



Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann  
Local Government Ireland



# Culture & Creativity Strategy

**2023–2027**



**Cork City**

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## Foreword

Cork City Council welcomes the extension of the Creative Ireland Programme for a further five years to 2027. Since the inception of the programme in 2017, Cork City Council has embraced the spirit and inherent opportunity of the local authority focused Creative Communities pillar. We look forward to building on this legacy as we continue to put culture and creativity at the heart of local policy.

Creativity has long been core to Cork City's identity. Through the centuries the city has embraced thinkers, artists, scientists and innovators of every kind. Cork is a designated UNESCO Learning City, a city of rich heritage and proud history. As a maritime city we look outward and welcome inward, enriched by the diversity of our growing population. The Creative Ireland programme provides the opportunity to harness this creativity across Cork City Council's service areas, enhancing the quality of our engagement with the wider community on priorities such as social inclusion, health and wellbeing, climate action, placemaking and local economic development. In doing so we rely on the creative expertise of Cork city artists and creatives of all disciplines and their ability to apply their skills and talents in new and innovative ways in the service of the wider society.

Working together in partnership is the best way to ensure that these creative practices can reach into all of our communities. The breadth of disciplines represented by the staff in the Cork City Culture and Creativity team, spanning service

areas from Enterprise to Libraries, demonstrates the embedded nature of culture and creativity in the outlook of Cork City Council. This Culture and Creativity Strategy responds to goals in the City Development Plan and a wide range of complementary strategies of Cork City Council in areas such as arts, heritage, libraries, enterprise and community development. It will enhance the realisation of those plans through the delivery of new creative engagement initiatives over the next five years.

Ardú Street Art Initiative; Criunniú na nÓg; Cork Words; KinShip Creative Climate Action; Rebel Streets; Urban Orienteering; Creative Parks, are just some of the impactful creative projects that have happened as a result of Creative Ireland Cork City to date. The next phase of the programme will continue to harness the creative capacity of the city, it's people and communities to make meaning, achieve wellbeing, spark joy and excitement and enhance the attractiveness of Cork City as a place to live, work and visit.

**Cllr Deirdre Forde**  
Lord Mayor

**Ann Doherty**  
Chief Executive



*An Puc by Aches, Ardú, Cork city.*  
**Photograph:** Ardú 2020



# 1 Creative Ireland 2023–2027

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Contact by Corcadorca, Cork Midsummer Festival (Eadaoin O’Donoghue and Cormac Mohally), Cork city. **Photograph:** Corcadorca 2020

Traveller Culture Permanent Exhibition, Cork Public Museum, Cork city. **Photograph:** Cork Traveller Women’s Network 2017



## 2 Culture and Creativity in Cork City

Cork is Ireland's second city and one that is fast growing, changing. A boundary extension in 2019 added urban villages and new neighbourhoods to the city's administrative area. Alongside this geographic expansion, the city's population is set to grow by over 120,000 to 335,000 people by 2040 and to continue to diversify: currently, one in eight people in Cork city were born outside Ireland.

For centuries, Cork City has fostered a vibrant cultural life, encouraging and embracing creative expression and enhancing the city's national and international reputation. Following its designation as European City of Culture in 2005, Cork ranked second among 79 cities for cultural participation and attractiveness in the European Commission's Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor 2019. Culture and creativity are a vital part of Cork City now and essential to its future.

In the past five years, the Creative Ireland Cork City programme has invested €1.2million in nearly 100 community-facing projects and events. Working in partnership with 405 creative practitioners and partners, we are proud to have enabled approximately 971,000 creative engagements by audiences and participants.

Some of these participants have grown up with the Creative Ireland Cork City programme. Having first taken part in Cruinniú na nÓg, they are now enrolling into third level creative courses. Others have aged gracefully (and creatively) in intergenerational projects with older people set in parks, day centres, ballrooms, libraries and concert halls.

Through this unique programme we have celebrated the many cultures in our city, both nomadic and settled, through exhibitions and special installations. We have extended a welcome to those choosing to make Cork their home through creative exchanges and conferences. We have

found ourselves reflected in our writing, our reading, our remembrance, our photographs and our song. We have emerged from difficult days with a fresh appreciation of our environment and of each other as kin, with inspiration and with determination to continue this creative journey together.

The extension of the Creative Ireland programme to 2027 is very welcome in that it gives us the opportunity to deepen and diversify, to explore and better understand the place of creativity in the life of the city. This new strategy is timely. It coincides with our new Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 which sets out how the city can best enable growth and investment in the coming period, while continuing to be an innovative, vibrant, healthy and resilient city. The vision and the priorities that we espouse here in this strategy, builds on and extends that which is articulated in the development plan.

As such, over the five years of this strategy we look forward to continuing to 'tell our own story', evolving the narratives of Cork City and its people, past and present. Through close engagement with communities across our expanded city we will 'enrich our sense of place'. Already internationally recognised as a creative city, we will 'support creative industry, ambition and risk-taking' and seek to enhance the potential of our creative economy. We will continue work to 'promote well-being through creative engagement' for individuals and communities within the city. Last but by no means least, we will prioritise being 'climate active' and through creativity enable authentic, inventive solutions that will make a difference now and for our future.



In our thinking and planning around these five areas of priority, we drew inspiration from the renowned but modest scholar, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi<sup>1</sup>, who made a life-time study of creativity. In his own words:

*"Creativity is a central source of meaning in our lives ... most of the things that are interesting, important, and human are the results of creativity... [and] when we are involved in it, we feel that we are living more fully than during the rest of life."*

This strategy sets a course for Cork City, for its people and its communities, to live more fully through creativity.

<sup>1</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: *Creativity: The Psychology of Discovery and Invention*.

*Tuning into the Park* with MTU Crawford College of Art and Design Students, The KinShip Project. **Photograph:** Marilyn Lennon 2022



### 3

## The Creative Ireland Vision for Cork City

The Creative Ireland Programme proposes that the new Creative Cork strategy ‘is an opportunity to align work and ambition across the local authority’.

Cork City Council Development Plan (2022 – 2028) holds ambitions and coheres objectives for the city under the following vision:

Cork City to take its place as a world class city, driving local and regional growth, embracing diversity and inclusiveness and growing as a resilient, healthy, age-friendly and sustainable compact city with placemaking, communities and quality of life at its heart.

In support of this vision, through the Creative Cork programme we look forward to:

*Cork City being known and loved as a creative city, confident in the expression of its identity and values, a place of courage and conviction, of invention and inclusion, where creativity is at the heart of who we are and what we do as individuals, as communities, as a Council and as a city, supporting us to realise our full potential and promoting our individual and community wellbeing.*



### 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cork Traveller Culture Mural by Cork Community Art Link with Cork Traveller Visibility Group, Cruinniú na nÓg, Cork city. **Photograph:** Framework Films 2021



## 5 The Creative Ireland Vision for Cork City

Over the period 2023 – 2027 Cork City will focus on exploring and advancing the following areas of strategic priority, confident of their enduring impact for the city and its communities.

The five priorities set out here encompass relevant ambitions of Cork City's Development Plan. They support and seek to further the positioning and intent of Cork as a Learning City, a Rainbow City and an Age-Friendly City, and as one of 100 cities in Europe working towards climate-neutral status. They respect and build on the culture, heritage and values of the city which include a strong commitment to leadership and action on inclusion, diversity, equality and access, and to innovation, experimentation and enterprise.

### Strategic Priority 1: To tell our own story

We will encourage and enable communities and individuals to remember, celebrate and share their heritages, cultures, abilities and identity. We will find new and creative ways to understand and capture our past and to explore and respond to our present, reflecting the rich diversity of our expanded, evolving city and its people. By doing so, we will uncover the connections that bind us now and for the future as individuals and as communities.

### Strategic Priority 2: To enrich our sense of place

Through close and creative engagement with our communities, we will re-imagine our city for those who live, work and visit here. We will illuminate new and familiar places and spaces across our city. We will inspire new understanding and deepen a sense of pride and of belonging. We will give visible expression to our communal values and to what makes us unique and compelling as a creative city. We will transform how people think of and engage with Cork City.

### Strategic Priority 3: To support creative industry, ambition and risk-taking

We will advance the culture, environment and conditions that will promote creative enterprise and innovation, and that will support our local creative industries. We will leverage existing strengths, support the development of new skills and capacities, as well as the creative clusters and partnerships that drive success. By doing so, we will amplify our profile as a creative city and enhance the potential of Cork City's creative economy.

### Strategic Priority 4: To promote well-being through creative engagement

We will champion the role of culture and creativity in supporting the health, wellbeing and development of individuals and communities within the city. We will respond to the needs of people across all generations and abilities, paying particular attention to children and young people, to those who are later in life and to those who are most vulnerable in our community.

### Strategic Priority 5: To be climate active

We will harness creativity to explore and advance the behaviours and attitudes, the actions and ideas that are a transformative response to our climate crisis. We will seek to encourage climate-neutral projects and to enable authentic, inventive solutions that will make a difference.



*Tools of the Trade Exhibition,  
Cruinniú na nÓg, Cork city.*  
**Photograph:** Venividi.ie



## 6 Implementation by Cork City Council Culture and Creativity Team

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

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

### The role of this team is to:

Creative Ireland Cork City will grow the capacity of the creative sector through:

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

change and positive outcomes locally, and potentially between local authorities at regional level; and

- Be innovative and take risks – try new projects and new ways of working.
- Develop inclusive, supportive processes with regard to allocation of support and resources including funding;
- Advocate the development of initiatives (such as projects and programmes) demonstrating potential for positive, long-term impacts;
- Consider how achievements of our programme may be sustained for the benefit of all involved;
- Stay abreast of developments in the creative sector and participate in training and upskilling where these opportunities will support strategic thinking as a team;
- Model excellence in project management, collaboration and reporting processes.

The delivery of the Strategy is led by the Director of Services for Community, Culture and Placemaking and the members of the Culture and Creativity Team for Cork City Council include the Cork City Architect, Director of Services for Corporate Affairs and International Relations, Arts Officer, Assistant Arts Officer – Community Arts, City Librarian, Senior Executive Librarian, Cork Public Museum Curator, Senior Archivist, Heritage Officer, Irish Language Officer, Learning City Coordinator, Senior Parks and Landscape Officer, Tourism Officer, Executive Scientist – Environmental Education, Rapid Coordinator, Archaeologist, Administrative Officer – Corporate Affairs and International Relations, Head of Enterprise.

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



*The Young Print Collective Exhibition, (Amal Hope, Elton Sibanda, Fionnuala O'Connell, Reem, Viktoria Kondratieva, Yeaneah O'Connell), Young Print Collective Exhibition, Cork city. Photograph: Clare Keogh 2022*



*Urban Orienteering Trail, (James Nolan), Cork city. Photograph: Darragh Kane 2020*









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places and communities through creativity.*