

Standing up for  
artists and audiences



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## INTRODUCTION

Without painters and dancers, performers and musicians, writers and storytellers, there is no film industry, no television or radio, nothing on stage or the walls of our galleries, and nothing in print.

There is no Culture without people and without artists.

Fine Gael and their leadership in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht are holding us back.

After six years in office, they have only now begun to embed an understanding at the height of Government that Culture, the Arts and Heritage are primarily intrinsic.

Culture 2025 and Creative Ireland are lacking in the imagination they profess to champion, and the Government

have failed in resourcing such initiatives adequately, instead choosing to spin, re-package and re-brand existing initiatives.

Sinn Féin's plan for cultural policy recognises and values the growing diversity of this island. We are committed to bringing certainty to artists and their spaces. We will re-imagine our national museums, cultural institutions and galleries to ensure that they are all-inclusive, structurally and digitally accessible.

Sinn Féin will increase funding across the cultural sphere and ensure that Local Authorities and the diaspora have a greater part to play. And Sinn Féin will ensure that young people are valued as artists in their own right, not only as audiences or future artists.

# 1. INCREASE INVESTMENT IN THE ARTS COUNCIL / AN COMHAIRLE EALAÍÓN BY €6.5 MILLION

The Arts Council is the government agency for developing the arts, working in partnership with artists and arts organisations to promote and foster creativity in literature, visual arts, film, dance, traditional arts, opera, music, circus, outreach and education, community arts, and arts festivals.

In recent years, The Arts Council has been affected by cuts of over €23,000,000.

Sinn Féin proposes to increase investment in the Arts Council by 10.8% - amounting to €6.5 million in 2018. Such funding will be focused on the

people who choose to devote their lives or a portion of their lives to cultural expression in all of its diversity.

Public investment in the arts is imaginative, directly impacts on employment and ensures a sustainable dividend for the state. The Arts support almost 21,000 jobs and are a significant part of our economy.

Sinn Féin also proposes to better engage both Arts Council's on this island through increased north/south initiatives and the co-funding of cross border organisations.

## 2. INCREASE INVESTMENT IN CULTURE IRELAND BY €0.5 MILLION

Sinn Féin acknowledge that Ireland's culture is created and maintained by every person on this island, and every person in the diaspora. In short, there is no single proposition for Irish identity – only diversity. Our culture is already vibrant and constantly emerging. Government policy must reflect, support, and protect that.

With an estimated diaspora of 70 million people, 40 million of whom live in North America, Ireland has unique challenges and opportunities in supporting its diaspora abroad and harnessing the incredible potential they offer us as a nation.

Culture Ireland promotes Irish arts across the globe, and financially supports Irish artists and organisations presenting works at venues and festivals abroad including the Edinburgh festivals and Venice Biennales.

Such international projects also make contributions to developing and promoting our cultural tourism offering, benefiting the domestic and foreign tourist.

Sinn Féin's proposal for 2018 is an increase of €0.5 million for Culture Ireland.

### 3. INCREASE CAPITAL AND CURRENT FUNDING FOR OUR NATIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS - COST €4 MILLION

Ireland's National Cultural Institutions have faced cuts in excess of 40% and are struggling under funding circumstances that create a cultural atmosphere that is inert rather than dynamic.

Day to day operations, opening hours, staffing numbers and programming have all been affected within these institutions, many of which are amongst the top 10 most visited attractions in Ireland.

Sinn Féin's increased investment for

our National Cultural Institutions also includes a capital investment programme of €1 million.

Our cultural institutions are invaluable to the Irish state in terms of showcasing the finest art, heritage and history that our country has to offer. They are elucidating and informative for both local and tourist alike. The National Cultural Institutions are also continually innovative despite the cuts endured during years of austerity.

## 4. NATIONAL YOUTH ARTS STRATEGY

Young people as artists, not just future artists.

Sinn Féin takes pride in Ireland's vibrant artistic history - across myriad art forms - and will campaign to ensure that such a record is upheld and added to into the future.

We will safeguard the right of every young person to explore their artistic and creative potential.

Despite the language in Culture 2025 - Éire Ildánach, Sinn Féin believe that Culture is already at the heart of a citizen's life. We have the political will and ambition to ensure that participation in cultural expression and cultural activities is a reality at all stages of life.

One third of Ireland's population is under 25 years of age. Young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years represent 18.3% of the population. Young people therefore have the right to be represented at the heart of cultural policy in Ireland and not as a minority group.

Over the course of a Government term, Sinn Féin will develop and deliver a National Youth Arts Strategy promoting participation, progression and provision. The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, working alongside both the Department

of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Education and Skills will carry out research, planning and consultation of a National Youth Arts Strategy over a period of 24 months at no additional cost to the exchequer.

This process will also serve to re-establish a culture of policy formation within the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and reduce the number of consultants employed.

A three year implementation programme at a cost of €5 million will follow the initial two year research, planning and consultation phase.

Young people must be seen as artists and participants in their own right rather than as audiences or future artists. Time to Shine: Scotland's Youth Arts Strategy for ages 0-25 presents a vision to "support all Scotland's children and young people to flourish and achieve in and through the arts and creativity".

Any national strategy should be focused on engagement, developing talent, and putting in place the appropriate infrastructure and support, not only within the confines of traditional education environments but developing arts habit in the non-formal education environment such as youth services, orchestras, and youth theatres, etc.

## 5. INCREASE INVESTMENT IN THE IRISH FILM BOARD - COST €2 MILLION

Irish film and television has endured disproportionate cuts in state support when compared to other sectors.

Sinn Féin would increase funding to the Irish Film Board by €2 million in 2018.

The audio-visual content production sector is estimated to be worth over €550 million and employs over 6,000 individuals, with over 560 SME's operating in the sector. Analysis by Revenue shows an estimated expenditure on employment from projects availing of Section 481 in 2015 to be €97 million, supporting 1,200 jobs. A further €70 million was spent on goods and services.

State support for Irish film and television provides multiple cultural and economic benefits, far beyond the

direct employment of on-set cast and crews. Tourism Ireland estimates that 35% of people visit this island as a result of its appearance and introduction by way of screen.

Sinn Féin recognise that our ability to attract big budget productions rests on the simultaneous development of our domestic eco-system i.e. the education of talent, cast and crews, production companies and the development of studio space – all fostered for the benefit of our indigenous industry for maximum benefit to be gained when attracting international productions.

The capital allocation of €2 million is mainly for the provision of development and production loans to the independent film and television sector.

## 6. ARTIST STUDIO SPACES SCHEME - COST €5 MILLION

Sinn Féin's capital project for the development of an 'Artist Studio Spaces Scheme' will develop state owned cultural infrastructure that offers security of tenure to artists across the state.

Sinn Féin believe that designers, musicians, dancers, visual artists, web developers, and performers can and should be offered insulation from the commercial rental market and that such security of tenure can be provided through affordable, state owned spaces, rented to artistic tenants for short and long term

tenancies that ensure fairness in access.

Sinn Féin have ring-fenced a fund of €5 million that will allow a number of Local Authorities repurpose and refurbish existing vacant Local Authority buildings for use as state owned artist studio spaces.

An Artist Studio Spaces Scheme could also allow for the waiving of rent should the artist be engaged in cultural activity for the benefit of the local community. A percentage of artist space could also be reserved for young, emerging artists.

## 7. FUNDING INCREASE FOR HERITAGE (INCLUDING MOORE STREET AND CULTÚRLANN) - €5.25 MILLION

Without Heritage, Culture has no context and no starting point. Without Culture we have no Art. When we think of Heritage we must appreciate that the National Cultural Institutions are Heritage, but so too are the tunnelled buildings on the lanes of Moore Street, the horror of the Magdalene Laundries, the built and the natural, the Giants Causeway and Brú na Bóinne.

Preserving our heritage and history is vital in contributing to the quality of life and cultural identity of our communities. Moore Street is one such site which is of tremendous importance in the birth of the Irish State, and which is deserving of sufficient funding to ensure its restoration and further

development as a key historical site and prime cultural asset.

Our language is also vital yet there is no Irish language centre in the South of Ireland.

Sinn Féin are proposing the establishment of a Cultúrlann in Dublin City Centre so as to establish a shared civic space for Irish speakers of all ages. With few opportunities for people to speak Irish when they leave the educational system, a dedicated venue, with a café, theatre, and conference room would create a dynamic, central hub in which the Irish language could thrive. We have proposed that such a centre be located on Moore Street and this project should be furthered in 2018.





Ar **Do** thaobh

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