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Foreword

Louth can rightly be proud of its musicians, writers, filmmakers, visual artists, architects, actors and dancers. From the Boyne to the Cooleys, creativity in all its forms is flourishing. What we must do is to support those making art, and assist individuals who wish to participate, both as makers and as audiences.

Drogheda Borough Council, Dundalk Town Council, and Louth County Council have adopted this Plan as the chief means by which the arts will be progressed up to 2008. The Plan has been informed by lengthy consultation, healthy debate, review at Strategic Policy Committee level, and finally by adoption by all three Councils. We are delighted to reaffirm local authority support for the arts, which do so much to improve the quality of life, and we look forward to maintaining the strong levels of cooperation between the local authorities and corporate partners which have been so obvious in the development of the Plan.

Cllr. Tommy Murphy, Mayor of Drogheda, Drogheda Borough Council

Cllr. Martin Bellew, Chairman, Dundalk Town Council

Cllr. Peter Savage, Chairman, Louth County Council
Message from County Manager

Louth Local Authorities have come together to produce this Plan which will inform and direct our support for the development of the arts in Louth for the next number of years. Louth has seen unparalleled growth in infrastructure throughout the county in recent years, with significant improvements to our roads, sanitation and housing resources. It is important that we should consider the development of access to the arts in the same way, and plan accordingly. While Louth Local Authorities have been progressive in their support for the arts over the years, the development of this, the first Arts Plan for Louth, allows us to harness our resources and coordinate our thinking and our activities.

This Plan is based on the understanding that by strengthening the means of providing access to the arts, individuals, communities and society as a whole will benefit. The Plan rightly assigns importance to the artist, as the person who reflects and inspires, and who must be supported and celebrated, but also emphasises the importance of increasing participation by all in arts activities.

I am delighted that the in-depth consultation process has provided us with a blueprint for the future, and I look forward to cooperation between Louth Local Authorities and our local and national partners in its implementation, and through its actions, to significantly increase participation in the arts in County Louth.

Martina Moloney, County Manager
Setting the Context
Setting the Context

The legislative underpinning of the Louth Arts Plan is provided by the Arts Act 2003. This Act repeals the Arts Act 1951 and the Arts Act 1973, and sets out the following in relation to local authorities and the arts.

"Part 2.6.

(1) A local authority shall, for the purposes of section 67 of the Local Government Act 2001, prepare and implement plans for the development of the arts within its functional area and shall, in so doing, take account of policies of the Government in relation to the arts.

(2) A local authority may provide such financial or other assistance as it considers appropriate to such persons or in respect of such activities, projects or undertakings, for the purposes of -

(a) stimulating public interest in the arts
(b) promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, or
(c) improving standards in the arts, within its functional area."

The Louth County Development Board Strategy has, as one of its aims, the creation of a countywide arts plan, and it is envisaged that the Louth Arts Plan will also form part of the Louth Local Authorities’ Corporate Plan.

County Louth is the smallest county in Ireland, with an area of 821 square kilometres. According to the figures from the Central Statistics Office, 2002, Louth has a population of 101,821, the 13th largest in the Republic. The majority of the inhabitants are urban dwellers, with the three largest towns being Drogheda (28,333), Dundalk (27,385), and Ardee (3,564). Louth has one of the highest population densities in Ireland.

The landscape of County Louth represents part of the rich glacial drift-covered midlands, which extends north as far as Dundalk. North of the town are the mountains of the Cooley peninsula. The county borders three Ulster counties, Armagh, Down and Monaghan and these Ulster borderlands are marked by extensive drumlin landscapes of small hills.

Meath borders the southern half of the county, where the rich agricultural landscape is marked by an impressive legacy of rural buildings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Drogheda is situated on the narrowest tidal point on the River Boyne, and it remains a busy port. The town is based on an Anglo-Norman foundation, when a twelfth century motte was built on the south side of the river at Millmount,
protecting the Norman bridge. Drogheda was one of the largest and most important medieval walled towns, enclosing 46 hectares. By the nineteenth century, Drogheda was a centre for the linen industry, while flour-milling and brewing also provided employment. Today the population of Drogheda is growing rapidly due, in the main, to an influx of workers who commute to Dublin to work, and their families.

Louth occupies an important strategic position in the eastern economic corridor between Belfast and Dublin, containing two of the most important road connections, the M1 and the N2. Situated on the N2 is Ardee, which at one time was frequently attacked by the Irish of south Ulster, due to its position as a frontier town of the English Pale. The town services a large agricultural hinterland and is home to Ardee Castle, the largest existing urban tower-house in Europe. In mythology, Ardee is the scene of the meeting place of Cú Chulainn, the hero of Ulster, and Ferdia, Maeve's champion, in the epic tale 'Táin Bó Cuailgne'.

The town of Louth was an important medieval borough in the thirteenth century, containing an Augustinian Abbey from 1148. It is now a village, long superseded by Dundalk, which became the county town and secured the northern edge of the Pale during the Middle Ages. The introduction of the linen trade by the Earl of Clanbrassil in the eighteenth century marked the start of Dundalk's industrial development. Brewing has been important for more than 300 years, while P.J. Carroll's tobacco works has operated since 1824. Dundalk's industrial core was the locomotive works of the Great Northern Railway, which at one time employed more than 1,300 people. Industrial decline in the 1960s was accentuated by the town's location on the Border. Recent renewal has seen the development of new retail centres and a housing boom. Dundalk Institute of Technology has provided third-level education since 1970, and has diversified its range of courses in recent years.

Louth has a considerably lower deprivation index score (11.0) than the national average (17.4). This is based on the Hasse Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation, which takes into consideration the underlying dimensions of deprivation - social class, demographic and labour market deprivation. The scores range from -50 to +50 with -50 being extremely deprived and +50 extremely affluent.

It can be seen that Louth has suffered significant economic deprivation; the deprivation score in 1991 was -3.3. However, this rose to 3.3 in 1996, and the 2002 figure was 11.0. These figures reflect significant positive economic changes.

"Rhyme and Rhythm", by Sandra Bell, Cast Bronze, Earl Street, Dundalk - part of Phase 1 of Louth Local Authorities' Per Cent For Art Scheme.
Ardee Baroque 2004 - (Photo: Alan Betson / The Irish Times)
The Arts in Louth
The Arts in Louth

Louth is home to a large number of amateur drama groups, musical societies, choirs, Comhaltas branches, painting clubs, brass and concert bands, and a pantomime society. In recent years, these thriving non-professional organisations have been joined by a number of professional theatre companies, most notably, Calipo and Upstate, both currently based in Drogheda. Similarly, there has been a rise in the number of visual artists and musicians who derive most, if not all, of their income through their professional practice.

Music making, in all its forms, has been historically strong in Louth. Classical music has been well served through the commitment and excellence of teachers, both within and outside the formal education system. The success of the Cross-Border Orchestra reflects the undoubted talent of the young players, but also the vision and determination of the leadership, north and south, of this unique and well-travelled ensemble. Traditional music in Louth continues to produce virtuosos, dedicated teachers, and players who keep the tradition alive. Gerry O’Connor, Donal O’Connor, Sean Corcoran, Brendan Larissy, and the Táin Céilí Band, among others, have a national profile. Indeed, several generations of the O’Connor family from Dundalk have researched, played, and recorded music and song native to north Louth, thus preserving a valuable part of our musical heritage.

Rock music venues such as the Spirit Store in Dundalk and Solas in Drogheda have brought the best of contemporary popular music to Louth and have, directly or indirectly, supported young bands and performers in their efforts. The worldwide success of The Corrs has proven to all that small beginnings can lead to major achievement. Dundalk Town Council’s decision to adopt a specially commissioned report which advocated the establishment of subsidised rehearsal and recording facilities for young bands reinforces the importance of music as a form of self-expression for many young people.

The arts in Louth are vibrant and innovative. Féile Uí Mhéith, the Dundalk International Maytime Drama Festival, Bridge Street Studios, Feis Dhún Dealgan, Ardee Concert Band, the County Fleadh, the Little Duke Theatre, Ardee Baroque, the Drogheda Samba Festival, the Traditional Weekend in Drogheda, amongst others, all reflect the interests and talents of the residents of Louth. We must begin, however, to see these festivals and initiatives as part of a great quilt of culture that exists in our county. Perhaps we have been happy to work in small constituencies, concentrating on small sections of the county, let alone aiming for a national audience. Louth is too small to have divided audiences, both from a financial point of view and from the point of view of a sense of identity. There exists the potential to develop a new sense of Louth, and the arts are one of the primary shapers of all ideas of identity.

This Plan aims to strengthen and give voice to the stories and experiences of every corner of Louth. It also aspires to create a stronger sense of pride in the achievements, history and potential of a county which has struggled for a long time to project a comfortable and unified persona to the outside world. Through the celebration of our artists and their endeavours, we can help to create a new sense of Louth. This Plan is a starting point.
The Local Authority Arts Service in Louth
The Local Authority Arts Service in Louth

Dundalk Town Council employed its first full time Arts Officer in 1989, thus becoming only the second local authority in the country to do so.

In 2002, Louth County Council appointed the first County Arts Officer and, in the same year, Drogheda Borough Council followed suit.

Each Arts Officer reports to the Town Clerk or Director of Service within their local authority, but work in an integrated way across Councils. Together, the three Arts Officers provide an arts service for the county as a whole.

There are five main areas of activity

1. Arts Grants and Awards.

Funding opportunities for both professional and non-professional artists and arts organisations are made available twice each year. Applications are adjudicated upon following recommendations by the relevant Arts Officer and external adjudication, where relevant.

- **Arts Act Grants**

  This scheme aims to support arts activity, both professional and voluntary, by community groups and individuals. Financial support for events, projects and arts initiatives of all kinds is made available through these grants, which have closing dates in March and September.

- **Young Music Awards**

  This scheme aims to encourage music performance of all kinds among young people. Awarded through audition, the Young Music Awards are open to musicians aged between 12 and 18. All musical instruments and styles are eligible. The closing date is in March.
The MacArdle Award

This award promotes excellence in classical music performance among young musicians in Louth. Endowed by the MacArdle family of brewing renown, this award is also adjudicated through audition. Musicians studying classical music between the ages of 13 and 21 are eligible. Although open to young musicians throughout the county, the MacArdle Award is administered by the Arts Office of Dundalk Town Council. Closing date is in March.

Schools Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme

This scheme aims to equip schools with musical instruments for use by students. Each year, these awards of €1,300 are made to three schools in the county for the purchase of musical instruments. Each successful school will have made their case in terms of need and in terms of what they will do with the award. The scheme offers first and second level students opportunities to participate in music making activities. Closing date is also in March.

The Tyrone Guthrie Centre Regional Bursary Award

Three artists are offered the opportunity each year to spend two weeks in residency at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan. The award allows visual artists, writers, composers, dancers and musicians to concentrate on their own work in a supportive environment. Closing date is in September.

Scholarships to the Drama League of Ireland Summer School

Three Scholarships are offered each year to support the development and training of individuals and groups in the area of drama. Successful applicants attend the annual Summer School, learning new skills and approaches which can be brought back to a wider audience in the County.

The Chairman's/Mayor's Award

This award was established to recognise the contribution to the arts of an individual or organisation over a sustained period of time. The Award, which takes the form of a financial gratuity, is decided upon by the current Chairman or Mayor of each local authority.

Annual Subventions

These are financial supports to organisations involved in the arts and are included in the Council’s budget each year. Examples include a number of Brass Bands, Droichead Arts Centre, and the Dundalk International Maytime Drama Festival.
2. Information and Advice

Information each Arts Officer receives on the Arts in County Louth is disseminated by the arts service through a variety of channels. These include local and national newspapers and radio, promotional material, mail-outs, and publications produced by the Arts Offices.

In addition, each Arts Officer deals with hundreds of requests for advice and information each year, on subjects as diverse as local, national and international funding, contract details, project facilitation and career development.

The Arts Office on the Market Square, Dundalk, is particularly well suited to act as a public arts information centre. Open five days a week and centrally located, it is currently the largest dedicated arts information centre in the Republic of Ireland.

3. Programming

A wide range of events and performances are organised by the Arts Service.

St. Peter’s Church of Ireland, Drogheda, has been the venue for an innovative programme of high quality classical and traditional music concerts organised by the Arts Office of Drogheda Borough Council.

Mannheim Musikhochschule Kammerchor performing at St. Peter’s Church of Ireland, Drogheda.
An Táin at the Town Hall Theatre and the County Museum, Dundalk are regular venues for music, theatre and dance performances organised by the Arts Office of Dundalk Town Council.

Other venues which have been utilised for arts events organised or supported by the Arts Service include Stephenstown Pond Visitors Centre, Ardee Community Centre, Ardee Castle, The Holy Trinity Centre, Carlingford, Droichead Arts Centre, Millmount Museum and Craft Centre, St. Nicholas Church of Ireland, Dundalk, Ice house Hill Park and St. Helena’s Park, both in Dundalk, Tullyallen Parochial Hall, and Walshestown National School.

In Dundalk, the Basement Gallery is presently programmed and managed by the Arts Office of Dundalk Town Council. Hosting eleven month-long exhibitions each year along with a programme of workshops and artists talks, The Basement Gallery has established itself as a visual arts venue with a strong emphasis on showing the work of young artists whose work is rooted in contemporary practice. Both Katie Holten from Ardee, who represented Ireland at the 2002 Venice Biennale, and Caroline McCarthy from Dundalk, winner of the prestigious A.I.B. Award, had their first solo shows in the Basement Gallery.

Louth Local Authority Art Collections

Drogheda Borough Council’s Art Collection is the most extensive and valuable of the three collections. Due in no small part to the foresight of Bea Orpen and her husband, C.E.F. Trench, who co-founded the Drogheda Municipal Art Gallery Committee in 1946, the collection is both wide-ranging and of high quality.

The Art Collection of Dundalk Town Council is comprised largely of pieces purchased from exhibitions in the Basement Gallery within the last ten years. Louth County Council has a small but growing collection.
**Public Art**

The majority of public art works in County Louth have been commissioned through the Per Cent for Art Scheme, which allows funding for art works alongside public capital works.

Due to the significant infrastructural developments taking place in Louth over the last number of years, over twenty sculptural pieces have been placed throughout the length and breadth of the county.

Private benefactors have also presented commissioned work to Louth Local Authorities, most notably Martin and Carmel Naughton, whose generosity has had significant impact on public art in Dundalk, through the commissioning of work in Ice House Hill Park.

### 4. Developmental and Community Arts

**Residency Programme**

This countywide scheme allows a school, community group, club or arts organisation to work in partnership with an artist from a range of disciplines. The residency lasts for an agreed period of time, and offers an opportunity for greater understanding of both the role of an artist and the challenges facing the host group. Louth Local Authorities’ Artist-in-Residence Scheme is supported by the Arts Council.

**Young People and the Arts**

The Arts Service aims to facilitate participation in the arts by young people, both within and outside the formal education system. A number of youth arts projects, ranging in size and scale are initiated or supported annually by Louth Local Authorities.

Dundalk Youth Theatre Company was formed from two previous initiatives in Dundalk. Since 1994, it has been supported by, and based in the Arts Office of Dundalk Town Council. In recent years D.Y.T.C. has commissioned new writing from contemporary playwrights such as Mark O’Rowe, which have been staged in Louth and Dublin.

Droichead Youth Theatre, which is structured and funded differently, has been similarly active with regular workshops, performances and exchanges.
Drogheda Borough Council Arts Office initiated a very successful Young Songwriters' Week in 2003. With Juliet Turner advising and guiding young musicians and songwriters over a week, and with representatives from the music industry and media participating in an information night, the positive feedback ensured that this initiative will become an annual fixture.

In 2004 the Arts Office in Drogheda initiated a new 3-day film school for teenagers, which also proved very successful. From Script to Screen was presented in association with Calipo Theatre and Picture Company and participants took part in script writing and drama workshops. The course will be broadened next year and it will also become an annual feature.
Arts in Education

The Arts Service aims to co-operate and collaborate with primary, secondary and third level institutions to provide quality arts experiences for all students in the formal education system. Very often people only get an opportunity to experience and participate in the arts when they are in school. The Arts Service will continue to work closely with schools throughout Louth to increase opportunities for young people to experience and participate in the arts.

In 2005, the Arts Service funded an initiative in which three schools in County Louth took part in Composition Workshops organised by the National Chamber Choir, culminating in performances of new compositions in the National Gallery.

Theatre performances in schools, or in accessible venues, are organised by the Arts Service in Louth. Recent performances of specially commissioned drama for young people include work by Barnstorm, Team Theatre Company and Piparella.

Through the aforementioned residency programme schools in Dundalk, Drogheda and Carlingford have had the opportunity to work closely with professional artists for a period of six months. A broad range of artists-in-residence have worked in schools including a fabric artist, ceramicist, scriptwriter, poet, visual artist and dancer.

The Arts Service also organises a number of shorter programmes and once off workshops for primary and secondary schools. Workshops to date have included traditional Irish Music, dance, creative writing, drama, classical music and visual arts.

Community Arts Projects

Louth Local Authorities are committed to working with people who have no history of artistic involvement, little belief in their own creative ability, and restricted access to arts activities. Arts projects which combat these drawbacks can increase personal self-confidence, empower marginalised groups and strengthen social cohesion.

Using skilled artists and facilitators, the Arts Office has worked with groups as diverse as people with disabilities, members of the Travelling Community, youth at risk, women’s groups, people in healthcare, whole school communities, sports clubs, and active retirement groups. These projects have either been initiated by the Arts Service, or have been developed in partnership with the groups themselves, or have been jointly initiated by other agencies such as St. Oliver’s Hospital, Dundalk, County Louth V.E.C., Dundalk Institute of Technology, Newry and Mourne District Council, Irish Wheelchair Association, Drogheda Community Services Centre, Drogheda Partnership Company and a large number of community development groups and residents associations throughout the county.
5. Planning

This Arts Plan is the first such plan to be developed in County Louth. It will build on the foundations that are already in place, and will map out the future role of Louth Local Authorities in the growth of the arts.

The Arts Service in Louth works with other sections within the local authority structure and is also part of an extensive national network of organisations and agencies involved in the arts including The Arts Council, Sculpture Society of Ireland, Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, Department of Environment and Local Government, Local Authority Arts Officers in other counties and in the North, as well as other parties.

Cognisance will be taken of the policies, plans and practices of these bodies in the implementation of this Plan and in the development of future strategies.
Methodology

In developing this, the County’s first Arts Development Plan, Louth Local Authorities developed a comprehensive agenda which involved public consultations, verbal and written submissions as well as a workshop programme to ascertain the views and ideas of the arts sector in the County.

Sixty-three written submissions were received and in excess of fifty additional viewpoints were received through the verbal submissions that made up the public meetings held in August 2003. In total 139 individual ideas, requests and suggestions make up the 113 submissions.

With the engagement of Arts Consultant, Deirdre Enright of Cultural Management Ltd., and through the analysis of the many viewpoints received, a number of ideas were distilled down to key recommendations as part of an intensive workshop process. The workshop participants included eleven experienced practitioners and managers from the following areas of arts practice; amateur arts, professional visual artists, a theatre company director, venue managers, educationalists and an expert in the field of professional journalism. Louth Local Authorities recognise and commend the participants' willing engagement with, and commitment to this process.

The recommendations made as part of this process inform and feed into the compilation of this, the first County Arts Plan.

Full documentation, including video footage of the public meetings, is available from Louth Local Authorities. A full report on the consultation process, submissions received, workshop content, recommendations, and participants is also available from Louth Local Authorities.
Core Principles
Core Principles

Participation in the arts is beneficial to the individual, to communities, and to society as a whole.

To be a citizen in a society where the arts are valued and supported allows each citizen to choose, explore, and pursue different means of self-expression.

In a society where the arts are undervalued and unsupported, opportunities for personal growth are blocked, access to the creative wealth of the world is stymied, and means of strengthening self-identity are restricted.

Running parallel with the beneficial impact of the arts on the individual is the potential of the arts to underpin community life. Group participation in the arts creates and reinforces bonds across social strata, age groups and gender. The arts can act as a catalyst for encouraging tolerance and understanding between culturally diverse people.

On a societal level, the arts have traditionally been seen as one of the prime manifestations of Irish identity. The practice of the arts can be a source of regional and national pride, and they can also force us to question how we present ourselves to the world.

Mission

Louth Local Authorities will work towards a society which values the arts, recognizing their contribution to individuals and communities, and by supporting those who create art, the quality of life and the richness of cultures in Louth will be enhanced.
The Plan
The Plan

Goals

1. To move to a situation where access to, and participation in the arts is a real and viable choice for all citizens of Louth.

2. To ensure that Louth will be home to a flourishing arts sector where artists and their work will be valued, developed, and celebrated.

3. To present information on all aspects of the arts in accessible and relevant ways.

4. To improve the infrastructure for the arts in Louth.

5. To raise standards in arts leadership and management in Louth.

6. To develop a clear marketing vision for the arts in Louth.
Goal 1 – To move to a situation where access to, and participation in the arts is a real and viable choice for all citizens of Louth.

Despite many years of initiatives and projects, national and local, aimed at broadening participation in the arts, it is still a common perception that the arts are an elitist activity, enjoyed by the privileged few. Encouraging increased participation in the arts is an integral part of the work of Louth Local Authorities’ Arts Service.

A + B – Inter-personal contact with an artist can be a powerful stimulus for an individual or community to become more involved in the arts. When that interaction occurs in the workplace, school or club, the impact can be particularly enriching.

C – Tying in with this idea that the place where interaction with an artist or the arts occurs is important, is the recognition of the role of the Libraries in facilitating arts events. Libraries are an accepted, neutral, and established part of the fabric of many communities, and can play an important role in offering access to the arts to those who may not attend events in dedicated arts spaces.

D – Young people’s participation in the arts is often difficult for a number of reasons. They lack the financial resources of adults, their voices are often not heard when decisions which impact on them are made, and the artforms in which young people express themselves may be different from the more established artforms familiar to their elders. A concentrated effort must be made to engage young people in expressing themselves in the artforms most relevant to them.

The Youth Theatres in Drogheda and Dundalk have provided positive formative experiences for hundreds of young people over the past number of years. Initiatives such as the Young Music Centre, referred to in Goal 4, Strategy B, and the Young Songwriters Workshops, referred to in ‘Louth Local authorities Arts Service’ will be important in the ongoing support of young contemporary music.

E – Festivals have the capacity to entertain and provoke audiences, while strengthening community ties. The benefits to tourism are well documented. Louth hosts a number of festivals throughout the year, some well established, others relatively new. Some of these festivals are initiated by Louth Local Authorities, while others are community initiatives. The challenge for Louth Local Authorities is to support the developments of arts festivals, while allowing for the fact that different festivals have very different aims.

F – Evaluating the impact of support for the arts is difficult for a number of reasons. Among these are the disparate nature of events and the non-standard nature of annual programmes. Sectoral attendance and participation data can be problematic to source. Notwithstanding, the accumulation of base line information is important for the future formulation of policy, and quantitative and qualitative information will be assembled for this reason, and for the purposes of comparison.
STRATEGIES

A) To develop a structured, county wide programme of Artists in Residence, with emphasis on host groups whose primary focus is not the arts, and to document these.

Actions:

1) We will, through the local media, and through liaison with relevant bodies, source and work with schools and community groups who wish to engage with an Artist in Residence.
2) We will publish and otherwise make available the processes and outcomes from these Residencies.
3) We will continue to engage with the host group once the Residency has been completed.
4) We will commission external evaluation of the Residency Programme, which will inform future actions in this area.

“Paint, Performance & Magical Tales” visual arts workshop at the Basement Gallery, Dundalk
B) To broaden the range of community arts activity organised and supported by the Arts Service of Louth Local Authorities.

Actions:

1) We will continue to collaborate with statutory, education and voluntary bodies to create opportunities for participation in community arts.
2) We will support quality community arts programmes, including those conducted through the medium of Irish.
3) We will strengthen existing links and develop new approaches to engaging with asylum seekers, refugees and new citizens living in the county.

C) To work in partnership with the Library Service to enhance public participation in the arts.

Actions:

1) We will initiate a programme of arts events throughout the branch library network, from visual art exhibitions to literature and story telling, which will complement existing activities taking place in Libraries.

D) To initiate an integrated programme of youth arts activities, which will reflect the interests of young people, and which will allow for diverse means of self-expression.

Actions:

1) We will liaise with existing youth work organisations, nationally and locally, to identify areas of common interest.
2) We will develop a blueprint for further long-term sustainable youth arts activities.
3) We will work with Dundalk Institute of Technology to strengthen existing youth theatres and work to expand participation in youth theatres throughout the county.
4) Ways of providing additional support to private sector arts education and training initiatives will be explored.
5) The valuable work of in-school arts projects, such as performances and exhibitions, will be supported.
E) To strengthen the number and range of arts festivals in Louth, while targeting resources at those festivals whose ethos and objectives are in accordance with overall planned arts development for the county.

Actions:

1) We will engage with existing festivals in the county to examine future plans and roles for the relevant local authority and the festival organisers.
2) We will pilot new festivals which will combat geographical and sectoral deficits.
3) We will work with Louth Hospitality, Midlands East Regional Tourism Organisation, and other tourism promotion bodies to market arts festivals in Louth in an integrated and efficient manner.
4) We will work with St. Patrick’s Day Festivals to support greater community involvement, particularly in the area of street theatre.
5) We will continue to offer opportunities to Festival organisers to build capacity in their Festivals.

F) To develop methods of measurement of public participation in the arts, thus securing baseline data with which to compare future trends.

Actions:

1) We will research models of best practice and implement methods of measuring and evaluating attendance at, and participation in, arts events.
2) We will utilise this information to inform future policy development in this area.
Goal 2 – To ensure that Louth will be home to a flourishing arts sector where artists and their work will be valued, developed and celebrated.

A) The support of artists, either as individuals or as organisations, is an essential part of this Plan. Recognition of achievement rewards endeavour, and can inspire individuals to undertake new challenges.

B) Information, advice and other supports will continue to be made available to artists. The existing arts funding opportunities will be reinforced through the provision of additional supports, and by adding to the opportunities available.

C) Louth local Authorities recognises the importance of the commissioning of new work from individuals & organisations in a wide range of art forms.

"Mind Your Fingers" devised and produced by Calipo Theatre and Picture Company, commissioned by Drogheda Arts Festival 2005.
STRATEGIES

A) To increase awareness of achievement in the arts by Louth Artists

Actions:

1) We will produce and make available a number of high quality publications celebrating the work of Louth artists.
2) We will enhance the status of the annual Chairman's/Mayor's Award.
3) We will increase opportunities for Louth Artists to present and perform their work through a series of organised exhibitions, presentations and performances.

B) To support Louth artists in their training, research, and practice needs.

Actions:

1) We will continue to utilise and promote the Tyrone Guthrie Centre Regional Bursary Awards, as well as expanding the Arts Act Grants, as a means of supporting individual artists.
2) We will work with other relevant agencies, such as Louth Leader, in developing training and support programmes for individuals and groups involved in arts practice.
3) We will continue to grow partnership funding to professional artists, organisations and festivals in the county.
4) We will initiate a new support structure, which will commit significant supports on a multi-annual basis to one arts organisation based in Louth. This will assist the organisation to plan strategically over a three-year period, while ensuring the provision of relevant and high quality arts activities in the county.

C) To utilise existing commissioning schemes and initiate new opportunities for those who create art.

Actions:

1) We will continue to utilise the Per Cent for Art Scheme and will seek to broaden the range of art forms commissioned.
2) We will develop a public art policy for Louth Local Authorities.
3) We will work in partnership with potential commissioning agents, and arts organisations and individuals, to make opportunities available for the commissioning of new work.
4) We will continue to develop and formalise the Visual Art Collections of Louth Local Authorities, through the formulation of curatorial policies in each local authority.
Goal 3 – To present information on all aspects of the arts in accessible and relevant ways.

A + B – Information is a pre-requisite for participation, and the presentation of information relating to the arts must reflect the dynamic nature of the subject matter.

C – The dissemination of information is not just a top-down model. Artist to artist, actor to actor, and musician to musician dialogue can be a valuable tool for the exchange of information and the sharing of opportunities.

STRATEGY

A) The utilisation of email and web technologies to facilitate public access to news and information on the arts.

Actions:

1) We will create a new arts-focussed, Louth-wide website which will contain news of events, funding opportunities, ongoing projects and other activities of interest.
2) We will introduce direct contact through email groups (e-bulletin) and will explore the introduction of SMS messaging.
3) We will compile a comprehensive arts database, which will be accessible to all through the website.

B) The creation of new channels of communication using traditional print and other media.

Actions:

1) We will compile, produce and distribute a free, regular, county-wide arts event guide.
2) We will work with existing media, such as local radio and regional press, to establish a stronger arts presence.

C) The establishment of new fora for debate so as to facilitate reaction and suggestions from the general public and artists.
Goal 4 - To improve the infrastructure for the arts in Louth.

A) During the consultation process for this Plan, many contributions, both written and verbal, made reference to perceived infrastructural deficits in relation to the arts.

The need for a larger performing arts venue for Drogheda, well-equipped performance and rehearsal facilities in Dundalk, and support for artists studios were voiced repeatedly.

B) Louth Local Authorities recognise that there may be gaps in infrastructural provision, but must first ascertain the full extent, usage levels and potential of that which exists already, throughout the county. This information will assist Louth Local Authorities in determining priorities, not just within the two main towns, but also within the smaller towns and villages which must not be overlooked. A planned, equitable, and balanced programme of arts infrastructure development will be our aim, with Louth seen in its entirety, not only as two competing urban centres.

The integration of arts infrastructural needs into future County Development Plans will be important.

C) The Droichead Arts Centre has developed from humble beginnings to its present position as a creative centre, spread over two premises. Now is an apt time for both Droichead and Drogheda Borough Council to review their current roles within the present funding arrangements. Dialogue towards a mutually agreeable partnership based on pre-determined objectives and supports will enhance the role of the Arts Centre for the benefit of the arts in Drogheda and further afield.

Louth Local Authorities sees an important role for the development of the arts through partnerships with initiatives such as the Holy Trinity Centre, Carlingford, The Agnes Burns Cottage, Stephenstown, An Grianán, Termonfeckin, Scoraíocht Lann Léire, Dunleer, Ardee Concert Band, and others.
STRATEGY

A) Undertake a consultative review of all arts facilities that currently exist in Louth in order to develop a clear strategy to deal with infrastructural deficits, if any.

Actions:

1) Carry out an audit of all performance, rehearsal and artists' workspace facilities which exist, and analyse the current use and management of arts facilities in Louth to identify the real and perceived needs for space for the arts. This audit will also inform the local authorities of each venue's disability access status.
2) Utilise the results of the aforementioned audit to inform and develop a strategy for Louth Local Authorities which will prioritise short term and longer-term infrastructure plans. This audit should inform future County Development Plans and strategies.

B) To ensure planned development of arts infrastructure both existing and planned in the care of L.L.A.

Actions:

1) Town Hall Theatre, Dundalk - We will compile an operational plan which will inform the development of the Town Hall Theatre, through addressing issues such as facility management, audience development, marketing, safety, and other aspects which will contribute to achieving the optimum, safe, usage of the venue.
2) Basement Gallery - We will expand the curatorial role of this venue through exploring the employment of a seasonal curator in order to maintain and develop the Basement Gallery's status as a leading venue for contemporary and conceptual Irish Art.
3) Highlanes Gallery - We will support the establishment, growth and future development of the new Highlanes Gallery Project, and will continue to work in partnership with Banbridge District Council on this project.
4) Droichead Arts Centre - We will continue to provide facilities, revenue funding and support to the Droichead Arts Centre, while reviewing our mutual responsibilities in this arrangement. We will also support the Droichead Arts Centre in future development of Barlow House and Barlow's Yard as a key arts resource for the citizens of Drogheda and South Louth.
5) Dundalk Young Music Centre - We will oversee the launch and on-going development of the Dundalk Young Music Centre project which aims to provide subsidised rehearsal and recording facilities for young musicians in a safe and creative environment. The provision of training and advice on technical management and career development is also an important part of this project.

C) Create partnerships with existing and new facilities throughout the county.

Actions:

1) We will support the Droichead Arts Centre in their implementation of the Annette Clancy Report. This process will inform future policy in relation to the Centre, which will be goal-oriented.
2) We will invite discussions with venue and facility boards of management, to establish long-term sustainable partnerships.

Goal 5 – To raise standards in arts leadership and management in Louth

A) To coincide with the growing arts sector foreseen by this Plan, it will be necessary to support and up-skill those whose role it is to guide and promote arts initiatives in Louth.

Managing change in the arts sector, while working with restricted budgets, is a major challenge, and successful outcomes are reliant on relevant management training.

STRATEGY

A) To develop new training and support programmes for Louth-based arts managers.

Action:

1) We will work in partnership with Business2Arts, the organization which encourages business support for the arts, in developing a specific programme of management training to include financial management, marketing and human resources for those working in the field in County Louth.

2) We will research and draw from previous programmes relating to arts management training devised by other Local Authorities and agencies.

3) We will invite Dundalk Institute of Technology, Louth County Enterprise Board, Partnership companies and Louth Leader to work with the Arts Service in devising training programmes specific to the needs of cultural managers in Louth.
Goal 6 – To develop a clear marketing vision for the arts in Louth

A) Due to the competing pulls of the two major urban centres in Louth, events have rarely achieved the optimum potential audience within the county. Our first marketing initiative must be to encourage local audiences to see our county as a single entity, with a wide range of innovative and attractive initiatives taking place within its borders. To that end, Louth Local Authorities in 2004 brought its arts funding schemes together under a joint branding initiative called CreateLouth. This means that, irrespective of where one lives in Louth, the same entitlements and opportunities exist for accessing support funding for arts activities. This countywide approach, which also provides for initiatives and decisions to be taken at individual council level, has the potential to act as a unified marketing brand for arts events, as well as acting as an imprimatur of a quality arts experience.

Our marketing initiatives must also take into account the potential audience of over two million people within an hour’s drive or train ride of Louth.

B) We live in a beautiful county. We also live in a county that, for historical reasons, has rarely been used as a backdrop for feature films or major television drama. The potential exists to capitalise on our un-filmed and unspoiled landscape through a joint marketing campaign with our northern neighbour, Newry and Mourne District Council.

C) We must also ensure that information on the activities of the Arts Service are disseminated and marketed positively within the internal structures of Louth Local Authorities. An integrated Arts Service is in a much stronger position to deliver its objectives, and the good will, support, and technical expertise of the executive and the Elected Members will only become fully available through successful internal marketing.

STRATEGY

A) To develop a clear branding for the arts in Louth, which implies the contemporary, professional, vibrant and active nature of the arts in County Louth.

Actions:
1) We will develop CreateLouth as a brand that is immediately identifiable as representing the high quality of arts information, events, development and activity in the county.
2) We will ensure that the dissemination of information associated with the brand is timely, effective and relevant and at all times.

B) To market Louth as a welcoming and attractive county in which to make films and television

Actions:
1) In partnership with Newry and Mourne District Council, we will seek funding for the establishment of a Louth, Newry and Mourne Film Commission.
2) We will work on a cross-border basis to facilitate film and television producers, keeping in mind our collective responsibility to the natural environment.

C) Promote the role of the arts within Louth Local Authorities and further the integration of the arts into the wider service provision.

Actions:
1) We will ensure that agreed arts policy is integrated into Corporate and Operational Planning at all levels within Louth Local Authorities.
2) We will provide information concerning arts planning and activities across departments in L.L.A. and seek to develop relevant opportunities for cross- departmental collaboration and co-operation.
Appendices
List of Arts Plan Submissions

Louth County Council

Name/Group:

1. Encore Productions
2. Pat McKenna
3. Bolaji Akiqboqun
4. Micheál McKeown
5. Vere Lenox-Conyngham
6. B. Muckian
7. St. Peter’s Male Voice Choir
8. Olive Eustace
9. Mary Kinsella
10. Revd. Michael Graham
11. Carmel Callan
12. Artisans Art Group
13. Kevin Weldon
14. Donal Black
15. Cllr. Oliver Tully
16. Rachel Thomas
17. Droichead Arts Centre
18. Alf Dwyer
19. Sandra Gough
20. Sandra Byrne
21. Patricia Murphy
22. Calipo Theatre & Picture Company
23. Kieran McNulty
24. Most Rev Dr Michael Desmond Hynes
25. Dundalk Media Centre
26. The Little Duke Theatre
27. Michael Holohan
28. Rita McCormack
29. Patricia McAteer
30. Katherine Máire Harvie
31. Roger Hudson
32. Mary Capplis
### Drogheda Borough Council

**Name/Group:**

1. Drogheda Travellers Education & Training Committee
2. Garry Maguire
3. Drogheda Early Intervention & Integration Programme
4. Patrick Branigan
5. Old Drogheda Society
6. Garry Maguire
7. John Moloney
8. St. Brigid’s Drama Group
9. Southside Community Development Programme – Drogheda
10. Kirsty McGhie
11. Leontia Browne

### Dundalk Town Council

**Name/Group:**

1. Oonagh Coleman
2. Paola Catizone
3. Stanley Miller
4. Dún Dealgan N. School
5. Mark Dearey
6. Magnet Training Facility
7. Joanne McKenna
8. Frances Lambe

### Arts Plan – Workshop Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Representing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Paul Henry</td>
<td>Drogheda Pantomime Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Malone</td>
<td>Artist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Declan Gorman</td>
<td>Upstate Theatre Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Tony Conachy</td>
<td>Droichead Arts Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Mark Dearey</td>
<td>The Spirit Store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Kevin Reilly</td>
<td>Ardee Concert Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Rachel Thomas</td>
<td>Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sharon Treacy-Dunne</td>
<td>Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Mel O’Loan</td>
<td>D.K.I.T.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Frances Lambe</td>
<td>Bridge Street Studios</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Bríd McBride</td>
<td>Dundalk International Maytime Drama Festival</td>
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