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INSPIRE | CONNECT | LEAD

A five-year strategic framework for
developing the arts 2019-2024

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Introduction

Since drafting this strategic framework for 2019/24 the world has been impacted severely by the COVID-19 pandemic; consequently we are all revising our daily lives under quarantine and finding different ways to work. The fragile and vital arts sector in Northern Ireland has been severely affected. The Arts Council has engaged on an ongoing basis with the sector to hear directly about the challenges faced.

In response to the initial impact we were pleased to be able to offer standstill funding under our Annual Funding Programme in 2020/21 and make immediate payments of 50% to assist with cash flow at a time of huge loss of income from box office and other earned income and grants.

We introduced an Artists Emergency Programme with a funding pot of £575k from other budget areas which we temporarily suspended; we were delighted when the Department for Communities, through Minister Hargey, made another £1m available towards this fund and an Organisations Emergency Programme. The latter offers grants of up to £25k for loss of income and additional programming. Organisations supported under Lottery Project Funding were also protected where they present year round programmes and are a key part of our arts infrastructure.

We continue to work with the Department and Minister Ní Chuilín to make the case to the Executive as the impact increasingly takes its toll on the venues, theatres, arts organisations and creative practitioners who make up our vibrant arts sector. Annually funded organisations informed us that by June 2020 they were facing potential deficits of up to £4 million, though this could increase; the anticipated loss of income in the sector for 2020/21, primarily through box office, is estimated to be £25 million.

We remain committed to placing the work of our artists and arts organisations at the heart of our social, economic and creative life, advocating their worth in a way that connects with audiences, policymakers, investors and wider society, contributing to the growth of our wider economy and building cohesion within and between communities. We continue to make the case to government for the preservation of our small and vital sector which will be key in the wider societal recovery process. Undoubtedly the impact of COVID-19 will span the time frame of this strategic framework and our annual business plans will detail the specific interventions and approaches we will adopt to help the arts sector survive.

In developing this strategic framework for the arts over the five-year period, 2019-2024, we need to think creatively, offer fresh solutions, and lead the sector in a strategic direction that will not only add strength and resilience, but create opportunity and growth. That is the role of the current strategic framework. It has been developed in consultation with the arts sector and key stakeholders, as well as our partners in local and central government, and the wider public sector.

To achieve this outcome, we are mindful of the wider political context and the uncertainties affecting society as a whole. The challenges are significant, and the arts will not be exempt. However, in certain knowledge of the unique and irreplaceable benefits that the arts bring to society, our overriding commitment will be to ensure that artists and arts organisations, working in all art forms, receive the support they need to continue to develop and work with confidence, vision and ambition. We are committed to working with government to deliver Programme for Government (PfG) priorities.

**'Placing the arts at the heart of
our social, economic and creative
life'**

Who We Are, What We Do

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) of the Department for Communities (DfC). The Council Board provides a broad cross-section of expertise, including representatives from the arts and culture sector. Members have individual and collective responsibility to the Minister for Communities in relation to the governance of the Arts Council.

The Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 established the functions of the Arts Council as follows:

- a) Develop and improve the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the Arts;
- b) Increase public access to and participation in the Arts;
- c) Advise the Department and other government departments, district councils and other bodies on matters relating to the Arts; and
- d) Such other functions as are conferred on the Council by any other statutory provision.

The Arts Council is required, as part of its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) to consider equality in all aspects of its work, including service design and delivery, employment and procurement. To ensure this, we will develop and submit an equality scheme to the Equality Commission during the first year of the Framework.

The Arts Council welcomes and recognises the diversity within our society, and how it is expressed and celebrated through arts and culture. Section 75 categories are not mutually exclusive and, as society changes, it is important that we encourage an arts sector that is supportive and inclusive.

Evidence gathered by the Arts Council demonstrates lower engagement in the arts by disabled people and those aged over 65. As a result, our priorities are focused on improving access to the arts for these groups. We will continue to promote and support engagement in the arts for all Section 75 groups.

The Arts Council will also deliver upon obligations set out in the two interrelated duties under Sections 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which require it to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. The Arts Council will set out clearly how this will be achieved through a Disability Action Plan (DAP).

Programme for Government

Currently, the draft Programme for Government (PfG) 2016-21 sets out the commitment to work in a more outcome-focused way with an emphasis on: economic advancement, tackling disadvantage and improving citizen wellbeing. It acknowledges the potential of the arts and cultural sector as an instrument for positive change.

We will continue to ensure we work in partnership with the Department to deliver on government priorities in future years.

Departmental/Government Priorities

An innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential is the driving ambition shaping the Arts Council's work. The Department acknowledges that the economic and social impact of the arts extends much more widely into health, wellbeing, and quality of life, to the creation of a more equal society; to having a safe community where we respect the law and each other and respect diverse cultural identities; where we care for each other and help those in need; and that the arts contribute powerfully to the creation of places where people want to live work, visit, and invest.

These are the priorities espoused by the draft PfG and the strategic framework and operational plans are designed to impact on those areas of activity that most closely contribute to successful outcomes in these areas.

The Arts Council has adopted a balanced scorecard approach in order to measure progress over the strategy period (Appendix 2). This is built on a balanced portfolio of measures across the dimensions: scale of activity, quality of activity, financial performance and innovation. It will also allow us to demonstrate how the strategy contributes to the draft Programme for Government Outcomes.

We will work with our sponsor Department to ensure that the value of the Arts, will be recognised as one of Northern Ireland's distinctive strengths, at home and internationally as a tool to aid understanding and reconciliation.

A framework not a plan...

The framework provides an overview of the strategic direction we are proposing to take over the next five-year period, 2019-2024. An accompanying business plan will be produced each year, setting out in detail the actions we will take in order to deliver our strategic objectives. The business plans will be linked to the draft Programme for Government and its associated outcomes.

The framework needs to address some difficult issues. It needs to be realistic, yet sufficiently ambitious to meet the creative expectations of the sector, our stakeholders, and the wider public.

Policy Context

The framework provides a flexible way of managing the following strategic challenges including:

Funding: the Northern Ireland Budgetary Outlook notes that, while the block grant will stay broadly level, rising inflation has created a reduction in real terms in public spending power.

The impact of COVID-19 on the arts in Northern Ireland is likely to see accumulated deficits of circa £4million and losses of £25m in 2020/21. The year on year impact cannot be evaluated until full recovery has been reached. However, given the likely scale of losses it is clear that the Arts Council will be unable to meet the needs of the sector without additional dedicated government support. The Arts Council will work with the Department for Communities to make the case for reinvestment.

Brexit: the impact of Brexit remains unknown but could affect creative migration, workforce mobility, visa issues, tariffs, markets, and create disruption to touring and barriers to sponsorship.

NI Executive: for the period 2017-20, the absence of a sitting Assembly and Executive in Northern Ireland affected many areas of public life. The Arts Council welcomes the restoration of the political institutions in Northern Ireland and the appointment of Minister Hargey and Minister Ní Chuilín to the Department for Communities.

We are confident that the arts can contribute across many of the priorities set out and agreed by the Executive in the New Decade, New Approach framework (2020).

We note the requirements for a new Programme for Government, building on the previous one to include tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth, as well as tackling paramilitarism and sectarianism.

A framework will also provide us with an opportunity to think creatively, offer fresh solutions and respond to change.

Continuing the Journey

We are proud to continue our support of artists, arts practitioners and arts organisations. Our vision is to 'place arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life'. We work to achieve this by championing the arts, developing and investing in artistic excellence and enabling the creation of experiences that enrich people's lives.

As part of the development of the Arts Strategy 2019-24, we commissioned an independent review of the outgoing strategy *Ambitions for the Arts* (See appendix 1).

“You spoke, we listened”

In developing the strategy we carried out extensive consultation with a range of key stakeholders. We have summarised the most frequently expressed responses:

- The arts in society cannot be viewed in isolation; they permeate all aspects of life, transforming people's environment, their education and their place within society. The sector wants to make society and decision makers aware of the benefits the arts bring – intrinsically, socially and economically.
- The Arts Council is seen as an advocate; a representative to engage with politicians, government departments and public agencies. The sector's perspective is that the Arts Council's role is to spread an understanding of the value of the arts and how they contribute towards public service goals.
- The Arts Council acknowledges the role Local Authorities play in local arts provision and the importance of place making in community planning. We recognise the opportunity to work together to strengthen access to the arts in rural areas.
- The sector generally supports the role of the Arts Council as an arm's length body and its function in distributing grants.
- There is a call for the Arts Council to communicate more regularly with artists and organisations and to provide stronger feedback in the post-award phase, especially to artists who have been unsuccessful in their applications for grants.

- Organisations and artists express concerns about funding, in terms of the reduction and the lack of security; especially the loss of multi-annual awards. The sector stresses the need to continue investing in artists and organisations to maintain the high standards and showcasing of their work.
- In the current funding environment it is vital to ensure that access is maintained to the arts and that understanding and developing the audience base is critical to reaching as many in society as possible.
- The arts sector is ambitious and thrives on experimentation. Despite the current funding pressures, artists seek to create ground-breaking work.

A Shared Vision

Because we have engaged widely with our stakeholders this is a shared vision that...

- Celebrates arts and creativity.
- Links us to a shared heritage of ideas, words, images and sound.
- Helps us to be connected, confident and outward looking.

The Creative Ecology

We support artists and arts organisations; but they in turn are part of a wider ecology with overlapping connections in the Creative Industries, digital production, screen, cultural tourism, creative learning and numerous forms of applied practice in social settings.

It is no longer appropriate to define the sector in terms of single artform priorities. The sector itself is exploring new ways of working, converging platforms and presenting work through digital media. This calls for a new approach to planning for arts and creativity. The COVID-19 pandemic has made that even more of an imperative.

Working with Government

The Arts Council has a strong track record of working with Government and its institutions to advance shared agendas and maximise resources.

In addition to their strong intrinsic value, arts and culture have a wider, more measurable impact on our economy, health, wellbeing and education. Participation in the arts can help build cohesive communities, make communities feel safer and reduce social exclusion and isolation. The economy is bolstered by visitors engaging in arts and culture and creative interventions can have a positive impact on specific health conditions such as dementia, Parkinson's and depression. They will also be essential in helping the recovery process arising from the trauma caused to so many by COVID-19.

A key feature of the draft Programme for Government is its commitment to an outcomes-based accountability model. It provides a framework that can be applied to services to improve their impact on people's lives, and it can bring about generational change for our communities. Collaborative working between government departments, local government, the private sector, Arm's Length Bodies (ALB's) and the voluntary and community sectors will be vital to realise the ambitions outlined.

There remain areas of inequality in Northern Ireland where concerted effort is required across government to positively influence the reform agenda and where partnerships with local actors, creative agents and the Third Sector can help animate change.

Fifty-one¹ percent of the funding invested by the Arts Council goes to the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland, helping to deliver social change, economic prosperity and build a strong and a shared community. There are many tangible examples of how engagement with the arts impacts on our health and wellbeing, but we need to reinvest in the arts to ensure artists and the arts sector can continue to make a difference.

We are committed to fulfilling our responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Government statistics² show that older people and deaf and disabled people are less likely to access the arts. As a result we are delivering specific actions that address this.

The scale and ambition of the Programme for Government calls for a change of culture in the public sector that encourages and enables those working in the arts to fully play their part. The following list summarises some of the ways in which we work with government and its departments:

¹ <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ACNI-2017-18-AFS-Dashboard.xlsx>

² <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/communities/experience-of-culture-and-arts-northern-ireland-201819.pdf>

- Supporting local authorities in the delivery of their Community Plans.
- Partnering the Public Health Agency in the design and delivery of a wellbeing programme, targeted at the most vulnerable young people in Northern Ireland.
- Partnering the Education Authority and Strategic Investment Board (tasked with delivery of the Executive's Urban Villages Initiative) to pilot a Creative Schools Scheme.

The arts can make a meaningful contribution to the draft Programme for Government and the strategic priorities of the department for Communities.

Ambitions / Priorities for the next five years, structured under three headings:

Our guiding principles for the next five years are summarised in three words...

Inspire

Connect

Lead

Simple, yes, but they reflect our ambition and our passion for the arts.

INSPIRE

Great art inspires us, nurtures our understanding of who we are and the world around us, and brings us together.

CONNECT

The arts are without boundaries. They connect communities, help build creative places, define a new sense of identity, and help us tell our stories, seek out and engage wider audiences. We want to reach out and reach further, bringing people together

LEAD

We see our role as enabling and empowering the sector to achieve its ambitions and to speak out for the arts; but we won't be able to do that alone – we will need to work together with other stakeholders to deliver on this promise.

In the following pages, this framework outlines strategic objectives and actions under each guiding principle informed by the needs of the sector.

Principle	Objective	Actions	
INSPIRE	<p>1. <i>Create the conditions in which work of excellence is made</i></p> <p><i>PfG Outcome: 5</i></p>	<p>a. Place quality and creative risk-taking at the centre of a revised assessment framework to ensure work of vision, power and imagination is made</p> <p>b. Incentivise innovation and experimentation through our grant-making processes</p> <p>c. Develop good-practice guidelines with the sector for self-assessment of creative work</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Year 2</p>
	<p>2. Create a confident, vibrant arts infrastructure</p> <p><i>PfG Outcome: 5</i></p>	<p>a. Invest in strategic programmes (Resilience and Blueprint) that build capacity in the sector</p> <p>b. Consider reinstatement of multi-annual funding</p> <p>c. Introduce a small-scale asset purchase / maintenance scheme to ensure arts organisations have the right equipment to deliver their work</p> <p>d. Encourage more private giving by helping organisations build their fundraising capacity</p>	<p>Years 1 - 3</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p>
	<p>3. Invest in workforce, skills and leadership development</p> <p><i>PfG Outcome: 5</i></p>	<p>a. Commission a review of leadership needs and skills shortages and establish the extent of workforce diversity in the sector</p> <p>b. Support the arts sector to invest in workforce development and succession planning to meet future leadership needs</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>Years 3 - 5</p>

Principle	Objective	Actions	
	<p>4. Invest in accessible career pathways in the creative and cultural industries</p> <p><i>PfG Outcome: 5, 8</i></p>	<p>a. Enhance the quality of creative careers advice in schools in partnership with NI Screen and the Department for the Economy</p> <p>b. Create a dedicated career pathway component within the Creative Schools Partnership programme</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 3</p>
	<p>5. Renew art form policies to reflect current needs</p> <p><i>PfG Outcome: 5</i></p>	<p>a. Review art form classifications to ensure their continued relevance in light of digital developments and implement a rolling policy review.</p> <p>b. Involve a deliberative forum in the review process (Consultative Assembly)</p>	<p>Year2</p> <p>Year2</p>
	<p>6. Create more opportunities for children and young people to engage in creative practice</p> <p><i>PfG Outcome: 3, 5,8</i></p>	<p>a. Invest in arts organisations which create high-quality learning experiences in and out of schools</p> <p>b. Invest in the Creative Schools Partnership (The Executive Office, Education Authority & ACNI) to improve creative and educational outcomes for children living in deprived areas</p>	<p>Years 1 - 3</p> <p>Years 1 - 3</p>

7. Inspire local communities to engage in transformative, high-quality arts experiences
PfG Outcome: 4,7,9

- a. Improve the regional and rural reach of funding through joint projects with local government, such as local place-based cultural initiatives. Years 1 - 5
- b. Strengthen arts activity in areas of low engagement Years 1 - 5

Principle	Objective	Actions
CONNECT	<p>1. Transform the relationship with local government through partnership working to strengthen local arts provision</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 10</p>	<p>a. Formalise bilateral relations with individual councils through Service Level Agreements. Years 2 - 3</p> <p>b. In conjunction with local government hold a biennial conference on the role of the arts in place making Year 2</p> <p>c. Develop guidance on common data collection on the social impact of the arts Year 2</p>
	<p>2. Improve access to / participation in the arts for disabled people</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 3,4,9</p>	<p>a. Renew the Disability Action Plan Year 1</p> <p>b. Carry out a survey of funded arts venues to ascertain current disability access gaps Years 1 - 2</p> <p>c. Rebrand and launch Equality Access Charter with improved processes and usability; advocate its use within the sector Year 2</p>
	<p>Implement recommendations from the Premium Payment review</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 3,4,9</p>	<p>d. Introduce the Disability Access Card for people with disabilities to Northern Ireland Year 3</p>
	<p>3. Accelerate growth opportunities in the Creative Industries</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5</p>	<p>a. Establish a working partnership with the Creative Industries Institute to create research and career opportunities for artists Years 1 - 5</p>

Principle	Objective	Actions	
	<p>4. Work with sector partners to increase audiences for the arts</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 10</p>	<p>a. Evaluate current audience development practice</p> <p>b. Build marketing capacity for arts organisations through programmes such as Pathway to Blueprint</p> <p>c. Create dedicated digital training for arts organisations to exploit market opportunities</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 3</p>
	<p>5. Capitalise on increased tourism by developing compelling visitor experiences</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5, 10</p>	<p>a. Work with Belfast City Council on the development of a major city centre cultural and visitor attraction</p> <p>b. Increase strategic engagement with Tourism NI to increase market visibility and brand awareness of arts culture and heritage assets</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p>
	<p>6. Connect to the world by supporting artists and arts organisations to present their work internationally.</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5, 10</p>	<p>a. Sustain international residencies and showcasing opportunities to enhance the global reputation of artists from Northern Ireland</p> <p>b. Support international touring through funding programmes</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p>
		<p>a. Create a seed fund to support new ideas that use digital technology in the arts</p>	<p>Year 2</p>

Principle	Objective	Actions	
	<p>7. Encourage innovative practices that cross artform boundaries</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5</p>	<p>b. Broker a partnership that connects the Creative Industries Institute and industry leaders to build digital capability within the sector</p>	<p>Years 3 - 5</p>
	<p>8. Promote knowledge exchange through funding better networks for the arts</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5</p>	<p>a. Invest in resource organisations to support practitioners through the creation of networks and the provision of training and professional development</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p>

Principle	Objective	Actions	
LEAD	<p>1. Demonstrate the important role of the arts to society through research and evaluation</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5,9</p>	<p>a. Establish a research partnership with the Policy Evidence Centre at the Ulster University to promote critical thinking and analysis to inform policy development</p> <p>b. Commission evaluations of strategic programmes</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p>
	<p>2. Make the case for a better resourced arts sector</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5</p>	<p>a. Grow public investment in the arts</p> <p>b. Build public and political support for a better resourced arts sector by engaging with decision makers</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p>
	<p>3. Ignite the imagination of the public by articulating how the arts improve our lives</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5,10</p>	<p>a. Capture the value of the arts through communication campaigns, case studies and video interviews</p> <p>b. Establish a Northern Ireland Arts Week with activities in core-funded venues as part of an annual celebration of creativity</p> <p>c. Commission a biennial survey on changing public perceptions of the arts</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Years 2, 4</p>
	<p>4. Future-proof investment in the sector by helping organisations diversify income sources</p> <p>PfG Outcome: 5</p>	<p>a. Prepare funded organisations for future challenges through the Resilience and Pathways to Blueprint programmes</p> <p>b. Support the development of tailored fundraising measures for the sector</p>	<p>Years 1 - 5</p> <p>Years 1 - 5</p>

Principle	Objective	Actions
LEAD	5. Establish a deliberative forum of practitioners and stakeholders PfG Outcome: 3,5,9	a. Establish a deliberative forum to involve artists in policy issues (assessment of quality, review of grant processes) and provide a touchstone for sectoral opinion alongside key stakeholders Year 2
	6. Improve the living & working conditions of artists PfG Outcome 5,10	a. Re-test the findings of the Living & Working Conditions of Artists survey Year 3 b. Develop a new scheme aimed at emerging artists Years 1 - 5
	7. Create shared opportunities by engaging stakeholders to achieve broader outcomes PfG Outcome: 7,9,10	a. Establish data sharing agreements with local government and the Policy Evidence Centre Years 2 - 5 b. Build ongoing relations with a range of public and philanthropic funders to achieve broader social outcomes Years 1 - 5
	8. Emergency COVID-19 pandemic Response PfG Outcome: 4,8,11	a. Co-design, with DfC emergency programme responses to the needs of artists and arts organisations b. Develop appropriate policy responses and advocate for support from government by deploying dedicated surveys to monitor impact of COVID-19

Principle

Objective

Actions

LEAD

9. Emergency COVID-19 pandemic Response (cont.)

PfG Outcome: 4,8,11

c. Assess venue infrastructural needs to determine health and safety requirements for reopening post COVID-19;

d. Survey funded arts venues to determine disability access gaps; support for UK disability alliance on COVID-19 and co-design disability access card scheme;

Statement of purpose

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the development and funding agency for the arts in Northern Ireland.

We distribute public money and National Lottery funds to develop and deliver a wide variety of arts projects, events and initiatives across Northern Ireland.

From theatre and literature to art in the community, we work in partnership with hundreds of artists, arts organisations and venues. Art has the ability to reach across boundaries, inspiring, teaching and bringing people together.

That's why we believe in placing "Art at the Heart", because we know that art makes a difference.

Statement of functions

The Arts Council is the statutory body through which public and National Lottery funding for the arts are channelled. We are also responsible for a number of important functions, including: developing and improving the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts; increasing public access to, and participation in, the arts; and advising the Department for Communities and other government departments, district councils and bodies on matters relating to the arts. The Arts Council is the principal advocate for the arts in Northern Ireland.

Our partnerships

We are committed to supporting a range of partnerships and community engagement for the benefit of audiences and cultural life.

The arts are recognised as an increasingly important delivery mechanism to enhance the services of other key public bodies: Public Health Agency, Education Authority, Urban Villages, local government.

Appendix 1

The last 5 years: what the independent review says in summary

The desk-based review cast a critical eye on the Arts Council's performance over the last five years, drawing evidence from evaluations, survey findings and interviews to identify what was achieved, what wasn't achieved, and what the key challenges are.

Societal changes are creating increased opportunities for the arts. The Creative Industries is a growth sector; young people are moving from a value system based on possessions to ones focused on experiences; digital technologies are making creative resources available to more and more people.

However, arts organisations are showing signs of real financial stress. Artists' income, expenditure on publicity, marketing and promotion continue to fall. This will have a long-term impact on organisations' ability to build audiences and hence generate income through box office.

Core funded arts organisations have increased their level of activity. Participation levels have increased but audiences have fallen.

Despite the prevailing uncertain financial environment, the Arts Council delivered a portfolio of targeted programmes which impacted on individuals and communities. New, innovative programmes such as Creative Schools Partnerships, the Arts and Older People programme and the Intercultural programme have extended the reach of the arts to address societal challenges around mental health, isolation, loneliness and cohesion.

Strong partnerships at a strategic and operational level have been built with the education, health and the community sectors. The Arts Council now works closely with the community, voluntary and statutory sectors to deliver its work in an efficient and targeted way.

The Arts Council has been successful in supporting volunteering activity through its Annually Funded Organisations. Volunteer engagement remains strong and therefore likely to be impact positively both on the individual and organisation supported.

Overall, the review reported that the Arts Council has delivered a diverse and high-quality programme with broad reach within the arts sector and local community.

Appendix 2

Balanced Scorecard: connecting actions and strategic goals

<p style="text-align: center;">SCALE OF ACTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in strategic programmes to build sector capacity • Consider reinstatement of multi-annual funding • Commission a review of leadership needs and skills shortages • Support the arts sector to meet future leadership needs • In partnership with local authorities improve the regional and rural reach of funding • Strengthen arts activity in areas of low engagement • Enhance the global reputation of Northern Ireland artists • Establish a Northern Ireland Arts Week to celebrate creativity 	<p style="text-align: center;">QUALITY OF ENGAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the quality of creative careers advice in schools and colleges • Invest in arts organisations which create high-quality school based learning experiences • Improve outcomes for children living in deprived areas by investing in the Creative Schools Partnership • Invest in resource organisations to enhance sector development roles • Engage public and philanthropic funders to realise broader social value • Develop a new SIAP scheme aimed at emerging artists • Develop appropriate policy / advocacy responses by deploying dedicated surveys to monitor impact of COVID-19 • Assess venue infrastructural needs post COVID-19
<p style="text-align: center;">INNOVATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place quality and creative risk-taking at the centre of a revised assessment framework • Incentivise innovation and experimentation through our grant-making processes • Develop good-practice guidelines for artistic self-assessment • Involve a deliberative forum in the review process (Consultative Assembly) • In conjunction with local government hold a biennial conference on the role of the arts in place making • Introduce the Hint Card for people with disabilities • Build sector digital capacity by brokering partnerships with the Creative Industries and other relevant partners • Establish a research partnership with the Policy Evidence Centre at the Ulster University • Co-design, with DfC emergency programme responses to the needs of artists and arts organisations • Survey funded arts venues to determine disability access gaps; support for UK disability alliance on COVID-19 and co-design disability access card scheme; 	<p style="text-align: center;">FINANCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner the Creative Industries Institute to create research and career opportunities for artists • Evaluate current audience development practice • Build marketing capacity for arts organisations through dedicated programmes • Create digital training opportunities for arts organisations to exploit market opportunities • Work with Belfast City Council on the development of a major city centre cultural and visitor attraction • Work with Tourism NI and other relevant parties to increase market visibility and brand awareness of arts, culture and heritage assets • Create a digital technology seed fund • Nurture creative, social and commercial relationships through the Resilience and Pathways to Blueprint programmes • Support the development of tailored fundraising measures for the sector • Re-test the findings of the Living & Working Conditions of Artists survey

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