Event Industry Association of Ireland

South Dublin Arts Infrastructure Strategy 2026–2040

Submission from the Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI)

Public consultation on South Dublin County Council's Draft Arts Infrastructure Strategy 2026–2040

November 2026

Supporting safe, inclusive and sustainable arts and event infrastructure



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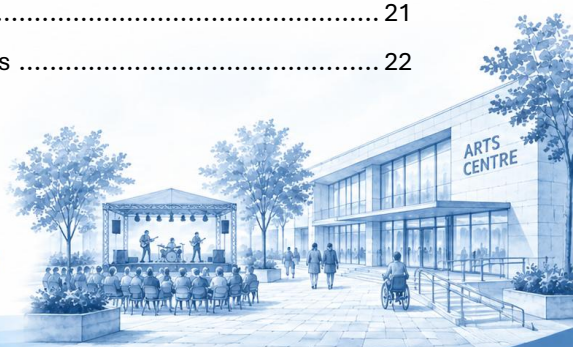
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Executive summary

The Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI) welcomes the Draft Arts Infrastructure Strategy 2026–2040 published by South Dublin County Council (SDCC, or the Council) and its ambition to provide a network of arts hubs, workspaces and specialist facilities across a growing county. The proposed Music Centre and Centre for Circus, Street Performance and Spectacle, together with investment in existing venues, offer opportunities to strengthen artistic practice, community participation and the professional delivery of cultural events.

EIAI recommends that the final strategy explicitly plan for the infrastructure through which arts and culture are presented at festivals, live events and outdoor performances. This requires suitable buildings and public spaces, technical services, production and storage facilities, skilled workers, clear permissions and sustainable operating arrangements. These requirements should be included from feasibility and site selection through detailed design, commissioning and management.

Festivals, outdoor performances and community cultural events can be among the most visible and accessible forms of arts participation. They bring cultural activity into neighbourhoods, create opportunities for people who may not engage with traditional venues, and provide shared experiences that contribute to social cohesion, local identity and civic pride. Infrastructure should therefore be assessed not only as buildings and spaces, but as the means through which artistic activity reaches communities.

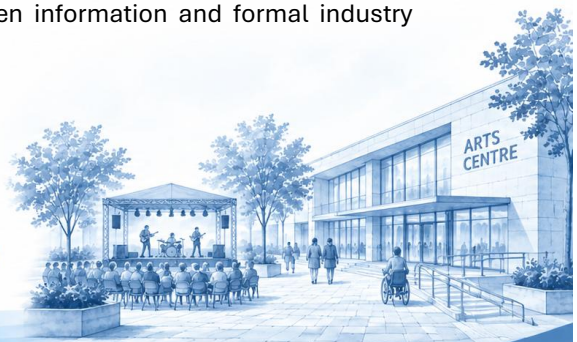
Event infrastructure is not separate from arts infrastructure. For many residents, live performances, festivals, outdoor events and community celebrations are an important means through which they encounter and participate in artistic activity. Investment in event-capable infrastructure therefore supports cultural participation, community engagement, placemaking and the public value of wider arts investment.

The draft itself identifies a significant evidence gap: open spaces are acknowledged as locations for events and performances, but were excluded from the infrastructure audit. The strategy should address this gap and connect its proposals with the Council's existing commitments on event facilities, Tallaght Stadium, tourism and the evening economy. It should also build on the technical detail already provided for circus and spectacle and the Music Centre's proposed training activities, extending that approach across the network. [1, pp.16, 44–47; 2–4]

Addressing these issues would improve the Council's ability to deliver its own objectives relating to participation, inclusion, placemaking, regeneration, tourism, community wellbeing and evening-time activity through infrastructure that is designed to function effectively in practice.

Our seven principal recommendations are to:

- Recognise festivals, live events, outdoor presentation, and the infrastructure supporting them within the strategy's scope, outcomes and strategic objectives.
- Complete a coordinated indoor and outdoor event infrastructure audit, adopt a proportionate county design standard and establish a funded programme for recurring event sites.
- Require technical and operational briefs for new and upgraded facilities, developed with production professionals, operators and users before designs are fixed.
- Coordinate permissions, protect compatible uses through planning and noise management, and establish workable arrangements for temporary occupation and development-related investment.
- Require viable operating plans, transparent programming and hire policies, fair procurement and funded maintenance of technical assets.
- Provide for event industry skills, professional development, supplier mapping and affordable production, rehearsal and storage space.
- Connect delivery with night-time economy and tourism policy, accessibility, safe transport and sustainability, supported by named leads, measurable actions, open information and formal industry participation.



Collectively, these recommendations are intended to strengthen the conditions through which artistic activity is created, presented and experienced. Their purpose is not infrastructure for its own sake, but the removal of practical barriers that currently limit cultural participation, community engagement, artistic presentation and the long-term sustainability of cultural activity across South Dublin.

The following ten themes develop these recommendations through 33 specific points. Appendix A provides proposed strategy wording and an early delivery schedule. Appendix B explains relevant Irish and international precedents, and Appendix C contains the sources. EIAI asks the Council to incorporate these recommendations into the final strategy and to involve the association and relevant member organisations in implementation and the specialist feasibility studies.

About the Event Industry Association of Ireland

The Event Industry Association of Ireland (EIAI) is the national representative body for Ireland's professional event industry. Its membership comprises more than 850 businesses, organisations and individual professionals, collectively representing over 56,000 people working across the sector.

Ireland's event industry connects organisers, producers, venues, performers, technical specialists and suppliers across festivals, exhibitions, conferences, business events, entertainment and community activity. It encompasses the infrastructure and services that make these events possible, including staging, temporary structures, safety, security, transport, catering and communications. Many businesses and professionals work across several disciplines and event types, making the industry's contribution difficult to capture within conventional sectoral classifications.

EIAI works to ensure that this breadth of expertise informs public policy and investment. We advocate for clear responsibilities, proportionate requirements and consistent processes that reflect how events are planned and delivered. In public realm planning, this means connecting ambitions for culture, community participation and economic activity with the design, infrastructure and operational arrangements needed to support safe, accessible and sustainable events.

EIAI and the purpose of this submission

Our contribution concerns the practical connection between cultural ambition and delivery. EIAI's interest is not limited to event operations. Festivals, live performances and cultural events are important mechanisms through which communities experience artistic activity, engage with local culture and participate in civic life. The recommendations in this submission therefore seek to strengthen the conditions under which cultural participation and artistic presentation can take place across South Dublin.

A performance depends on the artist and programme, but also on people who design, build, equip, operate and manage the event. The availability of suitable spaces, technical services and competent delivery teams affects which programmes can be presented, their cost, their accessibility and their long-term viability.

Arts facilities have distinct purposes, and event use should be planned around those purposes. Our proposals support artistic creation and affordable community access while making provision for compatible independent productions, commercial hires and shared services. Technical requirements should be proportionate to intended activity, rather than assuming that every community hub requires the specification of a touring venue. In this submission, references to the draft strategy use its printed page numbers, and Council actions cited from other plans are policy commitments, not assertions that the projects have been delivered.



1 Scope and strategic framing

1.1 Recognise events, festivals and temporary infrastructure

Sections 1.2 and 1.4 should recognise that arts infrastructure includes the places and services required to present cultural activity through festivals, live events and temporary installations. Section 4.5 already acknowledges open spaces as places for performances and events, but this recognition is not carried consistently into the evidence base, investment framework and implementation objectives. [1, pp.5–6, 15–16]

EIAI recommends a definition covering permanent venues, parks and plazas used for cultural activity, appropriate heritage grounds, production and rehearsal facilities, storage, utilities and the infrastructure needed to support temporary structures. The definition should also recognise the operating arrangements through which these assets become available to artists, producers and communities.

This broader scope would enable the Council to assess a neighborhood's actual opportunities for participation. A community may have access to an arts room but lack a workable location for an outdoor performance, or possess a suitable square whose use is constrained by fixed furniture, services or booking arrangements. Both should form part of the needs assessment and delivery programme.

Festivals, outdoor performances and temporary cultural activity can represent the first point of engagement between communities and the arts. They bring artistic experiences into parks, streets, public spaces and neighbourhoods that may not have access to dedicated facilities and provide important pathways into wider cultural participation. Recognising these activities within the infrastructure framework would strengthen the Council's ability to support inclusion, participation and cultural access across all communities.

1.2 Add an event infrastructure objective and explicit outcomes

The draft's outcomes recognise skills and employment alongside cultural and social benefits. EIAI recommends extending those outcomes explicitly to festival and event delivery, evening participation and the supporting businesses, practitioners and workforce, with a dedicated strategic objective for events, festivals and outdoor presentation infrastructure. [1, pp.25–26, 37–39]

That objective should require a coordinated audit, a county design standard, a programme of site improvements, a published permissions route and arrangements for programming, hire and data collection. Assigning the work an objective would allow it to receive a budget, a responsible lead and measurable delivery milestones alongside the building programme.

The outcomes should include increased access to suitable event spaces, affordable opportunities for independent and community producers, employment and skills in technical and operational roles, and appropriate contributions to local supplier expenditure, visitor activity and the evening economy. These measures should sit alongside artistic development and participation, with clear distinctions between cultural outcomes and additional economic effects.

The outcomes should also include increased opportunities for community participation in cultural events, festivals and public artistic presentation across all neighbourhoods, recognising that some residents engage with the arts mainly through live events, local celebrations and outdoor cultural activity.



1.3 Align the policy framework and correct references

Chapter 2 should explain how the arts strategy will work with SDCC's Economic Strategy, Tourism Strategy and Evening Time Economy Plan for Tallaght. The Economic Strategy's hospitality, leisure and tourism actions include a convention-centre feasibility study, an event-facilities audit, a Tallaght Stadium concert pilot, an events and conferences calendar and consideration of visitor-property management. These provide opportunities for shared research and coordinated delivery rather than separate assessments of substantially overlapping assets. [2, actions 1.3.1–1.3.5]

The policy framework should also reference the National Tourism Policy Statement, Fáilte Ireland's Corporate Strategy, the Night-Time Economy Taskforce recommendations and the applicable outdoor event licensing framework. The National Tourism Policy Statement specifically addresses tourism festivals and the night-time economy; these connections should be reflected where proposed arts facilities also support those activities. [6, 11, 19–20]

Planning alignment should use the adopted County Development Plan and its current variations. City Edge's Strategic Urban Regeneration Framework (SURF) was made as Variation No. 3 to the County Development Plan on 12 October 2026, and Variation No. 2 (NPF implementation: housing growth requirements) was made on 19 October 2026. Section 1.3 should cite Policy COS11 on arts and cultural facilities rather than CI8. [7–9]

The adopted City Edge Strategic Urban Regeneration Framework expressly supports implementation of a county-wide Arts Infrastructure Strategy and anticipates that future cultural provision within City Edge will be informed by its findings. The final strategy should therefore be recognised as a key delivery framework for cultural infrastructure within City Edge and used to inform future feasibility studies, land-use planning and investment decisions. [31, p.74]

The final strategy should distinguish current policies from historical sources, use consistent titles and explain how its implementation will respond to future national arts infrastructure policy. We have provided a correction schedule in Appendix A which identifies the specific reference and editorial issues that we believe require attention.

1.4 Measure usable capability alongside floor area

The proposed benchmark of 1,250 m^2 of arts space per 10,000 population is a useful spatial-planning starting point. However, a square metre of studio accommodation, storage or rehearsal space does not provide the same public-presentation capability as an equipped performance space, and an indoor floor-area measure does not capture outdoor provision. [1, p.27]

EIAI recommends that SDCC define the categories included in the benchmark and report creation, rehearsal, learning, production and presentation space separately. The needs assessment should establish a minimum level of suitably equipped presentation provision for each neighbourhood, with the share determined through evidence rather than an unsupported universal percentage.

A parallel indicator should record indoor and outdoor event capability per 10,000 residents, using assessed configurations, availability, technical suitability and access conditions. A space should not be counted as available simply because it exists; restricted opening hours, unaffordable hire, inaccessible routes or incompatible bookings may prevent the intended use. Population assumptions should be reconciled with the current development-plan variations and the National Planning Framework First Revision, approved in April 2025. [7, 30]



2 Venue design and technical specification

2.1 Establish a technical baseline for arts hubs

The proposed arts hubs provide a useful local network, with multi-purpose rooms capable of accommodating informal performance. Appendix B sets out indicative accommodation, including a room of 100–120 m^2 and storage for 60 seats. A room schedule alone does not establish the technical and operational arrangements required for dependable event use. [1, pp.19–20, 43]

EIAI recommends adding a baseline specification, developed with technical production and event-safety professionals, covering electrical distribution, data, appropriate lighting positions and any required rigging, acoustic treatment, noise control, blackout, level loading, secure equipment storage and accessible facilities for performers and audiences. The brief should include staff welfare, equipment inspection and safe changes between workshops, rehearsals and performances.

Acoustic advice should be obtained at concept stage, including whether sound limiting is appropriate to the proposed programme and neighbouring uses. Independent out-of-hours entry, security and access to toilets should be resolved before shared circulation arrangements are fixed. Where a requirement is unnecessary for a particular hub, the design brief should record why, rather than omit technical assessment altogether.

The instruction to consult the Arts Office when designing co-located spaces should be extended to include production specialists, operators and disabled users. Early consultation allows requirements to be built into the project while layouts and services can still be changed economically.

Early consideration of technical and operational requirements protects public investment, reduces the need for costly retrofitting and helps ensure that facilities remain adaptable to changing cultural, artistic and community needs throughout their operational life.

2.2 Clarify the Music Centre programme and operating model

The proposed Music Centre combines rehearsal, recording, production, training and public performance, with a main space described as accommodating 400 people with retractable seating. The draft also uses the description Flagship Music Venue. The feasibility study should clarify the intended balance between creation, learning, community activity and externally promoted performances, and the operating model needed to support that balance. [1, pp.20–21, 38, 44–45]

Promoters, venue operators and production suppliers should participate alongside First Music Contact, Music Network and other music organisations. The study should assess demand for different seated and standing configurations, simultaneous use of the centre, touring requirements and the time and staffing needed to change layouts. A single indicative capacity should not substitute for this assessment. The feasibility process should evaluate governance and operating models at the same stage as technical and spatial requirements so that programme ambitions, revenue assumptions and management capacity remain aligned.

The brief should include loading and vehicle access, door dimensions, stage and technical positions, sound and lighting systems, backstage accommodation, accessible performer routes, storage, hospitality, staff facilities and safe audience circulation. It should also identify permitted hours, potential acoustic constraints and the relevant planning, entertainment and alcohol-licensing arrangements for the proposed programme. These requirements should inform the business case and site choice together. Revenue assumptions based on late performances, hospitality or commercial hire must be supported by a feasible operating and permissions model, including the costs of technical staffing, security, cleaning, transport coordination and equipment replacement.



2.3 Formalise the Circus Centre as shared production infrastructure

The Centre for Circus, Street Performance and Spectacle is a particularly strong connection between the arts strategy and the event industry. Appendix B already provides substantial technical detail, including rigging, clear heights, fabrication workshops, loading, storage and external testing space, and expressly discusses parades and outdoor productions. EIAI welcomes this provision and recommends making its shared event-production role explicit in the final strategy and feasibility brief. [1, pp.21, 45–47]

The centre should support festivals, parades, street arts and touring circus through planned access to fabrication, rehearsal, build and test facilities, with community and commercial hire tiers and rental storage where feasible. Access arrangements should preserve the centre's artistic purpose while enabling professional producers and specialist suppliers to use compatible facilities. The business case should assess demand, separation of activities and responsibility for equipment and stored materials.

Feasibility consultation should include EIAI, the Irish Showmen's Guild, festival producers, staging and temporary-infrastructure suppliers and relevant specialists, alongside the Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network (ISACS) and circus practitioners. The draft's provision for specialist consultation provides a basis for this wider engagement. [1, p.21; 5]

The indicative external yard of 500–1,000 m^2 should be tested against actual structure footprints, anchoring or ballast requirements, circulation, servicing and emergency access. The description of the yard as big-top capable should be supported by a workable layout. Testing involving temporary structures, fire or pyrotechnics needs defined conditions, competent oversight and appropriate permissions and insurance; it should not be assumed feasible from the area schedule. Interim occupation at City Edge should follow the framework proposed in section 3.4.

2.4 Audit existing venues and test the Civic Theatre extension

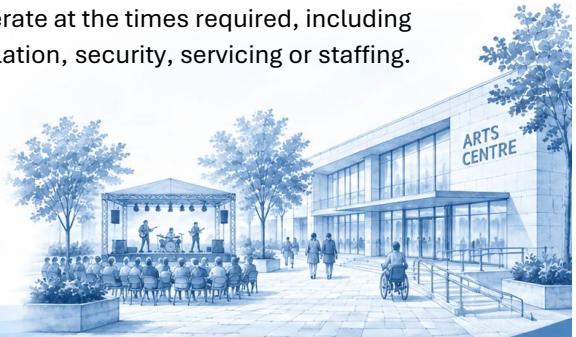
Objective 6 proposes maintenance and upgrades to existing arts infrastructure, while the Civic Theatre extension is identified for feasibility assessment. EIAI recommends that these reviews include the technical and operational ability to accommodate productions and external hires, alongside the accessibility and environmental priorities already identified. [1, pp.23, 38–39]

The audit should record electrical and data systems, lighting and sound equipment, rigging information where relevant, loading routes, backstage access, storage, technical staffing, condition and replacement needs. It should distinguish a missing asset from an asset that exists but cannot be used because it lacks inspection records, competent staffing or an affordable access arrangement.

The Civic Theatre study should test representative productions and examine loading, stage and backstage relationships, equipment movement, audience circulation and commercial or community hire. Proposed improvements should be commissioned through practical trials before handover, with verified technical information and clear responsibility for maintaining it. This would allow the Council to identify achievable upgrades as well as longer-term capital needs.

2.5 Make co-located facilities workable outside normal hours

Shared arts, library, enterprise and community facilities can improve access and make effective use of public investment. Their success depends on whether different activities can operate at the times required, including evenings and weekends, without conflicting demands on acoustics, circulation, security, servicing or staffing. [1, pp.21–22, 28, 43–44]



EIAI recommends adding event-use compatibility to the co-location criteria. Designs should test independent out-of-hours entry, access to toilets and changing facilities, acoustic separation, delivery routes, equipment storage and emergency arrangements. A performance should not depend on opening or staffing an entire unrelated service where separate operation is intended.

Before opening, each co-located facility should have an operating agreement covering booking priority, shared costs, technical support, keys and access control, cleaning, maintenance, insurance responsibilities and conflict resolution. The agreement should establish how community groups and independent producers can hire the space and what services remain available after the normal opening hours of the adjoining facility.



3 Outdoor spaces, public realm and festival infrastructure

3.1 Complete an indoor and outdoor event infrastructure audit

The draft acknowledges open spaces as important settings for events and performances but states that its research did not audit them. The draft notes that events have taken place at Parthalán Place, Corkagh Park, Waterstown Park, Griffeen Park, Tymon Park, Áras Chrónáin, Rathfarnham Castle, the Pearse Museum, Lucan House and Tallaght Stadium. Naming these places does not establish their usable capacity, availability, services or investment needs. [1, pp.16, 42]

EIAI recommends a county-wide audit of indoor and outdoor event and festival spaces, coordinated with Economic Strategy Action 1.3.2 and the Tourism Strategy. It should include existing and potential sites, with the agreement of owners and operators where assets are outside Council control. The audit should record:

- Ownership, management, tenure, booking contacts, availability, hire charges, deposits and responsibility for maintaining information.
- Assessed seated and standing configurations, usable areas, entrances, exits, emergency access, accessible routes, loading and servicing.
- Power capacity and distribution, potable water, wastewater, data, lighting, welfare facilities and the conditions for accessing services.
- Ground-bearing and protection needs, underground services, drainage, flood exposure and suitability for temporary structures.
- Noise-sensitive neighbours, operating hours, relevant permission history, ecology, heritage constraints and transport arrangements.

The purpose of the audit should extend beyond identifying physical assets. It should help the Council understand how festivals, performances and community cultural events support participation, artistic development and placemaking in different neighbourhoods, and where infrastructure barriers currently limit those opportunities.

The Council should also publish a searchable map and directory supported by verified site information, accessible PDFs and editable scaled drawings showing representative layouts. Each layout should identify its assumptions, date and limitations; organisers should remain able to propose alternatives and must assess their own event. Sensitive security or emergency information should have controlled access rather than unrestricted publication. EIAI's Limerick and Carlow work provides a practical basis for these recommendations. [16–17]

3.2 Adopt a county standard for spaces intended to host events

SDCC has already reported electrical power and data provision in public spaces, including parks and Parthalán Place. The arts strategy should build on this investment through a consistent standard for new and refurbished spaces intended to host recurring cultural events. [10]

The proposed standard would build upon investments already identified within the draft strategy itself, including the development of event-capable infrastructure at Corkagh Park, and would help ensure consistency, usability and long-term value across future projects. The draft identifies Corkagh Park as a location where events have taken place and records a new multi-use events space with stage and hardstanding under construction. [1, pp.16, 42]



The standard should address permanent electricity where justified by demand, potable water, wastewater and handwashing provision, data connectivity, accessible surfaces, suitable hardstanding or ground protection, secure service points and safe cable routes. Furniture and other fixed features should preserve tested event layouts; removable or relocatable elements should be used where necessary, with suitable storage and arrangements for reinstatement.

Supply capacities should be designed for assessed use. For example, the demand assessment may identify a need for 16A or 32A outlets and larger supplies, but these examples should not become a universal electrical specification. Technical designers should establish capacity, distribution, protection, connection and inspection requirements for each site. The same principle applies to water, structures, surfaces and other services.

The standard should be applied to relevant work at Parthalán Place, Corkagh Park, Lucan House and new City Edge public spaces, subject to ecology, heritage and other site constraints. Each installation should have a named asset owner, maintenance budget, inspection regime, booking method and fair published charges. Commissioning should include realistic event layouts and service tests so that investment can be used immediately and reliably after handover.

3.3 Establish a coordinated programme for major and heritage sites

Tallaght Stadium, Lucan House, Corkagh Park and the future City Edge network should be considered through a coordinated programme for event use, with a named Council lead linking arts, parks, tourism, economic development and site management. This would connect venue and public-space investment with programming, infrastructure and permissions planning.

The programme should align with the Economic Strategy's Tallaght Stadium concert pilot and the Evening Time Economy Plan's dedicated events team, landmark festival and annual stadium activation proposals. Existing strategy references to large-event potential should be treated as a basis for assessment, not as proof of an approved capacity for every configuration. [2, action 1.3.3; 3, actions 10 and 12; 4]

For recurring sites, SDCC should prepare and maintain documentation supporting event and licence applications: scaled site plans, services, access routes, emergency arrangements, assessed capacity assumptions and relevant operating constraints. These packs would reduce repeated surveys and improve consistency while leaving event-specific assessments and permissions with the responsible organiser and authorities.

Masterplans for Lucan House and, in cooperation with their owners, Rathfarnham Castle and the Pearse Museum should consider cultural event uses at design stage. Heritage protection, ground loading, temporary structures, lighting, sanitation, reinstatement and the frequency and scale of use should be addressed before programming commitments are made. The programme should also protect existing events during works through advance liaison, construction phasing and temporary alternatives where needed.

3.4 Publish a framework for temporary occupation

The draft proposes interim occupation of industrial or warehouse buildings for circus and spectacle at City Edge. EIAI supports this approach and recommends a published framework covering event and production uses, including storage, fabrication, rehearsal and appropriate temporary public programmes. [1, pp.21, 31]

The adopted City Edge framework supports arts and cultural meanwhile uses while requiring permanent provision to be planned and ultimately delivered under SCCA3 Objective 2. The proposed framework should give this policy practical effect through a clear route covering planning, fire safety, building control, insurance



and relevant licensing requirements, with standard licence or lease terms and a proportionate checklist. It should identify permitted activities, expected occupation periods, responsibility for adaptations and repairs, utility costs, access arrangements and limits on public attendance where relevant. [31, p.74]

Exit and relocation arrangements are essential where organisations will invest in premises, specialist equipment or a programme of work. Agreements should provide clear notice periods, identify how improvements will be treated and explain the relationship between temporary occupation and permanent provision. A short-term opportunity should not leave an organisation without a workable location after it has committed to staff, productions or training.

Toronto's Soundcheck document records a below-market temporary lease of city property for a community arts hub among its recent and ongoing measures. This illustrates a municipal approach to activating space; South Dublin should assess appropriate terms within its own property and governance arrangements. [25]



4 Planning, permissions and noise

4.1 Publish one coordinated route for event organisers

SDCC has several relevant roles as landowner, planning authority, event licensing authority and provider of public infrastructure. EIAI recommends a single published route that helps organisers identify the permissions and decisions they need, with a named event liaison or coordinator responsible for navigation and communication across the Council.

The route should cover site booking and landowner consent, relevant event licensing, road closures and traffic arrangements, noise and environmental requirements, fire and building-control matters and appropriate contact routes to An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the National Transport Authority. Guidance should distinguish the coordinator's support role from statutory assessment and the organiser's responsibilities.

For licence applications within the scope of the Planning and Development (Licensing of Outdoor Events) Regulations 2026 (S.I. No. 468 of 2026), Regulation 3 prescribes events with a proposed audience of 5,000 or more people for the purposes of section 479 of the Planning and Development Act 2024. Regulation 6 establishes the normal minimum application period of 20 weeks and requires pre-application consultation within the 36 months preceding the proposed event. Regulation 12 requires the decision no earlier than eight weeks after receipt and no later than 12 weeks before the event. Regulation 19 sets an application fee of €2,500 for events held mainly for profit or gain, with no application fee for other events and discretion to waive or refund fees in the circumstances specified. Transitional provisions and a separate procedure for relevant local-authority events also apply. The Council's guidance should explain the applicable route and timetable clearly. [11]

Smaller and community events need proportionate requirements based on activity, location and risk, with published charges, deposits, insurance expectations, booking criteria and response targets. Standard site information should be reusable across processes, with updates when circumstances change. The Night-Time Economy Taskforce's recommendation for a standardised local-authority event planning system provides a policy basis for improving consistency, while its suggested attendance wording should not be confused with the statutory licensing threshold. [20]

Stockholm's strategy provides a relevant example of coordinated information and contact services for organisers. A commissioned New South Wales study also offers a historical example of examining proportionate approval arrangements for small, low-risk venues; it is a study, not an Irish rule or evidence of an exemption available here. [27–28]

4.2 Embed venue protection and noise compatibility in planning

The strategy proposes music, circus and arts facilities within communities that will also accommodate homes, businesses and other sensitive uses. Noise compatibility must therefore inform site selection, building design and the sequencing of development. EIAI recommends an explicit commitment to an agent-of-change approach through the County Development Plan, relevant local plans and City Edge implementation.

The principle assigns responsibility for identifying and addressing impacts to the new use or development introducing the change. Dublin City Development Plan Objective CUO38 provides an Irish precedent for noise mitigation in residential and hotel development beside established late-night venues. London Plan Policy D13 and Victoria's planning guidance illustrate application in both directions, including where a new or expanded venue may affect existing residents. [12–13, 24]



For South Dublin, planning briefs should identify intended performance areas, neighbouring sensitive uses, sound-insulation requirements, loading activity and the relationship between indoor and outdoor programmes. New housing beside planned or established cultural venues should be designed with those uses in mind, while venue operators must have appropriate operating and noise-management arrangements.

SDCC should develop practical guidance with industry and relevant environmental expertise covering acoustic assessment, stage and speaker orientation, management plans, monitoring, appropriate sound limiters and the basis for operating-hour conditions. A clear complaints and liaison process should support early resolution. The strategy should commit to progressing any necessary planning-policy changes through the proper statutory process and should not imply that adoption of the arts strategy alone creates those protections.

4.3 Assess late-evening operation and licensing at feasibility stage

The Music Centre's proposed combination of performances, hires and hospitality requires a realistic assessment of the permissions and operating hours on which its business model depends. EIAI recommends that feasibility work identify the intended programme and then map the applicable planning, entertainment, alcohol and other licensing requirements, including any recurring court applications where relevant. [1, pp.44–45]

The assessment should identify lead times, professional and application costs, restrictions affecting audiences or programming, staffing needs and the consequences of different opening-hour scenarios. It should distinguish permissions already available from future reform proposals, with the business case based on requirements in force when decisions are made. An assumed change in national licensing law should not be used to justify otherwise unviable revenue forecasts.

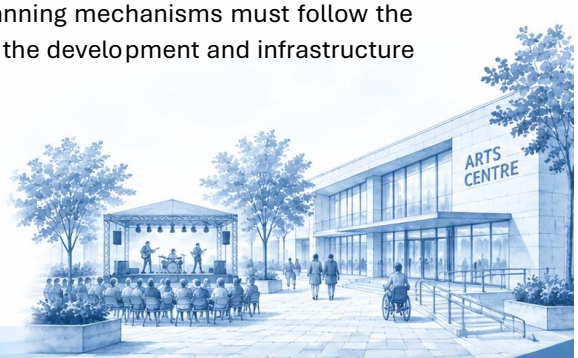
SDCC should engage with the national night-time economy structures on practical planning, noise and licensing issues emerging from the project and seek participation in suitable pilots involving publicly owned cultural or heritage sites. The Council should confirm the current status and eligibility of such opportunities with the responsible Department. This preserves the opportunity for learning and national engagement without assuming that a particular pilot is currently open.

4.4 Direct suitable development investment towards event infrastructure

The draft identifies development contributions, planning gain and other public and private sources as possible funding routes. EIAI recommends that the final strategy explicitly include event-capable public-realm services, production and storage space and suitable cultural premises among the needs considered through applicable development and infrastructure funding mechanisms. [1, p.28]

For City Edge and other growth areas, the Council should identify which cultural requirements will be delivered through land allocation, completed premises, serviced public space, direct capital investment or contributions under an applicable scheme. Project briefs and agreements should specify the technical fit-out, access, tenure, handover condition, management arrangements and funding responsibilities needed to make delivered space usable.

The adopted City Edge framework provides for discretionary pro rata contributions towards community facilities under SCCA2 Objective 3 and culture and arts facilities under SCCA3 Objective 4, in line with the Council's Development Contribution Scheme or a future special contribution scheme. The arts strategy should identify how these provisions can support its delivery programme. Any use of planning mechanisms must follow the relevant statutory powers and scheme, with a clear relationship between the development and infrastructure



requirement; it should not assume that every operating cost or equipment purchase can be funded through a contribution. [31, pp.73–74]

London's Cultural Infrastructure Plan offers a useful example of considering cultural-space delivery through planning tools and agreements. South Dublin can apply the underlying lesson of defining usable space and long-term responsibilities early, within the Irish planning framework. [23]



5 Governance, operating models and revenue

5.1 Require transparent programming and hire policies

Chapter 9 sets out four governance models: a company limited by guarantee, direct Council management, a tender model and a satellite arrangement. Co-location creates further operating relationships that must be resolved within the chosen model. EIAI supports selecting arrangements appropriate to the facility and its cultural purpose, supported by clear service-level agreements. [1, pp.34–35, 48–49]

Each facility should publish a programming and hire policy setting out how time is allocated between resident activity, Council or operator programming, community use and independent or commercial hires. The policy should identify booking windows, priority tiers, community and commercial rates, deposits, cancellation terms, technical staffing, included equipment and additional charges. Transparent access arrangements are particularly important where public investment is intended to support community participation, independent cultural activity and opportunities for emerging artists and producers.

Where the operator also produces events, transparent decision criteria and conflict-of-interest arrangements are necessary to give independent producers fair access. Annual reporting should distinguish programmed, community and commercial use, including unavailable periods and the reasons for them. This would allow the Council to assess whether public investment is delivering the intended range of opportunities.

Promoters, production suppliers and community users should contribute to operating-model decisions before management arrangements are finalised. Published access commitments should form part of the operator agreement, with affordable artistic and community provision protected and any cross-subsidy assumptions made explicit.

5.2 Establish the full operating business case and replacement budget

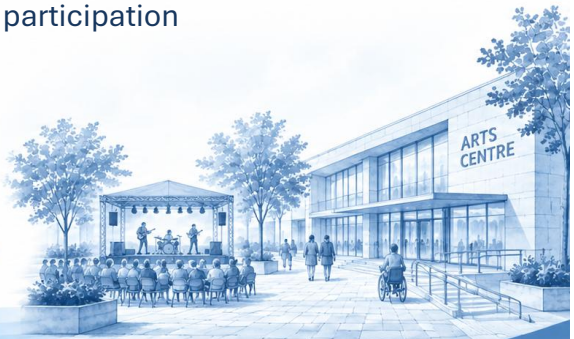
Every major capital proposal should include a multi-year operating business case covering staffing, programming, energy, insurance, cleaning, technical maintenance, inspections, security and equipment replacement. The model should identify the expected balance between public support, grants, ticket sales, hire, hospitality and other earned income, and the assumptions behind each revenue stream.

Sensitivity analysis should test changes in demand, labour and energy costs, opening hours, noise conditions and commercial bookings. The Council should publish the criteria used to assess operating viability, including the level of ongoing public support required to deliver its cultural and access objectives. Viability should not be inferred simply from the identification of a management body.

Satellite hubs require particular attention to the staffing and resources of the lead organisation. Responsibility for additional buildings, equipment, bookings and evening activity must be matched by funding and competent personnel. Shared management may reduce duplication, but the business case should show how the additional workload will be delivered.

The proposed sinking-fund approach should extend to technical equipment in both new and existing facilities. Asset registers, expected replacement cycles, inspection responsibilities and funded maintenance plans should be in place before opening. Equipment that cannot be maintained or staffed should not be counted as lasting event capability. [1, pp.28, 34–35, 38–39]

5.3 Procure competent operation and enable smaller supplier participation



Tender specifications for operating and supplying venues should reflect the actual delivery requirements. EIAI recommends evaluation criteria addressing technical production competence, event safety, accessibility, equipment management, workforce capability and the ability to deliver the published access and programming commitments.

The Council should undertake proportionate market engagement with event businesses and use suitable contract sizes or lots where this improves competition and access for smaller suppliers. Requirements for insurance, turnover, prior experience and administrative evidence should reflect the work being procured. Clear forward information about opportunities would help suppliers plan staff, equipment and partnerships.

Local supplier development should be pursued through accessible information, enterprise support and fair competition, with opportunities open to relevant small and medium businesses. A geographic preference should not substitute for lawful and transparent evaluation. Where supplier engagement is assessed, the criterion should concern a credible delivery approach and demonstrable capability.

Operator contracts should require published community and independent-producer access, appropriate reporting and arrangements for addressing complaints. Contract management should verify delivery of these commitments rather than rely solely on statements made at tender stage.



6 Workforce, skills and the supply chain

6.1 Provide for technical and event-delivery learning

The Music Centre already proposes training in music production, technology, sound engineering and music business. EIAI welcomes that provision and recommends extending the strategy's skills outcomes to the wider professional roles required to deliver live cultural activity. [1, pp.20–21, 25, 44]

These include lighting, rigging, staging, technical management, production management, event operations, crowd management, stewarding, safety, accessibility and sustainable delivery. The range should be developed with employers and practitioners so that training reflects actual work and different levels of responsibility, including entry routes and continuing professional development for experienced workers.

The Music and Circus Centre briefs should provide a technical training room or production laboratory, whether dedicated or designed for suitable shared use. The feasibility work should specify safe practical learning areas, equipment, storage, supervision and access to real production environments. Training should be designed into the facilities rather than depend on finding spare space after opening.

SDCC should convene TU Dublin, the relevant Education and Training Board, SOLAS, employers and industry bodies to explore delivery partnerships. We would highly recommend both Atlantic Technological University and Carlow Institute of Education who are both currently applying for funding for apprenticeship courses (level 6 – 8) that would be ideal for this venue. Council venues and events should support suitable work placements and apprenticeships where approved programmes and host capacity exist, with clear supervision and fair working arrangements. These are proposed partnerships and opportunities; the strategy should not assume that new qualifications or funded places have already been established.

6.2 Map event businesses and connect them with investment

The evidence base should identify the businesses and workers who enable cultural programmes to take place. EIAI recommends a baseline of event and production activity in South Dublin, covering organisers and producers, audiovisual and staging suppliers, temporary-infrastructure businesses, safety and crowd services, transport, catering and other relevant specialist providers.

The mapping should recognise that local cultural activity relies on an interconnected ecosystem of artists, creative practitioners, event producers, technical specialists, venues and community organisations whose collective contribution enables public access to arts and cultural experiences.

The mapping should distinguish businesses based in the county from the wider supply network serving it, record employment and skills needs where reliable information is available, and identify constraints such as storage, workspace, access and procurement. It should also capture independent professionals and smaller businesses that may be missed by a buildings-focused inventory.

The Local Enterprise Office and Economic Development team should work with EIAI and local business networks to connect suppliers with venue development, procurement information, enterprise supports and training partnerships. This should support fair access to opportunities while giving the Council better evidence of the workforce and services available to deliver its programme.

The findings should inform the creative-industries mapping and the infrastructure inventory, with a published aggregate baseline and a regular update process. Commercially sensitive information should be protected and participation arrangements clearly explained.



6.3 Secure affordable production, rehearsal and storage space

Event and festival producers require space for fabrication, rehearsal, testing, repair and storage, often with vehicle access, suitable floor loading and the ability to handle large items. The Circus Centre provides an important opportunity, but the county-wide needs analysis should establish demand beyond the users of a single facility. [1, pp.21–22, 45–47]

EIAI recommends naming these uses in the strategy's workspace needs assessment and City Edge implementation. The Council should identify appropriate locations and consider the effect of regeneration on existing production businesses, so that the activities needed to support the new cultural facilities are not displaced without practical alternatives.

Delivery options should include secure affordable leases, shared workshops, managed storage and longer-term property arrangements where justified. Terms should address permitted activities, access hours, servicing, reinstatement and the cost of specialist adaptations. Temporary accommodation should have a defined relationship to permanent provision.

London's Creative Land Trust was established to secure affordable creative workspace through property ownership and support for workspace providers. It offers a model for examining how tenure can protect cultural production, rather than a funding mechanism assumed to be available in South Dublin. The Council should assess suitable local arrangements with providers, enterprise bodies and users. [29]



7 Night-time economy, tourism and economic impact

7.1 Integrate evening activity and designate a responsible lead

The Evening Time Economy Plan for Tallaght already identifies a cultural hub at Parthalán Place, a dedicated events team and landmark festival, and an annual stadium activation programme. The arts strategy should explicitly connect its Tallaght proposals to these actions and identify shared responsibilities for space, technical infrastructure, programming, transport and safety. [3, actions 9, 10 and 12]

EIAI recommends designating a night-time economy champion within SDCC, with a clear remit to connect the relevant services and represent operational needs in infrastructure decisions. This function should complement existing teams and the event liaison proposed in section 4.1, with responsibilities made clear rather than creating competing contact routes.

New venue business cases should cost evening and weekend opening, including technical staffing, security, cleaning, safe access and travel home. Programmes should provide diverse opportunities, including non-alcohol-centred activity and participation by younger people where appropriate. Opening a building later will only create meaningful access if the programme, staffing and transport arrangements work together.

SDCC should maintain engagement with the Department responsible for the night-time economy (currently the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport) contribute practical evidence to national work on noise, permissions and temporary use, and seek suitable pilot opportunities. Dublin City's Night-Time Economy Strategy provides a neighbouring example of connecting cultural activity with transport, safety and public-space management. [20–21]

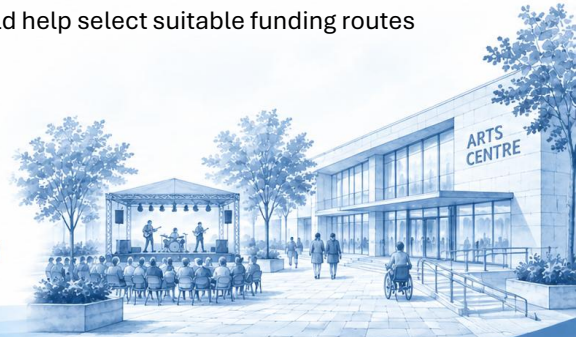
7.2 Connect tourism policy, festival support and hosting capability

SDCC's Tourism Strategy identifies gaps in high-quality indoor event provision and opportunities to connect with outdoor venues. The National Tourism Policy Statement addresses festivals as contributors to regional and seasonal activity, alongside a distinct commitment to the night-time economy. These connections should appear in Chapter 2 and in project feasibility briefs where facilities have a visitor-facing role. [4; 19, sections 3.7–3.8]

The Council's tourism function and Fáilte Ireland should be involved in relevant Music and Circus Centre studies and the major-sites programme. Assessment should include festival hosting, touring and partnership opportunities, the practical requirements of visiting productions, and how programmes could complement local hospitality and accommodation without displacing community access. Community events, local cultural programmes and circus activities may require different funding mechanisms and should not be disadvantaged where visitor-growth objectives are not their primary purpose.

Festival grants and venue programming should be coordinated with relevant Fáilte Ireland and regional supports. The Strategic Tourism Festival Investment Scheme 2026–2028 is an example of a multi-year funding programme directed at established tourism festivals, although applications are currently closed (as at 10 November 2026). The strategy should build capability and prepare for applicable opportunities without treating scheme eligibility or an award as guaranteed. [6, 22]

The Council should distinguish tourism objectives from the wider public value of cultural participation. Local events and community arts should remain eligible for appropriate support even where their principal benefit is to residents rather than additional overnight visitors. Clear objectives would help select suitable funding routes and evaluation measures for each programme.



7.3 Measure economic effects alongside cultural and social outcomes

EIAI recommends an explicit impact-evaluation approach for new facilities and Council-supported event programmes. Relevant measures include employment, supplier expenditure, use of local services, visitor nights, seasonal activity and the utilisation of venues, alongside participation, artistic development, affordability and access. Additional indicators could include local supplier participation, expenditure retained within South Dublin, repeat use of cultural infrastructure and the contribution of publicly accessible events to local economic and social activity.

The Council should select a consistent method, drawing where useful on established approaches such as eventIMPACTS, referenced in Scotland's National Events Strategy. Measures should be proportionate to the scale of public support and the event, with practical templates for smaller organisers. [15]

Evaluation should distinguish residents' attendance from additional visitor activity, gross expenditure from additional economic effects, and direct jobs from wider estimates. Assumptions should be published and double counting avoided, particularly where venue income, organiser expenditure and supplier revenue describe the same transaction.

Baseline information should be collected before major investment so that change can be assessed. Results should inform programming, infrastructure priorities and business support, with explanations where outcomes differ from forecasts. Economic indicators should strengthen accountability without becoming the sole basis for judging cultural provision. Economic measures should complement, rather than replace, assessment of cultural, social and community value.



8 Accessibility, safety and transport

8.1 Design and operate for accessibility during events

The draft's accessibility commitments should be applied to the conditions in which facilities are actually used. EIAI recommends that venue and public-realm assessments consider the complete journey of audience members, artists, speakers, staff, contractors and volunteers, including temporary layouts, outdoor surfaces, queues and periods of high attendance. This is consistent with EIAI's accessible-tourism submission. [18]

Accessible cultural participation depends not only on physical infrastructure but also on the ability of people to encounter arts activity within their own communities. The distribution of event-capable spaces across the county can therefore play an important role in reducing participation barriers and broadening engagement.

Design and operating standards should address step-free routes, accessible toilets and suitable changing provision, viewing arrangements, accessible backstage and staff areas, communication access, hearing support, quiet or lower-stimulation spaces, accessible booking and clear advance information. Outdoor provision should account for gradients, weather, grass, temporary flooring and cable crossings.

Disabled people and their representative organisations should be involved at feasibility, design, commissioning and operational review stages. Their input should inform tested layouts and service arrangements, with responsibilities and budgets allocated to the access measures required for each event configuration.

Accessibility should be a documented part of the county standard, venue audits and operator contracts. Information should explain actual provision and limitations rather than rely on a general description of a site as accessible. Changes to furniture, barriers, stages or entrances should trigger review of the relevant access arrangements.

8.2 Test evening transport and safe dispersal

The proposed 30-minute public-transport accessibility test should be supplemented by assessment of journeys at the times when programmes and staff shifts finish. A venue may meet a daytime travel criterion while leaving audiences or workers without an affordable or accessible route home after an evening performance. [1, p.27]

For facilities expected to operate after 9pm, and for major event sites, project briefs should examine late services, connections, walking routes, lighting, taxi and collection areas, accessible drop-off, coach arrangements and safe dispersal. Assessments should include staff and contractors whose work continues after audiences depart.

SDCC should engage the National Transport Authority and relevant operators early on event-day services and the relationship between finish times and transport capacity. Site layouts should keep waiting and collection areas clear of emergency access and avoid transferring crowding to nearby streets or stops without an agreed arrangement.

Amsterdam's Night Vision identifies affordability and the availability of transport home as constraints on participation. Its relevance here is the need to plan cultural provision and transport together, rather than assume that proximity to a daytime service establishes practical access at night. [26]



8.3 Include crowd safety, emergency access and temporary structures

Crowd safety and emergency access should form part of infrastructure planning from the outset. EIAI recommends that the open-space audit and venue briefs record configuration-specific capacity assumptions, usable circulation space, entrances and exits, emergency vehicle routes and appropriate assembly or dispersal areas.

Temporary stages, seating, barriers, tents and other structures can alter those conditions substantially. Site information should therefore identify ground constraints, underground services, anchoring or ballast limitations, loading routes and interfaces with permanent features. The design should provide workable locations for welfare, medical provision, production compounds and other support functions where required by intended use.

Fire-service expertise, Civil Defence and Garda liaison should inform relevant design and site-planning discussions, with health, medical and transport input where appropriate. This should be organised through defined roles and consultation arrangements rather than assume that every external body will become a standing member of a Council working group.

The applicable 2026 outdoor event licensing process requires event-specific planning and consultation. Reusable site evidence can support that work, but it cannot replace the organiser's assessment of the proposed activity, crowd profile, structures and operating arrangements. Smaller events also require proportionate safety planning according to their risks. [11]



9 Sustainability

9.1 Set sustainability requirements for facilities and programmes

The strategy should extend its environmental ambitions into the design and operation of new facilities and the events presented in them. EIAI recommends practical requirements covering energy, water, waste prevention, reuse, transport, procurement and the maintenance of equipment and materials across their useful lives.

For recurring outdoor sites, suitable grid connections can reduce repeated generator use where demand and site conditions justify them. Design briefs should also consider renewable electricity options, efficient lighting and equipment, water refill points, appropriate drainage, space for segregated waste and reusable service systems. Temporary provision should be planned where permanent installation would be unsuitable.

Shared storage, repair facilities and reusable infrastructure can reduce repeated manufacture, hire transport and disposal, provided the operating model assigns responsibility for inspection, cleaning, maintenance and booking. Environmental decisions should be supported by expected use and whole-life assessment, including ecological and heritage effects at outdoor sites.

SDCC-operated venues and event programmes should adopt proportionate sustainability management arrangements informed by ISO 20121:2024 or an equivalent approach. The standard addresses social and economic as well as environmental impacts. Smaller community users should receive practical support and manageable reporting requirements; third-party certification should not become a universal condition of access. [14]

Performance measures should relate to actual activity, such as energy use, generator demand, water provision, waste prevention and travel patterns, with a baseline and clear assumptions. These measures should feed into the annual delivery report and decisions about future infrastructure improvements.



10 Data, delivery and partnership

10.1 Assign responsibilities, budgets, milestones and review dates

Each strategic action should identify a lead service, delivery partners, a timeframe, a funding route or budget requirement and a measurable output. Objective 10 already provides for an annual working-group review; EIAI recommends publishing the results through an annual progress report and undertaking a substantive review at least every five years. [1, p.39]

The implementation programme should distinguish funded delivery, feasibility work and proposals dependent on external finance. It should identify decision points and dependencies, including land availability, planning, utilities, staffing and management agreements, so that delays can be understood and addressed.

Event-related indicators should include completion of the audit and county standard, the number and type of sites improved, affordable hire availability, community access hours, technical learning opportunities, supplier participation and performance against published permissions timelines. The floor-area measure should be reported alongside the capability measures proposed in section 1.4.

Appendix A sets out proposed early actions and periods running from adoption of the final strategy. These are recommendations for the Council's resourcing process, not claims that the Council has committed to those deadlines. A published delivery programme should allow residents, artists and industry participants to see what has changed and what remains outstanding.

10.2 Establish formal industry participation

The proposed working group should include, or have a defined means of drawing on, Parks, Roads and Traffic, Environment, Tourism, property management and relevant fire and building-control expertise, alongside the Arts Office, Planning, Library and Economic Development functions. This would allow practical site and operating issues to be resolved during project development. [1, p.39]

EIAI recommends a formal events and night-time industry advisory forum meeting at least twice annually, with participation from the association and relevant member organisations, arts bodies, independent producers, venue operators, technical suppliers, community organisers and disabled people's organisations. Membership and terms of reference should support a manageable forum with representation across different scales of activity.

The forum should advise on technical briefs, site information, access and hire policies, skills needs, participation barriers and delivery challenges affecting cultural organisations, communities and the wider event and production ecosystem. Its recommendations and the Council's responses should inform the annual progress report. Statutory decisions and procurement responsibilities should remain with the appropriate bodies, with conflicts of interest managed transparently.

EIAI specifically seeks participation in the Music Centre and Circus Centre feasibility consultations and in the development of the outdoor audit and county standard. This would bring operational experience into decisions early enough to influence design and cost, while allowing specialist member organisations to contribute within their areas of expertise.



10.3 Maintain an open venue and event information resource

The audit should lead to an open, regularly updated dataset and searchable map covering venues and outdoor sites. EIAI recommends a published minimum record including location, owner or manager, contact and booking route, intended uses, assessed configurations, accessibility information, services, operating constraints and the date of the latest review.

The Council should publish reusable plans and technical information in accessible and editable formats where appropriate, with named data owners and a process for reporting changes. Each record should distinguish measured information, indicative capacity and event-specific approval. Security-sensitive material, personal data and commercially confidential information should be handled through appropriate access arrangements.

Aggregate information on attendance, types of use, permissions, noise complaints, supplier participation and accessibility should support planning and evaluation. Collection should be proportionate and coordinated across Council functions so that organisers are not repeatedly asked for the same data. Links with national event and night-time economy data initiatives should be developed where compatible definitions and arrangements exist.

London's Cultural Infrastructure Map illustrates the value of maintaining a spatial evidence base alongside policy. South Dublin's resource should serve both strategic planning and the practical needs of artists, community groups and producers seeking a suitable place to work or present an event. [23]

EIAI would welcome the Council's response identifying the recommendations to be incorporated, those requiring further assessment and the arrangements for industry and community participation. We are available to discuss these proposals and facilitate relevant member input.




ARTS
CENTRE

Conclusion

Festivals, live events and outdoor performances are an integral part of how communities in South Dublin experience the arts. In a growing county, the buildings, public spaces, technical services, workforce and operating arrangements that make them possible must be planned together with the arts hubs and specialist facilities the draft strategy proposes. EIAI therefore asks the Council to treat event infrastructure as arts infrastructure in the final strategy.

Our headline asks, each developed in the sections indicated, are that the Council:

1. Recognise events, festivals and temporary infrastructure within the strategy's scope, and add a dedicated strategic objective with explicit outcomes (sections 1.1 and 1.2).
2. Complete an indoor and outdoor event infrastructure audit, adopt a county standard for event spaces and establish a programme for major and recurring sites (sections 3.1 to 3.3).
3. Require technical and operational briefs, prepared with production professionals, operators and users, for new and upgraded facilities (section 2).
4. Publish one coordinated route for event organisers, embed venue protection and noise compatibility in planning, and set out a framework for temporary occupation (sections 3.4, 4.1 and 4.2).
5. Require viable operating plans, transparent programming and hire policies, and fair procurement (section 5).
6. Support event industry skills, supplier mapping and affordable production, rehearsal and storage space (section 6).
7. Connect delivery with night-time economy and tourism policy, accessibility, safe transport, safety and sustainability, through named leads, measurable actions, open information and formal industry participation (sections 7 to 10).

These asks align with the framework the Council has already adopted: the City Edge Strategic Urban Regeneration Framework, which anticipates that future cultural provision will be informed by this strategy; the County Development Plan and its current variations; and national tourism and night-time economy policy (section 1.3).

EIAI would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council on implementation. Our member organisations can contribute expertise to technical specifications, and we seek participation in the Music Centre and Circus Centre feasibility consultations and in the development of the outdoor audit and county standard. We also ask to be represented on the events and night-time industry advisory forum proposed in section 10.2, whose advice should inform the annual progress report under Objective 10.



Appendix A Proposed amendments and early delivery

The wording below is proposed for inclusion or adaptation in the final strategy. It gives the Council concrete amendments through which the recommendations can be implemented. Suggested delivery periods run from adoption of the final strategy and should be confirmed through the Council's resourcing process.

Purpose and scope

Arts infrastructure includes the permanent and temporary spaces, facilities and services required to create, produce, learn, participate in and present arts and cultural activity. This includes festivals, live events and outdoor performance, with appropriate provision for venues, public spaces, production and rehearsal, storage, utilities and temporary installations, together with the operating arrangements required for safe, accessible and sustainable use.

Additional strategic objective

Plan, provide and sustain a coordinated network of infrastructure for arts events, festivals and outdoor presentation across South Dublin County, informed by local needs, technical and operational requirements, accessibility, environmental considerations and long-term operating capacity.

Actions under this objective should include the indoor and outdoor audit, adoption of a county design standard, a funded programme for recurring sites, published booking and permissions arrangements, and maintained site information. Delivery should be coordinated with the Council's economic, tourism and evening economy commitments and informed by the proposed industry advisory forum.

Outcomes

The strategy will increase access to suitable and affordable spaces for cultural presentation, strengthen technical and event-delivery skills, support the production supply chain and enable appropriate evening and visitor activity. Progress will be measured through participation, accessibility, availability, technical suitability and operating sustainability, together with proportionate economic indicators relevant to the programme concerned.

Design and investment criteria

Each project will be assessed against its intended uses, users and operating model. Feasibility and design will include technical production, operational, safety and accessibility input before spatial and servicing decisions are fixed. Briefs will address representative event configurations, whole-life costs, transport and access at intended operating times, compatibility with neighbouring uses and funded management and maintenance arrangements.

For public spaces intended to host recurring events, the Council will apply a proportionate standard addressing utilities, surfaces, flexible layouts, servicing, access, temporary infrastructure and responsibilities for use and



reinstatement. Completed works will be tested against the intended activities before handover, with verified information made available to users.

Operating and access requirements

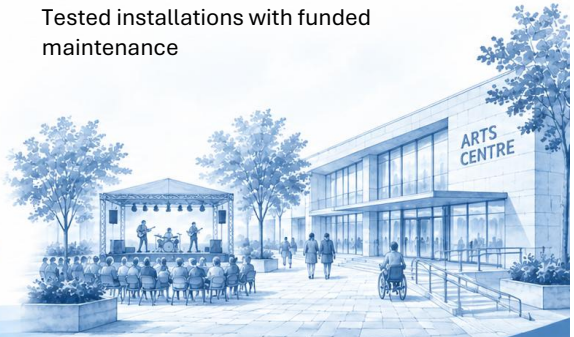
Facilities will have a multi-year operating plan and published programming and hire policy, identifying priorities, charges, technical support and community and independent-producer access. Operator agreements will establish reporting, maintenance, equipment replacement and conflict-management arrangements. Evening and weekend use will be supported by the staffing and services required to deliver the agreed programme.

Delivery and participation

The implementation programme will identify a lead, partners, timeframe, funding requirements and measurable outputs for each action. The Council will publish an annual progress report and undertake a substantive review at least every five years. A formal events and night-time industry advisory forum, meeting at least twice annually, will inform delivery alongside consultation with artists, communities and disabled people's organisations.

Proposed early delivery schedule

Action	Proposed lead and partners	Proposed period	Evidence of delivery
Agree scope and delivery leads	Arts Office with Planning and Economic Development	First 6 months	Event infrastructure objective and named responsibilities
Establish industry forum and night-time lead	Council management with EIAI and representative groups	First 6 months	Terms of reference and at least two meetings annually
Complete coordinated site and supplier baselines	Arts, Parks, Tourism, Economic Development and the Local Enterprise Office	Within 12 months	Mapped sites, needs assessment and aggregate supplier baseline
Adopt technical and public space standard	Council project teams with industry and disabled users	Within 12 months	Approved briefs used in new and refurbishment projects
Publish booking and permissions route	Named events coordinator with relevant services	Within 12 months	Guidance, contacts, charges and response targets
Publish temporary occupation framework	Property, Planning, Arts and relevant technical services	Within 12 months	Terms, checklists and relocation provisions
Agree major sites programme	Named Council lead with site managers and owners	Within 12 months	Prioritised investment and documentation programme
Deliver first site improvements	Relevant asset owners and infrastructure services	Within 24 months	Tested installations with funded maintenance



Action	Proposed lead and partners	Proposed period	Evidence of delivery
Prepare venue operating and skills plans	Project sponsors, operators, education and industry partners	Before design and operator commitments	Costed use, training, access and replacement plans
Publish data and progress	Working group and named information owners	Annually	Updated dataset, outcomes and delivery report

Editorial and policy reference corrections

- Correct Section 1.3 to refer to County Development Plan Policy COS11 on arts and cultural facilities. [9]
- Reconcile the contents page with the ten objectives in the body of the draft and with any additional objective introduced in the final version. [1, pp.2, 25, 37–39]
- Replace the repeated artist-workspace descriptor under Objective 6 with wording appropriate to maintenance and upgrades. [1, p.38]
- Correct the reference to a Revised National Planning Framework in 2026: the First Revision was approved in April 2025. Reconcile population assumptions with the current County Development Plan variations. [7, 30]
- Update the status of City Edge references to reflect the adopted framework and distinguish its SDCC area from the wider City Edge project. [8]
- Use consistent policy titles, including Place, Space and People, and distinguish historical references such as Culture 2025 from current policy and any successor arrangements confirmed before final publication.



Appendix B Relevant precedents and their application

These examples support particular recommendations; they are not proposed as a wholesale transfer of another jurisdiction's planning, licensing or funding system. Historical documents are identified as such, and their lessons should be assessed against South Dublin's responsibilities and resources.

EIAI public realm and accessibility submissions

EIAI's Limerick and Carlow County Council's work supports testing representative event layouts before designs are fixed, providing permanent services where appropriate, retaining flexibility and making verified information available to organisers. The accessible-tourism submission extends assessment to the whole journey and to participation as performers, speakers, workers and volunteers. These positions inform sections 3, 8 and 10 of this submission. [16–18]

London cultural infrastructure and secure workspace

The 2019 Cultural Infrastructure Plan connects mapping, planning and the protection and delivery of cultural space. London Plan Policy D13 provides an agent-of-change framework, while the Creative Land Trust's establishment illustrates an ownership-based approach to affordable workspace. For South Dublin, the relevant applications are a maintained spatial evidence base, clear cultural-space delivery agreements and secure tenure for production activity. [13, 23, 29]

Victoria planning for live music

Victoria's Planning Practice Note 81 explains how agent of change operates when new residential development or new or expanded music activity alters an existing environment. Its discussion of acoustic mitigation and planning controls supports addressing compatibility during site selection and design. The Irish recommendation does not import Victorian distances, overlays or legal requirements. [24]

Scotland's national events strategy

Scotland's National Events Strategy 2024–2035 connects event development with workforce, fair work, impact measurement and delivery partnerships. Its use of an action plan and reference to eventIMPACTS offer relevant approaches for an implementation programme and proportionate evaluation. South Dublin should adapt these to a local-authority arts infrastructure strategy. [15]

Toronto support for performance spaces

The 2024 Soundcheck background document records recent or ongoing measures involving venue licensing, agent of change, a property-tax mechanism and a below-market temporary lease of city property. These



illustrate the range of municipal functions affecting venue survival and new provision. They support coordinated assessment of property, planning and operating conditions; no equivalent Irish tax concession is assumed. [25]

Amsterdam participation and transport at night

Amsterdam's Night Vision connects cultural provision with affordability, suitable space and the ability to travel home at night. Its relevance is the relationship between the location of facilities, their operating times and practical access for audiences and workers. South Dublin's transport assessment should therefore test evening journeys and dispersal alongside daytime proximity. [26]

Stockholm coordination and public space

Stockholm's strategy for nightclubs and live stages describes coordinated contact services and information for operators, alongside opportunities on city-owned land and premises. It also discusses a fee-free public-space zone as a tool for encouraging activity. The transferable lessons are clear contact routes and transparent assessment of charges and activation opportunities, rather than an assumption that the same fee arrangements apply in Ireland. [27]

New South Wales proportionate approval research

The 2015 Low Risk Arts and Cultural Venues study was commissioned by the Live Music Office and City of Sydney and expressly states that it is not an endorsed City position. It examines ways to simplify approval for small, low-risk performance premises. It supports reviewing administrative proportionality while retaining appropriate safety and planning assessment, and should be treated as research rather than current law. [28]

Dublin City night-time policy

Dublin City's Night-Time Economy Strategy and Development Plan Objective CUO38 provide nearby examples of connecting cultural participation with practical operating conditions and addressing noise impacts on established late-night venues. They demonstrate that these issues can be considered within an Irish local-authority policy framework, while South Dublin must adopt its own provisions through the relevant process. [12, 21]



Appendix C References

Reference 1 is the consultation draft supplied for this submission. Other references support the specific policy connections, EIAI positions and precedents cited. Historical international documents are used for their stated approaches; their legal provisions are not presented as applicable in Ireland.

[1] South Dublin County Council. Draft Arts Infrastructure Strategy 2026–2040. Consultation draft, 50 pages. View source

[2] South Dublin County Council. Economic Strategy 2026. Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism actions 1.3.1–1.3.5, p.27. View source

[3] South Dublin County Council. Evening Time Economy Plan for Tallaght. Actions 9–12, pp.56–58. View source

[4] South Dublin County Council. South Dublin Tourism Strategy 2024–2029. Chapter 2 (Situation Analysis), p.11, accommodation and event-space assessment. View source

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