



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann
Local Government Ireland



Culture & Creativity Strategy

2023-2027



County Cork

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Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

Forewords

County Cork has a rich and vibrant cultural and creative sector that contributes enormously to our sense of identity and to the quality of life we as citizens enjoy. This can be seen in the many arts festivals that take place in every part of the county annually, in the extraordinary level of artistic production, the extensive cultural heritage that has been preserved and the level of individual and communal engagement in the arts.

County Cork is the largest county in Ireland by geographical area and the second largest in terms of population. The county offers a beautiful and incredibly varied natural environment and topography which has long attracted artists, writers, craftspeople, filmmakers, and many other creative artists to locate here. By their presence they have contributed and enriched cultural life in this county in so many different ways.

The county is also changing demographically. The 2016 census showed that people of 93 different nationalities have chosen to live here and to contribute their unique cultural perspective to an increasingly diverse community and this is welcome. More recently we have also welcomed many people fleeing the war in Ukraine, and we plan to assist their integration through programmes such as Creative Ireland.

The county has its own indigenous cultural traditions, be it in the distinctive Sliabh Luachra music and song of the Northwest of the county, the living preservation of the Irish language and customs in our two Gaeltacht areas of Mhuscraí and Oileán Chleire, our storytelling, set-dancing and sean-nós singing and the traditions, language and customs of the travelling community.

Colloquially, the county is referred to as the Rebel County and this stems from a fierce independence, a sense of justice, and a commitment to principles of which we are proud.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the importance of Culture and Creativity in the lives of our citizens was highlighted. People turned to the arts, culture, and creativity to help them through the difficult and unprecedented times. This led to a renewed awareness and appreciation of the personal benefits of engaging in creative activity.

As Mayor of the County of Cork, I welcome this strategy. It aims to enhance our understanding of the transformative power of Culture and Creativity and to set out various paths through which we can work for the betterment of the communities we live in.

Cllr. Danny Collins

Mayor of the County of Cork

County Cork Council has fully embraced the Creative Ireland programme since its inception in 2017. In doing so we see the way the Creative Ireland proposition connects to and complements the work that we do. We are intimately connected to the communities we serve through our elected members and the services we provide. We have seen the value and returns generated by strategic investment in arts, culture, heritage, and community development. Our goal as a local authority is to make Cork an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in. A thriving, active, cultural and creative ecosystem is a very important component in this work.

There are many resources which will come into play in helping deliver the aims of this strategy. We have an established network of libraries throughout the county which have been developed to provide a wide range of cultural services, events and activities as well as being spaces that are actively used throughout the year by many local cultural and creative groups. We have invested in our many arts and cultural festivals, seeing these as important annual events that bring the entire community together, as a key component in our cultural offering for visitors and for the economic dividend it brings to local economies.

As a local authority we have a duty to preserve our heritage in all its forms, physical, intangible and natural. These are resources of which we are custodians. We encourage public engagement with, and enjoyment of, these unique resources. Connected to this is the need to play our part in raising awareness about the impact we are having on climate and the environment, and I welcome the inclusion of this as a priority in the Culture and Creativity Strategy.

According to the 2016 census there are over 120,000 children and young people up to the age of 19 living in the county and this figure is growing. Creativity is an essential skill that will equip young people to meet the challenges of the future.

We are pleased to see that Creative Ireland, nationally, supports various measures in encouraging creative development for children and young people.

During our consultation process, key themes emerged. These included the need for greater levels of networking, information sharing and collaboration as a means of encouraging creativity at community level. The importance of culture and creativity to issues as diverse as placemaking, economic development, wellness, and the environment were frequently cited as was the need to look at how artists and other creatives can be more fully engaged in the Creative Ireland agenda. These themes have been considered and have informed the development of this strategic vision.

Since 2017, the Creative Ireland Programme has achieved many successes and we plan to build on these achievements over the next five years. A Culture and Creativity Team has been established with personnel drawn from several directorates, in recognition that culture and creativity is embedded across various service areas. I would like to commend the members of the Culture and Creativity Team for their work in developing this strategy and in the delivery of the strategic actions over the coming years.

County Cork can be proud of its cultural and creative sector, from local voluntary arts organisations to its many cultural producers consisting of the film and audio-visual sector, designers, makers, artists, writers, musicians, and craftspeople and also to the emerging new digital creative economic space. These are the makers and shapers of creativity in our community and we are proud to work with and support them.

As Chief Executive of County Cork Council I welcome this strategy and we will in partnership with Creative Ireland fully support its implementation.

Tim Lucey

Chief Executive of County Cork Council

1 Creative Ireland 2023–2027

The Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-government initiative committed to enhancing access to, engagement with, and enjoyment of Ireland’s culture and creativity. Within the broad range of available definitions, creativity is considered as *a set of innate abilities and learned skills; the capacity of individuals and organisations to transcend accepted ideas and norms and by drawing on imagination to create new ideas that bring additional value to human activity.*

The vision of the Creative Ireland Programme 2023–2027 is to mainstream creativity in the life of the nation so that individually and collectively, in our personal lives and in our institutions, we can realise our full creative potential thereby promoting individual, community and national wellbeing.

The Creative Ireland Programme will deliver through collaboration and partnership promoting understanding and appreciation of the value of creativity in all its forms — whether through the arts, culture, heritage, or technology.

The Creative Ireland Programme will prioritise its work around five aspects for the period 2023–2027:

- Creative Youth
- Creative Communities
- Creative Industries
- Creative Health and Wellbeing
- Creative Climate Action and Sustainability

Through the Creative Ireland Programme, *Creative Communities* supports the partnership between the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Ireland’s local authorities. This partnership enables citizens and communities to explore their culture and creativity at local level and, where appropriate, leverage that creativity to strengthen wellbeing, advance social cohesion and support economic development.

Creative Communities is also innovative in deploying creativity to achieve greater integration across targeted policy priorities. This has delivered new creative engagement initiatives in relation to for example children and young people, older persons, climate action, and local economies. Individuals and communities’ perception about the role and value of culture and creativity as central to our wellbeing in its broadest sense is being enhanced.

The opportunity embraced within the County Cork Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 is to support people’s participation, inclusion and expression within communities, and further strengthen local creative economies.



Cruinniú na nOg 2022.
Photograph: Anna Groniecka

A Sound Initiative.
Photograph: Anna Groniecka

2 Culture and Creativity in County Cork

Kinsale. The kind of rain we knew is a thing of the past— deep-delving, dark, deliberate you would say, browsing on spire and bogland; but today our sky-blue slates are steaming in the sun, our yachts tinkling and dancing in the bay like racehorses. We contemplate at last shining windows, a future forbidden to no one.

Derek Mahon 1941-2020

Reproduced by kind permission of the Estate of Derek Mahon and The Gallery Press www.gallerypress.com.

It is fitting to open a chapter entitled Culture and Creativity in County Cork with the words of a major poet who chose to live in the county for many years and who sadly passed away in 2020. Derek Mahon's poem Kinsale juxtaposes darkness and light: Darkness representing an earlier Ireland, repressive and dreary with a vision of an illuminated, modern, open, intellectually curious, creative and prosperous country that is full of possibility and 'forbidden to no one'. This final image sets the ambition for our strategy.

The Creative Ireland programme has enriched the lives of many communities and individuals in County Cork. It aims to create pathways to a wide range of creative and cultural possibilities, connecting individuals and communities and encouraging people of all ages to discover their personal creative potential.

Creative Ireland seeks to place culture and creativity at the heart of many of the services that the Local Authority provides. This is reflected in County Cork Council's Culture and Creativity team, whose membership is drawn from directorates in areas as diverse as climate adaptation, placemaking, economic development, as well as more commonly understood cultural functions of the arts, libraries, tourism, heritage, and language. This group fosters cross-disciplinary collaboration and sparks new initiatives to support and enhance the services we deliver.

County Cork Council's Arts, Culture, and Languages Strategic Policy Committee assists in the formulation, development and review of all policies that impact on cultural provision and has an oversight role in the development and operation of the Creative Ireland programme over the next five years.

County Cork is Ireland's largest county with a land area of 7,500 km² and a population of 332,255. Like other counties, Cork is becoming increasingly diverse. In the 2016 Census, 93 ethnic nationalities were identified, comprising 12% of the population. Children and young people aged between 0 and 19 accounted for 122,511 of the population and people aged over 65 stood at 45,800. Preliminary figures from the 2022 Census show that the County Cork and City population has increased by 7.1% bringing the combined population to 581,231.

There are two Gaeltacht areas in County Cork; Oileán Chléire and Gaeltacht Mhuscraí which includes an area to the west of Macroom, Baile Bhuirne, Baile Mhic Íre, Cúil Aodha, Ré na nDoirí, Cill na Martra, Guagán Barra and Béal Atha an

Ghaorthaidh. The Gaeltacht Act (2012) provides a statutory footing to the strategy for the Irish Language 2010- 2030 and recognises Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas (LPT), Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks. In 2019 County Cork Council produced the Múscaí Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan, providing a holistic view of the heritage of this culturally unique area.

The County Cork Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024 promotes "... a collaborative approach to building healthy, inclusive and resilient communities through social and economic development, enhancing our urban and rural communities guided by a quality of life ethos". County Cork Council recognises the significant part played by the many voluntary organisations who support cultural and creative engagement throughout the county. Without this, much of the county's cultural life would be greatly diminished. County Cork Council aims to continue working with and building capacity in this sector. Opportunities for increased networking and collaboration between locally based organisations were consistent themes in our public consultation. The sector also faces unprecedented challenges including rising costs, regulatory compliance etc. Lack of awareness of the creative and cultural resources available was also noted.

County Cork Council is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This is embedded across policies and championed through targeted programming, supporting our rights to a high quality of life, to contribute to, and participate in civic life. It recognises the diversity of needs of all citizens of various life stages, cultural, and ethnic minorities. It acknowledges that there have been barriers to participation and aims to work with communities to support creative participation and cultural leadership in the county.

This can be seen in our Rainbow Library Project with LGBTQI+ young people, our circus programme

with Direct Provision Centres and our Creativity in Older Age programme. Our artists' residency programme has also given several artists and a historian the time and focus to support creative engagement in communities across the county.

The County Cork Council Corporate Plan sets out to "Protect our built and natural environment through sustainable development and employing climate adaptation and mitigation practices that impact positively on meeting our climate action ambition". This strategy affords an opportunity to adopt creativity-based approaches to assist in meeting this important goal.

Connection and placemaking are strong themes in the County Cork Development Plan 2022 -2028. The Plan's vision and main aims for the county are underpinned by the core quality of life principles of sustainability, climate action, social inclusion, placemaking, and resilience: "The Vision is to provide for the development of County Cork as an attractive, competitive and sustainable place to live, visit and do business, where the quality of its economy, natural and built environment, culture and the strength and viability of its rural and urban communities are to the highest standards".

Culture and creativity contribute to council-led revitalisation programmes in towns and villages, with the ability to foster collaboration among makers and artists, add value to the urban experience and create new, welcoming creative places in the heart of town centres. The support of Creative Ireland in helping several creative micro enterprises and social enterprises to establish and flourish in towns such as Fermoy, Mallow, Killeagh, Carrigaline and Youghal is gratefully acknowledged.

The disruption and isolation which occurred in the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the value and the necessity for creativity in our lives. It also led people to consider using technology to connect, work, and champion new digital methods of communication. The pandemic has also shone

a light on the resilience of communities, new possibilities for use of communal outdoor spaces and the value of placemaking, and cultural connection in supporting social cohesion and wellbeing.

2018-2022

Between 2018 and 2022, more than 200,000 people participated in Creative Ireland initiatives led by County Cork Council. Over the past 5 years the Creative Ireland Programme has supported County Cork Council to develop and facilitate initiatives and projects which make a meaningful impact on the participants and communities involved. Supporting creative projects which are aligned to our strategic aims has allowed for a holistic integration of public policy at a local level. Some elements of our County Cork Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018 – 2022 included:

- Since 2018 we have provided funding to artists and community organisations for projects that meet the objectives of Creative Ireland. This has been a welcome source of additional funding and has enabled local groups develop imaginative and accessible projects in their community.
- Children and Young People: These include reading programmes, Teen Literature Festival, various artist residencies, and Cruinniú na nÓg.
- Through Creative Ireland we have been able to develop new opportunities for creative engagement for the elderly in our community and also those who live in care settings. This includes our radio documentary On The Wireless, radio soap opera The Estate and our Covid-Care Concert Series with local musicians and the Mobile Music Machine. We have also looked at ways in which we can support older people re-engage in the cultural life of the community post COVID-19. This has led to the establishment of Cultural Companions, a partnership with the HSE, Cork City Council, and the Munster Federation of Muintir na Tíre. Cork Cultural Companions' aim is to provide increased opportunities for older people to engage with culture on a local and national level.

- A Sound Initiative is a free instrument loan scheme which has been expanded greatly through the Creative Ireland Programme. Anyone can borrow an instrument free of charge and try it out before making a potentially expensive purchase. There will be accompanying workshops in libraries from 2023.
- The Creative Ireland programme has supported Irish language promotion initiatives developed through our Irish Office or proposed by independent groups. A recent development has been the commission of a brand new play in Irish for children, An Sean Bhean Óg, by Grace Kiely and produced by Graffiti Theatre Company.
- The county's heritage is an important cultural and creative resource that should be accessible to all. Through our Heritage Office we have developed a number of initiatives and have supported various publications including our Colourful Heritage of County Cork, a series of children's colouring books based on significant heritage buildings located around the county.
- In 2022 South Cork LEO led a consortium of Local Enterprise Offices in a successful bid to Creative Ireland for a project that aims to raise the level of activity in the film animation sector in Munster. The Creative Start-up Scheme supports artists, designers and craftspeople to establish retail spaces, revitalising commercial centres in towns and villages. Creative start-ups have been organised by Blackwater Valley Makers, Fermoy, Owenabue Artists Collective, Carrigaline, The Wildflower Creative, Youghal and smaller temporary pop-up projects in other towns.
- Circus Factory delivered classes in Direct Provision Centres in Mallow, Drishane Castle, Macroom and Clonakilty, developing circus skills, creative expression and personal development. This will be developed further in partnership with the centres and Circus Factory in 2023.
- The Culture and Creativity Team work to align and support the Council's tourism development objectives. This involves promotion of the county

as a destination and has led to funding for film projects that raise awareness of the county's rich cultural resources and many other initiatives.

Feedback from some of the groups, artists and creative professionals across Cork that have helped us to deliver our 2018 – 2022 strategy:

"Miss Polly Pollinator and Miss Betty Butterfly, two large sculptures are installed in two parks in Kanturk. They are made from almost 2000 plastic bottles. They were made and installed by artists Anton and Kate Rushinov with the help of the Tidy Towns volunteers, the school and the local Men's Shed. They are showstoppers and are the talk of the place".

Mary Corbett

— Kanturk Tidy Towns.

"I've been a participant and facilitator of youth filmmaking projects funded through the County Council and Creative Ireland. It has been great to see these projects grow from strength to strength over the years, providing young people in rural areas with opportunities to express themselves creatively as well as developing technical and social skills".

Elena Horgan

— County Cork Filmmaker in Residence.

"Some of the strengths of Middleton Arts Festival are the relationships we have with other groups and holding space for creativity. Creative Ireland support enabled us to commission the sound installation Sounding the Town – Change Climate Change by Danny McCarthy. This work incorporated the thoughts and views of numerous other local groups on climate change".

Belinda Walsh

— Middleton Arts Festival.

"Circus Factory has built meaningful relationships with children living in Direct Provision Centres, giving them a space to express their creativity, learn new skills and play. Circus has multiple benefits for participants mental and physical health, but above all we have seen the promotion of Circus bringing a vibrancy to Cork's landscape."

Isabella Dogliani

— Circus Factory Cork.

This strategy supports County Cork Council's ongoing commitment of supporting access to creativity and culture for communities of place or interest. It plays a pivotal role in the revitalisation of villages and towns across Cork. It brings people together through the shared need to create, develop ideas, and produce, creating a collective sense of wellbeing. Like poet Derek Mahon's vision of a modern Ireland, we hope that in five years time the achievements of this strategy will have worked in some small way towards making Cork a county that is more inclusive and where possibility and the opportunity to realise personal and community creative potential is 'forbidden to no one'.

3

The Creative Ireland Vision for County Cork

Cork County will be a place where creative professionals have access to training and support to work in their local areas, whilst being connected to and networked with similar practitioners and groups locally and nationally. Voluntary organisations have capacity to nurture and sustain their activities through strategic investment, training, and network building.

Connected

The Cork County Creative Ireland Programme 2023 -2027 is a catalyst for taking a collaborative and innovative approach to community wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development through programmes that include arts, culture, heritage, and technology. It is inclusive and mindful of the impact that culture and creativity can have on the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and people visiting our county. This Strategy recognises the role that culture and creativity can play in the development and growth of Cork County. It aims to ensure continuity, building on the achievements of the council's first Creative Ireland Strategy 2018-22, by retaining a strategic focus to empower communities and enable inclusive creative engagement through policy, practice, participation, and partnership. There will be a focus on developmental, community-centred programming with long term, sustainable impact. This strategic aim will be supported by a strong Culture and Creativity Team.

Inclusive

The Creative Ireland vision for County Cork is that culture and creativity is accessible to everyone countywide. We envisage people of all ages feeling more connected to their local community, environment and culture. Cork will be a county where there are accessible and inclusive opportunities for people to explore their individual creative interest, connect with others and celebrate culture in their local areas and across the county.

Sustainable

The capacity of Cork County Council will be developed in order to integrate and sustain culture and creativity across a range of its responsibilities such as community cultural services, heritage, placemaking, Irish language, environment, new communities, inclusion, regeneration, and the overarching goal of the development of more vibrant, creative, and sustainable places in which to live.

4

How The Creative Ireland Programme Works Principles and Values of Creative Communities

Creative Communities will continue to support local authorities as a wellbeing strategy through:

- **Policy** — Working in partnership across government supporting local authorities to deliver relevant local, regional, and national policies and priorities;
- **Practice** — Flexible, cross-cutting Culture and Creativity Teams providing an agile and adaptable approach central to the delivery of *Creative Communities* as it addresses locally-relevant priorities;
- **Participation** — Providing more opportunities for people to engage with and enjoy culture and creativity at local level in ways that underpin equality of access; and
- **Partnership** — Between central and local government, and Cork County Council and our local culture and creative sectors.

This approach is based on addressing a shared, strategic agenda while delivering on the challenges and opportunities unique to each local authority area.

The *Creative Communities* partnership will be delivered in line with the following principles and values:

- i. Broaden access to, and participation in, cultural and creative activities locally.
- ii. Use culture and creativity as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation in achieving greater wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic development.
- iii. Strengthen the capacity of local authorities to integrate culture and creativity across place-making, regeneration, renewal, and the development of more vibrant, creative, and sustainable places.
- iv. Investing in culture and creativity to support environmental, social, and economic returns that help deliver local authority agendas — from local and regional, to national and international.
- v. Build on the agility and integrated approach of Culture and Creativity Teams to sustain further delivery of targeted collaborative programmes.

5 The Strategic Priorities for County Cork

Strategic Priority 1: Connected, Creative Communities.

This strategic priority encompasses the primary role of the local authority in the delivery of the Creative Ireland programme.

Cork County Council is intrinsically connected to the many diverse communities we serve. In our vision, connected and creative communities comprise people of all ages and backgrounds, are open, intergenerational, multicultural, diverse and multidisciplinary. Cork County Council will support purposeful collaborative, cooperative partnerships to deliver common cultural and creative goals. Through this process, cultural and creative opportunity will be more visible and accessible locally.

The communal benefits of active participation in cultural activities are well documented, such as the way engagement in creative activity promotes social cohesion and reduces isolation. Local creative, arts, cultural, and heritage resources are a significant source of local pride and often attract members of the community as volunteers as well as active participants.

We see the positive role energised community networks can play in developing the Creative Ireland agenda to the benefit of local community. We are also aware of the demands on community and voluntary sector in the county. People are essential to the delivery of any developmental programme we may wish to undertake. For that reason, our approach will be consultative rather than prescriptive and realistic in terms of assessing the resources needed for successful delivery.

Strategic Priority 1 Objectives:

1. Through this strategy we will aim to establish and work with Community Creative Networks in our main towns. These networks will bring together interested parties such as community and voluntary groups, members of the business

community, special interest groups, artists, makers and others who wish to develop and deliver on a shared, inclusive cultural and creative vision for the betterment of their local areas.

2. We will focus on capacity building measures through training and engagement to develop, energise and sustain activity. We will support best practice in areas such as, but not limited to inclusion, diversity, planning, good governance, volunteer support, legacy planning, and risk management.
3. We will work to increase awareness of, access to and use of the cultural and creative resources, both social and physical available at local level. This will be achieved through publication, information sharing, and engagement.
4. We will work to ensure that creative artists, makers, designers, creative entrepreneurs and others are connected to, engaged in and informed of the delivery of the objectives of the County Cork strategy.
5. We will aim to ensure that the initiatives we develop or support are aligned with the objectives of the national Creative Ireland Strategy 2023-2027.
6. We will identify, nurture, and empower individuals and organisations who wish to lead cultural and creative development in their communities.

Strategic Priority 2: Creative Placemaking and Representation

In identifying Creative Placemaking as a strategic priority, our aim is to harness various cultural assets and interests to support the overall objective of making our towns, villages, and rural settings more attractive, vibrant, and liveable places. We employ the term creative placemaking in its potential to animate public spaces, structures and



Bike Circus Clonakilty 2021.
Photograph: Anna Groniecka

streetscapes, its ability to connect by bringing people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

Connection to place and a sense of belonging is important in the resilience to and mitigation of climate change in local communities and their immediate environment. A sense of belonging enhances connection to one's local environment, and in this sense, we aim to use placemaking as a creative catalyst to promote changes to behavioural attitudes in relation to the local environment and climate change.

We include the term representation in this priority recognising the need to ensure that the placemaking process must have regard to different points of view and the often contested attitudes towards place.

Strategic Priority 2 Objectives:

1. Use creative placemaking as a catalyst for revitalisation, cultural recreation and resilience in our towns, villages, and rural areas. Cork County Council aims to nurture a sense of belonging, good practice, sharing knowledge and experiences, leading to intercultural understanding, cooperation, and social cohesion.
2. Explore points of engagement and collaboration with Cork County Council Directorates to develop creative approaches to public realm, community enhancement and urban regeneration.
3. Collaborate strategically with the Municipal Districts Offices to nurture community-led initiatives that create sustainable and accessible opportunities for people to engage with creativity and culture locally.
4. Support inclusive participation in civic and cultural life while ensuring the diversity of people's backgrounds and experiences is appreciated and positively valued through recognition and inclusive representation.
5. Collaboratively develop the capacities of diverse groups and organisations across the county to lead and sustain inclusive and

accessible creative placemaking programmes for all ages in local areas, supporting connection to place and sense of belonging.

6. Foster a strategic multicultural and multigenerational approach that holds space for multiple voices to access, co-create and produce high-quality cultural programming, supporting creative participation across communities. Create and sustain opportunities for youth participation in the arts, heritage, creative industries and technology through youth-centred consultation and partnerships. Connect older people through programming such as Cultural Companions to share and explore creativity, fostering wellbeing, and a sense of belonging and agency in creative and cultural expression. Engage with established representative structures including the Older Peoples' Council, Local Creative Youth Partnership and the Public Participation Network.
7. Connect climate action activities with placemaking and the local environment to nurture the relationship between communities and their wider natural environments, and to support behavioural change to climate action.

Strategic Priority 3: The Creative Economy

The term creative economy is defined as *"the transactions of creative products that have an economic good or service that results from creativity and has economic value"* (Howkins 2001). As Ireland and the wider world transitions from product-based manufacturing to a services-based model the importance of creative thinking, the capacity to develop and commodify ideas as intellectual property has come to be recognised as a very valuable skill. The creative industries now encompass advertising, architecture, the arts, craft, design, designer fashion, film and video, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer games, and television and radio production.

In this strategic priority, Cork County Council acknowledges the need to embed creativity in its work in social, cultural, and economic development,

working to create opportunities for current and future creative professionals in the county and enabling creative industries to play a stronger role in supporting overall development.

Cultural activity has long been recognised for its economic dividend in areas such as tourism. County Cork has benefited from its image as a culturally vibrant county, with our cultural events and attractions bringing many visitors from all over the world.

Cultural hubs that cluster and sustain collaborative, creative talent can also play a role in the revitalisation of our towns and villages.

Strategic Priority 3 Objectives:

1. Support creative professionals to develop and sustain their practices in County Cork through specific supports, incentives, and strategic policy, including access to workspaces, professional development, and developmental programming that utilises and connects to the unique skillsets and expertise of the sector.
2. Research and development of supports and networks for creative professionals in rural and Gaeltacht areas of the county. Facilitate enhanced cooperation and peer support, leading to greater opportunities for creative professionals.
3. Work strategically with the Cork County Council Economic Development Unit and Local Enterprise Office (LEO) to raise awareness of existing supports and networks suited to the creative sector, co-founding a structured mentoring programme and piloting geographically based peer networks for creative professionals.
4. Champion our libraries as the lynchpin of the county's cultural infrastructure, supporting creativity and creative learning and promoting supports available to the county's creative industries.
5. Support businesses and festivals who are developing creative ways to reduce and reuse

waste materials in an effort to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and the impact on the environment.

6. Continue to support artists, designers, and craftspeople to establish retail spaces in which to sell their work through the Creative Start-up Scheme.
7. Include provision for networking and appropriate workspaces for digital creatives in the new digital hubs currently in development and in doing so supporting Cork County Council's work revitalising commercial centres in towns and villages.
8. Continue to work with Cork County Council's Tourism department and the county's festivals sector to support, sustain and consolidate through capacity building training measures.
9. Encourage youth participation in the arts, addressing particularly arts in the virtual digital space.
10. Explore opportunities to engage with and support existing film professionals working in the county.
11. Further develop the county's creative digital industry sector through links with existing programmes in the region, e.g., Munster Animation Forum and developing links with training providers in the region.

Strategic Priority 4: Wellness and Creativity

The World Health Organization defines mental health as a *"state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community"*.

The Cork County Culture and Creativity Team is committed to engaging with the Healthy Ireland programme, Library Services, Older Peoples Council, Local Creative Youth Partnership, Comhairle na nÓg and others, strategically

collaborating to co-deliver programmes that support individual and collective wellbeing.

There are several external organisations and initiatives with a remit for creativity and wellbeing that we are partnering with in order to add value to their ongoing work and extend the reach of the Creative Ireland programme. We also aim to develop new partnerships to widen our reach and diversify participation.

Research by The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) commissioned by Creative Ireland shows that creative activity in older years promotes health and wellbeing, reduces loneliness, depression, and stress. We aim to develop creative, social initiatives based on the findings of this study.

Likewise, the study Mapping the Art (NYCI 2021) found that youth arts provision supports the exchange of ideas, understanding of relationships, wellbeing benefits, development of empathetic skills, team dynamics, critical thinking and provides valuable and varied opportunities for social engagement.

There is significant research that identifies how being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear, and stress and increases positive mental and physical wellbeing. (EPA 2020).

Strategic Priority 4 Objectives:

Nurture new and existing partnerships that support positive mental and physical health and wellbeing to co-deliver across the county, with a particular focus on new creative partnerships in North and East Cork.

1. Support and initiate training and peer networking for creative professionals and partnering healthcare professionals in the health and wellbeing sectors. Cork County Council will continue to foster creative connections with care settings to support opportunities for developmental creative work.
2. Encourage individual creativity and confidence to emerge and flourish in a social, collaborative, and cooperative context, engaging in cultural and creative developmental programming to strengthen and support community cohesion.

3. Foster community-centred approaches to meaningful creative and cultural programming that prioritise the creative expression, sense of purpose and confidence of the participant. This may support increased wellbeing and agency for individuals and the community as a whole.
4. Support the wellness of our elders through layered methods of participation, focussing on social engagement. Continue our cross-sector approach internally and externally, fostering long-term impactful engagement that is person-centred, agile, and strategic.
5. Embed wellbeing and creativity as priorities in supporting our relationship with and understanding of climate action and natural heritage.
6. Develop connection to creative wellness across Cork County Council through creative programming for its staff, working collaboratively with Health Promotion and Wellbeing personnel.

Strategic Priority 5: Creative Climate Action

The Creative Ireland programme has the capacity to support the local and national climate action agenda. Cork County Council's Environment Directorate is already engaging in awareness raising measures targeting various sectors including farming, community and education.

The competing demands of developing visitor numbers in tourism and at the same time mitigating the carbon impact generated by those visits provides a compelling instance where creative solutions to this issue may be found. Research by Fáilte Ireland has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the level of visitor consciousness of their role in sustainability and responsible tourism.

People connect in a special way to their natural environment and we see how this natural environment has been changing over the years due to the impacts of climate change in things such as rivers, natural habitats, forests etc. The relationship to place is a valuable connector in work to raise

climate awareness and develop and test creative approaches to climate impact mitigation

New approaches to promote climate resilience and mitigation can be successfully communicated and innovative solutions developed through the Creative Ireland programme to be embedded in culture and creativity actions through existing council structures, in training and resource sharing, and in carbon / energy reduction strategies

Strategic Priority 5 Objectives:

1. Work collaboratively through the Culture and Creativity Team to embed Cork County Council's key climate actions in cultural and creative programming across the county:
 - raise awareness
 - engage with communities
 - educate/influence - with the ultimate goal of positively influencing behaviours.
2. Strategically align with Cork County Council's Tourism Department priority to address the carbon footprint of the tourism sector and help make it much more sustainable. Research has shown that the COVID 19 pandemic has accelerated the level of visitor consciousness of their role in sustainability and responsible tourism (Source: Fáilte Ireland). Cork County Council are working with Fáilte Ireland on the following:
 - Driving change at business level to support businesses to understand and embed carbon reduction activities
 - Driving change at the level of the destination where it is the intension of Fáilte Ireland in conjunction with Local Authorities to work with communities in their region to improve their sustainability performance.
 - Integration of Sustainability Goals into Destination Experience Development Plans currently in development by Fáilte Ireland in all regions, three of which are in Cork: The Cork Destination - Cork Harbour and East

Cork Experience Development Plan is at draft stage and the West Cork Coast and Peninsulas Experience Development plans are at delivery stage. Cork County Council is a key partner in the delivery of the actions in these plans.

- New sales and marketing opportunities for sustainable tourism businesses that are providing more sustainable options for visitors are also being developed by Fáilte Ireland's marketing teams as a certain cohort of visitors are now seen to seek out specifically sustainable visitor experiences.
- 3. Work cross-departmentally with Climate and Environment, Cork County LEO, and Tourism to support cultural organisations and creative enterprises in the County to engage in environmental management opportunities through the Green for Micro Programme offering which addresses resilience towards climate change and highlights cost savings that can be made. Incentivise and support cultural initiatives to participate in training for micro businesses entitled Sustainable Futures' co-delivered with the Environmental Research Institute at UCC.

6 Implementation by the County Cork Culture and Creativity Team

Cork County Council has a Culture and Creativity Team in place to guide and oversee implementation of this Strategy.

The Culture and Creativity Teams are the cornerstone of Creative Communities across all 31 local authorities in Ireland. These teams bring together a significant range and level of expertise and, in many cases, include professionals from architecture, archives, the arts, climate action, community, enterprise and environmental development, heritage, information and communication technologies, Irish language, libraries, spatial planning, tourism, and more. This depth of technical expertise affords each local authority a level of insight, resources, and delivery experience which few other public or private sector organisations can match.

The role of this team is to:

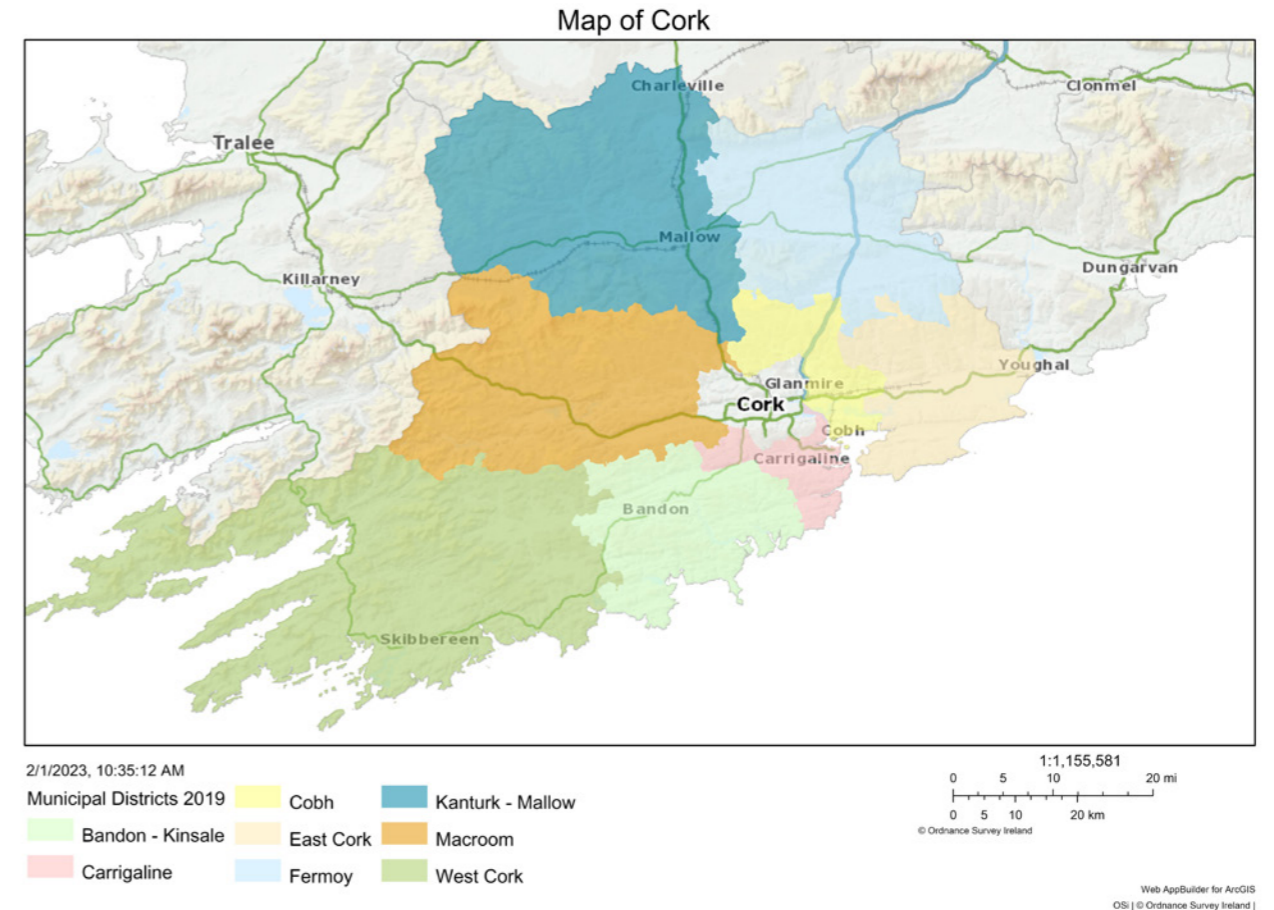
- Provide a collective forum for the ambition of culture and creativity within the local authority;
- Focus on diversity and inclusivity and enable harder to reach communities to participate in cultural and creative activities;
- Build on existing in-house expertise and strategies across areas of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development to leverage culture and creativity to deliver on targeted local authority agendas;
- Enable a shift in how the cultural and creative sector is valued within and across local authorities and ensure that culture and creativity is embedded across local authority plans, policies and project teams;

- Drive cross-collaborative actions that support change and positive outcomes locally, and potentially between local authorities at regional level; and
- Be innovative and take risks – try new projects and new ways of working.


The delivery of the Strategy is led by the Director of Services for Municipal District Operations and Rural Development and the members of the Culture and Creativity Team for Cork County Council include County Librarian, Tourism Officer, Arts Officer, Heritage Officer, Oifigeach Gaelach and the Energy and Climate Office.


These structures and processes are a critical success factor that will enable *Creative Communities* to deliver on strategic priorities for Cork County Council.


Map of County Cork and Municipal Districts



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