

DUBLIN CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011 - 2017

BACKGROUND PAPER

ARTS & CULTURE

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1. Introduction

Culture is one of the main elements in the creation of a city's identity. Through its culture a city is defined and its unique place in the world illustrated. Culture is a key determinant in attracting people to live, work and visit and an essential ingredient in a city's identity and local placemaking. For many generations, Irish artists, especially novelists, playwrights, poets, musicians and visual artists have been instrumental in establishing our cultural identity in the world.

The World Trade Organisation reports that cultural tourism accounts for 35-40% of tourism worldwide. It lists the benefits of working with the arts including the creation of attractions, shaping destination image, marketing places, animating static attractions and enhancing tourist experiences. The Department of Arts Sport and Tourism asserts, in its own Arts and Culture Plan that "*the dynamism of our cultural reputation is a key factor in building Ireland's profile as a good centre of creativity and innovation and a preferred destination for tourism and business*". Research in New York, Berlin and London has shown that the creative sector has been one of the more dependable growth areas for the city's economy.

At national level the knowledge-based economy has become central to economic planning and thinking in recent years. Dublin, as the capital city, must compete with other international cities for investment, jobs, tourism etc. in a global market. There is a growing realisation that a vibrant arts and culture sector increases the attractiveness of a city as a place to live, work or visit, essentially underlining and improving life quality. Arts and culture provision enhances the international image of a city and is now viewed as an economic driver as well as a vehicle for social inclusion, integration while underpinning quality of life.

Dublin City Council's policies and objectives in the next development plan must be robust and ambitious enough to support, facilitate and encourage ambitious investment in quality cultural infrastructure in the city.

As illustrated above, quality of life issues are now increasingly to the fore in public policy and plan-making. It is recognised that in order to attract talented workers to cities, high quality social and cultural facilities, attractions and supports to sustain a vibrant cultural scene must be in place. Workers in the global economy are becoming increasingly mobile and can choose the locations in which they work. They are more inclined to be attracted to those cities with quality infrastructure, a distinctive cultural identity, sense of place and a good quality of life.

Developing a rich and diverse cultural life in the city will be a multi-faceted process involving a number of internal departments, as well external agencies and organisations, in addition to the private sector. The city is home to nine of the ten national cultural institutions. While planning can deliver on the physical aspects of culture, or more precisely, create a physical environment conducive to the development of a city with a rich layer of arts and culture and cultural diversity, this should take place in a collaborative manner with the national cultural institutions,

2. Progress to Date

The existing development plan is very positive in a number of aspects in that it places a high value on arts and recognises the contribution they make to the quality of life of the city. Support is expressed in the plan for the provision and retention of infrastructure for arts and culture and the idea of cultural clusters is introduced.

Existing policies in the plan have achieved successful outcomes such as:

- The emergence of a new cultural cluster up around Parnell Square adding to the existing cluster in Temple Bar
- Additional space has been provided at the Hugh Lane, effectively doubling its space, with this gallery providing a showcase for national and international modern art in the emerging cultural cluster of Parnell Square and endorsing the role of Dublin as a capital city,
- Significant amounts of cultural spaces has been provided at Smithfield,
- The City Walls have been identified as a heritage cluster,
- The Legible Dublin Study has identified a network of strategic routes and spaces
- Sites have been identified for carnivals and circuses

The need to support accommodation needs of the emerging artist is also acknowledged in existing plan policy. To this end the Council has provided high quality facilities in the city with the LAB on Foley street providing exhibition space for emerging artists, rehearsal space for three theatre companies and incubator spaces. Alongside The LAB the national dance centre has been provided on a public-private partnership basis and has been open since 2006. The Red Stables in Saint Anne's Park provides 10 subsidized studio spaces for artists, allocated to artists on an annual basis while a residential studio award for an artist is offered every year to an Irish artist while a second work/live studio is allocated to an international artist.

However it is broadly considered that while many positive policies for the provision of cultural spaces and accommodation are contained in the existing plan, the mechanisms for delivering on could be strengthened by ensuring that the policies are accompanied by strong objectives.

Dublin City's library infrastructure, in terms of buildings and facilities, is considered to be poor and outdated for contemporary needs and increasing demands. The objectives in the current plan commit to providing new libraries at Artane, Beaumont and Ayrfield while a further commitment was made to identify sites for new libraries at Crumlin/Drimnagh, Finglas, Clontarf/Fairview and in the developing North Fringe Area. While the Planning process can and has facilitated in the delivery of library space it, is more usually the case that the DoEHLG in conjunction with the Library Service of the Council and the Areas office provide libraries on identified sites..

3. Future Trends and Developments

Culture and creativity are growing as important sources of new employment in the city. In 2005 Creative Industries made up 3.4% of world trade. As stated by Charles Landry "*Cultural resources are the raw materials of a the city and its value base... Creativity is the method of exploiting these resources and helping them grow. .. The task of urban planners is to recognise, manage and exploit these resources responsibly.*" Creating the right environment and facilitating the development of sustainable cultural infrastructure provides a platform for the growth of the creative economy in the city. As stated in the government's 2008 Arts and Culture Plan, arts and culture "*.. are vibrant and vital sectors of our economy. They are the wellspring of many of our creative and innovative enterprises. These sectors are primary economic contributors, real businesses, enduring employers, differentiators of us as a cultural and tourist destination – and areas that truly distinguish us as a people in the world*".

Not only is the provision of a vibrant and cultural life important in the pursuit of talent and promotion of social inclusion but also for tourism growth, improving the quality of life experienced by the indigenous population and overall in strengthening and supporting the creative economy. Creating attractive mixed-income, mixed-use neighbourhoods with the necessary social and cultural infrastructure and a high quality living environment is key to creating places where people, both indigenous population and the 'new Irish' will choose to live and remain.

In tandem with the growing international and national interest in the arts and its benefits to the economic and social life of the City, Dublin City Council has established its own Arts Section. The role of the Arts Office is to primarily engage with and develop, Arts services and infrastructure at the area based level. This complements the role of the National Arts Organisation, in particular the Arts Council who primary objective is to provide art service and infrastructure at national and city level.

The City Council, in drawing up the 6 themes driving the city forward, has placed arts and culture on an equal footing with the economy, sustainability, social cohesion, urban form and movement. The cultural vision set out by the council is *to make provision for cultural facilities throughout the city and promote awareness of our cultural heritage. Promote a safe and active street use through design of buildings and the public realm.*

Furthermore, the City Council is in the process of devising a new Arts and Cultural strategy to replace the existing 2004 – 2009 strategy. This is currently being drawn up on an interdepartmental basis between the Cultural Recreation and Amenity Department (CRA) and the Planning Department. This interdepartmental approach will ensure that the goals and aims of the cultural strategy will be reflected in the new development plan.

The City Council recognises that individual artists, arts companies and creative industries are at the core of the cultural life of the city. It acknowledges that the vibrancy of the artistic life of the city and the well-being of its people can best be realised in an environment which facilitates and encourages the production of creative and innovative work. It further acknowledges the need to support artists to engage with audiences locally, nationally and internationally.

4. Main Issues and Challenges

The development plan sets the agenda for the development of a local authority's area over its six-year lifespan and provides one of the main policy contexts for planning decisions in a local authority's area, influencing capital investment by both the public and private sectors. It is obligatory, amongst other stated objectives, that the development plan gives spatial expression to the economic, social and cultural needs of the city in terms of influencing new development, enhancing existing amenities and protecting the natural and built heritage. As prescribed by the Planning and Development Act 2000 each planning authority shall include objectives in its development plan for "*the integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population*"¹

Dublin City Council clearly recognises that culture is a vital component in the city's identity, central to placemaking and underlines quality of life. How best can this be expressed and reflected in the new plan? In order to sustain and enhance Dublin City's place as a leading Cultural Capital and to improve the quality of life for citizens and visitors, the City Council should demonstrate its leadership role in culture and clearly set out commitment and support for the provision of a range of arts and cultural facilities throughout the city, as well as encouraging and facilitating the provision of quality public art, festival space and cultural quarters and supporting the development of culture as a pillar of the growing creative economy. There are challenges to be addressed in the next development plan, namely:

1. **Infrastructure for The Arts** (Section 4.1)
2. **Libraries** (Section 4.2)
3. **Public Art** (Section 4.3)
4. **Spaces and Places for Festivals** (Section 4.4)
5. **Cultural Quarters / Clusters** (Section 4.5)

Innovative solutions are necessary to address gaps in cultural provision throughout the city while remembering that any proposals for cultural development must be tested against real need, suitability of design to purpose, and potential for sustainability, and economic viability.

4.1 Infrastructure for The Arts

The Arts Office has indicated the following arts infrastructure should be considered:

- A mid-range theatre (350 – 400 persons),
- A small theatre (120 –150 seater black box)
- Rehearsal spaces – a complex of 3 or 4
- Festivals building
- Visual artists studios
- Contemporary music venue with rehearsal spaces
- Office Space for arts organisations and for visiting producers
- Affordable living accommodation for artists
- An Opera House

While the above has highlighted many of the infrastructural needs of the city, it has been suggested that a thorough 'needs analysis' should be carried out across the entire city to identify those cultural facilities that are required at 'city level' and those that are required at the 'neighbourhood level'. It is, therefore considered felt that a needs analysis should be carried out which would document the range of cultural infrastructure that is required and would also include an audit of all arts and culture facilities in the city and with an assessment of quality, use, etc. This needs analysis would allow the city to realise what it contains in terms of arts and cultural facilities, and allow for an informed view when a planning application is lodged with the city council.

¹ Section 10(2)(d)

While not all infrastructural deficits can be addressed through the development management process, there will be opportunities in the future for provision of some of these facilities as part of larger-scale developments. It would therefore prove highly beneficial if an in-depth needs analysis was available to the planning department when presented with development proposals that could potentially incorporate a cultural facility.

However, the issue of long-term management including the day-to-day operational costs, must be addressed by the Arts Sector.

Research has proven that artists attract in-ward investment to areas undergoing regeneration. Also proven, though less commonly commented on, is that as areas improve economically, artists are sometimes displaced through rising costs of work and living space.

Living & Working Space

The provision of affordable living accommodation for artists, across all disciplines, must be encouraged throughout the city, including the provision of live-work units where appropriate. Live/work schemes are defined in the current plan as a 'commercial unit designed to accommodate a residential element'. and contains policy to add to the cultural diversity of the city by facilitating the provision of space for artists to live, work and exhibit. While there are some quality live-work units in the city such The Red Stables, IMMA and The Fire Station, the demand for these units far exceeds supply.

Surveys indicate that there is a demand for live-work units for Artists. The issue to be addressed is why the market has not responded to this need.

Work Space

The creation of the environments and the provision of appropriate facilities for artists to create are essential in a culturally vibrant and creative city operating in the knowledge economy. In this regard, the Arts Office, has recommended that fit-for-purpose hubs, capable of reducing collective capital and administrative costs, should be encouraged. These are appropriate responses to the sectors' stated need for:

- Acoustically appropriate Rehearsal Spaces for music and theatre practitioners/ensembles;
- A central Festivals Building and Box-office, capable of housing the administration of many of the key city festivals, thereby reducing costs, maximising connectivity between festivals and increasing branding opportunities for Dublin as a cultural tourist destination
- Visual Arts Studios – the critical need for fit-for-purpose affordable, studio space with reasonable security of tenure has been well documented and is backed by soon to be published research from the Arts Council. Increasingly, existing spaces have been depleted as owner/developers seek ever-higher income returns. Artist collectives, including those in receipt of revenue funding from the Arts Council, often have to relocate when a site becomes the subject of redevelopment.

The challenge therefore is how can the Development Plan process assist in facilitating the delivery of these key pieces of Art Infrastructure

Cultural Venues

The theatre sector has argued the economic need for a mid-range seating capacity theatre in a central area location. The situation has been worsened by the closure of Andrew's Lane, and by the imminent closures of the Tivoli, and Liberty Hall theatres while the contemporary music/world music sector has argued, through Arts Council sponsored research, for a dedicated contemporary music venue in a central Dublin location. Furthermore, with local opera audiences growing - partly through the expansion of appreciation programmes such as Dublin City Council's Opera in the Open series, and the education and outreach programmes of Opera Ireland, Opera Theatre Company and the Anna Livia Opera Festival – Dublin is still

one of the few European Capital's without its own Opera House. The new Liebeskind theatre in the Docklands may offer some new opportunity to the sector, but its suitability has yet to be tested.

4.2 Libraries

Dublin City Council's libraries have proved very successful in meeting many of the needs of the city's more culturally diverse population with such needs ranging from the learning of a language, use of IT facilities particularly the internet, attendance at multi-lingual events, accessing of foreign newspapers etc.

Dublin's identity is strongly associated with its rich literary offering and markets itself accordingly. The proposal to relocate the Central Library to Parnell Square is well advanced

Traditionally libraries have been provided as stand-alone structures. However over the years in the interests of sustainability, there has been an increased tendency to integrate library services with other services provided by the local authority and other cultural services. Such 'integrated libraries' have been provided at Tubercurry where the library also houses the court service, tax office and social welfare office, while the library recently built in Thurles combines a branch library and Thurles Arts Centre while in Dublin city the Northside / Cromcastle project aims to combine a library with a leisure centre. This type of model could be considered as the model to promote under the new development plan.

4.3 Public Art

The benefits of public art are well known. It can improve the attractiveness of an area by creating visual interest and sense of place in the environment, add to the overall quality of life of an area, gain profile for emerging artists, raise the profile of a residential development while also raising the developer's profile, and potentially increase the value of a scheme.

The existing plan contains policy "*to promote the provision of public arts including temporary art and sculpture, through such mechanisms as the government support Percent for Art scheme and the development control process*" more could be achieved in this regard. While a wide range of public and private sector agencies and organisations deliver public art voluntarily, local planning authorities can also encourage property developers to include artworks in schemes requiring planning permission. In this regard, a possible objective might be included, seeking the provision of new works of art as part of schemes of development and in determining an application for planning permission, have regard to the contribution made by any such works to the appearance of the scheme and to the amenities of the area.

4.4 Places and Spaces for Festival and Events

Good Civic Space is crucial to a city's health. *The Public and the Arts (Arts Council 2006)* indicated that 33% of our population attended open-air events – a trend which is increasing. Whether provided through soft or hard landscapes, the potential for cultural use of such spaces is hugely enhanced through the in-built provision of adaptable lighting & power supply; through its ability to facilitate new digital media; through its potential accommodation of (at least) temporary shelter; and through appropriate consideration of the ease and safety of public access.

While the current development plan recognises the need for infrastructure both indoors and outdoors it we may need to strengthen objectives, standards, specifications, guidelines or key requirements for the provision of outdoor spaces that are fit-for-purpose and capable of hosting quality events. A minimum standards policy could be incorporated into the new plan.

4.5 Cultural Quarters / Cultural Clusters

The existing city development plan contains policy “*to identify cultural and/or heritage clusters and to ensure the provision of appropriate linking infrastructure, including signage, pedestrian routes and heritage trails, to ensure that cultural and heritage buildings are linked to one another and to the wide public realm as part of a coherent structure*”. Dublin City contains a number of existing and proposed cultural clusters.

Dublin City contains a very distinctive cultural cluster in Temple Bar. While its development has been successful, it is not without problems in trying to strike a balance between the diversity of city centre activity and residential amenities. The next development plan might include policies and objectives supporting the continuing development of the city’s most established and successful cultural quarter, support a ‘night culture’ that doesn’t conflict with residential amenities and reflect the ambitions of the 2004 framework plan.

A cultural cluster has been emerging in Parnell Square as well as in the Heuston Gateway development (with the existing Collin’s Barracks included). However there is scope for further development and support of clusters. Further cultural clusters / cultural quarters in the city would be a welcome addition. Identification of suitable areas should take place along with an overriding vision as to how each of the areas should develop. The next development plan should reflect the ambitions of the City Council in the creation of exciting, diverse and distinctive cultural quarters in the city which are active both day and night while ensuring the residential amenities of the city centre aren’t negatively impacted upon. On the other hand should the city be considering specific clusters for nighttime uses.

The Arts Office has also highlighted that fact that there are smaller, discrete areas in the city that are building up as hubs of cultural activity. It is recommended that every effort should be made to support and expand existing and emerging clusters of artistic energy, innovation and knowledge e.g. Thomas St/Liberties area; Broadstone/Stoneybatter/Markets; Foley St; Rialto/Inchicore; Parnell Square - each with its own distinctive characteristics and reason for being.

This issue is also tied in with way-finding system the city. Considerable potential exists to improve the connections between cultural institutions and quarters in the city. In this regard a robust way-finding system in the city should be developed and implemented, essentially building on Policy Act10 of the current plan.

5. Summary of Key Issues

1. How can we plan for culture so that it positions Dublin as a leading cultural capital?
2. How can we plan for culture so that it is placed as a pillar of economic viability and civic identity?
3. What are the major cultural deficits at city level and at the neighbourhood level? Should a 'needs analysis' be carried out'?
4. How can the development plan serve to support artists in the city, particularly emerging artists?
5. How can we ensure that culture plays a major role in urban regeneration, place-making and city identity?
6. How can planning serve as a tool to encourage and facilitate the provision of living / live-work accommodation for artists, both indigenous and international?
7. How can planning serve as a tool to encourage and facilitate the provision of affordable exhibition spaces for artists in the city?
8. How can the shortfall in library provision in some areas in the city be addressed through the planning process?
9. How can DCC encourage and facilitate the provision of cultural facilities through the planning process that are properly managed and in sustainable locations?
10. How can DCC encourage the provision of multi-functional, fit-for-purpose outdoor spaces in suitable locations in the city?
11. How can the goals and objectives of the forthcoming Arts and Cultural Strategy be reflected in the new development plan?
12. How can we develop a vision for cultural clusters, both large and small-scale, in the city? Where are they located / proposed to be located? How should they be developed / protected / connected?
13. Are the cultural needs of the 'New Irish' different than the cultural needs of the indigenous population? If so, how can planning act as an aid in meeting these needs?
14. How can planning be used as tool to reduce 'cultural exclusion' in the city? How can we encourage all citizens can participate in the cultural life of the city?
15. How best can DCC encourage and facilitate the provision of cultural facilities in areas of need and sectors of need?