

The **Association of Local Authority Arts Officers** welcomes the work of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media on the topic of developing rural tourism in Ireland.

### **Brief Introduction**

The 31 Local Authority Arts Offices throughout Ireland are key resources in the national arts infrastructure. They have a critical role in developing and supporting arts development. Collectively they have over 35 years of experience in supporting artists, in commissioning art and in providing essential high-quality engagement opportunities for the public and the arts in their counties. The role of local authority arts officers is constantly evolving to include a broad cultural remit including; cultural tourism, urban regeneration and creative industries, which in turn, inform an expanded creative Irish landscape, indicating the multiple values now being placed on cultural development locally. At the heart of all of this are the artists; the writers, musicians, actors, performers, dancers and filmmakers, whose inspiring and compelling artistry are the real animators of the arts in Ireland.

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In responding to the themes identified by the committee, we wish to highlight a number of areas which would benefit the arts and our artists under the relevant themes 1 and 2:

1. Diversifying the rural tourism offering: attractions, activity tourism, creative tourism, screen tourism, and the night-time economy;
  - 1.1 Ensure to make provision for **Per Cent for Art** in capital programme budgets and engage with the relevant Local Authority Arts Officer in commissioning the artworks.
  - 1.2 Consider further phases of the **Local Live Performance Programming Scheme** and/or the **Night Time Economy Support Scheme** for cultural venues to avail of the opportunity to engage creatively with artists and the public.

1.3 Ensure that rural communities have creative capacity with measures that enable artists to live and work in them. Consider a **Capital Scheme for Local Authorities to develop Artist Workspaces**.

2. Outdoor recreation and outdoor recreation infrastructure, including sustainable outdoor- and nature-based tourism;

2.1 Ensure to make provision for **Per Cent for Art** in capital programme budgets and engage with the relevant Local Authority Arts Officer in commissioning the artworks such as artistic trails and signage incl **Fáilte Ireland's Developed and Emerging Destination Towns Capital Investment Programme**.

2.2 Consider further phases of the **Outdoor Public Space Scheme** initiated by the Department in 2021 – making capital provision for investment in outdoor performance spaces.