



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann
Local Government Ireland



Culture & Creativity Strategy

2023–2027



Longford

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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present Longford's Culture and Creativity Strategy as part of Creative Ireland 2023-2027 which comes at a formidable time in our communities. The last five years brought unexpected challenges which changed the order of our priorities, communication methods and our responsiveness in a more positive and inclusive way.

Longford is a vibrant, cosmopolitan mixture of people, culture, and traditions. The county is steeped in history and heritage, always with an eye on the future. The pandemic period was a challenging time for our community. The steering role of the local authority during this time ensured that our communities responded in a more resilience and creativity way. There was more of a focus on the 'present' which has rejuvenation qualities, leading to being more appreciative of our local surroundings and connectivity with our community. This led to a renewal in creativity in several different areas. The range of projects delivered over the five years of the project has been spectacular, diverse and community focused.

This is Longford's ambitious response to the national Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027 setting out five strategic priorities which invite everyone to connect, enjoy and explore, to experience and to excel.

Creativity is central to all our lives and is multi-faceted, being one of the most crucial aspects of our humanity. It is through creativity that new ideas are developed, and problems solved. It is essential for physical, social, and mental health. It leads to more productivity and innovation in the workplace and is also a form of self-expression and communication. Creativity provides a vocabulary

of expression and communication which is not dependent on any language while being universally understood. Longford County Council supports cultural participation and practice through partnership and collaboration. Providing supports and infrastructure across the county embodying the concept – *"If you build it and they will come"*.

Sitting alongside our many cultural strategies and initiatives, Longford will connect people, place and opportunities.

Turlough McGovern
Cathaoirleach

Paddy Mahon
Chief Executive



Tom Flood (accordion) and Noel Carberry (bodhrán) leading a bodhrán workshop in Ballymahon Library for Cruinniú na nÓg, 2022

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:

1. Creative Youth
2. Creative Communities
3. Creative Industries
4. Creative Health and Wellbeing
5. 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 Longford Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 is to support people’s participation, inclusion and expression within communities, and further strengthen local creative economies.



Patrick McGivney (Harp Media), Will Fitzgerald (Head of Programming, Galway Film Fleadh), Éanna Hardwicke (Actor), Danielle Galligan (Actor) and Robert Higgins (Harp Media) at the premiere of Lakelands, the first feature film by Granard-based Harp Media, at the Galway Film Fleadh, 2022.



From left: Gary Lydon, Dafhyd Flynn, Éanna Hardwicke, Robert Higgins, Patrick McGivney and Lorcan Cranitch during the Q & A session at the premiere of Lakelands.

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Culture and Creativity in Longford

In 2019, Longford County Council published their Corporate Plan (2019-2024). The new logo and tagline communicate the essence of the Council's approach- Connected -people, place & opportunity. The mission of Longford County Council is to work with our communities and partners to develop Longford as a dynamic, vibrant, safe, and prosperous county, celebrating its diversity, culture and heritage and, through strong leadership, build safe, healthy and sustainable communities. This sentiment and ambition will underpin the Culture and Creativity Strategy.

Using keywords like Trust, Resilience, Innovative, Collaborative, Creativity and Excellence stated in Our Core Value shows the commitment to all activities undertaken by Longford County Council.

Longford has a population of 46,634* and is a predominantly rural county with 65% of the population living in rural areas as per 2016 census. Nearly 68% of the county's total area is farmland. A large proportion of the workforce is engaged directly in agriculture or agri-related businesses throughout the county.

There are several employers in the County across a range of sectors including Pharmaceutical, Engineering, Food, BioPharma and Medical Devices, Internet, Computer Technology and various public service providers comprise the county's other key economic pillars.

Longford is a growing hub for Innovative Green Companies including sustainable construction and housing solutions who are sympathetic to the environment and determined to make a positive difference. This is an emerging market and should be beneficial to the local community in terms of jobs, improved infrastructure, and sustainable development.

Tourism is an important growing sector with several opportunities for development. Longford is part of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The Tourism Development for the region is highlighted in the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development strategy 2023-2027 which has identified several different categories of tourism markets.

Longford will strategically target the Culturally Curious, the Great Escapers and Social Energisers tourism market both on a national and international front.

The **Culturally Curious** want to visit new places, expanding their travel experience by exploring the landscape, history and culture; **Great Escapers** are sociable and enjoy interacting with the local people and connect with these through the living culture of the area including music, food and dance; and the **Social Energisers** are the early adopters who are driven by the need to be the first to try something different and innovative.

Visitors will view Longford as a destination with ease of access, tranquil location with fun, nature-based holidays, and short breaks.

The attractions in Longford include the major blueways like River Shannon, Lough Ree, the Royal Canal, and the various greenways including the National Famine Way, Newcastle Woodland Trail, Glen Lough Nature Reserve and Trail to name a few. The Longford Rebel Trail is a driving trail which has its own audio tour with interactive elements including interviews with local people and historians.

The county hosts sites of mythological, historic, archaeological, and cultural heritage. An Táin March Festival is keeping the legend of An Táin Bó Cuailgne (Cattle Raid of Cooley) alive and Ardagh Mountain connection with the Tochmairc Eithne (the Wooing of Étain by Midir) is important in terms of destination development. The wealth of architectural and archaeological including ecclesiastical heritage dating back to pre-historic times with the portal tomb of Aughnacliffe, ring forts

and the Toghers as seen at the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre.

Longford has many connections and links with several significant writers and scientists including Oscar Wilde, Jane Austen, father and daughter team of Richard and Maria Edgeworth, Oliver Goldsmith, John Keegan, "Leo Casey" and founding member of the Abbey Theatre and lecturer, Padraic Colum to name a few. The Longford Literary Driving Trail was designed to include as many literary hot spots in the county as possible with destinations of cultural and architectural interest.

The Center Parcs Longford Forest holiday resort situation in Ballymahon is nestled in 400 acres of beautiful historical forest. This provides much needed accommodation in Longford and highlights the natural charms of the county.

Key Learnings from the first Five years

The feedback from the public consultations combined with the Longford Culture and Creativity Team's high-level review endorsed the approach of the first five years of the strategy. The cultural scene in Longford was embryonic and required the team to build good foundations for development. Building capacity, collaboration and audiences' participation was essential for cultural and creative evolution in the county. The Creative Ireland Programme is now recognised as a core activity within Longford County Council with events like Cruinniú na nÓg, a highlight in the social calendar. Essential to the success of the first five years was the interdepartmental collaboration and coordination regarding all event programmes organised by the local authority. This approach ensured there was no duplication of services or events so there was no competition for audiences, delivering a quality product across all programmes and value for money for the community.

The benefit of the Creative Ireland Programme was highlighted during the pandemic period. The introduction of creative activities during this challenging time was essential for the physical, social, and mental wellbeing of all members of our community. The positives from Covid 19 included the team using different methods of engagement with the community starting with listening to their needs and hitting the right notes in terms

of communication that fit their narrative allowing for increased and improved collaboration. This model of participation ensured a wider audience in terms of numbers and diverse. The versatility and responsiveness of the programme in combination to the development of the creative arts sector via the community open call was essential. This was considered the main strengths of the programme.

There was increased year-on-year engagement with various community groups with the team providing supports in the form of training, financial support, and communication on various forms of grant aid other than Creative Ireland funding especially during the pandemic period.

The introduction of the new Creative Climate Action and Sustainability pillar in 2021 and integrating climate and biodiversity as an objective into the community open call for the next five year was considered significant. To develop multi-disciplinary, collaborative and partnership-based projects, all future projects need to include the cornerstones of the Creative Ireland ethos which are Arts, Heritage and Libraries. Ensuring sustainability of the cultural sector, a multi-year planned approach by our community groups will be more beneficial and tenable. The key themes of the programme, Creative Youth, Creative Communities, Creative Place and Creative Nation are still core to the success of the project. As Longford has limited performance or workshop spaces, the library has provided a hub for several community groups and projects. The social inclusion aspect of library encourages widespread participation and engagement from a diverse range of the community groups.

The team in Longford

The structure of Creative Ireland in Longford is twofold; Creative Ireland Culture and Creativity Team and the Creative Ireland working group. There is the over-arching Creative Ireland Culture and Creativity team which comprises of the major stakeholders for Creativity and Culture in Longford led by a Director of Services. The Creative Ireland working group is more operational in nature and brings together members of staff including the heritage officer, arts officer, archives services



An audience in Backstage Theatre

and the library service led by the Creative Ireland county co-ordinator. Both teams are anchored in the Directorate of Community Development which encourages programme opportunities to extend beyond the Creative Ireland team.

Developing the new five-year plan

In preparing this five-year plan, the Longford Culture and Creativity Team commenced by reviewing the operation and delivery of the first five years Creative Ireland Strategy and cross referencing the work on *Longford Heritage Plan (2019-2024)*; the *Longford Library Development Plan (2021-2025)*, *Longford Healthy County Plan (2018-2022)*, *County Longford Tourism Statement of Strategy and Work Programme (2017-2022)*, *Longford Age Friendly Strategy (2015-2020)*, *Longford Digital Strategy- Centred and Connected (2021-2023)*, *Longford Sports Partnership Strategy (2018-2022)*, the development of the *Longford Arts Plan (ongoing)* and the development of the new *Local Economic and Community Plan (ongoing)*, all set in the context of the work of the *Longford County Council Corporate Plan (2019-2024)*.

The next step involved inviting communities, creatives and artists to participate in open discussions to share the learnings from the last five years and to view opportunities for the next five years. This was an open invitation issued through the Public Participant Network, and by direct invitation to those who had been involved with delivering projects over the last 5 years. These meetings were scheduled in early November for each municipal district with an in-person evening meeting in Backstage Theatre in Longford town, an in-person morning meeting in Edgeworthstown Library and two in-person afternoon meetings to capture the Voice of the Child in Granard library. In all, 59 people took part in the in-person sessions and 43 people completed the online questionnaire.

The input from the Strategic Policy Committee in mid December was taken on board before drafting the final plan. The plan was presented to the Corporate Policy Group for review and was adopted by the Councillors in January 2023.

The following case studies set out Longford projects where interdisciplinarity, innovation and collaboration have been at the core:

Shawbrook Residential Music and Dance Residency (As part of Shawbrook's Forest festival)

Shawbrook supports a year-round residence for dance artists. This location is internationally renowned as a centre for excellence for dance and performance. Supporting artists and creativity is at the heart of Shawbrook. Residences for local and international artists provide an excellent opportunity to develop, question, expand their craft and showcase their excellent work in front of an audience of local and international guests. It also showcases what Longford can offer to creative people. In July 2022 the Shawbrook Residential Music and Dance Residency hosted 5 artists that collaborated and created a stunning piece called Oak & Bird which featured in the Summer Forest Festival Program. The feedback from the audience was amazing with a 70 people in attendance which is capacity for this venue.

Backstage Theatre's Multi Cultural Dance Project

A Community Integration Dance Project led by Choreographer, Catherine Young, brought people from multi-cultural backgrounds and different levels of ability together to participate in dance workshops fusing world music and dance styles including Palestinian Dabke, African Dance, Ukrainian Folk Dance and Irish Ceili. For the showcase, the participants were joined on stage by five professional dancers, four percussionists, four Longford trad musicians and four young Ukrainian violinists for a World Ceili event in the Temperance Hall in Longford Town. This performance had an element of audience participation which resulted in everyone joining in a traditional Irish Ceili which incorporated elements of different dance styles. This event engaged, nurtured, and showcased an appreciation of different ethnicities and cultures.

Bridgeways Act on Climate Change

85 Teens from different disadvantaged and hard to reach groups including refugees from Syria and Ukraine spent the summer months working on a climate action initiative. They expressed themselves through different mediums such as clay and sculpture using upcycling clothes, newspapers, and household items. This was an artist led project to discuss, educate and explain to the group and their own community about their collective carbon imprint and ways to reduce their impact on climate change.

Longford Memories: Reflections in a Time of Pandemic.

The book *Longford Memories: Reflections in a Time of Pandemic*, by Brian Farrell, was a major project undertaken in 2021 by Creative Ireland Longford, in collaboration with the Older Persons' Council and Longford Age Friendly Programme. The aim was to create a unique record of the lives and experiences of a cross-section of older people living around County Longford during the pandemic. Using the skills of an interviewer and photographer, the result was aesthetic pleasing, an archive of a living history which will be treasured for years to come. Audiences view this book as a celebration of the resilience of our older citizens. Their personal stories speak of their wisdom, creativity, and strength at a very challenging time in their lives.

Still Voices Film Festival

The *Still Voices* Film Festival, based in Ballymahon, has gone from strength-to-strength since it was established in 2017 with Creative Ireland funding. Festival director, Ronan O'Toole, aptly describes it as 'community-focused' and, at the same time, 'international'. The short film competition attracts entries from around the globe in several categories, including fiction, non-fiction, student, animation and experimental. The expansion of *Still Voices* is remarkable: it began as a weekend event in Ballymahon, and now runs over five days in several venues in the region, including Longford, Mullingar, and Athlone. This development has been possible because of additional funding from Creative Ireland in Westmeath and Fís Éireann.

The festival's success is based on the quality and range of events on the programme, including feature films, panel discussions involving distinguished filmmakers from home and abroad, and workshops and masterclasses facilitated by leading practitioners. Over 125 short films are shown, both in-person and online. A mark of festival's standing is that its patron is Terence Davies, the renowned British director, screenwriter and novelist. A film society has been established as a spin-off from the festival.

Still Voices encapsulates some of the key objectives of Creative Ireland: a local creative project has grown to the extent that it now has a regional footprint and an international profile.



3 The Creative Ireland Vision for Longford

Longford County Council's Culture and Creativity team is committed to delivering a responsive and all-inclusive cultural and creative programme as its vision for County Longford. We are committed to the vision that every person in Longford should have the opportunity and supports to realise their full creative potential regardless of age, gender or ability.

The period 2023–2027 will retain the strategic focus of a strong Culture and Creativity team, experienced in developing partnerships, cultural opportunity and creative activity that align best with the strategic priorities of Longford County Council. We will embed a strategic focus on sustainability, community focus culture development with a climate action and biodiversity narrative. The team will continue to reach out to include new and socially excluded communities within Longford.

To best situate Longford as a leader in creativity within the community, there is a concerted need to combine all Culture services with defined strategic objectives that are mirrored across each other's core mission statements. There is a need to communicate funding opportunities, new information of industry standards and update skills of the facilitators in the community so that they can seek opportunities to ensure their own sustainability into the future. There is a demand to encourage and facilitate activities that cultivate the cultural economy, which would begin with the incubation of local talent via the secondary schools' network through mentoring programmes or skills workshops. It would be important to research the opportunities of upskilling creatives based in their local area as part of a learning gate experience. This would result in social cohesion, and harness creativity of the local people providing the generation of new skills, innovation, and experiences.

The Covid-19 period has left Longford a very different place. The importance of the local towns is now of national importance both in



terms of community development and population demography. A thriving town centre is not just good for local economy but the provision of resources in terms of cultural and well-being services for the community. One factor in the public consultation was the sense of place, the teen demographic did not relate to their surroundings and were unable to identify elements that were distinctive about Longford. This place making element will remain a key focus of our Creative Communities engagement. It is important that communities and in particular children establish a strong sense of place to their local area to ensure a motivation to stay connected to the place that has become important to them. This will lead to more resilient and socially motivated communities who will cultivate a positive cycle of regeneration.

By 2027, it is the mission of the strategy that our communities will be even more cohesive, enthusiastic, and engaged with culture and creativity in Longford. There will be more engagement in making, consuming, and participating in a wide range of creative activities.

The advances in technology in terms of infrastructure, digital expression and development will provide connections and outreach from local creatives to audiences from all over the world including the local in person communities, all the while establishing Longford as their cultural base and expanding the local economy in terms of cultural attractions and tourism opportunities. The Culture and Creativity team in Longford look forward to the next 5 years of creativity created by local communities enabled by Longford County Council.

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 Longford 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.



Tea dance in Longford Rugby Club.

5

The Strategic Priorities for Longford

The Longford Culture and Creativity Team has identified five strategic priorities that are specific to the county. These areas were selected after the public consultations and will be key to the delivery of the strategy over the next 5 years. There will be developmental improvements, building on successes and learning from the first five years of Creative Ireland in Longford and further elements of audience building in our local communities. As part of the strategy, the team will commission another Culture and Creativity map of Longford to highlight the impact of the Creative Ireland programme on the Cultural Sector in the county after 10 years (2017-2027).

The five priorities are:

- Making Longford a great place to live, work, visit and invest in (A sense of place)
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths) programme development in schools
- Local Cultural Economy
- Creation of Longford legacy projects
- Climate Action and Biodiversity

Implementation

The implementation of this strategy is key. These priorities both compliment and add value to existing council strategies aimed at developing Longford as a great place to live, work, visit and invest in. There is a synergy which interlinks and reinforces the message of all five priorities. As such, this strategy will continue to deliver projects which are cross-departmental, community focused and will continue to demonstrate the success of the collaborative approach with a community lead.

Making Longford a great place to live, work, visit and invest in (A sense of place)

It is important that a collaborative approach is used to unite the Culture and Creativity Team, cultural planners, creatives, artists, and the Council through this new strategy to create communities and a place within them for historical, cultural, and emotional significance. The importance of creating a sense of place for the community is the connection to the surrounding environment and its resources, supporting the development of personal identity, inspiring stewardship, and nurturing empathy. Projects will need to use the principles of Place Making or Place Based Learning that will impact on the awareness of home, landscape and the heritage through creative programmes which will feed in the community development for that area.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths) programme development in schools

This area of collaboration is essential for the future of developing Longford as a great place to work, live and invest in, because these core skills are needed for the future workforce of Longford. Many of the jobs of tomorrow are not yet imaged or created. Longford Digital Strategy has been focusing on improving the digital infrastructure and connectivity in County Longford which will address the rural / urban digital divide. With this key cornerstone in place, the Culture and Creativity team will actively work on the development of the SMART communities, Digital Economy and Enterprise in partnership with the IT department, Local Enterprise Office, Arts Office and external stakeholders. The STEAM development also re-enforces the vision of a sense of place, at its core, the essence of the SMART communities is improving a community's sense of belonging. By introducing STEAM programming in primary schools of the county, using creative and skilled facilitators, who will develop into independent

thinkers, who adopt an interdisciplinary approach to project management and incorporate project-based learning. These creative problem-solving skills will inspire engagement with the real world in terms of critical thinking to resolve current and future infrastructure and every-day problems. By being creative there is a positive benefit for mental, emotional, and physical well-being for the youth of Longford. Creativity can be functional as well as aesthetic. Having a future-proof skilled workforce will assist with the expansion of the Digital Economy and Enterprise, which will further attract investment and encourage people to live in Longford.

Local Cultural Economy

This priority will highlight the economic activity which is centred around the local creative economy and activities including but not limited to music, film, and fine art. These activities will create and expand networks of trade, influence and knowledge transfer which will renew and generate new ways to be creative and find employment in this sector. Building on the success of this connectivity between communities the ambition of the strategy is to attract more like-minded people to enhance Longford's creative economy. Adding the element of incubating local talent via a mentoring programme and skills workshops at the developmental stages through the school network will led to community-based skill development and engagement. With the advances in technology and infrastructure, the possibility of upskilling creatives based in their local area via a learning gate experience becomes a real opportunity. This will broaden the socio-economic and cultural potentials of the programme and the potential for collaboration between cross-departmental and community agencies working within Longford. With a climate action remit, this can lead to the prospect of a circular economy such as the initiative Circular by Design.

Creation of Longford legacy projects

With a focus on place making, this strategy will identify what is so special and unique about the heritage of Longford. To create this sense and pride of place, there needs to be a cross-departmental

and societal, knowledgeable, interactive, and engaging method of communication. While Longford has a varied heritage and cultural legacy, the first project will be music centred. Music has a unique ability to connect people not just with a place, but a moment in time. There is a rich legacy and heritage of music in Longford so, over the next five years, an archive of this musical heritage will be created, then utilised and transformed into community-based projects showcasing the importance of this medium. The transformation from the archive to living memory is the first step to creating that connection with the community.

Climate Action and Biodiversity

The next five years are critical for the Longford County Council in terms of Climate Action with a 50% reduction on carbon omissions across all sectors. Therefore, it is essential to embed sustainable, positive changes and biodiversity actions through a focused communication narrative and reach out to all communities in Longford. This strategy will encourage new ambitious programme initiatives from communities to explore the impact of climate and biodiversity in local areas and the everyday lives of the people of Longford. A challenging topic such as Climate Action and Biodiversity requires a more creative approach. By applying a cultural lens via an artist or creative led project or initiative in the community will result in more community led solutions which will be adopted and embedded by the community. The Culture and Creativity Team will need to engage with local groups to provide funding information, best practice knowledge and acknowledge the work being achieved on the ground via sites and support through inter departmental or national connections. Projects might be as simple as starting a pollinator friendly garden register or more ambitious project of connecting all the greenways as a green tourism initiative with planting for food corridors to encourage a cross-community involvement.

6 Implementation by the Longford Culture and Creativity Team

Longford 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 thirty-one local authorities in Ireland. These teams bring together a significant range and level of expertise. 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;
- Be innovative and take risks – try new projects and new ways of working.

The delivery of the Strategy is led the Director of Services for Community Development. The members of the Culture and Creativity Team for Longford County Council include the County Librarian, County Archivist, Heritage Officer, Arts Officer, SEO in Community, County Architect, Head of LEO, Representative from the Communication Team, Representative from Tourism team, 2 representations from the Elected Members, Representative from Local Community Groups, Representative from Heritage School Programme, Representative from Older Person Council, Representative from the LCDC, Representative from PPN, Community Climate Change Officer, and Representative from Local Artist Collective

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

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