

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



HERITAGE AT THE HEART

HERITAGE COUNCIL STRATEGY
2018-2022

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

I would like to congratulate the Heritage Council and welcome its new Strategic Plan, 2018-2022: Heritage at the Heart, which sets out the Heritage Council's vision for the next five years and builds on all of the Council's achievements since its establishment in 1995.

Heritage at the Heart is being published in 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, which is being co-ordinated nationally by the Heritage Council. The EYCH aims to deepen the connection between people and heritage using events that promote a sense of belonging to a common European space. The Heritage Council's vision for the EYCH includes a commitment to build on the foundations laid this year, ensuring legacy beyond 2018.

The challenges faced by the heritage sector in this fast changing and globalised world are considerable. Heritage at the Heart reiterates the importance of managing and conserving our natural, built and cultural heritage to enrich the lives of people now and in the future.

The plan also sets out the Heritage Council's priorities, including the celebration of Ireland's heritage on the international stage, the conservation of the biodiversity of our rich landscape and the protection and promotion of our built and natural heritage for the wellbeing of people and communities.

The Heritage Council consulted widely in developing Heritage at the Heart, and the contributions of partners, stakeholders and the public are reflected in the plan, which has been shaped and enriched by the variety of submissions received. This partnership approach is a recipe for success in bringing the economic, social and

environmental benefits of caring for our heritage to old and new communities.

Underpinning this plan is the Government's policy of investment in Ireland's culture, language and heritage through initiatives such as Creative Ireland, Project Ireland 2040, the National Development Plan 2018-2027 and the recently announced Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage. I also welcome the Heritage Council's commitment to contribute to my Department's revised National Heritage Plan – Heritage Ireland 2030 which will go to public consultation shortly.

The final year of the plan - Heritage at the Heart - coincides with the 100-year anniversary of the foundation of the Irish State. A more diverse society means that our understanding of what is 'National Heritage' is changing to reflect the make up of our communities. Heritage at the Heart recognises this and through programmes like Heritage Week and Heritage in Schools shows how the Heritage Council can lead and respond to these changes and help celebrate Ireland's new and ancient heritage, now and for the future.



Josepha Madigan, TD

Minister for Culture, Heritage
and the Gaeltacht



CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

This is the Heritage Council's fifth Strategic Plan. In building on the achievements of previous plans this Plan also affords Council the opportunity to introduce new initiatives and remain at the forefront of contemporary approaches to heritage conservation, management and development. Our vision is very clearly stated as being to see heritage at the heart of Irish society and decision-making and that Ireland will be internationally recognised as a centre of excellence in heritage management, conservation and community engagement.

In that context the support and national context identified by Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Josepha Madigan TD in her foreword to this strategy, highlights the different and changing world in which we now operate compared to 20 years ago. The national policy framework has taken huge steps forward. A National Cultural Policy is now in place and there is significant emphasis placed by government on making the connections for culture, including our national heritage, across all government departments. The National Planning Framework, the National Landscape Strategy, the National Biodiversity Plan and the emerging National Heritage Plan will further strengthen the place of our heritage at the heart of the decision-making process, as will the publication of Council's new strategic plan in 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

To help secure its objectives the Heritage Council has many partners, particularly but not exclusively within the heritage community. This strategic plan with its focus on advancing national heritage priorities, nurturing belonging and ensuring

a vibrant heritage sector, has been conceived in consultation with this wide range of individuals, groups and organisations, including engagement with those still at school, the decision makers of the future. All of their views have helped shape our thinking and will be fundamental in assisting us with the implementation of the plan.

In that regard the Heritage Council is aware of the constraints of its current capacity and will continue to be imaginative and innovative in the way it both secures and directs its resources. Recent capital investment by Government in the state's heritage infrastructure is to be welcomed and offers us all encouragement. Council will work closely with all its partners to secure ongoing and additional and complementary investment in both people and their place.

I look forward to working with you all in the days, weeks, months and years to come on the implementation of this Plan.



Michael Parsons

Chairman
An Chomhairle Oidhreachta

WHY HERITAGE COUNTS

Heritage is the bedrock of civilization, the foundation of culture and the steady pulse of contemporary Ireland. It encompasses not just buildings, monuments and museum pieces, but also our distinctive landscapes, native wildlife and woodlands, literature, folklore, and crafts. Passed on to us in all its forms from previous generations, it defines who we are in the present, and our efforts to protect and interpret it today, will be our legacy to future generations.

Tangible and intangible, personal and collective, heritage is at the very heart of Irish society. Its relevance is palpable at local level where it drives economies, stimulates innovation and is the focal point for festivals, conferences and commemorations. A touchstone for identity in a world of accelerating change, heritage fosters a sense of belonging and supports social cohesion at a local and national level. It simultaneously crosses borders and transcends difference to connect people through shared values, history and traditions. As the nation's most valuable publicly owned asset, heritage must be protected, nurtured and enjoyed so that it continues to count in 2022 and beyond.



HERITAGE ACT, 1995

PART V

ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNCIL

- (2) There shall stand established on the establishment day a body to be known as An Oidhreacht or, in the English language, The Heritage Council to perform the functions conferred on it by this Act.
- (3) The Council shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and power to sue and be sued in its own name and to acquire, hold and dispose of land.

PART VI

FUNCTIONS OF COUNCIL

- 1) The functions of the Council shall be to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage, including monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways.
- (3) The Council shall in particular—
- promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage,
 - co-operate with public authorities, educational bodies and other organisations and persons in the promotion of the functions of the Council,
 - promote the coordination of all activities relating to the functions of the Council

PART VII

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCIL

- (1) The Council may make recommendations to the Minister in relation to the Council's functions, and may make such recommendations as may appear to it to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of the Act.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Heritage Council is governed by the Heritage Act 1995 which requires the Council to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage.

The Heritage Council is charged with:

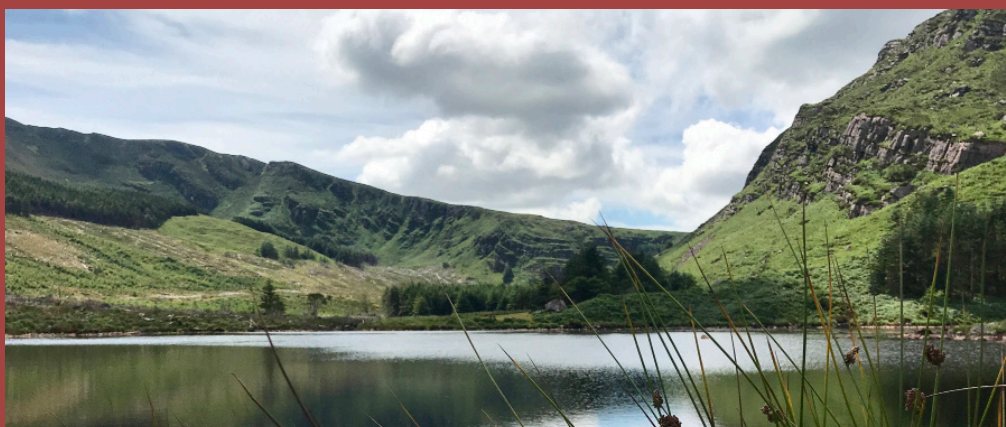
- Promoting interest, education, knowledge, pride and care of our national heritage and supporting appreciation and enjoyment of our heritage
- Co-operating with public authorities, education bodies and others in the promotion of its functions
- Advancing the co-ordination of all activities related to the functions of the Council

The Heritage Council aims to ensure that our heritage is managed and conserved to enrich the lives of people now and for the future. We will continue to promote and nurture our heritage as a source of personal, community and national well-being.



OUR VISION: 2018-2022

The Heritage Council is motivated by the prospect that by 2022, heritage will be at the heart of Irish society and decision-making and that Ireland will be internationally recognised as a centre of excellence in heritage management, conservation and community engagement.



OUR PRIORITIES

WE WILL REALISE OUR VISION BY

- advancing national heritage priorities
- nurturing belonging
- ensuring a vibrant heritage sector

OUR VALUES

IN REALISING OUR VISION, WE ARE COMMITTED TO

- the highest standards of heritage care
- integrity, accessibility and honesty
- professionalism and efficiency
- participation and partnership
- social inclusion
- sustainability and quality of life

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Ireland 2018-2022

Prepared against a backdrop of rapid change in an increasingly multicultural society, this document builds upon the successes of our Strategic Plan 2012- 2016 and anticipates the opportunities and challenges of the next five years. The Heritage Council will continue to adapt to evolving political and social landscapes, and remain responsive to the needs of Irish society and its heritage sector.

We are encouraged by the prominence of heritage in recent government initiatives such as Creative Ireland, Culture 2025, the National Landscape Strategy, Growing Tourism to 2025, the Action Plan for Rural Development, the National Development Plan 2017-2028 and Project Ireland 2040. There remains, however, much to be done in order that its intrinsic and extrinsic value is fully appreciated and articulated in national decision-making, and sustained through a robust programme of investment in the heritage sector.

The publication of a new National Heritage Plan during the lifetime of this strategy will provide a detailed policy environment in which the

Heritage Council can work to advance national heritage priorities.

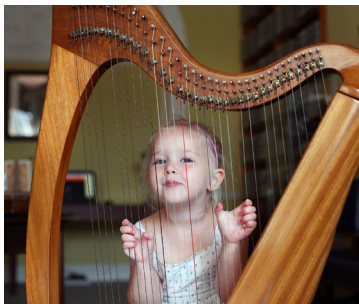
Our strategic objectives engage with the complex and changing socio-economic context of Ireland in 2018. At the time of writing, Ireland is experiencing a housing crisis. This document acknowledges that the Heritage Council has a role to play in motivating the heritage-led rejuvenation of some of Ireland's city, town and village centres. Working with others to facilitate the reuse of existing buildings will help to alleviate the crisis while preserving the distinctive identity and character of our historic urban centres.

Critical to achieving the Heritage Council's vision for 2018-22 is the continued support and development of the dynamic and diverse Irish heritage sector. Spanning local government, state institutions, community groups and the private sector, it has capabilities in areas such as landscape, biodiversity, and in all aspects of digital, built and cultural heritage. By maximizing the potential of its networks and partnerships, and drawing on the vital energy of the voluntary community sector, the Heritage Council can

contribute to solving complex issues such as the effects of climate change, urban regeneration and Brexit.

Heritage is inextricable from our identity as individuals and communities. As such, it is incumbent on the Heritage Council to explore with others the potential cultural and identity issues that could arise as a result of the UK's departure from the European Union. We will work as a conduit for natural and cultural heritage dialogue that crosses borders while also respecting cultural identities.

This Strategic Plan is born into the European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018) during which, the Heritage Council will champion the importance of cultural heritage and work to ensure a legacy of better-connected audiences, and a more empowered and connected heritage sector. The final year of this Strategic Plan will coincide with the anniversary of the foundation of the Irish State in 1922. Just as heritage was an inspiration for the construction of identities over one hundred years ago, we will work to ensure that it contributes to diverse and inclusive identities in today's Ireland.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

2018-2022

To realise the Vision for the Heritage Council outlined in this document, our focus will be principally on three Strategic Objectives:

- 1 Advance National Heritage Priorities
- 2 Nurture Belonging
- 3 Ensure a Vibrant Heritage Sector

The Heritage Council's approach to achieving these objectives will be consistent with our values. We will collaborate constructively with national and local government, voluntary, educational and other organisations. Our programmes will be cost effective and regularly reviewed. We will sow the seeds of innovation and support projects that will have a positive and enduring social and economic impact.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

1

ADVANCE NATIONAL HERITAGE PRIORITIES

National and International policy makers are becoming increasingly aware of the potential of heritage to contribute to economic growth and social cohesion, as well as to national pride and well-being.

During the lifetime of this plan, the Heritage Council will augment its record of providing expert evidence-based policy advice for the long-term benefit of Ireland's heritage. We will work in collaboration with other public and private bodies, to develop innovative ways of nurturing, recording and interpreting our shared cultural inheritance. By aligning our work with the programming of existing governmental initiatives, the Heritage Council will champion the significance and relevance of heritage in contemporary Ireland.

To Advance National Heritage Priorities, the Heritage Council will ...

- i **FULFILL** the statutory responsibilities set out in the Heritage Act, 1995 and, where necessary, seek improvements in the legislative framework to advance national heritage priorities
- ii **PROVIDE** leadership in delivering evidence-based policy advice in areas such as vernacular architecture, measuring the social and economic value of heritage, as well as policies on landscape, biodiversity and urban regeneration
- iii **ASSIST** in the formulation and implementation of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2018-2027 known as Project Ireland 2040
- iv **SUPPORT** the development of programmes that monitor change to heritage and devise programmes that care for natural, built and cultural heritage in Ireland
- v **CONTRIBUTE** to the development and implementation of a National Heritage Plan with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- vi **DEVELOP** policies and programmes that promote the sustainability of rural communities and the landscapes that they inhabit
- vii **WORK** in partnership with Creative Ireland programming
- viii **ENSURE** that the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH) promotes the significance of Ireland's heritage in a European context and that the year generates a heritage legacy
- ix **ENGAGE** with local and European heritage networks to identify their benefits for Ireland



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

NURTURE BELONGING

2

In a world of increasing globalisation, multiculturalism and mobility, heritage inspires a sense of belonging to a geographic or thematic community. It is the root of our individual and collective identities, but it is also the seed from which fresh connections will grow. Heritage issues an invitation to celebrate shared experiences and histories while also respecting difference.

This document is a blueprint for increasing inclusivity. It also addresses the inextricable links between heritage, identity and place and the imperative to engage with both the diaspora and community-based custodians of heritage. Attentive to the voices of young people who seek a sense of ownership of their cultural inheritance, we will also strive to provide more opportunities for youth participation and leadership.

To Nurture Belonging through a Sense of Identity and Place, the Heritage Council will ...

- i **ADVOCATE** for the strong contribution heritage can make in the regeneration of urban and rural landscapes
- ii **ASSIST** in improving the housing situation by developing strategies with local authorities that deal with unused historic buildings
- iii **RESPOND** to the challenges of Brexit by addressing any resulting identity issues and by focusing on areas where heritage has a relevance so as to minimise any potentially negative impacts
- iv **IMPLEMENT** programmes and initiatives, through grants, Heritage Week, Heritage in Schools and many others, that reward creative ways of promoting a sense of belonging and that also celebrate diversity within communities
- v **ENCOURAGE** the involvement of culturally diverse groups in heritage-related activities
- vi **CONTRIBUTE** to the National Landscape Strategy by investing in landscape partnerships and by encouraging new collaborations
- vii **WORK** with central and local government and local communities to examine the access and indemnity issues associated with places of special cultural or natural interest
- viii **DEVELOP** proposals to improve the quality of heritage management including, for example, in areas such as conservation and invasive species
- ix **ENDEAVOUR** to create more opportunities for young people to participate in and to lead heritage projects
- x **SUPPORT** projects that celebrate the Irish diaspora and the heritage of new communities in Ireland



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

3

ENSURE A VIBRANT HERITAGE SECTOR

The Heritage Council has always taken an innovative approach in enabling communities to care for and enjoy their local heritage. Our grant schemes, dynamic heritage networks and partnerships with public, private and professional bodies provide the impetus and support for community engagement and the development of heritage awareness and participation in Ireland.

During the next five years, the Heritage Council will continue to bolster the heritage sector by providing funding, training and enhanced communications and networking opportunities. We will also develop educational and research programmes to stimulate curiosity and promote understanding about our natural, cultural and built heritage.

To Ensure a Vibrant Heritage Sector, the Heritage Council will ...

- i **SUPPORT** the local authority Heritage Officer Network and assess how the range of local heritage services can be expanded to maximise the leadership role of local authorities
- ii **INVOLVE** local communities in caring for heritage by providing supports such as grants, training and capacity building opportunities as well as community archaeology and citizen science initiatives
- iii **DEVELOP** the digital platform for Irish heritage by building on the Heritage Council's Heritage Maps initiative (www.heritagemaps.ie) while being alert to the vulnerability of digital heritage assets
- iv **SUPPORT** the generation and communication of information on natural and cultural heritage
- v **INCREASE** the quality of online information to advocate for heritage, to provide a comprehensive national resource and to connect heritage groups and interests
- vi **FOSTER** and grow a heritage sector through supporting a range of heritage organisations, which currently include the National Biodiversity Data Centre, the Discovery Programme, the Irish Landmark Trust, and the Wicklow Upland Council
- vii **PROVIDE** support for Ireland's museums and collections through initiatives like the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) and initiate a review of the MSPI
- viii **PROMOTE** the educational & leisure benefits of community heritage projects
- ix **PROVIDE** support for future generations in their appreciation of the value of heritage through schools programmes at first and second-level
- x **EXAMINE** the integration of heritage in the formal education system with a view to using new and emerging curricula to showcase the value of heritage research
- xi **DEVELOP** heritage research programmes that nurture innovation and foster communication among stakeholders, building on the success of the respected Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research (INSTAR) Programme.



DELIVERING THIS STRATEGY

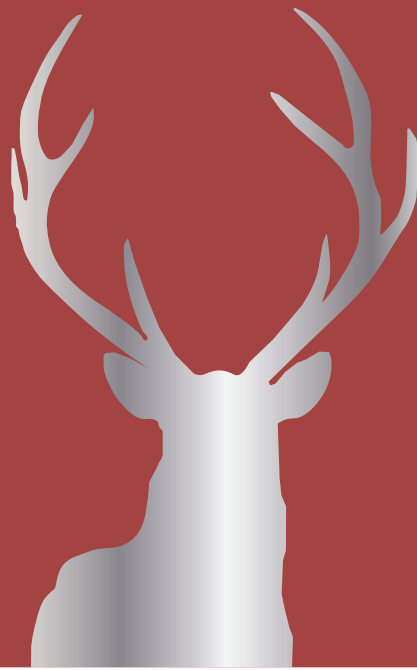
This Strategic Plan will be delivered by

- The Heritage Council board (expertise and corporate responsibility)
- Working Groups which are time limited and themed
- Council's executive
- Heritage infrastructure and key partners

EVALUATION:

The Heritage Council's priorities will be translated into annual operational plans for the years 2018-2022 and such plans will ensure the delivery of key targets and objectives. The work programme will be reviewed regularly against agreed key performance indicators; there will also be a special review of progress in 2020. Reporting on implementation will be detailed in published annual reports.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Heritage Council thanks all those individuals and organisations who commented on earlier drafts of this document and who offered ideas and inspiration.

PHOTOGRAPH CAPTIONS

Contents page and facing page

Top to Bottom, (1) Blacksmith at work, County Galway
(2) Set dancing during Heritage Week
(3) Town Walls, Youghal, County Cork
(4) Entrance to Rothe House, Kilkenny

Page 2. Full page photo

View from Áras na hOidhreachta, Church Lane, Kilkenny

Page 8. Photo Montage

Top, left to right: (1) Conservation work at Cashel Town Walls
(2) Traditional basket weaving at Muckross House, Killarney, County Kerry
Middle, (1) Glanteenassig, Castelegregory, County Kerry
(2) An Irish deer in its native habitat by Barry Coad
(3) Byre at Satchwell's farm near Creggs in Co. Galway
Bottom, Celtic Revival High Cross at St. Mullins Ecclesiastical Village, County Carlow

Page 11. Photo Montage

Top, left to right: (1) Aaron Pytlarz at the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Dublin in 2018
(2) Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, Michael Starrett with Sharon Slater, recipient of the Heritage Hero Award 2017
(3) Students from St. Brigid's and St. Mary's Primary Schools, Haddington Road, Dublin at the launch of Heritage in Schools website in September 2017
Bottom, (1) Left to Right, Colette Byrne, CEO Kilkenny County Council; Cara Trant, Manager, An Seanchai Kerry Writers Museum; Jimmy Deenihan and Michael Parsons, Chair of the Heritage Council at the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland Accreditation Ceremony, Kilkenny Castle, July 2018
(2) Members of Comhairle na nÓg who participated in a day-long Youth Consultation on the Heritage Council's Strategic Plan, 2018-2022
(3) Launch of Tralee Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) Summary Report in August 2017 **L-R:** Miriam Fitzpatrick, Heritage Council Board Member; Alison Harvey, Pilot CTCHC Programme Co-ordinator; Norma Foley, Mayor of Tralee; Minister of State, Damien English T.D; Cllr. John Sheahan, Mayor of Kerry and Michael Parsons, Chairman of the Heritage Council

Page 20. Photo Inset

Public demonstration at the National Print Museum during Heritage Week 2016

NOTES

NOTES

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