



2021-2025

The Next Wave

Draft Arts Strategy
for Consultation with SPC
December 2020

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Introduction

In 2021 Galway City Council will publish a new Arts Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025. It will take over from our current Arts Plan, *Creative City (2016)*. The new strategy will extend and develop the City Council's support for artists, arts organisations, venues and their workforces, and the communities they serve.

We start from a position of strength. Over the past decade we have witnessed a flourishing of the arts and culture in the city. Our accomplishments include our designation as a UNESCO City of Film and more recently the award of European Capital of Culture in 2020 featuring the local achievements of our Wave Makers and the Small Towns Big Ideas programme. Galway organisations and artists have risen to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 emergency in an environment of huge uncertainty and continued to make and deliver outstanding work and experiences.

So why does Galway City Council need a new arts strategy? The short answer is that the environment in which the arts have to work has changed. Departures in government policy, such as Ireland 2040 and wider shifts in the arts and cultural landscape at national level - *Culture 2025 /Éire Ildánach*, the *Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022* and the Arts Council's *Making Great Art Work* - have lent impetus to the strategic development of the arts locally through integrated cross disciplinary approaches and collaborative models.

Our role in encouraging and promoting local economic and community development has been strengthened under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, creating new opportunities for our citizens to think differently about their cultural resources and the potential they offer to nurture distinctiveness, civic engagement, and as an innovative stimulant for growth and employment in a wide range of traditional and new industries.

As the world continues to change economically, technologically, socially and environmentally, there is every indication that over the next decade that transformation will accelerate. In such a rapidly shifting landscape we cannot continue to operate in the ways we always have done. We need to change with the world, as it changes. We need to think and work creatively to overcome the challenges, and make the most of the opportunities, that such change brings.

And we need to go further in addressing old challenges, as well as readying ourselves to meet new ones. We are proud of the arts and culture that we support today. But while our original arts plan made strides in bringing arts opportunities to people across the city, too many gaps remain. Inequality of access to publicly funded arts still exists across our city; for children and young people, opportunities to experience the arts often depend on background and eircode; and throughout the arts sector a lack of diversity persists. It's time to bridge these gaps: to support and celebrate the arts for their intrinsic value to our society and their distinctive contribution to the cultural and creative lives of everybody in Galway City.

With the strategy that we are proposing here, we are looking to shape our city to encourage every one of us to express and develop our creativity through the arts: for the joy, satisfaction and wellbeing that living a creative life and engagement with the arts brings, and for the way in which creativity and the culture that comes from it allow us both to adapt to our world and to adapt it; to change, and to make the changes that we want to see.

In Galway City Council we see culture as an intrinsic element of our economic, environmental community and social sustainability and the development of all four elements in the city and in the region will inter-link and enhance our lives and the lives of children and young people who wish to live and work in the region.

We begin this new decade with a far clearer idea of the role arts and culture can play in shaping our social and economic landscape. In looking to the future, we want to engage and find new ways to support artists and arts organisations to evolve to meet new challenges as effectively as possible: through improving their environmental sustainability; through building better, nimbler business models; and through innovating and taking risks in all areas of their work in order to create inspiring, entertaining and moving arts experiences.

We want communities across the city to experience the benefits of our investment in the arts, and we want to support children and young people to develop their creative potential to the full. We intend to make sure that the doors are open for the finest, most exciting artists and cultural leaders, no matter where they come from, to step through.

This draft strategy draws on extensive consultation with the public, our partners and stakeholders, artists, independents, creative practitioners and arts organisations. It builds on evidence we have gathered.

1. Where we are now

We have now reached the end of the period covered by Galway City Council's Arts Plan, *Creative City*. Presented as a constituent part of the city's Cultural and Sustainability Framework Strategy, *Everybody Matters*, the aim was simple: the creation of a model of arts excellence for Galway city in aesthetics, curation, innovation and provision, encouraging artistic and community participation, fostering social inclusion, developing economic sustainability and encouraging environmental responsibility.

At its centre was the desire to create an approach that improved the connection between citizens and contemporary creativity leading to an enhanced quality of artistic life and a lasting legacy of pride of place. This ethos underpinned our approach to represent Ireland as European Capital of Culture (ECoC) where our priority was to deliver transformational change that would be real and sustainable with an emphasis on cultural innovation, supporting local creative talents and stimulating the cultural demand of local people. An important legacy of ECoC is that the potential for collaboration between professional arts organisations, the arts sector, business and the local authority was demonstrated.

The arts were central to our narrative as the most recognised manifestations of our cultural expression and identity. Creative City identified as strategic aims;

- that excellence would thrive and be celebrated in the arts,
- that everybody would have the opportunity to experience and be inspired by them, and
- that every child and young person would have the opportunity to experience their richness.

The plan set out the strategic vision for the city to become a world class city region; an innovative city; an equal and inclusive city; a sustainable resilient urban environment that is the regional capital of the west, and a city that promotes the health and well-being of all its people.

The arts plan clarified our purpose and aspirations: to ourselves, to our partners, to policymakers and the public. Its launch coincided with an exciting era of unprecedented cultural development and achievement in the history of the city in which funding for arts and culture increased significantly. The shared goals and strong partnerships which the arts plan enabled allowed us to support artists and cultural organisations to develop and it gave a clear rationale for our investment and allowed us to work with others so that great arts and culture could be made, experienced and appreciated by as many people as possible.

The successes of the Creative City arts plan have been significant. Galway's artists continue to flourish at home and on the world stage, and are vital sources of talent and enterprise for our city's creative industries, which are major drivers of the regional economy. Communities across the city have benefitted from investment in the arts. Our arts organisations have responded with ambition and imagination to the opportunity presented by Galway ECoC. As a result of all of this, there is now a much clearer understanding of the role that the arts, can play in building the identity and prosperity of the city, contributing to place making and creating stronger communities and enriching people's lives.

And yet there is more to be done. As we prepared for this new strategy we set out to understand how we could build on the accomplishments of the last arts plan, and achieve greater success in the areas where challenges remain.

We started with an open invitation in February 2020 to initiate a process of dialogue and discussion with Council colleagues and people from across the city – members of the public, children and young people and their families, artists, curators and producers, leaders of arts organisations and those working in national agencies. We asked them how they experience the arts and what their creative lives look like, what the arts, mean to them and what they believe public money should and shouldn't fund in the Arts sector.

We reviewed more than 50 reports on arts and cultural policy and strategy and the work delivered by artists and arts organisations, and the ways in which the public benefits from them. We posted an online arts survey to identify public priorities for investment in the arts which have yielded valuable insights about the role of the arts in the lives of Galway citizens. We hosted 12 arts sector workshops and 35 key informant meetings to ascertain the key issues and external changes that are likely to impact the arts sector.

We also conducted a mapping exercise which focused on Galway's arts organisations. We examined data about leadership, economic and environmental sustainability, and about the role arts activity has to play in the fields of health and wellbeing.

From our engagement with the arts sector and the public we identified a set of key challenges facing the sector that we believe our new strategy should address. Together, these challenges make up our 'case for change'. They are:

- *that across the population there are geographic variances i.e. provision is highly centralised. The artistic vibrancy of the centre feels detached and remote from the everyday lives of those living in suburban areas – where most of the city's population reside.*
- *that large sections of the population do not engage in the arts (as supported by public funds) barriers include socio-economic circumstances, ethnicity or religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, family status, age, membership of the traveler community, or through lack of accommodation of a disability.*
- *that although awareness of the issue is greater than it used to be, there remains a persistent and widespread lack of diversity in the voices being heard and in the audience profile for the arts in the city. While it's acknowledged that there are encouraging initiatives at grass roots level through festivals, residencies and occasional outreach projects by arts organisations – a more coherent policy and strategic approach is needed.*
- *that arts provision for children and young people across the city needs greater investment. Despite their developmental significance, economic dependency and the stated public preference for spending on them, the current level of arts funding for children and young people remains relatively low.*

- *that the dominant arts model in the city is one of production and consumption i.e. the emphasis is on building 'supply' with insufficient focus being paid to creating 'demand'. Public participation in the arts as a valued part of city life is not adequately developed despite the richness and wealth of arts and cultural organisations operating in the city and their desire to diversify and reach new audiences. The structures needed to support outreach work simply don't exist.*
- *that the business models of publicly funded arts organisations are often fragile and generally lack the flexibility to address emerging challenges and opportunities, especially those relating to operating within the digital economy and the integration of enterprise skills.*
- *that many creative practitioners and leaders of cultural organisations avoid risk-taking due to concerns about securing ongoing funding.*
- *that important strides were made to support relationship building across the network of local arts organisations, hubs, creative practitioners and independents in preparation for ECoC: more investment is now needed to sustain and develop collaborative approaches for the sector to achieve its potential.*
- *that more bespoke capacity building and training opportunities are needed to develop talent and strengthen arts sector capability*
- *that deficits in the city's built arts and cultural infrastructure are hampering Galway's development as a creative city region. New collaborative structures will be needed to support to a joined up approach between the arts sector, developers, planners and other relevant council departments focused on maximising the opportunity planned regeneration programmes offer for the arts.*
- *that current communications infrastructure is inadequate to support the breadth of exchange opportunities that would benefit the city and support the development of audiences for professional and amateur organisations and groups e.g. promoting classes, exhibitions, recitals, gigs, events, readings and performances. Or indeed to make the city's professional arts organisations whose work offers tremendous richness and diversity, easily accessible to the public and visitors to the city*

The strength and vitality of our artists, our arts organisations and the workforce in our arts sector, combined with a shared recognition of the challenges ahead, means that we can approach the next five years positively, and with confidence in our ability to achieve more, and reach further. It is now time to take the next step.

2. Facing the challenges ahead

The arts in Galway and Galway 2020 received a devastating setback with the onset of the Covid-19 emergency. From what was to be a showcase year to celebrate the richness of Galway’s cultural life and the achievements of its artists and communities, the emphasis has shifted dramatically to ensure the arts and cultural sector are not left behind in the huge task of recovery planning for Galway city.

The turbulence that Covid-19 has unleashed has profound implications for the arts sector. In a recently published report *Life Worth Living* the National Arts and Recovery Taskforce states “it is hard for the taskforce to over – emphasise the gravity of the situation facing the sector over the next few years”.

The report captures the impact on lives and livelihoods “Theatre artists and musicians have lost nearly all income from their work this year and face an uncertain future. Event workers have been laid off. Actors, dancers, performers are without that magical engagement with audiences that drives their creativity. Visual artists have seen their exhibitions cancelled and sales collapse, as cinemas, galleries and museums lie empty. Writers lost their income from reading at literary festivals. Circus and street spectacle artists have no idea when they will work again. Live events businesses and all of the hundreds of suppliers and sub-contractors are unable to earn a living and pay bills. Financial insecurity and an uncertain future are placing huge mental pressure on artists and event workers.....Audiences are missing out on the thrill, excitement and magic of live performance.”

The Taskforce makes a number of recommendations for the sectors survival until it fully opens up again. They include how the State can retain artists and the wider creative, technical, production and support workforce, with their skills and talent, so that there are still arts, culture and entertainment events for Irish audiences to enjoy in better times. These recommendations build on the considerable supports provided to the impacted sectors in Budget 2021 and in the July stimulus.

Two of the recommended measures have specific relevance for local authorities. Measure 5 recommends that Government sustains local authority capacity to support arts, culture and live entertainment through the pandemic and beyond. Measure 9 focuses on providing more outdoor public spaces for cultural events. A new scheme will accelerate a public realm capital improvements programme to adapt, equip and improve public spaces.

In identifying the value of the arts and cultural sector in society, the report offers ways to ensure artists and arts organisations are recognised and supported through new measures.

Our strategy is informed by the report recommendations.

More broadly change in the arts sector is already underway. Through the consultation, participants highlighted organisations and individuals across Galway city already meeting the challenges that our research identified.

They pointed to partnerships with the technology sector, the wider creative industries and higher education; initiatives around arts and health; and the growing support and celebration of everyday creativity. Such initiatives are exciting and inspiring. The challenge now is to adapt and expand them in order to accelerate and deepen the wider development and impact of our sector.

The coming decade will bring profound challenges for our artists, arts organisations and for our shared humanity. All of us face the reality of climate crisis, its implications and its consequences. On our shared planet our social, political, economic and cultural realms will engage with an array of challenges and opportunities. Public finances are pressurised by the growing demands of health and social care imperatives and the demands of an aging population; changing approaches to work and the ever increasing impact of high tech on our lives and occupations will pose difficult ethical questions; global financial uncertainty, the effects of Brexit and the hangover from the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to affect our economy and society.

On the edge of Europe, our peripheral city will feel the winds of international concerns and conflicts. As before we will respond emphatically we will legislate at local level for the wellbeing of our citizens, for equality and fairness in a city enriched and enhanced more than ever by imagination, creativity and culture.

Our intention is that this strategy will help put in place conditions that enable artists, arts organisations and their workforces, to respond to what lies ahead and to shape it for the better. For Galway City Council, the strategy will determine our role as advocates for the arts, culture and creativity, and our approach to development and investment for the next five years.

3. A vision for what we want to achieve

Our vision for the arts places the people of Galway at its heart. Over the next five years, we want to become a city where the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish through the arts, and where every one of us has access to a rich and remarkable range of high-quality artistic and cultural experiences.

When we have the time and the tools to develop our own creative potential we feel fulfilled and empowered. Whenever we encounter the arts, whether through theatres or galleries, street arts, circus or concert halls, schools, homes or community centres, it uplifts and entertains us, increases our knowledge and understanding, unites us and brings us joy. The arts help us make sense of the world and of ourselves: they provoke and inspire us, offer us moments of transcendence, encourage us to empathise and bind us more closely together. If access to them is limited by where we come from or what we do, the whole of society loses out.

Access to the arts will be a key element in the development of an environment that promotes diversity, creativity, tolerance and the exchange of ideas. As our city grows and changes through planned regeneration, public realm, housing and infrastructure projects the city will be transformed for current and future generations.

Creativity is the life blood of cities as a means of unleashing their capacity to survive and adapt. Ensuring a commitment to urban values and harnessing local energies to direct change in a way that enhances quality of life and quality of place will be key as the city evolves and changes.

With this strategy, Galway City Council acknowledges the integral and intrinsic role of the arts in the future socio-economic, community and environmental development of the city. We will champion the artistic lives of every person living here. Many of us already lead creative lives: we join book clubs, we take art classes, we stream creative content or listen to music. Our task is to enable more people to take advantage of opportunities to develop and express their creativity through the arts, and to support them to engage with the widest possible range of arts experiences. We will do this because we believe that everyone, should benefit from public investment in the arts, given their power to enrich our lives and to transform the communities in which we live and work.

We envisage a city transformed by the arts and, transforming them: a truly creative place in which we all can play our part.

DEFINITION:

The Arts

The arts are defined in the 2003 Arts Act as...

“any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and including in particular, visual arts, theatre, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture and includes any medium when used for those purposes.”

Provision can include financial and other assistance for the purposed of *“stimulating public interest in the arts, promoting knowledge appreciation and practice of the arts or improving standards in the arts.”*

DEFINITION:

Creativity

Creative Ireland define 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 the imagination to create new ideas that bring additional value to human activity.

DEFINITION:

Culture

GCC ‘Everybody Matters’ defines culture as including the following;

Landscape: the natural and built environment; material culture; cultural heritage; documentary and archival heritage; architecture; music; dance; design; cultural infrastructure; language; history; folklore; all artistic expression; sport; craft; food, traditions; traditional skills; memory; beliefs and values.

4. How we will achieve this vision

Galway City Council's support for the arts is an investment in the imagination and creativity of our people and our place. We recognise the intrinsic value of the arts, how they can illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world. We will champion, develop and invest in the arts to reach more people and work to ensure that everybody can nurture their own creativity and access the highest quality arts experiences.

The arts sit within the wider cultural policy framework *Everybody Matters* – A Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework for Galway (2016-2025) adopted by the Council in 2016.

The strategy aims to promote access to culture, diversity and cultural rights and recognises the integral role of culture in education and excellence, environment and place, the economy, health and wellbeing, information and knowledge. Delivery is underpinned by a commitment to facilitating local, national, and international hubs, providing support for projects, partnerships, and infrastructure and a commitment to monitoring and evaluation linked to key performance indicators for measurable delivery.

Policies and actions for the arts were set out in two previous arts plans *Confidence in the Arts* and *Creative City*. These plans provided an overarching framework of values, principles and strategic priorities that guided and informed the City Council's programming and investment in the arts. *Creative City* contains specific objectives focused on innovation in all its forms through an understanding of the artistic and cultural needs and priorities in Galway. *Creative City* dovetails with '*Everybody Matters*' from which the successful Galway 2020 ECoC bid *Making Waves* emerged.

The City Arts Office approach to artform development has been guided by the consultation processes undertaken with artists for the successful UNESCO City of Film and ECoC bids, and Agenda 21 for Culture, Pilot City plan, which assisted in informing the city's needs in arts development underpinned by a key commitment to cultural rights.

The integration of the arts within this broader cultural framework strengthens their connectivity with many aspects of wider civil society and public policy provision e.g. community development, health, education and economic development, and within the world of the arts it provides alignment beyond national borders opening up wider communications and mobility opportunities for artists and arts organisations. Contemporary arts practice is global and operates naturally in an 'open economy.' As such our membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Agenda 21 for Culture Pilot Cities and EU Capitals of Culture networks are particularly beneficial as they helped to develop collaborative infrastructure and raise the bar in the ambition of arts practice and work by Galway based artists and arts organisations as well as offering the potential to offset the limitations of domestic scale.

Our creative and cultural achievements over the past decade have brought us to a new era of endeavour that will require a different model that enhances and makes visible the distinctive role and contribution of the arts to the wider development of Galway city as we approach 2030.

Our strategy for the arts in this new era maintains and evolves cultural policy values and strategic priorities as it is built around the achievement of three cultural outcomes. These outcomes are ambitious and align with specific arts policy goals and actions. To achieve our three outcomes, both Galway City Council and the organisations and people we invest in will need to change. Our four investment principles will help steer that change. We believe that organisations that are committed to applying them will be better able to deliver the outcomes and provide greater benefit to the people of Galway city.

The outcomes we set out to realise through this strategy cannot be achieved by Galway City Council working alone. We will work in partnership with the Arts Council to deliver on the strategic priorities set out in our *Framework Agreement* in support of artists and to increase opportunities for access and participation in the arts. In addition, we will seek through our shared approach to leverage investment in the achievement of broader spatial goals in planning and inclusion through the *Local Economic and Community Plan* and the *City Development Plan*.

Through this strategy we will seek out new partners who share our vision and who want to work with us to strengthen arts opportunities across the city. These partners will come from The Department of Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht from further and higher education and schools, and from inside and outside the arts and cultural sector and the health sector. They will come from the commercial, public and not-for-profit sectors. They will come from across Europe and globally.

As the lead agency for the development of the arts, Galway City Council has a unique role to play in establishing the conditions in which the arts can thrive across the city. We will employ our expertise and research capacity to identify new opportunities and spot emerging challenges, and use our influence to bring people together to consider the best ways to respond. We will advocate for and invest in great ideas, and support their delivery to increase impact. We will use our regional perspective to identify and partner with others to deliver development work that strengthens the artistic infrastructure of Galway city.

We will work to ensure that all of our stakeholders and partners – European, national and local, and the public, arts organisations, artists, businesses and other funders – experience and understand the reach and impact of our investment in the arts. We need that impact to be clearly communicated and fully grasped, we understand that public, private and commercial investment in the arts must be increased and we will work to achieve this.

5. The new strategy

Galway City Council's arts strategy for 2021-25 is built around three outcomes and four investment principles. They are designed to work together to enable more people to take advantage of more opportunities to develop and express their creativity through the arts, to access the widest possible range of high-quality arts experiences, and ultimately to help create a city in which the arts are at the heart of creativity and culture, enriching the lives of every citizen.

These outcomes focus in turn on enhanced provision for children and young people to experience, develop and express their creativity through the arts at all stages of their lives; development of the arts within key urban areas, neighbourhoods, districts, and settings so that communities, especially those experiencing inequality or exclusion, can thrive through a collaborative approach to the arts; and amplifying a world class creative city region where the arts sector is dynamic, resilient, innovative, collaborative and international. The principles set out what we will look for in the arts organisations, individual artists and creative practitioners that we invest in.

The outcomes and principles are fundamentally interlinked. People are more able to develop their creative potential if they have easy access to the arts – off and online – and to high quality arts experiences. Such provision must be locally accessible but part of the ecology of the city and the region: one that is ambitious, inclusive, collaborative, dynamic, environmentally sustainable, relevant, internationally connected and highly innovative. And that ecology must in turn be driven by people from all of our communities who have been given equal opportunity to develop their individual creative potential. Taken together, the outcomes and principles depict the creative city we want Galway to become as we approach 2030.

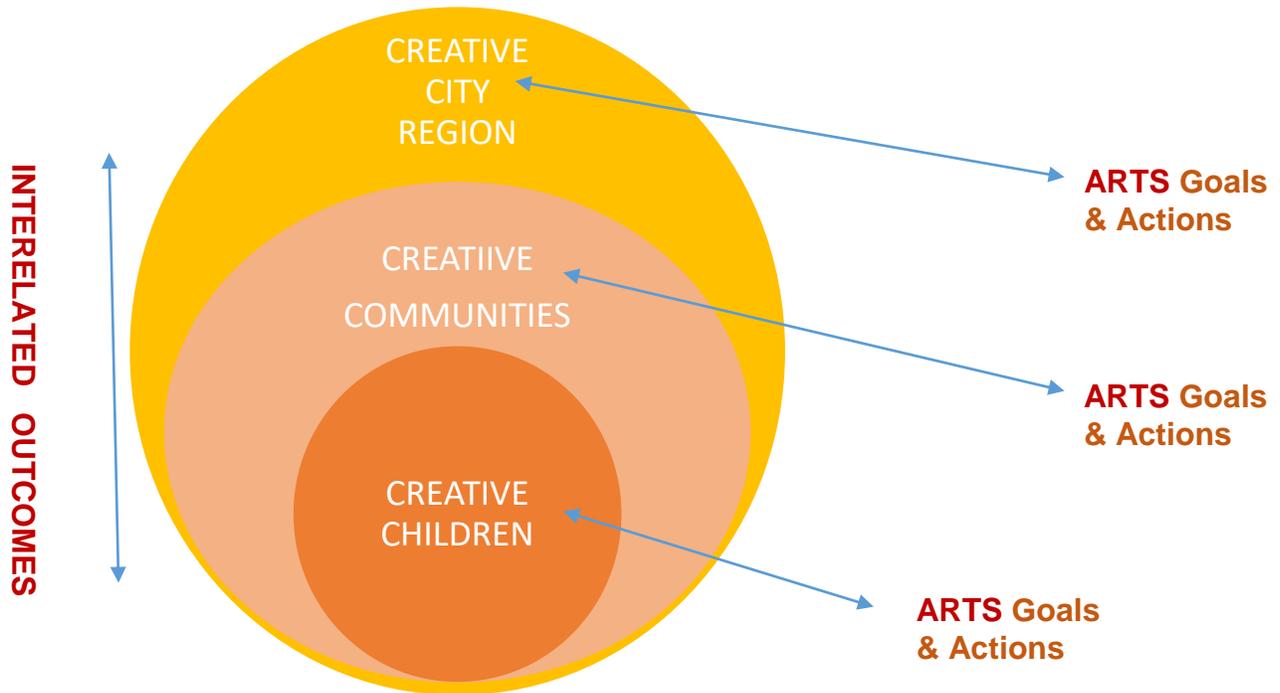
The arts goals specified in the strategy set out statements of intent, which will define the work of Galway City Arts Office in the main action areas, aligned to the achievement of broader cultural outcomes.

We have outlined indicative actions that Galway City Council will lead in the short-term to address the goals of the strategy and achieve the key 3 outcomes we want. Throughout the lifetime of this strategy in-built reviews will afford the opportunity to identify and include new actions to be delivered over the next 5 years.

Galway City Council has a dual remit as both a direct commissioner of the arts and as a funding agency. The arts goals and actions relate to the Council's commissioning role and the investment principles then refer to its role as a funder.

Outcomes | Goals | Actions:

A collaborative approach to arts, creativity and culture helps individuals, communities and places to thrive



Investment principles:

Ambition & Quality

Arts Organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work

Diverse & Inclusive

Galway's diversity is reflected in the organisations we support and in the culture they make

Agile & Sustainable

Arts organisations are innovative, nimble and dynamic

Environmentally Aware

Arts organisations aim to reduce carbon footprint and environmental impacts

6. The Outcomes | Goals & Actions

INSPIRING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE ARTS



Creative Children

Children and young people can develop and express creativity throughout their lives

Galway is a young and vibrant city. There are over 40,000 pupils and students in primary, secondary school, further and third-level schools and colleges across Galway, including 27,000 students enrolled in the NUI, Galway, GMIT and the GTI. According to the census Galway's population of 20-24 year olds is more than twice the national average. Education and learning is part of the past, the present and the future of the city. Educational attainment rates have increased – those with third level education has grown from 25.2% in 1991 to 45.0% in 2011 – the second highest proportion of any local authority area.

We believe that everyone can be creative and each of us has the potential to develop our creativity further. This strategy will reinforce the wider benefits and positive impacts of the arts to the development of children from early years to young adulthood and their communities. Our vision is to support all children and young people in Galway City to flourish and achieve through the arts and creativity and to provide access to the highest quality arts experiences. Our mission is to consolidate Galway City's reputation as a European leader for children and young people's arts.

The strategy will make explicit the already well established links between arts, education, youth employment and personal development. It will not only provide enhanced access opportunities for all of Galway City's children and young people but it will also signpost progression pathways for the city's talent of the future – be it on stage, the screen, behind the scenes or in our leading creative industries. Most importantly of all, this engagement with the arts will nurture personal qualities that will help our children and young people to grow confidently as citizens.

Children and young people themselves told us that, as well as helping them to express themselves and develop their skills and confidence, taking part in creative activities offered them a means of dealing with anxiety, stress and social isolation. Meanwhile, employers from all industries and sectors value creative skills and critical thinking in their workforces and want to see those skills developed more effectively in young people. We also know how highly the public values opportunities for children and young people to take part in arts activities, and that they wish to see more of our funding aimed specifically at supporting them to develop their creative potential.

We are not starting from the beginning, our current arts provision is targeted at the formal education sector, as well as informal community and youth settings. Our strategy builds on the strong foundation of a vibrant and forward thinking arts sector. We are exceptional in having a range of Children and Youth Art organisations for theatre, music, dance, film and literature and fortunate to have many visionary and energetic stakeholders. These include Baboró International Children's Festival, Branar Theatre, Galway Community Circus, Youth Ballet West, Junior Film Fleadh, Galway Youth Orchestra, Galway Youth Theatre, Galway Arts Centre, Cúirt Labs, Red Bird Youth Collective and St. Nicholas Schola Cantorum, as well as excellent amateur and community organisations who cater for the needs of children and young people and provide progression pathways.

The pre-school years play a vital role in readying children for school, as well as being influential in setting the compass for future arts activity. We believe it is critical to develop a high-quality early years creative offer across the city and we will partner with key arts organisations and Galway City Childcare Committee to develop an improved programme of arts activity for young children and their families.

We will encourage arts organisations to work with local education providers for example, through the planning, resourcing and delivering of joined-up arts in education programmes. *Creative Schools* and *Music Generation* offer significant opportunities to build sustained access and participation in high quality arts experiences from early years through to young adulthood.

Currently, the opportunity to establish a successful creative career remains unfairly dependent on personal background. We want to help young people understand what a career in the arts sector or the wider creative industries looks like, and support everyone, regardless of background, who wishes to embark on one.

The future success of our arts sector depends on being able to draw on a talent pool that is much wider and deeper than at present. The arts sector depends on a wide range of skills and experiences to thrive. We will help those who wish to take up roles in the arts sector and the creative industries, no matter what their background. We will also give greater support to individual artists and creative practitioners who want to turn their creativity into a career.

A distinctive cultural characteristic of Galway city is its bi-lingual status, with the highest rate of Irish speakers of any city area in the country. Twenty five per cent of children in the city are educated through Irish in Gaelscoileanna. Over the last twenty years there has been an increase in the number of Irish speakers living and working in the city due mainly to growth in the audio-visual and communications sector led by TG4 (national Irish language television station).

The importance of the language to the artistic and cultural life of the city cannot be overstated. There is an opportunity for a transformational initiative focused on children and young people, the promotion of Irish language arts and the development of audio-visual infrastructure in the western region. We believe that an initiative built around these components will strengthen Galway's reputation as a bi-lingual city and bring agency to its role as the key urban centre for innovation along the Atlantic corridor.

Goals: Inclusion	Actions: <i>creating and sustaining engagement in affirmative and inclusive ways</i>
Expand arts services and opportunities to children and young people across the city	<p>We will make children and young people a priority of our funding agreements with arts organisations and we will incentivise developmental actions for this cohort</p> <p>We will continue to deliver a programme of residencies, commissions, projects and workshops across art forms designed for a young audience</p> <p>We will work with youth arts organisations and relevant agencies to create safe spaces for rehearsal and performance across the artforms</p>
Nourish growth in terms of depth of provision within the existing City arts programme	<p>We will explore the possibilities of extending and building on the success of the pilot <i>Menlo Youth Music initiative</i> to establish a sustained city wide programme for arts engagement by children in a primary school setting across artforms</p> <p>Working collaboratively, we will develop a sustainable framework for arts and mental health programmes focused on the needs of young people, informed by findings from an Action Research commissioned by GCC Community and Culture Department and conducted by Create in 2019</p> <p>We will initiate action research to develop a model of engagement for children with special needs in the arts</p>

Goals: Sustainability	Actions: <i>developing infrastructure of quality</i>
Through partnership continue to develop, strengthen and sustain the infrastructure for arts provision	<p>Work with key organisations across the arts, young people's, voluntary and public sectors to develop a cohesive approach to the coordination of arts services, enhancing information and advisory services</p> <p>Work in partnership with Comhairle na nÓg to empower ownership and give agency to the voice of children and young people's advocacy for the arts</p> <p>Invest in the physical transformation of Lenaboy Castle as a city hub and focal point for young people's arts</p>
Advocate for the value of the arts in the lives of children and youth by engaging key stakeholders, audiences and communities	<p>Work with existing and new arts partners by responding strategically, in a coordinated way to ensure arts provision can be experienced and enjoyed by children, young people in the place where they live</p> <p>Develop a child friendly city where youthful imagination will find its canvas; and where art making in all generations evokes a sense of play, a world of fun, a city shaped and imprinted by the creativity of its communities and neighbourhoods</p>

Goals: Quality	Actions: <i>invest in creative potential to support work of excellence</i>
Work with all partners to achieve the highest quality experience in the arts for children and young people	<p>We will explore the creation of an Irish Language content creation fund for audiences up to the age of 18 in partnership with Galway Film Centre, TG4 and BAI</p> <p>We will explore with relevant local, national and European partners the potential of establishing a bi-annual children and young people's arts conference to share good practice approaches and models with the arts and other related sectors</p>

THE ARTS MAKE MORE LIVABLE PLACES

Creative Communities

A collaborative approach to culture helps places to thrive

Galway City had a population of 79,000 in 2016.

It has the most ethnically diverse population in the country with 19.4% of its residents recorded as having non Irish nationality, compared to the national average of 12%. The city also has the highest proportion of travellers in the country at 2.3%, the national rate of 0.8%. The Galway East electoral area has the highest residential population followed by Galway West. The city centre has the lowest number of residents and the largest population of over 65s. The city is the third most affluent local authority in Ireland. There are 28 small areas classified as disadvantaged, 10 of which are in Ballybane.

Galway City Council already works in partnership to develop and strengthen arts opportunities in communities, neighbourhoods and districts across the city: through our Artists Residency Programme, Artist in Schools Programme, the Arts Act Grants, the Per Cent for Art Commissioning Scheme, Culture Night, the Bealtaine Festival and many other programmes, and through the capital and revenue funds we have invested in arts venues and organisations, amateur and voluntary groups and artists across the city. Recognition has grown of the powerful role the arts play in shaping the places where we live, work and play.

Over the next four years we will work with a wide range of partners, including business, further and higher education and schools, healthcare providers, the commercial and voluntary sector and with other funders, to ensure that the arts continue to help build thriving communities. We want to see communities that are more socially cohesive and economically robust, and in which residents experience improved physical and mental wellbeing as a result of investment in the arts.

Such progress will only be possible if there is a shared commitment to removing the barriers that currently prevent many people from taking part in publicly funded arts activity, in particular those experiencing isolation or inequality. Many arts organisations are in the process of evolving how they make and share work in order to address this, while others already hold it as a core purpose. The ECoC *Big Towns Small Ideas* programme offers clear evidence that when individuals and communities are involved in shaping their own creative and cultural lives, and when the arts sector works with museums, libraries and the breadth of community partners, the range of people who benefit widens significantly.

The City Arts Office, Town Hall Theatre and Galway Arts Centre have a key role to play in providing local communities with access to the arts, and shaping their sense of themselves. We believe that a collaborative approach, where independent artists and arts organisations partner with established municipal arts hubs, will extend the reach of the arts to a wider audience, and support communities to engage fully in the process, resulting in outreach initiatives that deliver richer, more relevant publicly funded arts, as well as ensuring that limited resources go further, and civic and social benefits are delivered.

Our research shows that many artists and arts organisations in the city are in the process of evolving how they make and share work in order to address issues of diversity, geographic, social and economic barriers that currently prevent many people from taking part in publicly funded arts activity, while others hold it as a core purpose. A key focus will therefore be to facilitate arts organisations to work in partnership with local providers in the formal education, youth services, community and health sectors to deliver joined up arts programming that ensures people of all ages can access high-quality arts experiences in their local area with opportunities to enable them to realise their creative potential.

We will build on models of good practice developed by the City Arts Office in arts and health, arts and disability, arts and education and arts in community settings to deliver long-term engagement through a developmental approach that consolidates and mainstreams core city arts programming.

We will support local arts organisations to develop a better understanding of the needs and interests of their communities, and to use that intelligence to collaborate on delivering shared outcomes for those communities. Our consultation process highlighted the need to move beyond access and participation to a more holistic and democratic approach, which shifts the emphasis from participation to co-creation. We will support artists to make work of ambition and communities to collaborate in shaping and co-creating projects that animate or redefine their physical, social or cultural space. We will promote public art as part of *placemaking* to enhance *liveability* and *quality of life* in the city.

We will ensure that arts programming benefits all communities, across our city, and that the public, as well as our talented artists and curators, have access to opportunities wherever they live. However, our research shows that arts provision is currently uneven, especially outside the city centre in larger suburban areas. We will look for partners to work with us to build arts capacity, through local programmes (especially in communities with the least access to publicly funded arts provision). It is clear that new physical infrastructure for the arts is needed to meet the needs of Galway's changing communities and growing population and we will seek to address this through planned regeneration. Our strategy will action the recommendations of the *Arts and Cultural Taskforce*.

There is significant evidence of the connections between the arts and improved health and wellbeing. We want to develop deeper partnerships with Saolta Arts, Galway Healthy City and Age Friendly Galway, Galway City Development Partnership and others to support further research in this area and learn from international best practice, and to explore the potential of promising new approaches, such as social prescribing.

Access to information and knowledge are essential components of inclusion and public engagement with the arts. For the numerous individuals, communities, groups and organisations involved in the arts in the city the provision of reliable, quality information is key.

It is a core function of Galway City Council to provide and invest in information systems that benefit the city and support the development of audiences for professional and voluntary organisations i.e. advertising funding opportunities in a timely, transparent and consistent manner as well as promoting classes, exhibitions, recitals, gigs, events, readings and performances. The work of our city's professional arts organisations offers great richness and diversity. We will do more to make it easily accessible to visitors and the public through the implementation of an effective communications strategy.

We will encourage greater digital access and engagement that use the arts to help communities to connect internationally and that reflect the diverse influences of their diaspora communities, to build connections and create and present work that enriches the culture they produce.

In all of this work, Galway City Council will use data to build and share a more sophisticated picture of investment in the arts, and to operate as a strategic regional development agency that is able to invest at scale in order to seize opportunities and deal with big challenges.

Goal: Inclusion	Actions - creating and sustaining engagement in affirmative and inclusive ways
Expand arts services and opportunities to more areas across the city	<p>Deliver a programme of residencies, commissions, projects and workshops across art forms working with new community partnerships</p> <p>Establish a dedicated funding scheme to encourage and support community and voluntary arts activity</p> <p>Actively target new audiences and engagements through flagship events such as <i>Culture Night</i> and the <i>Bealtaine Festival</i></p>
Nourish growth in terms of depth of provision within the existing City arts programme	Draw on learning from dance residency projects delivered over the past five years to upscale and develop long-term engagement programmes focused on participation in partnership with Galway Dance Project in diverse community settings

Goals: Sustainability	Actions: developing infrastructure of quality
Through partnership continue to develop, strengthen and sustain the infrastructure for arts provision	<p>Work collaboratively with arts centres and arts organisations to increase opportunities for public access and participation in the arts through the development of a resource framework for the delivery of arts outreach services across the city</p> <p>Develop a centralised Galway City arts website to serve as a single point of information and event promotion, as a tool for advocacy and as a repository for gathering and managing data for research purposes</p> <p>Explore the potential to develop new spaces for the performance, presentation and creation of art in Arduan area development plan as part of the wider development of a neighbourhood centre for the Ardaun area</p>
Advocate for the value of the arts in the lives of individuals and communities by engaging effectively with key stakeholders and target audiences, communities across a diverse range of settings	<p>Work to identify outdoor public and amenity spaces which offer potential for adaptation for public performance and engagement with the arts as recommended by the Arts and Culture Taskforce as part of the investment in the city's public realm</p> <p>Work to develop accessible micro cultural spaces in public and community buildings throughout the city in order to embed cultural appreciation in everyday activity</p> <p>Build on existing partnership with the Friends of Merlin Woods to strengthen the infrastructure for arts programming on the Eastside of the city</p> <p>Build on existing partnership with the Westside Resource Centre to strengthen the infrastructure for arts programming on the Westside of the city</p>

Goals: Quality	Actions: invest in creative potential to support work of the highest quality
To develop a new framework within which artist's and communities can work collaboratively to develop a language and define more clearly the nature and relevance of the work created	Through the implementation of a public art commissioning programme test and experiment new approaches which engage artists and communities as collaborative creative partners and producers in shaping contemporary culture

AMPLIFYING THE IMPACT OF ARTISTS

Creative City Region

Galway City's
Cultural sector is
innovative,
collaborative and
international

Galway city is the beating heart of the Western Region. Perched on the edge of the Atlantic and surrounded by beauty; to the south the unique karst landscape of the Burren; to the north the iconic Connemara landscape – coast, bogland and mountain; to the west the celebrated Galway Bay, guarded by the prehistoric stone forts, holy wells and oratories of the Aran Islands and further north Inish Bofin; To the east lies arable land and a network of lakes and rivers, great houses, castles and large estates, thatched houses, vernacular buildings and a rich ecclesiastical heritage.

This magnificent environment has always attracted artists. The city benefits from an arts ecology that offers a diversity of models, from national and international brand leaders such as DRUID, Galway International Arts Festival and Macnas to formal and informal networks of individual artists, arts organisations, creative entrepreneurs, and independents who are central to sustaining a culture of innovation and creativity. Together they hold the ring for creative experiences from local hands onto the global and the digital.

To achieve the first two outcomes, Galway must be a place where artists are supported to live, make a living and are recognised as integral to the civic fabric of the city as it changes and grows. Equally, Galway's professional arts sector must be committed to innovation and collaboration and aspire to be world leading in the creation, development and distribution of work.

A number of Galway City's arts organisations are already celebrated internationally, with reputations that contribute to Ireland's position as a world leader in theatre and the performing arts and as a global tourist destination. We want to build on this success and support more arts organisations and practitioners to deliver work to the highest international standards. As Galway City continues to develop its European profile we will seek to encourage and develop an arts sector that is outward-looking and globally connected, and that is committed to working with and learning from international talent. We will continue to support arts organisations to bring the very best of world arts to Galway, to delight audiences and to inspire current and future generations of artists. And we will support the development of new international partnerships that build co-investment. These will yield financial and cultural benefits for the region as a whole.

From our detailed mapping of Galway's arts ecology it is clear that the large independent arts sector - made up of individual artists, new and emerging voices and companies are vital to sustaining and renewing the city's vibrant creative ecology. Over the next few years Galway City Council will provide more direct support for independent creative talent: our freelance directors, writers, makers, actors, performers, designers, composers, producers, painters, curators, sculptors and choreographers. And we will need the organisations we support to do more to aid the development of independent artists.

The arts sector must, work together to learn best practice, share resources and jointly develop talent. Collaborative planning and co-ordination remain key challenges given the broad range of

arts organisations, independents and creatives involved. The diversity of stakeholders means co-ordinated support is needed to facilitate a shared approach to arts policy and practice on the ground and bridge sectoral silos. We will invest in the development of unifying and collaborative frameworks, to embrace a variety of considerations. These include; capacity building, audience development, community engagement, social impact and the role of the arts in urban planning.

We will help artists and arts organisations to forge new partnerships with further and higher education, the technology sector, the charitable and voluntary sectors, the commercial creative industries and the wider business community. By drawing on this wider pool of expertise we believe opportunities for innovation in creative content, services and business models will flourish.

While recent funding pressures have made it harder for many of our cultural organisations to experiment and undertake formal research and development, we believe that risk-taking and innovation are critical to the continuing success of the arts sector. In future, we will do more to support innovation and more explicitly demonstrate our appetite for risk.

The arts sector already acts as an incubator for the commercial creative industries: spotting and growing talent and undertaking early development of new content and services. We intend to deepen those connections, supporting the artists and those in the creative industries to build our international reputation for creativity and act as an ever-more-important engine for our city and the regional economy. Through this strategy we will support the organisations we invest in to become more innovative. As technology evolves, so our arts organisations must evolve too, focusing on developing new works of art and creative content, reimagining our existing arts offer for contemporary audiences and experimenting with new ways of reaching the public. We want to work in partnership with further and higher education and the commercial sector to strengthen training opportunities so that more people working in the arts sector become ready adopters and developers of new technologies. We believe that this will increase the adaptability of people coming into creative careers, supporting them to move back and forth between the publicly funded cultural sector and the commercial creative industries, circulating knowledge and skills as they do so.

Our arts sector will only ever be as strong as the talent on which it is built. Many artists from the city, especially those with disabilities or minority ethnic backgrounds, and those from less privileged circumstances, continue to struggle both with issues of equality of esteem and developing a viable career. Unless we address these injustices, our city's arts output will fail to reach its true potential, and the attractiveness of the arts will suffer.

We acknowledge that grants, bursaries and awards allocated by Galway City Council annually through the Arts Act Grant Scheme to artists, arts organisations and groups across the professional sector is vital for the arts sectors capacity to adapt to a post Covid-19 world, maintain resilience, return to a level of activity, protect livelihoods and keep municipal arts buildings open. In addition, to respond to issues raised during the consultations regarding how the professional, amateur, voluntary and community arts sectors are funded we will introduce a differentiated approach on a pilot basis, for example a number of key arts organisations will be funded through the estimates process and consequently not eligible to apply under the annual Arts Act Grants Scheme. The annual Arts Act Grants will continue to be advertised through an open call for applications, but as three distinct schemes as follows; professional arts organisations, new voices project awards and community and voluntary arts awards.

We understand that built infrastructure is a key engine to drive artistic practice, innovation and the presentation of work to the public. We also acknowledge the urgent need for available space

in the short-term and the need for a strategic approach to tackle larger scale arts and cultural infrastructure deficits e.g. a concert hall, municipal gallery, studios, rehearsal and storage space, as well as office, administration, co-working and networking spaces.

Opportunities in the frame include: replacing the Black Box; repurposing Lenaboy Castle as a dedicated arts hub for children; and young people and the Manse building in Nun's Island. In addition, the City Development Plan makes reference to cultural uses in many of the key planned regeneration and area development plans. Projects include, Nun's Island, Headford Road and Ardaun.

We will adopt a partnership model that places Galway's creative people, organisations and institutions at the heart of policy delivery and change. Our goal orientated and planned approach will ensure that the infrastructure needs of the arts are considered in a holistic, integrated, city-wide manner that connects key creative stakeholders with developers and planners across the city.

A troubling finding of our arts review is that most of the city's cultural building stock falls below acceptable accessibility standards. We will respond as a matter of urgency to ensure access for artists to create and make work in the buildings and for audiences to engage and experience the work within.

Goal: Quality	Actions: invest in creative potential to support work of the highest quality
Artists and arts organisations are supported to make work of excellence	<p>Continue to implement a programme of support for individual artists across artforms which include; Bursaries and Awards, Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development Opportunities</p> <p>Introduce new research and development opportunities for artists and arts organisations to experiment and innovate in partnership with NUI Galway and GMIT</p> <p>Continue to invest in the outstanding range of Galway City Arts Organisations through the Arts Act Grant Scheme introducing a new voices project strand in 2021</p> <p>Commission artists across artforms to make work of ambition, imagination and challenge for the public realm – temporary, permanent and site specific drawing on the Per Cent for Art Scheme</p>

Goals: Inclusion	Actions: creating and sustaining engagement in affirmative and inclusive ways
<p>Ensure that Galway City's equality and diversity policy for the arts is embraced and understood by the arts sector</p> <p>Work in partnership with disability arts organisations to raise awareness and deepen understanding of issues relating to artistic ambition and parity of esteem</p>	<p>Work in partnership with arts organisations to identify best practice models internationally for the creation and production of work that portrays diversity in society</p> <p>In consultation with arts organisations set realistic targets for representational change in audience profile to reflect our multicultural city</p> <p>Ensure all awards for artists explicitly invite diversity and positive actions to address any identified imbalances</p> <p>Reward arts organisations that reflect the diversity of the city in their workforce</p> <p>Invest in the design and delivery of an awareness raising programme focused on attitudinal change</p>

Goals: Sustainability	Actions: developing hard and soft infrastructure of quality
<p>Strengthen the status of Galway as a creative city region by addressing deficits in built arts infrastructure through planned urban regeneration projects and area development plans that will transform the city for current and future generations</p> <p>Place the arts i.e. creative people, arts organisations and institutions at the heart of infrastructure policy delivery and change</p>	<p>Adopt a goal oriented and planned approach to meet a broad range of long term arts sector requirements for new spaces through implementation of Galway City Council's arts and cultural infrastructure development programme - adopted in principle by the City Council (2018/19)</p> <p>In order to respond to pressing short-term needs conduct an audit of buildings and spaces across the city that offer potential for repurposing and refurbishment e.g. as studio, rehearsal, storage, hub networking spaces, office accommodation and informal gallery and performance spaces and share the findings with the sector</p> <p>Establish an Arts and Urban Development Commission for Galway City that supports a more cohesive, integrated strategic relationship – brining arts expertise, planners and developers around the table. Link the Terms Of Reference for the Commission to the work of Galway City Council Physical Development Unit.</p>
<p>Build capacity within the arts sector to develop talent, improve quality across all creative work processes, to embrace change and be outward looking, connecting locally, nationally and internationally - working with and learning from local, national and international talent and expertise</p> <p>Ensure the arts sector is skilled, resourced and committed to its own renewal so as to enable arts organisations to respond quickly and effectively to a rapidly changing external environment</p> <p>Develop opportunities for ongoing dialogue, communications and collaboration within the arts sector and between the arts and non-arts sectors</p>	<p>Collaborate with NUI Galway to design a capacity building programme informed by the issues and needs raised during consultations to inform this strategy aimed at getting the arts sector back on its feet post Covid-19 and transitioning to a new era as a legacy to Galway's year as ECOC</p> <p>Working with the LEO and relevant agencies research and develop better business supports and models of best practice nationally and internationally for dissemination to the sector</p> <p>Invest in the development and resourcing of key city arts hubs to support the development of collaborative infrastructure and programmes for the performing and visual arts sectors</p> <p>Work collaboratively with relevant arts organisations, Galway Chamber and the cities 3rd level educational institutions to establish a forum where leaders in the arts can meet their equivalents in other fields of public and corporate life in the city – possibly bi-annually</p>

7. The investment principles

To achieve the outcomes set out in this strategy we will support the arts organisations and the people we fund to prepare themselves for the future.

Our new strategy introduces four principles that will apply to our investment in relation to arts organisations which we fund through the Arts Act Grants.

The organisations and people we support will demonstrate:

Ambition and Quality – they will be committed to developing their creative potential in order to deliver work of the highest quality and match themselves confidently against local, national and international peers.

Diverse and Inclusive – they will be reflective of the diversity of their communities, welcoming to individuals from every background and valued by the communities and partners with which they work.

Agile and Sustainable – they will be capable of adapting to meet the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Environmentally Aware - arts organisations aim to reduce their carbon footprint and environmental impacts

As the key development agency for the arts, creativity and culture in Galway City, we will support the change and improvement that is needed to put these principles into practice, undertaking research, identifying best practice and establishing partnerships and development programmes. Over the next four years we want to create an environment in which arts organisations can more readily adapt, change and develop, as well as come and go.

By 2025 we anticipate that we will be investing in organisations and people that differ, in many cases, from those that we support today. Some will be longstanding arts organisations that have evolved to meet the future needs of audiences and artists in the city and its wider hinterland. Others will be new to us. All of the organisations that we fund will be dynamic, championing good leadership, collaboration and success through creative and business innovation. Together they will reflect the diversity of our city and will work in ways that are valuable to and valued by their communities, creative practitioners and partners.

Ambition & Quality

Arts organisations and groups are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work

We are committed to the pursuit of excellence in everything we do. We will deploy our expertise and resources to bring about improvements in quality and innovations that arise. We believe in the value of training and skills, and we will use our investment to support organisations to develop talent and improve quality – across the full range of their creative work and processes, and in the ways that they run their organisations. Applicants will set out their ambitions and how they plan to make work demonstrating their awareness of the best in their field and how they plan to apply this knowledge.

The independent arts sector plays a vital role in maintaining a diverse audience base, and taking experimental and creative risk that is vital to the development and renewal of the arts ecosystem and we will invest in their development.

We believe that greatness can be achieved across the spectrum of arts activity. We do not consider that certain types or scales of artistic activity are inherently of higher quality or value than others; excellence can just as readily be found in a community hall as a theatre, in both the process of participation and in the work that is produced. We are equally committed to backing organisations and individuals who have the potential to create excellence in everything they do and to supporting those who are already established at the top of their game.

We understand that good public policy in the arts will always guarantee the liveliness and ubiquity of the “first step”. That is the network of small stages where young artists experiment, perform, engage and communicate in rehearsal rooms and studios and through residency schemes. We will invest more in New Voices.

Judgments about quality are inevitably subjective, but we will continue to work to establish a shared language around it – one that brings in self and peer-evaluation and the public view. We will take responsibility for the judgments on quality and value that determine our investment decisions.

Diverse & Inclusive

The diversity of Galway City is fully recognised in the audiences, arts organisations and individuals we support

Galway City Council provides for the arts as a fundamental human endeavour. Our City Arts Office works for all citizens – of all ages, places, social backgrounds and economic circumstances – so they can participate in and enjoy the arts. This strategy will advance our work in cultural rights, cultural sustainability and urban values through the distinctive contribution of the arts – investing in the development of an environment that puts equality and human rights into action in Galway.

Our strategy will support implementation of the values underpinning the Galway City LCDC *'Doing the Right Thing – Putting the Equality and Human Rights into Action in Galway City'* and the Arts Council's *'Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy'*. The strategy takes their proposals further and specifies actions for practical projects that facilitate co-creation of policy in the development of creative and cultural participatory practices focused on public engagement.

Our strategic model for arts development is fully integrated with and integral to cultural policy thinking in Galway city and county and many of the ideas proposed draw on the work of city and county arts programmes and initiatives already underway and thought through by artists and communities as part of the Agenda 21 for Culture Pilot Cities and ECOC 2020 engagement processes.

We will work with a range of partners to create a new framework for the arts that takes an holistic approach to inclusivity and diversity. As well as the culture that organisations produce and present, it will take into account governance, leadership, workforce, visitors, participants and audiences. When considering diversity, it will include socio-economic background as well as the range of protected characteristics including age, disability, sex, race and sexual orientation.

Using this framework as a guide, arts organisations will need to work with us to set ambitious targets which reflect the communities within which they work. Galway City Council will monitor progress under the roll out of the Equality and Human Rights Public Duty in setting appropriate targets.

Agile & Sustainable

Cultural organisations are innovative, dynamic and sustainable

We also want the arts organisations we support to make for diversity and to strengthen their relevance to the communities and partners they work with. We will ask them to demonstrate how they are listening to the voices of the public, including children and young people, artists, and partners, such as schools and further and higher education, health and disability. We want all the arts organisations we invest in to be valued for the way they reflect and collaborate with their communities, as well as for the quality and ambition of their work.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a catastrophic impact on the arts in Galway City. The devastation experienced by the sector will in all cases be profound and in some cases permanent. The long term impact of the pandemic on the arts will become clearer as we move through the implementation of this strategy. We expect the challenges facing arts organisations – from pressures on funding, changes in tastes and habits, technological advances and the accelerating impacts of climate crisis and resource distress – to remain acute. To navigate this territory successfully, arts organisations will need to become more agile and more environmentally sustainable.

We will facilitate the creation of a learning environment for arts organisations to develop their skills and build their capacity to operate effectively in shifting environments. Good governance and leadership will be critical in inspiring positive change and growing arts workforces that are, inclusive and able to draw on the widest range of ideas and experiences and build successful businesses over the next decade. We will support such arts organisations to become more entrepreneurial and to develop business models that help them maximise income, reduce costs and become more financially resilient.

We will support the development of a richer data culture. As a sector the arts are not fully utilising the power of data to understand audiences and the impact of their work. We will support partnerships with the technology sector and further and higher education to help us improve in this area.

We want to raise the bar in terms of the networks that arts leaders might be part of, as well as

deepening awareness about arts policy issues, harnessing goodwill towards the arts that is evident in many sectors. We will work with a range of partners in the fields of arts, corporate and public life and seek to facilitate greater interaction between arts leaders and their equivalents in these fields.

Environmentally Aware

Cultural organisations aim to reduce carbon footprint and environmental impacts

Addressing the environmental impacts of arts, cultural and events activities is an issue that was taken up by the Arts and Culture Task Force. They reference the report published by Creative Ireland which sets out how the cultural and creative sectors can play an important role in assisting people to understand and engage in the many aspects of climate change.

Developing the commitment and increased fluency in respect of climate and environmental literacy among those in the arts sector is key. We will help create the conditions in which the arts organisations that we fund can accelerate their progress in reducing their environmental impact. We will support the sector through implementation of the measures recommended by the Arts and Culture Task Force and access to advice and the sharing of best practice.

8. An integrated model of arts service delivery

As a Council we lead on the spatial planning, regulation and infrastructure that underpins the socio-economic, community and cultural development of Galway City in a sustainable manner. Our remit as a direct commissioner of the arts, has made us aware of our increasing role as a place-shaper and convener, bringing partners together to achieve local shared outcomes. We plan to strengthen the role of the arts to support local agendas from pure arts creation to tackling loneliness and improving wellbeing working collaboratively with other cultural service departments and communities.

Through the city arts programme the public enjoy and benefit from quality arts provision so that the best outcomes are secured in the wider context of cultural value and the public good. We will use the Creative Ireland programme as a platform to achieve shared, long-term cultural outcomes, for example to tackle barriers to participation and better embed place based approaches to the arts, culture and creativity.

Place based cultural development and fostering collaborations with a wide range of local partners is key to creating thriving cultural communities. Arts organisations need to work together as a whole system to achieve shared goals for local areas and through planned urban regeneration and local creative hubs we can build leadership capacity and skills in this area. We will partner with artists and arts organisations working together to respond to local need and on shared local objectives. We have a key role to play in facilitating this.

In our delivery of the Equality and Human Rights Public Duty our workforce, leadership and governance will evolve to ensure that we more closely reflect the public and our stakeholders. We will invest more of our resources in research and development work in order to improve our understanding of what the public and our stakeholders want from us, and to establish that the public gets the best possible value from the way that we spend their money. We will review the ways in which we gather data from the sector to ensure that our decision-making is better informed, for the organisations and individuals we work with. We will invest in appropriate new technologies and use them to improve existing services for the arts sector, and develop new ones.

Finally, we are committed to providing a clear account of the impact we are having across the city. We will supply regular reports to the public and our stakeholders on the investments we are making on their behalf and our progress on delivering the outcomes set out in this strategy.

9. Implementation and review

Galway City Arts Strategy provides a five-year framework for strategic actions to be implemented by Galway City Arts Office on behalf of Galway City Council in partnership with the Arts Council and other stakeholders. Each of our arts goals will be supported with an annual operational plan setting out details of work to be carried out. Actions listed under each goal will provide the baseline for evaluation and review of work programmes.

Our strategy will be implemented at a number of levels with Galway City Arts Office having direct responsibility for some actions, while others will involve working in partnership with various Council Departments and a broad range of arts stakeholders and public agencies locally, regionally, nationally and at European level.

The strategy will be implemented in accordance with the ambitions within the UN sustainable development goals. In particular the actions within this strategy will also contribute to the overall achievement of these goals by Galway City in the wider context, it is suggested that this strategy will contribute directly to the achievement of the following UN sustainable development goals;

- 3. Good Health and well being*
- 4. Quality Education*
- 5. Gender Equality*
- 8. Decent work and economic growth*
- 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*
- 10. Reduced inequalities*
- 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities*
- 12. Responsible consumption and production*
- 13. Climate Action*
- 16. Peace, Justice and strong Institutions*
- 17. Partnership for the Goals.*

Galway City Arts Office will lead implementation of our strategy and, with the support of Galway City Council, will secure any additional financial or other resources necessary to ensure the action plan is fully implemented.

Accountability and transparency are essential features within local authority service provision and are guaranteed through operational planning, target and goal setting and regular reporting to members of the management team. Progress in delivering our strategy will be reviewed on an

continuing basis through our review management process.

Galway City Council's Annual Report will include an account of the achievements and progress in the delivery of our strategy. We will undertake a mid-term review in 2022.

In preparing our strategy, Galway City Council has taken due regard of the various internal and external influencing factors, the available resources, as well as the strengths, challenges and potential opportunities for the city. Through our strategy, Galway City Council will meet its obligations to stimulate, develop and promote the arts, under the Arts Act 2003.

Our strategy takes an overarching view of Galway City arts landscape, emphasising that support for the primary role of the artist and public engagement with the artistic life of the city are core policy priorities. The core funding and investment required to implement actions detailed in our strategy is enabled through the Galway City Council annual budget allocation jointly provided by the City Council and the Arts Council towards implementation of the City Arts Programme. In addition, further allocations will arise through the Per Cent for Public Art Programme, Creative Ireland and Creative Europe.

Galway City was recently awarded Music Generation funding which over the next three years will be matched by the Galway Roscommon Music Education Partnership (Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board) and other funders.

In 2018 Galway City Council signed a joint agreement with the Arts Council under this agreement the emphasis has shifted from funding an annual programme of arts activities to agreed shared strategic priorities. This changed framework has led to possibilities for new investment by the partners in the development of the arts in Galway city.