



Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann  
Local Government Ireland



# Culture & Creativity Strategy

**2023–2027**



**Waterford**

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# Forewords

Creativity is synonymous with the lovely place that is Waterford County and City! As one of the oldest cities in Europe and as Ireland’s oldest city, Waterford people have always been creative. Creativity and nimble thinking ensured our survival and adaptation through the many years of Viking times, Norman times, the Middle Ages and on into modern times. New inhabitants and new circumstances, whether natural (such as climate change) or human-made, are the only constant. Change, adaptation, and flexibility are a must.

Waterford has seen huge change even in the last thirty years and the Waterford that thrives today is the result of the hard work and creativity, day in day out, by its people individually and together. Waterford City and County Council, in partnership with the people of Waterford, will value and reward creativity and bring creative thinking into making Waterford an even more fantastic place to live, work, and play. We will promote creativity, using the resources available to us – personal and financial — wisely and imaginatively. Here’s to another five years of great creativity thanks to Creative Ireland (Waterford).

**Mayor of Waterford City and County**  
Councillor John O’Leary.



I welcome the new Creative Waterford Strategy 2023–2027 which outlines areas of priority and our approach to supporting Waterford’s creativity over the next five years.

Waterford, as the capital of the Southeast, is a vibrant, progressive, and connected place. Waterford was named by the Irish Times as Ireland’s Best Place to Live in 2021 and this is a great legacy for us to build on during the lifetime of the Creative Waterford Strategy 2023–2027. Our county is positioned to lead on economic growth, on quality of life, and in our excellent cultural and creative offering for the region.

The population in Waterford is projected to grow by 60% by 2040, driving a 33% increase in the South-East region. This increase brings opportunities, and we acknowledge this in our approach to placemaking and celebrating the value that diversity brings to the region.

Continuing to support our creative sector is important as the creative industries and energy of the arts community brings our uniqueness to the forefront and makes Waterford a great place to live, work, visit, and invest in.

Waterford City and County Council has prepared and is in the process of preparing a number of plans, strategies, and policies that will be supported by the Culture and Creativity Waterford Strategy 2023–2027. These include the Waterford City and County Development Plan, the Arts Plan, the national and local Library Development Plans, and others. Building creativity into these plans leads to increased innovation

& wellbeing, supports stronger communities, enhances collaboration, and allows for new ways of working. Of major importance to Waterford City and County are our plans around climate action. We are committed to meeting our responsibilities under the UN Sustainable Development Goals and aim to transition to a low carbon, climate resilient, and environmentally sustainable economy. Through ACT Waterford, our Creative Climate Action project, a number of initiatives have begun involving the public in behaviour change in a range of environmental actions, and this new strategy provides strong support for engaging people with the issues. I look forward to seeing delivery by Waterford’s Culture and Creativity team on collaborative action, strong new partnerships, and exciting developmental projects as they progress through the lifetime of the Creative Waterford Strategy 2023–2027.

**Chief Executive of Waterford City & County Council**  
Michael Walsh

*Cruinniú na nÓg* project with Sand Artist Seán Corcoran and students from Gaelscoil Phort Láirge on Kilmurrin Cove, County Waterford.  
**Photographer:** Patrick Browne.



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 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 Waterford City & County Council's Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 is to support people's participation, inclusion and expression within communities, and further strengthen local creative economies.



ACT Waterford creative activities at the Waterford Harvest Festival 2022, Waterford. **Photographer:** John D Kelly.

Imagine Arts Festival launch with the Igbo Community in Waterford. **Photographer:** DGM Photographic.



## 2 Culture and Creativity in Waterford

Waterford is a growing and connected county where we celebrate our cultural heritage, our diversity, and our unspoilt natural landscape. We understand that our people are our strength and by working together we create tremendous bonds that bring about great outcomes.

The Creative Ireland *Creative Communities* Programme has provided Waterford with wonderful opportunities to deeply consider the value and strength of the innate creativity in our communities over the past five years from 2018–2022. Almost 300 *Creative Communities* projects have been delivered in this timespan, including community-based activities via our annual Open Call and local authority organised projects. Through *Creative Communities* funding we have seen the impact of creativity in public policy in areas such as heritage, building conservation, archives, Irish language, literature, and community development through a variety of initiatives. Waterford Libraries and Waterford Arts departments have supported writers, dancers, artists and our new communities to create new collaborative works and have ensured that the ambition of Creative Waterford has extended the opportunity for people in Waterford to be creative.

The population of Waterford has grown by 9.4% between 2016 and 2022, making it one of the fastest growing populations in Ireland and the fastest growing in Munster. This increase is due to natural population increase as well as migration and the trend is expected to continue. Our Creative Waterford Strategy must ensure that we are involving all members of the population and including everyone in our policies and activities as we move forward during its lifetime.

The Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022–2028 outlines the future development of Waterford. In this document, WCCC refers to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and outlines 8 points which incorporate the overarching objectives of the Goals. The Culture and Creativity Strategy Waterford Strategy 2023–2027 aligns itself to these Goals, supporting environmental actions, rural economy and connectivity, and in particular supporting the following statements:

- To support a strong, sustainable, diverse and successful economy, underpinned by enterprise, innovation and skills and access to quality education for all.
- To protect, conserve and enhance our unique natural heritage, landscapes, seascapes, biodiversity, built and cultural heritage asset
- To make places more sustainable, inclusive, diverse, accessible, and safe with the highest standards

The Culture and Creativity Waterford Strategy 2023–2027 is cognisant of the SDGs and we will work to implement them in our projects and activities, ensuring that the work of the team and the Open Call activities are sustainable, support innovation, and ensure that creativity is seen as core to delivery of inclusive, accessible, and diverse activity.

At local level, the Creative Waterford team are involved in developing and implementing strategies, which place creativity and cultural activity at their core or recognise its value in increasing wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic development. These include the Heritage Plan review, WCCC Irish Language Scheme, the Library Development Plan and the Arts Plan. The Team is also involved directly and indirectly in the delivery of other Waterford strategies including the Waterford Economic Strategy 2040 which feeds into Waterford Local Economic & Community Plan 2022–2026, the Waterford Digital Strategy 2022–

2026 and the Climate Action Plan, each of which has a bearing on the delivery of local authority services to our communities and stakeholders. Waterford City and County Council is participating as one of 19 areas in the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme with the Waterford Local Community Development Committee and our existing Healthy City and Healthy County plan. WCCC has recruited a Healthy Community Local Development Officer to coordinate activity from a local authority perspective. This increase in resource for local authorities is aimed at integrating the health and wellbeing agenda with their broader agenda and supporting a social determinants approach to health inequalities. Creative Waterford acknowledges the importance of this Programme and will endeavour to build links in our approaches to wellness and collaborative activities with Healthy Communities.

Waterford Cultural Quarter is an urban regeneration project based in Waterford City Centre. This initiative is viewing regeneration through the lens of culture, putting place making and collaborative community action at the heart of the WCQ Strategy 2021–2025. Through the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF), WCCC is planning projects such as WCQ Art House, a gallery and co-working space for creative agencies and individuals, WCQ Place, a culture and community hub with an emphasis on services to migrants and community activity, and Gov Lab, a data gathering, processing and dissemination centre which examines environmental, economic and creative industries in the South East. Each of these, and other projects, will have very strong links with the creative and cultural ecosystem in the South East region.

The Irish Office of Waterford City & County Council has been integrally involved in the development of the recently-approved Irish Language Plan for Dungarvan as a Gaeltacht Service Town. The plan contains a range of aims

and objectives to promote the use of Irish in the town, focusing on families and young people, the business sector, and education providers in particular. The actions contained therein will foster and encourage creativity in the promotion of our native language in Dungarvan and the Irish Office/WCCC will continue to support the local committee, Dún Garbhán le Gaeilge and the soon-to-be-appointed Language Planning Officer in the implementation of the Language Plan over the coming years.

*“Culture-led regeneration and development strategies can transform places. CCS not only provide economic benefits (through local taxation, job creation, innovation and supply chains), and social benefits (e.g. improved wellbeing and community cohesion) but also contribute to ‘place making’ by making cities and regions more attractive to work and live, encouraging inward investment, inward labour flows, higher productivity and increased tourism. Culture-led regeneration and development policies focus on economic and social development of a city or region through promoting and enabling cultural and creative activity.”*

OECD REPORT

### Creative Ireland Waterford Stats 2018–2022

**Total Open Call Projects: 90**

**Total Culture Team Projects: 69**

**Total Cruinniú na nÓg events: 113**

**Total Additional Funded projects/events: 24**

**Total projects funded: 297**

(including Climate Action Fund/ACT Waterford, Creative Communities Economic Action Fund, Social Prescribing Links & Covid Care Concerts 2022)

Waterford Designers & Makers Exhibition launch with Dr Audrey Whitty, Deputy Director National Museum of Ireland with ceramic maker Eileen Singleton.  
**Photographer:** David Murphy.



Some examples of completed Creative Waterford projects include:

### Waterford Intergenerational Music Project

In 2021, Waterford Libraries and Music Generation Waterford worked together to create a very special Intergenerational music project with the Bealtaine Choir and pupils at Kilmacthomas National School. Funded by Creative Ireland, the project documented the process of using music and song to share stories, express feelings, and explore mutual connections within the community, while enabling a positive ageing and mental wellbeing initiative for older people. Singing together created the opportunity for both children and older adults to appreciate and learn about their shared identity, heritage, and culture.

The project brought together the Bealtaine Choir of older singers (aged in their 70s, 80s and 90s) and the 1st / 2nd class pupils at Kilmacthomas National School. It was facilitated through musically driven activities that nurture and promote greater understanding, respect, and learning across both generations taking account of COVID-19 public health guidance in the community.

### Project Partners

Waterford Libraries, Music Generation Waterford, Bealtaine Choir, Kilmacthomas National School, Waterford Creativity Team, the Age Friendly Programme Manager, and Healthy Waterford Officer.

*“There is something special that happens when we sing together, an indescribable sense of belonging that can transform how we feel about ourselves and the world around us. This project reminded us all about this shared feeling, whether 10 years old or 90+, through music we can appreciate and be part of a shared identity, heritage and culture. Creative Ireland support towards this project enabled us to capture moments in time, moments where music brought two generations together where we could reflect on the past and dream for the future”*

**Shauna McCullough,**  
**Music Development Officer**

— Music Generation Waterford

### Waterford Designers & Makers Exhibition 2022

Created by Waterford City and County Council's Creative Ireland Programme, in association with Waterford Local Enterprise Office, the Waterford Designers & Makers Exhibition was launched by Dr Audrey Whitty, Deputy Director of the National Museum of Ireland in May 2022.

The Waterford Designers & Makers Exhibition presented the work of Waterford based design and crafts community, reflecting on the theme of Waterford and what it means to this community. Curator Vincent O'Shea based the exhibition on the creativity involved in craft work and showcased several areas of craft and design including textiles, ceramics, leatherwork, and wood turning. It featured the work of 18 exhibitors and was the first such exhibition of its kind in Waterford City or county. The venue for the exhibition was the Waterford Gallery of Art, 32 O'Connell Street, Waterford, which houses one of the oldest, and best, collections of contemporary art in Ireland.

*“Working with Creative Waterford on the of Designers and Makers Exhibition valued the maker's creativity and business skills. Creative businesspeople don't always comfortably in the economic/enterprise settings; collaborating with Creative Waterford meant the makers knew their creativity would be valued within the project. The exhibition showed that creativity and enterprise development can work together for the benefit of both.”*

**Brid Kirby, Head of Waterford Local Enterprise Office (Acting)**

### Diverse Creatives

'Diverse Creatives' was a Creative Ireland Waterford project in partnership with Waterford Library Services, Waterford Integration Services, Europe Direct Waterford, and the Imagine Arts Festival. The project was unveiled at the Imagine Arts Festival 2021.

It was a showcase of arts to celebrate the rich culture and experience of migrants who have made Ireland their home. These cultural performances included dance from the Igbo



Community Waterford, music from singer and songwriter Minnie Marley, the unveiling of an Intercultural Quilt created by the women of the Shakti Programme, and music from Artist, DJ, and Producer Murka Murcury.

*“The Creative Social Enterprise Programme for local migrant communities, led by Waterford Integration Services and supported by Creative Waterford, provides business opportunities, qualification and financial independence through creative expression of cultural identities. The programme’s creative output delivers animation through vibrant culturally embedded products, services, and performances, enhancing the creative capabilities and earning potential of our migrant communities.”*

**Anne Nolan, Programme Lead**  
— Waterford Integration Services.

### Dungarvan Art Trail

Waterford artist and dye transfer printer Jean Curran created an exhibition of original dye transfer prints from Hitchcock Technicolor movies in the form of the Dungarvan Art Trail which was launched in the town of Dungarvan in May 2021. This socially distanced exhibition allowed audiences to experience high quality art during the pandemic, enhancing the town for locals and visitors.

Original handmade prints from the film Vertigo were exhibited in unoccupied shop fronts and available business windows with the collaboration of local businesses throughout the centre of the town. Professionally presented in the shop windows, the prints created an immersive art trail allowing the audience to engage in the works as they move from building to building. The project was showcased on RTÉ’s Nationwide programme.

*“In recent times, people have been unable to go into galleries, indeed some people do not visit galleries at all. The Dungarvan Art Trail placed art central to our daily lives, as people pass buildings which they often don’t give a second glance to. Having an artist of Jean Curran’s ability to re-imagine spaces and to open conversations about creativity, imagination and art is a great opportunity.”*

**Margaret Organ, Arts Officer,**  
— Waterford City & Council.

### Street Art for the Goals

Waterford Sustainable Living Ireland’s project Street Art for the Goals combined an educational campaign about the Sustainable Development Goals with environmentally friendly moss murals installed in three County Waterford locations (Ballymacarbry, Cappoquin, Lismore).

The project worked with local groups in each location including the Ballymacarbry Tidy Towns Committee, the Cappoquin-Affane GAA Club and the Lismore Tidy Towns Committee bringing in local elements to each of the mural designs and then with Aga Krym the artist on the mural design.

*‘We at the Waterford Sustainable Living Initiative (SLi) have been fortunate enough to receive grant funding from Creative Waterford which has enabled us to expand and diversify our methods and project base. As an environmental education and awareness raising organisation, we have prioritised using creative methods to engage with our learners. This support from Creative Waterford has been instrumental in achieving this goal by allowing us to hire creatives to work with us on delivering our programme, which has been very successful. We have now mainstreamed creative thinking throughout our work and think we are a much stronger and more interesting organisation because of it.’*

**Jen Harris, CEO, SLi Waterford.**



Waterford Walls Festival mural of Senan and his favourite book, 'The Little Prince'. Artists were Zabou and Juliette Viodé. Browns Road Library, Waterford.  
**Photographer:** Ana Moretti



### 3

## The Creative Ireland Vision for Waterford City and County Council

The development of the Culture and Creativity Waterford Strategy 2023–2027 provides us with time and space to reflect on the previous five year strategy 2018–2022, to consider the importance of the role of culture and creativity in Waterford's past, and to look at how it can influence the future of our city and county. Our involvement in the Creative Ireland Programme allows Waterford City and County Council to strategically plan for building strong partnerships with communities and a wide range of stakeholders, while ensuring that creativity is acknowledged as an essential element in the successful development of our economy, society, and wellbeing.

Waterford's Culture and Creativity Team is the driver of the strategy and provides the expertise and passion to bring about strong alignment between policy and projects. To this end, the team has carefully considered our vision for the future and has set out our priorities going forward. Our vision is to plan for and deliver inclusive, innovative, and collaborative creative projects and processes. Central to this vision is ensuring that assisting people and communities to recognise their own creativity is acknowledged as a common theme under the Creative Ireland pillar of Creative Communities.

Acknowledgement of the value of creativity in non-traditional as well as traditional settings, in arts venues and in industry, in heritage settings and in hospitals and in areas of disadvantage is important and this will be achieved by having a diverse, dynamic, and expert Culture and Creativity Team throughout the lifetime of the strategy. Aligning Creative Waterford with Waterford City and County Council's policies in areas such as environment, economy, heritage, arts, placemaking, libraries, Irish language, etc. will ensure that our work delivers an integrated approach to cultural development. Sharing resources, seeking opportunities for collaboration, communicating our stories, and engaging with the public are some of the ways in which Creative Waterford will deliver on our vision and that of the Creative Ireland Programme.



Covid Care Concert in a residential nursing home Dungarvan, Co Waterford in 2020.  
**Photographer:** Patrick Browne

e-Fashioning the Future workshop participants embracing new methods of e-textile making for smart textiles. Waterford.  
**Photographer:** Patrick Browne.



## 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 Waterford City and 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.



Waterford shepherding the way in climate action. Pupils from St. Mary's National School, Tournaneena, Co Waterford Caoimhe O'Dwyer (right) & Doireann Power.  
**Photographer:** Mark Stedman



# 5 The Strategic Priorities for Waterford City and County Council

## Strategic Priority Waterford's Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027

### People and Place

The connection between people and place is a foundation for the development of connection, collaboration, and creativity. It is a priority of Waterford City and County to foster a deep-rooted connection between the people of Waterford and their place within Waterford. The landscape; the people, and the culture of Waterford act as an inspiration for creativity for all in Waterford - both new arrivals and those with deep roots in the land.

We celebrate the traditions of Waterford, both native and those brought here from new arrivals of the past: as evidenced in our placenames; in our music and song; in our art and our sense of identity. We welcome the opportunity to strengthen the sense of place and identity for those living in Waterford and to develop new traditions rooted in this place.

Waterford has always been outward looking. As a coastal county it has had far reaching links across the seas for generations, from the promontory forts along our coasts to the Waterford Shipping lines that crossed the world from Russia to America and beyond. Settlers arriving in Waterford in the past have become part of Waterford's identity, such as, the Huguenots, who brought with them the blaa that has become synonymous with Waterford, and more recently the Czech glass makers who revitalised Waterford Crystal and made it into the internationally celebrated craft that it is today.

The Irish language is richly reflected in our placenames (e.g Áird Mhór meaning the Great Height) but, so too, is our Viking, Norman, and English history. Waterford City is a Viking fortification and our placenames, such as, Ballygunner and Heilbhic, along the coast reflect this connection with Scandinavia. Villierstown and Mount Congreve reflect the landed estates that dot the Waterford landscape.

Waterford is one of only seven counties with a Gaeltacht area where our Irish language and cultural heritage is an integral part of day-to-day life. This connection to the Irish language is an immense source of creativity and pride of place in Waterford. The opportunities that this presents for our creative communities are a priority in our strategy.

The exploration of our people and the archaeology, artefacts, folklore, and history of our City and County yields rich heritage that can ignite the fires of creativity. Our priority is to allow our communities to not only explore their sense of place and identity through creativity, but also to help develop a stronger sense of Waterford identity.

### Actions

- Support an Irish language creative project annually.
- Develop a series “Licked Off the Stones” to explore how towns, villages and communities have unique identities and work with the local community to document what makes them unique and how their home place inspires and shapes them.
- Support projects “Digging into Waterford” that explore how Waterford's rich heritage can breathe new life into local areas.
- Support projects that assist “new settlers” in Waterford to find their connection to the place and the community.
- Support projects that help people in Waterford remain connected with their communities e.g. Youth; Older People; Disenfranchised groups.

### Supporting our Creative Sector

Waterford's creativity is evident in our city, towns, villages, and rural areas. Sculpture, Mural, and Street Arts are proudly visible to locals and visitors alike. Waterford City's public realm provides a canvas for music and arts performance. Our towns, villages, and their surrounding landscape, including our long coastline, give inspiration to our poets, writers, visual artists, crafters, and there is a deeply rooted sense of our culture here.

In order to support our creative sector, we will gather, build, and develop data and information to inform decision making on how we continue to support this sector. Hand-in-hand with the Creative Ireland Programme and building on the legacy of past projects and strategies, we will support our creative economy through partnership and collaboration. Development of networks of interest and skill, such as in crafts, design, and digital skills will be key to bringing creative people together.

Artists, both professional and non-professional, are an integral aspect of creativity in Waterford, and their skills need to be recognised and supported. Emerging and nascent creative skills must be encouraged to take steps to come forward and be seen. Creative Waterford will be a vehicle to create points of connection between these skills and organisations and agencies who can benefit from creative approaches to their work. Supporting the principles of professional pay for artists – paying the artist — is a value that we continue to uphold. Capacity building for creative professionals and for community groups and agencies continues to be an important principle of Creative Waterford, carried on from our previous strategy.

The festival sector is important to Waterford, all of which celebrate creativity and culture including local authority and Arts Council funded Spraoi International Street Arts Festival, Waterford Walls, Summer in the City, and St Patricks Festival, along with many others. Creative Waterford supports the creative ecosystem which fuels the festival sector

including opportunities for youth to experiment, to learn new skills, and to play. Cruinniú na nÓg allows young people to explore their own creativity and eventually consider careers in areas such as theatre, literature, street arts, and digital technology, as they realise the value of creative approaches in many aspects of their developing lives.

Ensuring that the value of creativity is included in Waterford City and County Council's strategies is essential. During the lifetime of this Culture and Creativity Strategy for Waterford, several policies and other strategies will be in development and will be delivered as referenced in Chapter 3: Culture and Creativity in Waterford. Creative Waterford can play a key role in ensuring the cohesive delivery of Waterford City and County Council plans. Innovation is written into Waterford City and County Council economic and development policies as a key driver of our economy. Creativity and imagination are the cornerstones of innovation and this needs to be reflected in our strategies.

Post-pandemic interventions to support Waterford's creative ecosystem are key – providing opportunities for strong partnerships between creatives and local authority projects such as place-making, community engagement, and digitisation.

*“Cultural sectors have long been at the vanguard of digitalisation, developing new models for production and consumption that are then mainstreamed across other sectors. New technologies have democratised ways to engage with culture and opened up new opportunities for CCS entrepreneurs, and in fact citizens, to disseminate content to larger audiences and reach new markets”*

— OECD (2022), The Culture Fix: Creative People, Places and Industries, Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED), OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/991bb520-en>.



Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Carry out research on the creative economy of Waterford and the South East, ensuring that funding and resources are used to support professional and emerging creatives in developing partnerships and opportunities.</li> <li>— Provide supports for the development of networks of interest within the creative ecosystem of Waterford and collaboratively within the region.</li> <li>— Support capacity building for the creative community of Waterford in collaboration with the Culture and Creativity Team.</li> <li>— Creative Waterford will examine opportunities to support residencies to drive the development of Creative and Cultural industries, in areas of specialisation and in areas that support circular economic activity.</li> </ul>

### Building in Creativity

Waterford’s built infrastructure is reflective of the creativity in the city and county. Built heritage is valued, and this is seen in our respect for our important city walls, in vernacular skills such as thatching, and in how we maintain buildings and spaces and ensure conservation and protected buildings. Waterford City and County has invested heavily in our museums and in the Viking Triangle, acknowledging how important our past is to our future. Waterford City and County Council’s award-winning Architecture Department is ambitious in reimagining spaces such as the village of Cappoquin and Mount Congreve House.

Waterford’s current provision of space for cultural activity is strong - Waterford has twelve libraries and two main art galleries, two theatres, and supports numerous creative spaces, both indoors and outdoors. In 2021 the Urban Regeneration Development Fund granted funding to develop several vacant buildings and public realm to support Waterford City and County Council’s vision to develop Waterford Cultural

Quarter — an urban regeneration project viewed through the lens of culture. Examples of this will include the WCQ Art House, a multidisciplinary space with facilities for public exhibition, as well as artists in residence and co-working space, and the Community and Cultural Hub which will support people from new communities to integrate their cultures with those of the native population.

It is a priority for Creative Waterford to support our built heritage and to provide space for cultural and creative expression in partnership with our communities. This is evident in the development of the Viking Triangle which is a best practice example of excellence in public realm, sympathetic renovation of the cityscape, and development of five top quality museums telling the story of Waterford’s past.

Building in creativity also refers to the need to include and support creativity in society, in our places and in our linkages with education, health, and community. An area that provides us with opportunities is digitalisation of culture and access to this. Smart technology is developing rapidly, it democratises how we consume culture in many ways, but also provides barriers. It can support creative expression, however it may also stifle locally-based creativity in favour of more globalised offerings. Creative Waterford endeavours to support local communities to perform, to make, to create and to have pride in how they wish to demonstrate their culture and creativity and to use new technologies in proactive, inclusive and accessible ways. We support innovation and providing access to new audiences, particularly the hard-to-reach audiences who may not feel comfortable in more traditional settings via new technologies.

The importance of creative approaches in society, of being imaginative and innovative, must be built into our communications and our storytelling. Creative Waterford strives to use visual and eye-catching imagery in our social media, newsletters, and other communications in order to inspire others to consider the value of design, colour, and imagination.

We will endeavour to build strong acknowledgement of the value of creativity into Waterford’s strategies, policies and plans. Influencing the thinking around approaches to working collaboratively, being innovative, and harnessing lateral thinking will be an important aim of this strategy.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Work in concert with Waterford City and Council to influence our policies to include creative approaches to areas of work such as economy, housing, active cities, healthy communities, and others.</li> <li>— Ensure that our built heritage and public realm are used to showcase creativity and enhance placemaking activity in rural and urban areas.</li> <li>— Use clear visual communications to inspire and tell the stories and outcomes generated from Creative Waterford funding.</li> <li>— Investigate ways in which we can capitalise on Waterford’s collection of artworks and cultural assets in the public realm and make them accessible to a global audience</li> </ul>

### Creative Wellbeing

Work identified under this priority in Waterford’s Strategy will feed into Pillar 4: Creative Health and Wellbeing of the Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027 and into the high-level priority for Local Authorities of Resilient Communities (as discussed and agreed with the County and City Managers’ Association (CCMA)).

As a means towards greater community and individual wellbeing, Waterford’s strategy commits to developing and improving access to cultural and creative activities. Building on the many successful projects from the previous strategy such as “Ah go on” with Waterford Healing Arts Trust and “Linking the Déise” with LINC Waterford, the theme of

creative wellbeing will copper fasten the inroads made so far and the work carried out by the Culture Team and the Local Authority as part of the Keep Well campaign during COVID-19.

Waterford is a pioneer for arts, health, and wellbeing, with a track record of long-term partnerships and programming in hospitals, care settings, community spaces, and in the home through collaboration between Waterford’s Culture Department and the Creative Ireland Programme. Waterford is home to the Waterford Healing Arts Trust who in addition to their programming function, co-ordinate [www.artsandhealth.ie](http://www.artsandhealth.ie) an independent national website providing a focal point and resource for the emergent field of arts and health in Ireland.

Liaising with the Healthy Ireland programme and the Sláintecare Healthy Waterford and Healthy Communities programmes will further enhance the activities and events that will be possible during the new strategy.

During COVID-19, people gained more insight into the value of engaging with cultural activities and experienced the effectiveness of creative activities in maintaining and protecting wellbeing. Creative activities optimise cognitive and emotional capacities, strengthen identity, nurture social interactions and enhance resilience.

Prioritising creative wellbeing can be life enhancing and indeed, life changing, for individuals and communities in Waterford. As with other aspects of our services, the promotion of wellbeing through creativity also aligns with Goal 3 (Good Health) of the Sustainable Development Goals leading to health and wellness not only for individuals but also for communities.

As our society faces an ever-deepening mental health crisis across all age groups, all non-drugs-based interventions are welcome. A social prescribing pilot project has already been undertaken in Waterford and our intention would be to continue with this collaboration between social prescribers and cultural services.



Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Creative Waterford and the Arts Service will include Creative Health and Wellbeing as an area for support in the annual Creative Waterford Open Call and will investigate opportunities to identify resources for proposals in this area.</li> <li>— Place Creative Wellbeing as a tenet central to arts and cultural policy documents due to be issued.</li> <li>— Develop the existing partnerships which the local authority has in the area of Arts and Health and investigate if further engagement opportunities exist.</li> <li>— Liaise with the Health and Creative Wellbeing Co-Ordinator for the local authority to roll out a staff initiative based on creativity and wellbeing in the workplace.</li> </ul>

### Collaboration

Working in partnership with communities, organisations, and agencies within Waterford City and County Council is a key priority for the delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme in Waterford. From 2018 to 2022 we have delivered almost 300 programmes and projects, each of which could not have been delivered without a collaborative approach.

Waterford's *Creative Communities* Open Call has allowed us to be democratic in our approach to funding projects that bring communities and creatives together in a range of activities including music, art, heritage, and dance, and it ensures that projects throughout the city and county, rural and urban, have an opportunity to develop with our support. The Creative Waterford Team have been instrumental in bringing creativity into schools and migrant centres, to the Waterford Greenway and our museums, into places and spaces where creativity needs to be nurtured and supported to thrive.

The Culture and Creativity team in Waterford will continue to build links and develop partnerships internally and externally throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

By planning, implementing, and working together, activation of projects will take off in meaningful ways. We will endeavour to ensure that our communities' voices are amplified through creativity, allowing them to express themselves in meaningful ways. Partnerships with higher education and education at all levels, with creative organisations and agencies, as well as community-based agencies provides huge potential to grow on relationships that have already been developed; Creative Ireland Programme-funded projects such as *ACT Waterford*, *Creative Ecosystem Development in the South East*, *Creativity in Older Age – Covid Care Concerts* and *developing links with the Social Prescribing Services* in Waterford have been incredibly fruitful and we look forward to growing all of these relationships over the life time of this strategy.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Continue the Creative Communities Open Call allowing communities and creatives to partner in collaborative projects.</li> <li>— Support the Culture and Creativity Team to enhance their areas of work in libraries, heritage, arts, environment, Irish language, etc. and to further develop links with agencies, organisations, and communities.</li> <li>— Creative Waterford will seek out further funding opportunities for areas of specialisation in environment, economy, wellbeing, and other areas over the lifetime of the strategy.</li> </ul>

### Climate and Biodiversity

Nature and the natural environment have been longstanding sources of inspiration for art and creativity. Waterford's landscapes have inspired writing, painting, and sculpture and provide not just aesthetic appeal but reflect what we value in our local environment. As we progress through the 21st Century taking care of our environment is more pressing than ever and communicating the need for collective action to protect our natural world is fundamental for continued enjoyment of our natural heritage. In Waterford we are aware of the vulnerabilities of coastal erosion and flood risk of low-lying areas, Semi-natural habitats are declining in quality and spatial extent and climate change is bringing the arrival of new wildlife species, some of which are invasive and threaten our native habitats.

Engagement of the public with climate action and biodiversity can effectively be channelled through creative media. In 2022, ACT Waterford, a Creative Ireland Climate Action-funded project embedded an artistic and creative approach to influencing behaviour change in five localities under five environmental themes across Waterford City and County. The programme has revealed great potential for communicating environmental science and behavioural change to diverse interest groups bringing together all age groups with ranging environmental and creative interests and capabilities. Making art whilst sharing skills and knowledge, and learning about our natural world is a key priority for the Culture and Creativity Strategy

Waterford 2023–2027. Complementing objectives for climate and biodiversity in the Waterford City and County Development Plan and Waterford Climate Action Plan, we look forward to promoting creativity to highlight how we can maintain and enhance Waterford's natural environment in favourable conservation condition and enable meaningful change in the climate and biodiversity challenge facing us.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Host Climate Action and Biodiversity-themed events in Waterford's Annual Calendar of Cultural Events.</li> <li>— Develop and promote collaborations between Waterford City and County Council Climate Action Team and Creative Communities.</li> <li>— Continue funding supports for communicating the Climate Action and Biodiversity Loss message through creative media.</li> <li>— Support creative environmental art projects that empower people to learn more about local habitats and the value of biodiversity.</li> </ul>



## 6 Implementation by the Waterford City and County Council Culture and Creativity Team

Waterford City and 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

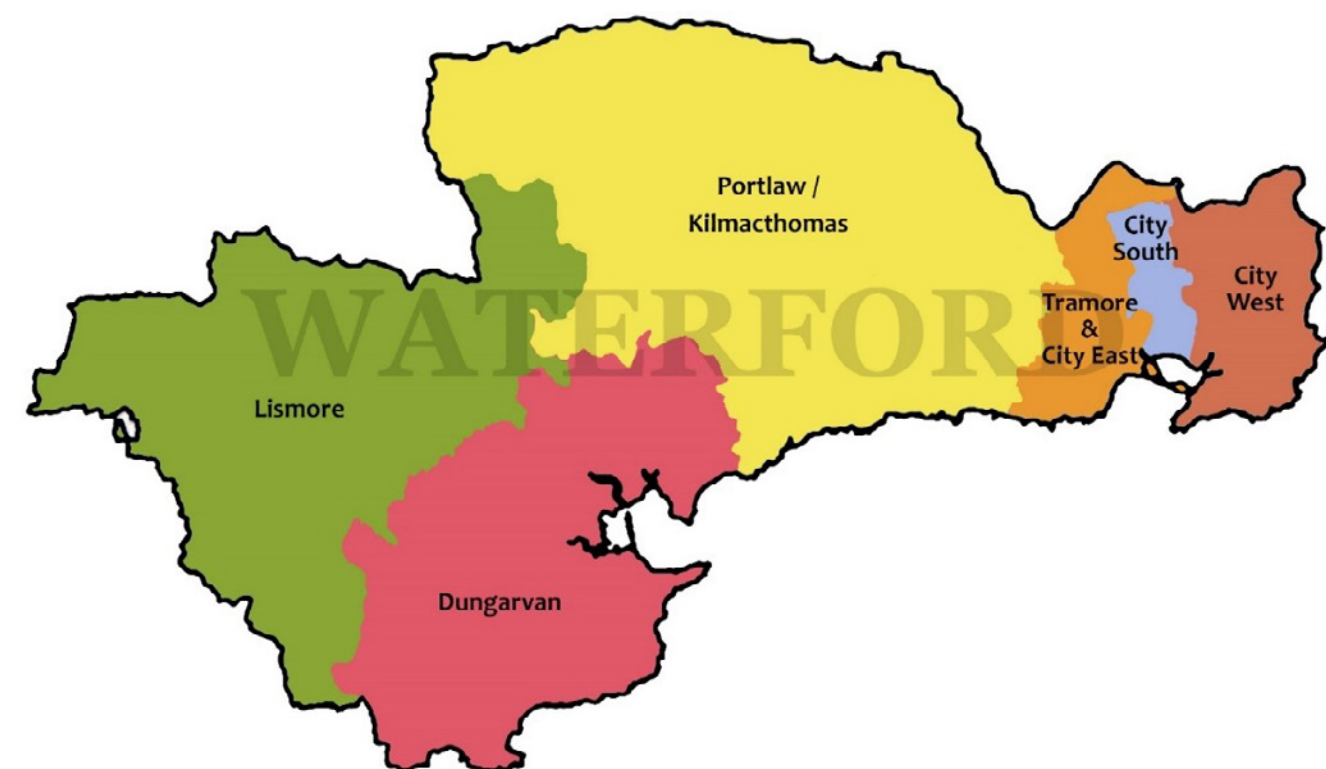
- Be innovative and take risks — try new projects and new ways of working.

The delivery of the Strategy is led by the Director of Services for Planning, Corporate, Culture, HR & IS and the members of the Culture and Creativity Team for Waterford include

- Waterford City and County Librarian and Head of Culture Team
- Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development
- Creative Waterford Coordinator
- Waterford Cultural Quarter Project Manager
- Heritage Officer
- Executive Librarian
- Keeper, Bishop's Palace, Waterford Treasures
- Archivist
- Conservation Officer
- Irish Language Officers
- Arts Officers
- Creative Waterford Project Assistant
- Waterford Cultural Quarter Community Liaison
- Climate Action Coordinator
- Sláintecare Healthy Communities, Local Development Officer
- Visual Arts Coordinator, Waterford Gallery of Art
- Senior Enterprise Development Officer

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

## Map of Waterford





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