

DÚN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL

Chairperson's Report of the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in the Council Chamber on Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 5.00pm

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Fleming, Michael (Chair) Grainger, Anna
Baker, Marie Moylan, Justin
Donnelly, Deirdre
Dunne, Daniel
Fanning, Martha

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Olivia Shaw Dunne, Sheila Grace, Andrew Clinch (PPN)

OFFICIALS PRESENT

Therese Langan, Director of Community & Cultural Development; Kenneth Redmond, Arts Officer; Jayne Parsons, Senior Staff Officer, Community & Cultural Development; Shahruz Mirmirani, Staff Officer, Community & Cultural Development;

Apologies

Cllr Ahmed Kazi, Cllr Mary Hanafin, Brian Kavanagh, Sandra Kelly

1. Welcome & Roll Call

Cllr Fleming welcomed everyone to the meeting and the roll call was carried out.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The draft minutes of the Community, Culture & Wellbeing SPC held on the 8th March 2023, and the draft minutes of the Special Meeting of the Community, Culture & Wellbeing SPC held on the 12th April 2023, were agreed and adopted.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

4. Information items submitted by members for written reply

No business.

5. Workshop to develop new Arts Plan

(a) The Draft Arts Plan.

As part of the consultation for the dlr Arts Plan, a meeting was convened with the elected members to seek their views on the priorities for the dlr Arts Plan 2024-2030. The objective of the workshop was two-fold:

- inform the group about what had been achieved during the life of Arts Plan 2016-2022, and,

- seek its views and ideas about priorities for the new Arts Plan 2024-2030.

Kenneth Redmond then gave a presentation on the work of the Arts Office in developing and promoting the arts across the county. It described dlr investment in the arts in the county and provided information about county venues, events, projects, collaborations and arts interventions for a broad cross-sector of the community, and developmental initiatives for artists, followed by a workshop with facilitated round table discussion and breakout groups.

A discussion followed in which the key achievements of the previous arts plan were noted.

Examples cited included:

- Outside art exhibitions.
- Moran Park and its benefit during COVID-19.
- The importance of the Lexicon Cultural Centre as an asset to the county.
- Cruinniú na nÓg and the excitement it created among young people.
- Appointment of an Irish Language Officer – this has been impactful culturally.
- The county-wide street art and junction boxes art initiative.
- An outcome of the pandemic: libraries reaching out to people who really needed it at the time – the perception that the LA ‘had your back’ and the sense of community care.
- Neuro-diversity Saturdays in the Libraries and how grateful individual communities are to be included.
- The arts –how competitions draw children into arts activities.
- Members acknowledged the impact of the Casement statue.
- The Joyce Tower and community access to the historic Joyce collection was noted.
- The new cultural space planned for Stillorgan library.
- The supports that were put in place for artists during lockdown.

The participants then analysed the challenges/opportunities the arts might face into the next 5/6 years and considered the potential responses. They noted that a major challenge would be to enhance communications and raise awareness about the local authority role in developing the arts; creating opportunities for artists and being as inclusive as possible for audiences.

Ambition

Participants shared their ambitions for the new Arts Plan and ‘crystal ball gazing’ stated that by 2030 their vision for the arts in dlr would be that the arts were visible, accessible, collaborative and inclusive of everyone in the county. When encouraged to explore this vision further they shared the following ideas:

- Opportunity for those in apartments to enjoy the public realm and spaces.
- Invite collaboration more widely, such as art exhibitions.
- Host multi-cultural events.
- Ensure a more even balance of arts activity across the county with cultural spaces accessible to people who mightn’t previously have experienced them.
- Support people to recognise their ‘inner artist’.
- Men’s sheds – something here to work on in relation to arts.
- Staging live performances in the Baths amphitheatre.
- Use the spaces we have well.
- There must be a legacy left in 2030– something lasting.

- Revisit the Festival of World Cultures.
- Focus on street spectacle and parades to arouse interest - as an entry point to the arts.
- Move outside of Dún Laoghaire – a more balanced, shared approach is required.
- Use more public building for performances, spaces.
- Leverage off the % for Arts Scheme.
- Initiate a mobile gallery – to travel from one community centre to the other to ensure more inclusion.
- Creating an opportunity for older people to become more involved in, and more aware of what was going on around the county in the arts is essential, particularly when considering the ageing demographic in the county. ‘People are aging in places, not in institutions. How to broaden out the programme to include them is a challenge. Increasing access for them is important as most older people are not technically adept’.
- Work more with local artists.

Opportunities for Communities and for Artists

In addressing the opportunities for communities and for artists in the county, it was pointed out that these must be viewed through the lens of consolidation and prioritisation. Resources are constrained; the policy of the Arts Office is to work in a targeted developmental way to ensure sustainable provision and lasting legacy. Further resources are required if the arts are to expand within the county, and partnerships/collaborations with other arts providers will be essential to support expansion. People emphasised the value of:

- Access to taster sessions re all aspects of the arts; going into community centres/ open spaces. Showcasing disciplines – a variety of workshops showcasing their skills/ move them around the county. Free for public and remunerate the artists.
- Initiate artist and community-led joint projects. Promote the work of artists where they confer with communities and collaborate in community projects.
- Ensure that there is an artist representation on the SPC- be more inclusive so that the voice of the artist can also be heard at policy level.
- From a mentoring perspective, provide artists who may need business supports with advice/mentoring through dlr LEO to enable them ‘grow their business skills’.
- Ensure that people are educated about the value of art – giving people space for graffiti as a means of expression.
- It was noted that it would be timely to ensure that Art commemorates the Carrickmines fire – 10-year anniversary.
- There was a strong view that metrics should be used to assess the extent of people’s involvement in the arts in the county and set targets for the future.
- The PPN should be utilised to get artists working more within communities.
- It was suggested that better and deeper links could be developed with Carmona and the John of God’s service.
- The Council needs to be as broad as possible in its definition of what art actually is to encourage more participation and engagement.
- The importance of the Irish language and music was stressed in relation to its local cultural contribution.

Additional points made related to the fact that festivals provide an opportunity for people to get involved in the arts. Involving communities in organising local festivals is useful for local capacity building. Líonta na Farraige was mentioned as a project which highlighted climate change and international partnerships; it got people involved. Dance contributes significantly to people’s mental health and physical well-being. The work of Dance Theatre of Ireland was highlighted in this respect.

Next steps

The workshop concluded with a conversation about the planned consultation process. The Arts Officer, Kenneth Redmond, informed the elected members about the next steps in the consultation. Members advised on methods of local engagement to ensure everyone would be heard from across the County. They also requested that the Arts Office should work to seek input from those who do not follow regular Council communication channels or use Council services.

7. Business Referred from the Council (if any)

None.

7. Business Referred from the Corporate Policy Group (if any)

None.

8. Item for SPC Future Work Programme

None.

9. Any other Business

None

10. Date of Next Meeting

To be determined.