

# The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

## 684<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting

Radisson Blu Hotel, Sligo  
Tuesday, 16 June and Wednesday, 17 June 2015 at 10:00

### **Present:**

Sheila Pratschke Chairman, Aibhlín McCrann, Deputy Chairman, Ciarán Walsh, John O'Donnell, John McAuliffe, Eimear O'Connor, Miriam Dunne, John Fanning, Brian Maguire, Monica Spencer.

### **In attendance:**

Orlaith McBride *Director*, Martin Drury *Strategic Development Director*, Aidan Burke *Corporate Services Director*, Stephanie O'Callaghan *Arts Director*, Liz Meaney *Arts Director*, Sean Mac Carthaigh *Public Affairs Director*.

### **Documents before the meeting**

Agenda  
Minutes of Meeting held on 20 May 2015  
Report on Harping Tradition in Ireland  
Peer Panel Paper  
Project (Round 2) 2015  
Theatre Schemes 2015  
Youth Ensemble Scheme 2015  
Dance Scheme 2015  
Aosdána Cnuas Recommendation  
Arts Council Strategy 2015

### **15 – 06 – 054 Apologies**

Joan Sheehy, Judith Woodworth, Mark O'Regan.

### **15 – 06 – 055 Chairman's Introduction**

*Conflicts of Interest*- The Chair requested members to declare any conflicts that they may have with the agenda items and reminded members to advise her of any conflicts that may arise during the course of the meeting.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### **15 – 06 – 056 Minutes of the Plenary Meeting: 20 May 2015**

The Minutes of the 20 May Plenary meeting were **approved**.

### **15 – 06 – 057 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising other than those covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## **15 – 06 – 058 Peer Panel Paper**

David Parnell joined the meeting. The Peer Panel Paper was presented, and the following was **agreed** by Council, with work due to commence over the summer. It was also confirmed that the proposals presented included the recommendations of the internal auditors' report on panels.

### *Generation of panel long-lists*

Details of the expertise, experience and demographic profile of individuals Council wishes to see represented on the panel long list will be devised and published.

A system will be introduced to populate the panel long list through application and/or nomination with published criteria and processes to give effect to this. Nominators will include Council, executive, appropriate organisations and individuals.

New panel related documentation will be devised and published including; guidelines / terms and conditions (to include reference to conflicts of interest and limitations on the length of service / number of panels served). This documentation will be differentiated depending on the needs of the art form / practice area.

Proposed long lists will be agreed by Council, once verified as within the criteria.

Records will be created and centrally maintained relating to the long list which will include arts expertise, demographic and geographic information, as well as length of service and participation and report on these records annually. These records will also record those individual asked to serve on panels, but who were unavailable.

The panel long list will be refreshed on an annual basis and published.

### *Forming panels from the long-list*

Members of the executive will no longer vote on panels.

A high to medium level process for selecting panels from the long list based on existing protocols and incorporating any requirements arising from this paper and arising from new conflicts of interest procedures will be devised and documented. This will include a process to ensure an art form or genre mix as required.

Panels will incorporate the breadth of expertise necessitated by shortlisted applications. This will be anticipated based on the experience of previous rounds.

Variations from the panel selection procedure will be exceptional and approved by senior management. The decision to vary process will be documented, and where possible within the timeline, Council will be informed if appropriate.

Recommendations will be introduced on the number of times a panellist might serve and/ or the period of time they might spend on the panel long list before serving a 'withdrawal' period.

The balancing key expertise and profiles (demographic or other) of individuals represented on panels will be monitored and reported on an annual basis.

A participation log will be maintained after each panel.

Where possible, in schemes with two rounds, the same panellists will be used.

Where possible, when panellists declare any conflicts, they will be ruled out of participation. However in the event that this is not possible the number of conflicts should be proportionate to the number of applicants; appropriate ratios will be developed for guidance.

#### *Chairing of panels*

Former Council members will be invited to join the new panel long list and, and as required, delegate to former Council members the (non-voting) chairing of panel meetings, where suitable Council members are not available.

To ensure conflicts of interest do not arise, former Council members will Chair panels assessing schemes involving applications which include serving Council members. This only arises in cases where Council members may benefit indirectly from applications in their capacity as arts professionals. Council members may not be named applicants for Arts Council awards.

All potential Chairs (including current and former Council members) will undertake facilitated training sessions in relation to their role as panel chairs with a view to supporting them in their role as a Chair of a peer panel.

#### *Peer panel payments*

The current daily rates for panels will be reviewed and revised, and a half day rate for attending a panel meeting will be introduced.

An additional payment rate will be set for preparatory work undertaken in advance of meetings. This payment will be linked to the number of papers assessed and the nature of the preparatory reading required by particular schemes.

#### *The assessment and decision making process.*

It was agreed to set down definitions for scores, to assist panel members, and to offer clarity to applicants. For example:

A – Must Fund (*10 points*): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have fully met the criteria for the award and merits funding on that basis, to the amount requested where possible

B – Should Fund (*8 points*): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding should resources allow

C – Could Fund (*5 points*): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have met the criteria, but to a lesser extent within the competitive context than other applications

D – Not a priority (*2 points*): this means that, in the view of the panel member, the application is deemed to have not met the criteria to an extent sufficient to merit funding

A protocol will be agreed around the amounts offered, which will be the amount requested, unless there is a panel recommendation to offer less. The reason for this will be documented.

Bespoke phrases will be reviewed and revised to ensure that they are effective in communicating useful feedback to applicants. These phrases will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The system of capturing important data from application forms to ensure that they can be made available to panel members in advance will be reviewed. This may be achieved by offering panel members remote access to applications in advance of panel date.

A consistent approach across teams will be taken on the types of materials which are made available to panellists in advance of panels. However, where consistency is not possible, a clear policy relating to this issue will be set down in writing. It is understood that this is not always possible across the different art form and arts practice areas. Priority will be given to the making budgetary information available to panellists in advance of panel meetings.

An internal review will be conducted annually of at least 3 awards/schemes to ensure quality of the assessment process, panel selection, conflict of interest procedures and all other related panel matters. This will review group will include a Council member and Senior Management.

Panellists will have sight of all applications through remote access, thereby enabling them to propose non-shortlisted applications for consideration.

The Panel chair will receive notice of all conflicts in advance of meeting

#### *Further Matters for Consideration*

The staff members in attendance at meetings will be the Head of Team, the assistant during the review of applications and the officer only during scoring. The Adviser may be available for clarification during the review of applications, but will only be called upon during scoring should specific issues arise. This may be altered when a Head of Team is unavailable.

The size of panels will be increased for awards where there is significant demand, a high volume of applications, or where there may be different genres or styles being assessed within one art form or practice award (e.g. different genres of music, or theatre productions of significantly different scale). Shortlists with applications below 30 for consideration will be assessed by a panel of 3, unless the mix of applications demands a greater breadth of expertise. Shortlists with 31 or more will be assessed by a panel of at least 4, larger if required by the mix of applications. As panels are formed prior to the completion of the shortlisting process these ratios will be based on previous patterns within individual schemes.

Funding will be allocated based on the strength of applications, not on the resources available. Protocols will be developed to ensure a scoring system which reflects the qualitative assessment of applications by panels.

An assessment of the scoring process will be undertaken to eliminate, as far as possible, the need for Chairs and/or Head of Team to vote as part of panels when conflicts arise.

An assessment will be undertaken of the resource implications of consistently involving international panellists on long lists, to increase the breath of expertise available.

A workshop involving Council members, Arts Council staff, and previous panel members will be undertaken as part of the on-going work to review the panel process.

Panellists will be strongly encouraged to have prepared fully in advance and to have a reasonably clear view of applications.

### **15 – 06 – 059 Peer Harping Tradition in Ireland**

Paul Flynn joined the meeting and presented the main findings from the Report. Members acknowledged how significant this report is to the harping community in Ireland particularly given the large voluntary nature of that community.

Despite it not being possible for the Arts Council to address all of the recommendations in full at this time and was **agreed** that the Council would consider addressing the recommendations in the context of a the Music Policy. It was **agreed** in the first instance that the Report would be presented formally to all those who contributed to it.

### **15 – 06 – 060 Awards and Schemes**

#### *Project Awards 2015*

Members **noted** the Project Awards Round 2, 2015 awards. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

#### *Theatre Schemes*

Members **noted** the Theatre Artist Development Scheme, Theatre Artist Residency Scheme and the Theatre Resource Sharing Scheme. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

#### *Dance Scheme*

Members **noted** the Dance Artist Residency Scheme. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

#### *Youth Ensemble Scheme*

Members **noted** the Youth Ensemble Scheme. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

#### *Deis Recording and Publication Scheme*

Members **noted** the *Deis Recording and Publication Scheme*. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

### **15 – 05 – 061 Aosdána Cnuas**

Members **agreed** the Cnuas recommendation. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

### **15 – 05 – 062 Reports**

#### *Policy and Strategy Committee 3 June 2015*

#### **Arts Council Strategy 2015**

The Chair of the Committee, Eimeár O'Connor updated members on the discussion and actions arising from the meeting of the 3 June. While much consensus had been established in preceding meetings around the key issues for attention in the new strategy, this meeting revisited them and concluded as follows:

- History and precedent were over-determining the present; altered circumstances required a new Arts Council strategy to guide change over the coming decade with a 10-year framework overarching three 3-year plans. 2016 would be a transition year. There was a general appetite for significant change over the next decade.
- There was comfort with the conception of the Arts Council as development agency and with so describing itself (without that being formally embedded in an official sub-title for the organisation – hence lower case rather than capitalised 'd' and 'a') The set of 'development agency' behaviours outlined in previous meetings and associated presentations were endorsed.

- Public engagement – seeking to better address those who are disengaged from the arts as defined by the Arts Council - was agreed in principle as a strategic priority. It was agreed to look again at how to translate this broad ambition for better civic engagement into targeted goals for achievement over the course of the fixed-term strategy. Further discussion was required on the demographic priorities of Council i.e. the identification of particular publics as priority concerns.
- The artist (in all disciplines) was agreed as a strategic priority and key focus of the new strategy. There was general consensus that the strategy should concern itself more with the career cycle of artists and the various supports and resources required to sustain artists at different points in that cycle. [REDACTED]
- Spatial planning and analysis (incorporating demographic data and information) would inform the strategic planning and provision of the Arts Council as outlined in the new strategy. This was allied to Council's partnership with local government.
- An investment strategy would be developed and published, informed by the 5 key points raised in SR14 (as identified on pages 24-26 of the summary document prepared for 3 June 2015). It was agreed that further discussion was required in respect of the proposed re-balancing between local, regional and national responsibilities.
- The principle of the 'filters' as a way of considering all AC actions and decisions including funding decisions was agreed, with further work to be done defining and the component elements of each filter. It was agreed that 'artistic quality' would be identified as a stand-alone filter, reflecting the particular importance attaching to this value in the concerns and decision-making of the Arts Council. Thus the 4 filters would become 5.

The report and recommendations of the Policy and Strategy committee were **agreed**.

### **15 – 05 – 063 Arts Council Strategy 2015**

Eimeár O'Connor, Chair of Policy and Strategy chaired the discussion on the Arts Council Strategy 2015.

The following decisions were **agreed** by Council allowing the working group to progress the strategy document over the summer for presentation in full at the plenary meeting on 3 September. It was **agreed** where required key sections of the document would be circulated to all members during the drafting process.

#### **Timeline, introduction, context**

The Council **agreed** the following:

- Ten-year Strategy 2016 -2025, Year 1 Plan followed by three 3-year plans.
- The new Strategy takes effect from 1 January 2016.
- The ten-year Strategy will be published after the meeting on 3 September 2015. The Strategy will be fixed, identifying where we will be headed over the life of the strategy. We will then have [structured] dialogue in the autumn before producing the first three-year plan (2017-2019).

- We will have a clear plan for Year 1 (2016) of the ten-year Strategy in the autumn.
- The title was not agreed with members agreeing to email Chair of P&S with ideas.
- We are not using the words 'Framework' (for the Strategy) or 'transition year' (for Year 1 of the ten-year Strategy).

### **From 'Remit' to 'Key areas for strategic action'**

The Council **agreed** the following:

- Mission (ii) - *Our mission is to lead the development of the arts in Ireland.*
- To order the sections as follows: Remit; Vision; Mission; Leading the Development of the arts.
- The overall sense of the 'Vision' section was agreed.
- To reduce the section describing the 'Vision'.
- To retain active words / verbs in the section 'Leading the Development in the Arts': Advise, Advocate, Invest.
- To explore where best to place 'partnership'.
- To move 'invest' to point #3.
- To distinguish key priorities from ways of doing.
- To explore where to locate explanation that the Arts Council welcomes the findings of SR14 and is becoming more public facing.

### **Public Engagement**

The Council **agreed** the following:

- Priorities:
  - Children and young people: in school and out of school
  - Priority publics: new communities and people living in disadvantaged areas / taking care not to be paternalistic or to ghettoise people in the language used to describe this
  - Audience development incorporating audience engagement as well as marketing
  - Voluntary and amateur practice
- To look for and promote quality and excellence across all arts engagement work.
- To support and promote the artist at the heart of public engagement.
- To support and promote engagement where artists are centrally involved in the design and delivery of work.
- To ensure that the Arts Council uses and promotes respectful language when talking about and working with communities that face challenges.
- To ensure that the Arts Council is not paternalistic and does not further ghettoise people in its efforts to engage priority publics (i.e. the most severely arts disadvantaged).
- To consider public spaces for the arts and the development of the 'third space'.
- To consider the Pathfinders study, and look again at the barriers to engagement.
- To consider the findings of *The Study on Audience Development in Ireland 2015*.
- The full sphere of voluntary and amateur practice ranges widely and includes:
  - Professional participative arts and professionally led arts-collaboration
  - Amateur artistic and creative activity self-led voluntarily by participants and their clubs/groups, interacting occasionally with professional artists and subsidised professional arts resources;
  - Volunteering in a non-artistic capacity to help run arts events, projects and venues.

## Digital Agenda

- To include some focused reference and action in relation to the 'digital agenda', while acknowledging the challenges for the Arts Council to engage with the digital arena - which is of enormous scope.
- It was **agreed** that further work would be done on this as there was not a definitive decision as to 'where' to locate the 'digital agenda' in the Strategy. For example, it is relevant within 'Public Engagement' under 'audiences' (digital platforms for dissemination and engagement) and under 'young people and children' (art making by children and young people using digital media); it is relevant within 'Artists' in relation to the making and dissemination of work.
- To consider the PESTLE analysis during SR14, which brought attention to (the Arts Council's relevance/irrelevance for) practice and projects that are 'born digital'.

## The Artist

The Council **agreed** the following:

- To include the word 'artist' or 'artists' in the goal, and the notion of valuing the artist.
- To remove the phrase 'and rewarded appropriately' from the goal, and make a distinct objective about remuneration later in the section.
- To include a statement on the intrinsic value of the arts at the start of this section.
- To generally balance 'support' with the development of an environment that enables artists to work.
- To move point #3 up to join point #1 and redraft as necessary.
- To revisit point #2 and the overall order of all the points as a result of these changes.
- To remove 'high-quality' from point #1.
- To retain the term 'emerging' in point #3 [while appreciating this may not be synonymous with innovative and experimental work, and that established artists may be creating innovative and/or experimental work].
- To continue to use the term 'investment' as this is being used throughout the Strategy.
- In relation to point #4, to change the word 'productive', while retaining the sense of continuity of artistic practice and paid work that a better overall working environment for artists would enable.
- In relation to points #4 and #5, to use the word 'support' rather than 'assist'.
- In relation to point #7, to cut 'Irish-based' and just use the word 'artists' without qualification.
- In relation to point #7, to cut the line, 'Given the legitimate ambition of many artists and the limitations of domestic scale'.
- In relation to point #8, to consider making it two points, allowing the first section of #8 to remain clear (ending at 'agreements'), while also being more explicit about advocating measures that would sustain a living and would be beneficial to artists' careers.
- To revisit point #9: to distinguish between professional artists working in a wide range of different settings, on the one hand, and amateur arts on the other; to shift from a statement to an action; to consider the general sentiment as part of a 'values' section or something similar.

## Investment strategy

The Council **agreed** the following:

- To incorporate bullet point #1 into the overall goal.
- The remaining bullet points describe features and characteristics of our Investment Strategy.
- It will be explicit that the historical funding model and funding decisions will change.
- To express overall in this section that there is a rebalancing required between recurring and non-recurring funding.
- To bring point #3 up under #1 or perhaps join with point #1.
- To ensure point #5 is clear, while keeping in mind that this is a ten-year Strategy and that there will be more detail in the three-year plans.
- The overall meaning of point #6, while conveying that the Arts Council will exercise judgment and that there will be cases where investment in built infrastructure is appropriate, in particular for artform development.
- To incorporate the words or sense of 'realignment' in point #7 (moving from the 80:20 distribution).
- Regarding point #8, to place a *number of* organisations on multi-annual funding agreements.
- The principle of point #9, and to reduce its length.
- The principle of points #11 and #12.
- To find another word to describe the 'lenses' or 'filters', e.g. criteria or something more imagistic.
- To keep the Matarasso quality assessment framework.
- To simplify or clarify the distinction between (applying the 'lenses' to) applications and our own budget planning.
- Regarding #5 'Economic Model & Governance Lens', create two clusters of points, one cluster for the 'Economic Model' and one for 'Governance'.
- To leave the overall rewriting and ordering of the points to the Chair of the P&S Committee and to the executive until the next version.

### **Spatial planning – people and places**

The Council **agreed** the following:

- To use Goal #1 'public provision for the arts across Ireland is well planned'.
- To reverse the order of the points.
- To change 'renew' in point #2 to 'progress'.
- Regarding the third bullet point under 'Why this goal', to bring out the sense that by working in partnership we are sharing intelligence and learning and not only bringing together (financial) resources.

### **The Arts Council – effective leader, expert body and development agency**

The Council **agreed** the following:

- For the executive to develop this further.
- To include sectoral development.
- To see what it would look like to include 'values' - such as transparency – in this section.
- Not to name specific agencies with which we might prioritise engaging with as it is a ten-year Strategy and names of agencies and Departments may change.

## **Strategy format**

The Council **agreed** the following:

- A general preference for the second format, with 'unfolding of ideas' and 'story'.
- A good strategy will set out an agenda, how we will achieve this and how we will know that this has been achieved.
- To provide a section of the next draft in two different formats.
- Graphic design will play a major part in communicating traceability from goal and rationale to outcomes and measures.
- To include an 'Executive Summary'.

## **Current corporate priorities**

The Council **agreed** the following:

- A plan for 'Year 1' of the ten-year Strategy will be very clear about what happens to current corporate priorities, such as touring.

There being no other business the meeting ended.

