



Armagh City  
Banbridge  
& Craigavon  
Borough Council

# Draft Arts, Culture and Heritage Framework 2018-2023

*Enriching lives through authentic and  
inspiring cultural opportunities for  
everyone*

June 2018

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**thrive**  
making culture count

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## **Foreword**

This Arts, Culture and Heritage Framework was commissioned by the Economic Development and Regeneration Committee of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. It sets the direction for cultural development in the borough for the next 5 years.

The borough has an excellent cultural infrastructure to build upon and, as a new organisation, we have the opportunity to develop and improve access to quality arts, culture and heritage experiences for all our citizens and visitors.

**Community** and **Place** are at the heart of all the council's planning. We want our arts, culture and heritage services to serve the community and reflect the unique identity of this place. We have a strong track-record in arts, culture and heritage activity, providing a host of ways for people to become involved with venues, activities and events that enrich their lives and create a sense of community and well-being. We now have the opportunity to strengthen this offer by aligning our services and supporting partner organisations to ensure that arts, culture and heritage can have the optimum impact on the further development of the borough and its citizens.

This framework compels us to tell the stories of this unique place. It strengthens our ability to achieve a wide range of social and economic goals. It requires us to follow best practice approaches, whilst always responding to the needs of our local communities.

Discussion and information sharing in workshops, focus groups and one to one interviews during the consultation process was rich and constructive. This has helped shape a framework that has the support of local cultural advocates. I am grateful to the individuals and organisations who gave their time, ideas and energy to providing valuable contributions that have made the development of this framework possible. I look forward to the implementation of this framework over the years to come.

**Lord Mayor, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council**

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is ambitious for this place. Culture, arts and heritage has the potential to play an even greater role in the regeneration and economic development of this borough. It is important that we harness those unique aspects of this borough that make us different and attractive to residents, visitors and potential investors alike. Arts, culture and heritage allows us to do that in an engaging and authentic way. I look forward to seeing the impact of the framework as it is rolled out across the borough.

I want to see local opportunities for arts, culture and heritage practitioners that align with the Council's employability and skills agenda. We also need to ensure that our heritage is preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Ensuring alignment with the Programme for Government themes should provide additional opportunities for funding support.

**Chair of Economic Development and Regeneration Committee**

## **1. Why do we need a framework?**

This framework is designed to show how the arts, culture and heritage offer within the borough will flow towards the goals of Council's 'Connected' Community Plan, the Council's Corporate Plan and work alongside the Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy.

It reflects the thoughts, opinions and ambition uncovered during the consultation process, and has developed these to set out a path for cultural services that will deliver on the objectives identified in our plans.

The framework is a celebration of the richness of our current cultural offering and of what has been delivered to date. It also points the way towards even greater cultural development. If the full potential of culture is to be realised, we must create greater awareness of the role that arts, culture and heritage can play across our borough. The key to success lies in showing more people the strength and impact that arts, culture and heritage have in making Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon a great place to live, work, visit and invest.

### **The importance of culture**

Cultural activity is a basic human and developmental need. It is recognised by Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that:

*'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.'*

Cultural activity allows individuals to explore and express their identity and to satisfy the human need for inspiration and creativity. For communities, cultural engagement encourages a sense of belonging and engenders a sense of confidence and civic pride.

Culture creates safe spaces for the celebration and exploration of diversity, it opens access and encourages understanding. Cultural activity makes an important contribution to our society but it also provides enjoyment, connection and a feel good factor that is essential to our quality of life. The borough has a host of venues that provide this opportunity and of particular note are Armagh County Museum, the F.E. McWilliam Gallery, the Market Place Theatre and Millennium Court Arts Centre.

Learning new skills, through formal and informal processes, are an important outcome of being involved in cultural activity. These are a significant contributor to developing a quality diverse workforce and extending working life or

encouraging voluntary action. Similarly, targeting and developing key skills for the cultural sector enhances the cultural infrastructure and develops the cultural product.

Arts, culture and heritage services are uniquely positioned to tell the story of both the place and its people. Being part of how culture, stories and ideas are expressed and represented has an impact on residents and nurtures a sense of place and civic pride. Having a strong cultural infrastructure is a key influencing factor when targeting inward investment and can be instrumental in changing perceptions of the borough.

## **Key principles of the framework**

### **Ambition**

We are ambitious for this place. The economic climate is difficult for the arts, culture and heritage sectors as with many other aspects of life in Northern Ireland. We need to remain ambitious to allow creativity to be a fundamental part of the fabric of the borough.

### **Align**

Local Government Reform in Northern Ireland has brought major change and with it the opportunity to look closely at our cultural services and identify where we can improve and grow to best meet the needs of our citizens. All public services face a challenging funding environment and we must navigate these difficulties whilst providing relevant, valued services that deliver the best impacts possible.

### **Access**

We recognise the inherent value of our cultural offering and strive to make sure that the opportunity to enjoy it is available to everyone, irrespective of age, background or ability.

### **Relevance**

This borough has many unique and compelling stories to tell and create. Our cultural offering must celebrate those stories, and create opportunities to write new ones.

## **Prosperity**

We seek the opportunity to increase prosperity by providing a quality arts, culture and heritage offering that meets local needs and attracts cultural tourism.

## **Cultural infrastructure**

We must promote and develop our cultural venues to make sure they can provide the excellent cultural experiences that will make people want to live, in work and visit the borough.

## **New partnerships**

We are stronger and more effective when we engage with current partners and form new strategic collaborations. We need to develop stronger links with both statutory and local cultural organisations.

## **Measure and share**

We will review progress so that we can demonstrate what we are achieving and what new actions are required to make sure we achieve our objectives. Through consultation with stakeholders we have learned more about our strengths and have identified areas of focus that will deliver positive changes.

## **2. The borough's cultural landscape**

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is the largest council in Northern Ireland outside Belfast – with a population estimated at 210,300. It is incredibly diverse in terms of landscape, city and towns, history and population. The cathedral city of Armagh has historical significance that spans millennia – as the Home of Saint Patrick and the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland. The ‘new town’ of Craigavon, which is situated between the market towns of Lurgan and Portadown, created a large population centre and has flourished into a hive of industry.

Stunning countryside spans the shores of Lough Neagh to the foot of the Mourne Mountains holding a host of townlands, villages and the thriving market town of Banbridge.

The cultural offering is equally rich and diverse. Cultural venues, large and small, strong community engagement and events of growing reputation all help us tell the story of the place. Arts, culture and heritage already play an important role in community life and the borough boasts a range of first class cultural venues.

## **Visual arts**

We have a rich visual arts offering with three renowned arts centres, each with their own unique identity.

In Banbridge, the F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio offers a diverse programme of museum standard temporary exhibitions and a permanent collection of work by internationally renowned sculptor F.E. McWilliam who was born in Banbridge in 1909. The sculpture garden, recreation of F.E. McWilliam's studio and a busy popular restaurant make it a destination for locals and visitors.

The Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre provides a varied visual arts programme in its gallery and communal spaces, with regular opportunities to participate in visual arts through their workshop programme.

The Millennium Court Arts Centre (MCAC) in Portadown has carved a niche as a leading contemporary arts centre with particular expertise in supporting emerging artists.

Armagh County Museum has a fine collection of paintings and works on paper including pictures of exceptional quality across Irish art history, from 18th century to the present day; including a very fine collection of paintings by Lurgan-born writer, poet and mystic, George Russell (AE). Works from the collection are regularly on display in one of three temporary exhibition spaces in the museum.

## **Performing arts**

The Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre was opened in 2000 and since then has been offering audiences a programme spanning theatre, dance, comedy, music, poetry and song. It attracts almost 70,000 attendances per year including national and international audiences.

Delivery partners include John Hewitt International Summer School, William Kennedy Piping Festival, AmmA Centre, choral societies and a range of amateur theatre groups.

It is at the heart of Armagh city and was an anchor to the city centre regeneration playing a key role in building the night-time economy.

## Heritage

The preservation of local heritage is a fundamental part of the framework. The protection of archives, the built environment and cultural fabric will require strong partnerships to be developed, with the council driving this agenda.

There are many ways to explore and experience heritage in the borough. Armagh City has several significant cultural venues of renown including Navan Centre & Fort, Armagh Robinson Library, The Archbishop's Palace, No 5 Vicar's Hill, and Armagh Observatory and Planetarium.

The Uilleann Pipes, championed by the Armagh Pipers Club, recently achieved UNESCO World Heritage Status.<sup>1</sup>

Armagh County Museum (ACM) is our oldest county museum and holds an unparalleled collection of art, artefacts and books relating to County Armagh. ACM is a fully accredited museum and transferred to the council from National Museums of Northern Ireland in 2015.

Craigavon Museum Services (CMS) and The Barn Museum, Tannaghmore Gardens, both hold full museum accreditation. The CMS collection is diverse and reflects the heritage of the local area. Heritage experiences are delivered to children, families and older people. Money Penny's Forge near Portadown offers experiential learning and promotes the preservation of the traditional skill of blacksmithing. The Brönte Interpretative Centre near Rathfriland celebrates the local origins of the famous literary Brönte family.

The F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio in Banbridge is also a fully accredited museum and holds the largest and most significant collection of work by internationally renowned sculptor F.E. McWilliam.

There are a number of venues and attractions that offer opportunities to uncover the heritage of the area; Thomas Ferguson's Linen Mill in Banbridge; Dan Winter's Cottage and Sloan's House, Loughgall; Carleton Street Orange Hall, Portadown; Brownlow House, Lurgan; and the borough's two National Trust properties, The Argory and Ardress House.

The borough has a number of significant examples of built heritage, particularly the Georgian architecture in Armagh and architecture relating to the linen and textile industries.

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<sup>1</sup> Inscribed in 2017 (12.COM) on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

## **Community-based work**

Access to the arts and creativity is provided through partnerships with community and arts organisations. These locally relevant projects deliver on needs and opportunities identified through consultation and collaboration. Outreach programmes are also offered across the cultural venues often focusing on particular target groups. For example, 'Playful Museums' which targeted families with early years' children and the dementia-friendly cultural programmes across venues aimed at older people and carers.

## **Events**

Armagh city hosts two signature events each year. The award winning Georgian Festival celebrates the city's eighteenth-century Georgian heritage. The Home of Saint Patrick Festival hosts many exciting Irish and international artists and events, coming together in recognition of the strong connection with Saint Patrick. The Food & Cider Festival celebrates County Armagh's famous apple orchards and the fabulous local cuisine of one of Ireland's top emerging food destinations.

Lurgan Park will host the prestigious UK Pipe Band Championship for three years from 2019. Community-focused events are held throughout the borough including Buskfest, a popular music festival in Banbridge, Country Comes to Town, in Portadown and two local agricultural shows in Armagh and Lurgan.

## **Cultural activity**

A thriving arts scene, populated with professional artists, unique cultural organisations, creative industries, a host of localised cultural interest groups and vibrant community festivals, enriches the borough.

During the public consultations, around 300 different types of cultural organisations and activities were represented – from formal cultural organisations to voluntary cultural activity and community based groups. From music to local history, drama to crafts, the wealth of cultural activity across all areas of the borough was impressive and to be encouraged.

In many instances, this activity has been supported directly by the council. For others, the activity exists with support from council in terms of information exchange and signposting.

### 3. Corporate agenda on arts, culture and heritage

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Framework must correlate with the relevant themes and objectives of the council's Corporate Plan, Community Plan and Tourism Marketing and Development Strategy, all of which display an ambition for the borough.

The Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and the Community Plan share the long-term aim that:

*'Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts and cultural experiences'.*

The Corporate Plan makes the following commitments towards this aim:

- Seek investment to preserve uniqueness of our heritage
- Increase participation in arts and culture
- Improve accessibility to creative experiences

The following actions are intended to achieve this aim:

- Develop a clear vision for arts and culture provision across the borough
- Promote the area as a place to live, visit and invest in
- Proactively source funding and partnership opportunities towards investment in our borough
- Provide high quality arts and cultural venues

The Corporate Plan also acknowledges the contributions that art, culture and heritage can make to quality of life, opportunities for young people, celebrating diversity and the economy.

**The Community Plan** acknowledges the important role that arts, culture and heritage play in place-making. One of the long-term outcomes is:

*The borough is a place of discovery, where unique cultural and natural assets are cherished and people are inspired to be creative, to grow and to flourish.*

Relevant short-term outcomes include:

- More people benefit from high quality, accessible artistic and cultural engagement and expression
- Better partnership working helps to nurture skills development, foster innovation and raise our profile as a region that champions creativity

**The Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy** recognises that culture is a driver for out-of-state visitors. It identifies that the key target audience to increase the tourism economy is focused on cultural activity and highlights the need for investment in the council's venues and product to harness this potential:

*“Demand from the Culturally Curious segment will be one of the main drivers of the forecast growth in tourism to the island of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Prioritised investment in the destination's assets will be of significant appeal to this segment;*

*Allied to this is the fact that the destination contains histories, stories, themes and potential visitor offerings which are unique to this destination and importantly have a strong resonance in a national context”*

The Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy identifies the arts, culture and heritage of Armagh City as a key focus for the destination. In order to ensure that we serve our citizens as well as visitors, this framework takes a borough-wide approach to arts, culture and heritage.

Council also operates within the wider cultural context across Northern Ireland and this context provides both challenges and opportunities.

Statutory bodies including funders, operating in the cultural arena, are coming under increasing pressure around levels of funding available and the need to evidence impact. This has led to a willingness to create partnerships around funding and delivery to maximise both resource and impact.

## 4. What the data tells us

An analysis of existing data is the first step in examining who currently engages in cultural activity and where resources should be focused to improve services.

The population of the borough (estimated at 210,300) is projected to increase by 13% by 2030, compared to 5% growth in NI overall. The number of children (aged 0-15) is projected to rise by 6%. This increase for 0-15 is not seen in NI as a whole, where it is fairly static. The group with the largest projected increase (46%) is people aged 65 and over.

The Northern Ireland Statistics Agency's Continuous Household Survey indicates that 86% of adult residents in the borough engaged with arts and culture in 2013/14-2015/16 (NI average 86%).

In Northern Ireland as a whole, levels of engagement in arts and culture are lower for people living in deprived areas. In 2016/17, relatively fewer adults living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (80%) had engaged in arts and culture than adults living in the least deprived areas (95%). These lower levels of engagement have been seen over a number of years.

The geography of the borough has an impact on who engages. Covering an area of 554 square miles, the borough has a variety of urban and rural areas, and contains two key transport corridors. This road network provides easy routes for incoming visitors, but also for residents to go beyond their local area to access cultural experiences.

1 in every 3 households in the borough booked tickets at a performing arts venue between 2014-2016. However, 2 out of 3 of those who booked did so at a venue outside the council area. It is worth noting that half of the postcodes in the borough are closer to performing arts venues across 5 other council areas than they are to the Market Place Theatre in Armagh. (Source: Thrive)

The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey (February 2011) gives a broad picture of the factors influencing people to engage in arts and culture. Respondents indicated that the top 3 factors were that they; found it enjoyable (71%); attended to see a specific show (41%); had access to a good arts venue (25%).

In summary, existing data tells us that cultural provision in the borough should:

- Consider the needs of a growing population, particularly of children aged 0-15 and people over 65
- Provide engagement opportunities that are attractive to people living in more deprived areas, where engagement in arts and culture is lower

- Deliver enjoyable cultural experiences that offer something distinct from what is available and easily accessible in other parts of Northern Ireland
- Ensure that residents in the borough have access to high quality arts venues

## 5. What our stakeholders told us

During the creation of this framework, we consulted with elected representatives, local stakeholders and council staff. We also spoke to funders and regional stakeholders to understand the broader climate and context.

We had conversations with local artists, community groups and arts organisations. They revealed the many and varied benefits of engaging in local projects built around local needs. These include peace building, tackling anti-social behaviour or isolation, and transforming public spaces.

### Local stakeholders

More than 120 local people representing a broad range of arts and cultural interests took part in consultation sessions across the borough, highlighting the incredibly diverse range of cultural activity already happening and the huge commitment of those involved.

The sessions were dynamic and constructive with participants demonstrating support for cultural life, and an impressive knowledge of the local offer.

There was a very clear recognition of the value and impact of arts, culture and heritage engagement both in venues and in grassroots local delivery.

Arts, culture and heritage engagement referenced included but was not limited to:

<b>Music</b> <b>Literature</b> <b>Tours, exhibitions, talks, publications</b> <b>Local heritage and family history</b> <b>Book clubs</b> <b>Concerts</b> <b>Film, theatre, ballet</b> <b>Encouraging people to buy art</b> <b>Architecture</b> <b>Architectural heritage</b> <b>Nature</b>	<b>Literary talks</b> <b>Publications/booklets on history</b> <b>Lambeg drumming</b> <b>Irish language events</b> <b>Traditional arts</b> <b>Orange Heritage</b> <b>Bringing arts &amp; culture to diverse groups</b> <b>Poetry</b> <b>Pipers</b> <b>Walking</b> <b>Reading</b>
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<b>Choirs</b> <b>University of the Third Age</b> <b>Historical societies</b> <b>Marching bands</b>	<b>Festivals</b> <b>Craft workshops</b> <b>Technology workshops</b> <b>Social history archive</b>
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The consultees spoke passionately about the difference arts, culture and heritage has made to theirs and others lives. In particular:

- conserving, sharing, deepening understanding of people and place;
- fun, enjoyment, connection, tackling isolation and enhancing wellbeing;
- skilling up, exploring talent and creating employment opportunity;
- celebrating rural life, preserving the spirit of the place and retaining traditional skills and stories;
- engagement, networks, support and understanding communities.

Stakeholders told us that they valued the opportunity to contribute to strategic planning and have their opinions heard. There was a clear desire that consultation should be continued throughout the delivery of the framework, and that it must be regular, consistent and ideally from a single source.

They welcomed the framework and saw the potential for it to provide evidence and focus for attention and resources. There was support for better promotion of existing facilities and events.

Stakeholders want the council to take a lead role in creating awareness and a clear identity for cultural engagement across the borough. The council is well placed to develop partnerships with local stakeholders as appropriate, but also facilitate bringing people together to support peer learning, information sharing and planning.

Regional stakeholders view the council as both a current and potential partner. The resources the council has at its disposal in terms of the arts, culture and heritage activity and the aspirations around place-making are attractive to regional partners and funders.

From the consultation with local and regional stakeholders, three roles emerged for the council to fulfil in relation to arts, culture and heritage:

1. **Deliverer** – the council has invested in cultural infrastructure and will continue to deliver significant amounts of the cultural offer.
2. **Partner** – the council will strengthen existing and forge new partnerships with key cultural providers in the area and regional stakeholders around shared aims and to lever funding.
3. **Facilitator** – the council can facilitate and support existing cultural activity taking place at a local level across the area.

### **Regional stakeholders including current and potential funders**

The message from this group of stakeholders was very clear in actively seeking continued engagement and partnership from the council in developing arts, culture and heritage across the borough. They recognised the value that the Council has in being able to bring a range of interested parties to the table and lead on developing collaboration and partnerships. They spoke at length about the breadth of the offer in the area and the quality of the venues and facilities.

These consultations highlighted potential funding sources that could be available to the council to enhance current arts, culture and heritage investment. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland should be fully engaged to explore how they can contribute further to arts activity across the borough. Arts & Business NI could also provide invaluable support to the arts and business sectors locally.

## **6. Our vision**

Throughout our consultations with the public, we developed a vision based on the consensus that arts, culture and heritage can make the lives of citizens better and deepen our understanding of this place.

Our vision is:

***Enriching lives through authentic and inspiring cultural opportunities for everyone***

## **What will success look like?**

The borough will be a place where arts, culture and heritage are valued and our citizens will find the conditions to allow their creativity to flourish. We will have succeeded in delivering the vision of the framework when:

- There is a 5% annual increase in users of our cultural venues. Venues will be seen as thriving hubs open and relevant to all citizens of the borough.
- Delivery will be led by council but also in partnership with a series of delivery partners across the borough.
- Engagement can be seen to have a positive effect across a number of aspects of citizens' lives.
- The council can quantify the range and breadth of cultural opportunities it has provided for residents and visitors to deepen and widen cultural engagement.

## **How will we do that?**

The key to success is through bringing together the programming and engagement activity delivered by individual venues and facilities into a shared, audience-led and co-ordinated approach. This will see greater alignment between the programmes and engagement activities within the four main venues: the F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio, the Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre, Armagh County Museum and the Millennium Court Arts Centre.

Cultural venues will aim to both deepen engagement with existing audiences and reach people who currently do not engage. An awareness of under-represented audiences and an understanding of their needs will inform programming and engagement activity. We will target specific groups to make cultural experiences more accessible and relevant. This targeted approach will be evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis.

**Engagement covers both attendance and participation and includes existing and potential audiences. Achieving the right balance of activity across these elements will be the key to success.**

Engagement will happen primarily in cultural venues but also in community settings and throughout the events programme. Given the council's investment in cultural infrastructure, the potential for offering cultural opportunities within venues must be maximised.

Widening access and deepening relevance is challenging, labour intensive and requires specific skills. The department will deliver, partner and facilitate this programme – bringing together, in a planned way, the cultural activity and cultural providers across the borough. The framework recommends the formation of a dedicated engagement team to coordinate this new approach, continue consultations with local stakeholders and explore regional partnerships and funding opportunities to bring to the wider team.

Venue managers and curators will work with the engagement team to plan activity that compliments the ‘core’ programme. Together they will develop strategies to enhance accessibility and create bespoke activity targeted to specific audiences.

The engagement team will also develop activity within the community for those who may be unlikely, unwilling or unable to visit the venues. This may be linked to the council’s signature events or support local events that meet identified needs.

Encouraging visitors to the area is important and links to the Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy will be made through ongoing development of the signature events, development of the main cultural venues and facilities and creation of unique community and event activity that could also be of interest to visitors.

Finally, the engagement team will lead the measurement of the impact of the engagement work along with venue management and staff.

### **Millennium Court Arts Centre (MCAC)**

MCAC occupies a unique place within the borough’s portfolio of cultural venues. The MCAC, as a community enterprise organisation, receives the majority of its annual funding from ACBCBC. It is one of the four key cultural venues (along with the Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre, the F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio and Armagh County Museum) leading the delivery of the framework.

Housing two purpose built visual art galleries, workshop and artist studio spaces, MCAC is uniquely placed to deliver cultural activity in Portadown and the surrounding area. As one of the premier contemporary visual art spaces outside Belfast, MCAC is an important asset in the borough’s cultural offering.

This framework supports MCAC's development as a welcoming, open cultural venue for residents and visitors to access high quality cultural experiences and creative engagement opportunities. In line with the other key cultural venues in the borough, MCAC is required to join a coordinated approach to achieving the outcomes identified in this framework.

The future relationship between the council and MCAC will rely on their ability to demonstrate a significant contribution to achieving these outcomes. This will require closer partnership working with council teams. The following actions are recommended to help MCAC deliver on the outcomes stated in this framework. The actions will be subject to annual review:

- The relationship between the council and MCAC will be formalised through a Service Level Agreement
- MCAC will be part of the council's annual programming process and will coordinate exhibitions and engagement activity with the other three key cultural venues
- MCAC will embrace the audience-based focus on engagement that is at the core of the framework's delivery
- MCAC will participate in the new approach to the collection of data to evidence impact across the borough
- MCAC will contribute to arts and culture community engagement across the borough.
- MCAC will develop a two-strand programming strategy with the ACNI funded contemporary art programme complemented by a community engagement focused programme
- MCAC will develop audience plans for each exhibition and deliver on the framework's focus on families and older people
- MCAC will build on its existing strengths in supporting artists' development through residencies and mentoring
- MCAC will partner with the council team to deliver the Connected Challenge Fund
- MCAC will put in place a governance and reporting system to clearly demonstrate outputs.

## **Other delivery partners**

In addition to MCAC, it is recommended that council develops a number of other funded Service Level Agreement arrangements with key cultural providers in the borough. These partners will help meet the requirements of the framework that council are not in resourced to fully deliver. Cultural partners should be selected on the basis of track record and governance arrangements.

It is recommended that a pilot programme will run for 2 years with the following cultural partners: Arts in Motion, The Shore Collective, The John Hewitt Society and Armagh Pipers Club. These organisations are currently undertaking excellent work across the borough and could add significant additional value to the work of council.

A strict governance framework and outcomes based analysis should be put in place before the pilot is commenced, during the period of the pilot and evaluation afterwards.

If deemed successful, the pilot should be extended for the period of the framework.

## **7. Guidelines for cultural programming**

*“In addition to being an integral part of the protected human right to freedom of expression, artistic and creative expression is critical to the human spirit, the development of vibrant cultures, and the functioning of democratic societies. Artistic expression connects us all, transcending borders and barriers. Artistic expression can challenge us and change the way we view the world.”*

A joint statement by 53 States of the UN, September 2015

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council values the key role culture plays in connecting people and supporting the vitality of a place. Ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to realise their full potential and make their own cultural choices underpins the recommendations of this framework. Maintaining and developing the quality of the cultural opportunities offered in the borough relies on our observance of some best practice guidelines:

## **Artistic Freedom**

Respecting existing legislation that supports the right to freedom of expression (in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights) is key to developing high quality cultural programmes that match national and international standards. Programme content will allow for the expression of a wide variety of perspectives.

## **Equality and Diversity**

Our cultural venues should be safe, welcoming and neutral spaces where creativity, discussion, debate and engagement are encouraged. We are committed to ensuring our programmes are accessible to people of all backgrounds and abilities, in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Venues will give guidance to audiences about the nature and content of programmes to ensure visitors make informed choices about their experiences.

## **Excellence**

Excellence of experience should underpin all activity and there should be a recognition that no contradiction needs to exist between excellence and accessibility. Opportunities for all to respond to the work of artists as well as showcasing the work of community endeavour can co-exist within our cultural programmes.

The borough boasts some of the leading cultural facilities in Northern Ireland with reputations for programmes of the highest quality, led by people with extensive expertise in the arts. Armagh County Museum, the F.E. McWilliam Gallery, the Barn Museum, the Armagh Robinson Library and Craigavon Museum Service are fully accredited museums delivering to the high standards demanded by the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme.

## **Relevance**

Cultural activity will explore the stories of this place in the past and the present, as well as look to the future using innovative techniques and approaches to create and communicate cultural opportunities. Stories, debate, discussion, performance and participation are seen as valid ways for people in the borough to express their confidence, their sense of who they are and how they feel about this place.

The borough aspires to deliver locally but also develop a global reputation. Therefore, cultural activity should make connections between communities but also with the rest of the world through international partnerships and networks.

## **8. Outcomes, actions and milestones<sup>2</sup>**

The following section breaks down the approach to delivering the framework into more detailed actions and milestones linked to outcomes that will be delivered across the timeframe 2018-2023.

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<sup>2</sup> Arts, culture and heritage are covered by the term culture or cultural in this section

## 8. Outcomes, actions and milestones

<p><b>Community outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural programming will reflect the needs of both those who currently engage, and those who do not</li> <li>• Cultural engagement will have a positive impact on the wellbeing and health of our citizens</li> <li>• Cultural venues and activities will create open and safe spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds learn from each other and connect</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Establish a borough-wide council arts and cultural engagement team (three roles) to lead and coordinate engagement activity with venue managers/programmers, the local community and arts organisations.</p> <p>Research the feasibility for an Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Group, fundamental to which are elected members, to support the cultural activity and act as advocates for the work being delivered.</p> <p>Establish a baseline for engagement (attendance + participation) across the council area to identify who is and who is not engaging and what change is achievable.</p> <p>Undertake a public engagement process working through the community planning function, to understand what residents need from their cultural activity and what is preventing them from attending.</p> <p>Deliver a balanced programme shaped by engagement process for both in-venue engagement and non-venue based engagement each year; focusing on older people and families who do not currently engage.</p> <p>Deliver ACNI Challenge Fund ‘Connected’ Project as a pilot for the new borough-wide approach to engagement and programme delivery.</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b></p> <p>Team established Autumn 2018</p> <p>Terms of Reference developed for possible recruitment to begin Spring 2019</p> <p>Delivery in 2019/20</p> <p>Developed in 2018 for roll-out from Autumn 2018 onwards</p> <p>Part of annual business planning process from 2019 onwards</p> <p>Pilot delivered in 2018/19 to inform annual business planning process from 2019 onwards</p>

**Place outcomes**

- Cultural activity explores and communicates the unique stories of this place for everyone to enjoy
- Cultural venues are being developed to enable them to deliver the highest quality cultural experiences
- Cultural venues are widely recognised as vibrant creative hubs that serve the needs of both residents and visitors

**Actions:**

Develop engagement programming with a focus on the borough's cultural and built heritage.

Council to develop a number of other funded Service Level Agreement arrangements with key cultural providers in the borough. These partners will work with council to deliver the requirements of the framework. Cultural partners should be selected on the basis of track record and governance arrangements. A pilot programme will run for 2 years with the following cultural partners: Arts in Motion, The Shore Collective, The John Hewitt Society and Armagh Pipers Club.

Ensure our cultural venues and spaces continue to develop and deliver excellent experiences through investing in collection care and development, customer service and relevant accreditation across venues with a focus on the four main venues.

Standardise best practice approaches to audience experience by adopting industry standards across all venues and facilities including but not limited to: 'Family Arts Standards', Tourism NI's Quality Grading Scheme for Visitor Experiences, age-friendly venues, JAM card.

Develop family friendly spaces and programme across main venues.

Realise capital developments at F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio, the Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre, Armagh County Museum and Navan Centre & Fort, in order to ensure that the vision and outcomes of the framework can be fully realised for the benefit of residents.

**Milestones:**

Identify and agree unique stories that run across the borough e.g. linen, music, Orange Heritage etc.

Scoping process Autumn 2018

Pilot 2019 – 2021

Ongoing programme of accreditation and development across the period of the framework.

By end 2019

Pilot programme across Autumn and Winter 2018

See separate capital plans

<p><b>Economic outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural activity plays a key role in making this borough a place where artists, creatives and related enterprises can thrive</li> <li>• Cultural activity offers opportunities to develop skills, build capacity and access opportunities</li> <li>• Cultural activity will help develop and deliver the opportunities around cultural tourism by creating cultural tourism experiences that celebrate the distinctive stories of the area</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <p>Deliver the ACNI Challenge Fund project ‘Connected’ to build active creative partnerships with the local community and with creative professionals.</p> <p>Create and facilitate a cultural forum across the council area using the Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre, F.E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio and the Millennium Court Arts Centre as initial places to meet and develop terms of reference, agenda and work plans to meet needs of the wider cultural community.</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of a pilot programme of artist support and development building on similar models elsewhere</p> <p>Advocate ‘Percent for Art’ scheme by end of 2019.</p> <p>Signpost financial aid programme and offer support to cultural organisations around application process</p> <p>Implement branding and coordinated marketing.</p> <p>Implement and use data framework.</p> <p>Explore the potential for Internationally recognised standards such as UNESCO Creative Cities. The thematic areas are Design, Film, Crafts &amp; Folk Art, Literature, Music, Gastronomy and Media Arts. The Literary theme is worth actively striving towards</p>	<p><b>Milestones:</b></p> <p>Pilot delivered in 2018 to inform annual business planning process from 2019 onwards</p> <p>Forums advertised and recruited by Spring 2019 Should be genre-based to encourage cross-borough working.</p> <p>Consultation in 2018 for rollout in 2019/20</p> <p>2019</p> <p>2019</p> <p>See Section 9</p> <p>See Section 10</p> <p>2020</p>

## **9. Supporting activity**

In order to deliver the framework the council will need to implement supporting activity. This will include but is not limited to:

### **Increase data available for box office systems**

For those council venues which already have box office systems in place, the Market Place Theatre and Arts Centre and Navan Fort & Centre, data must be collected consistently, and KPIs agreed which help to track progress towards the outcomes for this framework.

Consideration should also be given as to how more data can be channelled through existing systems e.g. free events being ticketed to help with event management and data collection.

### **Technical**

The technical resource available should work across the department, rather than being attached to one specific venue. There would need to be more detailed work identifying actual available capacity and this can then be fed into the annual business planning process taking place across the department.

### **Percent for art scheme**

This initiative is when a percentage of a capital budget is specifically reserved for art, usually up to 1% of the net construction cost up to a specified limit. There is an opportunity for the council to not only encourage developers working in the area to consider this scheme but also to think about how artists can be involved in public realm work from open spaces to street lighting.

### **EU Funding**

Creative Europe is the European Commission's framework programme for support to the culture and audio-visual sectors. A number of councils across the UK have led on Creative Europe projects with cultural delivery organisations. It remains to be seen the opportunities in this regard post Brexit.

## **Business support**

There are opportunities for the business sector in the borough to increase their support of arts, culture and heritage. Arts & Business NI could act as advisors to help develop this but there are some obvious opportunities around sponsorship of programmes and activity and deepening links with local employers and offering employee access to cultural information.

## **Branding**

Council is keen to have a unified brand across all its services to help drive recognition back to the council for all the work it delivers as well as partnering in and facilitating.

## **Marketing and communications**

It is important the council continues to develop those skills and that the need to attract tourists is balanced by the imperative to market effectively to target groups within the borough.

Marketing support for the organisations and activities being undertaken across the borough would be a way for the council to build relationships with local providers. Council could signpost marketing resources and support that are available online to cultural organisations at no cost through e-zines and online profile.

## 10. Impact

This framework aims to change perceptions and to increase the value attached to arts, culture and heritage. Reliable evidence on the impact of cultural engagement will allow us to evaluate the value of our programmes for citizens and enable us to articulate the wider value of cultural activity. An analysis of current approaches to gathering quantitative and qualitative data in cultural venues and services in the borough has identified significant weaknesses. Currently, there is a lack of clarity over how and why data is collected, and lack of skill and resources dedicated to analysing and using the data.

A key priority in the implementation of this framework is the alignment and improvement of collection and analysis of data across all cultural services in the borough. This will enable us to make a convincing case for continued investment in arts, culture and heritage.

### **Measurement and Evaluation:**

A consistent methodology for collecting and recording data on cultural activity is required. Our approach should focus on finding answers to three key questions:

1. How much did we do?
2. How well did we do it?
3. Is anyone better off?

By the end of the first year of the implementation of the framework, we will have a considerable body of evidence to enable us to evaluate our progress and identify key priorities going forward.

### **Proposed measures for the collection of quantitative data:**

<b>How much did we do?</b>		
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Method of collection</b>
Footfall to all cultural facilities	Anyone entering the building	Data counters at main entrance
Number of people at ticketed events	Ticket sales	Box office system
Total number of attendees at outdoor and other events	Total number of people at each event	Visual estimation methods/surveys

Participations in venue-based and non-venue learning and community programmes	Total number of participations ie. Number of people x number of workshops	Registration/booking forms
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### Proposed measures for the collection of qualitative data:

Finding answers to the questions ‘**How well did we do it?**’ and ‘**Is anyone better off?**’ will rely on implementing a robust and consistent approach to gathering qualitative data. The suggested methodology for this is to conduct surveys on a representative sample of attendees and participants, consisting of:

- A set of standard questions that relate directly to the outcomes outlined in the framework
- Postcode and county/country data

The following table shows the number of surveys required every 12 months across different activities to provide a robust level of data.

	<b>Suggested respondent targets</b>	<b>Suggested methodology</b>
Museum, gallery and heritage attendees	500 responses	Exit surveys
Theatre attendees	500 responses	Post show e-surveys across a range of events
Outdoor events	100 responses	Face-to face ipad interviews / surveys
Learning/engagement programme participants, both in-venue and in the community	100 responses	Evaluation cards at end of session
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>1200 responses</b>	

**Analysis and reporting:**

Effective analysis and reporting of the data will rely on identified member/s of the team being responsible for this area of work, with the support of venue managers. The results will be collated in an impact report and shared with the wider team at regular intervals. The impact report will provide an evidence base for informing programming decisions, assessing the progress of the delivery of the framework and communicating the value of cultural activity across the area for residents and visitors.

## **11. Conclusion**

The framework is an ambitious document putting in place fundamental building blocks for the long-term success of the arts, culture and heritage sectors in the borough.

The Members and staff of the council have demonstrated their ambition for the future of the borough and the role arts, culture and heritage can play in this regard. This ambition is matched by the organisations working across the borough creating a healthy environment for the sectors to thrive in the future.

Partnership is key and one of the fundamental points outlined in this document is to see closer alignment with the relevant arts, culture and heritage statutory agencies and also to develop more Service Level Agreements locally.

Venues are at the heart of the framework. They are central to the delivery of the outcomes and need to be developed to become increasingly relevant to all of our citizens.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has a vast array of arts, culture and heritage activity, skills and talent both delivered by, partnered and facilitated through the council. This framework gives the council its place as a cultural leader bringing together that activity and those who deliver it now and in the future, for the benefit of all.

This framework will create the means to help Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council achieve a happy, healthy and connected community; a vibrant and sustainable economy; and appealing places for living, working and learning through current and future cultural provision.