

# KEY REASONS TO SUPPORT THE ARTS

The arts make a major contribution to the NI economy:

- The arts economy in NI is worth almost £30 million per annum, with over £12 million being generated annually in earned income.
- The return on public investment is considerable, with every £1 of public money invested by the Arts Council generating a return of £3.62 to the local economy.
- Increased public funding for the arts would result in a similar multiplier effect, increasing the value of its return to the wider local economy.

The arts and the creative industries are significant employers:

- The creative industries in NI employ 33,567 people, or 4.6 per cent of the workforce. This is more than many of the traditional mainstays of employment in NI, including Agriculture.
- A survey of the Arts Council's Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) shows that 2095 individuals were employed either in a full or part time capacity. Many more are employed on a full, part time or voluntary basis in other arts organisations not measured through the RFO.
- With investment, the potential exists for greater expansion of the creative industries in NI, as the average employment in the creative industries across Great Britain is considerably higher, at 6.8 per cent, equating to one million jobs and a further 790,000 creative jobs in other industries.

The arts generate inward investment and increased tourism:

- In a competitive international marketplace, business leaders cite the presence of a rich cultural environment as one of the major incentives for locating their businesses. Our flagship projects, such as the Lyric Theatre and the Ulster Orchestra, play a part in creating that environment, making Northern Ireland a location of choice and attracting direct investment in the economy.
- The arts play a significant role in the rapidly growing tourist market - presenting a positive image of the region as a "must see" destination and providing the wide range of cultural and entertainment activities for visitors.

- In the last decade, the NI tourism market grew by 60 per cent, with £357 million revenue generated in 2005. Cultural tourism is growing faster than other tourist segments, engaging 39 per cent (224,000 ) of visitors each year in cultural activities. Investment in the arts is needed if we are to compete with the 200 destinations across the globe, and capitalise on the potential for further growth.

The arts are catalysts for local regeneration:

- The arts are acknowledged around the world as prime catalysts in transforming the cultural and economic regeneration of cities and regions.
- Participation in the creative arts leads to community regeneration, enhancing social cohesion by promoting the integration of minority groups, tackling sectarianism and racism and contributing to a more inclusive society – all areas of social dissonance which have proven all too costly in our recent history.
- Arts activities support the delivery of the Government's 'Shared Future' agenda. Two thirds of Arts Council-funded arts activity supports cross community participation.
- Arts facilities play a unique role in regenerating the night life and thereby the night-time economy of towns and cities, which benefits other local businesses, cafes, etc in the surrounding area.

What about our cultural entitlement?:

- The people of Northern Ireland deserve the same cultural entitlement as our neighbours – the arts are not after all just for London, Dublin, Liverpool, Cardiff, Cork or Glasgow. Yet ...
- Northern Ireland receives the lowest level of public investment in the arts across the UK, at £6.13 per head of population. In the last financial year Scotland received £11.93 and the Republic of Ireland, the equivalent of £12.61.
- In October 2007, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, James Purnell, M.P. announced an increase of £50 million to go to Arts Council England in the 2008-2011 spending cycle, saying that, "Our arts and culture matter. They are a key part of the life and identity of our country, and that's why the government has invested heavily in them since 1997."

- Since 2004/05 funding to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland has been frozen, which effectively means it has been decreasing in real terms.
- The Government's diversion of Lottery funds to the London Olympic Games 2012 means that Lottery funding for the arts in NI will drop by a further £4.55m to an estimated £4.74 million by 2011/12.
- The Arts Council has to turn down on average 60 per cent of applications annually from artists, primarily due to lack of funds.
- Reversing the historical deficit of funding in the arts in Northern Ireland requires an uplift of funding of just under £9 million per annum, a total of £26.9 million over the three years of the CSR period. This would place spending at just under £11.50 per capita, on a par with other countries in the UK.
- The increase in the annual arts budget sought by the Arts Council is very modest in relation to the overall Northern Ireland budget – the Arts Council's current budget is less than one third of one per cent of the health budget; or two thirds of one per cent of the Education budget.

The contribution to Northern Ireland's improving image abroad:

- Northern Ireland's poets, writers and musicians have brought the region significant international acclaim including the Nobel Prize for Literature, the International Tchaikovsky Prize and even Oscars.
- The arts make the world talk about NI for all the right reasons and promote a positive image of a confident and creative place in which to live, work and do business.

The arts are a vibrant sector which deserves to be nurtured and which is already a potent force in enhancing the image of Northern Ireland abroad. Contribution to education and health:

- The arts support the development of children and young people through a range of innovative programmes. 75,000 school children enjoy arts workshops each year.
- Arts are good for health and aid recovery. 88 per cent of people surveyed at the Mater Hospital, Belfast said that they found arts activity beneficial. A study at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital found that participation in the arts has led to

- improved outcomes, including a reduction of patient staying time in hospital.

On 25th October 2007, the Northern Ireland Executive launched its draft Budget 2008-2011. The Draft Budget is now open to public consultation until 4th January 2008. As part of this public consultation phase, there will be a number of regional consultation meetings, to which the public is invited to attend and have their views placed on the record. We will publish the dates of these public meetings on this site when they are announced by the Executive.

The emphasis of the draft budget is on economic development, plus health and education, with Culture, Arts and Leisure some way down the list of priorities.

The advantages to be gained from meaningful investment in the arts have been recognised by Northern Ireland's main political parties, which gave their overwhelming support in October to a Private Members' Motion, calling on the Executive 'to raise the level of arts funding to at least the United Kingdom average within the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.'

Regrettably, cross party ministerial support for the motion is not reflected in a Draft Budget which, if realised, will have devastating consequences for the arts sector and a negative impact on the economy as a whole. Our artists and core organisations will face a bleak future, and pressing developmental work will not be undertaken.

Spending on the arts in Northern Ireland is channelled through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). DCAL's provisional budget planning figures indicate that the Arts Council – the lead funding and development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland - is likely to receive a nominal net increase of £4.25m, the equivalent of a per capita increase from £6.13 to £7.89, but only by year three. Moreover the figures are only guaranteed for year one with subsequent years two and three being only provisional: hence there is no guarantee that such an eventual modest uplift would in fact be forthcoming.

Current Arts Council assessment is that the arts in Northern Ireland require an additional £26m investment over the coming three-year spending period – the equivalent of £11.55 per capita. This would be a modest increase in the context of the overall Northern Ireland

budget - the Arts Council's current budget is less than one third of one per cent of the existing health budget; or two thirds of one per cent of the education budget.

The Arts Council's request per annum is approximately £9m. With the prospect of an additional uplift of only £500k for next year, the sector faces immediate financial problems. **This draft settlement falls far short of the Arts Council's assessment of need.**

The increase of £4.25m makes some provision for the shortfall in National Lottery funding for the arts due to the redirection of funds by the Government to support the Olympic Games 2012. However, the **Arts Council stands to lose £4.5m** as a result of the redirection.

**The people of Northern Ireland should have the same cultural entitlement as their neighbours on these islands.** Yet the prospect of achieving broad parity the rest of the UK or the Republic of Ireland remains as distant as ever, and we remain consigned to the bottom of the UK and Ireland league table.

The arts sector in Northern Ireland has endured **standstill funding for the past three consecutive years** – a cut in real terms - and continues to have the lowest baseline figure for public spending on the arts. Public spending per capita on the arts in the year 2006-07 was: in the Republic of Ireland £12.61; in Scotland £11.93; in Wales £8.80; in England £8.39; in Northern Ireland £6.13 (£10.5m). The 2008-2011 per capita figures for the rest of the UK and Ireland will be published on this website when the detail becomes available – regardless, Northern Ireland will still be at the bottom of the league table.

The last time the government departments and agencies went through this competitive budgeting process, a small number of departments managed to turn around their initial bleak budget and to achieve an increased settlement, as a direct result of lobbying pressure from the departments, their sectors and the public, during the consultation period.

### •**Consequences for the Arts of the Draft Budget 2008-2011**

#### •**Important consequences of no spending uplift and another year of standstill funding for the arts:**

- Programmes will close, putting the future of dozens of organisations in jeopardy
- Many jobs right across our towns, cities and villages will be at risk

- The Arts Council has already had to close its Multi-Annual Programme, which supported 56 arts organisations employing 200 people and providing 3,200 arts events; the future of these organisations is at best uncertain
- The Arts Council has informed local authorities that they have become a low funding priority, so that the Arts Council can safeguard the future of the independent arts sector
- Over 25,000 participants from across NI, including many young people, will be denied access to outreach activities and engagement in the arts.
- Projects in urban and rural communities will be cancelled
- Services to children and young people will be cut
- The benefits which we know the arts can bring to education and healthcare will diminish
- The crucial role which the arts plays as a feeder for the Creative Economy will be undermined
- The NI tourism product will be weakened through fewer events, productions and exhibitions
- The international image of Northern Ireland will suffer as local artists and arts organisations lack the resources to step onto the international stage
- There are a number of targets and actions contained within the PfG which the arts will contribute to, such as increasing attendances and levels of participation in the arts by 2% by 2011. How can these targets be met when the budget itself will cause a contraction in the arts sector?
- One of the priorities of the PfG is to grow the Creative Industries by up to 15%; as the arts provide the oxygen that fuels the Creative Industries, lack of investment in the arts will have a detrimental impact on the potential growth of that sector.
- We may not be able to continue to support several groundbreaking initiatives like Creative Youth Partnerships, which provides 300 arts projects, employment for 130 artists, and direct involvement in the arts for 13,000 young people; or Re-imaging Communities, which is helping communities overcome the negative impact of The Troubles and gain a sense of civic pride and empowerment.

- Developing the arts sector is a slow process, and short term savings will lead to long term loss. Where will the artists of the future come from?

To make your voice heard for the Northern Ireland Campaign for the Arts

Click onto: <http://keepourartsalive.com/> and register your feedback.

**Keepourartsalive is a campaign by the arts sector and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to improve the outcome for the arts through the NI Draft Budget 2008-2011 public consultation phase, which closes on 4th January 2008.**

The people of Northern Ireland deserve the same cultural entitlements as their neighbours on these islands. This campaign aims to pressure the NI Executive to redress the historical funding deficit and to grant Northern Ireland broad parity of funding with the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

This website offers you the tools and information you will need to support our artists and arts organisations in their campaign for an urgently-needed increase in arts funding in Northern Ireland.

Please make your voice heard by writing now to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) or by attending one of the public consultation meetings - and help us to keep our arts alive