



## Establishment of the Dublin City Council Cultural Company

### 1. Introduction

As Members are aware, Dublin's bid for European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2020 designation was unsuccessful. However the legacy of the bid has been profound as a consequence of the partnership and engagement methods used during the bid process and the strong relationships built up through cultural initiatives in city neighbourhoods and communities. As a result of the success of the Bid process, Dublin City Council established a legacy Programme to implement the vision and some of the projects set out in the Bid Book called Dublin's Culture Connects.

Dublin's Culture Connects' purpose is to engage in partnership with citizens and the cultural community to produce relevant, high quality inclusive cultural projects and programmes that connect citizens to their neighbourhoods and their city.

The Programme currently comprises four projects:

1. **The National Neighbourhood** is a partnership between the eight National Cultural Institutions located in Dublin brokered by the City Arts Office and DAHGRA and supported by the Area Managers and their teams of all five Administrative Areas and Dublin City Public Libraries. The starting point is extensive consultation with local residents leading to projects developed on themes they raise and wish to work with and matched to artists who wish to work on these themes and through co-creation with community in specific city neighbourhoods.
2. **Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin** is a partnership with Business to Arts where four cultural organisations were selected through an Open Call to receive €15,000 each (which must be matched by themselves) to employ a Development and Fundraising Manager to be trained and mentored by Business to Arts until the end of 2018. They will further create opportunities for 12 months training and mentorship for small cultural and community organisations in 2018. Over the period focus groups will be organised in the area of marketing and sponsorship.
3. **Cultural Audit & Mapping Project** is a city wide project that, through desk research and public consultation, establishes the current stock of cultural infrastructure (e.g. buildings and facilities including parks) and also seeks to take stock of 'soft' infrastructure (e.g. organisations, people). This will be used internally within Dublin City Council (for planners for example) and externally (for public, visitors). It is being developed in cooperation across 7 Sections of Dublin City Council and with external partners in business and tourism.
4. **E.U. Lab** is a support mechanism for Dublin City Council Departments to build capacity in securing E.U. Funding particularly across cultural and social Funds such as UrbAct Interreg, Creative Europe, and Erasmus+. Up to ten applications are targeted to be delivered in 2017. Some applications are in process, one is already successful.

## **2. Current Systems & Oversight**

Overall the work of Dublin's Culture Connects engages the services of up to thirty contractors. These Contractors have been procured in keeping with the Dublin City Council Procurement Guidelines. Council oversight of the project to date has been provided by the City Arts Officer reporting to the Assistant Chief Executive, through reports to the Arts and Cultural Advisory Group and through a standing item on the Arts, Culture and Recreation SPC agenda that reports on the Cultural Strategy of Dublin City Council (2015-2021). Area Committees have engaged strongly with the initiative and many Councillors have attended Advisory Group meetings, launches and events.

It is important to note that although the City Arts Officer was responsible for the ECOC Bid and the City Arts Office is responsible for payments, Dublin's Culture Connects is a CRES Departmental and inter Departmental initiative functioning as a separate unit within Dublin City Council. (It operates from Council offices located at Palace Street). Its function is not simply to deliver projects but to build capacity for and within Dublin City Council to enable the population of Dublin to engage in cultural initiatives that connect them to their city. The projects aim to support community development, social inclusion, economic development and environmental protection. For the past three years, the project has worked within Dublin City Council's administrative structures but this approach was always seen as temporary. Employment and longer-term contracts for service will be required for long-term sustainability.

The Contractors employed have provided services such as facilitation and community outreach, project management and event control. In addition, many of the contractors are cultural or artistic specialists such as curators, practicing artists or arts organisations. City Council officials from the Arts Office, Area Offices, Community Development, IT services, CRES admin etc. have facilitated and provided support to these programmes and contractors as they do with all project delivery across the City Council. Almost all of the contractors of Dublin Culture Connects come from a population of cultural practitioners that are highly mobile in employment and generally not seeking full time positions but are accustomed to short-term contracts and flexible working hours. Therefore, it would be difficult to create positions within the City Council that would provide the required flexibility on a long-term basis for both employee and employer.

## **3. Proposal to Establish Dublin City Council Cultural Company**

However, as this important programme consolidates, the City Council has a responsibility to create fair and equitable working conditions in keeping with best employment practice. The allocated budget for Dublin's Culture Connects is €0.750m in 2017 and it may rise to €1.000M in 2018. Having fulfilled two years of programming it is now important to consolidate the successes of Dublin Culture Connects by placing the programme on a more sustainable and stable footing.

The options for dealing with the long-term sustainability of this programme could be resolved by securing the services of a third party to deliver this programme. However, my preferred option is to create a Dublin City Council Cultural Company to ensure the appropriate degree of both City Council oversight and operational flexibility hence the decision to establish the Dublin City Council Cultural Company. This new Company will be a company limited by guarantee (CLG) with the Dublin City Council Chief Executive as its Sole Member, in accordance with normal practice for City Council companies.

I am proposing that the Board of the Cultural Company will consist of seven directors reflecting the skills set required for the oversight of cultural programmes and buildings as well as HR, legal and finance expertise. I am proposing that two Elected Members will provide the City Councillor oversight and I have invited the Lord Mayor and the Chair of the Arts, Culture & Recreation SPC to take up these positions. I am also proposing that Assistant Chief Executive, Richard Shakespeare, will chair the Board and will be joined from the Executive by the City Arts Officer.

There will be three independent directors appointed by the Member, one with Heritage Buildings/Programme experience, one from and Arts/Cultural background, and one with legal and financial expertise. The directors appointed will not receive any remuneration for their work with the Company. The Board members will receive appropriate corporate governance training.

The Company will appoint an Interim CEO for a short period until a public competition is organised for the post. The remaining months of 2017 will be taken up in creating systems and contracts of employment as well as appropriate training. The interim CEO will be asked to report regularly to the Arts, Culture & Recreation SPC. The new Company will adhere to Procurement Guidelines in keeping with its purpose. The Board will outsource the HR and finance functions including employment contracts, procurement and payroll.

The Company will also be tasked with the management of the Dublin Tenement Museum. Dublin City Council owns No. 14 Henrietta Street and has developed the historic, 18th century building as a museum, archive and research centre, with a primary focus on the social and architectural history of the house and the broader area. Physical work on the building and the visitor experience is complete and the Museum is open to the public under a temporary Management Company. Many of the employment issues affecting Dublin Culture Connects will also affect the Tenement Museum. It is common practice with local authority owned Arts Centre or Museums that day-to-day management is the responsibility of a separate company.

Other projects may be taken on by the Dublin City Council Cultural Company over time and their selection will be based on how best to achieve sustainability for the project building or programme.

I would ask the Elected Members to note this Report. Regular reports on the new Company will issue as set out above to the Arts, Culture and Recreation SPC.

**Owen P. Keegan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**13<sup>th</sup> November 2017**