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Responses to public consultation to
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The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's response to:

DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK 2016-2021

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the funding and development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. We invest c.£20m in the arts each year through our Exchequer and National Lottery funds, providing the main support for artists through a range of funding opportunities. 79% of the funding invested by the Arts Council goes to the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland, helping to deliver social change, economic prosperity and build a strong and shared community.

There is a strong track record of the arts sector supporting the work of government departments and agencies, helping to achieve previous PfG priorities across a wide range of objectives, notably in social and economic regeneration, reconciliation, tourism, creative industries, education and health.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Programme for Government Framework Consultation 2016-2021. We offer recommendations for your consideration and have also supplied an evidence base supporting those recommendations.

There are two parts to this submission; the substance of the ACNI response is found in section 1 and the wider body of supporting evidence and observation is found in section 2.

- 1. ACNI Recommendations (pages 2-4)**
- 2. Evidence - how art and culture support the achievement of the PfG (pages 5- 16)**

1. Recommendations

The Arts and Culture sectors impact on 16 of the 42 PfG Indicators and have a significant impact on 10 out of 14 outcomes.

Arts and culture are specifically acknowledged in the PfG in relation to the following outcomes:

Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential

Outcome 9: We are a shared society that respects diversity

Outcome 10: We are a confident, welcoming, outward-looking society

Outcome 12: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest

Recommendation 1

Apply Indicator 27: Improve Cultural Participation, and associated measures, to the following additional Outcomes:

Outcome 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy

Outcome 3: We have a more equal society

Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives

Outcome 6: We have more people working in better jobs

Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other.

The pursuit of excellence in arts is of paramount importance to Northern Ireland's culture; to its artists, practitioners, participants and audiences. **It is imperative that the term "Excellence" is added to Indicator 27: To Improve Cultural Participation**, in order to achieve Outcomes such as 5, 9, 10, 12 and 14 and to support **Indicators 30 and 40; To 'Improve our attractiveness as a destination' and to 'Improve our International Reputation'**.

Further, in relation to Indicator 27, we advise that **the term 'Cultural Engagement' is a more accurate term to use** than 'Cultural Participation' because the former includes the increasing numbers of people who engage with arts and culture online rather than through conventional means of participation and attendance.

Recommendation 2

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) recommends augmenting Indicator 27 to: 'Improve Cultural Engagement and Standards of Excellence'.

The ability to value all of the benefits to society that the arts delivers is difficult, particularly because measures are often qualitative (e.g. a sense of wellbeing), they may occur at individual, communal and national levels. **In fact, what we need to do is value our arts and culture in new ways across government, with new measurements that help people think of them for what they are: a strategic national resource.**

In light of the Arts Council's own experience in measuring the impact of the arts and their intrinsic value to Northern Ireland, **we advise that the measure** (% engaging with arts/cultural activity in the last year) **associated with achieving Indicator 27 is insufficient.**

Recommendation 3

The Arts Council recommends that the PfG draws on a wider base of available evidence (both qualitative as well as quantitative) and with the help of the Arts Council, adds new measures to evidence achievement of indicators 27, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 30, 35 and 40 (see below)

Quantitative measures should be expanded to include **digital engagement figures** for arts audiences in NI and indeed for international audiences too. Digital content development is key to improving arts and culture engagement levels online. Increasing numbers of national arts organisations (eg Tate Britain) and artists are producing video and digital arts content to reach new and international audiences for their work. To evidence digital engagement as a measure for indicator 27, we advise the following:

PfG Indicator 27, add a second Measure : % of NI Arts Sector with improved digital capacity, knowledge and content development skills.

Overall, there is a worrying lack of reference to **the role of the Artist** within the PfG, which is of fundamental importance to Indicator 27 and to Indicator 30 and 40. The achievement of Indicator 27 in particular is intrinsically linked to the skills and creativity of our artists. The importance of their role in creating great art and cultural experiences for all cannot be underestimated.

For Northern Ireland to remain competitive and capitalise on the success of the creative industries and a growing creative economy, and **for NI society to continue to benefit from the many rewards of a strong arts and cultural sector, the Executive needs to make a long-term strategic investment in the next generation of creative talent.** This investment would start by making arts and culture an integral part of the educational curriculum and would extend to professional skills and career development opportunities for our artists.

We advise that **increasing investment in the development of our artists is central to raising standards of excellence in arts and culture.** To evidence investment in our artists we advise the following:

PfG Indicator 27, add a third Measure : Invest in the skills and development of our artists.

Measure 3 can be applied also to Indicators 13: Improve the quality of education, Indicator 14: Improve the skills profile of the population, to Indicator 30: Improve our attractiveness as a destination and to Indicator 40: Improve our international reputation.

In addition, improving Cultural Engagement levels will be achieved through growing attendances at events in arts and culture venues across NI. Although the Arts Council has achieved one of its key ambitions to build an arts venue or facility within 20 miles of every citizen in NI, engagement levels by our citizens and visitors will not grow unless a modest programme of capital investment by the NI Executive is rolled out to maintain those buildings.

PfG Indicator 27, add a fourth Measure: Establish and monitor a rolling programme of capital development to maintain key arts venues across Northern Ireland

As previously stated, revising Indicator 27 to include Standards of Excellence in the measure is of paramount importance. Assessing and measuring levels of excellence in arts and culture is difficult. However, qualitative measures can be applied to individual engagement with and community perceptions of art; to levels of health and wellbeing, to a sense of identity, to levels of civic pride, to trust in public resources. For example **the Arts sector is at the forefront of improving general wellbeing**. Research indicates that a higher frequency of engagement with arts and culture is generally associated with a higher level of subjective wellbeing. A Scottish report ¹ identifies a positive link with wellbeing, even when other factors including age, income, economic status, area deprivation, education, qualifications, disability or long-standing illness and smoking are accounted for.

We recommend that Wellbeing is incorporated into measures on this indicator. Indeed, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland is a provider of Official Statistics with a research and development team in place. We provide statistics relating to audience engagement with arts, on numbers attending arts events, on participation, on community outreach by arts organisations but ultimately, much of this is quantitative analysis measuring the impact and reach of the arts. The Arts Council itself uses qualitative data and assessment to value the quality of art works created and to assess the excellence of artists and arts organisations. **The Arts Council advises that qualitative measures for Indicator 27 could be achieved using wellbeing as the gathering point for audiences, communities and artists to engage in conversation and qualitative feedback.**

Recommendation 4

The Arts Council's expertise as a provider of Official Statistics on the Arts should be used to establish new, qualitative measures for the arts such as wellbeing and excellence which can be applied to Indicators 27, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 14, 26, 28,30, 31, 35 and 40.

¹ Scottish Government Report: "Healthy Attendance: The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports Participation on Health and Satisfaction with life in Scotland" 2013 and "The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society, An Evidence Review", Arts Council England, 2014

2. Supporting Evidence

The evidence base of the role of art and culture in supporting the achievement of the Programme for Government

Indicator 27: Improve Cultural Participation

We are pleased that the role of art and culture in supporting Government to meet its stated outcomes is acknowledged in the current draft PfG. Inclusion in the PfG helps to establish cross-party acknowledgment of the reach and value of the arts in relation to a wide range of departmental responsibilities, as well as recognising the relevance of the arts to shaping and delivering key aspects of the work of all departments in the Executive. It presents the opportunity to integrate arts and culture closer to the heart of government and government investment.

Arts and culture are specifically referenced in association with

Indicator 27, 'Improve Cultural Participation' and the accompanying synopsis:

Cultural engagement impacts positively on general wellbeing. Cultural participation is known to bring benefits in learning and education; and there is a significant association with cultural engagement and good health and satisfaction with life. Culture is key to our sense of identity as individuals and as communities. Cultural offerings encourage visitors and day-trips, creating and maintaining jobs in cultural tourism; and contribute to the development of creative industries in our economy.

Indicator 27 is directly aligned in the PfG to five of the strategic outcomes:

Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential

Outcome 9: We are a shared society that respects diversity

Outcome 10: We are a confident, welcoming, outward-looking society

Outcome 12: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest

Outcome 14: We give our children and young people the best start in life.

As can be inferred from the synopsis of the contribution of arts and culture provided by the PfG Framework (stated above), **there are other outcomes in which arts and culture are making a significant impact**, both directly and indirectly; **an obvious example being Outcome 4, relating to health and wellbeing: 'We enjoy long, healthy, active lives'.**

In lieu of that, the Arts Council would welcome a greater acknowledgment of the contribution of arts and culture to delivering additional outcomes within the PfG; adding specific indicators that more accurately reflect the breadth, depth and significance of the contribution that arts and culture make across society, of how they support the work of Government departments, and therefore how they impact across the stated outcomes. We have previously identified additional PfG outcomes and indicators we believe are relevant to arts and culture within our recommendations, which we hope you will consider.

In seeking public views on the suitability of indicators and measures, the Arts Council wishes to outline its **observations on Indicator 27, 'Improve Cultural Participation'**.

First, the Arts Council recommends that **‘Cultural Engagement’ is a more accurate term to use than ‘Cultural Participation’**. Cultural engagement implies both participation and attendance at arts and culture events and activities but also allows for the inclusion of those who engage with arts and culture online, and to be added to the measurement of that indicator.

Second, we recommend **using a wider base of available evidence and additional measures for Indicator 27, that is, to include qualitative as well as quantitative measures.**

The measure for indicator 27 is currently: ‘% engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year’. Whilst this is a reasonable measure, **it is not, alone, a sufficient measure**. We appreciate that a robust evidence base is required for the PfG, relating outcomes, indicators and specific outcomes but it must be borne in mind that **‘not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts’**. There is a substantial body of evidence, anecdotal as well as empirical, supported by international research that provides additional evidence of how the impact of arts and culture is felt across the economy, health and wellbeing, education and society².

One of the limitations of a purely quantitative-based approach is that the measure for improving cultural participation does not take into account the quality of the cultural offering nor its experience. Nor can it entertain the intrinsic value of creative and cultural activity. **We must encourage and support excellence in our arts and cultural offering**, as without it we cannot achieve the full potential of its impact in relation to the PfG outputs. For instance, if the standard of our cultural tourism offering is not of sufficient quality to raise Northern Ireland’s international cultural and creative profile, this will impact detrimentally on Government’s ability to fulfil Outcome 12: ‘creating a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest’.

Overall, there is a worrying lack of reference to **the role of the Artist** which is **of fundamental importance to Indicator 27**. The achievement of this indicator is intrinsically linked to the skills and creativity of our artists and the importance of their role in creating great art and cultural experiences for all and to achieving Outcome 10 among others. We advise that **increasing investment in the development of our artists is central** to raising standards of excellence in arts and culture. **We recommend including investment in our artists as a measure** to achieve the Cultural Engagement (Participation) Indicator 27 and the 5 outcomes associated with it.

The evidence to support the need for investment in our artists is illustrated by the successes of those artists who have received awards from the **Arts Council’s own Major Individual Artist Awards Programme and its Support for Individual Artists Programme**. The funding associated with these programmes is aimed at individual artists; writers, dancers, musicians, composers, performers, painters, fine craft artists or other. This type of targeted public funding has helped artists such as Sinéad Morrissey the T S Elliot prize-winning poet, novelist Glenn Patterson and painter Colin Davidson develop their skills and their careers to the extent that they have become artists of international standing and ambassadors for Northern Ireland abroad. More investment in our artists

² *“The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society, An Evidence Review”, Arts Council England, 2014*

who can help deliver better outcomes and indicators of use to the NI Government and to society as a whole.

Evidence is also provided in the Arts Council's own joint research with An Chomhairle Ealaíon on *'The Living and Working Conditions of Artists' 2008/09* and the 2016 survey *'The Social, Economic and Fiscal Status of the Artist'* by Visual Arts Ireland. The recent survey supports the findings that though our artists are spending 98% of their time creating art, only 32% are able to make this a fulltime job and 76% of visual artists are living below the poverty line. It is important that in order to maintain and develop the skills and creativity within our arts sector, we must increase investment in artists.

The use of digital technology is also playing an increasing role in how people consume, share, access and create arts and culture. Digital technology offers a means of bridging participation gaps in the arts, opening up the potential to overcome barriers to access and participation that have endured for generations. **The need to strengthen the digital skills and capacity of the arts sector in Northern Ireland remains an important objective to the Arts Council and we would recommend it added as an additional measure to achieving PfG indicator 27 and to Indicators 30 and 40.** Raising the level of digital skills, knowledge and capacity to develop digital content within the arts sector is essential; it can make arts and culture content available to more people, both within NI and to international audiences, contributing positively to the suggested, revised outcome 'Improve Cultural Engagement' and to other areas such as Outcome 10: We are a Confident, welcoming, outward-looking society

Technological innovation has also enabled many more people to access NI's culture internationally. It would be possible to connect digital technology with yet another useful measure for indicator 27 if Northern Ireland were to adopt the recommendation of the Warwick Commission on The Future of Cultural Value, 'Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth'. One of the report's recommendations was that the UK could lead on the development of a low-cost digital public space (DiPS) in which all publicly-funded creative and cultural content would be made available to the public. This concept, applied to an NI DiPS would overtime, become a digital 'cultural library' of NI's artistic and cultural assets, assuring that everyone can assume their full role as digital cultural consumers, regardless of skill level, ability, status or income.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's own Troubles Archive <http://www.troublesarchive.com/> is a digital collection or archive of work by artists who have interpreted and documented, through the arts, the darker periods of our history from the late 1960s through to the year 2000. Its value as an academic tool and a rich, interactive treasure trove of high quality, excellent art is appreciated by both local and international audiences. The fact that this archive of work by leading artists is now online, supported by related digital content, has increased the reach and influence of the arts and culture offering from Northern Ireland to new audiences in new countries. As indeed our colleagues in other Arts Councils have found, online engagement with culture can augment, rather than replace, live arts experiences as well as growing audiences for the arts.

In short, the consumption of art and culture is changing rapidly and to achieve the Outcomes associated with Indicator 27, we recommend the PfG adds the measure: **Improve the digital capacity, knowledge and content development skills of the NI Arts Sector.**

Finally, a measure that is overlooked regarding Indicator 27 in particular is the need to maintain and develop the arts and culture infrastructure in NI.

The Arts Council asserts that quantitative measures alone are insufficient. Sir Peter Bazalgate, Chair of Arts Council England said, **“When we talk about the value of arts and culture, we should always start with the intrinsic – how arts and culture illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world. This is what we cherish.”**³ He then went on to point out how important the arts are for the benefits they also confer to our social wellbeing and community cohesion e.g. benefits to our physical and mental health, to our education system, to our national status and to our economy. The ability to value all of those benefits is difficult, particularly because measures are often qualitative and they may occur at individual, communal and national levels. **In fact, what we need to do is value our arts and culture in new ways, with new measurements that help people think of them for what they are: a strategic national resource.**

The important area of **Wellbeing could be the gathering point for audiences, communities and artists to engage in conversation and provide qualitative feedback and qualitative measures** to evidence how the arts are achieving PfG outcomes and indicators. Assessing levels of excellence in arts and culture, individual and community reactions and perceptions, levels of health and wellbeing, levels of civic pride, trust in public resources, all can be used to measure arts and culture engagement and the impact of the arts on society.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is a provider of Official Statistics with a research and development team in place. We provide statistics relating to audience engagement with arts, on numbers attending arts events, on participation, on community outreach by arts organisations but ultimately, much of this is quantitative analysis measuring the impact and reach of the arts. The Arts Council also uses qualitative data and assessment to value the quality of art supported by public funding and to assess the excellence of artists and arts organisations engaged in that.

As experts in data collection on the arts, **the Arts Council wishes to express its desire to be represented on the agency contributing to the Data Development Agenda for the PfG**, particularly regarding qualitative measures required to sufficiently measure levels of wellbeing and excellence in the arts.

Arts and culture and remaining PfG indicators

The PfG contains 42 indicators and associated measures. Arts and cultural activity can reasonably be said to impact either directly or indirectly on all but a very few of these indicators. We intend here to **focus on those 16 indicators where arts and culture exert the most evident direct influence**. Rather than laboriously addressing each and every indicator in turn, we have organised the PfG indicators into relational groupings.

³ “The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society, An Evidence Review”, Arts Council England, 2014

- **Health and wellbeing (PfG indicators 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**

Carnegie UK Trust *'Towards a Wellbeing Framework'* presents wellbeing as an holistic concept which brings together social, environmental, economic and democratic outcomes. Its approach to wellbeing asks us to consider how society is progressing in the round and, in this context, it recognises the arts as an important medium for enhancing 'subjective wellbeing'.

UK research indicates that a higher frequency of engagement with arts and culture is generally associated with a higher level of subjective wellbeing. A number of studies report a positive impact on health conditions including dementia, depression and Parkinson's disease⁴.

The positive effects on our health and wellbeing through engagement with the arts are now well established. In Sweden, research indicates that arts engagement has a direct impact on health and increased life expectancy (<http://sjp.sagepub.com/content/28/3/174.short>). The benefits of self-expression through the arts have been found to ease chronic illness and other conditions including dementia. Indeed publically funded organisations such as ArtsCare, provide arts interventions in hospitals across Northern Ireland and have a strong body of evidence supporting the benefits to patients of their work within the Royal Belfast Children's Hospital to mention but one area.

The UK Alzheimer's Society has long promoted the benefits of arts, crafts and social interaction as a way to help people with dementia live well and reduce loneliness. Arts Council England has produced a series of studies on how arts and culture supports people with dementia, which indicate that participation in visual arts and singing can help to reduce isolation, improve communication, memory and emotional wellbeing amongst people with dementia. One music project was found to have contributed to a 27.72% decrease in the number of prescribed anti-psychotic drugs on the day of the activity.

A 2016 research report commissioned by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland on its Arts & Older People's Programme, which is delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland, highlights the benefits to older people of creative interventions in terms of alleviating depression, anxiety and loneliness. The programme has engaged 9,000 older participants in arts and cultural activities, promoting active ageing and positive health and wellbeing for older people living in disadvantaged and harder-to-reach communities across Northern Ireland.

Professional arts organisations contribute across the range of health and care services. For example:

- **ArtsCare** works across the five Health and Social Care Trusts, engaging staff and service users in arts-based programmes. Arts Care's team of Clown Doctors visit 4,000 family members every year, working alongside clinical and nursing staff to improve the hospital experience for sick children.

⁴ *Scottish Government Report: "Healthy Attendance: The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports Participation on Health and Satisfaction with life in Scotland" 2013 and "The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society, An Evidence Review", Arts Council England, 2014*

- **Cahoots** children's theatre company brings bespoke theatrical shows to children living with cancer at home with their families.
- **Seacourt Print workshop** runs bespoke programmes for older people in residential care, including people with Alzheimer's, fibromyalgia, autism and brain injury.

Relating to PfG Outcomes:

The benefits of arts and cultural interventions in supporting the work of departments and agencies are widely recognised. This is an important growth area with, for instance, NI's work in relation to arts and older people leading the way in the UK. To facilitate continuing development of the beneficial relationship between arts and culture and health and wellbeing, the role of arts and culture should be acknowledged in relation to Outcome 4: 'We enjoy long, healthy, active lives'; and indicator 6: improve mental health.

- **Education (PfG indicators 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)**

- Schools in the US that integrate arts across the curriculum have shown consistently higher average reading and mathematics scores than similar schools that do not.
- Students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree than those who do not.

The Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value, 'Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth' (2015) highlights agreement within the Cultural and Creative Industries and industry more broadly that the current UK educational focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) should include the Arts (STEAM). With other leading powers, Asia in particular, re-thinking their educational paradigms to focus on creativity, culture and enterprise, 'we need scientists as much as we need artists who understand the property of materials and the affordances of new technology'. The report also points out that, without educational intervention, we are in danger of allowing a two-tier system in which the most advantaged in social and economic terms are also the most advantaged in benefitting economically, socially and personally from the full range of cultural and educational experiences. Young people at all stages of the education system should be exposed to the multi-disciplinary mix of science, technology, arts, humanities and enterprise that underpins creative success in NI.

In 2014 the Welsh Assembly gave a resounding endorsement of Prof. Dai Smith's report on 'Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales', pledging to develop an All-Wales Arts and Education Programme that formally asserts a central role for arts education. The premise of the report is that: 'In a twenty-first century, schooling will increasingly become the basis of a creative society, of a creative economy and a creative culture. Creativity, or being open to the acquisition of new knowledge and innovative skills, will shape our world like no other force imaginable'. The Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis, endorsed this vision, writing: "It is only having high quality arts and creative experiences in schools, by valuing them and giving them their deserved place in our curriculum, by making them available to all children, especially those from deprived backgrounds, that we can nurture the potential of our learners and develop skills we need for our economy."

For Northern Ireland to be competitive and capitalise on the success of the creative industries and creative economy, government needs to make a long-term strategic investment in the next generation of creative talent. **The Arts Council recommends that a commitment to investing in skills and career opportunities for individual artists needs to be enshrined in the PfG and reference to Indicator 27 should be added to Education Outcomes.**

By making art an integral part of the curriculum we would give the next generation of artists, designers, engineers, creators and cultural leaders the opportunity to develop the imagination and skills that are vital to our future. We would also embed the principle of creative thought and response in all our children. Employers increasingly emphasise the need for qualities and aptitudes which are synonymous with the arts - powers of creativity, of communication, of empathy, adaptability and social skills. An arts-rich education, utilising arts and culture as a vehicle as well as a context for learning, should to be core to the whole school experience of all pupils. It should be augmented by exposure to the arts outside school as well as interaction with professional artists in the school environment.

To develop a coherent approach to skills investment, particularly to harnessing and retaining young talent in Northern Ireland, we need to start with our schools and with relevant careers advice and information about the creative sector. If young people do not know where the opportunities lie, the diversity of young people entering the sector and building a skilled workforce will be affected. This situation could be greatly improved with a coherent programme of investment, offering: relevant advice and information to equip careers advisors to talk about the variety of jobs in the creative sector; programmes of work to better connect education and industry; new routes to qualifications (potentially for NEETs) via the creative sector; the development of 'pre-apprenticeship' and work experience opportunities.

To help Northern Ireland's creative and cultural talent develop to the highest levels possible, we need to adopt an 'escalator' approach, linking the various stages in artists' career paths. This would start at pre-school stage, extend throughout the curriculum, into the F&HE institutions, paid apprenticeships and internships such as those currently facilitated through the NI Creative Employment Programme administered by Creative and Cultural Skills and funded by the Arts Council, professional development support programmes, then be sustained in an environment in which careers in the creative sector can flourish and be appreciated.

- **Sticky Fingers** are specialists in Early Years arts and in devising tailored arts activities for children, families, carers, teachers and childcare professionals. The company works with the Cedar Foundation, Irish Travellers Project and Autism Ireland.
- **Replay Theatre Company** provides multisensory theatre experiences for children and young people with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), embedding new creative strategies in the PMLD classroom
- **Kids in Control** is a professional theatre company running integrative physical theatre training for young people and teenagers. It works with community groups in areas of need and disadvantage and in partnership with schools to support the National Curriculum.

Relating to PfG outcomes:

The Arts Council strongly recommends that a commitment to investing in skills and career opportunities for individual artists needs to be enshrined in the PfG.

The Arts Council welcomes the recognition in PfG of the contribution arts and culture make to PfG

Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential

Outcome 14: We give our children and young people the best start in life

• **Economy (PfG indicators 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 41)**

The creative sector is one of our fastest growing sources of competitive strength, wealth and job creation. The arts promote Northern Ireland as a creative place with a creative workforce and as a location of choice for international businesses.

Successful economies are characterised by a strong creative sector and the creative industries are recognised across the world for their potential for wealth and job creation. They create wealth and jobs through the development of intellectual property and creative content, produces, services and experiences. The UN has recognised the global strength of the creative industries: “The creative economy is not only one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy, but also a highly transformative one in terms of income generation, job creation and export earnings.”

- The Creative and Cultural Industries are the UK’s fastest growing industry.
- The Creative Industries represent 5% of total employment in Northern Ireland (43,000 people) and generate £797m gross value added to the local economy.
- Creative Scotland estimates that arts and culture accounted for £3.2 billion GVA in the Scottish economy in 2010.

Official government statistics published in June 2016 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) reveal that the UK’s Creative Industries are continuing to outstrip other employment sectors in the UK:

- Jobs in the Creative Industries have increased three times faster than the UK average
- Exports of services from the UK’s Creative Industries increasing more than four times the rate of the UK total - contributing almost £20bn to the UK economy

The focus on the creative economy reflects the shift away from a strong manufacturing base to reliance on service-led industries and the knowledge economy. The success of the information economy, the tourism sector and the prosperity of our towns and cities are intimately linked to creative work.

The cultural and creative industries have an impact on us as individuals and in our shared culture – they shape our arts, contribute to our view of the world, influence our consumer choices and improve the enjoyment of environments in which we live and work. They also shape the way in which we are perceived by others around the world.

Artists are the lifeblood of the creative and cultural industries. The continuing success of the creative industries is contingent upon building the dynamic artistic base upon which the creative industries

depend. The growth of indigenous film and television industries, for instance, is built upon the available pool of skilled and talented actors, directors, playwrights, technicians and designers who receive their formative training in the publicly-funded theatre sector, through art colleges and F&HE institutions.

Arts Council-funded organisations provide year-round the full range of professional arts and entertainment services, from carnival and circus skills to theatre and opera.

- 5,974 employed
- 3,608 volunteers
- Belfast City Council estimates a return on investment of £8 for every £1 spent on the arts.
- Arts and cultural venues outside of Belfast make a net economic impact of over £8m each year.
- Despite the significant economic contribution of artists, their average salary is under £7,500.

The Warwick Commission report on the Future of Cultural Value, 'Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth' (2015) highlights the extent to which the success of the cultural and creative industries is dependent on the talent development, R&D, networks and career development opportunities that have been supported by public investment. Public spending on arts and culture is infinitesimal compared to their GVA and their contribution to the economic success of the broader creative and cultural industries. Reductions in levels of public investment not only affect the reach and impact of the arts and culture; they also impact on the quality and diversity of the content and talent that is the wellspring of the UK's Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem.

The Arts Council strongly recommends that a commitment to investing in skills and career opportunities for individual artists needs to be enshrined in the PfG. Investment would start by making art an integral part of the educational curriculum and extend into professional life.

Relating to PfG outcomes:

The Arts Council believes that the contribution arts and culture make to raise the international profile of Northern Ireland, to supporting the night-time economy, to attract tourism and to the development of the creative industries, warrants wider inclusion of arts and culture in the PfG .

Indicator 27 should be matched with the following outcomes.

Outcome 1: We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy

Outcome 6: We have more people working in better jobs

Outcome 12: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.

In relation to Outcome 12, the need for indicators on the quality of education, the skills profile of the population and competitiveness of the economy are obvious. However, investors look for more than that, and the quality of arts and culture and standards of excellence therein, are instrumental in raising the profile of Northern Ireland internationally and making it a creative, vibrant and forward-looking society to work and live in.

• Society (PfG indicators 26, 27, 28, 31, 35, 42)

Arts and culture have the widespread support of the general public:

- 81% of the public believing that the arts enrich the quality of our lives;
- 79% of adults and 96% of young people engage in the arts;
- 70% of people living in the most deprived areas engage in the arts.

Arts and culture are inextricably linked to social and cultural change in Northern Ireland. There is strong evidence that participation in the arts can contribute to community cohesion, reduce social exclusion and isolation and make communities feel safer and stronger. The arts have responded quickly and effectively to the region's changing social and cultural landscape. Through dedicated support initiatives the arts are successfully promoting cultural diversity and making a significant contribution to the Executive's priority of Building a Strong and Shared Community.

A stand-out example is the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013 programme which helps evidence the significant contribution of arts and culture to place-making and which established an international cultural reputation for the city.

The Warwick Commission Report on the Future of Cultural Value, 'Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth' (2015) prioritises the role of culture and creativity in generating a sense of identity, place and community. It asserts that 'the Cultural and Creative industries have a big role to play in successful place shaping', with 'major cultural events containing the potential to renew and strengthen infrastructures and revitalise community pride, and enhance the reputation of cities and communities internationally'. The annual Culture Night in Belfast, for instance, attracts 65,000 people to the city centre, bringing our communities together and making the city centre a shared space for everyone to enjoy.

Promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion have been central to the role of publicly-funded arts for decades. With dedicated expertise, the arts are a key instrument in connecting individuals and communities to new opportunities, learning and practical life-enhancing benefit.

Arts and culture play an important part in defining and preserving cultural identity; of the individual, of communities, and of a nation as a whole. They define who we are, in our own eyes and in the eyes of the world. They bring people and communities closer together. They are powerful catalysts for community regeneration. They provide the tools that enable our distinctive cultures to promote themselves in affirmative and inclusive ways and they provide creative solutions to the legacies of the past. They introduce a new dimension to the efforts of government agencies working in the field of social and economic regeneration.

- Specific arts-led community regeneration initiatives such as the '**Building Peace through the Arts; Re-imagining Communities Programme**' have involved almost 20,000 people, nearly all new to the arts, who embraced change and through the arts realised new possibilities and new potential for their communities. There is a direct link between the outcomes of this programme and the four themes of Together Building a United Community.
- The **Intercultural Arts Programme** provides a strong response to NI's changing social and cultural landscape, promoting cultural diversity and understanding by bringing our diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds together through shared creative and cultural activities. It contributes to the Executive's Building a Strong and Shared Community. More than 3,500 people from marginalised and harder-to-reach communities in NI have participated to date.

All arts organisations funded by the Arts Council engage fully in Community Engagement. Their education and outreach programmes bring a wealth of high-quality opportunities to learn and develop, for younger and older people alike, across Northern Ireland. Almost half of all activity delivered by the Arts Council's 112 core clients is outreach.

Arts and cultural organisations engage proactively with harder-to-reach and disadvantaged communities. For example:

- **174 Trust/Duncairn Arts and Cultural Centre** serves four of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland on a cross-community basis, targeting older people, disabled people, young people and BME groups.
- **The Playhouse** engages local young people with the PSNI to improve relations, deter anti-social behaviour and re-connect young people with education and training.
- **Prison Arts Foundation** provides arts-based programmes in NI prisons which lead to improved internal relationships and improved rehabilitation into society.
- **ArtsEkta** works across the community, education and health sectors, connecting cultures and communities through pioneering intercultural outreach programmes designed to deepen and strengthen understanding and relationships between diverse communities.

The Arts Council's Building Peace through the Arts – Reimagining Communities Programme is particularly relevant to the outcomes below. An arts-led community regeneration scheme operating in economically disadvantaged and marginalised communities throughout Northern Ireland it has helped 20,000 people embrace change through the arts. The programme engaged artists to work with local communities to challenge sectarian and racist attitudes and to develop public art that supports reconciliation.

Relating to PfG outcomes:

The Arts Council welcomes the recognition in PfG of the contribution arts and culture make to PfG Outcome 9: We are a shared society that respects diversity

Outcome 10: We are a confident, welcoming, outward-looking society.

The Arts Council believes that the contribution of arts and culture to building a stronger community warrants inclusion of arts and culture in PfG

Outcome 3: We have a more equal society

Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other.

● **Tourism (PfG indicators 30, 40)**

UK research provides an indicator of the potential impact of 'cultural tourism' on the NI economy.

- 10 million visits to the UK involved engagement with the arts, representing 32% of all visits and 42% (£7.6 billion) of all tourism-related expenditure.
- In the UK, museums are regarded as the fourth best activity out of 32 and rank third on visitors' to-do lists.

Arts and culture are vital ingredients in Northern Ireland's success, both here and overseas. The arts put Northern Ireland on the world map for all the right reasons, raising our profile as the kind of vibrant, creative and forward-looking place where you would want to live, work, and invest. They offer one of the main attractions for tourists and, in a competitive global marketplace, distinguish us

from other places.

Arts and culture create additional spending by tourists in two ways. Some visit primarily for arts and culture attractions while others take part in such activities during trips that are made for other purposes, potentially extending trips and generating additional spending.

In Northern Ireland, cultural festivals and events are acknowledged by Tourism NI as key anchors for cultural tourism.

- **Belfast Culture Night** attracted 65,000 people to the city centre for 200 free family events, contributing to an estimated £2.5m spend in the city.
- **Tourism NI** estimates that five of the big arts events of the Derry~Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013 together produced £20 return on every £1 invested; £15.5m tourism impact; 330,396 visitors.
- **The 2012 Ulster Bank Belfast Festival at Queen's** generated £2m benefit to local businesses; £577,180 tourism revenue; 311 full-time equivalent jobs

Relating to PfG outcomes:

The Arts Council welcomes the PfG recognition of arts and culture within Outcome 12: We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest. Appropriate measures for Arts and Culture should also be added to Indicator 40: Improve our International Reputation and Indicator 30: Improve our attractiveness as a destination.

I submit this response on behalf of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for your careful consideration.

Roisín McDonough

Chief Executive