



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Pillar 2 of the Creative Ireland Programme

all in the same storm

Creative Communities Interim Review

A Government of Ireland Initiative
Tionscnamh de chuid Rialtas na hÉireann

creativeireland.gov.ie



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022



CCMA
Comann Lucht Bainistíochta Contae agus Cathrach
County and City Management Association

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Executive Summary

The local government sector provides a wide range of services ranging from infrastructure; planning; housing; economic and community development; and environment, emergency, recreation, and amenity services.

The 31 local authorities also have an extensive track record of community engagement through inter alia the arts, culture, heritage, and library services which are fundamental to developing a wider creative economy and society. The *Creative Communities* initiative therefore seeks to harness this potential, through partnership between the Creative Ireland Programme in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Ireland's local authorities, to deploy creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic success.

The partnership is built around a common framework, within which each local authority developed a 2018–2022 Culture and Creativity Strategy, following local public consultation. Delivery of this

strategy is managed through a cross-cutting Culture and Creativity Team with a designated Creative Ireland Coordinator. Just as each local authority area has distinct attributes, the 31 local strategies within *Creative Communities* enable tailoring and targeting of programmes to meet local needs and potential.

Led by the Creative Ireland Programme and the County and City Management Association, this interim review examined the effectiveness to date of *Creative Communities* in embedding creativity within public policy at local level, and in engaging creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development. The review also explored how delivery in collaboration with local authorities could be optimised in the future.



The review concluded that *Creative Communities* has substantially enhanced the reach of local authorities, increasing impact and visibility, and creating opportunities for communities through 2,658 projects across Ireland in 2018 and 2019 alone which would not be supported by other funding streams. Exchequer funding, and the integrated national–local model have been important catalysts in the initiative, enabling local authorities to strengthen pride of place and a sense of belonging that helps to make our cities and counties more attractive places to live and work. *Creative Communities* has also demonstrated a capacity to enable local authority and national community response in supporting community health and wellbeing through creative engagement.

The strong public relations, communication and support from the Creative Ireland Programme at national level is valued by local government. In return, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht benefits from the experience and insights of an extensive and cross-sectoral network across the country through the *Creative Communities* initiative. The review nonetheless recognises the need for greater awareness of the positive outcomes of creative engagement in local development; working innovatively across key policies such as climate action, heritage, youth, local government, urban, rural and community development and community health and wellbeing. This will be achieved through more proactive communication with key stakeholders

across both local government and relevant Government departments, and enhanced collaboration between existing networks in areas of policy alignment.

The *Creative Communities* initiative has delivered notable successes in engaging creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development in what has been a relatively short timeframe. These successes can be strengthened through clearer targeting of the programme and, again, communication has an important role to play in this regard. Concerns nonetheless remain that strategic development and momentum will be difficult to sustain in the absence of early clarity regarding the post-2022 future of this initiative.

The review makes clear that *Creative Communities* has brought about new areas of delivery working across the local authority, as well as supporting local authority innovation and new partnership development.

Within local government, a critical success factor to date is the designation of the Creative Ireland Coordinator from within each local authority to lead the programme of their Culture and Creativity Team. It is nonetheless recognised that this approach also places additional responsibilities on certain staff and this challenge highlights the value of underpinning the mechanism through which *Creative Communities* enables local authorities to engage administrative and/or programme support.

Another successful innovation of *Creative Communities* lies in the agility and make-up of the Culture and Creativity Teams as the driving force of this initiative. These teams comprise a significant range and level of expertise in every local authority and can include professionals

from architecture, archives, the arts, community, enterprise and environmental development, heritage, information and communication technologies, Irish language, libraries, planning, tourism and more. Bringing together this level of technical expertise affords a local authority a level of insight, resources and functionalisation which few other public or private sector organisations can match. Where they work well, these teams can harness the potential of *Creative Communities* to deliver on strategic priorities for each local authority.

In seeking to optimise future delivery, the interim review group makes a number of recommendations that encompass:

1. Consolidating the cross-cutting role and potential of the Culture and Creativity Teams;
2. Enhancing communication to achieve better understanding of creativity and its value in supporting wellbeing, social cohesion and economic success;
3. Aligning additional financial resources in delivering further targeted, collaborative and sustainable programmes across local communities;
4. Monitoring and evaluation to support investment strategies at local level; and
5. Delivering clarity regarding the future of *Creative Communities* beyond 2022.



The review concluded that *Creative Communities* has substantially enhanced the reach of local authorities, increasing impact and visibility, and creating opportunities for communities through 2,658 projects across Ireland in 2018 and 2019 alone which would not be supported by other funding streams.

Acknowledgements

This interim review of *Creative Communities* has been developed with the support of a number of partners and individuals.

The Creative Ireland Programme would like to acknowledge the early guidance and support for the interim review, received from Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive, Meath County Council and former Chair of the County and City Management Association (CCMA), Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council and Chair of the CCMA Economic, Enterprise, Community and Culture (EECC) Committee and Daniel McLoughlin, Chief Executive, South Dublin County Council and member of the CCMA-EECC Committee.

The Creative Ireland Programme would like to extend thanks to the Local Government Management Association for their support in facilitating engagement with the CCMA-EECC committee, particularly Marina Duffy and Mary O'Shaughnessy. The Creative Ireland Programme also wishes to acknowledge the openness and engagement of the CCMA-EECC committee members in their meeting with Katherine Licken, Secretary General of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

and the Director and representatives of the Creative Ireland Programme in February 2020. It was this meeting, which established the joint approach to the interim review of *Creative Communities*.

The interim review process was guided by Co-Chairs, Tania Banotti, Director of the Creative Ireland Programme and Daniel McLoughlin, on behalf of the CCMA. The Co-Chairs would like to acknowledge the members of the interim review working group for their contribution in the development of the process, their diligence in reviewing documentation and the insights they brought to bear.

The Co-chairs would also like to extend their gratitude to the 31 Coordinators and 23 Directors of Services from Ireland's Local Government Sector who took the time to share their work, their experience and their perspectives on the effectiveness of the *Creative Communities* initiative.

M.CO Projects provided valuable research and policy development support in the establishment, development and drafting of this interim review.

Part I Context



01 Background to Creative Communities



The Creative Ireland Programme evolved directly from the success of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme, where it was recognised that one of its most successful elements was the community engagement led by local authorities.



Feedback from local authorities following the Centenary Programme saw a desire to harness the creativity and collaborative potential of the approach, and the *Creative Communities* partnership was designed to deliver this in a sustainable way.

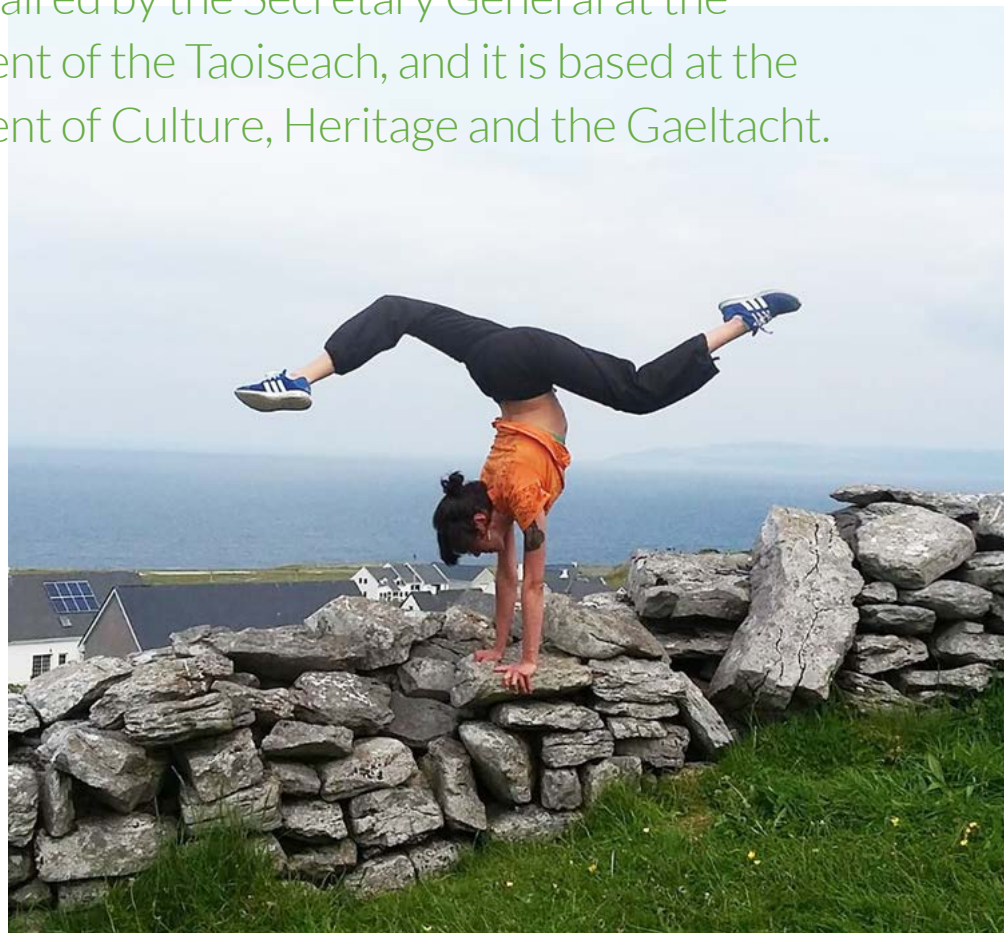
The ambition for *Creative Communities* is embedded within the establishment of the Creative Ireland Programme, as set out in December 2016. The Creative Ireland Programme commits to collaboration; between central and local government, between culture and industry, between artists and policy makers, and seeks to place creativity at the centre of public policy.

Local authorities are the lead agencies in local development and play a key leadership role across infrastructure, place-making, enterprise, culture, community development, tourism and the environment. Working collaboratively therefore, the *Creative Communities* pillar in the Creative Ireland Programme seeks to harness the potential this provides to deploy creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic success.

Local authorities are the lead agencies in local development and play a key leadership role across infrastructure, place-making, enterprise, culture, community development, tourism and the environment.

02 Creativity in Public Policy

The Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-Government programme. Its work is overseen by a Senior Officials Group, chaired by the Secretary General at the Department of the Taoiseach, and it is based at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.



The Creative Ireland Programme defines 'creativity' 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.

Creativity is embedded in the new Programme for Government (June 2020), which commits to:

- Support ongoing implementation of the Creative Ireland programme;
- Support Creative Ireland in their 'Engaging the Public on Climate Change through the Cultural and Creative Sectors' initiative;
- Implement the Audio-visual Action Plan;
- Expand Creative Schools, ensuring every child in Ireland has access to tuition and participation in art, music, drama and coding. Ensure it continues beyond the life of Creative Ireland and to work with the Department of Education to achieve this.
- Further collaboration between local authorities and local arts organisations through *Creative Communities*.
- Development of a Digital Creative Industries Roadmap.

The Programme for Government additionally commits to *work to ensure that local authorities are sufficiently supported to allow the fulfilment of long-term strategic cultural and arts planning at a local level.*

Culture 2025 is the national policy framework that defines the scope and sets the direction of Government policy for the whole cultural sector. It recognises that the Creative Ireland Programme will continue to be the primary implementation framework for the promotion and strengthening of culture and creativity throughout Ireland. Since its establishment in December 2016, the

Creative Ireland Programme has worked with various Departments and agencies to make significant progress in embedding creativity in public policy and delivering on the ambition of Government. Working collaboratively, the Creative Ireland Programme has focused on both supporting direct engagement with creativity (e.g., on education, institutions, industry) as well as creativity as a way of engaging with broader societal issues (e.g., mental health, social marginalisation, rural isolation, poverty, isolation of the aged, individuals with disabilities or special needs, migrant integration, intercultural dialogue, climate action, biodiversity loss). The range of programme delivery includes, for example, collaboration with the:

- Department of Education and Skills, Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Arts Council on the implementation of the Creative Youth Plan. The implementation of the Plan includes initiatives such as 300+ Creative Schools across the country at any one time;
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the development of Global Ireland, the Government's strategy for doubling the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint and how Irish culture can contribute to the reputation of Ireland overseas;
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in leveraging the role culture and creativity can play in relation to public engagement on climate change;
- Department of Health, Healthy Ireland and the HSE in relation to health and wellbeing; and
- Department of Social Protection in relation to the Social Welfare Scheme for Professional Artists on Jobseekers Allowance.

03 The Creative Communities Implementation Framework

The Creative Ireland Programme comprises five pillars at national level

	Pillar 1 Creative Youth
	Pillar 2 Creative Communities
	Pillar 3 Creative and Cultural Infrastructure
	Pillar 4 Creative Industries
	Pillar 5 Global Reputation

While *Creative Communities* is the primary pillar supporting partnerships with the 31 local authorities, it is clear that the other four pillars of the Programme align with the work and ambition of each and every local authority wherein elements of youth, infrastructure, industry and external reputation are also central to place-making.

Strategic Approach

In early 2017, following the launch of the Creative Ireland Programme, extensive public consultation took place in every city and county across Ireland to explore how Government could build on success of the partnership and programming that had been central to the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme. This consultation, supported by the Creative Ireland Programme, led to the development of a five-year *Culture and Creativity Strategy* for each local authority area. The strategies are unique to each local authority, reflecting the breadth of cultural and creative work being undertaken in each area, the vision and values of each local authority and their strategic priorities.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government agreed to jointly invest in projects and initiatives implementing these Culture and Creativity Strategies across the 31 local authorities. This support recognises that culture and creativity are essential to sustaining and developing vibrant communities and places throughout Ireland.

Local authorities have the expertise and experience to evolve delivery of *Creative Communities*. They have flexibility in their individual Culture and Creativity Strategies to best meet the needs in their area. This approach is underpinned by the principles guiding *Creative Communities*:

- To encourage increased participation in creative and cultural activities locally;
- Ensure that resources and delivery mechanisms coalesce to bring about longer term change across the culture and creative sectors;
- To increase collaboration across the local authority structures;
- Support capacity building and recognise and build upon each team member's role, experience and function;
- Promote the value creativity and culture offers to society including the transformative effect it can have on the lives of individuals and communities in helping to address societal challenges (e.g., in the areas of education, health and wellbeing); and
- Support and complement existing local authority plans such as the Local Economic and Community Plan, County Development Plan and various sectoral plans and strategies.

Creative Communities is now supported by both Departments through a three year SLA 2020 – 2022 with each local authority.

Local Coordination and Delivery

Within each local authority, delivery of their Culture and Creativity Strategy is led by a Director of Services. A designated Creative Ireland Coordinator, appointed from within each local authority by the respective Chief Executive, acts as the primary contact for the purposes of the Programme. Delivery is managed through a *Culture and Creativity Team* established as a cross-cutting project team within each local authority. The purpose of the Team is to:

- Enable a shift in how the creative and cultural sector is valued within and across local authorities by using innovative approaches to project development;
- Drive cross-collaborative actions to support change and positive outcomes locally;
- Be innovative and take risks – try new projects and new ways of working;
- Build on existing in-house expertise and strategies to offer real strategic support for culture and creativity to thrive through the Creative Ireland Programme;
- Focus on diversity and inclusivity and enable harder to reach communities to participate; and
- Provide a unified voice within local authority structures for the creativity and culture sector.

The Teams working within the local authority are generally made up of local authority officials including Arts Officers, Heritage Officers, Librarians, Community Development, Irish Language Officers, representatives of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and/or Economic Development Sections, and often include Planners, Archivists, Conservation Officers and representatives from other sections within the local authority. Some local authorities also include members of cultural and/or community organisations in their Teams.

Local authorities are the lead agencies in local development and play a key leadership role across infrastructure, place-making, enterprise, culture, community development, tourism and the environment.

Programme Funding

Under their Memorandum of Understanding, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government commit to providing funding via the Creative Ireland Programme (noting that such funding is subject to normal annual budgetary and estimates processes). Over 2018 and 2019, exchequer current funding of €6.55 million was made available to local authorities to enable them to implement their strategies.

These figures yield a sum of €96,775 per annum made available to support an annual programme in each local authority. While this funding is provided at the same rate for all 31 local authorities, additional funding is provided by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for Cruinniú na nÓg, comprising €15,000 per annum for twenty seven local authorities, and €75,000 per annum for each of the four Dublin local authorities in recognition of their greater population size. Over 2018 and 2019, these partnerships with local authorities enabled by *Creative Communities*, yielded 2,658 projects delivered across all five pillars of the Creative Ireland Programme.

Recognising that the Culture and Creativity Teams and the Creative Ireland Coordinators come from within the existing staff of each local authority, an element of annual programme funding can be used to engage administrative support on a temporary basis and for related travel costs.

In coordinating the Programme at national level, the Creative Ireland Programme officials provide for:

- Quarterly meetings for Culture and Creativity Teams and Coordinators to share learnings, highlight new opportunities;
- Communications and public information on the Creative Ireland Programme website www.creativeireland.gov.ie with a dedicated section for each local authority, digital platforms, press and PR support and incorporation of *Creative Communities* initiatives into national and regional media campaigns.
- An online portal captures information on each initiative supported by the Creative Ireland Programme and consequently enables an overview of the number, breadth and scope of initiatives taking place. (Appendix 1 sets out a summary of projects and initiatives implemented in 2018–2019).

04 Interim Review Objectives

The purposes of this Interim Review were:

- a) Review the experiences and effectiveness of the Culture and Creativity Teams to enable local authorities to:
 - Embed creativity in public policy across Local Government
 - Engage creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development
- b) Map good practice through case studies.
- c) Consider the strategic approach to Pillar 2 – *Creative Communities*, and explore how delivery in collaboration with local authorities could be optimised in the future.

Part II Review of Progress



05 Overview

The interim review sought to assess the effectiveness of the *Creative Communities* initiative and, within that, to identify strengths of the programme and areas for enhancement.

This was achieved through a workshop with Creative Ireland Coordinators in December 2019, and follow-up surveys in June 2020 with these Coordinators and with local authority Directors of Service chairing the Culture and Creativity Teams. The workshop and surveys also sought feedback in relation to implementation of the local authorities' 2018–2022 Culture and Creativity Strategies, and the alignment the *Creative Communities* initiative has achieved with the ambitions of the Creative Ireland Programme.

The survey of Coordinators additionally sought to identify two case study projects from within each local authority. These case studies provided insights into how *Creative Communities* delivers for local government.

The first set of case studies explored alignment of *Creative Communities* with the ambition of the Creative Ireland Programme to engage creativity as a strategy for:

- Wellbeing;
- Social cohesion; and
- Economic development.

The feedback from local authorities reflects a strong consensus that *Creative Communities* has been an effective strategy in helping to address those challenges. When analysed across the three facets of this ambition (wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development), the responses initially suggest that the majority of both local authority Coordinators and Directors regard creativity as a more



effective strategy for wellbeing and social cohesion, than for economic development. However, further analysis demonstrates that significantly less emphasis has been placed by local authorities on utilising *Creative Communities* to target economic development to date, and there is therefore less evidence against which to assess its effectiveness in this regard.

As set out in Section 2 above, the Creative Ireland Programme has become an important contributor to public policy at national level. The second set of case studies considered how *Creative Communities* might help to embed creativity within public policy at local level. In line with the ethos and ambition of the Creative Ireland Programme, these case studies focused on:

- Delivering across the local authority;
- Supporting innovation within the local authority; and
- Developing new partnerships and resources for the local authority.

The feedback from local authorities makes clear that the approach and framework of *Creative Communities* has brought about much closer collaboration between cultural and creative disciplines at local authority level and, in many cases, the collaboration and impact extends further across the local authority and its partners.

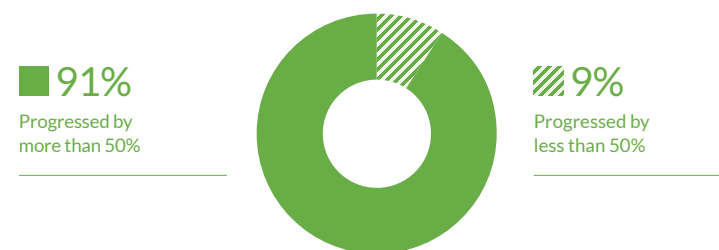
A summary of the survey feedback is set out within this section, below, with a number of the case studies also included for illustrative purposes.

05a Culture and Creativity Strategies – delivery and focus

Over 90% of Coordinators estimated that delivery of priorities in their local authority's strategy has been progressed by 50% or more. The majority of Coordinators consider both the values and the priorities of their strategy to be relevant. However, a significant number (25%) believe that some refocusing is warranted, particularly in relation to priorities. Where Coordinators identified that the values and/or priorities of strategies were only partly relevant, this assessment was based on a number of considerations, including:

- Closer alignment with wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development;
- The impacts of COVID-19 necessitating a major re-think with a greater focus on supporting local communities and stimulating local economies.
- The need for local authorities to prioritise longer term projects or take account of the local authority's role in other initiatives such as Creative Youth; and
- The need for a stronger emphasis on diversity.

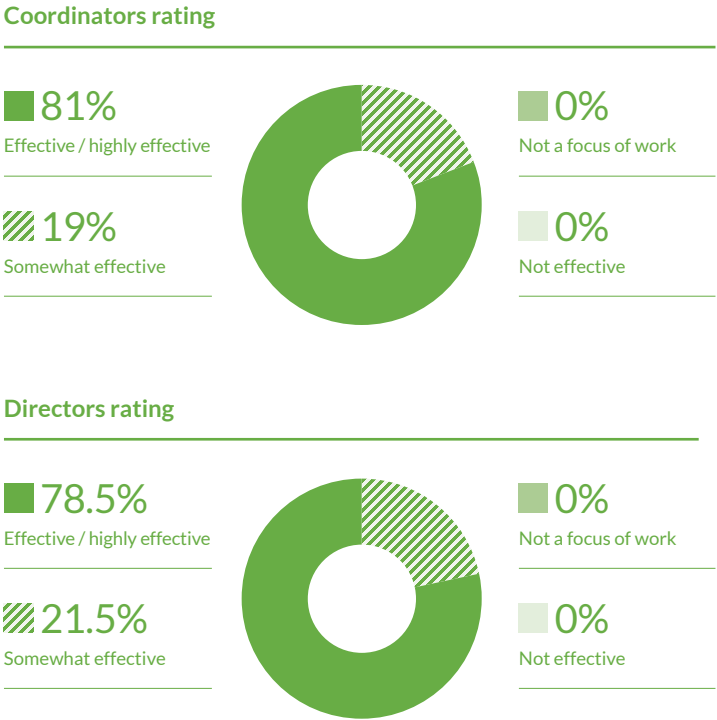
Coordinators rating



Over 90% of Coordinators estimated that delivery of priorities in their local authority's strategy has been progressed by 50% or more. The majority of Coordinators consider both the values and the priorities of their strategy to be relevant.

05b Creativity as a strategy for wellbeing

The majority of local authorities rated creativity as either effective or highly effective in helping to promote wellbeing. For Coordinators (n=31) these ratings total 81% with 58% of respondents rating it effective and 23% rating it highly effective. For Directors (n=23) the ratings total 78.5% with 56.5% of respondents rating it as effective and 22% rating it highly effective.



— Mobile Music Machine



The majority of local authorities rated creativity as either effective or highly effective in helping to promote wellbeing.

Case Studies

In Waterford, Focus Ireland tenants worked closely with artists, gardeners and local organisations to create a new garden space to be used by residents and visitors. In Clare, the ‘Cultural Companions’ initiative worked in partnership with Age & Opportunity to create opportunities for substantial numbers to attend cultural events, helping to combat social isolation among older people. An intergenerational choir project in Donegal demonstrates how creativity can be used as a strategy for individual and community wellbeing. The project is led by the Social Inclusion Unit of Donegal County Council and the support through *Creative Communities* has helped the choir to become firmly established. Louth County Council engaged creativity as a strategy for individual and community wellbeing with older men. Their project is set out, hereunder.

CASE STUDY — WELLBEING

Louth County Council Everyman

What outcomes / benefits did the project deliver in relation to wellbeing?

This project provided 25 older men (55–80) with a weekly creative outlet for 9 months. Involving song/story, it engaged them through involvement in every step of the project from writing song/stories to the final performance of a song cycle they created in An Táin Arts Centre. It provided a platform for the men to work with professional local artists and perform at a very high standard as a result. Following the success of the project, some of the participants went on the following year to take part in the Abbey Theatre's 5x5 project.

In terms of wellbeing results, all those who participated took part in writing sessions, which they found beneficial and (in their own words) 'like 'therapy sessions'. This led to open chats with the facilitators which they felt gave them 'headspace', particularly as they were not 'of the generation used to opening up'.

The participants had never been exposed previously to anything similar and they collectively benefitted from the camaraderie and social connections that evolved over the period. For individuals, it targeted social isolation and it has increased their own level of participation in creativity as well as attendance at cultural activities.

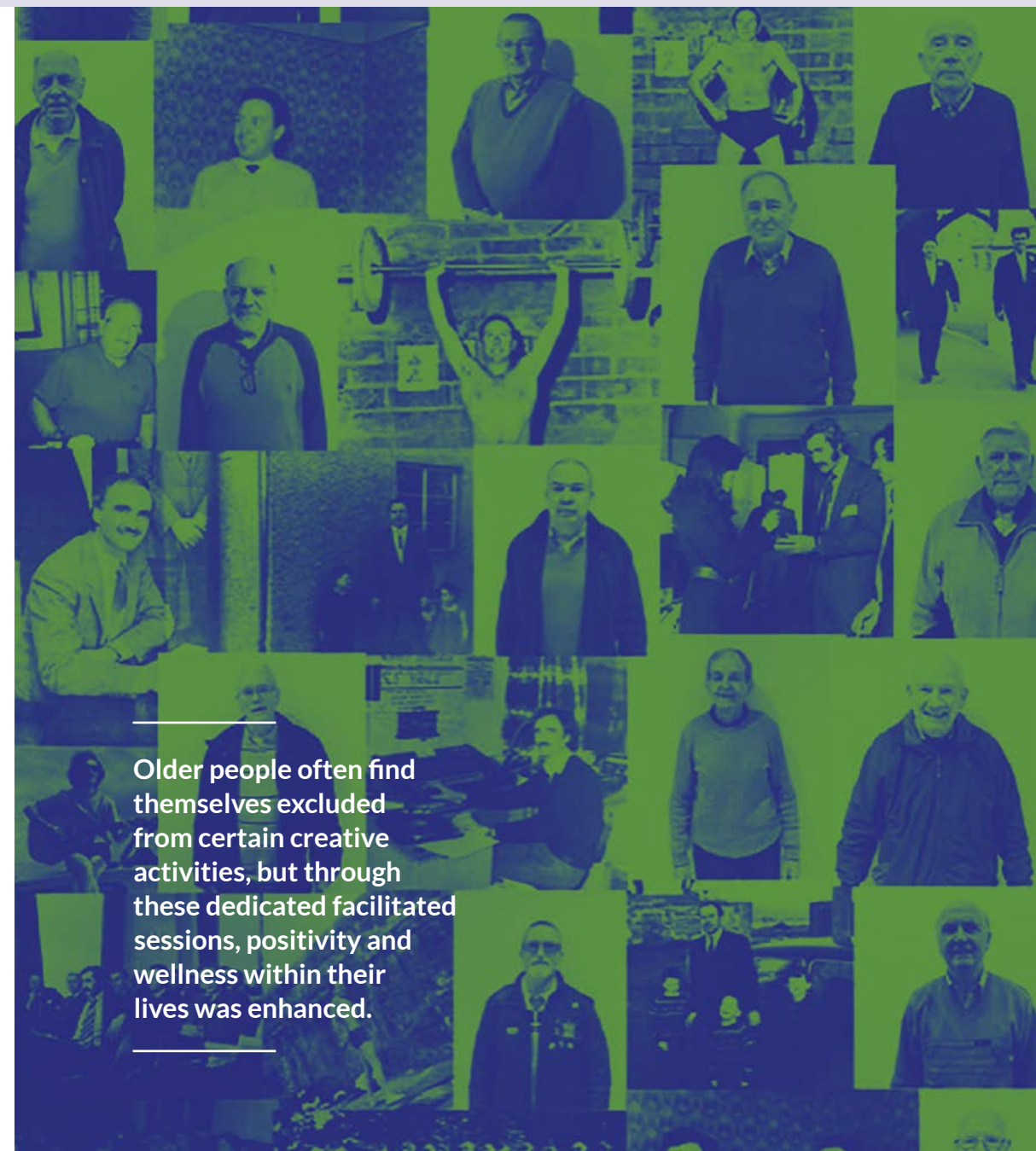
How did the project deliver these benefits / outcomes?

This project embraced the six values set out in Louth's Cultural and Creativity Strategy: Collaboration, Inclusivity, Empowerment, Participation, Community and Communication.

The provision of a *Cultural Communities* fund, a key action of Louth's strategy, enabled the project to be supported and developed. In essence, this project used cultural conversations with artists/facilitators to promote culture-led development within the community.

There were three workshops held at the start of the project which contributed to the social engagement of the group and shone a light on the issue participants faced in their daily lives. Older people often find themselves excluded from certain creative activities, but through these dedicated facilitated sessions, positivity and wellness within their lives was enhanced.

There was added value when a spin-off project was subsequently accepted by the Abbey Theatre for further development.

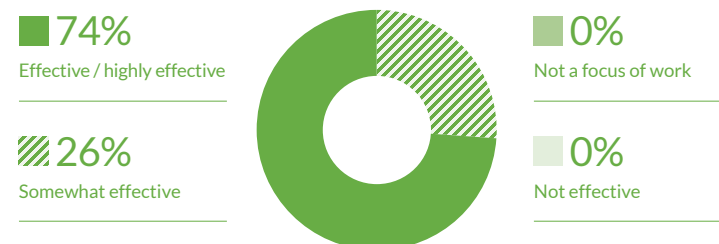


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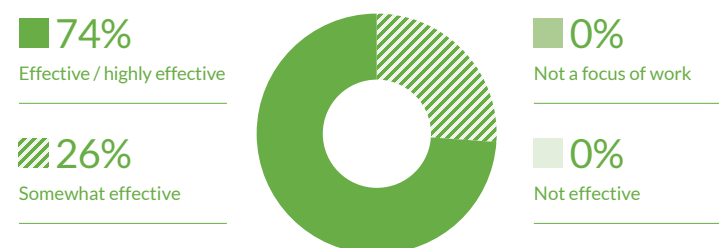
05c Creativity as a strategy for social cohesion

An equal amount (74%) of local authority Coordinators (n=31) and Directors (n=23) rated creativity as an effective or highly effective strategy in helping to promote social cohesion. It is notable however that a higher proportion of directors (22%) rated creativity as a highly effective strategy compared with coordinators (16%) in this regard. Across both cohorts, 26% rated creativity as somewhat effective as a strategy for social cohesion.

Coordinators rating



Directors rating



Case Studies

In Limerick, the Creative Ireland Programme enabled three arts organisations to work together in a project which integrates young people from differing parts of the city, who would otherwise be unlikely to socialise together. Creative Rathdangan in Kildare provided a cultural platform to explore and document the changing context around Bord na Móna's withdrawal from the area and the challenges and opportunities that this transition would bring.

In many respects, these projects of social cohesion are also projects of place-making, where local people own shared experiences that are as important to identity and vitality as shared infrastructure. The same is also true of 'Lost Palace of Lixnaw', where Kerry County Council brought a rural community together through exploration of local heritage. The project 'Get to know Laois' also leveraged local assets but, in this case, by introducing the culture and heritage of Laois to people who were new to the area.

CASE STUDY – SOCIAL COHESION

Laois County Council

Get to Know Laois

What outcomes / benefits did the project deliver in relation to social cohesion?

— This is an ongoing project focusing on introducing new communities to Laois, in particular those coming from diverse international backgrounds. The initiative is a positive statement within the county and proactively responds to the challenges around wellbeing and integrating new communities into the fabric of Laois society.

Starting in 2019, the project focused on excursions for residents from two Direct Provision Centres and one emergency accommodation centre in the county; proactively welcoming new communities to Laois and introducing them to the treasure trove of arts, heritage and tourist attractions in the county. It also acted as a networking opportunity for people of Middle Eastern, Asian, African and Central American origins to meet with each other and share their experiences of being in Laois and also their experience of the asylum service.

Questionnaires were used to collect feedback and the evidence makes clear that the experience contributed greatly to their sense of wellbeing. Feedback through direct conversations with participants reflected this as well as feedback from the project partners, the Laois Asylum Migration and Integration Service.

The 100 participants in total (a blend of families and individuals) communicated their enjoyment of the excursions in terms of:

1. Meeting native Irish people to talk to on a range of subjects; their backgrounds, how they came to Ireland, the reasons for coming, life within the Direct Provision Centre (DPC) and emergency accommodation, and their desire to work and put down roots;
2. They were interested in seeing more of the county and these bus tours to cultural and heritage sites enabled a broader understanding of the geography and landscape of the county, as well as the history of Laois, its past and contemporary culture;
3. Many of the participants would not have travelled outside Abbeyleix, Portlaoise or Mountrath since their arrival in the county. People with children in the school system seemed more integrated than those who had come alone without other family members;
4. Due to limited proficiency in the English language, the ability to understand factual information on heritage was evident and the need for Creative Laois to include 'making, doing, creating' activities in future phases has been built in to 2020 planning; and

5. The feedback from all participants was of excitement and interest in the excursions and the delight to see other parts of Laois, getting to know more about the county, building up a picture of the county and its people, feeling more integrated, less isolated, doing something that was different to the growing monotony of their days without status clarification, employment and their culture, family and friends.

How did the project deliver these benefits / outcomes?

— The Laois Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018–2022 aims to provide opportunities for everyone in the county to become involved in creativity and culture through a programme of participation and engagement. This enabled the Culture and Creativity Team to plan and design an initiative targeting new communities to Co Laois.

In addition, the theme of 'A Sense of Place' in the strategy encompasses a diverse range of components that contribute to creative placemaking. The Get to know Laois initiative leveraged the wider potential of culture – including language, food, architecture, heritage, storytelling, and nature – to deliver a purposeful programme for new communities.

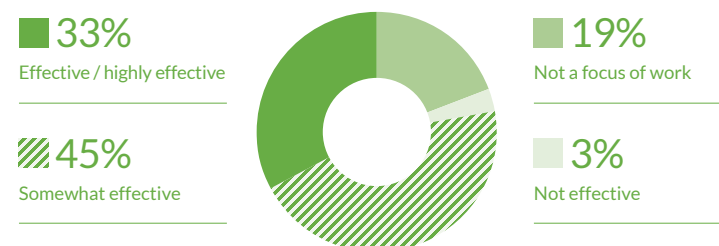
This type of initiative solely for new communities would not have been considered and/or designed by any individual current Culture and Creativity Team member within their own working remits. By coming together and working as a single team, it enabled the opportunity to identify and target specific groups and also integrate the key roles and assets of team members. Delivering the project was also enabled by partnership with Laois Asylum Migration and Integration Service and the insight, expertise, knowledge and connections their support worker had with new communities, as well as the managers of the DPCs and emergency accommodation.

The current reality of COVID-19 is a deterrent to collective excursions/activities at this point, and the Laois Culture and Creativity Team is actively looking at other pathways for these communities to benefit from the initiative, through working directly with local community groups in the towns with DPCs and emergency accommodation.

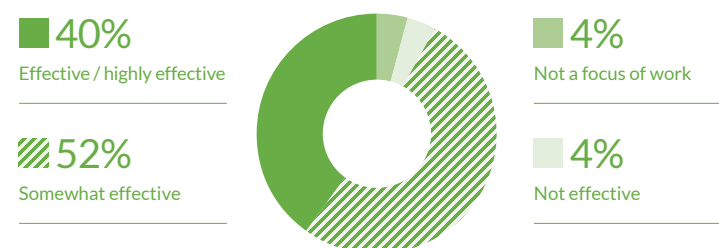
05d Creativity as a strategy for economic development

Based on their experience of the *Creative Communities* initiative, the highest proportion of both local authority Coordinators (45%) and Directors (52%) rated creativity as somewhat effective in helping to promote economic development. Almost 40% of Directors (n=23), however, rated creativity as an effective or highly effective strategy for economic development, compared with less than 33% of Coordinators (n=31) who viewed it in this regard.

Coordinators rating



Directors rating



— 'Designer Makers' project, Galway City

Case Studies

In Galway City, the '*Designer Makers*' project offered an opportunity for new creative partnerships between Galway City's strong creative community and the city's equally strong IDA-supported multinational companies. The IDA regional office, Galway LEO and the Creative Ireland Coordinator worked together to deliver the project.

Mayo County Council invested in a '*Ireland's Edge – Awakening Creativity*' conference as part of the '*Other Voices*' music festival Ballina. The investment through Mayo's Creative Ireland Programme, helped to secure additional support and sponsorship which enabled this event to be staged twice in Ballina, bringing visitors and international profile to the area.

The Creative Ireland County Cork Pop-up Shop Scheme benefited a range of groups in getting projects off the ground by enabling temporary retail opportunities. With an initial focus on creating a direct economic return for designers, craftspersons and artists involved, there are indirect benefits in driving additional footfall and spending in local towns.

In Leitrim, '*Small Sparks*' saw Leitrim County Council's Arts Office and Local Enterprise Office create opportunities for local businesses to collaborate with artists in order to promote innovation and creativity within their companies.

CASE STUDY — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Longford County Council Still Voices Film Festival, Ballymahon

What outcomes / benefits did the project deliver in relation to economic development?

— Still Voices has become one of Ireland's premier short film festivals. What started as a small one-night showcase for local filmmakers, has grown to a weekend festival, screening the best of both Irish and international short films and generating employment for creatives in Longford and the region. The festival also contributes to the wider economies of Longford and Westmeath, attracting clientele for bars, restaurants and accommodation providers.

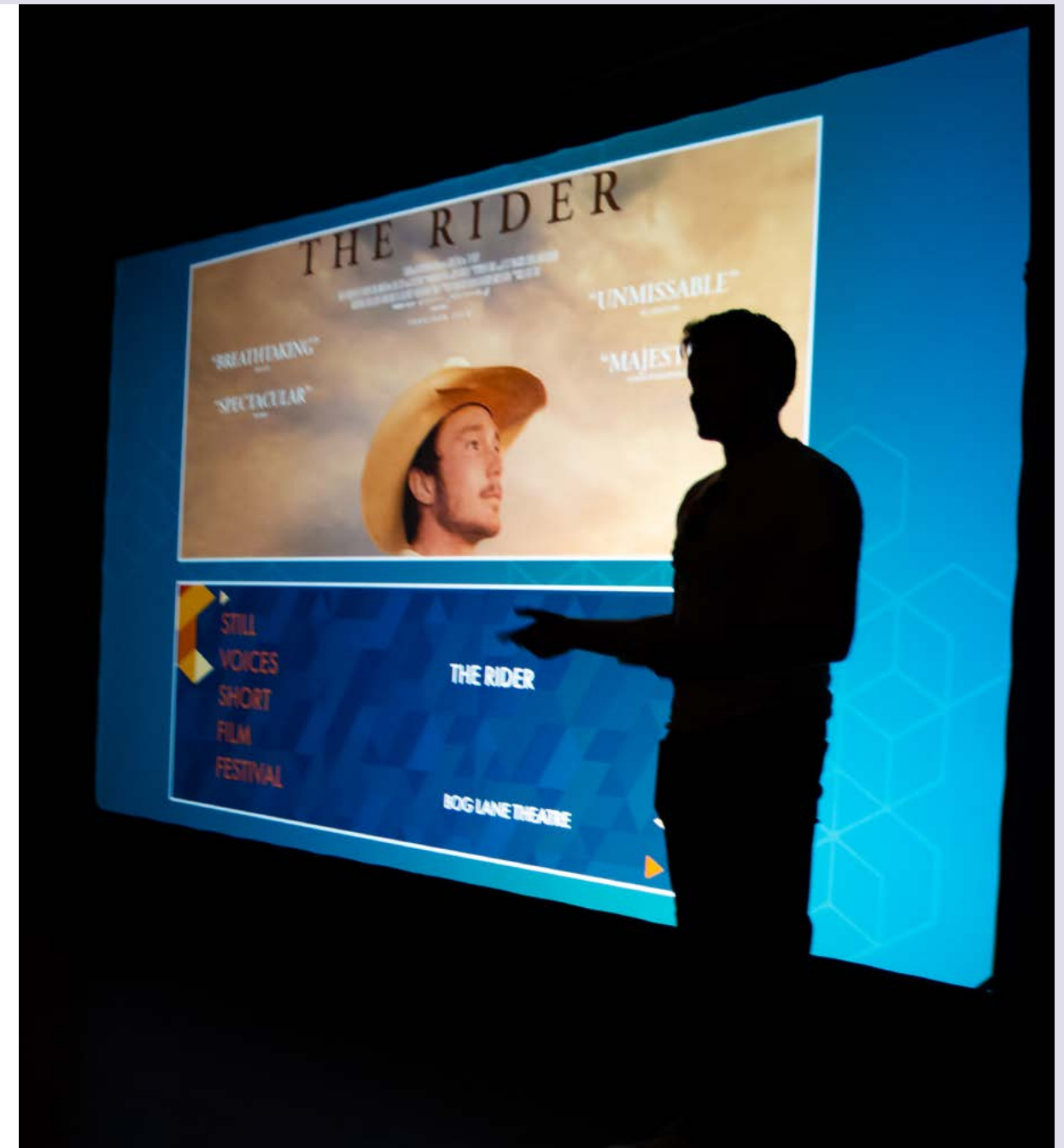
The festival has also established a strategic partnership with Athlone IT, providing a platform for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across animation and illustration, and supporting the skills development agenda in the midlands.

The increasing profile of the film festival continues to grow Longford's profile as a destination and a location for film production. Still Voices is now part of Film Network Ireland (Ireland's largest independent Film Networking platform) which sees Ballymahon contributing to the national dialogue on film in Ireland.

How did the project deliver these benefits / outcomes?

- The framework of Longford's Cultural and Creativity Team enabled Still Voices to transition from a community project to an economic project, partnering with the Local Enterprise Office, and the Local Authority Town Team.
- This led to the development of a new strategy and business plan to create a roadmap for the future of the festival.

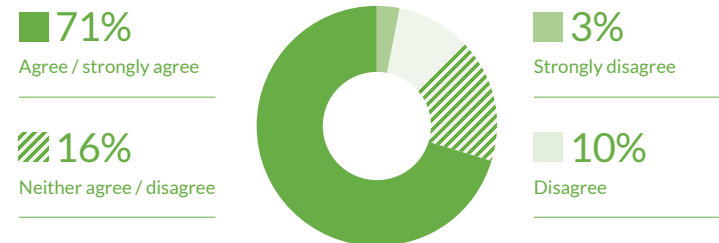
What started as a small one-night showcase for local filmmakers, has grown to a weekend festival, screening the best of both Irish and international short films and generating employment for creatives in Longford and the region.



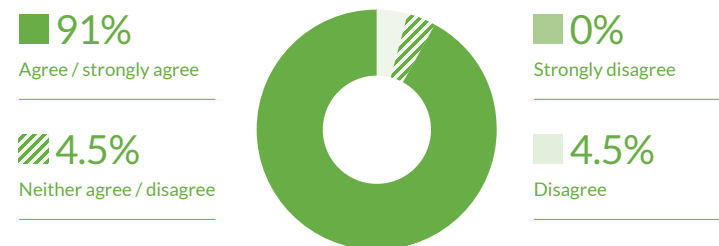
05e Delivering across the local authority

The majority of both Coordinators (71%) and Directors (91%) agreed or strongly agreed that the *Creative Communities* initiative has seen the programme deliver across the local authority.

Coordinators rating



Directors rating



A number of local authorities instigated festivals that brought together various competencies, disciplines and sections within the local authority.

Case Studies

Many local authorities identified that the cross-cutting framework of *Creative Communities* and the development and delivery of the 5 year Cultural and Creativity Strategy supported integrated delivery across the local authority. Laois County Council's 'All-Ireland Pollinator Plan' worked across two directorates in generating community engagement around biodiversity loss and climate changes, through delivery of a creative project.

A number of local authorities also instigated festivals that brought together various competencies, disciplines and sections within the local authority. For example, Wexford County Council established Archi-Fest as an exhibition and public talks that explored the role that architecture and design plays in everyday lives and delivered across libraries, arts and archives, housing and community sections of the local authority.

CASE STUDY — DELIVERING ACROSS THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Sligo County Council Reimagining Sligo

What benefits or outcomes did the project deliver across the local authority?

In the process of planning for this major international conference to explore imaginative interventions in the built heritage, contemporary environment and public spaces of our towns and cities, Sligo County Council is working across architecture, arts, heritage, spatial planning, environment and economic development sections. The conference will support the local authority and local citizens to re-imagine Sligo and its future development alongside international and national thinkers and practitioners in culture and regeneration.

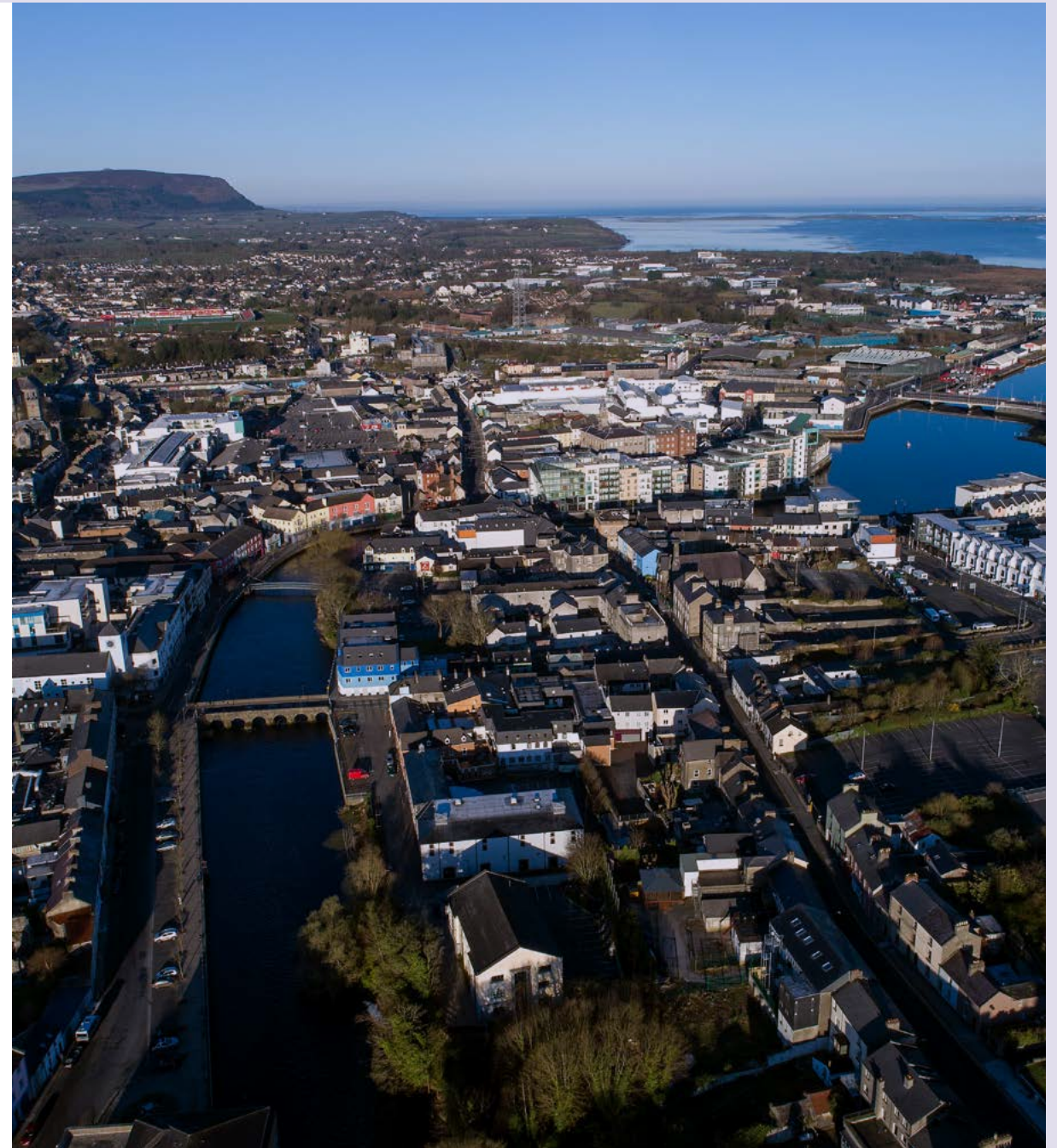
Planning for the conference (scheduled to take place in 2021) has provided Sligo's Culture and Creativity Team with the opportunity to go beyond the normal, i.e. the organisation of projects and events, and adopt a more strategic approach that builds capacity to sustain creative placemaking.

In so doing, this approach is assessing the cultural and creative resources available to the local authority, in order to optimise their impact and effectiveness in local development.

How did the project deliver these benefits / outcomes? — A project team was established to ensure that the project reaches across multiple service areas within the local authority. Twenty-five people were consulted from within the local authority, in addition to relevant external stakeholders.

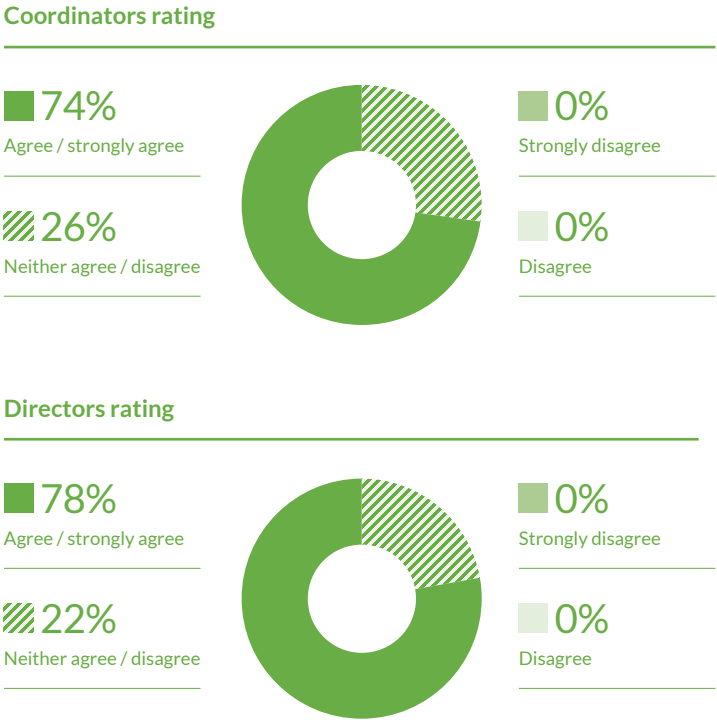
An initial 'day of enquiry' workshop resulted in a draft report that informed the basis of the approach and themes important to the local authority in the delivery of the initiative.

The conference will support the local authority and local citizens to re-imagine Sligo and its future development alongside international and national thinkers and practitioners in culture and regeneration.



05f Supporting innovation within the local authority

The majority of both Coordinators (74%) and Directors (78%) either agree or strongly agree that delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme within their local authority has seen the programme support innovation within the local authority.



– Cruinniú na nÓg, Joe Caslin, Rua Red / Photo by Mark Stedman



Case Studies

In Fingal, the 'STEM Saturday' initiative brought together the IT department, Building Facilities, Events Section, Libraries Section and the Culture and Creativity Team in developing taster sessions for young people to become involved in STEM activities; accessing the talent within the local authority to support a wider need.

'Kerry County Council's Architecture' Kerry benefitted from a new approach to collaboration within the local authority which enabled the open and forward-facing vision and ambition of the council

to be foregrounded. It generated a sense of positivity and pride in relation to physical planning, in particular. South Dublin County Council brought together the arts and library services with the Civic Theatre and Rua Red Gallery and others in developing and delivering a project to meet the needs of the early-years age range in the area. In Monaghan, the local authority leveraged a national/international project ('*Ireland at Venice*') to build wider dialogue and ambition for the future of small towns in Ireland, as set out hereunder.

CASE STUDY — INNOVATING WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Monaghan County Council Free Market

What innovative benefits, outcomes or new achievements did the project deliver within the local authority?

This project supports two priorities of Monaghan's Cultural and Creativity Strategy; namely 'Our People and Place' and 'Creative Space and Place'.

These priorities allowed for research in identifying supports and investment required for the cultural and creative sector. The knowledge gained from this research was presented to management team by the Culture and Creativity Team. Management recognised that in the process of interrogating a complex problem, creativity was an engaging way to find solutions.

This project opened up dialogue and discussion across the local authority on the importance and possible future of small market towns in Ireland. It recognised the diverse make up and approach of the Culture and Creativity Team. Innovation requires open channels of communication and the Culture and Creativity Team led and managed this openness with external and internal voices, allowing for all views to be considered and fed into future planning processes around the development of creative spaces.

An integrated approach by the local authority, that now includes the Culture and Creativity Team in all future consultations around future planning, has created a nurturing and learning environment, allowing for a framework of knowledge management, incorporating new information and experiences to deliver on the priorities of Monaghan County Council.

How did the project achieve these benefits / outcomes?

— After initial resistance to the project, the research, exhibitions and activities demonstrated by the project brought together local authority management, planners, engineers and members of the Culture and Creativity Team for a common goal of ensuring that when investigating or planning developments, creative solutions and creative ideas were part of the process.

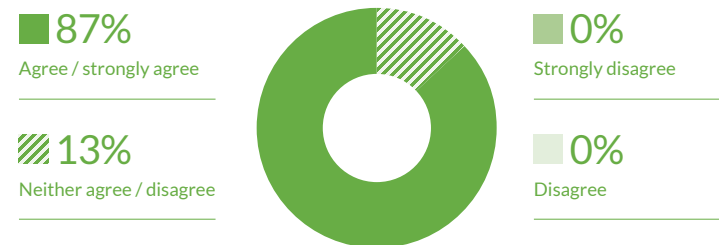
The benefits were enabled by the establishment of an integrated Cultural and Creativity Team at senior level, within the local authority, in terms of both capital and programme developments.



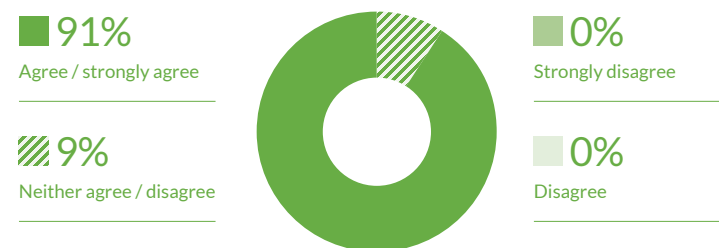
05g Developing new partnerships and resources for the local authority

The vast majority of both Coordinators (87%) and Directors (91%) either agree or strongly agree that delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme has seen the programme support the development of new partnerships and resources both in the local authority and with third parties.

Coordinators rating



Directors rating



The *Creative Communities* initiative enabled a number of new partnerships. Mayo County Council partnered with the private sector in digitising almost 70-years of photographs from the archive of *The Western People* (the largest newspaper in Connacht). The 'Follies of Offaly' project created partnerships with private landowners and local heritage groups in preserving important elements of Offaly's built heritage. Galway County Council

and Donegal County Council developed partnerships with neighbouring local authorities (and with a different jurisdiction in the case of Donegal) in seeking to grow audiences for cultural projects. Such integrated audience research and development projects could prove to be of immense value in seeking to support development of event-based and evening economies in a post-COVID context.

**CASE STUDY — GENERATING NEW PARTNERSHIPS
AND/OR NEW RESOURCES FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY**

Meath County Council Kells Creative Placemaking

What new partnerships, resources and/or other benefits did the project deliver for the local authority?

Kells Creative Placemaking – The Bigger Picture Project aims to reconcile the sustainable management and conservation of Kells’ built heritage with the cultural, economic and social requirements of its contemporary environment. The strategy seeks to develop an integrated network of arts initiatives, cultural facilities and bespoke dedicated spaces for artists and the creative industries.

‘Kells Creative Placemaking’ is a project of Meath County Council’s Cultural and Creativity Strategy which established new partnerships involving the Arts Council, the Heritage Council, the National Print Museum, the local authority and the local community.

This partnership approach has already unlocked funding of €1m to conserve and regenerate a former Courthouse and former Sawmills to meet these local needs and ambition, through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

How did the project deliver these benefits / outcomes? — It falls under Meath Culture & Creative Strategy 2018–2022 – Strategic theme – Enhancing our local cultural and creative infrastructure.

The *Creative Communities* approach and funding both strengthened and enhanced elements of the festival in Kells, and assisted with the ongoing Printworks Restoration Project, helping to unlock additional funding.

This partnership approach has already unlocked funding of €1m to conserve and regenerate a former Courthouse and former Sawmills to meet local needs and ambition, through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.



06 Key observations

6a Strengths

The workshop and the surveys of local authority Coordinators and Directors revealed a number of key strengths. Many elements of the *Creative Communities* initiative underpin local authority service programmes in terms of tourism, social inclusion, economic development, and community development. **Creativity has enhanced the reach of a local authority, increasing its impact and visibility, and strengthening working relationships with the community.** *Creative Communities* is serving to highlight a local authorities' creative assets, establishing creativity at the heart of a local authority's development and using creativity to examine new ways of creating a better future. This positive, creative representation is enabling a citizen pride of place and sense of belonging that in turn is creating a positive image and profile for the local authority area making it a more attractive place to live and work.

The interdisciplinary focus of *Creative Communities*, whereby **the cross-cutting nature of Culture and Creativity Team across several service sections of the local authority, provides communities and citizens the opportunities to engage and collaborate more broadly;** to work on creative projects from grassroots level by facilitating access to all types of creative activity. This flexibility means that *Creative Communities* initiatives can reach the spaces

in between other local authority service programmes whilst validating and adding value to local authority services in the community (e.g., libraries).

The funding structure (100% grant) and scale of *Creative Communities* have proven an important enabler particularly in providing support to creative enterprises/operators in local communities that may be beyond the reach of many national initiatives. **The funding is considered an important additional resource enabling local authorities to leverage creativity in supporting collaborative community engagement,** and providing local authorities the opportunity to support new or larger scale creative community initiatives that would not ordinarily have access to these resources. Accordingly, *Creative Communities* provides the freedom for local authorities to take risks, to explore and ultimately to extend the reach that would not otherwise be possible.

This in turn has become vital in supporting projects throughout the community bringing together creative practitioners and citizens **to give equal opportunity to all citizens to become involved in exploring creativity in a very broad range of areas which would not be supported by other funding streams.** *Creative Communities* has facilitated local authorities to support more communities from diverse backgrounds

helping to reduce social isolation by targeting hard-to-reach groups.

The capacity of *Creative Communities* to bring communities together and instil pride of place is difficult to quantify; however, this was evident during the COVID-19 response when ***Creative Communities* mobilised creative initiatives to form a very important part of local authority and national community response in supporting community health and wellbeing.**

In terms of embedding creativity in public policy at local level, Culture and Creativity Strategies are increasingly referenced in many Corporate Plans, County Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans. As the local pillar of an all-of-Government programme, creativity is increasingly being seen as more than just a cultural issue; it is at the heart of strategic development and change. **The introduction of service level agreements, resourcing delivery of the Culture and Creativity Strategies, has brought about a more strategic perspective to how culture and creativity can be utilised** as an enabling tool for economic development, service delivery and social cohesion.

As the Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-Government initiative, this opens doors to conversations within the local authority that might not otherwise get started. While a lot of the success is

building on work that has been ongoing for many years, the new approaches have undoubtedly brought added value. The Culture and Creativity Teams are the key strength of the *Creative Communities* initiative. **The cross-cutting composition of the Culture and Creativity Teams facilitates a collaborative approach across local authority departments** in terms of project design, evaluation and outcome. More joined-up, group working represents a significant change in working practice for the cultural sections, and more strategic relationships now exist with other local authority sections. This is helping embed the *Creative Communities* initiative into the local authority structure, enhancing project outcomes.

A direct relationship between the Culture and Creativity Teams in local authorities and the Creative Ireland Programme in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht including regular quarterly meetings is a significant positive development for relationships. The provision and maintenance of a bespoke, online portal by the Creative Ireland Programme to support promotional and financial elements of individual local authority initiatives is a key resource.

Strong public relations, communication and support from the Creative Ireland Programme at national level is crucial because there is significant value in the

formal recognition from national level of the work of local authority Culture and Creativity Teams. This close working relationship has the benefit of bringing national visibility to rural and local successes that are so important for pride of place by citizens. Such supports from the Programme enable local authorities to have greater strength in approaching partners and communities. Conversely, the development of a positive working relationship between Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and this extensive cross-sectoral network of officials in each local authority improves the Department's understanding and awareness of individual local needs. This in turn enhances the Department's own responsiveness and capacities in the area of culture and creativity. Therefore, **the relationships that have been developed between the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the local authorities through the Creative Ireland Programme are increasing important for both parties in terms of influencing and shaping policy and programme delivery.**

6b Areas for enhancement

In terms of areas for further enhancement, it is noted that **greater targeting of resources is required in relation to social cohesion, wellbeing and economic development** (particularly the latter). However, the breadth of ambition of the *Creative Communities* initiative was also noted to be both a strength and a weakness. There is a view that *Creative Communities* cannot be all things to all strategies and therefore a greater degree of thematic focus and prescription by the Creative Ireland Programme may be required. This would reinforce the original creative and collaborative aims of the Programme whilst ensuring available resources do not simply serve as top-up funding for other service programmes.

The **commitment to extending the programme beyond 2022** remains a concern from an operational programming and strategic perspective.

Increased financial resources could support the introduction of some targeted national initiatives enabling new or innovative approaches and/or the expansion of successful pilot projects. Competitive national funding calls were regarded as one possible option to underpin this approach. It was also noted that more resources for high population areas should be considered.

There were also suggestions regarding non-financial measures. **Enabling deeper collaboration between existing networks was considered important** in delivering greater effectiveness and efficiency, e.g., linking with local authority health and wellbeing programmes and initiatives, strengthened partnerships with other local economic and community development initiatives. Benefits would also accrue from greater collaboration between local authorities on certain initiatives.

The concept of creativity remains a general challenge and, by extension, the understanding of the Creative Ireland Programme and the *Creative Communities* initiative therein. Any sharpening of the focus of the *Creative Communities* initiative should **be supported by more proactive communication with key stakeholders such as elected representatives and senior management**. It is believed this would extend the awareness and reach of the *Creative Communities* initiative and assist further mainstreaming of creativity at regional and local policy and programming level.

In seeking to embed creativity in public policy, the review identified the importance of Government Departments, local government senior management teams, and elected members having a stronger shared understanding of the development of *Creative Communities*. For relevant Government departments, **better recognition and**

integration of Creative Communities are required across the areas of climate action, heritage, youth, local government, urban, rural and community development and community health and wellbeing, and also across the Local Government Management Agency and the County and City Management Association.

Similarly, while the communications from the Creative Ireland Programme are high quality, including the excellent partnerships with RTE on Cruinniú na nÓg, there may be ways to enhance the channels with local authority communications teams and with elected members' networks to ensure as wide and consistent a message as possible.

While a key benefit has been the additional resources, structure and strategy, there is a widespread view amongst local authorities that *Creative Communities* has had the practical effect of placing an extra burden on the same group of local authority staff. **If the administration and running of the programme can be adequately organised and supported, the Creative Communities initiative could become more sustainable and further embedded in the work of local authorities.** The designation of Creative Ireland Coordinator can be reassigned within each local authority and it is recognised that different coordinators may have different needs in terms of the type of administrative or programme support required. Flexibility in approach therefore remains important.

07

Conclusions and Recommendations

The work of *Creative Communities* is clearly valued by senior management in local government because of the difference it makes to enhancing the lives of local communities.



In establishing Creative Communities as a key pillar of the Creative Ireland Programme, the ambition was set out to:

- Work through collaboration;
- Engage creativity as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic success; and
- Place creativity at the centre of public policy.

The work of *Creative Communities* is clearly valued by senior management in local government because of the difference it makes to enhancing the lives of local communities and making our cities and counties better places to live, work, visit and invest in.

This interim review identifies a number of strengths upon which the *Creative Communities* initiative can build as well as areas for future enhancement, as set out below.

1. Integrated working / Culture and Creativity Team

The cross-cutting framework of *Creative Communities* (within the local authority) is assessed to be effective in embedding creativity within public policy at local level. The flexibility and functionality of the Culture and Creativity Teams model is unique, providing local authorities with an agile and adaptable resource to address locally relevant priorities.

In a short number of years, *Creative Communities* has seen significant collaboration between services such as arts, heritage and libraries within most local authorities. In some local authorities, the make-up of the team extends beyond these (aforementioned) services, enhancing the potential of the programme to further embed creativity within placemaking and public policy, and to benefit from the creative input of wider local authority expertise.

Recommendation 1

The cross-cutting Culture and Creativity Teams should continue to be central to delivery of the *Creative Communities* initiative, meeting regularly and including sections relevant to delivery of the ambition of the Creative Ireland Programme in relation to wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development.

2. Understanding creativity as a strategy

An over-arching goal of the Creative Ireland Programme is to mobilise culture and creativity as a strategy for social cohesion, wellbeing and economic development. While local authorities have well-established approaches to the development of core areas of creativity in which they have long invested, e.g. arts, heritage and libraries, the applied utilisation of creativity is a newer and more challenging concept. There is also limited awareness of *Creative Communities*’ ability to deliver across key policy areas such as climate action, enterprise, youth, urban, rural and community development, and community health and wellbeing. The lived successes of the *Creative Communities* initiative could be supported by more proactive communication to make the strategic potential of *Creative Communities* evident to key stakeholders, including amongst senior officials and elected representatives.

Recommendation 2
Ensure clear and accessible communication builds on the impact and visibility of *Creative Communities* initiatives in achieving better understanding of creativity and therefore better recognition of its value in supporting the development of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic success.

3. Targeted investment

Investment in the work of *Creative Communities* is delivering greater wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development in local communities through innovation and new models of collaborative working within local authorities. The success of this integrated and flexible model to deliver targeted and meaningful services rapidly into local communities, for example as recently demonstrated by the *Creative Communities* age-friendly scheme in response to COVID-19, underscores the capacity and agility of the initiative to further deliver with additional targeted resources. The delivery model has undoubtedly placed an additional pressure on existing staffing resources and the facility to utilise some *Creative Communities* annual financial allocation is an important building block in the programme’s sustainability.

Recommendation 3
The allocation of additional financial resources to the *Creative Communities* initiative should align with national policy priorities in delivering further targeted, collaborative and sustainable programmes of creative engagement across local communities.

4. Delivery against ambition

Within the ambition and flexibility of the programme, the effectiveness of *Creative Communities* is achieved by local authority expertise identifying priority objectives, and the approach to best achieving these objectives at local level.

This approach would be enhanced by improved gathering and recording of focused and readily-available project and programme data. Such data could be invaluable in analysis and dissemination of best-practice for *Creative Communities* as well as further underpinning the case for investment in the future.

Recommendation 4
The central role of local authorities in identifying and addressing priorities appropriate to their local authority area should be supported by a more focused and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation of the impact of investment.

5. Sustaining success and planning for the future

The Creative Ireland Programme and the five-year Local Authority Culture and Creativity Strategies are planned to run until 2022. While the value of the *Creative Communities* initiative is widely recognised and acknowledged within this interim review, the lack of clarity concerning its medium – long term future is likely to limit strategic planning and delivery of initiatives as we advance towards 2022.

Recalling the significant preparatory work and public consultations undertaken in each of the 31 local authority areas to develop the current *Creative Communities* initiative, an early decision regarding the continuity of this initiative post-2022 is considered essential to provide sufficient time for a similar process of public consultation, stakeholder engagement and strategy development.

Recommendation 5
To ensure the continued sustainable delivery of creative initiatives in support of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development in local communities, greater clarity is required regarding the future of the *Creative Communities* initiative beyond 2022.

08 Appendices



Appendix 1 Summary of data on *Creative Communities* projects and initiatives (Source: Creative Ireland Portal 2018–2019)

A review of the data in the online portal managed by the Creative Ireland Programme Office shows that 2,658 projects have taken place over the 2018–2019 period. While projects differ in size and scale, and therefore are not in themselves an accurate reflection of the work of *Creative Communities*, the underlying data provides greater insight.

Reaching across the five pillars of the Creative Ireland Programme

Table 1 indicates that *Creative Communities* reaches across the five pillars of the Creative Ireland Programme. The figures show a significant emphasis on children, young people and communities, but over 13% (347 projects) engaged in engaging in other activities, demonstrating demand from local authorities to identify how the programme can best serve their respective needs.

Fit with Creative Ireland Pillars	No. projects
Pillar I: Children and Youth	1207
Pillar II: Creative Communities	1104
Pillar III: Cultural Investment	76
Pillar IV: Creative Industries	39
Pillar V: Global Reputation	28
Other (e.g. Bliain na Gaeilge, European Year of Culture Heritage, Decade of Centenaries)	204
Total	2658

Table 1

Enabling a range of projects and initiatives

Table 2 indicates that *Creative Communities* enables a wide range of projects and initiatives to be supported. Events that could be considered within the arts rank high in the types of projects supported, particularly for visual art as well as music/spoken work events and theatre, drama or comedy.

These make up less than 30% of events however, with natural, intangible, oral and architectural heritage folklore/archives, history and archaeology making up a combined 20% and wider community/social, crafts/artisan/gastronomy and Design/STEM, which would are not core within in arts, heritage or library programmes, representing over 16% of all activities.

Project types: 2018 – 2019	Projects
Archaeology	21
Architecture/Architectural Heritage	49
Biodiversity/Natural Heritage	60
Community/Social	158
Crafts/artisan/gastronomy	75
Creative/Cultural Development	92
Dance	42
Design, Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths	74
Film/Screen/Cartoon	70
Folklore/Archives	19
History	110
Literature and/or Poetry	123
Multidisciplinary	77
Music/Spoken Word	202
Operational/Administrative Costs	110
Promoting the Irish language	73
Storytelling/Oral heritage	72
Street Art, Spectacle and/or Circus	53
Tangible/Intangible Heritage	50
Theatre, Drama and/or Comedy	130
Visual Art (painting, photographs, sculpture, etc)	213
Grand Total	1873

Table 2

Reaching diverse publics

Table 3 indicates that *Creative Communities* enables local authorities to develop projects which engage with diverse publics. The target audiences show a strong emphasis on projects that cater for children and young adults as well as the general public. In addition, there are a range of projects over the past two years which are targeted at creative practitioners, older audiences and disability groups.

Target Audience	No. projects
Artists/creatives	67
Children/Young Adults	723
Disability Groups	26
General public	583
Older Audience	38
Other (specific groups)	1221
Total	2658

Table 3

Funding Stream	No. projects
Creative Communities Funding	1643
Cruinniú na nÓg funding	1015
Total	2658

Table 4

Creative Ireland Programme funding streams for local authorities

Table 4 indicates that *Creative Communities* enables significant access for local authorities to additional funding streams for projects and programme delivery additional to core funding allocated under *Creative Communities* or Cruinniú na nÓg.

Appendix 2 Membership of the Interim Review Working Group

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht met with the Economic, Enterprise, Community and Culture committee of the County and City Management Association (CCMA) in February 2020.

On foot of this engagement between the Creative Ireland Programme and the CCMA, a working group was established to guide this interim review.

The membership of the working group is:

- Daniel McLoughlin (Co-Chair) CCMA / Chief Executive, South Dublin County Council
- Tania Banotti (Co-Chair) Director, Creative Ireland Programme
- Alan Farrell, Director of Service, Galway County Council
- Breda Fox, Head of Enterprise for Galway
- Kate Kennelly, Arts Officer, Kerry County Council
- Amanda Pedlow, Heritage Officer, Offaly County Council
- Mary Carleton Reynolds, County Librarian, Longford County Council
- Dr Eamonn Kelly, Creative Ireland
- Sheila Deegan, Creative Ireland
- Caoimhín Corrigan, M.CO Projects

In progressing the interim review, the working group met three times:

- **April 17, 2020** — This meeting set out the initial approach and areas of key focus for the interim review
- **July 22, 2020** — The second meeting involved review of survey findings and a first draft of analysis emerging from those findings
- **September 18, 2020** — The final meeting involved a review of the interim review, taking the feedback for the working group into account

In line with the progression of the project, documentation and draft approaches to findings and analysis, a draft report and draft recommendations were shared for review in advance of the respective meetings. Owing to restrictions arising from Covid-19, all meeting of the working group took place online.

Appendix 3 Creative Ireland Coordinators' meeting, December 2019: Summary feedback

This appendix summarises feedback from a workshop with Creative Ireland Coordinators in the Museum of Literature in Ireland in December 2019. The workshop was an opportunity for Creative Ireland Coordinators to consider a sense

of common purpose, share success stories and challenges to date and discuss hopes and concerns for the future. It was also key in informing the approach to the interim review of *Creative Communities*.

Summary insights

Summary insights of the meeting highlight the following needs/opportunities:

1. Communicating value – there have been successes, but more needs to be done.
2. Developing programmes with greater clarity of purpose; breaking silos, building partnerships, building capacity, backing innovation has been positive etc.
3. There is a common ambition to innovate, improve the contribution of culture and creativity and its standing.
4. 'Creativity as a strategy' needs to be addressed at local level. This idea is not as strong or as clearly understood in comparison to Government's foundational document for the Creative Ireland Programme.
5. The programme needs to become more strategic at local level and achieve stronger integration within the local authority and within local authority plans.
6. Achieving greater local authority buy-in to the programme is key to longer-term development (building on processes that are robust and working well).
7. The next phase needs to focus on sustaining the frameworks that support the programme, maintaining momentum in terms of Local Government ambition for the programme, and embedding the programme for the longer term.
8. Both operational and strategic supports are required for the programme to develop:
 - a) Operational – to resource/support/strengthen local authority Culture and Creativity Teams; and (and CIP is happy for resources to be used in that)
 - b) Strategic – to ensure shared clarity/buy-in to the strategic potential of the programme, and that this strategic approach is embedded.
9. Shared understanding is required in relation to the unique selling proposition (USP) of the Creative Ireland Programme and in how that USP is communicated.

The value of the work

Discussions on the day demonstrated that Coordinators recognise and value a range of clear and integrated benefits from the programme. Common experiences indicate that Creative Ireland initiatives have:

- Helped to join dots within the local authority, improving collaboration, innovation and integration, and avoiding duplication;
- Tackled diverse social, economic, environmental challenges;
- Projects that have addressed 'People, Place and Identity' have had impacts

on wider planning and local area development;

- Projects have engaged a cross generational approach, thereby strengthening social cohesion and community well-being; and
- Projects that have cut across the 5 pillars of Creative Ireland have contributed to the economic well-being of the locale, in particular relating to development of the creative industries, by providing professional development and upskilling opportunities for creative practitioners.

The focus of the work

On the day, an in-room poll was used to identify the focus of work as it aligned with a number of statements. While this was undertaken as quick exercise, these views highlight a number of positives in the approach and focus of *Creative Communities* in relation to innovation and new ways of working (Item [a] below), advocacy for increased participation in culture and creativity (Item [b] below) and influencing change across other local authority areas (Item [d] below).

On the other hand, the responses noted that more than half (57%) saw a strong relevance in *Creative Communities* extending the reach/impact of existing work (per Item [c] below). The responses also highlight a variance from the focus of the Creative Ireland Programme 'as a strategy for wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development' [Item (e) below] when compared with Government's foundational document for the Programme:

As Creative Ireland Coordinators please rate the relevance of these statements to your work. (Participants asked to rate 1–5 stars, with 5* as more relevant.)

Statement	4–5 stars = High Relevance	3 stars = Relevant	1–2 stars = Low Relevance
a) Doing things differently – finding new ways of working, joining the dots or trying different approaches	73%	23%	3%
b) Advocating for increased participation in culture and creativity	62%	28%	10%
c) Extending the reach/impact of existing local authority cultural / creative programmes	57%	25%	18%
d) Influencing change across other local authority services, for better service delivery	49%	26%	26%
e) Utilising creativity as a strategy for individual wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development, for your local authority area	32%	48%	19%

Table 5

How we work

The session looked at How Coordinators work in terms of the Culture and Creativity Teams. At the meeting Coordinators were asked to share experiences of challenges or barriers to collaboration and integration as well as thinking about the next three years of the programme, of hopes and concerns as Coordinators. These experiences were gauged using on-site polling and discussion. This session indicated that:

- The majority of local authority Culture and Creativity Teams meet at least quarterly, with only 14% meeting less often;
- A challenge identified by the Coordinators gathered – 22% do not think that their creative team understands the value of the overall Creative Ireland Programme;
- Creative Ireland Coordinators feel it is essential *Creative Communities* and the 5-year strategies are not seen as a project-based programme and identified the need for demonstrating impacts and communicating the wider value of *Creative Communities* at CCMA/Director level; and
- A sustained human resource commitment would be required to enable continued momentum for the Creative Ireland Programme at Local Government level.

The Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of *Creative Communities*

Feedback from Coordinators indicated that (across both local authority Culture and Creativity Teams and Chief Executives/leadership teams) a quarter of those who have good awareness of

the programme, do not strongly value the programme. It was recognised that there is benefit in seeking to coherently distil and strategically communicate the value and USP of the programme.

Coordinators proposed that the USP includes

- The contribution the programme can make in relation to place-making, local identity, pride of place, local enterprise, and realising benefits for communities was seen as helping to shift thinking in relation to the potential of culture and creativity within policy (where this contribution can be to social cohesion and community development but also impact upon economic development);
- Partnership – National/local, with external partners at local level, across the local authority and potentially with other local authorities;
- Leveraging / unlocking wider supports, resources, investment and benefits;
- Innovating how local authorities work – joining dots which were not previously connecting; and
- Realisation in all-of-Local Government plans (in the same way as the Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-Government plan at national level).

It was noted that the USP also relates back to the original objectives of the agreed programme; in relation to culture and creativity as a strategic enabler – delivered through partnership and collaboration and underpinned by an integrated national strategy (shared purpose), shared structures and frameworks and shared communication:

Frameworks/Structures

- There is a need to reinforce that this is an integrated multi-disciplinary initiative rather than a culturally focussed arts/heritage/libraries initiative. This is not to take from the cultural value the Creative Ireland Programme brings, but to help develop the creative strand of work across Local Government in addition to the established cultural work of the local authority;
- Creativity should also be foregrounded in frameworks/structures and set out as a key contributor to social cohesion, and broader economic development;
- It is important that the review would take account of how local authority Culture and Creativity Teams should be structured to deliver. Achieving cross-directorate competencies are crucial;
- Continuing innovation and evolution are important within the programme. While the nature and scale of projects can still be flexible, there is a need to strengthen the approach as a strategy/programme (nationally and by each local authority), and not just a collection of projects; and
- Embedding the Creative Ireland Programme / agenda in 5-year plans is key; that local authorities begin to think about the value of the programme beyond 2022.

Communication

- There is a need to enhance communication as a strategy/programme (and not just a collection of projects);

- Responses from Coordinators indicated that 75% of CEOs/leadership teams valuing the programme is an excellent basis from which to build. There is a need, however, to understand why they value it and whether they all value it for similar reasons? Is there a shared strategic ambition, political impetus, language and messages that can carry within and across all *Creative Communities* initiatives; and
- Strong messaging could be built around a smaller number of more significant and visible projects and around projects which take differing approaches but share similar objectives. This could help to provide a basis for demonstrating impact, and promoting those same key messages contributes to increased advocacy / visibility for the wider work and agenda.

Common Purpose and Ambition

The discussion and feedback from Coordinators confirmed many of the issues and ideas that the Creative Ireland Programme had been considering as areas of focus for the review and years ahead.

The meeting identified a shared sense and common purpose in relation to:

- The importance of building on the momentum, the structures and strategies that have been established;
- The need to restate the strategic intent of the Creative Ireland Programme and the *Creative Communities* partnership (with senior management in local government); and
- Targeting more integrated and ambitious programme development.

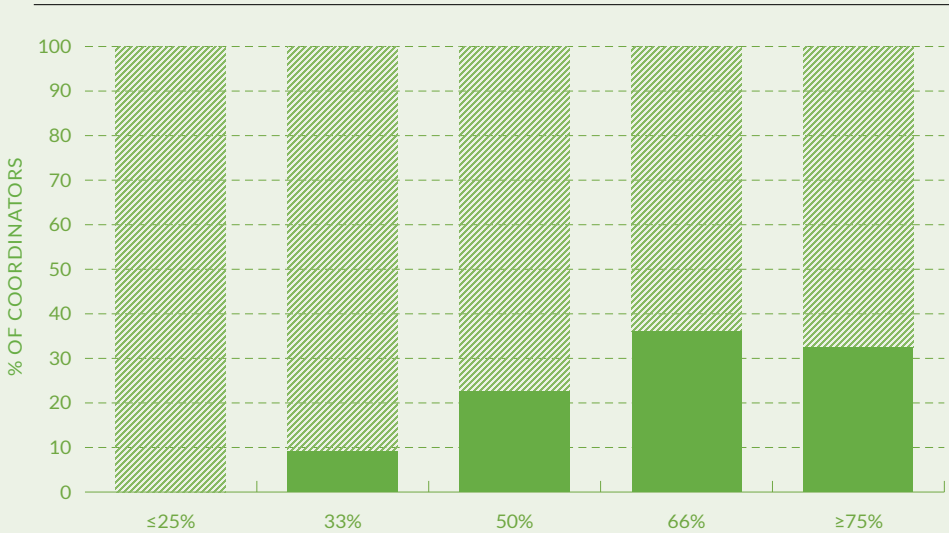
Appendix 4 Analysis of evaluative surveys completed by Coordinators and Directors of Service within local authorities

In June 2020, an evaluative survey issued to Coordinators. This survey covered a range of issues related to *Creative Communities* some of which were informed by the December 2019 workshop with Coordinators.

4a Progress of the 2018–2022 Local Authority Cultural and Creativity Strategies

The evaluative survey sought to ascertain Coordinators views on progress being made under the 2018–2022 Strategy of their local authority. (Note: this survey took place in June 2020 at the mid-point of the five-year timeframe).

How much progress has been made in delivery of the priorities identified in your local authority's strategy?



Over 90% of Coordinators estimate that delivery of priorities in their local authority's strategy has been progressed by 50% or more. While Coordinators and local authorities may each differ in how they rate progress, it is clear from the surveys (taking account of the response

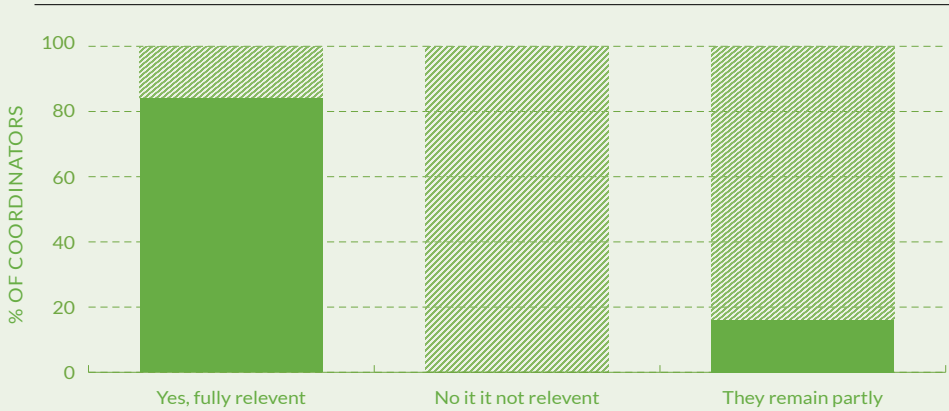
rate and qualitative and quantitative insights) and from data provided through the Creative Ireland portal, that a significant volume of work is being undertaken at local level. *Creative Communities* is being delivered within local authorities.

4b Continuing relevance of the values and priorities originally identified in the 2018–2022 Strategies

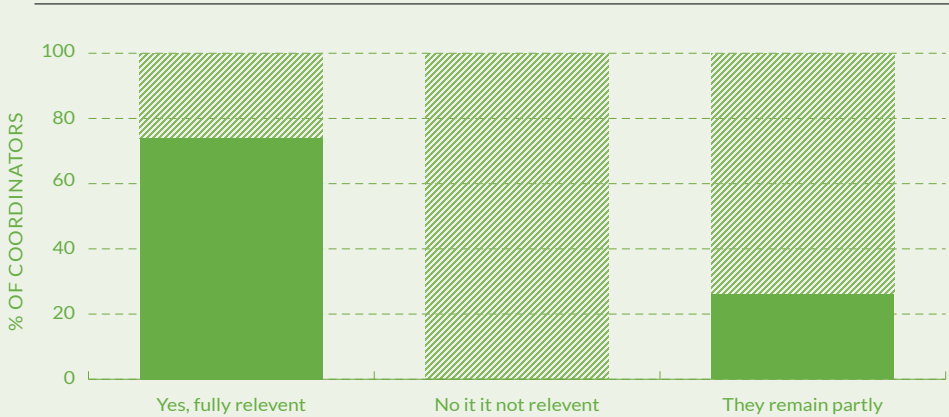
In the development of *Creative Communities*, each local authority was asked to identify the values and priorities that would guide their Strategy. The interim review recognises that, where these 31 Local Authority Culture and Creativity Strategies were developed

following the success of the 'Ireland 2016' Centenary Programme and supported by extensive consultation at local level, there was no precedent or pilot for the 31 Strategies which were progressed and published in parallel. The interim review presented an opportunity to consider whether the values and priorities identified by each local authority in their Strategy remain relevant.

Are the values of your local authority's strategy still relevant for your city/county as you progress to 2022?



Are the priorities of your local authority's strategy still relevant for your city/county as you progress to 2022?



A clear majority of Coordinators consider the values and priorities of their strategy to be relevant although a significant number believe that some reconsideration is warranted, particularly in relation to priorities where over 25% of Coordinators hold this view.

Where Coordinators identified that the values and/or priorities of strategies were partly relevant, this assessment was based on a number of factors, including:

- The approach of the local authority evolving to prioritise longer term projects;
- Consideration of stronger alignment with wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development;
- Strengthening approaches to mapping/ data;
- A need to emphasise collaboration as central to the approach within the local authority and with other partners;
- Re-considering the scale of ambition, where the Strategy was overly ambitious and did not take account of the local authority’s role in other initiatives such as Creative Youth and Cruinniú na nÓg;
- The impacts of COVID-19 requiring a major rethink and a focus on the local: “Covid has changed the landscape entirely, and future programmes will need to have an increased focus on supporting health, wellbeing, identity and stimulating local economic development”; and
- The need for a stronger emphasis on diversity.

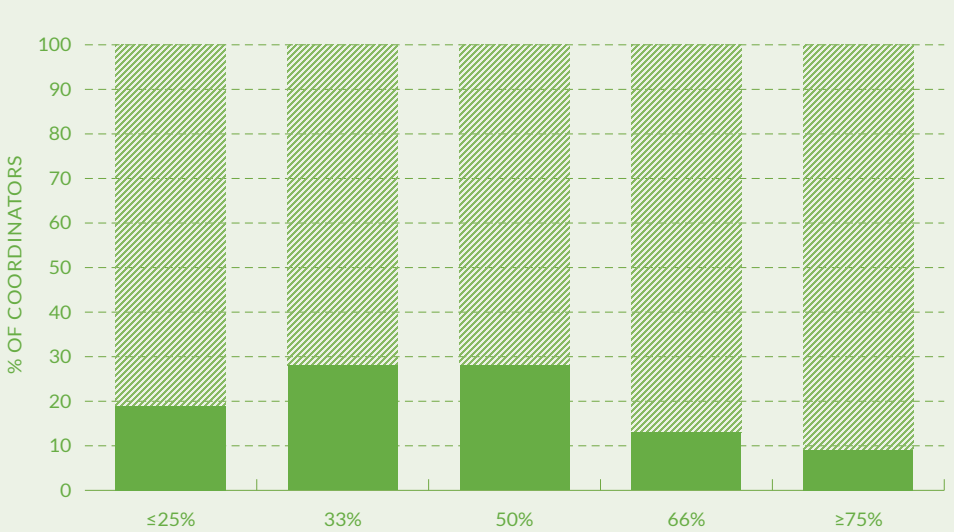
4c Delivery through technical expertise and ‘open call’ processes

The Culture and Creativity Teams comprise a significant range of expertise in each local authority. While the make-up of Teams differs between local authorities such expertise can cross the arts, architecture, archives, community, economic and enterprise development, libraries, heritage, language, biodiversity, tourism, planning, information and communication technologies (ICT) and more. This level of technical expertise affords a local authority with resources which few other public or private sector organisations could match. *Creative Communities* harnesses this expertise in collaborative approaches to engaging creativity as a strategy to meet identified needs in that local authority area.

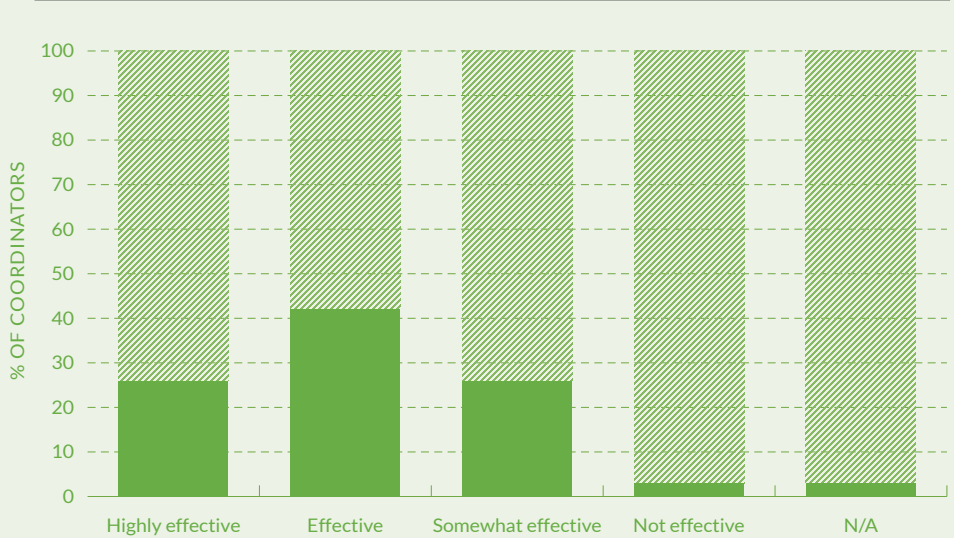
Given the range of technical expertise available (and the networks and partners these experts can bring) local authorities are well placed to identify programme needs from their resource of in-house experience and knowledge. This can be highly effective, particularly where existing programmes are not aligned to meet more integrated needs and/or where an element of innovation or risk-taking is required. Such an approach is fully in line with the principles that underpin *Creative Communities*.

In other cases, local authorities engage ‘open call’ processes, inviting applications/ submissions from outside the local authority. Such processes enable creative practitioners, cultural organisations, community groups and other organisations to identify particular needs where culture and creativity can make a difference. The interim review sought to identify the extent to which local authorities were utilising open call processes and whether Coordinators regarded such processes as effective:

For how much of your programme (since 2017) have you utilised an ‘open call’ process?



Where you have utilised an open call process, how effective do you consider this approach to be, in delivering against your local authorities Cultural and Creativity Strategy?



Approximately 49% of local authorities are utilising open call processes for less than half of their programme; a further 29% utilise open call for half their programme and almost 22% use it for more than half their programme. Only one local authority noted that the question was not applicable suggesting that 30 of 31 local authorities use open call processes to some extent.

In terms of effectiveness, one local authority found the process to be ineffective and a further 8 local authorities found it to be only somewhat effective. The 21 remaining local authorities found it to be either effective or highly effective.

From Coordinators' feedback, open call processes are variously used for large and small projects. Some local authorities use them to enhance larger scale initiatives, investing up to €10,000 on a project, where other local authorities had a €1,500 ceiling on applications.

In elaborating on the effectiveness of 'open call' approaches, Coordinators noted:

- The importance of continually developing the approach and a value in ensuring that the approach to any open call process is designed to meet identified themes/priorities in the local authorities Culture and Creativity Strategy;
- The 'open call' approach can yield excellent and innovative projects that would not be identified or funded under other schemes;
- A challenge can be the absence of continuity in initiatives from one year to the next although a number of local authorities (such as Leitrim County Council) note that open call works best if is a designed as a developmental process rather than a grant giving exercise; where groups and professional practitioners

are mentored and supported from expression of interest, throughout each project's lifecycle and successively onto other applications.

- The 'open call' approach can lead to a breakdown in internal collaboration within the Teams as successful projects are being managed by third parties who can apply in their own interest area (e.g. arts / heritage / libraries etc.)
- Where there are multiple schemes (other than *Creative Communities*) open to community groups, applications can be unfocussed. Some local authorities (e.g. Carlow County Council) address this through community meetings that highlight the importance of collaboration and the priorities in their criteria. Such processes can, in themselves, support collaboration.
- 'Open call' processes can be targeted to engage with different types of creative partners;
- 'Open call' approaches which are practitioner-led (rather than community-led) can be effective in artist-led projects but less successful in attracting applications from other creative practitioners. Others noted that application processes are not attractive to all creative practitioners and that direct commissioning is essential at times to achieve the right fit and expertise and enable a more developmental approach.
- Some groups do not have the structures or skillset in place to deliver projects and do not recognize the importance of acknowledging funding. In some cases (e.g. Galway County Council) a creative producer is engaged to help shape and strengthen projects that are successful through the open call.

- Administration and evaluation can be onerous. Where some local authorities use independent assessment panels with members of teams from other local authorities, such processes can be a valuable opportunity for shared learnings, but involvement of the local team is essential.

4d The programme *Creative Communities* enables

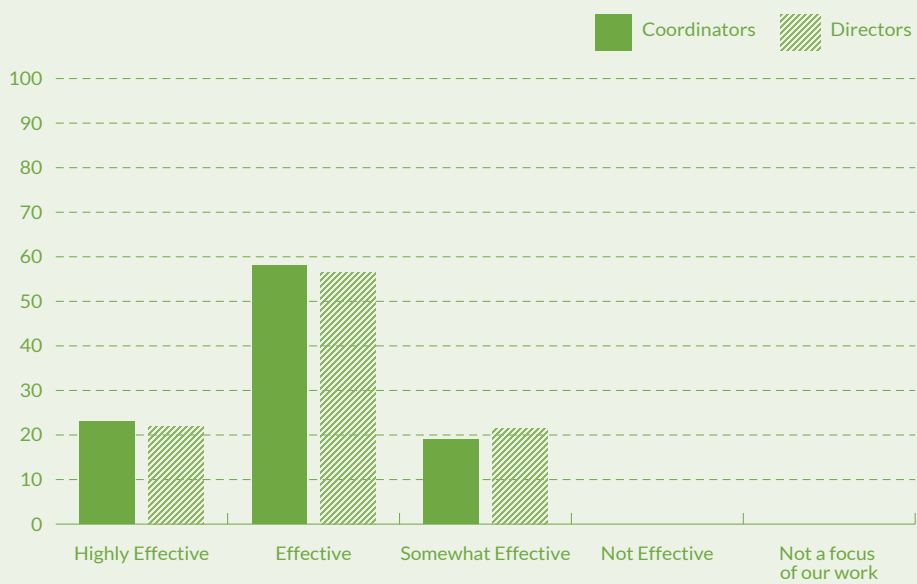
This section focuses on the programme of initiatives that *Creative Communities* enables in cities and counties across Ireland. The data is derived from the evaluative survey issued to Coordinators in June 2020 and a parallel survey issued to Directors of Services at the same time. Aligning with the ambition of the Creative Ireland Programme, this section considers quantitative feedback on the effectiveness of creativity as a strategy for:

- i. Wellbeing;
- ii. Social cohesion; and
- iii. Economic development

This section also encompasses qualitative feedback from the survey (iv) on areas of strength and areas for enhancement in relation the programme that *Creative Communities* enables.

The feedback indicates significant agreement that *Creative Communities* has been an effective strategy in helping to address wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development. The responses reveal the majority of both local authority Coordinators and Directors regard creativity as a more effective strategy for wellbeing and social cohesion, than for economic development, in relative terms. Additional analysis of *Creative Communities* projects, however, indicates that local authorities have placed less emphasis on targeting economic development through the work of *Creative Communities* to date, and there is therefore less evidence against which to assess its effectiveness in this regard.

The work of Creative Communities in helping to promote wellbeing in our city/county has been:

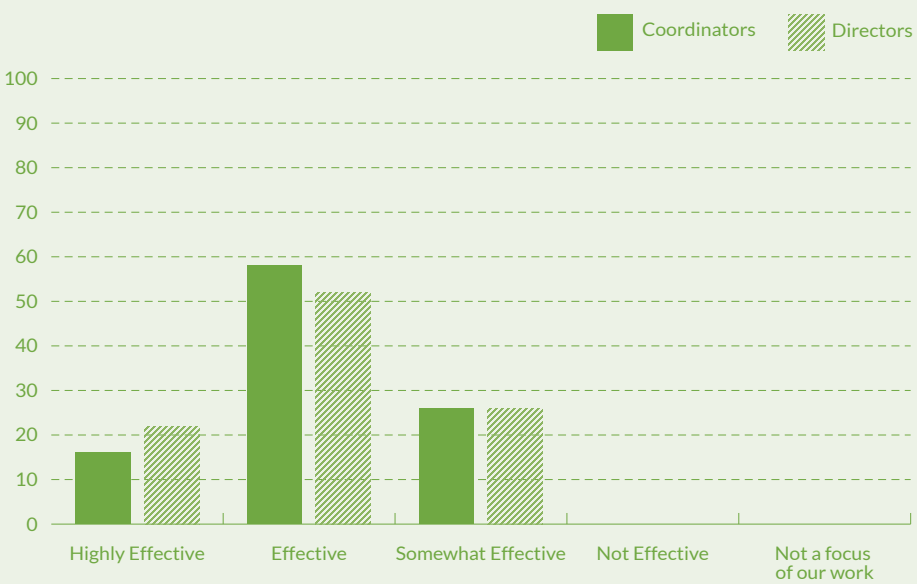


i) Creativity as a strategy for wellbeing – survey data

Coordinators and Directors of Services from Ireland’s 31 local authorities were asked to rate the effectiveness of creativity as a strategy for wellbeing. The vast majority of Coordinators and Directors of Services rated creativity as either effective or highly effective in helping to promote wellbeing.

For Coordinators (n=31) these ratings total 81% with 58% of respondents rating it effective and 23% rating it highly effective. For Directors of Services (n=23) the ratings total 78.5%, with 56.5% of respondents rating it effective and 22% rating it highly effective. The balance of Coordinators (19%) and Directors (21.5%) rated creativity as somewhat effective in helping to promote wellbeing.

The work of Creative Communities in helping to promote social cohesion in our city/county has been:

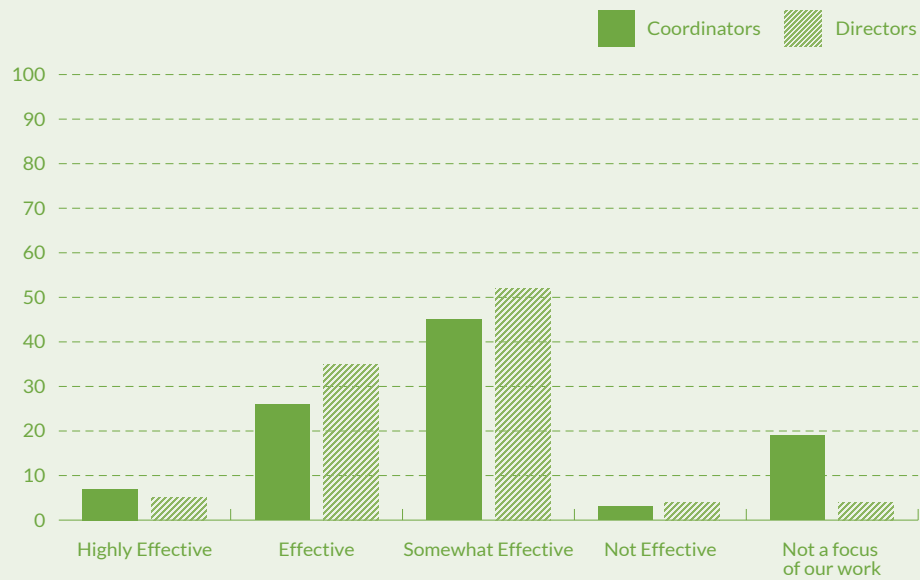


ii) Creativity as a strategy for social cohesion – survey data

Coordinators and Directors of Services from Ireland’s 31 local authorities were asked to rate the effectiveness of creativity as a strategy for social cohesion. The vast majority of Coordinators and Directors of Services rated creativity as either effective or highly effective. It is notable however that a higher proportion of Directors of Services rated creativity as a highly effective strategy in helping to promote social cohesion.

For Coordinators (n=31) 58% of respondents rated creativity as an effective strategy for social cohesion. An additional 16% of Coordinators rated it a highly effective strategy but a higher proportion, 26% rated it only somewhat effective. For Directors of Services (n=23) 52% of respondents rating it as effective and 22% rating it highly effective. Approximately one in four Directors of Services (26%) rated creativity to be somewhat effective as a strategy for social cohesion.

The work of Creative Communities in helping to promote economic development in our city/county has been:



iii) Creativity as a strategy for economic development – survey data

Coordinators and Directors of Services from Ireland’s 31 local authorities were asked to rate the effectiveness of creativity as a strategy for economic development.

The highest proportion of both Coordinators and Directors of Services rated creativity as somewhat effective in helping to promote economic development.

For Coordinators (n=31) almost one third rated creativity as either an effective or highly effective strategy, with just over 45% rating it as a somewhat effective strategy. One Coordinator (3%) did not regard creativity as effective in helping to

promote economic development. From the responses, just over 19% of Coordinators indicated that creativity as a strategy for economic development was not a focus of their work.

For Directors of Services (n=23) almost 40% rated as either an effective or highly effective strategy, with a further 52% rating it as a somewhat effective strategy. From the responses, one Director of Service did not regard creativity as effective in helping to promote economic development and one Director of Service indicated that creativity as a strategy for economic development was not a focus of their local authority’s work.

iv) The programme Creative Communities enables: Areas of strength and areas for enhancement

This section is based on qualitative feedback in relation to the programme of initiatives that Creative Communities enables through local authorities in cities and counties across Ireland. The feedback has been summarised here from the 54 surveys (of a possible 62) which were returned. This summary notes strengths / areas for enhancement separately for Coordinators and Directors of Services, to reflect the complementarity and variance within these perspectives.

Key Strengths – Programme/ External Delivery Effectiveness

Through the evaluative surveys issued, Coordinators and Directors of Services were asked to ‘outline key strengths of Creative Communities, in terms of the programme in enables and/or the benefits it delivers for (their) local authority area’.

Key strengths – Coordinators

Coordinators noted key strengths, including:

RESOURCES

- It is an important source of funding;
- Creates an opportunity/incentive to support new or larger scale creative projects that would not ordinarily have access to these resources; and
- Enables the freedom to take risks that would not be possible without the backing of the Creative Ireland Programme.

REACHING COMMUNITIES

- Creative Communities interdisciplinary focus (working across sections of the local authority) gives communities the opportunities to engage and

collaborate more broadly; to work on creative projects from grassroots level by facilitating access to all types of creative activity. Its flexibility means that Creative Communities projects can reach the spaces in between other local authority programmes;

- It supports communities from diverse backgrounds including ethnicity, age and creative ability. Reduces social isolation and can target hard-to-reach groups.

PLACE

- Facilitation of pride of place through positive, creative representation that also supports a sense of belonging; and
- Highlights our cultural assets, putting culture at the heart of our local authority’s development and using culture to examine new ways of creating a better future.

Key strengths – Directors of Service

Directors of Services noted key strengths, including:

RESOURCES

- It provides additional resources and validation to our work in community, libraries, arts, heritage, Irish language, culture;
- The support of the Creative Ireland team in Dublin adds greatly to the initiative and ensures focus; and
- Funding structure (of 100% grant) and scale are beneficial.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Elements of the Creative Communities work underpin many of our major programmes in terms of tourism, social inclusion, economic development, community development;

- It is a net job creator at a local level. Providing support to creative enterprises and creating job opportunities; and
- Nurturing and supporting *Creative Communities* have led to a clustering effect and create a positive image and profile for the county making it a more attractive place to live and work.

REACHING COMMUNITIES

- It enhances the reach of the local authority, increases its impact and visibility, and strengthens working relationships with the community;
- Invaluable in supporting projects throughout the community combining professional artists and citizens giving equal opportunity to all to become involved in exploring their creativity in a very broad range of areas which would not be supported by other funding streams;
- Brings communities together. Instils pride; and
- During COVID-19 it formed a very important part of our community response in supporting health and wellbeing.

RISK-TAKING

- Provided opportunity to explore non-typical areas for local authority.

Areas for enhancement – Programme/ External Delivery Effectiveness

Through the evaluative surveys issued, Coordinators and Directors of Services were asked to 'outline the areas where *Creative Communities* can become more effective, in terms of the programme it enables and/or the benefits it seeks to deliver for your local authority area.'

Areas for enhancement – Coordinators

Coordinators noted areas for enhancement, including:

GUIDANCE FROM THE CREATIVE IRELAND PROGRAMME

- Stronger more coherent national branding that describes exactly what it is that Creative Ireland is would be beneficial;
- It has taken the first 3 years of this Creative Ireland to 'find its feet' or foundation for our local authority, in terms of what it is about, what we are trying to achieve and how it aligns with local policy. It is now recognized as an effective, strategic programme for the county on many levels from engaging with the community, harnessing creativity at local level to putting our county on the national and international stage. It is becoming more effective in terms of strategic planning of the programme for the next number of years. We are looking at 2–3-year projects which will have a legacy for the programme, some will be the foundation for longer projects of up to 5 years. It is now allowing for more enhanced collaboration in new multifaceted ways which otherwise would not happen.

FOCUS

- A focus on projects that promote economic benefits needs to be targeted by the *Creative Communities*. The creative industries are a significant and valuable contributor to Ireland's economy;
- More focus on the health, wellbeing and identity elements of the programme. Some local authorities now have a wellbeing programme.

There may be potential for new initiatives there and in relation to social inclusion. Provide support to carry out programmes with individuals and communities with special needs and high levels of poverty and exclusion;

- Creative Ireland at national level could be more prescriptive in ensuring that only projects that really fulfil the collaborative aims of the overall programme rather than top-up existing programmes can be funded. It cannot be all things to all strategies. Best practice case studies drawing on previous years would be inspiring to the commissioning of future projects.

REGIONAL / NATIONAL COLLABORATION

- The RTE radio/Creative Ireland podcast series called 'My Creative Life' as part of Cruinniú na nÓg was good. It would be very beneficial to see all local authorities collaborate on one or two key projects each year.

POLICY

- The results have been phenomenal. In many ways it would be wonderful to see this as *Creative Communities* phase one with an extended commitment from Government to a long-term programme. This may be more challenging in a post-COVID context but, in many ways, it has never been more necessary. Long-term thinking and planning take years to embed. Achieving balance amongst the programme measures between departments internally is only happening now; and
- *Creative Communities* needs to be a measure in all policy, planning and funding applications for the full impact

to be realised. (This has already been initiated in some local authorities where it is envisaged "that the collective views of the team from the perspective of creativity could positively impact on economic development policies, play policies, age friendly strategies, town planning etc. as well planning for arts, heritage and libraries").

Areas for enhancement – Directors of Service

Directors of Services noted areas for enhancement, including:

RESOURCES

- Increased resources.

FOCUS

- The breadth of ambition is both a strength and a weakness of the programme;
- It is early stages at the moment, but a more clearly defined emphasis on the economic benefits that can be achieved should be continuously highlighted during programme-planning, which could in turn enhance the local economy and support job creation. *Creative Communities* could become more effective particularly during the COVID-19 recovery period by further promoting engagement with businesses through perhaps strengthened partnerships with the LEO and Chambers Ireland;
- Necessary to further develop social inclusion elements in particular. There is a sense at times that the usual groups and community activists benefit the most as most exposed to applying for grant aid. Post-COVID, we need to become more effective and remain relevant. We have to find new ways to

maintain a strong level of engagement with our customers; and

- Commitment to extending the programme beyond 2022.

PROGRAMME

- If additional funds became available, it might be possible to introduce some targeted national initiatives based on best practice around the country. Best-practice case-studies may present opportunities here;
- Targeting of successful projects for further development, as well as open calls; and
- More strategic view with more medium-term outlook, i.e., projects that are delivered in a 3-year lifespan and can then be mainstreamed into relevant space/sector to continue.

PROMOTION

- Increased communication and media promotion of *Creative Communities* and its objectives will strengthen both the work in the broader community and increase the level of engagement, particularly in hard to reach communities.

4e Creativity in public policy at local level

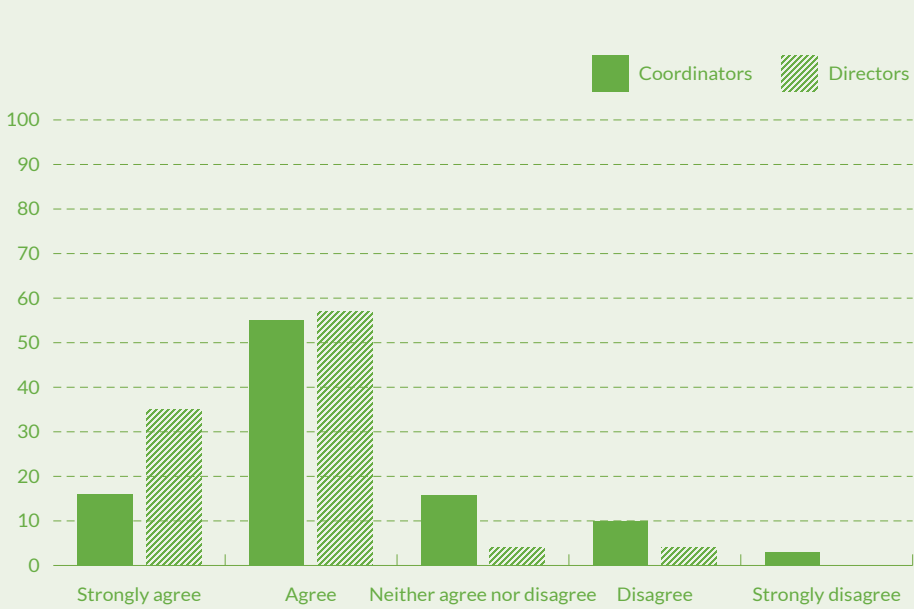
This section focuses on the on the effectiveness of the *Creative Communities* initiative in helping to embed creativity within public policy at local level. The data is derived from an evaluative survey issued to Coordinators and Directors of Services in June 2020, which sought quantitative feedback on the effectiveness of *Creative Communities* in:

- i. Delivering across the local authority;
- ii. Supporting innovation within the local authority; and
- iii. Developing new partnerships and resources for the local authority.

This section also encompasses qualitative feedback from the survey (iv) on areas of strength and areas for enhancement in relation to delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme with and within local authorities (through *Creative Communities*).

The feedback indicates significant agreement that *Creative Communities* has been an effective strategy in delivering across the local authority, supporting innovation and developing new partnerships and new resources. The data indicates close alignment in both the views of Coordinators and Directors of Services in relation to combined ‘agreement’ and ‘strong agreement’ around the contribution *Creative Communities* makes. In the areas of ‘delivering across the local authority’ and ‘supporting innovation’, Directors of Services are notably stronger in their assessment of the positive difference the initiative makes.

Implementation of the Creative Ireland Programme within our local authority has seen the programme deliver across the local authority (i.e. beyond the teams/ programmes traditionally associated with delivery of cultural and creative services):



i) Delivering across the local authority

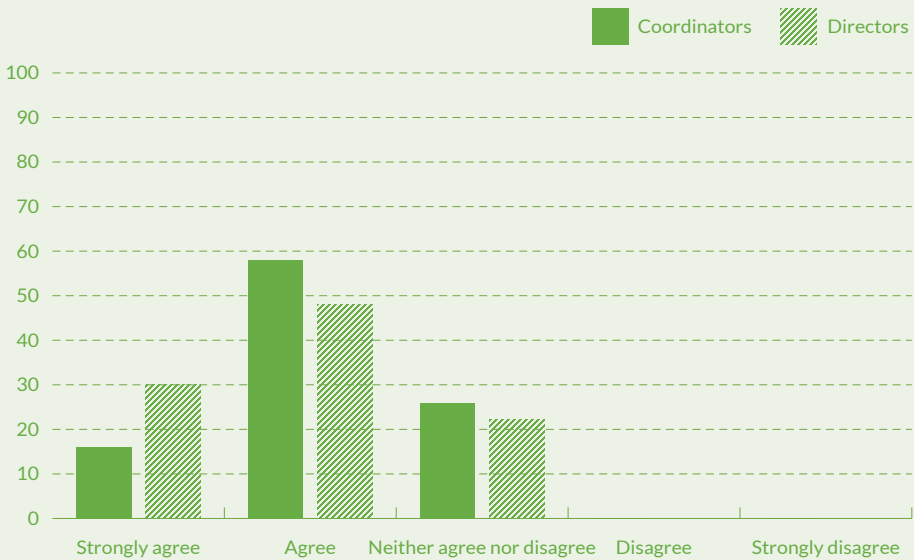
Coordinators and Directors of Services from Ireland’s 31 local authorities were asked to agree or disagree on a scale, whether the implementation of the Creative Ireland Programme had seen the programme deliver across the local authority.

The majority of both Coordinators (55%) and Directors of Services (56.5%) agreed that the programme has delivered across the local authority. A significantly higher number of Directors of Services (35%) strongly agreed in relation to the same statement compared with Coordinators (16%).

For Coordinators (n=31) a total of 71% agreed or strongly agreed that the Creative Ireland Programme has delivered across the local authority. A further 16% neither agreed nor disagreed with the same statement, while 10% disagreed and 3% (one Coordinator) strongly disagreed.

For Directors of Services (n=23) just over 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the Creative Ireland Programme has delivered across the local authority. From the responses, one Director of Service disagreed that the programme had delivered across the local authority, and one Director of Service neither agreed nor disagreed.

Delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme within our local authority has seen the programme support innovation within the local authority (e.g. in how we work):



ii) Supporting innovation within the local authority

Coordinators and Directors of Services from Ireland’s 31 local authorities were asked to agree or disagree on a scale, whether delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme has seen the programme support innovation within the local authority.

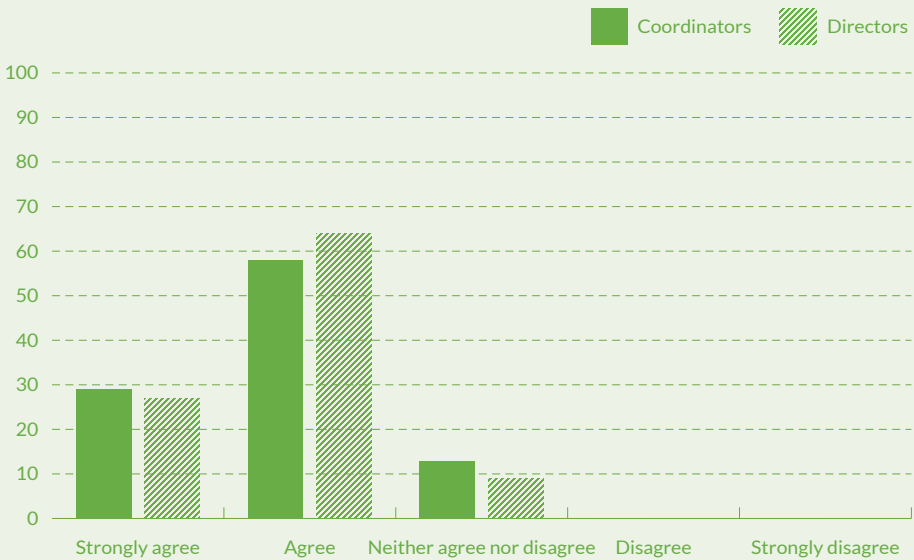
The majority of both Coordinators and Directors of Services either agree or strongly agree that delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme within our local authority has seen the programme support innovation within the local authority. For Coordinators, this combined figure is 74%.

For Directors of Services, this combined figure is 78%, with a notably higher number of Directors of Services (30%) strongly agreeing in relation to the same statement compared with Coordinators (16%).

For Coordinators (n=31) this sees down as 58% who agree that the programme has supported innovation within the local authority, 16% strongly agreeing with this statement and a further 26% neither agree nor disagree.

For Directors of Services (n=23) 48% agree that the programme has supported innovation within the local authority, 30% strongly agreeing with this statement and further 22% neither agree nor disagree.

Delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme within our local authority has seen the programme support the development of new partnerships and resources for the local authority:



iii) Developing new partnerships and resources for the local authority

Coordinators and Directors of Services from Ireland’s 31 local authorities were asked to agree or disagree on a scale, whether delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme has seen the programme support the development of new partnerships and resources for the local authority.

The vast majority of both Coordinators and Directors of Services either agree or strongly agree that delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme within our local authority has seen the programme support development of new partnerships and resources for the local authority.

For Coordinators, this combined figure is 87%. For Directors of Services, this combined figure is 91%.

For Coordinators (n=31) this breaks down as 58% who agree that the programme has supported development of new partnerships and resources for the local authority, with an additional 29% strongly agreeing with this statement. A further 13% neither agree nor disagree.

For Directors of Services (n=23) 64% agree that the programme has supported development of new partnerships and resources for the local authority, with an additional 27% strongly agreeing with this statement. A further 9% neither agree nor disagree.

iv) Delivery with and within local authorities: Areas of strength and areas for enhancement

This section is based on qualitative feedback in relation to delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme with/within local authorities. The following sections identify a number of strengths as well as areas for enhancement. The feedback has been summarised here from the 54 surveys (of a possible 62) which were returned. This summary notes strengths / areas for enhancement separately for Coordinators and Directors of Services, to reflect the complementarity and variance within these perspectives.

Key strengths – Delivery with and within local authorities

Through the evaluative surveys issued as part of the interim review process, Coordinators and Directors of Services were asked to 'outline key strengths in how the Creative Ireland Programme works with/within Local Government.

Key strengths – Coordinators

Coordinators noted key strengths, including:

COLLABORATION + COMMUNICATION

- The culture team is a key strength within the programme as it facilitates group working. As the Creative Ireland Programme is an all of government initiative, this opens doors to conversations within the local authority that might not otherwise get started and "it makes collaborations more achievable as there is some seed funding to start to make things happen";
- Led to a significant change in working practice within the cultural entities

within the council and strengthens the visibility and impact of those sections;

- The regular exchange of information between the Creative Ireland Programme and the local authorities is very worthwhile. Strong PR, communication and support from the Creative Ireland Programme Office at national level is a key part of this and there is also significant value in the formal recognition from national level of the work of local authority Culture Teams; and
- That marketing has enabled local authorities to have greater strength in approaching partners and communities.

POLICY + STRATEGY

- As a formally adopted strategy, the Culture and Creative Strategy is now referenced in many Corporate Plans, County Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans. The introduction of SLA's is helpful in terms of focussing commitment on delivery of the strategy and how it can be supportive of other policies across the local authority;
- The new definition of culture under Creative Ireland was critical as culture in the broadest sense i.e. not just the arts was very significant to the broadening of the appeal to a wider audience and there increasing the opportunity for all sectors to work together in partnership with the communities we serve;
- Brought about a more strategic perspective, leading to initiatives such as research partnerships with local Higher Education Institutes and mapping of local authority cultural assets with local authority GIS expertise; and

- It is a platform that can be used to work cross sector within the local authority which has had positive benefits for example in terms of climate change, age-friendly actions etc.

TAPPING INTO EXPERTISE

- Strategic working relationships now exist between culture sections and other sections. The Local Enterprise Office, Economic Development, Tourism, Planning, Environment, Climate Action have been involved with providing expert advice and input on specific projects;
- Joined up working maximises the resources involved and an opportunity for the local authority to tap into the broad experience of wider partners; and
- Collaborative approach across departments in terms of project design, evaluation and outcome. Encouraging other sections and partners to critique project ideas also assists in enhanced project outcomes.

Key strengths – Directors of Services

Directors of Services noted key strengths, including:

COLLABORATION + COMMUNICATION

- The mechanism of the Culture Team and Coordinator are key strengths of the programme. It embeds the programme throughout the organisation and extends its reach beyond the traditional cultural areas. This needs to be further developed to be seen as a core element of activities across all sectors rather than an add-on;
- It has redefined the definition of creativity and attracted a wider

range of actors into this space. The national status of the programme and associated creative initiatives bring a whole new cohort of people in touch with the local authority and builds a wider 'customer base'. The creative sector is now seen as an important part of community and economic development; and

- It must be viewed in terms of the sum of the works in this area and recognised that a lot of the success is building on work that has been going on for years, but with added value and new approaches. It has brought a more formal structure within authorities, realised additional opportunities and created new networks.

POLICY + STRATEGY

- It is highlighting how creativity can be an enabling tool for economic development, service delivery and social integration. Creativity is more than just a cultural issue; it is at the heart of development and change;
- The work of *Creative Communities* has provided a more strategic approach to creative and cultural planning in our local authority. It has embedded creativity at policy level and builds on the wider vision and objectives of the local authority in a more integrated way; and
- It has provided an opportunity to explore non-typical areas for the local authority. It has enabled risks to be taken in trying new approaches that have generated positive outcomes.

TAPPING INTO EXPERTISE

- Multiple benefits, supporting core service areas to improve their service offering and ensuring a more holistic and all-services response to problem solving and opportunity creation;
- It has brought all the creative disciplines, traditional, artistic, cultural, social and economic from across the Council to work on the programme, add value in terms of their existing work and acted as a catalyst for looking at combined working in a more strategic way; and
- It gives additional capacity in a local authority where resources (human and financial) are constrained. Resources are now available to harness the creativity that is found within the staff and programmes of local government.

Areas for enhancement – Delivery with and within local authorities

Through the evaluative surveys issued, Coordinators and Directors of Services were asked to outline 'the areas where the Creative Ireland Programme can work more effectively with/within Local Government'.

Areas for Enhancement – Coordinators

Coordinators noted areas of enhancement, including:

COMMUNICATION

- Needs to be embedded at Director level and needs to be publicised more to our Department (DHPLG) and at LGMA and CCMA level. DHPLG or DRCD do not seem to be as visible within *Creative Communities*, where DES and DCHG seem to be well engaged on Creative Youth;

- More updates on the National Creative Ireland Programme could be circulated in publications e.g. local authority News, LGIU bulletin to raise the awareness and profile of the programme. Elected members could be briefed at annual LAMA conference etc.; and
- A clearer national message would help. With the many pillars of Creative Ireland maybe the community strand gets lost a little. Often people do not realise what Creative Ireland is despite best efforts at local level.

INTEGRATION

- Local authorities should be encouraged to broaden out the Culture Teams to include other agents across the council. Ultimately, the priorities of Wellbeing, Social Cohesion and Economic development would be instilled in our planning as outputs and indicators of achievement and aligned with the remit of representatives from Community, Environment, Enterprise, Planning, Housing, Tourism, etc.;
- The programme has only been in place for a short time. Embedding ways of working needs more attention. The working of the culture team could become more cohesive, stronger and more effective. More opportunities for all members of the Culture Teams to be involved in the national meetings would be help people to think bigger; and
- While most of our work has been, and will likely continue to be, *Creative Communities*, each of the pillars of the Creative Ireland Programme is relevant to local authorities. It may be valuable to include or increase presentations to demonstrate the potential with other pillars.

RESOURCES

- Further commitment to the programme beyond 2022. Increased funding provided, particularly post COVID19, to support and sustain the creative sector;
- Currently for some members of some culture teams, Creative Ireland has not been mainstreamed into their work programmes, so the work of the CI Programme is seen as an extra burden on already stretched resources. It is often the case that the workload falls 90% to the Coordinator which can be problematic. A rotating coordinator role would more effective;
- We could also work with more experts – developing creative tools and thinking within the local authority to be innovative, take risks, and explore how creativity is core to problem-solving and a requirement of the 21st century skillset; and
- More resources for high population areas.

POLICY + STRATEGY

- Provision of national guidance through the CCMA on the scope, aims and benefits in wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development;
- The Creative Ireland Programme at local level needs to be led, really driven, by Senior Management. Arts Officers and Heritage Officers are simply not at the table where strategic decisions are made;
- By being embedded into the Local Economic and Community Plan, Creative Ireland supports delivery and can play an integral part in creativity and culture while also supporting economic and social sustainability.

Could work very effectively towards achieving specific local authority aims in relation to targeting specific hard to reach communities and also policy areas such as climate action, urban realm design and animation, creative industries, tourism, etc; and

- We need to devise some form of longitudinal impact assessment on the programme.

Areas for enhancement – Directors of Services

Directors of Services noted areas of enhancement, including:

COMMUNICATION

- It would be helpful if government departments, Local Government senior management teams, Elected Members collectively saw the benefits of culture and creativity to all our communities and supported its development wholeheartedly. The communications from the Creative Ireland Programme Office are high quality, including the excellent partnerships such as with RTE on Cruinniú na Óg. Maybe there is a way to enhance the channels with local authority Communications Offices and with the Elected Members networks to ensure as wide and consistent a message as possible;
- Strengthen the links with the relevant CCMA committee through a quarterly progress report; and
- Within the sector it may be beneficial to have the Creative Ireland staff visit the local team once per year to provide additional support and a national viewpoint.

INTEGRATION

- The Creative Ireland programme needs to become a core function, with appropriate resources and funding, within the LA encompassing all the creative sectors. There is potential for more formal integration of *Creative Communities* with other cultural services and programmes within the local authority;
- LA are inundated with grants and schemes that are typically managed within a specific directorate. *Creative Communities* is a cross-functional initiative, however the lead department may not be the direct beneficiaries. Projects need 'creative champions' within participating directorates at a relatively senior level to drive project implementation/delivery; and
- Strengthen collaboration outside the organisation – linking with PPN, education providers, the voluntary sector and in economic development.

RESOURCES

- A key benefit has been the additional resources, the structure and the strategy - the challenge is we are looking at the same people to deliver e.g. Arts, Library, Heritage, etc. and the staffing is so tight it is a challenge for the staff involved. Could be a much stronger voice if adequately resourced from a staffing perspective, it is an “add on” job for a number of the committee so at times although “buy in” is positive – there are usually only 2/3 staff members really driving the agenda;
- The fact that the programme is cross functional, is both a strength and weakness as it is ancillary to main work of the directorate, thus quality and timeliness of participation/delivery

can pose a challenge. It would be more effective if there was a multi-annual commitment to enable longer-term planning and potentially to deliver a small number of large-scale projects rather than a large number of small projects; and

- While there is visibility within the directorate responsible, that is less so for other directorates and so it does not make the Management Team agenda often and they may not be aware of the work. This is, in part, down to resources as all are very busy doing – a lot of work happens without being highlighted.

POLICY+STRATEGY

- To build on what has been achieved, there here needs to be a commitment to the programme beyond 2022;
- Introduce some focus on developmental work for the teams as well as the delivery of projects to build sustainability. We need to try to mainstream the creative approaches resourced under the Creative Ireland Programme within the traditional functions of Local Government; and;
- There are opportunities to further target aspects of the programme, such as linking in with climate action and engaging in SMART community initiatives.