



Place, Space & People

VISION

Our vision is for a country where everyone has the opportunity to create, engage with, participate in and enjoy the arts and culture, regardless of who they are or where they live and work.

Introduction

01

This policy framework is informed by the Arts Council's ten-year strategy *Making Great Art Work (MGAW)* and builds on all five pillars of that strategy with particular emphasis on the *Spatial & Demographic* goal and *The Artist and Public Engagement* goals.

In MGAW (2016–2025) we state:

In ten years' time, we want Ireland's international standing as a leader in the arts to be strengthened by our commitment to new generations of ambitious and innovative artists. The vitality of the arts across the country and in our diverse communities will inform national cultural policy and influence the wider work of central and local government.

Our vision describes an Ireland where the arts are practiced and enjoyed widely in our communities, public spaces (real and virtual) and in dedicated venues and centres across the country.

While MGAW plots the coordinates for the development of the arts in the decade 2016–2025, we have committed to publishing more detailed policies and plans to guide that development. This allows us and other key stakeholders to take account of a rapidly changing environmental context, as has particularly been the case with the public health crisis since 2020.

This spatial policy framework is one such guide, which:

- Articulates a clear vision around our ambition for greater socio-spatial equity over the next five years.
- Sets out the Arts Council's spatial priorities for ensuring a fair distribution of our investment in the arts in this period.
- Moves the Arts Council to a socio-spatial analytical environment.
- Identifies the key planning policy and growth areas where the arts have a significant role to play.
- Sets out to build on our existing core partnership with local government and develop new strategic partnerships for the delivery of policy objectives.

PLACE

This policy understands place as specific physical locations where human settlements have formed and it also acknowledges the more complex understandings of place as locations that both create and are given meaning by human and non-human interaction with (and perceptions of) those locations. We understand places to be dynamic and responsive to continuous change and to be inextricably linked with both individual and collective identity. It is for this reason we believe the arts and cultural expression are central to the creation of meaning in place, and the ideas of place identity and place-making.



Holger Lonze 2 Poetry Day Church Island,
2019, Valerie Ó Sullivan
Photographer: Valerie Ó Sullivan
Location: Church Island, Iveragh Peninsula

Context

Our policy builds on several decades of work by the Arts Council, extending from the 1970s up to this present day, which have sought to address geographic and social equity concerns. It also speaks to the wider public policy agenda as guided by the National Planning Framework, *Project Ireland 2040* and the policy instruments and further strategies deriving from that (for example, the National Development Plan, regional and county development strategies and, *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021–2025*). The Appendix in this document provides a full account of the background to the policy development.

CHANGING SOCIO- GEOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT

The public health crisis that began in 2020 has brought about unprecedented change in the way we live and work and the way the arts are created, engaged with and enjoyed. As well as demonstrating remarkable resilience and agility in responding to this crisis, which impacted particularly harshly on live arts, the arts sector has shown admirable creativity and inventiveness in finding solutions to how work is made, presented and engaged with.

Universally, we are all reimagining the ways we live, work and engage with each other. Through remote working and digital engagement we have undergone a significant shift in our understanding of place and space as they pertain to our lives and how we go about them. Alongside finding ways to meet new challenges, we have identified new possibilities and opportunities for working and engaging across the public realm. Government policy is actively supporting new models of working in which location is no longer a determining factor for access to opportunities.

02

As well as having implications for how the Arts Council functions as a national development agency this could mean a significant paradigmatic shift for artists and arts organisations in terms of where they are located, where they work, and where work gets made and presented. It may take some time to understand fully the impact of the pandemic and the change it has brought about, thus the principles of this policy are designed to allow the Arts Council to be responsive and flexible, to ensure we can support demographic, cultural and spatial change as that evolves.

The public health crisis notwithstanding, Ireland has been undergoing an intense and rapid period of change both physically in terms of improved infrastructure and urban planning but more importantly on a societal level in terms of demographic changes in population profile, and our behaviours and attitudes. This policy framework will seek to embrace that change and ensure that arts and culture are an integral part of all aspects of that growth and development.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

This framework will inform the work of the Arts Council and our stakeholders in delivering the arts – artists, arts organisations, local authorities, other public cultural providers, and the commercial arts sector.

We also see it as a critical resource in informing and influencing a wider group of stakeholders charged with delivering public policy, where there is significant potential and opportunity to further embed the arts and culture – local authorities, regional authorities, government departments and agencies, the education sector and beyond.

Ultimately, it is for all people living in Ireland so they have a clear sense of Arts Council priorities in striving for greater socio-spatial equity and a means of holding us to account for that.



Ardnakinna Lighthouse,
2021.
Photographer: Joleen Cronin
Location: Berelsland

Statement of Policy

03



Dance2Connect,
2021, Jessie Thompson,
Photographer: Jacek Snochowski
Location: Skerries, Dublin

The arts shape and challenge us, give us pleasure, help us to know who we are and where we are going: their distinctive, creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and conversation. (MGAW 2016–2025)

We see creative expression as a fundamental part of our humanity and want Ireland to be a country where people can confidently exercise their rights to creative and cultural expression and engagement, ultimately leading to a richer, more multi-faceted quality of life.

We want to take bold new steps to ensure that people have a greater say in what their cultural rights are and to create an unprecedented demand for and opportunity to engage in and experience arts activity in every village, town and city in Ireland.

Ambitious for progressive change, we want to see tangible evidence of the reach of publicly supported arts being significantly extended to new people and places. Furthermore, we want to see a shift in public policy that places the arts and culture as central to all areas of public policy, planning and development in Ireland.

We believe there is absolute compatibility between our core spatial objectives for the arts and a range of government policies, not least those expressed in *Project Ireland 2040*, and *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021–2025* and through initiatives such as *Town Centres First* and the *Night-time Economy Taskforce*. We look forward to working collaboratively with colleagues in our parent Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media (DTCAGSM) as well as a range of other government departments and agencies to ensure the contribution of the arts to such key policy objectives is meaningfully realised.

Building on our core partnership with local government, as expressed through our memorandum of understanding *A Framework for Collaboration*, we want to expand that work strategically into other domains such as spatial planning, urban design, community and economic development, and social inclusion to demonstrate the rich potential of embedding the arts and culture more emphatically in local and regional development.

Above all we believe the arts have a singular role to play in the creation of the places and spaces people live and work in, whether physically through ensuring high quality architectural design and urban planning or on a more profound level through adding richer meaning to people's interactions with places and spaces. We believe there is a natural affinity between the processes involved in creating art and the dynamic and responsive nature of places, their complex histories and imagined futures.

Artists and arts organisations are central to imagining, leading, inspiring and providing new and deeper ways to look at and engage with the world around us and we want to ensure that geography supports rather than impedes the opportunities they have to make art work. We also believe in the core inner creativity of every person and want to ensure they enjoy their cultural rights to give expression to that creativity and engage with other arts and culture regardless of where they live.



First Fortnight Festival 2021
2020, *Rainbow Over Your Blues* by ADW,
Photographer: Conor Mc Cabe

Values / Underpinning Principles

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The following core principles will inform all policy actions developed and delivered under this framework:

1. A people and place-centred approach

We believe this policy is essentially about the people we serve and the places they live in, work in, engage with, and come together as communities in, to enjoy fulfilling creative growth and development.

2. Belief in the intrinsic value of the arts in our society

We believe in the inherent value of the arts in their own right – their power to shape and challenge us, give us pleasure, help us to know who we are and where we are going: their distinctive, creative power is an essential feature of our consciousness and conversation.

3. The principle of socio-spatial equity

A socio-spatial equity policy is an active commitment to ensuring fairness and equality in our policies, and how our resources are distributed, to ensure meaningful access to arts provision and participation irrespective of place or circumstances. It acknowledges the need for different approaches and interventions in different places that respond to the specific needs of those places.

4. Transparency in decision-making and planning

A core value in *Making Great Art Work* is our commitment to integrity, accountability, and transparency, in all of our decision-making and especially in our investment of public monies.

5. The social value of the arts

There is substantial evidence to show the positive impact that participation in the arts can have on wellbeing and quality of life both at an individual and community level. This positive impact is inextricable from the intrinsic value of quality artistic activity that supports creative – exploration, meaning-making and expression.

6. Sustainable and high-quality design

We believe that the design and use of places and spaces, most particularly public spaces, can impact significantly on peoples' lives. Architecture and place design is experienced by everybody in all aspects of their everyday lives. Our Architecture policy advocates for high quality and sustainable design as a democratic right, and that informs our role as a prescribed body in the planning system.

7. Partnership

We believe that progress is only made by working in collaboration and respectful partnerships with other key stakeholders in the work that we do, be that the arts sector, the public sector, the third sector or other entities.

As a State Agency the Arts Council operates at **simultaneous scales** of engagement and will have appropriate plans and responses for each strand of its work within this spatial framework. This means that we will publish and make clear the different levels at which we engage in respect of all actions we undertake under the following four key policy areas of delivery:

- Advice & Advocacy;
- Planning and the Arts;
- Arts Investment & Development;
- Learning & Insight

From a spatial perspective these **simultaneous scales** are expressed through physical remit:

- National
- Regional
- Local
- Virtual / digital
- International / global

In strategic terms they will be delivered by:

- Improving the Arts Council's competence and skill in spatial and demographic analysis.
- Creating a new measurement framework for assessing spatial and demographic reach and impact.
- Structuring ourselves to have improved connection to and understanding of the arts and development at regional level.
- Advocating for embedding the arts and culture in our Planning systems and the appropriate provision of public arts infrastructure across the country.
- Building on our core partnership with local government to seed initiatives in other policy areas (e.g. architecture, the designed environment, community development).
- Brokering new partnerships at a range of levels (government departments, regional authorities).
- Bringing the arts into public policy thinking and development in innovative and creative ways.



DYI ZONOSIS,
2020, Dublin Youth Theatre,
Photographer: Mark Stedman
Location: Museum of Literature Ireland

Policy Areas

05

A. ADVICE & ADVOCACY

As an expert body on the arts the Arts Council has a legislative role to advise government on arts and cultural matters. While our primary conduit is through our parent Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media we also engage with other Departments where core objectives intersect, such as the Department of Education, and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Whilst we have participated in myriad ways on various initiatives involving other departments, we have yet to build strong working relationships with those whose policies we firmly believe the arts and culture intersect with.

This includes the critical contribution of the arts and culture to health and wellbeing, quality of life, urban and rural development and growing vibrant multifaceted places to live and work in and shape our towns and cities into the future. Our newly developed model of Social Impact Assessment, which looked at the impact of arts investment at a local level, offers an excellent starting point for gathering such evidence.

In line with Government's objective of greater cross-agency co-ordination it is our ambition to work in a much more integrated fashion with our colleagues across government departments, bodies and agencies to ensure the power and potential of the arts in these other public policy areas is realised in full. We aim to proactively forge new relationships with and advocate for the centrality of the arts and culture to the core policy areas of the following departments – Health, Rural and Community Development, and Housing, Local Government and Environment.

In making our case to other bodies, we need sound and up-to-date evidence and to understand better the issues faced by communities across the country. We need to be sure our working systems are conducive to having such intelligence and we see the opportunity that has been afforded by the past year of remote working as a way of re-imagining roles and responsibilities in our organisation. The creation of *regional satellite offices* would further enhance our national knowledge and remit, allow for the development of meaningful partnerships with regional authorities and bodies, and widen and enrich the profile of the Arts Council as a national agency.



Public Intervention – Spatial Stories 2,
2017, Dorothy Smith,
Photographer: Dorothy Smith
Location: Arbour Hill, Dublin 7

In transforming our business systems, we are also undertaking to build a better picture of arts and cultural activity nationally through applying spatial and demographic analysis and drawing on relevant public sources of key information and data.

Policy measures we will undertake in this area include:

- Work in the context of cross-government and interagency structures to bring key arts intelligence and insights to bear on public policy research, development and implementation.
- Adopt Social impact Assessment as a key metric for assessing the impact of the arts in Irish society today.
- Develop 'on the ground' Arts Council knowledge, capacity and profile through satellite regional restructuring of our services.
- Improve the Arts Council's competence and skill in spatial and demographic analysis.

B. PLANNING AND THE ARTS

The Arts Council values its position as a prescribed body under the *Planning and Development Act, 2000*, and is aware of the huge potential for broadening and enhancing its role in that regard. In engaging with planning processes from local through to national level we have always stressed the importance of cultural growth and development as an integral part of sustainable development. We want to build on our local government partnership with Arts Services and others involved in arts planning at local level, to ensure the provision of optimum arts infrastructure locally is integrated into wider county and city development planning. Further, we want to see a strategic and sustainable approach to future capital programmes for the arts that is informed by identified needs and reflects the Government's Climate Adaption policy. We believe there are excellent opportunities for existing infrastructure to be adapted or upgraded to reflect best practice climate adaptation, while also meeting the evolving needs of artists and audiences.

As the agency with statutory responsibility for architecture as an art form we have a particular interest in the designed environment and the importance of high-quality design of spaces and places for people to live, work and spend their recreational time in. Our Architecture policy aims to further develop creative practice and increase opportunities for public engagement with architecture and place-making. We believe beyond the physical, the arts have a significant role to play in social cohesion, through creating meaning in place, and a sense of identity and belonging, responding also to a vibrant and changing population demographic.

We aim to work collaboratively with colleagues in local government, regional authorities and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to embed the arts and culture more authoritatively in planning and development. We will do this by brokering new partnerships, offering guidance and advice and designing innovative new initiatives that bring creative processes to bear on areas like public consultation and participatory democracy. We believe the artistic community is central to such a process and we will facilitate new connections between artists, arts organisations with relevant expertise and planning bodies and authorities to this end. There is real potential for Ireland to become an international exemplar in planning and development in adopting such new approaches.



Culture Night,
2018.
Photographer: Liam Karma
Location: Meeting House Square, Dublin



Youth Circus Parade at Douglas Street Autumn Festival as part of Pitch'd Circus Arts Festival,
2019, Louisa Sloan,
Photographer: Clare Keogh
Location: Douglas Street, Cork

Policy measures we will undertake in this area include:

- Work with our parent Department to develop an optimum arts infrastructure for the future.
- Work with Planning bodies and authorities to develop knowledge and capacity on the integration of arts and culture into sustainable planning and design.

- In collaboration with the artistic community explore creative ways of informing planning and development processes through cross-agency partnerships and artist citizen engagement.
- Build on our key strategic partnership with local government to work collaboratively exploring the contribution of the arts to other domains.

C. ARTS INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Our supports are multi-layered, reaching artists, ensembles, collectives, arts organisations, buildings, festivals, localities, and communities. At all times we strive to achieve breadth and balance of support and development giving due regard to nurturing the ecology of the arts while also ensuring people have fair and meaningful opportunities to engage in the arts. We are conscious that both the ecology and wider society, as well as places, are continually evolving and we will continue to take actions to lead and respond to this change.

In line with Making Great Art Work our investment actions and strategies are focused on the two core goals:

The Artist: Artists are supported to make excellent work which is enjoyed and valued, and *Public Engagement:* More people will enjoy high-quality arts experiences.

SUPPORTING ARTISTS

Geographic analysis of our individual awards to artists in 2020 showed the three most prominent counties in terms of applications and awards were Dublin, Cork and Galway. In comparison to the population distribution Dublin was shown to be particularly over-represented, with 40% of applicants and 46% of grantees living in Dublin as opposed to 28% of the population residing there. 21 counties were under-represented in terms of applicants. Whilst there is evidence that many artists gravitate towards larger urban and metropolitan areas, where there is sufficient infrastructure, peer support and networks and increased opportunities to make work in this context, the apparent concentration of artists in Dublin in particular merits further exploration. Moreover, the prohibitive costs associated with living and working in the capital presents an economic barrier that favours those who are more fiscally stable.

Notwithstanding the fact that for some art forms locale may be less relevant, the degree to which available infrastructure influences the living and working decisions of artists needs to be examined. In supporting the Project Ireland 2040 objective, to develop the four other cities outside the capital, the Arts Council will put a specific lens on what reasonable level of arts infrastructure should be available in those cities and make recommendations to the relevant authorities in terms of future planning.

Further, with a now rapidly changing context for living and working in Ireland, moving to increased remote working post the Covid crisis, the Arts Council will actively support Government policy to revitalise and re-energise rural towns, and work with others to develop an environment that encourages artists and creative workers to relocate. A more balanced approach to provide opportunities for artists to live and work in other cities and towns in Ireland accords with sustainability objectives.



Creative Places,
2019, Cape Clear,
Photographer: Joleen Cronin
Location: Cape Clear, Co. Cork



Arranmore,
2019, Diarmaid O'Meara,
Photographer: Martha McCulloch
Location: Arranmore Island

It is important to stress our current picture of artists is informed in the main by those we directly engage with through our range of funding programmes. As the expert agency on the arts we need to have a richer picture of practicing artists in Ireland – a better understanding of those we do not reach, including those who have survived and / or prospered without state subsidy. To inform this process the Arts Council will need to collect accurate and up to date data about where artists live and work and the resources and facilities which they have access to, and we will do this in collaboration with our local authority partners.

Additionally, a key policy objective in the *Arts Centre policy* is to offer support to artists as creators, participants, collaborators and community members and this is currently being prioritised for support through Arts Centre funding. We will closely monitor and assess the outcomes of this strategic area of focus.

Finally we will actively support artists and arts organisations in availing of opportunities for capital investment in new work spaces for artists, through relevant schemes such as the *Cultural Capital Support Scheme*, the *Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)* and the *Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)*.

Public Engagement

In this goal in MGAW we indicate that we will make Public Engagement a priority in our funding agreements with arts organisations and that our policies, plans, and partnerships will be informed by spatial and demographic knowledge. While through our *Equality, Human Rights and Diversity (EHRD) policy* some work has been progressed in this regard we have further work to do on understanding geographic reach, in terms of the audiences served by the subsidised arts sector. The acceleration of online production and engagement disseminated through digital platforms has undoubtedly expanded opportunities for cultural engagement where place would have been a significant factor in the past. However, as we return to live art experiences, and reclaim the unique value of people gathering to share those common experiences, we need to make sure there are measures in place to ensure reasonable socio-spatial equity in the opportunities to engage.

Particular funding programmes and schemes (Partnership funding, Arts Centre funding, the Festival Investment Scheme, Touring and Dissemination Scheme) will continue to be relied on to meet the geographic reach objective of Arts Council funding. However, we also need to understand better, particularly from an audience-centric perspective, how equitable and fair the opportunities for people throughout the country to engage in the work of key strategic organisations are. This particularly applies to those with a self-described national remit, and we will work with those organisations to develop clear criteria in our funding agreements that seek to achieve a reasonable level of socio-spatial equity in this regard. Similarly with organisations that work at regional level we will develop a new scale-appropriate metric in this area.

It must be understood that public presentation of certain large scale work (such as symphonic and large scale-opera) will require specific venues of scale that will likely be in major urban centres or cities and this will be taken into account in developing such criteria. But the Arts Council also welcomes the artistic communities' ability to imagine new ways of meeting audiences, even when traditional infrastructure isn't available, and finding creative solutions where deficits exist.

As well as working with key Strategically Funded organisations, we will ensure that socio-spatial criteria across our funding programmes are open and responsive to new ways of engaging with and relating to communities and places and spaces. In ensuring well-balanced provision we will articulate and support the broad range of ways in which we understand equitable outcomes can be achieved. We will also continue to shape our supports as informed by the identified needs of people in places.

Our Creative Places programme, which supports more cultural agency at local level and provides new opportunities for local communities to decide, design and take part in arts experiences in the places where they live, has been expanded, and the Arts Council is committed to further growing and developing this initiative. As a unique way of investing in people and places we will closely monitor and evaluate its impact to inform future policy in this area.

Children and young people remain central to our strategy and we want to ensure they continue to have opportunities to engage in, create and shape their own arts and cultural opportunities. The Creative Schools programme has been a successful model of ensuring socio-spatial equity in terms of the range of schools participating and we will be further enhancing relevant criteria in the expansion of that programme. Provision for children and young people remains a key focus of our partnership with local government and our Strategically Funded organisations and we will ensure that is factored in to any socio-spatial analysis of our reach through those channels.

Policy measures we will undertake in this area include:

- Review and rebalance supports for artists based on optimum spatial and demographic information.
- Establish clear scale-appropriate criteria aimed at achieving socio-spatial equity in public engagement across all funding programmes.
- Promote and develop further a people and place-centred approach to investing in the arts and communities.
- Ensure the centrality of children and young people's engagement and voice in the arts across all areas of the country.



Culture Night,
2018,
Photographer: Liam Karma
Location: Dublin

D.
LEARNING & INSIGHT

As the expert agency on the arts in Ireland the Arts Council prides itself on being a live hub of knowledge and insight on where and how the arts happen and their significance and impact on other policy and development areas. To do this we embrace an active learning environment to keep ourselves as informed and expert as possible. We rely ultimately on the knowledge, expertise and insights of the arts sector who every day engage with and develop arts practice in places, both real and imagined, throughout Ireland. As a development agency for the arts we have a responsibility to provide a conduit for that wisdom and experience to be brought to bear in the public policy arena, and we will endeavor to create meaningful connections between the artistic community and government policy forums.

We are critically aware that as well as advising and advocating for the arts we need to be constantly learning and listening and we will continue to strive to ensure an open working culture where people living anywhere in the country feel welcome to get in touch, begin a conversation or provide useful feedback about our function.

Policy measures we will undertake in this area include:

- Ensure our socio-spatial knowledge and thinking is informed by contemporary trends and thinking in public planning and development.
- Work with the artistic community to create new opportunities for understanding and reimagining public policy concerns.
- Encourage a culture of open dialogue with the Arts Council as a development agency working across the country.



Little Girl Dancing in Front of Building in Athy,
Culture Night, 2020
Photographer: Niall Carson
Location: Athy, Co. Kildare

Implementation & Oversight

06

Further details on each of the policy measures outlined above are provided in the accompanying Implementation Plan which will focus on action delivery over the next five years, to correspond with the remaining time period of *Making Great Art Work*. This plan will be subject to review and additional actions added as required.

The policy implementation will be monitored by an internal working group, and progress reviewed at Arts Council board meetings on a quarterly basis. The Arts Council will report on progress of this policy and strategy in its annual report, as well as any other evaluations or reviews of corporate strategies.

Implementation Plan

Spatial Policy

A. ADVICE & ADVOCACY

Policy measure	Actions
Work in context of cross-government and inter-agency structures to bring key arts intelligence and insights to bear on public policy research, development and implementation.	<p>A1. Assess and prioritise relevant government department policies to develop a focused strategy on demonstrating the contribution of arts and culture to key policy outcomes.</p>
	<p>A2. Advocate for cultural participation to be one of a set of new wellbeing indicators being developed by the National Economic and Social Council.</p>
	<p>A3. Lead the national audit of arts and cultural spaces, building on the facilities database from 2016, as per recommendation in the final Report of the Night-Time Economy Taskforce.</p>
	<p>A4. Include spatial module in 2022 iteration of the annual Arts Insight survey that looks at spatial access to arts facilities and events and significance of factors such as transport and other infrastructure.</p>

A. ADVICE & ADVOCACY

Relevant Stakeholders / Potential partners	Desired Outcomes	KPIs
Government departments	The arts and culture are embedded in core government policy areas.	New formal partnerships established with at least two Departments.
DTCAGSM, Creative Ireland, Rethink Ireland	The power and potential of the arts in other policy arenas is realised.	Cultural participation is adopted as a core indicator in new national wellbeing indicators.
DTCAGSM, Failte Ireland, Give us the Night, Local Authorities	The Arts Council has expert and up to date knowledge on arts and cultural provision nationally and related spatial factors.	A national online database of arts and cultural facilities mapped.
Arts Sector		New spatial information available from arts insight survey.

A. ADVICE & ADVOCACY	
Policy measure	Actions
Adopt Social Impact measurement as a key metric for assessing the impact of the arts in society today.	<p>A5. Roll out the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) model that was piloted with local authority arts services, across the arts sector and in collaboration with other bodies.</p>
Develop 'on the ground' Arts Council knowledge, capacity and profile through satellite regional restructuring of our services.	<p>A6. Pilot the creation of two new positions of regional responsibility aligned with the geographic remit of regional assemblies – Northern & Western Regional Authority and Southern Regional assembly.</p>
Improve the Arts Council's competence and skill in spatial and demographic analysis.	<p>A7. Incorporate Eircodes into all business systems and put in place new measures for capturing data on location of activities.</p> <p>A8. Integrate clear spatial and demographic indicators into new Data Strategy.</p> <p>A9. Develop an inventory of all public data sources the Arts Council should be drawing on to inform decision-making policy development and planning.</p>

A. ADVICE & ADVOCACY		
Relevant Stakeholders / Potential partners	Desired Outcomes	KPIs
<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Creative Ireland</p> <p>Rethink Ireland</p> <p>Design & Crafts Council of Ireland</p> <p>Heritage Council</p>	<p>A consistent approach is adopted to SIA across the arts and cultural sector, contributing to a body of national evidence on the social impact of the arts.</p>	<p>SIA toolkit published.</p> <p>Training delivered to arts sector.</p> <p>Case studies and relevant data published.</p>
<p>Key regional arts organisations and services</p> <p>Regional authorities</p> <p>Local authorities</p>	<p>Arts Council national knowledge and remit enhanced.</p> <p>New working relationships brokered with regional authorities and bodies to the benefit of the arts community.</p>	<p>New positions of regional responsibility sanctioned.</p> <p>Key office locations and facilities identified.</p>
<p>Artists</p> <p>Arts organisations</p> <p>DTCAGSM and other government departments</p> <p>Local government</p> <p>3rd level institutions</p>		<p>New metrics in place for spatial analysis of investment.</p> <p>Annual report to council on spatial distribution of resources.</p>

B. PLANNING AND THE ARTS	
Policy measure	Actions
Work with our parent Department to develop an optimum arts infrastructure for the future.	B1. Use existing evidence and new sources of data gathering outlined above, to identify gaps, needs and opportunities in the capital infrastructure and make recommendations that align with government policy into the future (Project Ireland 2040, Our Rural Future, National Adaptation Framework).
	B2. Inform and advise DTACSGM on future capital programmes.
Work with planning bodies and authorities to develop knowledge and capacity on the integration of the arts and culture into sustainable planning and design.	B3. Develop and communicate a clear framework and outline of the Arts Council's outward planning role as prescribed planning authority.
	B4. Develop guidance on planning for arts and culture as an integral part of area, local and regional development plans, with an emphasis on high-quality architecture and design.
	B5. Contribute to the national guidelines for Development Plans review.
	B6. Develop guidance for planners and developers on effective integration of arts and culture into new developments.

B. PLANNING AND THE ARTS		
Relevant Stakeholders / Potential partners	Desired Outcomes	KPIs
DTCAGSM Local authorities OPW	Future capital programmes for the arts will be strategic, sustainable and appropriate to need.	Ambitious capital programme for new development in the arts.
	Existing infrastructure is adapted / updated to reflect best practice climate adaptation, while also meeting the evolving needs of artists and audiences.	Additional retrofit programme to bring existing infrastructure up to standard.
Local authorities Regional authorities	The Arts Council's role as a prescribed Planning Authority will be maximised and more widely recognised.	More relevant and strategic engagement with planning authorities.
Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	The provision of optimum arts development and infrastructure locally is integrated into wider county and city development planning.	Evidence of arts and culture integrated into new development plans.
DTCAGSM Other cultural agencies / bodies		Arts and culture included in the new national Guidelines for Development Plans.

B. PLANNING AND THE ARTS	
Policy measure	Actions
	<p>B7. Develop a matrix for offering advice on capital development in the arts at different scales of optimum provision.</p>
<p>In collaboration with the artistic community explore creative ways of informing planning and development processes through cross-agency partnerships and artist citizen engagement.</p>	<p>B8. Develop new arts and interdisciplinary practice opportunities that focus thematically on key planning and development areas such as rural development and participatory democracy in the plan-making process.</p> <p>B9. Actively engage with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to further explore opportunities for collaborative work in this area.</p>
<p>Build on our key strategic partnership with local government to work collaboratively exploring the contribution of the arts in other domains.</p>	<p>B10. Continue to work through the Framework for Collaboration structure to grow and develop new areas of collaboration.</p> <p>B11. Work with the Architecture Team to support new partnership initiatives with local authorities.</p>

B. PLANNING AND THE ARTS		
Relevant Stakeholders / Potential partners	Desired Outcomes	KPIs
	<p>The arts are established as an integral part of the national planning system.</p> <p>New private and public development adopt a sensitive, high-quality and sustainable to the inclusion of cultural facilities in plans.</p>	<p>Evidence that Arts Council guidance has been incorporated into Development Plans and utilised by planners and / or developers in future developments.</p>
<p>Artists</p> <p>Arts organisations</p> <p>Public Bodies</p> <p>3rd level institutions</p> <p>Communities</p> <p>Department of Housing, Local Govt and Heritage (DHLG&H)</p>	<p>The vision and creativity of artists is brought into the public planning and development policy arena.</p> <p>Innovative and exemplary creative practice in planning and development is recognised nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>New models of promoting and supporting interdisciplinary practice have been supported and developed by the Arts Council.</p> <p>New creative initiative has been developed with DHLG&H.</p>
<p>Local authorities</p>	<p>Demonstrate the impact of arts and culture at local level in sustainable development and high quality place design.</p>	<p>Case studies and evidence reviews published.</p>

C. ARTS INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Policy measure	Actions
Review and rebalance supports for artists based on optimum spatial and demographic information.	<p>C1. Conduct a census of artists living and working in Ireland in collaboration with local government partners.</p> <p>C2. Undertake a cross artform / practice review of the infrastructural provision of workspaces for artists nationally, taking into account new practices and ways of working and the rapidly changing environment.</p> <p>C3. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Arts Centre policy's actions to offer support to artists as creators, participants, collaborators and community members.</p> <p>C4. Track our investment in artists spatially and develop appropriate mechanisms to address any identified imbalances.</p> <p>C5 (C7). Pilot a socio-spatial reach measurement project with a number of key national and regional organisations towards developing appropriate spatial and demographic criteria within Strategic Funding.</p>

C. ARTS INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Relevant Stakeholders / Potential partners	Desired Outcomes	KPIs
Artists Arts organisations Arts Centres Local authority Arts Services	<p>Our investment in artists is balanced and reflects the socio-spatial profile of artists living and working across Ireland.</p> <p>Greater co-ordination between local authority and Arts Council supports for artists.</p> <p>Key arts organisations are providing meaningful support, advice and opportunities to artists across the country.</p>	<p>Accurate spatial dataset on artists living and working in Ireland.</p> <p>Future capital programme that addresses identified gaps in infrastructure.</p> <p>Evidence of increased and enhanced working opportunities for artists throughout the country.</p> <p>Evidence of more spatial balance in our supports to artists nationally.</p>

C. ARTS INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT	
Policy measure	Actions
Establish clear scale-appropriate criteria aimed at achieving socio-spatial equity in public engagement across all funding programmes.	<p>C6. Make explicit the socio-spatial criteria that apply within different funding schemes such as the Festival Investment Scheme and the Touring Scheme.</p> <p>C7 (C5). Pilot a socio-spatial reach measurement project with a number of key national and regional organisations towards developing appropriate spatial and demographic criteria within Strategic Funding.</p>
<p>Promote and develop further a people and place-based approach to investing in the arts and communities.</p> <p>Ensure the centrality of children and young people's engagement and voice in the arts across all areas of the country.</p>	<p>C8. In the expansion and further development of the Creative Place programme ensure the new model of Social Impact Assessment is incorporated into evaluative processes on this programme.</p> <p>C9. Further develop socio-spatial criteria in the expansion of the Creative Schools programme paying particular attention to the spatial insights in the evaluation of that programme.</p> <p>C10. In reviews of Strategic, Arts Centre and Partnership Funding ensure spatial analysis of provision and opportunities for children and young people is examined.</p>

C. ARTS INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT		
Relevant Stakeholders / Potential partners	Desired Outcomes	KPIs
<p>Arts sector</p> <p>The public</p> <p>Key partners / local authorities</p> <p>National arts and regional arts organisations in receipt of substantial public funding</p>	<p>Ensure a reasonable socio-spatial balance of opportunities for people to engage in the arts across Ireland.</p> <p>Offer clarity on Arts Council supports and expectations at different scales of provision – national, regional, local, virtual, and international.</p>	<p>New metrics developed on socio-spatial distribution of Arts Council resources.</p> <p>Evidence of increased and enhanced opportunities for public engagement in the arts throughout the country.</p>
<p>Local communities</p> <p>Artists</p> <p>Arts organisations</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>Children and young People</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Creative Associates</p> <p>Creative Ireland</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>Arts sector</p>	<p>Increased opportunities for people to decide, design and take part in arts experiences in their own localities.</p> <p>Continued socio-spatial equity and sustainability in the roll out of this programme.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for children and young people to take part in arts experiences in their own localities, as informed by their own needs and interests.</p>	<p>Arts Council supporting more places where there is limited access to infrastructure for the arts.</p> <p>More schools involved across the country.</p> <p>More sustained involvement by schools that connects in with the arts infrastructure locally.</p> <p>More children and young people engaged in the arts.</p>

D. LEARNING & INSIGHT	
Policy measure	Actions
Ensure our socio-spatial knowledge and thinking is informed by contemporary trends and thinking in public planning and development.	<p>D1. Offer a programme of spatially themed seminars to staff and members – Invite key leaders and thinkers in planning and development as well as related areas such as virtual / digital space to participate.</p> <p>D2. Forge new partnerships with third level institutions towards enhancing research and knowledge in this domain.</p>
Work with the artistic community to create new opportunities for understanding and reimagining public policy concerns.	<p>D3. Commission and publish a series of artistic essays pertaining to the arts and spatial / public policy matters in a variety of media.</p>
Encourage a culture of open dialogue with the Arts Council as a development agency working across the country.	<p>D4. Create a platform for direct citizen engagement with the Arts Council.</p> <p>D5. Re-establish the Meet the Arts Council programme at different regional locations when it is safe to do so.</p>

D. LEARNING & INSIGHT		
Relevant Stakeholders / Potential partners	Desired Outcomes	KPIs
<p>Arts Council</p> <p>Artists</p> <p>Arts organisations</p> <p>Policy Makers</p> <p>3rd level institutions</p>	Arts Council is recognised as a dynamic learning organisation that acts as a conduit between the arts sector and a wider public policy agenda.	Increased demand for Arts Council input / contribution across a wide-range of public policy fields.
<p>Arts Sector</p> <p>Public</p>	The relevance and value of the artist's creative voice and contribution to public discourse is recognised.	Increased profile of artist in the media and other public policy forums in Ireland.
	The Arts Council as a public agency is informed and relevant and open to new and alternative voices and thinking.	New ways of listening and engaging with the public established.

Background to Policy Development

Appendix

This policy builds on several decades of work by the Arts Council which have sought to address geographic equity concerns. As early as the 1970s the Richards¹ report examined the imbalances in geographic provision of the arts in Ireland and informed the legislative change that enabled local authorities to play a more active role in promoting and supporting the arts. Arts Council regions-focused strategy in the 1980s, and subsequently, has nurtured and grown that critical role, to the extent that our partnership with local government forms the bedrock of our spatial and demographic planning today; at its simplest ensuring there is arts development and provision in every county in Ireland, and expressed strategically through our ten-year agreement with the County and City Management Association *A Framework for Collaboration*.

Separately, through other dedicated pieces of policy and development work, the Arts Council has sought to give due consideration to the notion of geographic reach in a bid to ensure 'breadth and balance' in its provision. Previous arts plans gave particular emphasis to trying to ensure as wide as possible a geographic spread of provision, and our current strategy aspires towards *well-balanced arts provision benefitting people across Ireland*.

A policy starting from the perspective of the people who do or do not benefit from arts provision in places across Ireland, provides the basis for the Arts Council more emphatically adopting socio-spatial equity as a core consideration in our decision-making and planning for the arts.

The review and subsequent development of an *Arts Centres' policy* in 2019 was conducted in the context of the joint responsibilities local authorities have with the Arts Council for that crucial infrastructure. As that policy is rolled out it forms a key foundation on which this spatial policy is built. Additionally, a small festivals' review and subsequent Festivals' policy acknowledged the significance of the *Festivals Investment Scheme* in meeting more equitable spatial and demographic objectives. However, a more recent review of the Arts Council's *Touring and Dissemination Scheme* showed that there was no pattern of targeted investment in touring in the period 2014–2018 and there was an uneven distribution of touring projects per population. A key finding was that, *Touring and dissemination are fundamental to public engagement with quality arts provision – and essential to addressing Dublin vs ex-Dublin Imbalances*.

Within different art forms and multi-disciplinary areas of practice geographic access has also been a consideration, albeit not always formally expressed. A core underlying principle has been to ensure there are spaces for the creation and presentation of art throughout the country, in the main adopting a regional provision approach, and this often forms the basis for the *strategic relevance* of organisations in our funding programmes. In the course of our work the Arts Council now seeks to address a range of spatial concerns – from ensuring geographic spread; to strategic regional provision; to acknowledging urban cluster patterns for some artists and arts organisations (for, example, theatre-makers located close to large cities); and the role of organisations with a designated national or regional remit in addressing countrywide reach.

The ubiquity of digital engagement and virtual platforms has offered another plane – virtual space – on which the arts and culture are now accessed and enjoyed, which must be considered within any analysis of reach and engagement.

More recent initiatives such as the *Creative Schools* programme have taken an explicitly spatial and demographic approach to school selection to ensure an equitable socio-spatial distribution of opportunities to participate. Feedback from the evaluation of this initiative highlights the particular value of investment in small rural schools where the scale of this investment has the potential for much greater impact proportionate to schools in larger urban settings.

Further, within the context of our continued partnership with local government a shift in strategic focus to the notion of 'place' has allowed for further investment in 'on the ground' long-term developmental initiatives and the initiation of a new *Creative Places* programme that focuses on people in places having more agency in their local cultural development. This has the potential to become a key policy instrument for socio-spatial equity and ensuring Arts Council support to places that lack the necessary infrastructure for accessing the arts.

Finally, this framework is set within the context of and intersects with other corporate policies that have been developed under the auspices of *Making Great Art Work*, namely the *Equality, Human Rights & Diversity* and the *Paying the Artist* policies, as well as those that are in development, including a Digital policy and a Climate Adaptation policy. It also applies within art form and practice areas where policy is being renewed, with specific application to the Architecture policy.

¹ Provision for the Arts, J.M Richards, 1976, The Arts Council & The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

WIDER CONTEXT

At national level advancement in the area of spatial planning has culminated in *Project Ireland 2040* an ambitious long-term vision for the managed growth and development of all parts of the country based on evidential predictions around settlement patterns and behaviours. Most importantly planning has been explicitly linked to state investment for the first time through the *National Development Plan*, with major capital investment committed to up until 2027 under the *Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)* and the *Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)*. With vibrancy and vitality of place a key objective, the arts should be integral to these channels of support, as they have a central role to play in place animation and development.

Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018–2027 a capital investment programme for culture, launched in April 2018 is particularly relevant. As well as significant investment in national cultural institutions, this includes a €40m capital programme for regional cultural infrastructure and a €127m plan to invest in the Gaeltacht, the Irish language and the islands. The current *Cultural Capital Scheme* for arts and culture organisations that runs until 2022, is focused on enhancing and upgrading existing facilities, prioritising projects that reduce an organisation's carbon footprint and that will make a real and positive impact on the environment. Projects that provide additional capacity for artists and artistic production particularly in arts centres are also prioritised. A further funding stream in response to the pandemic was also rolled out last year, to allow arts and cultural centres to make the necessary adaptations to their spaces. Through this policy framework the Arts Council can give particular priority to reviewing the current arts infrastructure on a spatial basis, and making recommendations for what the future focus and priorities of the next round of the *Cultural Capital Scheme* should be, based on identified needs.

The National Planning Framework *Project Ireland 2040* is based on a population growth projection of one million up to that period, with 25% of that growth in Dublin, 25% in the combined four other cities, and the remaining 50% in key regional centres, towns, villages and rural areas. As well as the five cities, five other towns are identified as key regional growth areas: Sligo, Athlone; Letterkenny; Derry; and Drogheda / Dundalk: Newry the latter two acknowledging the significance of the Border and the Dublin – Belfast economic corridor. A regional focus to Arts Council spatial policy will give particular emphasis to these cities and towns.

Ireland's unique rural nature, proportionately the largest in Europe, is also recognised with several objectives focused on regenerating rural living. In *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021–2025*, a framework is offered for a cross-departmental approach to the development of rural Ireland over the next five years. *Its vision for a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development, which is built on the interdependence of urban and rural areas, and which recognises the centrality of people, the importance of vibrant and lived-in rural places, and the potential to create quality jobs and sustain our shared environment fully accords with Arts Council objectives for socio-spatial equity and the arts being practiced and enjoyed widely across the country.*

In respect of core Government policy and development the Arts Council has a substantial contribution to make regarding what uniquely a thriving arts ecology can offer to this holistic development of the country. Furthermore, there is now a wealth of evidence both nationally (for example, the Growing up in Ireland study on the Cultural Participation of Children and Young People) and internationally (for example, the WHO evidence review on Arts & Health) that demonstrates the positive impact of the arts in areas such as education, health, well-being and quality of life.

Relevant compatible areas that the Arts Council will promote further within this new spatial policy framework include:

- Growing the arts on a spatial basis.
- As well as the intrinsic value of the arts in peoples' lives, the specific cultural, social and economic benefits of good arts provision in a range of settings (rural, urban, small towns, cities and so on) – for example, their contribution to wellbeing and quality of life, their role in defining the character of place, their role in creating place meaning and enhancing community cohesion and inclusion.
- The adaptable nature of the arts to bring richer value to different settings with flexibility for either compact, smart growth in urban areas or strong stable communities in rural areas.
- The importance of relativity to scale – region / city / town / neighbourhood / community – and aligning the nature of provision accordingly.
- The importance of accessibility to amenities – through good public transport and optimum physical access.
- The significance of national Broadband rollout for utilising new platforms to access the arts, and the need to closely align our digital arts strategy with this spatial policy.
- Creativity's contribution to enterprise, innovation and skills development.
- The arts and creative industries as a key and growing employment sector, with necessary supporting infrastructure being provided for that (for example, artist workspaces, galleries, Arts Centres).

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