



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Report of the Limerick Culture and Arts Working Group on a proposed new model for arts and culture in Limerick City and County

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Working Group Remit

Cross Party Culture and Arts Working Group

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The remit of the working group is to:

- ▶ Set out the current position of Limerick City and County Council in relation to culture and arts provision
- ▶ Raise awareness of the Limerick City and County Council’s commitment to culture and arts in Limerick and its ability to deliver on key national and local strategies
- ▶ Prepare recommendations for consideration by the Council including a proposed new model for the delivery of culture and arts by Limerick City and County Council.

The working group met 5 times and also conducted visits to 3 UK Local Authority Administrative Areas, i.e. Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester. These particular Councils are recognised for the positive contribution their cultural policies make in supporting their economic and social development.

Some key learning points from those visits are set out briefly in *Appendix A*.

Strategic Framework

Limerick City and County Council has prepared the ground in developing the Limerick Cultural Strategy – A Framework 2016-2030. As *Appendix B* illustrates Limerick has been on a journey where economic and cultural growth are integrated. The momentum achieved through investment in culture in the last number of years has positioned the city and county as a vibrant, exciting and progressive place. The delivery of the inaugural National City of Culture, the highly regarded European Capital of Culture application and the first Limerick cultural strategy, approved by Council in 2016, have positioned the Council to take advantage of the opportunities presented at regional and national level to develop a vibrant arts and culture environment across the city and county.

Limerick Cultural Strategy, A Framework 2016-2030 has the following 8 Ambitions and Objectives:

- 1** To grow Limerick's Cultural Capacity by retaining and attracting creative practitioners to live and work in Limerick
- 2** To grow the physical and human resources, infrastructure and support for staging large scale interventions, performances, festivals and productions
- 3** To support and grow innovative and creative collectives in Limerick
- 4** To foster multiple examples of imagination, innovation and integration in Limerick and to use creative approaches to help citizens and visitors to re-imagine Limerick
- 5** To place culture at the heart of economic growth and regeneration of Limerick
- 6** To engage citizens through involvement in culture
- 7** To become a centre for active research and problem-solving in culture that will have local, national and European significance
- 8** To increase and support the role of the creative industries in Limerick

Limerick City and County Council has demonstrated an ability to connect the inspirational with the practical. **Limerick 2030**, an economic and spatial plan for Limerick sets out a strategic road map where cultural and economic development are at the heart of the socio-economic regeneration of Limerick. This Economic and Spatial Plan provides a road map towards a Limerick that is ambitious and dynamic.

It also highlights the need to accelerate economic and cultural investment to *"Transform Limerick into a major economic and cultural force"*.

Crucially therefore, culture is at the heart of the economic development of Limerick. Equally, development of culture is a critical feature of addressing social development. This is recognised in the Limerick Cultural Strategy where culture for all the people of Limerick is a key strategic aim.

As such, the Working Group is in a position to advise Limerick City and County Council on the practical application of the 2030 Plan and other local and national policies in relation to culture, including **Creative Ireland**, the Government's 5 year culture programme 2017-2022.

The focus of the Working Group has been to ensure that:

- 1 Cultural resources are aligned to a clear and transparent framework
- 2 Strategic objectives in regard to culture are informed by and integrated with local policy such as Limerick 2030; the Local Economic and Community Plan; as well as national policies on tourism and creative industries; and national policy on culture and arts
- 3 Creativity is placed at the centre of Limerick City and County Council policies and the use of Culture to drive social and economic development is a critical platform for the future of Limerick
- 4 The development of important programming areas and flagship ideas across City and County contributes to a revitalised Limerick
- 5 The cultural and community organisations that lead this work are supported and developed
- 6 'Incorporation of ideas recorded through public consultations into the detailed plans for funding and activity will be central to Council policy.

A culture and creativity plan under the Creative Ireland programme has been prepared for Limerick and presented to the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), Community, Leisure and Major Emergency Services, where culture currently lies. This plan is aligned with the Limerick City and County Council Cultural Strategy Framework.

Current Organisation and Funding of Culture in Limerick

Culture in Limerick is delivered through the Directorate of Customer Services, Culture and Arts. The Directorate is led by a Director of Service. The "cultural offering" includes Limerick Arts Office, Libraries, Limerick Museum and the Limerick Gallery of Art. The Directorate works across departments with other directorates on related work programmes, including Economic Development, Social Development and Physical Development. In the region Limerick City and County Council plays a leading role in advancing best practice in culture and arts.

The Cultural sector in Limerick incorporates a wide range of cultural organisations, professional networks and people, both professional and voluntary, who deliver local, regional and national programmes. This contributes significantly to the range of Limerick's cultural life and activities.

Current cultural funding provided through Limerick City and County Council amounts to c. €4.6 million euro per year. This includes programme supports, operations, buildings maintenance and upkeep, vehicles, salaries and wages. A breakdown of approved expenditure is provided below:

The adopted budget allocations are:

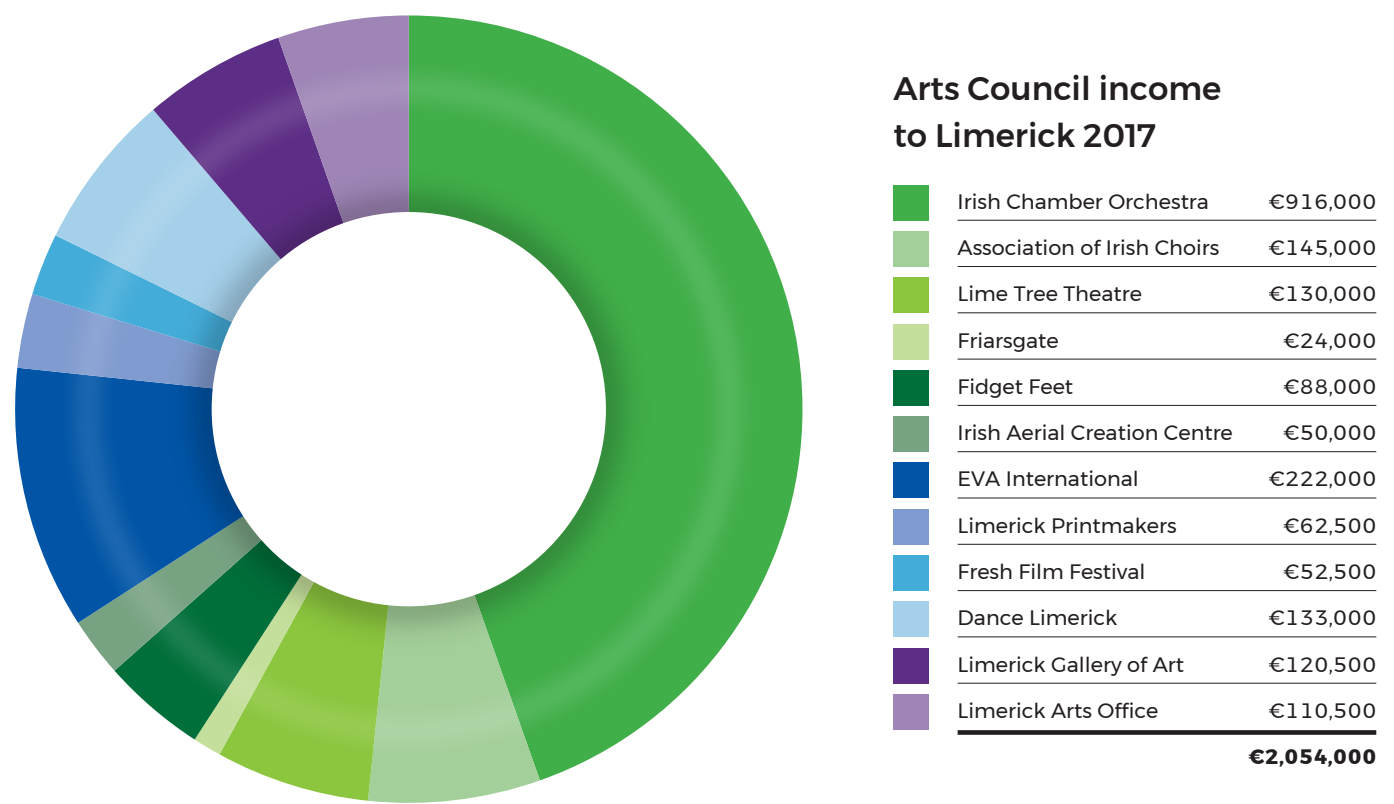
Limerick Gallery of Art*	€383,295
Limerick Arts Office	€399,651
Limerick Museum	€257,840
Libraries	€3,200,000
Belltable	€160,000
Culture Night	€26,000
Civic Festivals	€216,407
Grants Under the Arts Act	€20,000
Total	€4,663,193

*Includes the Arts Council Grant

In addition, the Limerick Arts Office administers grants, approved by Limerick City and County Council, for the following major venues and organisations;

Dance Limerick	€25,000
Hunt Museum	€16,000
EVA International	€10,000
Irish Chamber Orchestra	€16,000
University Concert Hall	€40,000
TOTAL	€107,000

Limerick Arts Office also offers individual grants to creative practitioners through bursary schemes and makes recommendations for the Grants under the Arts Act. In addition, the Arts Council provides funding to Limerick Arts organisations of c.€2m in line with their strategic plan, entitled *Making Great Art Work*. Limerick organisations and festivals benefit from other Arts Council funding categories through open calls. The chart below illustrates.



Findings from Study Visits

The aim of the study visits was to try to identify, from culturally successful Local Authority Administrative areas, some key characteristics which could be transferred into a model for Limerick. The visits also provided an opportunity for the Councillors who were part of the Culture and Arts Working Group to meet with their counterparts and to observe and discuss different delivery models. *Appendix A* sets out a summary of the findings from best practice review undertaken during the study visits and possible implications for and applications to Limerick.

The Group visited Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. All were different in their approach and organisation. These Local Authorities recognise that Culture and Events is central to the delivery of the following economic and social objectives:

- ▶ To attract investment, students and visitors
- ▶ To bring local people together and support participation
- ▶ To form a key element in supporting the narrative of place making and sense of community

Implications for Limerick

Limerick has the opportunity to **learn from and adapt best practice**, and also to **invest further in areas where Limerick has recognised strengths**, including:

- ▶ Community engagement and programming (the European Capital of Culture Jury specifically praised this area of Limerick's work)
- ▶ Development of artists as well as capacity building for arts and cultural organisations, in a national and international context
- ▶ A closer connection with Creative Industries, film, fashion, and food sectors
- ▶ Building on the existing programmes and also revisiting Limerick's Cultural Programme ideas from the European Capital of Culture bid book, the best of which could provide several exciting additions to the cultural calendar over the next 2-3 years
- ▶ Some key District Festivals and Events which have the potential to become vehicles for strategic strengthening and internationalisation of Limerick

Limerick can also build on 4 additional features which have become **internationally recognised** during the National City of Culture and European Capital of Culture bidding processes.

- ▶ The strength of a number of Limerick's cultural organisations and their capacity to develop as national institutions
- ▶ Interest and leadership in grass roots community cultural development on the part of Limerick's cultural sector
- ▶ Deep commitment to the role of culture and arts in regeneration and capacity building
- ▶ Building on the vibrancy of youth culture and the impact of a large student population

Ideas from the cultural sector

At a public World Café engagement event we shared some initial findings with a wide-ranging group of representatives from Limerick's cultural sector. They were asked to identify a number of key priorities and areas for development which they would like to see featured in the new organisational model for Limerick Culture. Their ideas demonstrated a quantifiable consistency in terms of key topics.

The topics are:

- 1 Programme presentation and visibility:** marketing; audience identification and development; going beyond the website.
- 2 Venues, spaces and locations:** possible hubs and centres for artists; residencies.
- 3 Networks and representation:** maximising their ability to represent and advocate for the sector.
- 4 Capacity building and entrepreneurialism:** mentoring between large and small organisations, help with sharing bidding knowledge; use of "fallow years" in biennial programmes to support other organisations with capacity; more business acumen.
- 5 Festival and event development:** helping to grow and develop existing festivals and to identify and conceptualise new ones.
- 6 'Made in Limerick' model** was spoken of particularly well, as was the Jury Visit day in July 2016.
- 7 Community engagement:** including the promotion and support of volunteers – new and existing.
- 8 Genre clusters:** bringing together in closer programming and support networks of similar genres in order to maximise impact – literature, theatre, philosophy; music etc.

Recommendations of the Working Group

Building on the combination of our existing strategic and planning frameworks, the Creative Ireland programme, public consultation and the learning from our visits the Limerick Culture and Arts Working Group make the following recommendations to the Council.

- 1 To introduce **a new structure of oversight and support for Culture and Arts** which involves both elected members and representatives of the Cultural Sector. **A Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)** has been identified as the most practical solution. One third of its membership would be from the sector and would include representatives from LACE and PLAN. The Culture and Arts Working Group is to act as a Interim Committee and proceed to have a call for the allocation of funds. An evaluation committee is to be established to appraise applications for financial assistance.
- 2 To support the policy development role of the SPC with a **Linkage Group** consisting of the many voices of the culture and arts community of Limerick.
- 3 **To establish a Culture Service Department.** The Department will include the following key cultural services: Libraries, Museums, Limerick Arts Office and Limerick Gallery of Art. This would mean that Limerick City and County Council would be one of the first local authorities to lead on the objective of the Creative Ireland programme to establish Culture Departments within Local Government. (see proposed structure *Appendix C*)
- 4 To encourage a greater sense of **openness and transparency** about funding opportunities by streamlining the process of cultural grants.
- 5 The **current Cultural Grants process to be moved to the autumn**, to better inform budget allocations.
- 6 **Encourage and facilitate continued dialogue** about the development of culture and arts in Limerick.
- 7 To invest the allocated **€600k from Limerick City and County Council on a yearly basis** to enable a wider group of organisations to benefit from potential multi annual funding arrangements.
- 8 **Encourage some “early wins”** in terms of festival development by publishing the Festivals and Events Strategy commissioned by Limerick City and County Council and resourcing a capacity building programme
- 9 The proposed Cultural Services Department will work to **create a synergy between City and County for major cultural events** – e.g. Riverfest, Christmas Lights Switch On, St. Patrick’s Day – encouraging joint marketing and programming investment
- 10 Introduce a programme of strategic development to encourage **excellence and visibility in each municipal and metropolitan district so that each district has** a flagship festival.

- 11 Consideration to be given in the longer term to the **aligning of cultural, sport and tourism services** to build a cultural brand for Limerick as an exciting cultural destination.

The Council's approval is sought for the following:

- 1 Proposed establishment of a Strategic Policy Group for Cultural Services and Cultural Services Department (*Appendix C*)
- 2 The recommendations of the Culture and Arts Working Group as outlined on pp.10-11.

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Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon

Chair of the Cross Party Culture and Arts Working Group

Appendix A

Summary of Fact Finding Visits

Prepared by Neil Peterson

Members of the Limerick Culture and Arts Working Group team visited three UK Local Authority Areas – Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow. All were different in their approach and organisation. But all saw Culture and Events as central to delivery of economic and social objectives

- ▶ Its ability to attract investment, students and visitors
- ▶ To bring local people together and support participation
- ▶ To form a key element in supporting a narrative of place making and sense of community (especially Liverpool and Glasgow)

All three cities have delivered a significant international “mega event”

- ▶ Commonwealth Games (Manchester and Glasgow – Liverpool is bidding for 2022/2026)
- ▶ European Capital of Culture (Glasgow 1999; Liverpool 2008)

All three have a mix of strong sporting tradition and a rich cultural sector. Arguably Liverpool and Glasgow have had a broader cultural range given the Glasgow Museums group and National Museums Liverpool/LARC (Liverpool’s Big 8 Cultural Organisations).

But Manchester has recently invested significantly in HOME and is working closely with the private sector in the development of a new cultural district in the former Granada Studios which will be a permanent home to the Manchester International Festival (MIF)

All three have a mix of events designed to attract international audiences

- ▶ MIF, Liverpool Biennial

and at least one major annual event which allows the City to “come together”

- ▶ Liverpool’s River Festivals, Glasgow Merchants Festival, Manchester Day

with other events which celebrate more specific elements of the cities

- ▶ e.g Mela in Glasgow, Africa Oye and Arabic Arts in Liverpool

Events which promote key retail opportunities are also seen as increasingly connected to the City’s event portfolio such as the Christmas Light switch on; Christmas Market (Manchester).

All Cities have had to deal with cuts to Council budgets but still maintain the will and desire to support flagship events. This has led to different (though similar initiatives). But these largely boil down to

- ▶ Bids for national resources (e.g. Arts Council England, Creative Scotland) to enable continued delivery of mega events (often linked to national or city anniversaries – e.g. Summer of Love, Liverpool’s 10th ECoC anniversary; European initiatives – Glasgow)
- ▶ Increasing the resources devoted to securing external (largely commercial) sponsorship.

Liverpool and Manchester are also in the process of appointing **City Region Mayors**, and in both cases the remit is likely to include significant City Region cultural activity. In Glasgow, the City also plays host to a number of national cultural institutions and has a leading cultural role for the entire West of Scotland. So there is **a major regional dimension** to all of the Cities.

Implications for Limerick

Whilst on the face of it all three cities (with core populations of between 450,000 and 600,000 and City Regions of between 1.5 and over 2 million people) are much larger than Limerick and have much more heavily resourced Cultural infrastructures, the issues are similar.

For Liverpool and Glasgow in particular, both cities have used culture and events with great success in turning around a previously challenging city narrative from the 1980s. They have successfully represented themselves as open, attractive and eventful cities, yet without losing the “edge” and grit which give both cities a real sense of character and distinctiveness. This is very much the type of balance Limerick is seeking to, and can achieve.

Organisationally, all three cities have developed some very different approaches – but all have tried (as Limerick is intending to do) to balance

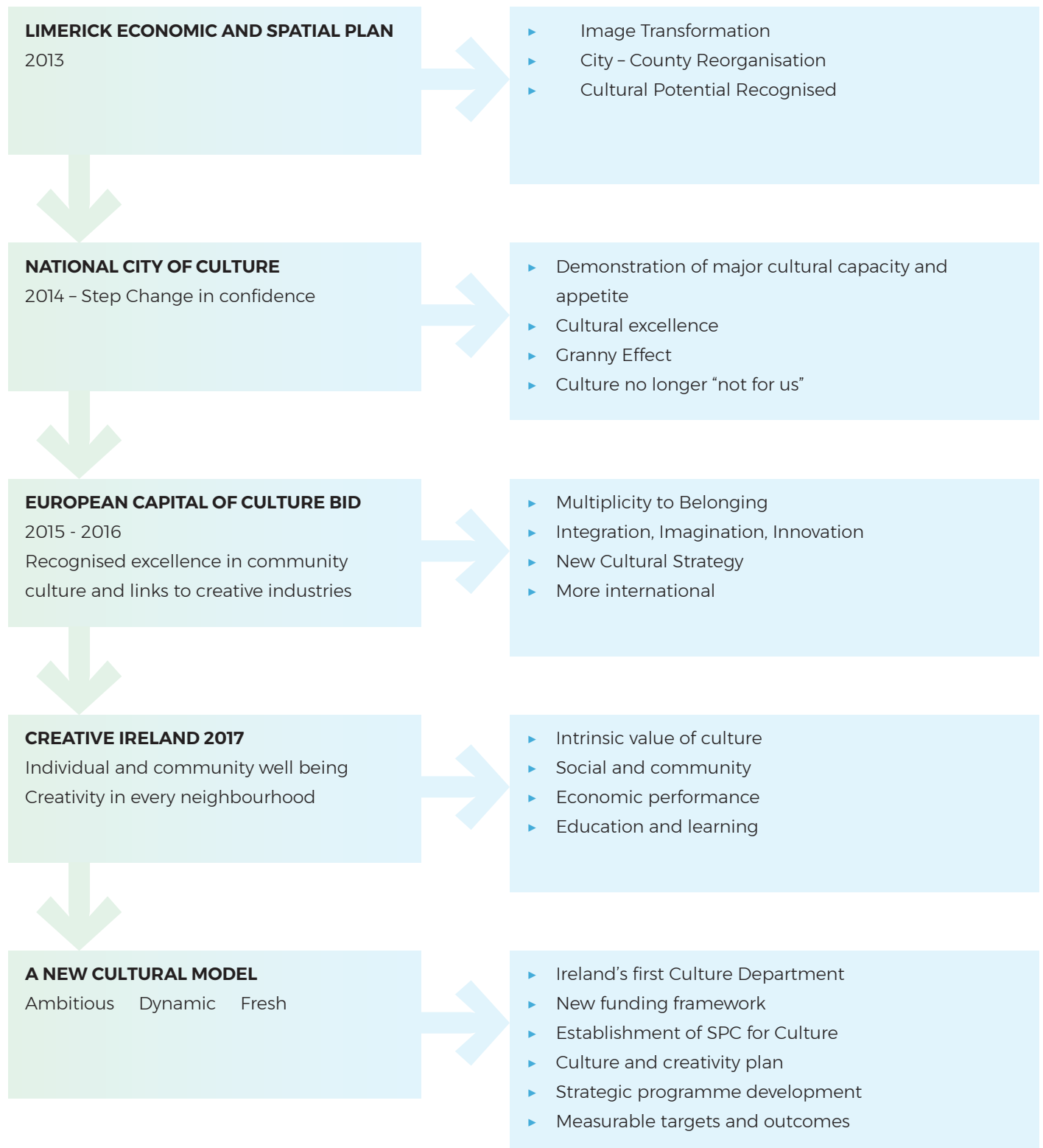
- ▶ A small but high quality group of key festivals which are about innovation and excellence and which drive a more international reputation and audience
- ▶ Events which embrace and connect with local audiences, especially those who are furthest away from participation; also these events tend to celebrate the city’s growing diversity
- ▶ Development and capacity building of the cultural sector
- ▶ More joined up programming – (Liverpool and Glasgow both had specific marketing resource in the Culture organisations)
- ▶ Use of the City’s position as a major and iconic sporting centre to cross connect

- ▶ Connections to significant, but separately funded capital developments
- ▶ The need to identify alternative funding streams from National, European and commercial/philanthropic sources
- ▶ Whichever organisational model is chosen, there were crucial partnerships to be developed with Tourism (City/Region), Sport, Parks, Youth Service.
- ▶ Need to compete (especially Liverpool and Manchester) with a culturally powerful capital city.

Liverpool had the most developed system (Culture Liverpool Investment Programme - CLIP) for funding cultural organisations and also for connecting their programme and outcomes to wider city objectives. They also had the most developed system for political scrutiny (the role of the Cabinet, the Cabinet Member for Culture, the political sign off of investment and the regular review by the Culture, Tourism and Leisure Scrutiny Committee). They had also encouraged the development of LARC (major cultural organisations) and CoOL (medium sized festival type organisations) as networking groups for the cultural sector.

None of the Cities had a major role in the development and funding of individual artists – though Glasgow Life has Arts Development officers.

Appendix B



Appendix C

