



Comhairle Cathrach  
& Contae **Luimnigh**

**Limerick** City  
& County Council

Clár Éire Ildánach  
*Creative Ireland*  
Programme  
2017–2022



# **Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027**

**DRAFT DOCUMENT  
FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

DEADLINE FOR FEEDBACK  
5pm | 20 October 2022

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## Chapter 1: Foreword

Limerick City and County Council are proud to present this new Culture and Creativity Strategy for 2023-2027, which builds on the legacy, growth and reimagining of Limerick as a creative place over the last number of years. At the centre of this new strategy is a vision to ensure that everyone in Limerick is given the opportunity to engage and participate in cultural and creative activities.

Understanding the nature of creativity as a process, as well as its transformational power, is also a central ambition within our new Culture and Creativity Strategy, and it is the many artists, makers, practitioners and creative workers who help us to harness this power for the benefit of all. Across the expanse of City and County, and encompassing everyone from infants to those living in care homes, we believe that culture and creativity should be accessible and open to everyone.

This strategy embodies a number of core principles, which are fundamental to our approach. These principles include equity and accessibility, risk-taking, sustainability, the voice of the child and co-design practices, as well as renewed alignment with the concept of age-friendly places. In the development of this new Culture & Creativity Strategy for 2023-2027, we have identified a number of strategic enablers, and it is through these enablers that we aim to work towards our new shared vision for Culture and Creativity in Limerick.

These enablers include our community of highly skilled artists and creatives, the process of strategic integration with local policies, our civic festivals and events, and a variety of funding strands. Other key enablers include the use of innovative technologies to foster connections, and the support of networks, partnerships and active participation. Focusing on selected projects, our work is also informed by research, evaluation and empirical data, which informs future action.

Our Culture and Creativity Strategy for 2023-2027 is integrated with the Limerick Cultural Strategy (2016-2030) as well as with other interdepartmental and cross-sectoral strategies and policy documents, including the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028), Limerick 2030 Vision: An Economic and Spatial Plan, The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), Limerick Heritage Plan (2017-2030),

Global Limerick Diaspora (2021-2025), Limerick's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019-2024), and the Library Development Plan (2021-2025), among others.

It is also closely aligned on a National level with the priorities for the Creative Ireland Programme (2023-2027), The Arts Council's "Making Great Art Work" Strategy (2015-2025), the Government of Ireland's Culture 2025 Strategy (2020-2025), the Local Authority Museums Network (LAMN) Strategy (2022-2026) and the Healthy Ireland Framework (2013-2025), as well as on an international level with the guiding principles of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

As outlined in the Limerick Cultural Strategy (2016-2030), our understanding of the term "culture" is informed by the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which describes it as a *"set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs"*.

This interpretation of culture and its powerful impact on society has been a driving force behind Limerick's regeneration initiatives over the past number of years, and it continues to guide our planning, policies and practices. Building on the concepts of multiplicity and belonging, which are fundamental themes within the Limerick Cultural Strategy (2016-2030), Limerick continues to provide inspiration and opportunities to connect, discover and celebrate our shared identity.

Our dedicated and experienced Culture and Creativity Team are in place to deliver on this ambitious new strategy, and the future for culture and creativity in Limerick has never looked brighter.

## Chapter 2: Creative Ireland 2023 – 2027

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

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

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

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

1. Creative Youth;
2. Creative Communities;
3. Creative Industries;
4. Creative Health and Wellbeing;
5. Creative Climate Action and Sustainability.

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

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

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

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## Chapter 3: Culture and Creativity in Limerick

Culture and creativity are at the heart of Limerick's revitalisation and growth. Culture and creativity are also central to many of the public policies and strategies which articulate Limerick's forward momentum and ambitions for the future. At the core of Limerick's strategic cultural development is the Limerick Cultural Strategy: A Framework (2016-2030), which sets out an ambitious vision for Limerick's future and the role that culture plays in that future.

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) for Community, Leisure and Culture is committed to the development and promotion of culture in Limerick, as well as harnessing the power of creativity to reimagine our City and County, and to improve the quality of life of its residents. Limerick was the first Local Authority in Ireland to create an SPC for culture; our experience in this area has enriched the current SPC and continues to ensure that the arts, heritage, culture and creativity remain central to Limerick's development and growth.

Arts and cultural activity have played an integral role in the ambitious reimagining of Limerick. Our experiences in deploying creativity to achieve enhanced wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development is considered to be one of Limerick's key strengths. Our designation as Ireland's first National City of Culture in 2014, and our subsequent bid for European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2020 continue to be a source of inspiration. For Limerick, the 2018-2022 Creative Ireland programme was invaluable, as it allowed us to build on the success and momentum of our City of Culture year and the ECOC Bid, and enabled us to continue expanding our arts, cultural and heritage provision across the City and County.

These initiatives helped to establish new models of working, inspired fresh ideas and brought knowledge, expertise and European connections to Limerick. Limerick sees itself in a new light, bringing increased investment into the City and County. The Creative Ireland Programme provided inspiration, framework support, and resources, while also acting as a powerful catalyst for creativity and connections.

Much has been learned through these processes, and with the support, staffing and resourcing from Creative Ireland and Limerick City and County Council, we will continue to learn, grow and innovate. As a result, we are well positioned to participate in EU cultural and creative projects.

Since the beginning of the Creative Ireland Programme in Limerick, over €800,000 has been invested in creative and cultural projects across the City and County. Over 60 different projects have been supported through the Creative Ireland "Made in Limerick" grant scheme, with grants totalling over €175,000 being awarded. More than 270,000 live public engagements have been registered across Limerick's Creative Ireland Programme since 2018. In 2021 alone, 30 creative practitioners were engaged to deliver cultural activities and projects.

"This is Art", a visual art competition for young people which began in 2021, has reached tens of thousands of people, with visual art being displayed outside Limerick's iconic Potato Market. In the same year, our "Musicians on Call" project, which brings live music performances into hospitals and healthcare settings, registered over 15,000 engagements (virtual and in-person) across a number of healthcare facilities. Another highlight of the 2021 Creative Ireland Programme was "100 Women of Limerick", a collaborative project between Ormston House and local historian Sharon Slater which tells the story of Limerick women and their outstanding achievements in the arts, activism, business, education, politics, science and sports.

Among the innovative and interdisciplinary projects which were initiated as part of the 2018-2022 Creative Ireland Programme is "Future Creators", which is a youth-focused collaboration between the Irish Aerial Creation Centre (IACC), the Irish Chamber Orchestra Youth Orchestra (ICOYO), and the "Limerockers Crú" hip hop dance group. Having started in 2020, "Future Creators" presented a short film titled "Outside is Inside Now" as part of the 2021 Culture Night programme, and they have ambitious plans for the next five years. Our partnership projects "Musicians on Call" with Music and Health Ireland and "Yard Duets" with Dance Limerick, which are funded through Creative Ireland's "Creativity in Older Age" programme, are examples of successful cross-departmental and cross sectoral initiatives which harness culture and creativity to improve quality of life and wellbeing within healthcare settings.

In the area of Climate Action, our innovative community-based project “Decarbonising Together” has the potential for long-term impact and legacy. Funded by the Creative Climate Action Fund, “Decarbonising Together” invited five communities from the Limerick Metropolitan area to examine how meaningful climate action could become part of their day-to-day lives. Almost €120,000 has been invested in this initiative, with Garryowen Community, the Limerick Civic Trust, Island Community Partners, Meadowbrook Residents Association and the Munster Indian Cultural Association all delivering grassroots, community-led climate action projects with a strong collaborative approach.

The impact of Creative Ireland’s flagship initiative Cruinniú na nÓg in Limerick is also strongly felt and welcome. In 2022 alone, over 15 separate events took place across Limerick. These events were attended by 1,200 audience members, with a further 1,890 virtual engagements registered. Limerick Arts Office deliver the annual Cruinniú na nÓg in partnership with Fresh Film, who play a central role.

The film-focused programme has introduced children and young people to the art of filmmaking, and complements other film-based initiatives in Limerick, while helping to nurture the creativity of young people from an early age. Demonstrating a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, Limerick’s Cruinniú na nÓg programme is delivered in partnership with a wide range of other organisations and groups; including the Library Service, the Hunt Museum, Music Generation, the Irish Chamber Orchestra Youth Orchestra, Limerick Youth Dance, Limerick City Gallery of Art and the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Local Creative Youth Partnership, among others.

Limerick has a broad range of urban and rural communities with a young, diverse and growing population. Based on preliminary results from Census 2022, Limerick City and County’s current population is over 205,000, representing an increase of over 10,000 persons (5.4%) since 2016. Based on latest available data (Census 2016), 40% of Limerick’s population is under 30 years and 25% under 18 years. Just under 15% of Limerick City and County’s population are from non-Irish ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

In the inner city, some 47% of the population were not born in Ireland and Limerick is home to just under 100 nationalities, with a growing population of dual Irish and non-Irish nationals. The Polish/Polish Irish community alone is approximately 6,000 people (2016), and the recent re-settlement of refugee populations has brought new communities to Limerick. This diverse and multicultural community of Limerick is part of the fabric of our identity, and we believe that social cohesion, integration and partnership approaches can be enormously powerful when creativity and culture is placed at its centre.

The amalgamation of Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council in 2014 continues to present opportunities for collaboration, cross-pollination of ideas, and the sharing of resources across an area which includes one of Ireland’s major cities and a population living across a large rural area. We acknowledge that more work needs to be done to strengthen connections across Limerick, and we firmly believe that culture and creativity can provide pathways towards a more integrated society.

A rich tapestry of culture, heritage and the arts is a major feature of Limerick’s attractiveness, for locals and visitors alike. Limerick boasts stunning areas of natural beauty and noteworthy heritage sites, as well as first class contemporary cultural facilities including the Lime Tree Theatre | Belltable, Limerick City Gallery of Art, the Hunt Museum, Limerick Museum, Limerick Printmakers, Ormston House Cultural Resource Centre, Dance Limerick, the Irish Aerial Creation Centre, Friars’ Gate Theatre (Kilmallock) and the Honey Fitz Theatre (Lough Gur). Locations of particular historic significance include King John’s Castle, St Mary’s Cathedral, Kilmallock Historic Town, Adare, Lough Gur Heritage Centre, Desmond Castle Demesne and the medieval village of Askeaton, to select just a few.

In Limerick, culture is visible in almost every corner of the City and County, and its network of libraries and community centres provide valuable and accessible creative spaces for people living in the locality. Limerick City and County Council’s recent Audit of Community, Cultural and Arts Facilities (2021) found that over 200 facilities are being used for a wide range of cultural activities, including music and dance lessons, arts and crafts, concerts, exhibitions and theatrical productions.

Limerick has a vibrant cultural scene, with thriving cultural organisations and groups including Limerick Youth Dance Company, Fresh Film, Bottom Dog Theatre Company, Fidget Feet, Limerick Youth Theatre and the County Limerick Youth Theatre calling Limerick their home. Among Limerick's most well-known cultural figures are the Grammy winning actor Richard Harris, broadcaster Terry Wogan, Pulitzer prize-winning author Frank McCourt, Grammy nominated rock band The Cranberries and Riverdance composer Bill Whelan, as well as other successful independent artists including The Rubberbandits, Hermitage Green, Rusangano Family and Denise Chaila.

The Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO) is based in the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, and the ICO's Sing Out With Strings programme continues to bring the joy of music to children in some of Limerick's most deprived areas. Limerick City and County is also home to numerous music schools, youth and community orchestras, brass bands, concert bands and choirs, each of which is passionate about sharing the transformational power of music within its community. Following its successful establishment in Limerick City, the Music Generation programme is also being expanded into Limerick County.

Festivals and large-scale events continue to be a source of great pride for Limerick, and there are approximately 80 different festivals across City and County. Limerick hosts Ireland's only International Band Championships, which sees marching bands from all over the world performing along Limerick's main street in front of thousands of spectators.

This event is part of Limerick's St. Patrick's Festival, which is recognised as Ireland's largest regional St. Patrick's Day Festival and brings tens of thousands of people together to celebrate and connect. Another annual highlight in Limerick is Culture Night, which sees an average of 20,000 people participating and engaging annually.

Along with the rest of the world, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was strongly felt in Limerick, with life as we knew it grinding to a halt. The arts and cultural sector was impacted by extreme levels of uncertainty, as events were cancelled and projects postponed indefinitely. In response to this crisis, the Community, Leisure and Culture Strategic Policy Sub-Committee commissioned a report on the Impact of Covid-19 on the arts and culture sector in Limerick, which identified four key priority areas. These included the development of multi-purpose creative spaces, capacity and career development, support for new creative enterprises and collaboration.

Many of these priorities are reflected in the new Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027. During this time, funding provided by the Department for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media through its "Local Live Performance Support Scheme" enabled Limerick City and County Council to support the delivery of new cultural projects and performances, particularly in outdoor settings.



*Musicians on Call - Music & Health Ireland, St. Camillus Hospital, from left Colin Kenny, Gráinne Hope, David Hope, Eoin O Meachair. Photo credit Keith Wiseman*

Limerick was awarded a UNESCO Learning City Award in 2017, and is home to world-class creative education facilities, including the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick (UL), the Limerick School of Art and Design at the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), Mary Immaculate College's arts programmes and the SAUL School of Architecture at UL. As a city with over 3,500 young people studying a diverse range of creative disciplines at third-level within a concentrated area, Limerick is uniquely positioned as a creative educational hothouse, and we acknowledge the value and potential that this embodies for Limerick and its future growth. Students and graduates from across disciplines form a vital part of Limerick's cultural and creative eco-system, in both the contributions they make and the benefits they enjoy.

In the areas of film, media and the wider creative industries, Limerick's Troy Studios is the largest film studio in Ireland, and the national broadcast station RTÉ lyric fm is also based in Limerick. As part of the Limerick 2030 Vision, over €1 billion is being invested in enterprise and investment infrastructure and our national role in the area of creative enterprise will continue to grow in the coming years. Limerick's reputation and status within the traditional and contemporary craft and design sector also continues to develop with the "MADE-Limerick" Arts and Craft Co-operative and Limerick's Fab Lab providing accessible shared workspace, facilities and retail opportunities for a broad range of creative practitioners, artists and makers of all kinds.

We have witnessed first-hand the power that culture and creativity have in building resilient communities, enhancing quality of life, supporting wellbeing, improving social cohesion, integrating diverse groups and nurturing economic development. We will continue to build on our previous successes, working towards our shared vision for Limerick City and County.



Artists Cleary and Connolly in the Eco Showboat Mayfly solar boat, in front of Deirdre Power and Chelsea Canavan's Mayfly banner at the Curraghbour Boat Club during the project launch in May 2022. Photo credit Dermot Lynch

## Chapter 4: The Creative Ireland Vision for Limerick

Our vision for Limerick in 2027, is a City and County which is creative, integrated, confident and excited about the future. We envision a multicultural Limerick, where culture and creativity is part of everyday life. All citizens will be proud of Limerick's arts, culture and heritage, and we want everyone to feel welcome, supported and encouraged to participate. We are all curators of our cultural engagement, and we feel empowered to play this role.

Nationally and internationally, Limerick is recognised as a powerful creative incubator, an artistic inspiration and a prominent stage for creatives and communities. For artists and creative workers of all types, Limerick is a place where they can earn a living from their creative practices and they are appropriately paid for the work they do.

Creative practitioners, artists and cultural leaders are supported, enjoying all that Limerick has to offer, while sustaining their creative careers. With support, investment and collaboration, the wider creative industries are booming, making a valuable contribution to the local economy and bringing talented creative and cultural practitioners to live, work and thrive in Limerick. We are not afraid to take calculated risks in the search for innovative new ideas.

Quality of life, a sense of fulfilment and wellbeing continues to improve across Limerick, as engagement with arts and cultural activity becomes increasingly part of everyday life. In an age-friendly city, perceived barriers to engagement, participating and interaction with culture and creativity continue to be reduced across all demographic groups, leading to a greater sense of shared identity and integration across different communities.

Limerick has a reputation as a culturally vibrant and creatively innovative place. Ongoing investment has enabled the infrastructure for the arts, culture and heritage to continue improving, expanding and thriving. Insights from targeted research projects will help to inform our ongoing investment in the sector, and our decision-making is based on robust evaluation and solid empirical data.

Limerick City and County, as well as its multi-cultural community are widely celebrated, valued and provided with the support they need to flourish. Limerick's diverse communities share their own unique cultures, connecting with other groups through creative expression and celebration. Intergenerational and social connections are made every day, through cultural activities and exchange across the City and County. Culture and creativity are intrinsic to our education system, from primary school right through to third-level and adult education. Creative minds, both young and old, are stimulated, invigorated and celebrated.

While remembering the legacy of our year as National City of Culture, and our bid for European Capital of Culture, we are firmly focused on the future and we are taking calculated, strategic steps to continue building on the impact of these initiatives. Our distinct heritage, arts and cultural offering is visible, valued and accessible to all. Limerick is recognised as culturally vibrant, and this plays a central role in how Limerick is represented to the world. Our international ambitions, our geographic location and our cultural expertise means we are well-positioned to participate in and lead large-scale EU cultural projects, and we are ready to do so.

Our Culture and Creativity Team is recognised, confident and active, and they continue to work collaboratively and inter-departmentally. They have the combined expertise and influence to positively enhance public policies and the provision of civic services, as well as having the administrative support and leadership needed to do so. Culture and creativity acts as the catalyst that drives innovative and positive change across a wide range of sectors including healthcare, education, youth engagement, the justice system and in other areas of our society.

**This Is Our Vision.**

**This Is Our Future.**

**This Is Limerick.**

## Chapter 5: How We Work – Our Principles and Values of Creative Communities

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

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

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

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

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

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## Chapter 6: Strategic Priorities for Limerick

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: CONNECTIONS

Connecting people and communities to each other, and to the world.

*Culture and creativity have the ability to connect people and places, and act as a powerful catalyst for integration, collaboration and partnership. Limerick City and County is made up of diverse communities, some of whom may experience isolation. Our Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027 has the potential to improve, strengthen and enhance the integration of different communities, as well as enabling Limerick to connect more confidently with the wider world. This priority comprises three main aims;*

#### **Aim 1: To connect different communities across Limerick City and County by nurturing creativity**

Limerick is growing and is now home to just under 100 nationalities. With an ambition to achieve better integration between Limerick's different communities, evidence from consultation meetings indicated that more work is needed to nurture and strengthen the connections between communities in the City and those living in Limerick County. The 2014 amalgamation of our two local authorities into Limerick City and County Council provides opportunities to improve these connections, and to improve the quality of life for people living in all areas of Limerick through a united approach.

In reflection of our changing demographic and increased population diversity, we are committed to supporting projects, partnerships and organisations which have the potential to connect and integrate communities across the City and County. Established initiatives such as Cruinniú na nÓg and the Creative Ireland "Made in Limerick" grant scheme will continue to support communities, acting as a creative catalyst for collaborative projects, new partnerships and synergistic relationship-building.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, technology provided new ways for people to connect, and we will continue to support innovative ideas which explore how technology can be used to connect people, communities and places. Festivals and events also connect people in powerful ways, and Limerick is home to a broad range of festivals which are supported by Limerick City and County Council.

The concept of story-telling, which can be delivered through all artforms, has been identified as being a valuable creative device for authentic connection. Major cultural events such as Cruinniú na nÓg, Culture Night and Civic Festivals will ensure that the voices and stories of Limerick's diverse communities are represented and heard, and we will continue to facilitate the growth and development of these key events.

**Aim 2: To engage, inspire and connect people across all generations.**

Creative Youth and Creativity in Older Age initiatives are key priorities for Limerick. Intergenerational projects have the potential to create more resilient communities, enhance social cohesion and improve wellbeing for citizens. The Voice of the Child is at the heart of our engagement with children and young people, and this is evidenced by our approach to the Creative Schools programme, our commitment to the Local Creative Youth Partnership (Limerick & Clare) and our delivery of Cruinniú na nÓg.

Collaborative approaches between Limerick’s libraries, community centres, cultural venues and third-level institutions and partnerships with organisations such as Age Friendly Ireland will help to sustain intergenerational creative connections. Initiatives such as “Musicians on Call” and “Yard Duets” continue to connect people of all ages. We will continue to support creative projects across formal and informal education settings.

As a UNESCO Learning City, we place significant value on education, learning and growth. We play our role within the Irish Network of Learning Cities, ensuring that culture and creativity remain central to the learning experiences of people of all ages.

**Aim 3: To connect Limerick to the World, and the World to Limerick**

Nestled on the “Atlantic Edge”, Limerick’s positioning brings excellent connectivity, with the US to the West, and Europe to the East. This duality has contributed significantly to Limerick’s identity. Limerick is uniquely placed to reaffirm its global significance, showcasing its cultural heritage, alongside its reputation as a forward-thinking creative community. Tourism plays an important role in the local economy of Limerick, and our cultural heritage is a major attraction for visitors and the people of Limerick. Working with key partners, Limerick City and County Council’s aim is to help promote Limerick’s distinct offering of arts, culture and heritage, as well its natural beauty, to a global audience.

In line with the Global Limerick Diaspora Plan (2021-2025), we also seek to reconnect with Limerick’s international citizens and diaspora, to share their stories and celebrate their connection to Limerick. We will act to enable Limerick’s artists to reach a global audience with their work, through showcase events and a partnership approach with organisations and initiatives such as Culture Ireland and the Global Irish Festival Series. Other festivals and events will also play a key role in the realisation of our ambitions in this area.



Arathi Surendran celebrates the Onam Festival with the Thiruvathira dance performers and the Munster Indian Cultural Association held recently at Limerick Racecourse. Artists Deirdre Power & Chelsea Canavan were invited to the harvest festival of Kerala and shared their creative climate project 'Grounds for Change' with the Munster Indian Cultural Association. Photo Deirdre Power

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: PLACE-MAKING

Enhancing the creative landscape and cultural infrastructure of Limerick, for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

*Culture and creativity play a vital role in changing the narrative around our City and County, and this has been demonstrated by Limerick's designation as National City of Culture in 2014 and its more recent bid for European Capital of Culture in 2020. These initiatives have ignited the creative spirit of its citizens and it is our ambition to contribute towards making Limerick a welcoming and inspirational place to live, work and visit. The River Shannon also plays an important role in Limerick's collective identity, both as a major source of artistic inspiration and creative energy, as well as providing a firm sense of place. This priority comprises two main aims;*

### **Aim 4: To facilitate and support the development of creative spaces.**

Creative spaces and infrastructure for artists, arts practitioners, creative workers and the general public are a vital component of a creative community. Working in partnership nationally and locally, we will contribute to the facilitation and support of artist residencies, networks, capacity building initiatives and professional development opportunities. We will also help to create conceptual and physical space for people to be inspired, to take risks, experiment and flourish. This approach also provides meaningful opportunities for people to connect with others.

Building on the 2021 Audit of Community, Cultural and Arts Facilities in Limerick City and County, we aim to increase awareness of the existing creative spaces, including Limerick's libraries, galleries, community centres and cultural venues. We will continue to explore the potential for creative hubs and clusters, working with a range of partners. We will act on the recommendation received from the Research on the Impact of Covid-19 on the Arts and Culture Sector in Limerick, which related directly to the development of more creative spaces.

### **Aim 5: To celebrate and safeguard Limerick's heritage and cultural identity by stimulating, nurturing and empowering our artists and creative workers, encouraging them to use Limerick as their inspiration.**

Limerick's historical and cultural significance is a source of great pride and inspiration for our artists, creatives, and historians, and it is an integral part of our cultural identity. In close alignment with the Limerick Cultural Strategy (2016-2030) and the Limerick Heritage Plan (2017-2030), we are committed to celebrating, safeguarding and sharing our archaeological, cultural and built heritage, by working in partnership with Limerick's museums, heritage sites, libraries and cultural venues, and building the capacity of our existing cultural infrastructure.

Limerick's numerous artists and creatives are all crucial individual elements of its collective cultural identity, and safeguarding the integrity of the artist, as well as the creative process itself, is of utmost importance. In addition to creative spaces, we also aim to create more opportunities for Limerick-based artists across the City and County, and encourage them to use Limerick both as inspiration and stage.

We will continue to nurture, support and encourage Limerick-born and Limerick-based artists on a local, national and international level through the provision of funding, performance and exhibition opportunities, networks, advocacy and capacity building. We aim to ensure that Limerick is a place where artists feel inspired, valued and empowered to take creative risks, as well as being a place where they can comfortably earn a living through their chosen creative and artistic practices.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: CHANGE-MAKING

Harnessing culture and creativity to facilitate positive change within healthcare settings, social services and in the area of climate action and biodiversity.

*Focusing on a number of different environments and settings, we will support the deployment of culture and creativity as a way of enhancing life-changing and life-affirming positive interventions. Our goal is to broaden access to the arts, culture, heritage and creativity across a variety of appropriate settings to improve wellbeing and enhance quality of life. Taking an interdepartmental approach, we will work towards our shared vision of a healthy, happy and fulfilling life for the people of Limerick where Culture and Creativity are part of everyday life. This priority comprises two main aims;*

**Aim 6: To promote, facilitate and support creative change-making across a diverse range of settings.**

Working closely with key partners, experts and practitioners we will continue to champion the use of creativity within healthcare settings and social services across Limerick City and County, with the aim of helping to improve wellbeing and quality of life. Our current projects in this area, such as “Musicians on Call” and “Yard Duets”, have the potential to complement the work of Limerick City and County Council in delivering the Healthy Ireland Programme, in partnership with Healthy Limerick and Age Friendly Limerick and in line with the Healthy Ireland Framework (2013–2025).

Culture and creativity also has an important, but underutilised role to play in workplace settings, within the justice system and across other related sectors. Working strategically and collaboratively with key partners, we will explore the potential benefits of creative change-making and intervention initiatives in other appropriate settings. The overall goal in this area is to enhance and supplement current provision, as well as improving the quality of life for people living in Limerick.

**Aim 7: To contribute to Climate Action and Biodiversity initiatives, advocacy and awareness raising.**

Combating climate change is an issue of major importance. In line with the Limerick Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019), and working with inter-departmental partners, we will continue to explore opportunities to raise awareness of the increasing risks associated with climate change in Limerick. In unique ways, culture and creativity can be harnessed to draw people’s attention to the issue of climate change and through creative initiatives, people can be encouraged to find and implement potential solutions at a grassroots level.

A new Climate Action Plan is already being developed for Limerick, and the Culture and Creativity Team will play its role in supporting creative projects which help to raise awareness and complement climate action initiatives. Building on the success of the Creative Climate Action funded “Decarbonising Together” project, we will continue to explore creative ways to reduce our CO2 emissions in Limerick City, and to build a healthier, happier and cleaner city for all. We will also support artists and creative workers to explore the topic of climate action, to use creativity to help raise awareness of the issues, and to find local solutions at a grassroots level.



*Musicians on Call – Music & Health Ireland, St. Camillus Hospital, musician Colin Kenny. Photo credit Keith Wiseman*

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: INNOVATION & CREATIVE CAREERS

Supporting innovation and nurturing creative careers within the wider Creative Industries, Technology & Film.

*Limerick is a forward-thinking, innovative and ambitious place with a growing population of young, creative minds, particularly in urban areas. The wider creative industries across the City and County make an extremely valuable contribution to Limerick's local economy, and the film industry is of particular significance. By nurturing creative entrepreneurship, design-thinking and innovation, we aim to create synergy across the broader creative industries, leading to the creation of new jobs and delivering economic, educational, social and cultural benefits. New technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality also have the potential to enhance Limerick's culture and tourism, improve connectivity, enhance quality of life and contribute to the ongoing growth of creative communities. This priority comprises two main aims;*

### **Aim 8: To support the growth, diversification and diffusion of Limerick's Film, Screen and Digital Technology sectors.**

Limerick is pioneering in the area of filmmaking, production and presentation, with Troy Film Studios being the largest film studio complex in Ireland, and with organisations such as Fresh Film providing valuable platforms for young, independent filmmakers to showcase their work, and engage with others. Animation, coding and the growth of the computer games industry are also exciting developments, and there are an increasing number of educational opportunities, career pathways and incubation hubs being created. Limerick's Film Festivals all contribute to the rich ecosystem of the film and screen sector in Limerick, and this is evidence of the sector's potential for growth.

In partnership with the Fresh Film, we will continue to support the delivery of educational activities in film for children and young people, as well as through the annual Cruinniú na nÓg programme and Culture Night events. Working closely with Film in Limerick and resource organisations such as Innovate Limerick, we will play our role in promoting, supporting and facilitating the growth and diversification of Limerick's film and screen sector, as well as encouraging new and innovative ideas to flourish.

Innovative technologies have been identified as a key enabler through which some of the aims outlined in this Culture and Creativity Strategy could be achieved. Creative tools such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), drones and the "Internet of Things" (IoT), all have the potential to provide additional benefits across tourism, community engagement, education and intergenerational initiatives.

Working in partnership and inter-departmentally, it is our ambition to harness new and existing technology to enhance Limerick's cultural and tourism offering, as well as exploring other opportunities to incorporate digital technology into our work. With our vision of making culture and creativity accessible to all, we will examine the "digital divide" and review potential opportunities to address this issue where possible.

**Aim 9: To facilitate the incubation of innovative ideas, the sharing of knowledge and the career progression of creative entrepreneurs.**

With a focus on the broader economic development of Limerick City and County, we will embrace new ideas, and support professional development and training opportunities for creative entrepreneurs across the diverse creative industries. From small micro-enterprises to tech startups with global potential, Limerick has the capacity to be a powerful incubation space for innovation and sustainable growth. In line with the Hubs Network Strategy (2020-2023) and LEDP Strategy (2021-2026), as well as the Limerick Development Plan (2022-2028), we will continue to explore the concept of incubation spaces and creative hubs, which also aligns with Aim 4 above.

The sharing of knowledge and innovative ideas is also an important area of sustainable growth, and we are keen to explore the teaching and application of STEAM subjects for children and young people. Spaces such as the Fab Lab provide access to equipment, space and expertise for a variety of different makers at any stage in their career, and this facility is a valuable asset to Limerick and its population of creatives. STEAM subjects are given new life and meaning in this practical environment, and the additional interactive opportunities available through the collaborative delivery of Limerick Festival of Science also enhance learning in this area. Development in this area will be approached through research, collaborative initiatives and partnership approaches.

Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) is one of the biggest educational centres for art and design in Ireland, and the craft and design sector is another area of particular developmental interest for Limerick. The industry has seen significant growth in recent years, and craft making has also been shown to offer a broad range of social, community, mental health and wellbeing benefits, as well as contributing to the local economy in a sustainable way. Similarly, the growth of social enterprise businesses is another area of particular interest, and further collaborative partnerships with entities such as Limerick's Local Enterprise Office will help in the design and delivery of appropriate cross-sectoral projects and initiatives which support innovation and which help to nurture creative careers.



*Cruinniú na nÓg - Photo credit Alan Place*

## Chapter 7: Implementation by the Limerick City and County Council Culture and Creativity Team

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

The Culture and Creativity Teams are the cornerstone of Creative Communities across all 31 local authorities in Ireland. These teams bring together a significant range and level of expertise and in many cases, include professionals from architecture, archives, the arts, climate action, community, enterprise and environmental development, heritage, information and communication technologies, Irish language, libraries, spatial planning, tourism and more.

This depth of technical expertise affords each local authority a level of insight, resources and delivery experience, which few other public or private sector organisations can match.

The role of this team is to:

- Provide a collective forum for the ambition of culture and creativity within the local authority;
- Focus on diversity and inclusivity and enable harder to reach communities to participate in cultural and creative activities;
- Build on existing in-house expertise and strategies across areas of wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development to leverage culture and creativity to deliver on targeted local authority agendas;
- Enable a shift in how the cultural and creative sector is valued within and across local authorities and ensure that culture and creativity is embedded across local authority plans, policies and project teams;
- Drive cross-collaborative actions that support change and positive outcomes locally, and potentially between local authorities at regional level; and
- Be innovative and take risks - try new projects and new ways of working.

The delivery of the Strategy is led by the Director of Services for Community, Tourism and Culture and the members of the Culture and Creativity Team. These structures and processes are a critical success factor that will enable Creative Communities to deliver on strategic priorities for Limerick City and County.

- Creative Ireland Coordinator, Arts Officer
- SEO Tourism and Arts Officer
- City & County Librarian Libraries, Gallery & Museum
- Director/Curator, Limerick City Gallery of Art
- Curator, Limerick Museum
- Environment Awareness Officer
- AO- Age Friendly
- Health and Wellbeing
- Heritage Officer
- Executive Archaeologist
- Senior Architect, Urban Innovation
- AO Urban Innovation
- Head of Enterprise
- Regional Film Coordinator
- Executive Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning
- AO LEO
- Head of Information Systems
- AO Trade and Investment
- Trade and Investment
- City and County Archivist

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS CHAPTER IS PROVIDED BY CREATIVE IRELAND  
AND CANNOT BE AMENDED.**