

ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND: ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20



***Our mission is to place the Arts at the heart of our
social, economic and creative life***

Business Plan 2019/20

1. Introduction	3
2. A new Strategic Framework.....	3
3. Our Organisation: Who We Are, What We Do	4
Board of the Arts Council.....	4
4. Policy Priorities.....	5
Programme for Government	5
DfC Letter of Remit 2019/20.....	5
5. Looking Ahead to 2019/20.....	5
6. Artists	7
7. Annually Funded Organisations	7
8. Equality Scheme.....	8
9. Disability Action Plan	8
10. Celebration of Age	8
11. North-South Working.....	9
12. East West Relations.....	9
13. Local Government.....	9
14. Cultural Heritage.....	9
15. Improving Operations & Service	10
16. Social Media	10
17. Annual Funding Survey	10
18. Internal key points of action during 2019/20	10
19. Corporate Governance.....	11
20. Resources and Budget 2019/20	11
Appendix 1	13
Appendix 2	15
Appendix 3	17

1. Introduction

The financial context for this Business Plan is contained in the Department of Finance briefing on the Northern Ireland Budgetary Outlook 2018-20 which sets out a number of scenarios based on broad strategic issues. Budgetary pressures and the consequential planning assumptions may have far-reaching implications for the Arts Council, its portfolio of funded organisations and their programmes of activity.

We have engaged in dialogue with the sector to hear their concerns about the future, specifically, the uncertainty facing public funding sources (not only from the Arts Council), what measures might be taken to mitigate their impact and how we might best protect our core cultural infrastructure. In light of the prevailing pressures on the sector, we are taking a strategic approach to improve resilience, increase capacity and investment readiness.

A tangible illustration of this is our commitment to work with a cohort of funded organisations in partnership with Belfast City Council to rollout the Resilience Programme. We will look at the timeframe for a similar initiative in Derry~Londonderry, and explore measures to underpin small and medium sized organisations.

We remain committed to place 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.

2. A new Strategic Framework

A draft five-year framework for the Arts in Northern Ireland 2019-2024, entitled "*Inspire, Connect, Lead*" was approved by the Board and has been submitted to the Department for Communities (DfC). The business plan reflects the first year of the new 5-year framework, specifically developed as a framework in light of prevailing uncertainties: the draft Programme for Government (PfG); the pressure to protect 'frontline services' and manage within reduced public funding; the need to encourage resilience within the sector and promote, where appropriate, the use of shared services. We will be flexible and respond to emerging priorities.

Arts organisations in Northern Ireland are reliant on public funding at a time when this funding source is uncertain. We will support portfolio funded organisations to diversify their income sources, build awareness of funding opportunities available through charitable trusts and foundations and invest in capacity building measures to help the sector become more

financially resilient. Together we will work with Arts & Business NI to progress the recommendations of the 'Socially Investing in the Arts' report, map the skills needed in the sector to be 'investment ready' and sign-post funding opportunities. We will work with other public funders in the Arts to ensure that our grants are working effectively and that our funding policy and practice is supporting long term resilience.

3. Our Organisation: Who We Are, What We Do

Board of the Arts Council

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) of the Department for Communities. The Board provides a broad cross-section of expertise, including representatives from the arts and culture sector. Board 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) to develop and improve the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the Arts;
- b) to increase public access to and participation in the Arts;
- c) to 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.

In discharging these functions, the Arts Council will develop a new Equality Scheme 2019-2024 for approval by the Equality Commission during the course of the year. Schedule 9 of the Act requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and the desirability of promoting good relations.

In addition, under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995), the Arts Council is specifically required to have due regard to the need to: promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Arts Council is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

A new Disability Action Plan 2019-2024 is being developed and will be submitted to the Equality Commission for approval.

4. Policy Priorities

Programme for Government

The draft PfG contains a 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 instruments for positive change.

DfC is responsible for setting policy, bringing forward legislation and resourcing the culture, arts and leisure sectors.

DfC Letter of Remit 2019/20

The Department has stated that Outcome 5 – “An innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential”, should be the driving force shaping the Arts Council’s work. It also states that the economic and social impact of the arts extends much more widely into health, wellbeing, and quality of life (outcome 4); to the creation of a more equal society (Outcome 3); to having a safe community where we respect the law and each other (Outcome 7) and respect diverse cultural identities (Outcome 9); where we care for each other and help those in need (Outcome 8); and that the arts contribute powerfully to the creation of places where people want to live work, visit, and invest (outcome 10).

The Department expects the Arts Council to set strategy and operational plans and direct funding inputs towards those areas of activity that most closely demonstrate impact in some or all of these areas and, in partnership with the Department, to refine ways to capture and report on impact in these areas.

The Business Plan reflects these priorities and shows how the Arts make a contribution in these areas.

We will work with our sponsor Department to ensure that the role of the Arts, their value and impact will be sufficiently recognised as one of Northern Ireland’s distinctive strengths, both internationally and within a divided society as a tool to aid understanding and reconciliation.

5. Looking Ahead to 2019/20

Everyone has the right to access arts and culture of their own choosing and we remain committed to realising that ambition. By contributing to the Government’s priorities, the Arts Council will deliver the following benefits during 2019/20:

1. Manage the Annual Funding Programme within the context of reduced public funding by ranking each organisation against its ability to address the Council's strategic objectives;
2. Monitor performance of our annually funded organisations, through regular meetings, quarterly reports and the Annual Funding Survey to ensure delivery against our strategy and wider Government priorities;
3. Promote the legacy benefit of the Arts and Older People Programme aligned with the Active Ageing Strategy (2016-2021);
4. Continue the implementation of a joint initiative with Education Authority and Urban Villages to promote creative arts experiences for young people in schools, contributing to the schools' improvement agenda;
5. Consider the future infrastructural needs of the sector particularly those venues that were constructed as part of the capital grant programme but which may require refurbishment and updating;
6. Continue the implementation of the 'Resilience Programme' with Belfast City Council to help arts organisations undergo a process of change aimed at strengthening their resilience, capacity and investment readiness;
7. Develop similar bespoke resilience programme in Derry~Londonderry in partnership with Derry City and Strabane District Council;
8. Enhance the quality of creative careers advice in schools in partnership with NI Screens and Department of Economy.
9. Carry out an audit of Youth Music in Northern Ireland, a commitment of the Music Strategy;
10. Review the achievements of the Cross Border Touring Programme (North-South and East-West);
11. Develop a new five-year Disability Action Plan;
12. Work with Local government to improve local and rural reach of funding through joint projects.

13. Establish Terms of Reference for, and membership of, an independent deliberative forum to advise the Arts Council.
14. Establish a research Memorandum of understanding with the Creative Industries Institute and policy Evidence Centre in the Ulster University.
15. Strengthen the digital capacity of the arts sector through a training partnership with the Ulster University.
16. Work with Tourism NI and the Department for Communities Historic Environment Department to enhance visitor experience of heritage assets through the arts.
17. Continue to partner with the British Council to deliver the first year of the Jaipur Literature Festival in Belfast.
18. Contribute evidence on value and impact of the arts in partnership with Department for Communities.
19. Develop a new scheme aimed at emerging artists.

6. Artists

Our artists are one of the greatest sources of talent that we have in our society - supporting their creative development is an essential role of the Arts Council. We will continue to value, celebrate and support artists through our system of awards, commissions, residencies and by developing further opportunities to showcase their work at home and abroad.

Opportunities such as the British School at Rome Residency, international residencies including burgeoning opportunities in India (Jaipur Literature Festival, Sanskriti Foundation and Ramgarh) and our joint artists' international development programme with the British Council NI are essential to continued professional development.

7. Annually Funded Organisations

In the context of funding constraints, we will mitigate the impact of spending reductions and protect "frontline services". We will foster the principles of adaptive resilience, encourage arts organisations to collaborate with each other, to consider the possible benefits of shared services, engage with the private sector to increase sponsorship, and to assess commercial opportunities. In collaboration with Arts & Business NI we will work to raise awareness of the work of Trusts and Foundations,

and alternative forms of arts finance, and with the Creative Europe Desk encourage applications to European sources of funding.

8. Equality Scheme

The Arts Council has a longstanding commitment to promote equality and has developed particular programmes which respond to the needs of marginalised groups.

The Arts Council will develop a new Equality Scheme which is a statement of its commitment to fulfilling its Section 75 duties. The Equality Monitoring Working Group was set up in 2013 as part of the Art Council's arrangements for assessing compliance with Section 75 duties.

Its function is to provide strategic leadership for the outworking of the Equality Scheme by ensuring that equality and diversity is embedded across the organisation. Chaired by the Chief Executive the group meets quarterly to review progress.

9. Disability Action Plan

The Arts Council will develop a new Disability Action Plan that outlines the organisation's commitment to promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourages participation in all aspects of the Arts.

Setting out a range of action points, the Disability Action Plan aims to ensure that people with a disability have the same opportunities to avail of investment in the Arts, including the employment of persons with a disability in the arts sector. The plan builds on measures already taken by the Arts Council to promote inclusion and access, including funding the core costs for several Arts and Disability organisations, supporting artists through the Individual Disabled/Deaf Artists grants programme and ensuring equality of access to the Arts through the Arts & Disability Equality Charter.

The Disability Action Plan represents a clear statement of the Arts Council's ongoing commitment to fulfilling the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). The Arts Council will implement the recommendations arising from an analysis of its Premium Payment as part of our Equality commitment.

10. Celebration of Age

The Arts and Older People Programme is aimed at stimulating arts engagement amongst vulnerable and isolated older people. Jointly funded by the Public Health Agency and the Baring Foundation, we will assess the achievements of the programme as it enters its final year.

11. North-South Working

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland and An Chomhairle Ealaíon have been working together to develop the Arts for the past thirty-six years. This cooperation takes many forms and includes an annual plenary session which receives reports from the joint North South Working Group.

The work plan for 2019/20 comprises support for a comprehensive range of arts organisations delivering services on an all island basis. A Chair of Poetry and an all island Children's Laureate have been established through this mechanism and measures have been agreed to actively encourage touring of drama, music and opera for the enjoyment of wider audiences.

This year we will see twin public art commissions to celebrate the life and work of Seamus Heaney, developed by the two Arts Councils working together.

12. East West Relations

The Arts Council also has long standing relationships with the other Arts Councils in the UK. The 2019/20 work plan includes a review of the Cross Border Touring scheme; Commissioning opportunities with the Performing Rights Society for composers from Northern Ireland; support for artists to attend the annual international networking platform for the world music industry (WoMEX).

13. Local Government

The Arts Council has been working with stakeholders to ground the relationship with the local authorities, ensuring the Arts are integral to local Community Plans by participating in the planning processes, including the development of local integrated arts strategies.

Pioneering work has already been done highlighting the significant contribution the Arts can make to urban renewal and regeneration, tackling inequalities and contributing to social cohesion.

The Local Government Challenge Fund stimulated new investment in arts provision. In 2019/20 we will continue to work with Belfast City Council on the Resilience Programme and work to develop a new programme in Derry City & Strabane District Council. This initiative will help arts organisations undergo a process of change aimed at making them more effective and efficient; improve their resilience and investment readiness.

14. Cultural Heritage

NI has rich cultural heritage assets which have untapped visitor potential. Working in partnership with the Historic Environment Division, Tourism NI

and Heritage Lottery Fund we will deliver key projects to animate designated sites of heritage interest through the arts.

15. Improving Operations & Service

We are committed to improving our performance, ensuring that we have the focus, innovation and adaptability to face an ever changing environment.

We recognise the importance of investing in our people and their learning development, strengthening relationships with our clients and ensuring that our grant programmes and processes work effectively and create a culture of partnership with our stakeholders.

16. Social Media

The Arts Council has developed an effective and engaging social media strategy. The primary objectives include increasing access to, and participation in the Arts, while enhancing the online visibility of the Arts Council. The Arts Council is now present on a number of social media platforms and uses these to communicate strategic messages and develop an engaged audience, comprised not only of those within the arts and creative sectors, but those in related sectors including health, education, local government and other public bodies.

The Arts Council monitors activity across all of its digital channels. The Council uses analytical tools to help identify the gender and age profile of our audience, and their location and actively build audiences through making digital links to communities and individuals in harder to reach areas of Northern Ireland.

17. Annual Funding Survey

The Annual Funding Survey (AFS) captures a range of information from each arts organisation, including finances, employment, audience size, participation levels and case study examples. Gathering this data not only provides an overview of the activity levels of the sector but also assists us in monitoring our clients' performance against their annual targets and helps to fulfil and improve our reporting function to DfC.

18. Internal key points of action during 2019/20

We realise that the relationship with our clients should be clearly structured and easily understood. To help this process we have a Service Charter which sets out what our clients can expect from us and what we expect of them. We are also committed to regular engagement with the arts sector to make sure that our programmes and processes are relevant and effective. This year we will establish terms of reference for the independent deliberative forum which will assist the Arts Council take forward its programme of work.

Acknowledging the importance of continuous improvement and aligning purpose, people, and values, we are focused on updating the Department on a regular basis.

- Develop our advocacy messages in the context of the draft Programme for Government and the priorities of the Department for Communities;
- Embark on EU Exit Day 1 Delivery Planning to ensure that all issues that may impact on services have been identified to ensure minimal disruption after the UK leaves the European Union.

19. Corporate Governance

The Arts Council has a Finance Committee to oversee how budgets are managed and an Audit and Risk Committee which oversees a programme of work of internal and external audit and compliance. It also reviews the Risk Register on a quarterly basis. This work programme is led by the Director of Corporate Services.

All committees report directly to the Board. The Board also receives quarterly updates of delivery against the targets of the Business Plan.

20. Resources and Budget 2019/20

The Arts Council receives expenditure funds from two main sources: Exchequer funding from the Northern Ireland Budget through DfC and Lottery funds from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The Exchequer budget figure is £10.197m.

Net Lottery income for the year is forecast at £8.699m. A proportion of the Arts Council's total overheads are recharged to the Lottery Accounts. The Lottery recharge for 2019/20 is estimated at 53%.

In the current economic climate, the Arts Council is constantly reviewing its overhead costs. The budget for 2019/20 is £582k.

The Arts Council continues to monitor costs rigorously and to ensure that an appropriate proportion of overheads are charged to the various ring-fenced projects under management.

Details of capital activity relating to the 2019/20 period is shown in Table 1

Table 1: 2019/20 Capital Allocation

	2019/20
The Metropolitan Arts Centre	£403,558*
Small Capital Grant Programme	£500,000
Art Collection	£50,000
Final Budget	£953,558

*This is for the completion of the reparation work on the MAC Façade.

Details of the 2019/20 allocation by programme are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: 2019/20 Resource allocation by programme

Programme	Exchequer (£)	Lottery (£)	Other (£)	Total (£)
Annual Funding Programme	8,516,691	4,339,611		12,856,302
Support for Individual Artists	246,103	500,000	25,000	771,103
Arts Development Fund	126,807			126,807
Small Grants Programme		400,000		400,000
Project Funding		1,000,000		1,000,000
Arts & Older People			120,000	120,000
UK Cross Border Touring				
North South touring				
Young People & Wellbeing (ARTiculate)			25,000	25,000
Public Art		200,000		200,000
Creative Schools Programme		100,000	100,000	200,000
Resilience Programme		250,000	150,000	400,000
Overheads	574,652			
Salaries	2,001,000			2,001,000
Strategy/Research	28,800			28,800
Communications	50,000			50,000

Appendix 1: Headline Achievements from 2018/19

There were a number of significant achievements, notably in relation to the strengthening of productive partnerships with external bodies and agencies.

These achievements highlight the major contribution that the arts are making to the creative and cultural life of Northern Ireland, to the local economy, and to addressing some of the region's most pressing social issues.

The standout achievements were:

Local Government Challenge Fund. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to this programme, which is designed to embed the arts in local authority planning and in the delivery of key areas of civic responsibility. Eight out of the possible ten eligible local authorities have developed significant new arts programmes, with a total investment of £872,640 of Arts Council Lottery funds being matched by the local authorities.

Resilience Programme. The Arts Council and Belfast City Council jointly developed an 18-month professional support and funding programme that is helping 14 of Belfast's key arts organisations with a city-wide reach to adapt and change to meet the growing needs of the city.

Creative Schools Partnership. This new programme, partnering with the Education Authority and Urban Villages, completed a highly successful £120,000 pilot year, introducing more creativity into the classroom to improve educational outcomes for students and strengthen community cohesion. 180 children participated across 10 schools in 5 Urban Village areas.

Arts & Age Festival. The annual month-long festival in April celebrated the achievements of artists and arts organisations, working in partnership with health and care professionals through the Arts & Older People Programme, to increase participation in creative activities and thereby tackle social justice issues and help older people to enjoy longer lives lived better.

Articulate Arts and Young People Wellbeing Programme. Now in its second year, this three-year partnership programme with the Public Health Agency continues to find creative new ways to give a voice to issues affecting young people, with innovative arts projects such as a film developed by west Belfast based Suicide Awareness and Support Group and arts organisation Kids in Control, to raise awareness among local young people about online bullying and suicide.

Seamus Heaney Legacy Programme. A month-long International Visiting Poetry Fellowship was created as part of Queen's University / Arts Council's joint ten-year Heaney Legacy project, with the inaugural recipient, award-winning American poet Mark Doty, presenting a series of public readings, masterclasses and outreach activities. Seamus Heaney Children's Writing Fellow, Myra Zepf, continued to enthuse students in schools across Northern Ireland about books, reading and creative writing.

Art Lending Scheme. The Arts Council launched a free lending scheme to enable galleries and organisations to loan and exhibit works from its collection, thereby increasing public access to, and appreciation of, works by local artists. A special scheme has also been introduced this year to encourage schools to borrow works, with the additional offer of assistance with mounting the exhibition and facilitating artists' talks for the students.

Major Individual Arts Awards. The special contribution of four significant individual artists to the development of the arts in Northern Ireland was acknowledged through MIA awards of £15,000 each, to enable the creation of substantial new work, to composer Ed Bennett and writers Malachi O'Doherty, Carol Moore and Rosemary Jenkinson.

International opportunities. An Arts Council priority continued to be to strengthen international profiling opportunities for artists from Northern Ireland, through the Brussels Platform in partnership with the Northern Ireland Executive Brussels Office, and through partnership programmes with the British Council, supporting, e.g., platform events at the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris and a growing range of artist residency/showcase opportunities in India, now including the Jaipur Literature Festival.

Appendix 2: 2019/20 Deliverables:

1. Manage the Annual Funding Programme within the context of funding constraints by ranking each organisation against its ability to address the Council's strategic objectives;
2. Monitor performance of our annually funded organisations, through regular meetings, quarterly reports and the Annual Funding Survey to ensure delivery against our strategy and wider Government priorities;
3. Promote the legacy benefit of the Arts and Older People Programme aligned with the Active Ageing Strategy (2016-2021);
4. Continue the implementation of a joint initiative with Education Authority and Urban Villages to promote creative arts experiences for young people in schools, contributing to the schools' improvement agenda;
5. Consider the future infrastructural needs of the sector particularly those venues that were constructed as part of the capital grant programme but which may require refurbishment and updating;
6. Continue the implementation of the 'Resilience Programme' with Belfast City Council to help arts organisations undergo a process of change aimed at strengthening their resilience, capacity and investment readiness;
7. Implement similar bespoke resilience programme in Derry~Londonderry in partnership with Derry City and Strabane District Council;
8. Enhance the quality of creative careers advice in schools in partnership with NI Screens and Department of Economy.
9. Carry out an audit of Youth Music in Northern Ireland, a commitment of the Music Strategy;
10. Review the achievements of the Cross Border Touring Programme (North-South and East-West);
11. Develop a new five-year Disability Action Plan;
12. Work with Local government to improve local and rural reach of funding through joint projects.
13. Establish Terms of Reference for, and membership of, an independent deliberative forum to advise the Arts Council on arts related matters.
14. Establish a research Memorandum of understanding with the Creative Industries Institute and policy Evidence Centre in the Ulster University.
15. Strengthen the digital capacity of the arts sector through a training partnership with the Ulster University.
16. Work with Tourism NI and the Department for Communities Historic Environment Department to enhance visitor experience of heritage assets through the arts.
17. Continue to partner with the British Council to deliver the first year of the Jaipur Literature Festival in Belfast.

18. Contribute evidence on value and impact of the arts in partnership with the Department for Communities.
19. Develop a new scheme aimed at emerging artists.

Appendix 3: Performance Measurement

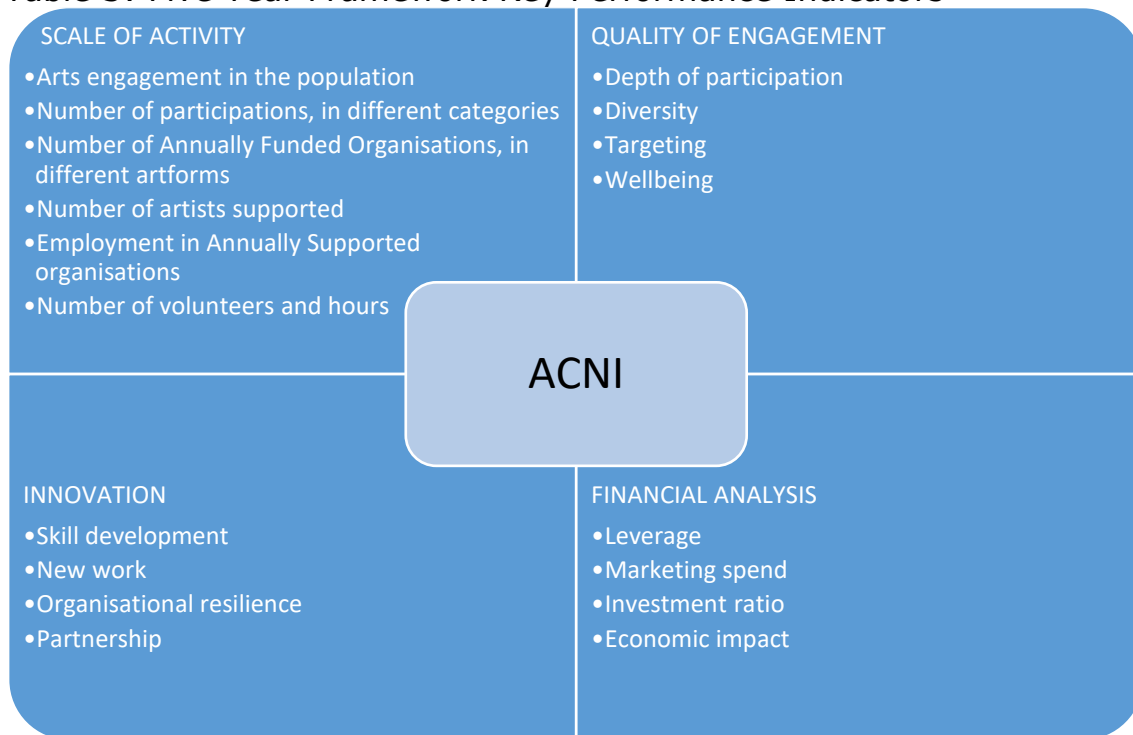
The following performance indicators have been developed to measure the success of the draft Five Year Plan

The Arts Council commissioned a performance management framework which underpins the draft Five Year Framework. This, independent work by Annabel Jackson Associates, supports the preferred Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) system used by government. A breakdown of key performance indicators associated with each of the four domains can be found in Table 3.

The method reflects a balanced portfolio of measures that acknowledge trade-offs and inherent weaknesses in the collection and aggregation of data.

A flexible balanced portfolio of measures has been developed across the following dimensions: scale of activity, quality of activity, financial performance and innovation. This system will be developed over time as data systems and learning is strengthened.

Table 3: Five Year Framework Key Performance Indicators



Activities associated with this year’s business plan have been aligned to the framework designed for the 5 Year Plan. These details are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Alignment of 2019/20 Deliverables to the 5 Year Framework KPIs:

