

## CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

NPF Submissions  
Forward Planning Section  
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government,  
Custom House  
Dublin 1, D01 W6X0

BY EMAIL ONLY: [npf@housing.gov.ie](mailto:npf@housing.gov.ie)

9<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK ON BEHALF OF THE ARTS COUNCIL (AN COMHAIRLE EALAION)**

This submission has been prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Ltd on behalf of the Arts Council. Please direct any correspondence to:

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#### **1.0 Introduction**

We refer you to the Arts Council's pre-draft stage submission, and the Council is grateful for this further opportunity to input to the making of the NPF.

Having reviewed the Draft NPF, we note:

- the recognition of the importance of creativity, the arts and culture in the vision for Ireland, on page 20 of the Draft NPF;
- the statement that 'a creative and culturally attuned society, whose people, businesses and communities are equipped to further our national economic output and artistic endeavour', is included the Ireland 2040 Vision on page 27;
- the inclusion of the case study on McAuley Place, Naas, an independent living facility for the elderly which has an arts and culture centre at its heart which contributes enormously to the success of the centre as a residential and community facility.

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The Arts Council welcomes the Draft NPF's inclusion of the arts, culture and creativity its vision, and its inclusion of the example of successful delivery of an arts facility.

However the Council considers that the vision is more likely to translate into successful delivery of policy, projects and initiatives at local level by the inclusion in the NPF of an objective (a National Policy Objective - NPO) for arts development. There is no such NPO in the current draft.

VISION  OBJECTIVE  DELIVERY

We make three recommendations for amendment of the Draft NPF in Section 3 below.

## **2.0 Background to Recommendations**

### **2.1 *The Arts and Quality of Life***

The arts are a major contributor to the quality of life of residents in cities, towns and rural areas - for people of all ages, gender, level of ability, income level and cultural background. In the publication *Arts in Irish Life* published by the Arts Council in 2015 (and updated in 2017<sup>1</sup>), it was reported that 64% of the population had attended an arts event within the preceding twelve months.

This compared very favourably to the figures for Northern Ireland (47%) and Great Britain (45%). This high level of participation in the arts is a particular strength (and a unique asset), which should be maintained and built upon.

Additionally, the arts have played and could continue to play a significant role in defining Ireland's international profile, as a place of culture, learning and creativity, thus assisting to attract tourism and investment.

### **2.2 *The Value of the Arts in Childhood Development, for the Elderly and for Cultural Integration***

In 2016 the Arts Council commissioned the ESRI to analyse data from the *Growing up in Ireland* longitudinal research project about children's engagement in arts and cultural activity. The research confirmed that arts and cultural participation leads to a range of positive outcomes for children, in terms of their cognitive development, improved social skills and wellbeing.

This demonstrated causal link builds on earlier international research in this domain, and underpins the Arts Council's emphasis in its 10-year strategy<sup>2</sup> on improving opportunities for children and young people to participate in cultural life and the arts.

McAuley Place in Naas, one of the case studies described in the Draft NPF, is an excellent example of how the arts can contribute to the quality of life of older people.

It is widely recognised, in Ireland and internationally, that the arts can be the meeting point for diverse cultures including immigrants, fostering integration.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Strategic-development/The-Arts-in-Irish-Life/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.ie/arts-council-strategy/>

### 2.3 **National Arts and Cultural Policy**

In a speech to the Aosdána General Assembly in March 2015<sup>3</sup>, President Michael D Higgins said:

***“As a society we must come to recognise that institutional provision for the arts is as important to our infrastructure as roads, hospitals and schools.”***

In December 2016 the then Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD launched the Creative Ireland programme, saying:

***“Creative Ireland is about placing culture at the centre of our lives, for the betterment of our people and for the strengthening of our society...”***

Creative Ireland is a five-year all-of-government initiative, from 2017 to 2022, which aims to improve access to cultural and creative activity in every county across the country (it thus has a spatial dimension).

Creative Ireland is the implementation vehicle for the priorities identified in *Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach*, the draft cultural policy published by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in July 2016. *Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach* states that arts and culture are intrinsic to the Irish State, acknowledges the need to increase access to and participation in the arts, boost our creative industries, and preserve our heritage with a particular focus on language, landscape and the environment.

Importantly, *Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach* states:

***“Local authorities have an important role in providing access to cultural services at local level. They provide a key link in the relationship between national policies and the cultural experience of people in their everyday lives.”***

It is for this reason that the Arts Council recommends the inclusion of a NPO for arts development in the NPF, so that the objective (informed by the NPF vision) will be transferred down through the hierarchy of planning policy documents to county, city and local development plans.

### 3.0 **Recommendations**

Against the above background the Arts Council makes the following recommendations for amendment of the Draft NPF before its finalisation:

#### A. **Amendment of Figure 5.1 ‘Elements Supporting Quality of Life’**

Figure 5.1 ‘Elements Supporting Quality of Life’ (Draft NPF p. 74), is an important diagram expressing what should be valued, supported and developed to ensure that the NPF vision for quality of life is met.

The omission of arts and culture from this diagram is significant. The Arts Council considers, in line with the statement by then Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD when launching ‘Creative Ireland’ (see quote above), that the arts and culture should be explicitly mentioned/identified as an element

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1681841-speech-by-president-michael-d-higgins.html#document/p1>

supporting quality of life. The arts and culture are not a subset of 'leisure and social interactions'; they have more value than that in Ireland and warrant explicit recognition. We recommend that Figure 5.1 be amended to include 'arts and culture' as one of the elements.

**B. Definition of quality of life and well-being, National Policy Objective 4**

NPO 4 seeks to ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, high quality urban places providing communities with a high quality of life and well-being.

We submit that it would be most effective if the 'elements supporting quality of life' (as described in Figure 5.1, with the elements amended to include 'arts and culture') were identified or referenced in NPO 4. This would allow (and encourage) the quality of life of existing or proposed urban areas to be measured against a recognised ideal or vision.

**C. Inclusion of a National Policy Objective to support the provision of facilities for the arts and culture**

It is considered that Chapter 5 of the NPF – and therefore the NPF as a whole – is lacking a National Policy Objective (and supporting discussion) supporting and promoting the provision of access to arts and cultural facilities in order to encourage artistic endeavour and creativity.

The Arts Council is concerned that without such an NPO, the welcome recognition of the arts, culture and creativity in the NPF's vision for Ireland will not translate into policy, projects and initiatives at local level.

Ideally, such an NPO would be included in a new sub-chapter in Chapter 5, for example entitled 'The Arts, Culture and Creativity'. The discussion/content of the sub-chapter could be informed by *Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach* and *Making Great Art Work*. We submit that this would complement the existing sub-chapters 'Quality of Life and Place', 'Shaping Sustainable Communities', 'Healthy Communities', 'Age Friendly Communities', 'Diverse and Inclusive Ireland', 'Education and Life Long Learning', etc. Alternatively, the new NPO could be included under one of these existing sub-chapters.

We hope and trust that this submission will be considered and found useful. The Arts Council would be happy to elaborate on the recommendations and assist in any drafting of policy if necessary.

Yours sincerely,



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