

**Minutes of the Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
on Friday 26th November 2021 at 2 p.m. via Microsoft Teams**

Members in attendance:

Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn (Chairperson)	Galway County Council
Cllr. Padraic Mac an Iomaire	Galway County Council
Cllr. Andrew Reddington	Galway County Council
Helena McElmeel	Business Representative
Mairtin Davy	PPN Representative

Staff in attendance:

Liam Hanrahan	Director of Services
Alan Farrell	Senior Executive Officer
Sharon O'Grady	Arts Officer
Mary McGann	Administrative Officer
Bernie Kelly	A/County Librarian
Andrew McBride	Healthy Ireland Coordinator

Apologies:

Cllr. Ivan Canning	Galway County Council
Cllr. Liam Carroll	Galway County Council
Cllr. Peter Keaveney	Galway County Council
Megan Flynn	PPN Representative

Cllr. Herterich Quinn welcomed everyone to the Community and Culture SPC 2021 and thanked everyone for their attendance online and noted the apologies received.

1. Minutes of Community and Culture SPC meeting held on 27th April 2021

Cllr. Herterich Quinn asked if there were any matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting of the SPC. No queries arose.

On the proposal of Cllr. Andrew Reddington seconded by Máirtín Davy, the Minutes were agreed and adopted.

2. Creative Ireland Programme 2021 - Update

Ms. Sharon O'Grady, Arts Officer gave a presentation on the Creative Ireland Programme 2021 outlining the breakdown of the total expenditure of €177,811 across categories such as Bursaries, Culture Team projects, Cruinniú na nÓg, Creativity in Older People and a once-off project this year which was the Wandering Kite Festival. Ms. O'Grady outlined the strategic framework for the projects and confirmed that a new local strategy would be put in place once the continuation of the programme was confirmed beyond 2022. In addition, she stressed the added value brought to the Programme through the addition of Ms. Ruth Gordon being a dedicated resource for managing the implementation of the various projects and programme developed under the funding.

Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn thanked Sharon O'Grady and Ruth Gordon, Creative Ireland Project Manager for their work on the programme, particularly in light of the challenges in delivering projects over the last year, and also agreed that with the importance of a dedicated Coordinators role and queried if this would be continued. In response, Liam Hanrahan, Director of Services, confirmed that the national Creative Ireland project would be continued until 2027 and discussions and negotiations were continuing with the Department regarding the associated resource requirements.

Máirtín Davy requested information on the remit and rules and requirements regarding Creative Ireland project applications and in response, S. O'Grady confirmed that projects could emerge from discussions with the various members of the Culture Team or through the direct application process for Creative Ireland Bursaries. The latter was a competitive process, where projects were assessed by both the internal Culture Team and external professional judges to ensure that projects aligned with the 8 strategic priorities of Creative Ireland. Liam Hanrahan confirmed that a range of assessment criteria would be applied including the quality of engagement, artistic merit, in addition to the numbers who were engaged on any particular project. Alan Farrell advised that direct contact with the relevant Culture Team Member was recommended in addition to attendance at Funding Workshops which outlined the application and assessment processes across a range of funding schemes.

3. LCDC Healthy Galway County Plan – Consultation on Priority Themes

Andrew McBride, Healthy Ireland Fund Coordinator, gave a presentation on the Healthy Galway County Plan which is being developed by Galway County LCDC (Local Community Development Committee) under the Healthy Ireland Programme, and outlined that the purpose of this presentation was to determine what areas were deemed priorities by the SPC so that this would feed back into the development of the local Plan.

A McBride confirmed that the Healthy Galway Plan is being developed taking into account the current national, regional and local policies across 6 thematic areas, and priority actions will be developed to align with the 4 goals of the Healthy Ireland Framework at national level, i.e.,

1. Increase the proportion of people that are healthy at all stages of life
2. Reduce health inequalities
3. Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing
4. Create an environment where every individual and sector in society can play their part in achieving a Healthy Ireland.

A McBride then outlined the national policies and the latest statistical data from analysis and research at national and local level across the 6 thematic areas, and the projects which were currently being developed by the LCDC under Round 3 of the Fund. The thematic areas outlined were:

- Physical Activity
- Nutrition and Healthy Eating
- Mental Health
- Sexual Health
- Tobacco and Alcohol
- Spaces and Places for Wellbeing

Cllr Herterich Quinn thanked Andrew McBride for the comprehensive presentation and the work taking place in this area and stated that it was clear that a cultural shift was required across a number of areas such as healthy eating and exercise and ensuring there was better access to services such as community transport which impacted on the quality of life for older people who may be living in rural isolation. Cllr Herterich Quinn also raised the issue of the lack of spaces and places for older teenagers and the need to emphasise the provision of additional outdoor activities for youth in response to the concerning level of mental health issues for young people.

Mairtin Davy raised the issue of ensuring night-time activities were safely available in isolated areas and ensuring signposting to information on healthy eating.

Helena McElmeel commented on the very broad topics in the Healthy Galway County Plan and the linkages across the various thematic areas. In particular, she stressed the importance of the walkability of the Public Realm and how this can impact on nutrition and healthy eating by integrating edible landscapes into design of public spaces and housing at local level. Ms. McElmeel also stressed the importance of a range of recreational activities for young people, stating that young people who were not interested in sport had a lack of recreational outlets at local level. In addition, she stressed the importance of creating a variety of play spaces

throughout the public realm to implement children's 'right to roam' and ensure they could interact with a range of natural and diverse landscapes.

In response to the issues raised, A. McBride acknowledged the importance of unstructured play for children and advised that the Community Department are liaising with the Planet Youth project to determine how we can audit and build on the range of recreational and leisure outlets available to youth across the County.

Cllr Andrew Reddington thanked Sharon O'Grady and Andrew Mc Bride for the very informative presentations.

4. Community Activities Fund & Community Support Schemes – Consultation on Priority Areas

Mary McGann, Administrative Officer, confirmed that the Department of Rural and Community Development had launched the Community Activities Fund under the Community Enhancement Programme with a national budget of €9m. Ms. McGann confirmed that the details of the Community Activities Fund were agreed by the LCDC at their meeting this week but we were awaiting Irish documentation, and discussion with the SPC regarding any potential overlaps or added value with the Community Support Schemes, before advertising both funding schemes.

M. McGann confirmed that €286,802 had been allocated to Galway County LCDC under the Community Activities Fund, and the purpose of the Fund was to provide small grants to community groups impacted by the pandemic towards 2 areas:

- A. Operating/Running Costs covering the period 1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022
- B. Equipment or the Upgrade of Community Facilities

M. McGann confirmed that the purpose of this scheme, and all of the LCDC schemes, was to address disadvantage according to the LECP (Local Economic and Community Plan) and in this case, the LCDC had determined that the priority for the scheme should be to improve social inclusion and community wellbeing. M. McGann also outlined potential differences between the Community Enhancement Programme and the Community Support Schemes, in that the LCDC Schemes must have regard to the relative level of deprivation in areas to ensure it was focused on addressing disadvantage, and this would be a factor in the assessment process.

M. McGann presented some amendments to the Community Support Scheme for Community Development, which addressed some of the issues which had been raised regarding health

and wellbeing and emerged as part of the consultation process on the Healthy County Galway Plan. These were presented across the 3 areas in the funding scheme as follows:

- A. Community Facilities – it was recommended that funding be made available for Access Audits, Energy Audits and Safety Audits in order to identify works required at community facilities and add value to applications towards other funding schemes for these works.
- B. Community Tidy Towns Initiatives and Amenity Projects – in addition to the existing areas for funding, it was proposed to invite applications for innovative and safe re-use of unused or underused spaces to be repurposed as play spaces, youth spaces, family friendly or age friendly pocket parks, and to encourage these spaces to be re-imagined in consultation with local professional expertise to comply with all safety and technical considerations.
- C. Social Inclusion – in order to combat the increasing levels of loneliness and social isolation which have arisen as a result of the pandemic, and its effects on physical and mental wellbeing, it is proposed to invite communities to apply for a range of events, activities, workshops, or associated equipment, to meet the needs of their local community and maximise the use of local indoor and outdoor facilities.

Cllr. Andrew Reddington welcomes the availability of funding towards running costs and insurance and stated that this will be very important in terms of keeping community groups afloat at this time.

Helena McElmeel welcomed the linkages which had been formed in the funding scheme with the issues which have been raised through the Healthy Ireland analysis and consultations.

Máirtín Davy queried the application process for the Community Activities Fund and the level of funding which may be available to individual groups and in response, M. McGann confirmed that the Department had requested a widespread awareness campaign to ensure that all Groups at grassroots level were aware of the funding support. Therefore, it was very likely that the scheme would be over-subscribed and the level of funding which could be made available to individual groups would have to be determined as part of the assessment process to ensure a fair and equitable approach. M. McGann also confirmed that advice would be given to all groups on how to submit a completed application, and the criteria of the scheme, at a webinar to be arranged through the PPN.

5. Any Other Business

Bernie Kelly, A/County Librarian, outlined that the Library Service worked in collaboration across all of the areas of the presentations and highlighted “Healthy Ireland at your Library” which provided a stock of materials, events, and a point of contact for trusted information across a range of areas. She confirmed that the Library Service was taking part in the national campaign entitled “Drop into your Local Library” and was the second library service nationally to go “Jam Card Friendly” by implementing a training programme to ensure all staff were more responsible to the need of Jam Card Users by giving them ‘just a minute’ more.

6. Date for next meeting

The date for the next meeting was confirmed as 14th December 2021 at 11a.m. and will be held online via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting then concluded.