectoral networks

- 2.3 The centre also provides industry with sampling and finishing services including: CAD, pattern cutting, prototype/ portfolio development, connections to short run producers

- 2.4 Recent achievements of the centre include: 10 designers at various stages in the business lifecycle (ranging from pre start, growth and expansion into new markets) receiving bespoke one to one support and accessing equipment/ workspace. Two designers, supported through the F&TDC have recently been advised that they are to be nominated for Irish Fashion Innovation Awards, one designer has been test trading in the Craft Village and another designer plans to open a retail outlet in the very near future.

3 Key Issues

3.1 Councils Business Support team have been working closely with the F&TDC to develop an Interreg North West Europe funding application - Smart Creative Hubs, the application has been successful at stage 1, over 80 submissions were received with 18 proceeding to stage 2 application. If stage 2 is successful the Interreg project will leverage the following outputs for the centre over the next three years

- Participation in a €2.39m European funded programme
- Individual grant allocation of €399,650
- Fulltime business development manager plus administrative support
- Purchase of digital printing equipment (valued at €50K)
- Development of a transnational network - including links with Centre for Fashion Enterprise (London); LYIT (Ireland); Stitching Artez (Netherlands); Chambre de Metiers et de Artisanat de Region de Basse Normandie (France); Voka - Kamer van Koophandel West Vlaanderen (Belgium)
- Delivery of two bespoke business support programmes facilitated by the Centre for Fashion Enterprise London:
 - Programme 1 - Market Entry programme – a two day business support programme to entry level designer businesses delivered in both Derry & London. This is a proof of concept where designers develop their pitch to industry based specialists for diagnostics, feedback and affirmation. It is anticipated that 15-20 designers will participate in each session with three programmes to be delivered throughout the duration of the programme - total number of participants 45 -60 over 3 years
 - Programme 2 - Pioneer programme – a six month business support programme to designer businesses that have been established for at least one year, themes to include: developing a brand, sales & range planning, business planning, introduction to digital business tools and digital communications. Programme to be delivered once in year two and twice in year three. Delivered to six designers per season - 18 designers in total.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR and Other Implications

- 4.1 Pending a successful outcome at Stage 2 the Inner City Trust will commit the necessary match funding contribution of 40% for the project valued at €159,860.
- 4.2 There are no current financial implications, however if Council are required to allocate funding in the future, a report will be brought to committee for approval.
- 4.3 A full report including financial liabilities for DCSDC will be submitted following evaluation of the stage 2 application.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members approve Councils participation up to Stage 2 as a project partner in the Interreg North West Europe - Smart Creative Hubs proposal

Background Papers

None