

To The Millennium

September 1995

Forewords

“I congratulate the Arts Council on the production of its coherent strategy for the development of the arts in Northern Ireland. The publication is timely and coincides with my intention to launch later this year a Strategic Plan for the Education Service, including the arts, setting out the strategic aims, priorities and targets for the rest of the decade.

The primary role of the Arts Council is to steer the general direction of artistic policy and decide the allocation of funding in line with the exercise of its artistic judgement. This substantial document sets the parameters within which the Council will discharge its statutory duties. It will provide a focus for decisions on the allocation of resources including the significant additional funds from the Lottery. It also provides a set of reference points from which the new statutory Council’s relationship with my department can be developed in terms of corporate planning and the subsequent monitoring and assessment of performance.

I am grateful to the Council for the work which has gone into the drafting of the strategy and its refinement following extensive public consultation. I agree with the strategic thrust of *To The Millennium* and I wholeheartedly welcome it as a new framework within which the Council can develop even more fruitful working relationships with district councils, art bodies and all those who are involved in supporting and developing the arts in Northern Ireland.”

Michael Ancram MP

“Given our small population, and the long years of conflict, it is remarkable how distinguished a contribution our creative and performing artists have made both nationally and internationally. The arts generally can make an enormous contribution to our society at this time of hope and change. They can play a vigorous part in the process of reconciliation, in providing employment and improving the quality of life both for our own people and those coming to the province for business and pleasure.

To The Millennium seeks to assist those in the arts to make their role as profound and valued as possible. It was first published in draft form in June 1994. Although itself the culmination of a consultative process which started almost four years ago, it nevertheless initiated an active public debate in the media, at meetings and in the form of eighty-three written submissions. We received much valuable advice and observation and this document takes into account the views expressed. It is right to record that there was a considerable measure of consensus behind the essential vision expressed in our Mission Statement, with its five elements: development - of the arts here - to wider audiences - across a broad range of art forms - with a commitment to quality.

This final version of *To The Millennium* shares the broad aims of the education service and has been assisted by thoughtful contributions from officials of the Department of

Education. I am very glad that the Arts Council has been able to agree the Strategy with the Minister for the Arts, Michael Ancram MP, without in any way infringing the principle of artistic independence enshrined in the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. I present it to him and to the public with great pleasure.

Donnell Deeny QC Chairman - Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Chapter One: A STRATEGY FOR THE ARTS

1.1 TO THE MILLENIUM - A STRATEGY FOR THE ARTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The arts play a crucial and enhancing role in the life of the individual and society. They have the power to heal and reveal, to explain and entertain, to excite and delight. They are a force for understanding and for change. Our mission is to develop the arts in Northern Ireland so that as many people as possible can enjoy as many forms of art as possible to as high a standard as possible. The strategic overview set out in this chapter has been grouped under three principal aims agreed by the Department of Education and the Arts Council. Chapter 2 outlines the objectives and priorities flowing from these aims which have been identified as necessary for the sustenance and expansion of the arts in Northern Ireland. These are complementary and a degree of overlap will be evident. Subsequent chapters will address the means by which these may best be attained, particularly over the years leading to the new millennium: to encourage access to, appreciation of and participation in a broad spectrum of arts; to promote creative and performing arts of quality; to increase resources for the arts and ensure their effective and efficient use.

TO ENCOURAGE ACCESS TO, APPRECIATION OF AND PARTICIPATION IN A BROAD SPECTRUM OF ARTS

1.2 Every citizen has the right to enjoy and participate in the arts. For some, that will be an easy right to exercise, but for many not. It must be made plain that the arts are for people of all walks of life. A principal justification for public funding of the arts is to ensure that the public are able to appreciate a wide range of art forms.

The Arts Council seeks to increase the number of people who enjoy the arts, drawing in those who at present feel, for whatever reason, that the arts have little to offer them. We wish to encourage the young to understand the arts and find one, or many, forms that engage their interest.

We wish to ensure that the economically deprived do not feel excluded from the life of the arts. We are anxious that disabled people have access, physically, and in every other way, to as many art forms as possible. Where there are those who cannot get out to enjoy the visual or the performing arts, such as older people in residential homes, we shall strive to bring the performer and the artist to them. We shall seek to expand the provision of arts facilities throughout Northern Ireland so that no citizen, whether rural or urban, is deprived of reasonable access to the arts.

We are committed to equal opportunities for both genders and all sections of the community.

1.3 We stress the importance of arts in education. We shall press the Department of Education, the Education and Library Boards and the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment to ensure a proper role for literature, music and visual arts in schools and colleges.

The Arts Council believes that the arts have an important role in the areas of cultural traditions. They can enable each section of the community to celebrate and understand their own and each other's heritage. The cultural diversity of Northern Ireland can be a source of strength rather than of division. We wish to explore with government the most effective use of cultural traditions funding. Artistic expression in the Irish language should be given its proper place in our cultural heritage. The arts have the power to transcend nationality and regionalism and to free people from the shackles of their own prejudices. We shall seek to bring to the fore public appreciation of, among other things, film, architecture, photography, design and crafts as activities hitherto not sufficiently recognised as artistic in their nature.

1.4 Active participation by people in the arts is particularly important. Traditionally, this often found successful expression here in the amateur drama and musical world. Increased voluntary participation in the arts has thrived in a community context with local communities celebrating their own culture and history in their own way. In co-operation with others, we wish to promote the development of innovative, high quality community arts throughout Northern Ireland.

1.5 The enormous influence of television and radio should be used to open new vistas of culture and taste, not only as a medium for other art forms but as art forms in themselves. The distinctive contribution of Northern Ireland artists, whether literary, musical, or other, is entitled to be recognised and broadcast on the television networks.

All sections of the media in Northern Ireland should be urged to follow the lead given by the most enlightened in reviewing and discussing the arts. They should be in the vanguard in encouraging participation in, and enjoyment of, the arts.

1.6 TO PROMOTE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS OF QUALITY

Creativity is the very essence of the arts. It is a vital characteristic of the human mind, a necessary prerequisite of quality in the performing arts. We will seek to raise standards across the art forms and to achieve excellence. We do not wish to subsidise the mediocre, but will avoid elitism in seeking to distinguish what is excellent of its kind from what is not. We are proud of our own artists and companies and their work. We shall seek to strengthen the artistic community here and create mutual respect between artist and audience. Employment in the arts whether as creator, performer, craftsman or administrator, must be recognised as a useful and honourable way of life. To enable practising artists to say and work in Northern Ireland is a worthwhile objective in itself.

We shall support those living artists and existing organisations which have brought credit to us all and we celebrate their achievements. We will welcome opportunities for them to display their talents both here and, when possible, further afield. We shall encourage the fostering of an informed critical climate.

We welcome and shall seek to sustain provision for training in the arts in Northern Ireland. We support the establishment of an Academy for the Performing Arts here as an important element in educational provision.

We shall welcome and encourage innovation and new departures, whether from existing artists and companies or from new arrivals or commercial entrepreneurs. We should be open to outside influences and new experiences developed elsewhere.

1.7 A key method of achieving excellence is the provision of dedicated facilities for the arts. The Arts Council will promote the establishment of new theatres, galleries and other arts facilities throughout the province by deploying resources made available from the National Lottery, and through the capital programme for the arts. We shall aim, by these means, to fill gaps in existing provision. We shall maximise the use of existing buildings, such as the Grand Opera House and the Lyric Theatre, so that resources are employed most effectively. A flexible approach to the use of buildings not designed for artistic purposes can ensure a worthwhile role for them.

TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR THE ARTS AND ENSURE THEIR EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE.

1.8 Public funding of the arts brings a double benefit. It enriches the quality of life of the individual and society, but, partly because of the labour intensive nature of the arts, it also achieves substantial returns in economic and employment terms. Such funding stimulates significant expenditure from other sources.

Better access and higher standards require more resources. In fact, the funding of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland has been, for many years, at a lower per capita level than Scotland and Wales, albeit in and around the GB average. The UK, in turn, has a much lower level of public funding for culture than its European peers. Most arts organisations here suffer financial strains. Large sums are now available from the National Lottery Arts Fund, but the requirement to direct its grants almost entirely to capital and equipment expenditure may well exacerbate rather than ease existing revenue difficulties.

For these reasons we need to double total revenue support for the arts in Northern Ireland by the year 2001. How can this be achieved? We look to an increase from local government where spending varies so widely between districts. The business community and the public are also key players, but it is not possible to achieve this target from these three sources alone.

The economic deprivation of the province and its geographical isolation make an unanswerable argument for central government arts funding being, at least, at the per capita level of our neighbour Scotland. This is a just and realistic target at which all can properly aim.

Such a step, however, would still fall far short of a doubling of support. Achieving this will require much larger grant aid or, more realistically, an early relaxation of National Lottery Directions to permit general revenue expenditure. This should not erode the principle that this funding is additional to central government support for the arts.

1.9 We wish to foster partnerships so that the resources and excellence we seek can become a shared objective. The Arts Council, after all, is only one actor on the cultural

stage. To this end, and to ensure continued consultation, we will bring together in a Consortium for the Arts in Northern Ireland all those bodies with a role to play.

These will include: ABSA Arts and Disability Forum The British Council Community Relations Council, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Craftworks Forum for Local Government and the Arts, Laganside Corporation, Northern Ireland Film Council, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust, Rural Development Council, The Workers' Educational Association, Youth Council for Northern Ireland.

Artistic bodies, Education and Library Boards, Government departments, Major sponsors, Museums, Newspapers and media groups, Practising artists, Professional bodies, Publishers, Trade Unions, Universities and further education colleges, Voluntary Sector

The Consortium will be in addition to direct bilateral relationships with a wide range of relevant organisations. The Arts Council will co-operate with the other Arts Councils in the United Kingdom in an ongoing relationship. We shall continue our fruitful co-operation with the Arts Council in Dublin, An Chomhairle Ealaíon. We shall seek constructive and practical partnerships with artistic bodies throughout the European Union, North America, Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

1.10 We acknowledge the essential role of district councils, with their democratic mandate and local knowledge in increasing the profile of, and funding for, the arts in Northern Ireland. The Forum for Local Government and the Arts, established in November 1994, is already meeting regularly and acting effectively in pursuit of these goals. Bilateral partnerships between the Arts Council and district councils will be established where appropriate. We look forward to arts funding from district councils rising across the board to the per capita levels of the most supportive councils.

1.11 To ensure that the resources available help as many people as possible, it is vital they are used effectively and efficiently. The criteria for funding will reflect this aim. Our client partners will be expected to use grant aid imaginatively. Co-operation between them will be essential to avoid duplication and waste. While competition may at times be healthy and appropriate, all those in the arts should remember that they are colleagues first and foremost.

1.12 Despite a quarter of a century of violence and civil disorder, the arts in Northern Ireland have survived, a tribute to the resilience and courage of both artists and audiences. Some may point out that the troubles have been a source of inspiration in some art forms, but none can deny that, against the gain of creation, the burden of destruction has been chiefly borne in this part of these islands. Whatever the future may bring, our artists and public should be empowered to give and receive of their best.

Chapter Two: OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

This chapter gathers together priorities identified under each of the succeeding sections. Its purpose is to provide a clear framework in which priorities are linked to the Council's aims and objectives. These are by no means the only priorities of the Council. They are the strategic priorities identified at this stage as emerging from the work of the Council and the extensive consultation process.

MISSION STATEMENT

To develop the arts in Northern Ireland so that as many people as possible can enjoy as many forms of art as possible to as high a standard as possible.

AIM A

To encourage access to, appreciation of and participation in a broad spectrum of arts.

OBJECTIVE 1

To seek new audiences for and participants in the arts among those not yet attracted to the arts.

PRIORITIES

To encourage a greater degree of engagement and interaction between the artist and the community.

To increase awareness of the arts in Northern Ireland and beyond through advocacy in the media.

To organise and promote a high quality programme of touring arts events and exhibitions throughout Northern Ireland.

To encourage the Ulster Orchestra and Opera Northern Ireland to ensure that as wide an audience as possible has the opportunity to appreciate their performances.

To encourage a wide range of venues, including heritage centres, to promote traditional arts events.

To ensure, in partnership with local government, that arts centres and other professional arts venues make suitable provision for the voluntary arts through participation and performance.

To support the wider participation of and access for local communities in festival programmes, particularly youth, elderly people and people with disability.

To consolidate partnership and develop programme planning and continuity through representation on and co-operation with the Prisons Arts Trust.

To meet regularly with the creative and expressive studies advisers and others to create new initiatives and schemes within the formal education system.

To sustain the Young Arts Programme in primary and post-primary schools.

To expand the provision of theatre in education in consultation with the Education and Library Boards and to appraise the current role of youth drama in Northern Ireland.

To facilitate people under twenty five, outside the formal education system, to participate in and attend arts activities.

To co-operate with service providers to secure the place of the arts in the informal education system, to ensure that as many people as possible can develop their own creativity.

OBJECTIVE 2

To ensure the provision of a wide range of art forms.

PRIORITIES

To stimulate production of film, television and video as an art form in Northern Ireland through the National Lottery Arts Fund.

To develop film as a cultural activity primarily through the Northern Ireland Film Council.

To give appropriate support to photography, craft and architecture as distinct areas of practice within the visual arts.

To sustain centres of excellence for music, opera, drama and the visual arts.

To respect cultural diversity by recognising the roles of Irish and Ulster Scots in the language of the community.

To promote the traditional arts in Northern Ireland as a shared tradition which is the confluence of many strands. To develop an integrated and strategic approach to cultural traditions arts funding.

OBJECTIVE 3

To maintain a commitment to equal opportunities for both genders, disabled people and all sections of the community.

PRIORITIES

To implement equality legislation and codes of practice to ensure that procedures and policies are fair and lawful within the Arts Council and to actively encourage this within the client/partner network.

To introduce more support projects for young people with special educational needs, including those with disabilities.

To address the issue of perceived cultural marginalisation of women within the arts as working artists and administrators.

To increase access to the arts and arts buildings for disabled people.

To encourage representation of women and disabled people on boards of management of arts organisations.

To support equality of opportunity in training and employment for disabled people.

AIM B

To promote creative and performing arts of quality.

OBJECTIVE 4

To promote by 2001 a dedicated arts facility of quality within twenty miles of every person in Northern Ireland.

PRIORITIES

To use the National Lottery Arts Fund to promote the establishment of new theatres, galleries and other facilities and the conservation of existing arts buildings.

To expand provision where needed, particularly in the west and rural areas, while sustaining existing facilities in Belfast.

To promote museums and libraries as venues and resources for the arts.

To achieve the highest standards of excellence in the architectural design of new or restored buildings.

To encourage National Lottery applications from all types of organisations, across the community, for arts projects - professional or amateur - which should address the important issues of public good and access for disabled people.

OBJECTIVE 5

To encourage artistic creativity and innovation.

PRIORITIES

To encourage innovation and experimentation in the arts.

To support creative artists by promoting their work abroad, establishing an open competition for Northern Ireland, and increasing studio space.

To support the exhibition of contemporary work of high quality, most prominently in the new public gallery at Ormeau Baths, Belfast.

To offer greater opportunity for new writing from local or locally-based playwrights while responding appropriately to wider national and international contemporary writing.

To encourage the development of the quality and range of festival events to include local work of high calibre as well as new and internationally renowned artworks and events.

To encourage museums and libraries to include more contemporary art and literature in their collections and to commission, as well as purchase, the work of living artists.

To encourage artistic excellence by the appointment of an International Officer and through national and international exchanges.

To support publishing houses and magazines in their literary programmes.

OBJECTIVE 6

To sustain and develop centres of excellence and training for the arts.

PRIORITIES

To sustain the Ulster Orchestra and Opera Northern Ireland as key art form providers.

To encourage the Lyric Theatre to develop its central role in sustaining and developing the experience of local theatre artistes and writers, both through employment for mainhouse shows and through co-productions with local touring companies.

To develop a plan for dance in Northern Ireland, in partnership with the Sports Council and other interested bodies, with particular emphasis on a dance centre.

To work with all employing organisations in the arts towards improving their training, including the provision of modular courses.

To support the establishment of an Academy for the Performing Arts.

To expand and develop the provision of professional expertise for the voluntary arts.

To provide awards to encourage excellence within the voluntary arts.

To support the training needs of festival organisers.

OBJECTIVE 7

To create a climate in which the value of the artist is properly recognised.

PRIORITIES

To widen public appreciation of artists by developing Artist-in-Residence schemes with a range of partners and increasing the number of musicians, writers and other arts in education and the community.

To encourage a climate of informed critical appreciation.

To support readings, workshops, festivals and residences, where writers engage with their public.

To work with the major broadcasting organisations to maximise their support for and coverage of the arts in Northern Ireland and to promote a fair share of regionally-produced work for television and radio networks.

AIM C

To increase resources for the arts and ensure their effective and efficient use.

OBJECTIVE 8

To double total revenue support for the arts in Northern Ireland by the year 2001.

PRIORITIES

To achieve parity with Scotland in per capita terms in central government funding of the arts.

To use the most effective incentive schemes to stimulate local government support for the arts.

To ensure that clients and all those working in the arts are aware of and make application to all appropriate funding sources.

OBJECTIVE 9

To encourage co-operation by fostering existing partnerships and by forging new relationships among all those concerned with the arts.

PRIORITIES

To work with district councils through the Forum for Local Government and the Arts and through bilateral partnerships.

To establish the Consortium for the Arts in Northern Ireland.

To encourage district councils, through their arts venues, to facilitate co-productions with theatre companies.

To encourage the concept of 'per cent for art', and lobby public and private sectors to actively adopt this policy.

To appoint an Arts Co-operation Officer at the Arts Council.

To promote partnership between local councils, traditional arts groups, the museums and other agencies, to collect, preserve and publish field work in the traditional arts.

To implement a rural arts project in co-operation with other relevant bodies, including the Forum for Local Government and the Arts.

To seek the appointment of a designated arts officer in each district council area.

To receive an arts development plan from each district council with fifteen months of the publication of this strategy.

To promote festival co-operation between Northern Ireland and our neighbours.

OBJECTIVE 10

To promote the effective marketing of the arts.

PRIORITIES

To support the establishment of a central booking system for arts events in Belfast to ensure the most effective use of funds available.

To provide training for arts administrators supported by European funding.

To increase awareness of the arts in Northern Ireland and beyond through advocacy in the media.

To work with the major broadcasting organisations to maximise their support for and coverage of the arts in Northern Ireland.

To publish a joint action plan of the Arts Council, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Forum for Local Government and the Arts for stimulating cultural aspects of tourism and recreation.

OBJECTIVE 11

To ensure the efficient management and distribution of funds for project capital and revenue programmes in the arts.

PRIORITIES

To assess and monitor the financial and administrative policies and practices of client/partners.

To work with district councils, ABSA and other agencies to maximise the impact of arts expenditure.

To appoint an officer with dedicated responsibility for training.

Chapter Three: CRITERIA FOR FUNDING

In deciding whether to fund an organisation or activity and whether to increase, maintain, or reduce such funding, the Arts Council will bear in mind all relevant considerations in so far as possible. The Arts Council seeks to be as well informed as possible about its clients' work. However, to assist applicants for grant aid in approaching the Council, the following criteria should be borne in mind as among those influencing the Council in its decisions. In considering projects, we will ensure that what is proposed is consistent with the objectives and priorities we are pursuing.

3.1 EXCELLENCE

The Arts Council is committed to the encouragement of high professional standards among the client/partners it supports. It does not wish to subsidise the mediocre, but to encourage creative and performing work of quality.

Standards will obviously be different in arts where the public are not only an audience but are actively participating.

3.2 EFFECT

What effect will funding have? How many people will enjoy the activity to be funded and for how long? Where appropriate, the activity should be open to as widespread a cross-section of the community as possible.

Would the activity happen even if no funding was provided by the Council? Will the activity happen in much the same way if funding is less than previously?

Will the effect of funding be to allow the people of Northern Ireland to enjoy something new and innovative?

3.3 EDUCATION

Has the application taken into account the need to expand the numbers of those who enjoy the arts by, in particular, addressing those who are still being educated and young people generally? For example, are workshops to be held in schools, or is there provision for school pupils to attend rehearsals or performances at a lesser or nominal cost?

3.4 ECONOMIC BENEFITS

A key way of encouraging the growth of the arts in Northern Ireland is to increase the number of creative and performing artists, and those who serve them living here. The province is an economically-deprived and geographically remote part of the UK and EU. Local employment is therefore of particular relevance.

How much of the funding will be spent in Northern Ireland? What proportion of it will be spent on people working here? What proportion of it will be spent on people working here? What proportion will be spent on materials made or bought here? Is the funding likely to lead to further economic spin-offs? Will it benefit persons resident here and enable them to perform, work or study here or elsewhere?

3.5 EQUITY

The Arts Council will seek to be fair and equitable in its dealings with client/partners who apply for funding. It will seek to ensure that funding is fairly spread across the art forms, across all sections of the community, and throughout Northern Ireland, bearing in mind population concentrations and relative accessibility.

The Arts Council will expect client/partners to be committed to equal opportunity for both genders, disabled people and all sections of the community.

3.6 EFFICIENCY

The Arts Council requires that any client/partner organisation funded by it is properly constituted and run with complete honesty and with efficiency. Structures must be in place to ensure adequate financial and administrative control. The organisation should not have an excessive administrative overhead. The Arts Council will seek to assess the 'value for money' provided by the activity.

Client/partners should be capable of making successful efforts to raise money from box-office, district councils, central government, sponsors, European funds, trusts and foundations. They should effectively promote and market their activities. All client/partners will be expected to derive at least a significant part of their income from non-Arts Council sources.

An existing track record will obviously be of assistance in assessing the likely quality of future projects. Grant aid, whether going to bodies or individual artists, writers, musicians etc. must be spent for the purpose for which it was awarded.

Artists and Art Forms

Music and Opera

Visual Arts

Film

Drama

Literature

Traditional Arts

Community Arts

Dance

Chapter Four: MUSIC & OPERA

PRIORITIES

To sustain the Ulster Orchestra and Opera Northern Ireland as key art form providers and to encourage them to ensure that as wide an audience as possible has the opportunity to appreciate performances of high standards.

To support creative and performing artists, and widen public appreciation, by increasing the number of musicians and composers in education and the community.

To encourage greater access to differing forms of music through tours, commissions and festivals.

To encourage close co-operation between the relevant companies in the provision of touring opera outside Belfast.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Music plays a crucial role in the cultural life of the province. It contributes greatly to the international perception and reputation of Northern Ireland. The Arts Council desires to expand the musical audience in our community while not neglecting the importance of new creative work in composition and performance, whether emanating from the amateur or professional worlds.

The importance of music in the affairs of the Arts Council is indicated by the fact that, in common with other UK Arts Councils, it has the largest budget of any of the arts forms. In order to underpin classical music in Northern Ireland, the Council strategically devotes a high proportion of its expenditure on two companies - the Ulster Orchestra and Opera Northern Ireland. These are the main providers of classical music and opera and attract substantial audiences with a wide geographic and social spread.

4.2 ULSTER ORCHESTRA

The Ulster Orchestra Society is the biggest single client-partner of the Arts Council. It was formed in 1981 incorporating the BBC Northern Ireland orchestra at that time. Since then it has had a succession of prominent principal conductors including Bryden Thomson, Vernon Handley, Yan Pascal Tortelier and En Shao. Its regular series of subscription concerts in the Ulster Hall have been, and are, well attended and well regarded. It provides orchestral accompaniment for Opera Northern Ireland. It performs a number of concerts as part of the Belfast Festival at Queen's. The orchestra regularly enjoys successful tours of Great Britain, the Republic and has previously toured South Korea, Germany and the United States. Within Northern Ireland, it contributes considerably to the community through regional work, educational projects and chamber music concerts. Many of its players have formed small ensembles and a majority teach young people either privately or through the Education and Library Board systems.

The orchestra provides a considerable body of broadcast music which is transmitted both on Radio Ulster and Radio 3. The Arts Council was concerned at the level of contribution from the BBC, particularly in comparison with BBC Wales and the National Orchestra of Wales. Increased support from the BBC has been, and will be, welcomed as it already plays a most influential role in the activities of the Ulster Orchestra and will remain a key component in its future development. The BBC shares the Arts Council's concern that any additional funding should be used to greatest effect.

In accordance with our overall views on the efficient use of resources, we will require the orchestra to co-operate with other client-partners in the operation of its booking office. It is obviously sensible that systems be compatible so that the benefits of public support through the box office are maximised.

Some notable commercial sponsors are long-standing supporters of the orchestra. The effect of the building, by Belfast City Council, of the conference centre/concert hall on the Lagan - The Waterfront Hall - on the operations of the Ulster Orchestra has yet to be fully assessed. It will be an important part of the proposed Partnership Agreement between both councils. The City Council takes the view that the Ulster Hall should remain the home of the Ulster Orchestra and is committed to the maintenance and refurbishment of that important building.

The fact that the Ulster Orchestra will continue to give most of its performances in the 1200-seat Ulster Hall rather than the 2250-seat Waterfront Hall removes one argument for increasing the size of the orchestra to full symphonic strength. At present its playing strength of 63 contracted players provides a basis for a wide repertoire of orchestral music with augmentation when necessary.

One aspect of the orchestra's activities is touring outside Belfast, throughout Northern Ireland. This is at present limited in scope, partly because the cost, although highly subsidised, is considered substantial by many small towns. Furthermore, not all towns have suitable venues. An increase in the size of the orchestra may exacerbate both these problems.

The cost of such an increase in size would be considerable - at least £0.5 million a year. The Arts Council does not consider that it could, or should, find increased support of anything of that nature in the foreseeable future without a major uplift in our annual grant. Neither Clive Priestley in his report, nor Bonnar Keenlyside in theirs, were convinced of the arguments in favour of a significant increase of this kind in the size of the orchestra. Indeed, at this time, the key issue is achieving funding which will allow the orchestra to maintain its present level of activity.

We wish to sustain the orchestra in its work and to encourage it to ensure that as wide an audience as possible has the opportunity to appreciate its high standard of performance. It should continue actively to seek new audiences both in the Greater Belfast area and to throughout the province. Regional activity should be designed both to find an appreciative audience and to encourage that audience to attend at the regular concerts of the orchestra. Steps to encourage the involvement of professional musicians from the province in the orchestra are welcomed, whether as full-time

members or when augmentation is required. While the Ulster Orchestra will remain the principal provider of orchestral music, we acknowledge the value of other ensembles and of visiting orchestras to the province.

4.3 OPERA NORTHERN IRELAND

Opera has enjoyed a remarkable renaissance in recent years and has been brought to the attention of a wider audience than for many decades.

With the intention of ensuring a reasonable provision for this important art form and a desire to rationalise and to improve standards, the then Arts Council founded Opera Northern Ireland in 1984. It combined the energies of the Northern Ireland Opera Trust and Studio Opera Group. It produces two seasons of opera in the Grand Opera House, Belfast. It also regularly presents touring opera. In accordance with its mission statement and criteria, the Arts Council supports this company as the most appropriate means of presenting professional opera in this part of the world. We support arts organisations in Northern Ireland in preference to visiting companies. That complies with our criteria in bringing economic benefits here, especially as visiting companies with high standards have proven more expensive than the productions of Opera Northern Ireland. The coming of The Waterfront Hall is a further opportunity for increasing the frequency of opera there and at the Grand Opera House.

It has been recognised that Opera Northern Ireland has had some notable artistic successes with its productions. They are regularly attended and praised by the critics of the national press. In common with most artistic activity here, it must be acknowledged that the funds available for production are considerably less than those available to other comparable companies in the rest of the United Kingdom, let alone those on the continent. The company has also had to cope with having to cancel seasons twice because of the bombing of the Grand Opera House. It showed commendable adaptability in mounting two productions in the Klondyke building, the former boiler house of the Belfast Gasworks, which had never hitherto been used for any artistic event.

We remain committed to a long-term aim to try and increase the number of main-scale operas to four in a year. It is important, however, to ensure before moving to four operas (whether in two seasons of two operas each, or, more expensively, three seasons) that the company has sufficient income to reach the standards of its most successful productions and maintain an efficient administration.

Opera touring outside Belfast is of real importance. It does, however, pose difficulties. The audience for opera outside Belfast has not been sufficiently researched. This should be done. It is possible that it is most sympathetic to well-known, 19th-century, largely Italian operas. Unfortunately, these are often unsuited to small venues because of problems of sets, accompaniment and casting.

This problem has been approached in different ways by ONI which has toured sometimes with piano, and sometimes with a small ensemble, sometimes with a work that has received critical praise but has not attracted audiences and sometimes the reverse. The two most successful ventures in the field of touring have been two co-

productions between Opera Northern Ireland and the Opera Theatre Company of Dublin, namely *Carmen and Don José* and, more recently, *Hansel and Gretel*. We believe a continuing policy of co-operation between these companies is important to provide as much opera as possible of good standard and attractive repertoire to the regions.

A number of local music lovers, after the setting up of Opera Northern Ireland, formed the Castleward Opera to provide an outlet for their energies and talents. Its annual season in June, in the theatre, converted from the stables, of the National Trust property at Castleward, has been an increasing success. In recent years, there has been an emphasis on principals from outside Northern Ireland with a consequent rise in both costs and standards. It should be borne in mind that the limitations of the venue, including its inability to accommodate a full-scale professional orchestra set a clear ceiling on its development. Furthermore, the location and 'other factors' mean that the performances are not normally readily accessible to the general public. Nevertheless, in contrast to the attitude of the Arts Council of England to Glyndebourne, the new Arts Council has given an increased measure of support to Castleward Opera in acknowledgement of its role.

4.4 CONTEMPORARY AND EARLY MUSIC

The support of contemporary music is an important part of the Arts Council's strategy. New art, in whatever discipline, must be encouraged and the composition and performance of new music is essential for the musical development of the province. The Arts Council has consistently encouraged and supported the quest for new ideas and innovative musical experiences. In partnership with clients and other institutions, such as the BBC and the two universities, the Arts Council has stimulated a growth in the number of young composers living and working in Northern Ireland.

The Arts Council will continue this strategy in several ways. An active commissioning policy has provided the vehicle for composers to access performers for their work, both local, national and international. Clients such as the Ulster Orchestra, Opera Northern Ireland, the Belfast Music Society and several local arts committees have responded favourably to the presentation and performance of new music. The Arts Council will encourage their continued support as it is essential to the expansion of composition in the province.

Touring artists are also encouraged to commission works from modern Irish composers. The promotion of music publications and recordings is an integral aspect of the wider dissemination of music from the province. In this role, the Arts Council recognises the importance of the Contemporary Music Centre in Dublin as the natural centre for contemporary music composition throughout Ireland. In partnership with An Chomhairle Ealaíon, the Arts Council will continue to support the publication of music scores and the information magazine *New Music News* while, at the same time, exploring the possibilities of the production of CDs featuring contemporary Irish music. Another focus of this co-operation will be the joint funding of the Ennis/IMRO Composition Summer School in Galway.

The Arts Council has long recognised the importance of presenting new music to young people. Its support of the Composers-in-Residence and Musicians-in-Residence posts has focused attention, both within the confines of academia and in the wider community, on contemporary music.

In this context the Arts Council will seek to expand its Composers-in-Education and Composers-in-the-Community schemes which have done much to involve people of a wide age range and de-mystify the process of composition.

As a focus of contemporary music-making, local, national and international, the Arts Council will continue to support 'Sonorities', the festival of contemporary music at Queen's University.

Since 1981, there has been a complementary festival of Early Music at Queen's University. The Arts Council recognises the important place which Early Music holds at this time and will continue to seek the best means of provision.

4.5 MUSIC AND DISABILITY

The Arts Council supports various initiatives in the field of music and disability since we recognise the importance of providing creative opportunities for everyone, and particularly for disabled people. We will continue to assist agencies such as the Drake Research Project, which uses computer technology to assist physically disabled people in expressive music-making and composition, and Share Music which runs residential courses in music-making for disabled people. We will seek to encourage other agencies such as Open Arts and ArtsCare to work in music with disabled people, particularly people with learning disabilities, who currently lack provision. We will support others such as Live Music Now! to take professional musical performances to those (for example, adults with learning disabilities, students at special schools, and elderly people in nursing homes) who cannot attend mainstream musical events.

4.6 CHAMBER MUSIC

In order to provide a full range of music activity, the Arts Council has funded chamber music recitals on a regular basis through its touring programme, through the Belfast Music Society and through the support of music series promoted by local arts committees.

Audiences for chamber music are small, not only in Northern Ireland but throughout the UK. The Arts Council will seek to encourage new audiences by linking educational workshops/masterclasses with touring programmes by visiting artists. The wider impact created by liaison and joint productions with Music Network in Dublin will also be supported. The involvement of young people as both audience and performers is essential to the development of the appreciation of chamber music and the Arts Council will continue to facilitate the Belfast Music Society and other promoters in presentations which enhance this goal.

4.7 Jazz

In 1989, the Arts Council appointed a Jazz Administrator with a broad brief of encouraging jazz, at all levels, throughout the province. Masterclasses and workshops

held in Belfast proved most successful and led to the setting up of an International Jazz Summer School, using the facilities of the University of Ulster at Jordanstown. Jazz in schools has been a priority, as all Education and Library Boards have embraced Creative Music Making as a core activity and, in this context, jazz in its widest interpretation can play a role.

The continuation of the touring element of jazz will stimulate new and existing audiences and performers. North/South cooperation and co-ordination is an essential part of this strategy.

The Arts Council will continue its support of jazz, which could be expanded into other areas such as Community, Pop, Improvised and World Music. The correlation with Contemporary Music should also be recognised.

4.8 MUSIC EDUCATION

Musical skills and disciplines are not innate and need to be taught with flair, dedication and a great deal of expertise. It is partly through education that art will come to be seen as a central element in society. Every effort must be made to influence educational agencies to provide high-quality musical training throughout the education system.

It is vital that musical training and/or appreciation is available to all students, although music is not a core subject in the school curriculum. All instruments should be treated equally. For some years, there has been a bias against piano and voice, which has led to an imbalance in the number of people with these skills. This should be addressed by the Education and Library Boards and the Department of Education.

Despite the existence of two university music departments the lack of a third-level educational establishment specifically providing tuition in musical performance has meant that most music students who wish to be performers have no other choice than to complete their training outside Northern Ireland. It is important that an academy for the performing arts be established in Northern Ireland as soon as possible. It will provide a centre of excellence and a focal point for young musicians.

We will encourage our clients, such as the Ulster Orchestra and Opera Northern Ireland, to undertake more work in education. They can be a positive influence on pupils and can encourage them to appreciate and increase their knowledge of music. They may stimulate some pupils to consider a life as a professional musician and they may encourage others to attend musical events, thus establishing a pattern for life.

The orchestras of the different Education and Library Boards are well established. In 1994, they were complemented by the Ulster Youth Orchestra, initiated by the Arts Council, which came together for a residential course, culminating in public concerts. This has proven a prime example of co-operation between public and private sectors with considerable support from commercial sponsors.

It is a long-term aspiration of the Arts Council that the several summer courses supported by central funding, ie Ulster Youth Dance, Ulster Youth Theatre, the International Jazz Summer School and the Ulster Youth Orchestra, can eventually be

linked together to form a Performing Arts Summer School. The impact on the province could be immense and far reaching. We will consider the establishment of a Ulster Youth Choir if a major increase in funding made this possible.

4.9 MUSIC THEATRE

As the term implies, music theatre combines elements of both drama and music. In recent years considerable interest has grown for this cross-disciplinary art form as a less expensive way of presenting dramatically-enhanced music, often semi-staged and involving an interaction between vocal and instrumental music on a minimalist set. To a large extent, music theatre was a reaction to the sometimes lavish, frequently expensive world of opera. Contemporary composers have seen music theatre as a viable alternative to operatic composition which allows for performance of small-scale new work of a cross-disciplinary nature, although not supplanting the ultimate experience of writing opera.

In Northern Ireland, music theatre has so far been an infrequent aspect of the performance scene but the Arts Council will seek to explore further its possibilities for development with its opportunities for innovation and interaction between several art forms.

4.10 POPULAR MUSIC

Popular music - whether pop, rock or country - transcends boundaries of class and community in Northern Ireland as it does abroad. As the phrase suggests, it is what most people enjoy and experience in terms of music. For that very reason, it can be economically self-supporting. The role of public funding is primarily, therefore, in the field of music in the community and in the educative process of developing musical knowledge. The Arts Council gives support to musicians' collectives such as the Nerve Centre and Newtownabbey. These provide facilities for composition, rehearsal and recording, particularly for young musicians.

4.11 COMMUNITY MUSIC

The perception of community music - i.e. which community groups wish to perform - as in conflict with so-called 'high-art' music is one which the Arts Council seeks to alter. Because of lack of funding in the past, help has had to be restricted to specific projects. The Arts Council will seek to promote community music by making available recording equipment, musical instruments, rehearsal space and meeting places for enthusiastic musicians to develop their skills. It will, however, seek to provide opportunities for these enthusiasts to expand their musical horizons by contact with professional musicians. This interchange of knowledge and experience will help to break down barriers and misconceptions, at the same time providing support for centres and projects already in existence but opening up new areas of musical experience for a wider community. (Traditional music is discussed in Chapter Nine.)

4.12 AMATEUR MUSIC

The amateur music-making scene in Northern Ireland is a well established aspect of the arts. Largely because there are so few professional musicians in the province, the amateur movement is frequently the main provider of certain types of music-making choral societies, brass, flute, pipe, accordion and a host of other instrumental bands

and orchestras and operatic societies. A number of bands across the country have benefited from significant grant aid for instrument purchase from the National Lottery Arts Fund. There are over twenty amateur operatic companies spread widely throughout the province and all of them are being well supported by their local communities. They have large memberships and most of them are financially sound. Their most important function is to supply an artistic outlet for their members, should it be as a scene painter, an orchestral player, or on the stage as a dancer or singer. As amateur operatic companies are almost the only outlet for local singers and dancers to perform on stage, it is essential they are encouraged to continue and to improve.

Choirs and choral societies have a proud tradition in Northern Ireland but they have met increasing difficulties in recent years as the number of singers keen to participate has fallen. We view this trend with concern. We will seek to support higher standards of achievement through contact with musicians of quality.

With all amateur music-making groupings, the Arts Council will continue its policy of providing contact with professional musicians of high standing through masterclasses and workshops. In the past such masterclasses have included such illustrious names as James Galway (Flute), Heather Harper (Voice), Nikolai Demidenko (Piano), and Nicola Hall (Guitar). It has also organised series of masterclasses in co-ordination with amateur music societies such as the Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters, the North of Ireland Bands Association and the Brass Band League.

It is through such contact that standards of performance can be effectively enhanced.

Chapter Five: VISUAL ARTS

PRIORITIES

To support creative artists by promoting their work abroad, establishing an open competition for Northern Ireland, and increasing studio space.

To widen public appreciation by developing Artist-in-Residence schemes with a wide range of partners and promoting educational programmes.

To support the exhibition of contemporary work of high quality, most prominently in the new public gallery at Ormeau Baths, Belfast.

To give appropriate support to photography, craft and architecture as distinct areas of practice within the visual arts.

To encourage the concept of 'percent for art' and lobby public and private sectors to adopt this policy actively, whereby a proportion of the cost of a new building is devoted to works of art.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The visual arts in Northern Ireland may be said to be in a more flourishing state than ever before.

In recent years two artists of local origin - William Scott and F.E. McWilliam - achieved international recognition. They were accompanied by a whole generation of artists of acknowledged excellence, such as George Campbell, Gerard Dillon, Colin Middleton. Several members of the ensuing generation have successfully established themselves. The Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Ulster, formerly the Belfast Art College, has a high reputation, and attracts students from outside Northern Ireland. The Ulster Museum's collection of 20th-century art commands respect.

In other ways, however, the current situation is worrying and unsatisfactory, both for the creative artist and for the public.

There is not as yet a major historical collection of fine art of international standing, private or public, within Northern Ireland; nor is there a major history-based Fine Art Department at either university. There is no strong tradition of patronage or purchasing. Most seriously of all, there is today a wide gulf between the visual artist and the public. Young artists strive to practice their skills to the highest standards; but both skills and standards are largely removed from the culture and lives of ordinary people.

Probably more reproductions are bought today than ever before; it seems to be easier for a print-shop to pay the high overheads of central Belfast than for an off-licence. Yet there appears to have been no corresponding increase in the number of people who buy original work by living artists to hang over their mantelpieces. Whose fault is this? Too many artists scorn mantelpieces today. Too many mantelpiece-owners scorn today's art. How to bring the two back into a more fruitful relationship must be one of

our first priorities. It will not be easy to achieve. There must be no lowering of standards, no dilution of excellence, no censorship, no restriction on the individual artist's right to pursue objectives to their artistic conclusions. Yet a degree of greater engagement with the community on the part of some artists might make it easier to understand, appreciate, and enjoy new works of art.

5.2 THE NEW GALLERY

A central way of approaching this objective is the establishment and maintenance of a well-run public gallery where contemporary work of high quality is always on show especially if some, at least, of that work enjoys a reasonable degree of popular appeal. Perhaps the present trend away from pure abstraction towards more representational artforms may help the process, but of course there is room for both.

Since the publication of the draft strategy the Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast, has been opened by Michael Ancram MP, Minister for the Arts. This attractive, centrally-located gallery will provide a substantially larger exhibition space than heretofore. It is not intended that the new gallery should be wholly dependent for funding on the Arts Council: its board will in due course need to consider raising income by various means, but it starts out with the full support and goodwill of the Board.

It would be unhelpful at this stage to compromise the independence of the management board of the new gallery, or the prerogatives of its first director, by predetermining its policy. However, it seems only right to offer the new venture a set of broad sailing directions. The principles set out in this chapter are intended to apply not only to the new gallery in Belfast, but also to the whole field of visual art promotion throughout the area of our remit.

It should be said that the establishment of the new gallery in the Ormeau Baths should, in our view, by no means prejudice the much more ambitious project to establish a permanent collection, both of historical and modern art, in central Belfast.

5.3 STRATEGIC ISSUES

An essential duty of the Arts Council must be to secure creative excellence in the arts. But that poses the recurring question: who is to be the judge of excellence? How to avoid elitism on the one hand, populism on the other? It is healthy that such a debate should take place. There always exists a kind of international consensus on what is good and what is bad - not always right, but not always wrong. There exists also a local taste, flavour, flair. It will be for the Arts Council to make the best judgements it can amongst all the conflicting considerations, opinions and tastes: to use its best endeavours to make the most of the best, and to make the best of the most.

In doing so, we shall seek to be fair, impartial, and open to independent appraisal; and to ensure that there is no place in our procedures for improper discrimination or favouritism.

There is another significant area of difficulty: the relationship between the local and the international.

Not everyone is able to visit the great international collections of fine arts. Those who are restricted to the province - or indeed to Ireland - can have only a restricted knowledge of world art. It is therefore important to bring to Northern Ireland, whenever possible, exhibitions of international quality.

It is equally important, however, to promote the best work by local artists; and, from time to time, to show it abroad. The new and larger Ormeau Baths Gallery will make it easier to combine both functions. Group shows, perhaps theme-based, can be both shown locally and toured to other parts of Ireland, and abroad. We will seek to reduce the long waiting-list for young artists by holding open exhibitions and shows where both the numbers and size of works are set so as to allow the largest possible participation. So far as possible, work in the whole range of new media will be accommodated, including installation works, ephemera, and computer-generated art forms; and there should be provision for regular showing both of photography and of graphic arts.

Provision in Belfast must not be at the expense of the rest of the province. We shall seek to establish a network of alternative exhibition spaces throughout the province - not always in purpose-designed galleries, but making imaginative use of community centres, leisure centres, libraries and school buildings, which should be available also for participatory workshops and masterclasses. It is of fundamental importance that all these buildings, both in and outside Belfast, should give a warm, positive sense of welcome to all.

5.4 THE ARTIST

Working artists stand in need of more help and support than they presently receive. A Code of Practice for the Visual Arts has very recently been drawn up by the National Artists' Association with support from the Arts Council in England. This code takes account of essential issues such as Exhibition Payment Right, a concept which the Arts Council will encourage. The Arts Council will also liaise closely with the Artists Association of Ireland on matters of relevance for artists in the North of Ireland. There is a case for the provision of further training after art college, especially in areas such as financial management and marketing skills. How many artists carry proper insurance; or have adequate pension provision; or are forced to sign on for unemployment benefit? The current level of provision in this area will be assessed and recommendations drawn up.

We will explore the provision of economical serviced studio space, perhaps in the many rooms presently unused, in city or town, above shops and offices, some of which have good north light and could be made very serviceable at moderate cost.

We will seek to encourage a closer relationship between the artist and the community in various ways: by the kind of work with schools so successfully pioneered by Neil Shawcross and others; by the use of residencies, both community-based and in institutions, and perhaps even Artist-in-Residence schemes in industry and commerce; by the encouragement of friendlier relations between amateur and professional artists, such as have developed in the theatre; above all, by seeking to involve more people in the visual arts in an active rather than a passive way.

5.5 NEW WORKS

The Arts Council Collection of works by local artists has served its purpose well, and it is our intention to continue to buy samples of the best work of local artists. If resources permit, we consider appointing a curator with responsibility for the management of the existing collection. We shall make every effort to co-ordinate our activities with those of other galleries and institutions, particularly the Ulster Museum, and will seek to collaborate with them in the establishment of a central and authoritative slide index and library for the visual arts.

We shall continue to support the Print Workshop and the Printmaker-in-Residence. Consideration will be given to the best location for the workshop to enable it to continue its role of support and facility for local printmakers.

We will continue to support the commissioning and purchase of new works along the same lines as heretofore, with such fine-tuning as may seem appropriate. We strongly support the provision of appropriate works of art in new public buildings and favour the concept of 'percent for art', by which a proportion of the cost of new building is devoted to works of art. No newbuild project or conversion should be considered too small to be worthy of such a commission. District councils will be actively encouraged to adopt this concept. One other project, embarked upon with much enthusiasm but presently floating a little adrift, is the scheme for a major Sculpture Park. We are sympathetic to the scheme while accepting that there are still unresolved questions partly as to resources. If these can be resolved, the development of the Stranmillis Road site has much to commend it.

5.6 ARTISTIC CRITICISM

We will seek to raise the standards of artistic criticism and journalism in the province, both in the press and in the broadcast media. We will consider funding an annual Best Critic Award to this end. We will encourage public debate on matters of visual aesthetic interest, in which Ireland, north and south, has traditionally been weak. We will offer assistance to other bodies working in the same field, for example organisations concerned with the promotion of craft, design and film.

5.7 ARCHITECTURE

The remit of the Arts Council has now been broadened to include a specific reference to architecture. On a number of occasions in the past our predecessors gave support to exhibitions and publications on architectural subjects. We shall accordingly be pleased to follow the example of the Arts Council in England in expanding and extending support for the promotion of public understanding of architecture.

There is certainly a need for a wider interest in, and knowledge of, the aesthetic aspects of architecture, as opposed to its purely functional aspects. As with other visual arts, we will seek to raise the standards of criticism and debate, not only in the media but also in the wider educational field.

We will entertain applications for support for exhibitions, lectures, and publications in this field which would enable more people to learn the vocabulary of architecture and thus enjoy it infinitely more. We contemplate establishing bursaries or prizes within the framework of education. If there is sufficient support for it from the interested parties, we shall favour the establishment of an Architectural Centre for Northern Ireland, if possible in a building, new or old, of acknowledged architectural excellence.

In supporting architecture, we shall be open also to applications for projects in the fields of landscape architecture; wall murals and sculpture in the community; townscape, villagescape and landscape planning. We are also concerned with the aesthetic qualities of differing materials; architectural and planning history and conservation; and other visual aspects of the quality of the built environment.

We shall seek to support and encourage the use of design competitions for significant commissions, public and private. It would be useful to collaborate with a working group of members of the architectural profession with a particular interest in the artistic aspects of their work.

We believe that representatives of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects and the Royal Institution of the Architects of Ireland, of the Northern Ireland Chapter of the Landscape Institute of the Department of the Environment, and of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, should be invited to join the Consortium for the Arts in Northern Ireland.

5.8 CRAFTS

The Council's remit has also been broadened to embrace crafts. In a world where sensibilities have been dulled by the domination of mass production, there is a growing need for quality in materials, craftsmanship and design. Good design and high standards of craftsmanship are in themselves important culturally and are also fundamental in ensuring employment opportunities, since poorly designed objects will not survive in competitive export markets. As such we are anxious that the aesthetic and cultural aspects of the crafts in Northern Ireland be fully developed and appreciated. Ambitious and well researched craft exhibitions are essential if public awareness and understanding are to be raised. We therefore support the inclusion of quality craft exhibitions in our major visual arts galleries to demonstrate the full range of craft, including traditional craft, that is produced here. We would support a joint exhibition of visual arts and crafts to be toured throughout the province.

We favour improving the quality, quantity and status of education and training in the crafts at all levels of the education system. We are encouraged by the training initiatives undertaken which enable traditional skills to be learnt and new ideas to be developed. We will offer bursaries, if funds allow, to those active in the field of creative crafts as well as arts.

We will encourage and facilitate school visits by practising professional artists and craftworkers to demonstrate and discuss their work.

In conclusion, we will co-operate with Craftworks in pursuit of this policy. We recognise the closeness of the connection between the arts, especially the visual arts

and crafts, and will give the fullest support to increasing access to markets for craftworkers and encouraging standards of excellence in their work.

5.9 PHOTOGRAPHY

In spite of the importance of photography in modern society, the technological and even artistic evolution of photography has been almost entirely within the commercial field, with its cultural value often being implicitly neglected by state funding bodies. An overwhelming percentage of Arts Council spending in the UK has been directed towards the fine arts, whilst relatively little support has been given to photography and other media drawing on modern technology. This disparity should be addressed as we approach our new arts policy for the next five years.

The Current Situation

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland formally adopted photography as part of its remit in the late sixties. The major percentage of Arts Council funding towards photography is through the Community Arts budget, which currently supports two community-based workshop/resource centres: Belfast Exposed, based in King Street, which was established in 1989 with additional funding from Making Belfast Work, and Pilots Row, Derry, jointly funded by the Arts Council and the City Council since 1987. Through the Visual Arts department, the Arts Council has also supported over the years one-off projects and exhibitions: hence the precise overall level of subsidy is difficult to calculate. We welcome the opening of a dedicated photographic gallery at Clotworthy Arts Centre, Antrim, in 1993.

Implementing a Strategy for Photography

The Arts Council will address six key areas. It will encourage innovation and experimentation by supporting photographic work of artistic merit. It will award an annual prize for outstanding achievement in the field of photography. Awards will be available to encourage young photographers. It will continue the work of the Community Arts department in stimulating and funding community based photographic activity through provision of dark-rooms, cameras, workshops and training. The Arts Council will consider applications for funding of high quality photography books from local publishers. We shall seek to add more photographic works to our permanent collection. The Visual Arts department, through its touring programme, can help to promote high quality photographic exhibitions.

Photographic Organisations Photoworks North (formally constituted in May 1991) is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of photography throughout Northern Ireland. Activities have included organising exhibitions, lectures at clubs and educational institutions, compilation of an index of photographers in Northern Ireland, and the production of *Source* (a quarterly photographic journal). The Arts Council has recognised the importance of the work of Photoworks North by funding the running costs and marketing of *Source*.

We recognise the aspiration of Photoworks North to establish a photographic resource and exhibition centre in Belfast. Many other cities throughout Britain of comparable

and lesser size have such facilities for the promotion of excellence in photography. The Arts Council will seek to ascertain whether such a centre is the most effective use of resources in this field.

The Northern Ireland Photographic Association represents 27 camera clubs throughout Northern Ireland, its primary objective being the promotion of photography in all its forms, with a special emphasis on education. We will, where possible, support the activities of both these organisations.

Chapter Six: FILM

PRIORITIES

To stimulate production of film, television and video as an art form in Northern Ireland through the National Lottery Arts Fund.

To develop film as a cultural activity primarily through the Northern Ireland Film Council.

6.1 FILM

The recommendation in the Priestley Report that the Northern Ireland Film Council should form a sub-committee of the Arts Council, with delegated responsibilities, appears to run directly counter to more recent developments in this field in Scotland and Wales. The present position is that NIFC is an independent body largely funded through the Arts Council. This chapter was prepared in consultation with NIFC.

We are very conscious of the substantial disparity of funding for cinema between Northern Ireland and other regions of the British Isles; but this results in part from the way in which film embraces both the cultural and commercial; and the Arts Council is not, and never will be, in a position to provide all the resources sought by the industry.

However, we wish, so far as practicable, to support and consolidate the progress made to date by the Film Council and, therefore, the Arts Council intends to devolve primary responsibility for the development of cultural film activity in Northern Ireland to NIFC from 1996. This will be done in consultation with the Department of Education and NIFC. Appropriate mechanisms will be formulated to achieve this. These mechanisms will have to address the legal duties of the Arts Council both under its own Order in Council and the National Lottery Act including the directions made thereunder. Support for film and video activities in the community arts field and in art centres supported by the Arts Council will continue to be a matter principally for it.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland will make the case to DENI for a substantial increase in the funding available for film from 1996. Parity with Scottish public sector film funding (per capita, pro rata) should be the absolute minimum ambition.

We consider that this does not merely mean parity with the Scottish Film Council, although this would mean funding of over £300,000 per annum for NIFC alone. We therefore state our ambition for an overall budget for public sector support for film in Northern Ireland which encompasses both the funding that may be available from the Department of Education and that which may be available from the Department of Economic Development and its subsidiary agencies.

The Arts Council and the Film Council believe that the most rational and efficient policy for film is one that follows an integrated and complementary approach to the cultural and commercial aspects of the film and television industry. The Film Council already applies this approach to its activity in four key areas: Education; Training; Production; Exhibition.

6.2 EDUCATION AND YOUTH

The Film Council, as a registered charity with educational objectives, is extensively involved in education. The Council's annual Cinemagic International Film Festival for Young People is widely acknowledged to be the foremost event of its kind in the UK and Ireland. The Film Council's integrated and complementary approach to its work means that its Media Education Officer, working to promote media education in schools, is able to build on the pioneering work of the Cinemagic team. The Film Council is also involved in media studies provision at teacher training level and intends to work in continuing/community education when resources allow.

6.3 TRAINING

As a specialist development agency, the Film Council has prioritised training as one of its primary objectives. Its Training Committee has developed and introduced a range of specialist training courses with support from the industry. NIFC achieved 'Sector Representative Body' status from the Training and Employment Agency in 1995.

6.4 PRODUCTION

The objectives of both Councils focus on the production of new, original work using film (and television) as an art form in its own right, both drama and documentary. Existing connections with broadcasters will be built upon to enhance and enrich the opportunities for all film and programme makers in Northern Ireland.

The joint strategy for production is predicated on partnership funding. We will work with relevant partners to improve conditions for the production of films and television programmes in Northern Ireland, by people from Northern Ireland, for the people of Northern Ireland and beyond. An important part of this funding will be monies made available by the Arts Council as a National Lottery distributor. Film production projects are eligible for Lottery funding and criteria for financial support have been developed in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Film Council.

The role of the BBC as a provider of finance for film is increasingly important. We welcome the increase in funding coming through BBC Northern Ireland, but regret that a higher proportion of it is not being spent here. It is important to sustain the creative and technical artists living in Northern Ireland. The Arts Council, when allocating funding for film, considers it essential that it be spent in Northern Ireland in so far as possible. Regrettably, the generous tax concessions available in the Republic require that production should normally take place there rather than on the whole island of Ireland.

6.5 EXHIBITION

The Film Council's proposed new responsibilities for film from 1996 will enable it to develop an integrated approach to the enhancement and expansion of cultural film exhibition initiatives in Northern Ireland. We recognise the excellent work done by Queen's Film Theatre, one of the premier regional cinemas in the UK. Over twenty-six years, QFT has continued a programme of breadth, diversity and quality. Also of importance is the Foyle Film Festival, which has been running for nine years; its annual autumn festival presents a high quality thematic programme. Clearly the responsibility for funding QFT and the Foyle Film Festival, in consultation with the Arts Council,

will enable NIFC to develop new and dynamic relationships with both these partners, and to lobby for more funding to be made available to the sector as a whole.

It seems highly likely that the British Film Institute, whose charter extends to Northern Ireland, should become a more substantial funder here to develop cultural film exhibition in Northern Ireland as a key priority.

We believe it might be possible, in partnership with interested local authorities, at quite modest cost, to expand the existing QFT to provide expertise and administration for a new province-wide film service.

Chapter Seven: DRAMA

PRIORITIES

To encourage the Lyric Theatre to develop its central role in sustaining and developing the experience of local theatre artistes and writers, both through employment for mainhouse shows and through co-productions with local touring companies.

To offer greater opportunity for new writing from local or locally-based playwrights while responding appropriately to wider national and international contemporary writing.

To expand the provision of Theatre-in-Education in consultation with the Education and Library Boards and to appraise the current role of youth drama in Northern Ireland.

To encourage district councils, through their arts venues, to facilitate co-productions with theatre companies.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Theatre in Northern Ireland is alive and well when judged by the number of actors, writers and directors from here both working in our theatres and with marked success abroad. It is thriving in terms of increased audience, youth theatre and community plays. The scene is not quite so satisfactory for theatre professionals seeking to earn a full-time living here or for audiences outside Belfast who have limited access to professional productions.

Of the twenty-five districts outside Belfast, only a few have a purpose-built theatre. Some have an arts centre or town hall where local people can see occasional productions programmed amongst music, films and light entertainment. Such productions may be from the local amateur group or from a visiting professional company.

Opportunities for participation vary. There are drama projects and classes in some schools, youth clubs, day centres, and community centres, but the provision is uneven. The Arts Council recognises that sound foundations have been laid by a mixture of amateur and professional practitioners and wishes to build on these foundations to achieve a reasonable level of provision overall.

7.2 PRODUCTION

The willingness to produce new plays has placed the theatre in Ireland at the head of its field internationally. It is important to ensure that time for re-writing is built in to production schedules and that new plays of merit do not vanish after only one production.

To support the production/artistic team, there must be a reliable administrative back-up. This should not mean that it is necessary for every one-off project to generate a new company name and a new administrative base in order for such back-up to take

place. It is imperative that companies, theatres and individuals co-operate on productions on an ongoing basis.

7.3 TRAINING

At present there is no training school in Northern Ireland for any of the core or related theatre crafts and there is no provision for professional theatre people to sustain and develop their skills. The analysis and conclusions of the Basil Deane Report made a convincing argument for the establishment of a performing arts school in Northern Ireland. The Report further recommended that, while its remit might serve all the performing arts, an acting school should be the immediate priority, with music, dance and technical training becoming available in the future.

The Arts Council supports the establishment of an Academy for the Performing Arts.

We will also encourage Education and Library Boards to consider giving more grants to performing arts students. Given the need to enhance design, technical and administrative skills, the Arts Council will consult with the theatre community and interested training agencies to consider how best to ensure that these vital aspects of the production process are not left out of any overall training policy and provision.

7.4 PLACES AND VENUES

Most of our theatre companies are based in Belfast. Other towns and cities have very little contact with professional theatre workers. Even well-equipped venues such as the Ardhowen Theatre in Enniskillen or the Newry Arts Centre, which have occasionally tried to host a rehearsal period for a touring company, have not succeeded in sustaining a professional presence in the town. Companies often spend only one night in these towns and cities as they tour away from Belfast for a couple of weeks.

We believe that the presence of professional theatre people in a town can contribute to the development of local interest in the arts. It also facilitates an arts input to local activities in schools, community centres and the arts venue itself.

We will encourage district councils, via their arts venues, to facilitate co-productions with theatre companies. The venue could provide administrative back-up and rehearsal facilities. The production would open in the venue before touring more widely.

The Arts Council welcomes the initiatives of Derry and Armagh councils to provide a new theatre in their cities.

In some towns, the local amateurs have shown their love of theatre by campaigning and fund-raising to ensure that their town acquires a theatre building of its own. The development of the new Courtyard Theatre at Ballyearl and the refurbished theatre in the town hall at Portadown are testaments to the tremendous local support that has led to these welcome additions to the circuit. As well as enhancing the quality of local work produced, our professional companies benefit enormously from the existence of such purpose-built spaces, ensuring in turn that the local audience can have an enriched season of theatre close to home.

It is not always necessary to have a purpose-built space for theatre to take place. The addition of a few lights or some simple staging can transform a community centre or village hall into a theatre for a night. The Arts Council has provided a central pool of equipment for this purpose in the past, but the demand now outstrips the resource. The Arts Council will encourage and assist district councils which have not yet done so to provide a central pool of equipment and advice for the benefit of local groups. This could be of benefit not only to visiting professional theatre companies, but would be available as a resource for locally-produced youth, community and amateur productions.

The Arts Council reserves the right to engage experienced practitioners or companies to provide appropriate productions when the range of work on offer does not provide the variety required by the audience.

7.5 LYRIC PLAYERS' THEATRE

Now in its twenty-fifth year, the Lyric Theatre is the only producing theatre in Northern Ireland. When our actors are working, it is as likely they will be engaged by a small-scale company, touring to community venues, as on the stage of the Lyric. Our directors, writers and designers produce work with professional touring companies and with youth and community drama groups. Their schedule may involve working on existing scripts, or at other times it might include creating theatre which reflects people's own experience. They have to be versatile - this is in the nature of their profession - but they have successfully turned the necessity of earning a living into a strength. As a consequence, a major feature of theatre in Northern Ireland is the positive and supportive interaction which exists throughout professional, amateur, youth and community practitioners.

The Lyric has introduced co-production with some of the touring companies in Belfast. Recent examples have included joint ventures with Tinderbox and Point Fields. Their co-productions have then gone out on tour to regional theatres, having opened on the Lyric stage.

The Council welcomes the initiatives taken by the Lyric and will encourage the theatre to develop its central role in sustaining and developing the experience of local theatre artistes and writers, both through employment for main house shows and through co-productions with local touring companies.

7.6 NEW WRITING

The encouragement of new writing is vital to a healthy theatre. New plays, whether by established or new playwrights, should be produced not only by professional companies such as the Lyric or Tinderbox, but also by community and amateur groups. A Commissions Scheme will be introduced by the Council to promote new writing and, where feasible, encourage the publication of new plays.

7.6 ADMINISTRATION

The Council will consult with the theatre community to assess the appropriate level of administrative support needed for the level of theatre activity taking place across Northern Ireland.

A central agency could provide continuity and build on contacts and experience over a period of time, providing support for a group of individual companies, each of whom could retain their own identity whilst taking advantage of an effective administrative back-up.

7.8 PARTICIPATION - YOUTH, AMATEUR AND COMMUNITY DRAMA

The Arts Council affirms the importance of participation in the field of drama. Amateur drama groups flourish in many towns and continue to celebrate their work through the festival tradition, taking part in both all-Ireland and British festivals. The Council will continue to give financial support to a range of training initiatives and encourage the continuing development of good quality productions.

The Arts Council has funded awards to encourage excellence within the amateur drama festival movement.

There is a strong regional dimension to the youth drama movement in Northern Ireland. Youth drama groups have been established in more than half of the district council areas. The annual production by the Ulster Youth Theatre attracts increasing interest from young performers and audiences alike. The Youth Drama Scheme, directly managed by the Arts Council, has been running for fifteen years. This is an appropriate time to review the situation.

An increasing number of community groups are staging their own work and large-scale community plays have become part of the theatre landscape in Belfast and Derry. The Arts Council will encourage local groups to tour their projects where possible and thereby experience one another's work. We favour the development of community drama outside Belfast and Derry and have begun to work with district councils and other interested bodies to achieve this end.

7.9 DRAMA AND THEATRE-IN-EDUCATION

The Arts Council is committed to the work of Replay and other theatre-in-education companies but recognises that there are insufficient resources to meet demand.

The Council will consult with the Education and Library Boards as to the best way of expanding the provision of theatre-in-education, whilst ensuring that the standard of work remains high.

We will support the Creative and Expressive Studies Advisers in each of the Education and Library Boards in promoting the highest standards of in-service training and programmes of work for schools.

Chapter Eight: LITERATURE

PRIORITIES

To support publishing houses and magazines in their literary programmes.

To support readings, workshops, festivals and residencies, where writers engage with their public.

To promote tours by distinguished authors, sometimes in conjunction with other artists.

To respect cultural diversity by recognising the roles of Irish and Ulster Scots in the language of the community.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The status of Northern Irish writing -poetry, fiction, drama, and other genres - has never been higher. This, in turn, has helped to produce an expanding literary community and literary culture - publishing, magazines, public readings, critical debate, international interest and exchange. There is much potential for developing this culture further, to the benefit of writers and readers. Accordingly, we wish to see literature fully valued within the funding structures of the Arts Council. This would recognise its special power both to represent society to itself and to transform consciousness: the space it opens up for the interaction and transmutation of differing perspectives, philosophies and traditions. It has been widely acknowledged that Northern Ireland's special contribution to literary expression in these islands is due, in part, to the diversity of cultural elements on which writers can draw.

8.2 THE WRITER

The Arts Council is committed to the principle that literature begins with the writer. Our most fundamental priority is to help writers by various means: (1) by highlighting the availability of bursaries, which will enable them to 'buy time', undertake research, pursue a particular project at home or abroad, acquire skills or experience; (2) by continuing and developing the residencies which have been so successful in the universities and the community, and which also have the effect of widening participation; (3) by financial support for readings, workshops, festivals and other activities whereby writers involve themselves in the community; (4) by ensuring the provision of such practical advice and support as talented new writers may need while they are in the process of establishing themselves; (5) by grant-aiding publishers where appropriate.

8.3 PUBLISHING

There has been a remarkable development of publishing in Northern Ireland during the last twenty years. The audience for books is the largest audience which Arts Council funding helps to foster. We believe that the presence of first-rate professional publishing is crucial for local writers, for the representation of Northern Ireland in all its complexity, and as a service to the community. Here literature takes its place at the core of a virtually unique regional articulation which has created new audiences in the north and proved its appeal elsewhere. We note, by the way, that the Scottish and

Welsh Arts Councils take a broader 'cultural' view in their support for a variety of locally-published books, as contrasted with the previous practice of the Arts Council here. Regional publishing constitutes a key link between the arts and the Cultural Traditions philosophy.

It brings together contemporary writing, literary heritage, and other aspects of heritage. Northern Irish publishers also provide a valued outlet for writers from other parts of these islands. However, given the problems common to all Irish, Scottish, Welsh and regional publishers (i.e. problems of scale, inability to compete with London in the most lucrative areas of the trade), we recognise that funding for literary publishing must be provided at a level which will allow standards and output to be maintained. It is sometimes the case, too, that publishers outside Northern Ireland need help with publications that are important to literature here. In addition, there must be assistance for smaller literary publishers to develop their distinctive lists. The expansion of local publishing has created an important pool of editorial and technical skills. It is in the interests of all the community that the Arts Council should help to retain these in Northern Ireland.

Thus publishers may require support for the development of their literary and cultural lists, over and above funding for particular titles. We also see a role for the Arts Council in promoting co-operation between local publishers and the Department of Education. In addition, less traditional means of publication are coming to the fore, with the technological scope for developing forms of community publication. However, such enterprises initially require informed guidance. Again, in some instances of a particularly localised literary project, writers might be assisted to seek suitable support.

8.4 MAGAZINES, CRITICISM, JOURNALISM

The literary magazine, in its creative and critical capacity, is important to the currency of talent and ideas. Such magazines must be supported, insofar as they prove their vitality and stamina. Funding should also be available, as it is at present, to encourage the printing of literary work, critical discussion, and reviews in Journals of a more general or inter-disciplinary character. Since critical and scholarly exploration of Northern Irish writing, although rapidly developing, is still in its infancy, we see a role for the Arts Council in supporting particularly valuable contributions to this process, whether on a small or large scale. On a more popular level, we note the inadequate and patchy performance of the Northern Irish newspapers with respect to literature, critical argument, reviewing, and promoting awareness of writers, literary events, and local publications. They compare very badly with Dublin or Glasgow in this respect. We will make vigorous efforts to persuade editors of the need to rectify this situation. It is also important to facilitate the circulation of literary and arts magazines. To this end, bookshops, arts centres, community centres and other appropriate outlets should be assisted to carry a range of magazines (not only from Northern Ireland) which represent the state of the art and of debate, and which can introduce new readers to new writers.

8.5 LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

Literature is closely involved with that most common and sturdy of all community arts, language. As the most complex renovator of language, literature holds a central place

both in relation to other artforms and arts activity (e.g. theatre, community arts, traditional arts), and to issues of cultural diversity in Northern Ireland where literature in English is vitally engaged with, and empowered by, a vigorous speech, which itself reflects a diversity of influences from Irish and from Scots. Nor can language be divorced from the variety of its historical and cultural contexts. We welcome, for instance, the current interest in Ulster Scots; and we recognise the role of the Ulster Scots Language Society in maintaining this important part of our heritage and in retrieving the work of its writers.

Further, we strongly emphasise that all criteria applied in this strategy to English-language literature, carry the same force where literature in the Irish language is concerned. However, we recognise, too, that the number of people currently equipped to read and write such literature is comparatively small though increasing. The Arts Council has, in the past, encouraged writing in Irish by such means as assisting the publication of books and magazines, instituting the first Writer-in-Residency in Irish in the island, subsidising readings and fora, and linking readings with traditional Irish music. We now affirm that a less reactive and more pro-active approach is being developed. This includes support for an Irish-language arts centre and for Irish-language activities in other arts centres.

Some commentators point to the policy of the Scottish Arts Council with respect to Gaelic: e.g. its generous support for the Gaelic Books Council and the National Gaelic Arts project. At the same time, given the different proportion (and different social geography) of Irish speakers in Northern Ireland, a more grass-roots approach may initially be desirable, if we wish to encourage (a) excellent writing in Irish, (b) wider appreciation and enjoyment of its qualities and traditions (the 'heritage' aspect). Accordingly, we believe that administrative and decision-making structures should be established and resources found whereby the Arts Council would be enabled to work with such bodies as ULTACH Trust and those centred on An Cúlúrlann, together with the secondary and tertiary educational sector, to achieve this end. The role of newer media (e.g. video) should be kept in mind in this connection. On a wider front, it also seems one of the areas where the existing co-operation with An Chomhairle Ealaíon over literary and other artistic matters could be developed. For instance, an Irish language arts group might be formed, to which various interested bodies, north and south, might contribute. Or a high-profile event, such as a Celtic languages literary festival, might be established.

Again, one reason for the new interest in Irish-language writing throughout the island is a mature recognition of the interdependence of literary traditions. English-language and Irish-language writers do not see their literary worlds as mutually exclusive. Translation is one of the means whereby this fluidity, this interest in the rich multiplicity of language in Ireland, has been facilitated. Thus it is desirable that kish-language writing in Northern Ireland should not be segregated from the creative and critical momentum of literature as a whole, and all means of developing this interchange - such as joint readings by writers in both languages - should be encouraged.

8.6 EVENTS, VENUES, AUDIENCES

The Arts Council will continue to support readings, festivals, talks, and other literary events where such support is appropriate and indispensable. We recognise that these events are now more widely spread across the province and we hope to ensure that this exciting diversification continues. At the same time, we will stress the importance of building an audience - and hence increasing participation over time - rather than concentrating resources on events which have a more transient effect. The role of Writers-in-Residence/Writers-in-the-Community, and of literary centres which succeed in establishing a clear policy or programme, will be crucial. We also recommend that writers and speakers from outside Northern Ireland should, if possible and desirable, visit more than one venue. This is another area where existing co-operation, not only across the province or with the Arts Councils in Great Britain, but with bodies in the Republic such as Poetry Ireland, will continue to be developed. We also intend to examine the provision of venues suitable for readings and other kinds of literary performance, and the extent to which arts centres cater for literature in their programming. In this connection, it may be appropriate to think about more varied kinds of literary event, such as links between poetry readings and music, events that emphasise a variety of oral traditions (speech as-literature and literature-as-speech), writers reading from works other than their own. In addition, we believe that events which encourage critical debate, reflection, and awareness of literary traditions also make a significant contribution.

Even if they are keen readers, people are often put off literary events due to a perception that such events are addressed to an elite. Much depends on how and where such events are mounted and promoted - more informal set-ups often appear more welcoming. We will make every effort to encourage a higher profile in the local media for contemporary writing, as for the other arts: radio and TV arts programmes often speak with the deadly self-consciousness of a beleaguered ghetto. The Arts Council is also interested in finding new ways of representing literature in daily life. We will establish partnerships to develop poetry-in-public projects. The nature of literary expression makes it especially appropriate that we should maintain and develop the Arts Council's partnerships with a wide range of other bodies, and that we should foster links between literature and other forms of artistic and cultural activity. The existing partnerships and links that we particularly hope to explore include those with the Cultural Traditions arm of the Community Relations Council; the WEA and adult education in general; the British Council; community arts and local studies groups; schools and universities. We will sustain and enhance, if possible, the Writers in Schools scheme.

8.7 INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Writing by people from Northern Ireland has achieved an international presence. In addition to its currency in the English-speaking world, it has been translated into such languages as French, German, Polish, Swedish and Italian: the Arts Council will be open to involvement in new schemes for mutual translation. Northern Irish writers have been invited all over the world. In turn, writers and intellectuals from abroad contribute to the literary community here, in that their visits, whether to literary festivals or otherwise, constitute an antidote to introversion and provinciality. There has also been considerable interchange with writers and literary activity elsewhere in these islands. Northern Ireland can offer a special focus on literary issues in the archipelago. At the same time, there is scope for the Arts Council to develop its

contribution to all this traffic. Thus we intend to seek closer liaison with the British Council over the import/export of writers and the representation of Northern Irish writing abroad. For instance, it might be possible to initiate a Visiting Writer scheme, whereby a distinguished writer would spend a longer period of time here, and a range of activities would be organised around the visit. We would favour the organisation of an International Writers' Conference here. Thus our approach to the funding of literature will take full account of the new horizons that writers have helped to open up, both inside and outside Northern Ireland.

Chapter Nine: TRADITIONAL ARTS

PRIORITIES

To promote the traditional arts in Northern Ireland as a shared tradition which is the confluence of many strands - Irish, Scottish, English and, further, European and American.

To support local classes, workshops, folk clubs and festivals engaged in the promotion of traditional music and dance.

To encourage a wide range of venues, including heritage centres, to promote traditional arts events.

To promote, in partnership with local councils, traditional arts groups, the museums and other agencies, the collection, preservation and publication of field work.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The traditional arts may be said to comprise singing in Irish, English, Hiberno-English and Ulster Scots; storytelling in these linguistic formations; music, which incorporates Gaelic, Scottish and English traditions; dance, whether Irish, Scottish or drawing upon other influences; theatre, from mumming to morris to other forms of folk theatre; vernacular architecture and crafts, from stone-built cottages to weaving and toymaking; and a massive and amorphous body of folk-custom and belief.

As many of the arts develop increasingly technologised methods and techniques of expression and communication in the years before the new millennium, we believe that it has become even more crucial to cherish and nurture traditional forms of cultural expression particularly in those societies and communities, such as Northern Ireland, where the traditional arts have survived and where they continue to flourish.

The traditional arts are in danger of being viewed as less sophisticated forms of human expression than the so-called higher arts-forms, but it is our belief that the traditional arts in Ireland represent a highly sophisticated cultural achievement all the more impressive for being so widely dispersed across the whole community. Also prevalent is an unexamined and inaccurate prejudice which sees the traditional arts as belonging almost exclusively to one side of the community in Northern Ireland, when in fact they have been a shared resource and source of pleasure for hundreds of years. The Arts Council wishes to stress and support wherever possible this shared inheritance.

There is a danger of thinking of our traditional arts as part of a heritage industry, quaint survivals to be viewed with a mixture of curiosity and sentiment, when in fact these arts are among our most vital and contemporaneous. Internationally, for example, Irish traditional music is seen as very much of the here-and-now, and traditional players have long since found a place in the enthusiasm for world-wide indigenous musics that is a significant part of the culture of young people.

9.2 HOME AND AWAY

We are fortunate in Ireland and in Northern Ireland in being a part of Europe which, for all kinds of historical and geographical reasons, preserves a substantial part of a traditional and folk culture hugely impressive in its density, range, and, most important, quality. Northern Ireland has a substantial share in this island heritage which is further enriched and diversified by the interanimation of Gaelic, Scottish, and English languages and cultures over many centuries. There is a case for saying that the cultures of these islands reveal themselves in their closest and therefore most intense interrelation in the north of Ireland, and that this cultural field of interanimation is the underlay beneath much of the literary, theatrical, and musical achievements of the past twenty-five years.

These achievements are, it may be said, earthed in Northern Ireland. The traditional arts, in our view, permeate many aspects of the cultural life of the province, whether linguistic, musical, theatrical, or visual and this gives our cultural expression a geo-poetic energy. Northern Ireland took a lead in the development of traditional arts by the appointment of an officer with that designated function, and we would wish to maintain and enhance that commitment in order that the widest involvement of the community be sustained.

9.3 OBJECTIVE

We further believe that the contacts with local communities and activities which have been carefully nurtured over the years should be maintained and enhanced, and to this end local authorities should be encouraged to develop funding partnerships with local groups in order to promote the excellence and expertise of their traditions. The part played in this broad community action by Cultural Traditions funding has been helpful. Our principal objective in traditional arts is to help create opportunities for the increased flourishing of traditional arts activities in the diverse communities of Northern Ireland, both town and country. One of the related areas of strategic focus will be to encourage a wide range of venues, including heritage centres, to promote traditional arts events.

9.4 TRADITIONAL DANCE

There has recently been a revival of traditional dance of all types, particularly noticeable in set dancing where young people contribute to its regeneration by organising workshops. Set dancing crosses the cultural divide, involves all age groups (though young people are in the majority) and promotes traditional music by using live musicians.

Set dancing has enjoyed a dramatic upsurge in popularity in recent years and has led to a revival of associated forms of traditional dance such as the step dancing of Fermanagh and Tyrone. The Arts Council has assisted its development by supporting both research programmes and Set Dance Societies and will continue to do so. The schools of Irish dancing promote dance which is formal and regulated and is integrally connected with competition. It is performed mostly by young people, encouraged by their parents, whose payment of fees ensures that the activity is largely self-financing. The Council will support excellence in this field, where possible.

9.5 DEVELOPMENT

A key element in our nurturing and cherishing of traditional arts is the activity of collecting, preserving and disseminating the substantial inheritance of a great oral and folk culture, which is still evolving and growing. Collecting and preserving are activities therefore which are vital, in that they contribute to the continuing exfoliation of our culture. We wish to promote, in partnership with local councils, Cultural Traditions, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, universities and other bodies, the collection, preservation and publication or reproduction of the results of these researches and fieldwork. We will, in partnership with others, seek to initiate projects in these areas by advising interested bodies on the nature, scale, and feasibility of their proposals and undertakings, and by providing seed-funding. We will target specific areas or activities for development, whether in storytelling, music, dance, visual aspects or vernacular architecture; and we will develop joint North/South initiatives.

An example of such a project would be the establishment of folklore scholarships, whereby one or more young people each year could be apprenticed to a traditional Gaelic storyteller to be trained into the complex linguistic and memory skills involved. There are perhaps no more than six master storytellers still alive on the island; if this initiative is not taken their art will die with them.

This part of the world enjoys a proud tradition of rhetoric and oratory in field and marketplace, as well as assembly, court and church. We acknowledge a tradition not normally thought of in an arts context.

9.6 GAELIC CULTURE

It will be evident that a crucial factor in our conception of the traditional arts is the Gaelic language. However, we would stress that the Irish language is not a 'traditional art'; it is a language of great antiquity and complexity and the repository of much of the traditional lore of Northern Ireland. The province stands at an interface between the ancient Gaelic culture of the north-west of Ireland in Donegal and the vibrant cultural networks of Scottish Gaelic. Specific developments should be planned for a number of centres to launch a consciousness-raising programme which will lead to greater understanding of ancient Celtic civilisation and deeper appreciation of its products whether in poetry, saga, sacred writings, archaeology, architecture, topographical and place-name lore or music.

9.7 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Traditional arts are by their nature diverse and multi-cultural. We would welcome applications from multi-cultural bodies from communities in Northern Ireland which would seek to express the cultural diversity and enhance the manifold richness of the cultural life in the province.

We recognise that cultural activity in the traditional arts, while being expressive of the communities whence it arises, knows no boundaries; it crosses fault-lines, by emotional involvement, aesthetic experience, and the individual and communal liberation artistic excellence enacts. In practical terms, we would wish to implement this strategic overview by continuing to encourage touring, across the province, in Ireland as a whole, and internationally.

Chapter Ten: COMMUNITY ARTS

PRIORITIES

To promote and assist the development of innovative high quality community arts throughout Northern Ireland and not only in urban areas previously designated.

To develop integrated projects involving new alliances within communities and new funding partnerships.

To promote high quality training and sound administrative practices with appropriate bodies.

10.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

'Community' is a slippery and somewhat artificial term and it is important to recognise that 'communities' cannot be confined (and ghettoised) within the neat boundaries of streets or townlands or district council areas. Communities grow and change and sometimes disappear altogether, and their development is, therefore, a complex matter that must have its dynamic among particular groups. Development cannot be imposed from outside. Community development has as its goal the construction of a long-term process by which people living in a particular locale, or sharing a common focus as a community of interest, overcome economic, social and cultural disadvantages.

Community development is not new. Local people have always organised events, worked to improve their conditions, and participated in cultural activities, but the expertise that exists is not always valued either by local people or by 'outsiders'. In the last twenty years or so, the potential of this local expertise has begun to be realised and supported. More, however, needs to be done to recognise and back this work.

The main characteristic of community development is its emphasis on process; its wisdom lies in recognising that long-term problems cannot be solved by short-term solutions. This process is activated by education and training, by nurturing confidence and skills through co-operative self-help.

10.2 COMMUNITY ARTS

Community arts can play a valuable role in the process of community development. As the first stage, well-designed community arts can encourage people to resurrect their imaginations; to make ideas, to fashion words, or music or materials; in short, to become both critical and creative. As such, community arts have much to teach the wider society.

We are living in a world which is moving away from mechanical and automatic production where the individual and the community are mere extensions of the machine, to a world in which the ability to think creatively and innovatively will be the measure of value. Community arts can bring us forward into a richer vision of the creating human mind.

10.3 COMMUNITY ARTS - STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

We pay tribute to the pioneering work which has been done throughout the field of community arts by arts workers and communities at local level to raise standards throughout Northern Ireland.

We congratulate also those local authorities, voluntary agencies, statutory bodies at regional level, educational institutions and businesses which have championed community arts.

However, it must be acknowledged that many communities are not yet aware of the potential of community arts in contributing to the creative, social and economic strength of their own areas. And there are communities who still have had no experience at all of community arts.

It is of the first importance, therefore, that the Arts Council of Northern Ireland encourage, promote and assist the development of innovative highquality community arts throughout Northern Ireland and not only in urban areas previously designated.

10.4 Recognising that a number of first-class projects have demonstrated the artistic credibility of innovative, non-traditional approaches both in aesthetic terms and in the process by which such arts are generated, we intend to foster the creative as well as the social standard in community arts.

We, therefore, strongly recommend that funders and policy makers at local and regional level take a more pro-active approach to backing the largely voluntary commitment invested by local communities. We recommend that they direct resources in a co-ordinated and imaginative way to offer realistic support to high calibre work being done in rejuvenating communities at local level, especially among the most badly disadvantaged.

10.5 We recommend that a thorough survey of community arts be carried out at local authority level, involving participation from all local bodies. The survey would determine local needs, give local people the lead in thinking of activities they would like to get involved with, and, perhaps most importantly of all, register the often latent local talent that exists in every community. It should be borne in mind that many people who are gifted have little confidence about 'pushing themselves forward'. It is crucial that people are encouraged to participate.

10.6 Given that the natural base of community arts is at local level or involving people sharing a common focus (e.g. disabled people, rural dwellers), we would urge the building of participative strategies to conduct the process of community arts. It is crucial that groups come together naturally, rather than being forced into allegiances by 'experts'. Arts professionals can assist enormously, working in close partnership with communities. We would encourage greater co-operation and 'networking' between professional arts workers and amateur practitioners.

10.7 Community arts have the capacity to involve a very wide range of alliances across a particular community, between communities and between local and regional levels. We will encourage and support the forging of practical links and collective, integrated ways of working towards the creative development of communities through their own arts.

10.8 We would encourage a more imaginative and integrated channelling of human and financial resources at both local and regional level. We would endorse, especially, strategies and projects which draw together agencies and bodies not previously involved in arts, recognising that there is a reservoir of expertise and untapped experience which could open exciting new and worthwhile landscapes within community arts. Examples of these are the work of Derry City Council's outreach programme in involving the Health Boards at local level to co-design and help fund, with Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust, an imaginative community arts project based on women and health; the ingenious and well planned use of the FÁS training and employment scheme in Galway as a way of engaging unemployed people directly in civic arts work for which they can earn a wage (MACNAS); or the linking together of rural arts and rural development in some of the Rural Parish Councils in England. All these paradigms illustrate the reciprocal benefits of creating new partnerships through community arts.

10.9 Community arts can only really grow to their full creative, social and economic potential through sustained commitment and support and planning. They depend fundamentally upon the building up of a participative learning process which brings lasting results, if given time. Given the central importance of education, training and the sharing of skills, we recommend that greater local and regional resources are pooled in an integrated, locally-based investment in equipping communities for long-term processes of development.

10.10 We advocate the strengthening of good community development practice in the delivery of community arts training, education, project planning and marketing, to ensure that local people can participate fully in all aspects of community arts from training and teaching of specific arts skills to developing confidence and expertise in designing and organising and promoting co-ordinated programmes.

10.11 We recognise and commend the critical role played by artists and arts workers of high calibre in stimulating community arts activities. Those workers have often demonstrated great skill in drawing out the capacity of those who have not had the opportunity to work at their own creativity and learn new skills and a deeper understanding of the arts. As funding permits, we will extend the Artist in the Community Scheme to draw more fully upon the often unacknowledged base of artistic and organisational talent that is present in local communities. We would encourage local bodies to play their part in supporting their own artists and arts workers, as a means of enriching their own particular communities.

10.12 We will continue to promote good practice projects which demonstrate high artistic standards, innovative approaches and good planning. We advocate that greater attention be paid to documenting and publicising such projects in order that their

example can be adapted by other groups and to create a practical resource of expertise and imaginative models for the benefit of all those involved in community arts.

10.13 Recognising the huge voluntary commitment to community arts in Northern Ireland, we recommend that activities and programmes be created which can generate paid recompense to arts workers, and we would support, where possible, the planning of sustained community arts programmes which offer training and job opportunities to the unemployed.

10.14 We take note of two recent developments. The CAF was established in 1994 and could act as an umbrella body encouraging co-operation and as a potential resource for training, expertise and technical assistance for community arts throughout Northern Ireland. The Comedia Report was published in August 1995. It is currently out to consultation.

Chapter Eleven: DANCE

PRIORITIES

To develop a plan for dance in Northern Ireland, in partnership with the Sports Council and other interested bodies, with particular emphasis on the establishment of a dance centre.

To support tours of visiting classical and contemporary dance companies.

To expand training opportunities for dance.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The last number of years have seen rapid growth and remarkable diversity in dance activities in Northern Ireland. More than ever, there are opportunities for people to attend performances by visiting companies, to take classes in ballet and contemporary dance and to participate in social, folk, country and traditional dance forms. A network of Ulster Youth Dance centres has been set up in partnership with local authorities and dance now has an established place in the school curriculum. Large-scale community dance events have demonstrated the potential of dance as a liberating and creative force and as a means of developing cultural identity and group interaction. The very diversity of the dance forms currently being practiced assists these processes and makes a vital contribution to the healthy emergence of a dance community.

DANCE FORMS

BALLET

It is clear that a small community like Northern Ireland does not have the resources to support or sustain a professional ballet company. However, popular programmes of well-presented classical works are much appreciated by audiences and the Council will help to secure visits by internationally-acclaimed companies. The Council will also seek to extend the repertoire by encouraging performances by large-scale modern ballet companies whose programmes include 20th-century works.

Ballet classes take place regularly across the province. They are privately organised, are self-financing and serve as an initial training ground for young Northern Ireland ballet dancers, some of whom subsequently become members of major European companies. The young dancers come together at the Northern Ireland Summer Ballet School which is grant aided by the Arts Council. Developments such as the Teacher Link Day organised in the province by the Royal Ballet School will also receive support.

11.3 CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Opportunities exist for those who wish to express themselves creatively through contemporary dance. Such people need guidance from experienced dance specialists who can draw on ideas and styles in contemporary work to enable dancers to give form to their thoughts and feelings in dance composition.

The Youth Dance leaders are part-time and there remains a shortage of trained dance specialists and choreographers available to work in the community. Consequently, guest choreographers have been invited to mount large community dance events with groups of adults and young people in Derry, Enniskillen and Belfast.

The provision of a body of trained dance specialists is fundamental to the development of contemporary dance. The Council will favour a training and support scheme for tutors and choreographers. This will include consultation about training needs; a skills enhancement programme; and special funding for selected dance leaders to take on particular projects. To complement this, professional choreographers will be engaged to work towards performances with locally-based trained dancers and to devise and lead community dance projects. (Traditional Dance is discussed in Chapter Nine.)

11.4 ACCESS TO DANCE - DANCE IN EDUCATION

Since the introduction of the National Curriculum, dance has been a compulsory subject within physical education and has received support from the Creative and Expressive Studies Advisers of the Education and Library Boards. These changes have strengthened the role of dance in schools but there is an urgent need for more teachers to undergo training so that the initiative may not be lost and also to ensure that the work can develop. Close co-operation with the Sports Council is also envisaged to promote this area of work. The Arts Council, in co-operation with the Education and Library Boards, engages visiting companies to take workshops in schools and organises short and long residencies which culminate in the presentation of dance events.

The cost of training for dance is problematic as most of the leading institutions are privately administered and therefore must charge full economic rates. Area Boards grants, where available, are taken from the 'discretionary pool' and are not sufficient to meet the costs. Thus talented young dancers are prevented from taking up places at the best training schools. The Council will consult with the Department of Education and the Area Boards about this immediate problem. Younger children, however, are catered for through the Talented Child Scheme administered by the Council on behalf of DENI. Northern Ireland children have benefited from this scheme and the Council will advocate for its continuation.

11.5 DANCE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

There is already a demand for dance for those with learning disabilities in Northern Ireland. A number of recent projects have demonstrated what can be achieved and have sharpened awareness of the potential for the involvement of disabled people.

It is important that disabled groups be included as an integral part of the dance culture in the wider community. This will encourage people with disabilities to visit arts and entertainment centres, to take their place as audience members, and to present their own dance creations as part of a dance programme. To support these initiatives the Arts Council will liaise with groups and arts organisations such as Open Arts and ArtsCare.

The Council will also work closely with these organisations to help effect a gradual spread of provision by offering training opportunities for this work. The training

programme should include staff and management in the 'caring professions' whose understanding and support are crucial for the proper organisation of and practical back-up for the projects.

11.6 DANCE SPACES

The development of dance in Northern Ireland is frustrated by the lack of adequate spaces. Dance needs spaces with proper dance floors for dancers to train, experiment, create, rehearse and perform. The shortage of performance facilities severely restricts the number of areas which can host visiting dance companies. The Arts Council will undertake an up-to-date audit of dance spaces in the province and investigate the scope for improvement.

11.7 DANCETIME

Dancetime, the Spring Festival of Dance 1994, was organised and funded by the Arts Council in association with local authorities. The aims were: to co-ordinate a range of dance workshops, events and programmes across the province; to encourage co-production and partnership-funding; to build confidence and raise the profile of dance and to draw together into a coherent movement those who form the dance community. The Council will consult with the dance community and other interested bodies to promote the constructive development of future programmes.

11.8 INFRASTRUCTURE

In a few years' time, a pool of trained dance talent will be available in Northern Ireland. The dance community may then expect to take its proper place alongside other art forms by establishing a small-scale contemporary dance company of a standard which will allow the company to perform both locally and internationally. Such a company will only be viable if the support from district councils and from local audiences has developed significantly.

In addition, when the developments outlined above come to fruition, there will be an active network of dance amateurs working with local dance groups to produce new performance pieces.

The Arts Council recognises the need for an infrastructure to underpin these developments and will seek:

- (i) the consolidation and development of arrangements for collaboration and joint funding of dance projects with local authorities, the Education and Library Boards and other funding bodies, such as the Sports Council.
- (ii) co-operation with 'presenting' theatre and arts centre managements to ensure that the best international companies are seen across the province;
- (iii) the co-ordination of information and support services. At present there is no central meeting point for dancers and their audience where dance magazines, books and videotape documentation on dance performances might be available. The establishment of one or more dance centres would remedy this situation. A dance centre could be a separate building, perhaps part of our architectural heritage, or it could be a lead aspect of a multi-purpose arts centre. It could act as a resource centre

and could provide a point of contact with the network of dance organisations elsewhere to encourage exchange of ideas, performances and skills. A central news-sheet offering information and advice could link both groups, amateurs and centres.

The Arts Council will consult with the dance community and with district councils to ascertain the most effective way of providing such services.

The Arts in Society

Education and Youth

Training

Equal Opportunities

Cultural Traditions

Rural and Urban Arts

The Voluntary Arts

Arts in Prisons

Chapter Twelve: EDUCATION AND YOUTH

PRIORITIES

To facilitate people under twenty-five, outside the formal education system, to participate in and attend arts activities.

To meet regularly with the Creative and Expressive Studies Advisers and others, to create new initiatives and schemes within the formal education system.

To introduce more support projects for young people with special educational needs, including those with disabilities.

To sustain the Young Arts Programme in primary and secondary schools.

To co-operate with service providers to secure the place of the arts in the informal education system, to ensure that as many people as possible can develop their own creativity.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The law places the arts within the curriculum by requiring that Creative and Expressive Studies (Art, Music, Drama and Physical Education) are taught in schools. The position of dance within PE has been the subject of continuing debate. The Arts Council will play a full part in ensuring that this important art form continues to be well served and will work with others, including the Sports Council, to achieve this end. There is a widespread view that the curriculum is too prescriptive. National testing of pupils at nine, eleven, fourteen and sixteen threatens to reduce the amount of time available to devote to other activities. In both primary and secondary schools, the arts should be taught as part of a balanced curriculum and in a way that promotes rounded intellectual growth without diminishing serious artistic development. The threat is perhaps most apparent in the attainment targets for Key Stage 4 (fourteen-sixteen years).

At the heart of this section of the Strategy lies the belief that education is a creative process capable of releasing potential at every age of life. In each realm of the arts, education enables people to reach beyond their immediate experience, to widen opportunities and extend access.

This process is not confined to the classroom though this plays an important part. Through the influence of education, particularly the years of compulsory schooling, the groundwork can be done that may build an informed audience for the future.

12.2 SCHOOLS, FORMAL EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The introduction of a national curriculum was the most fundamental change to affect schools in the post-war years. Since the Education Reform Order took effect, the pace of change has been developing faster than our ability to manage it. Only now are the implications for the arts being fully understood.

12.3 YOUNG ARTS PROGRAMME

The Arts Council's Young Arts Programme promotes a range of arts events and workshops for schools. Its aim is to offer access to creative artists and performers to enrich the quality of the classroom experience. This service is provided at a rate below its true economic cost with schools making a contribution. A revised system of charging was introduced in the wake of changes in the law which gave schools control of their own budgets.

Primary schools are thus customers of the Arts Council, choosing from a menu of services as their funding permits. In the first four years since its introduction, schools have given a positive assessment of the scheme and value what the Arts Council has on offer. Of immediate concern are the practical limitations imposed on the Council by a shortage of staff and resources. Currently demand for the scheme exceeds the Arts Council's ability to supply by a factor of three. We will sustain the Young Arts Programme and, if resources allow, extend it.

Different arrangements operate in the secondary sector where the timetable is less flexible. Here the co-operation of the five Area Boards has helped seed some large-scale schemes that often involve several schools in an area.

12.4 FINANCIAL DELEGATION (LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS)

Schools have to put local management into practice but, while they are free to determine their own spending priorities (beyond the limits of what is compulsory), they have to assign a value to arts activities within a range of competing demands.

In some schools, the budget may be so stretched it is not possible to take advantage of arts schemes. Initiatives such as theatre-in-education, artists' residencies and artists visits to schools may be left to 'wither on the vine' if there is no funding available from central sources. The Arts Council will set up a monitoring system to measure the impact of these changes.

12.5 TEACHER TRAINING

Teachers will need to develop skills and knowledge in order to deliver the national curriculum to the high standards expected. We will seek to establish, at each appropriate stage, partnerships with the five main institutions responsible for initial teacher training (ITT) in order to raise awareness of the value of the artist as an educational resource and the contribution the arts can make to a young person's education.

The Arts Council will assist with information and advice and, for experienced teachers, will act as a catalyst between schools and the artistic community by helping the subject advisers and assisting with the production of appropriate curriculum materials for in-service training.

12.6 CHARGING

Many schools charge parents for optional school activities. Official guidelines define the activities that schools can and cannot charge to parents. However, while the basic principle is clear - the essentials are free - there are some exceptions to the rule. Schools can charge for teaching pupils to play a musical instrument. The peripatetic

service of the Area Board provides this tuition, but not for voice or piano. We are concerned about this bias and for the future of the music service which is threatened under the new system of charging.

The rules about charging are widely interpreted to include school parties visiting theatres, galleries and museums when the trip is not part of the basics. When similar measures were introduced in England, theatres reported significantly reduced bookings from schools for matinee performances. If this were to happen here it could pose an unintended threat to arts organisations. To date there is little statistical evidence of the impact of these changes in Northern Ireland but the Arts Council will monitor the situation.

12.7 CO-ORDINATION

Artists and arts organisations have been working purposefully in our schools, supporting teachers and extending the classroom experience. However, it is clear that the Arts Council alone cannot provide a dedicated schools support service and we will work with others in the system who can.

Seminars and consultations could be organised to establish links and to ensure effective communication between the Arts Council, the Education and Library Boards, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the Northern Ireland Film Council and, where an education scheme impacts on the wider community, with the district councils. There are a number of benefits that could emerge from a joint approach. They include: devising more support projects for children with special educational needs; diversifying the range of music provision to include more jazz projects; offering more opportunities to participate in programmes developed under Education through Mutual Understanding and Cultural Traditions; developing a more extensive range of media studies projects and recommending new schemes where arts provision is weak.

The Arts Council will meet with the CCEA, the Creative and Expressive Studies Advisers of Education and Library Boards and the Northern Ireland Film Council, to discuss programming issues and other related concerns, including the prominence of Northern Irish artists on the Creative Arts Curriculum.

12.8 NEW INITIATIVES

All children encounter the arts at school. However, the quality of experience can be much more rewarding with input from artists and performers, or through direct participation in the creative process. We will consolidate earlier successes and will introduce new schemes and projects, particularly where the pressures of external examination tend to marginalise the arts.

We also favour projects that encourage the young to experience the arts out of school, through after-school schemes and through weekend and summer courses.

The Arts Council will work closely with the Youth Council and other organisations in considering how to foster the creativity of and deliver the arts to young people within the target age range of five to twenty-five.

We will enter into discussions with the Youth Council and others with a view to introducing a Young Arts Card to encourage active interest in arts events. In addition to special events, the cardholder scheme could operate on the basis of negotiated discounts at recognised venues and will be linked to an information service, targeted at the young, with news about live arts events.

12.9 INFORMAL AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

This is a substantial field of arts activity that brings enrichment and pleasure to a great many people. The principal service providers include: the Workers' Educational Association, the continuing education departments of the province's two universities, the Open University, colleges of further education, local authorities, arts centres, community groups, the Youth Council for Northern Ireland, voluntary and independent bodies. Many of these organisations have succeeded in extending public participation in the arts and in providing new opportunities. The Arts Council recognises the work of a range of agencies which promote the arts among the groups included in the 'new constituency', and the need to develop these services, particularly in areas of greatest social and economic disadvantage.

The Arts Council will actively seek ways of encouraging opportunities in the participative arts and engaging the interest of as many people as possible in developing their own creativity

Chapter Thirteen: TRAINING

PRIORITIES

To work with all employing organisations in the arts towards improving their training, including the provision of modular courses.

To support the establishment of an Academy for the Performing Arts.

To provide training for arts administrators supported by European Union funding.

To appoint an officer with dedicated responsibility for training.

13.1 NEW STANDARDS IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The idea of a major change in training provision for the arts has been the subject of vigorous debate. In many minds there is a resistance to change. Vocational courses have traditionally been taught by further education colleges. Universities and similar bodies prepare their students through courses with an academic focus. Up to now there have been few other alternatives.

Opinion is divided about the most appropriate preparation for a career in the arts. There are those who feel that, because human creativity is diverse and irreducible, it is impossible to define the relevant skills for success at the highest level. They are opposed to training systems based on rigid standards and argue that it is really only possible to fix limits to (and assess) foundation skills.

Despite these misgivings, possibly the greatest threat facing the work force today is that young people are not properly prepared for the demands of their vocation and are not able to compete because our standards are trailing behind those of our partners in Europe.

Recently, there have been moves that could change the face of training by providing an alternative to the academic route. This shift in emphasis is supported by employers with the backing of government, which is introducing the new system of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). It is likely that NVQs will become common currency, replacing the array of current qualifications offered by different bodies.

If the arts sector is to play an effective role in the economy, it will need to be strengthened through higher levels of investment in training. We will support moves to develop and sustain employment prospects within the sector and to ensure its continued success through high-quality training provision.

There is a widely-held view that the Arts Council should take the lead in formulating a strategy for training in the arts and arts administration. In this respect, we will work closely with the Arts and Entertainment Training Council (the Industry Lead Body) and others to develop appropriate skills-based occupational standards and training.

At the level of technical and vocational training, the Arts Council can play a useful role by contributing to national programmes for the sector. These measures might include: providing placements for particular skills; developing training networks; encouraging arts organisations and other employers in the sector to implement training strategies.

13.2 SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN THE ARTS

Our two universities are meeting many of the initial training needs of the province's creative artists through fully prescribed academic courses. The visual arts, the verbal arts and the academic aspects of music have been well served; the performing arts, particularly drama and dance, less so. However, while the higher education system makes a major contribution, of immediate concern are the standards and delivery arrangements applying to the areas of music, performing arts, visual arts, creative writing and arts management.

The Arts Council strongly supports the establishment of an Academy for the Performing Arts in Northern Ireland, whether by attracting an established institution to Belfast or by setting up a new body in co-operation with the universities or colleges as envisaged in the Deane Report.

13.3 NEW INITIATIVES

There are urgent, supportable needs, where the Arts Council could offer short modular courses itself. There is a continuing need for training provision for arts administrators in the province. We welcome the extension of the Business in the Arts Scheme to Northern Ireland. The Arts Council will set objectives and targets to meet these training needs in consort with the local authorities and others. High quality training projects for arts officers and others in the heritage and cultural sector have been led by the Arts Council with European Union funding. These have provided a useful example of how training can broaden experience and expertise.

Amongst visual artists, community arts and craft workers, there is a need to provide a grounding in business management skills, especially amongst those returning to work. The Arts Council will, where possible, promote training initiatives which provide appropriate programmes to achieve these objectives.

To ensure that these objectives are met, the Arts Council will appoint an officer with specific responsibility for training to co-operate with other interested parties.

The cultural sector collectively makes a tangible contribution to the economy through directly attributable earnings and related spending. The rising tide of interest in this field highlights the need for further investment in training. We will seek to find additional funding from the European Union and other sources.

Chapter Fourteen: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

PRIORITIES

To implement equality legislation and codes of practice to ensure that procedures and policies are fair and lawful within the Arts Council and to encourage this actively within the client/partner network.

To address the issue of a perceived cultural marginalisation of women within the arts as working artists and administrators.

To increase access to the arts for disabled people.

To encourage representation of women and disabled people on boards of management of arts organisations.

To support particularly equality of opportunity in training and employment for disabled people.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The new Arts Council is committed to equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, gender, marital status, disability, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. We shall implement equality legislation and codes of practice to ensure that procedures and policies are fair and lawful within the Arts Council and shall actively encourage this within the client/partner network. We particularly support equality of opportunity in training and employment for disabled people. Furthermore, this strategy expressly addresses the vital issues of women in the arts and arts and disability.

14.2 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

The position of women in the arts reflects the position of women in society as a whole. A survey by the Arts Council of Great Britain showed that women represent 50-70% of audiences across the range of arts events, but it is perceived that the active role of women in the arts has yet to be fully realised. Despite a strong traditional orientation in women's education towards the fine arts and humanities, women are seriously under-represented at a number of levels in the arts sector, primarily in employment as working artists, administrators or representatives on boards of management of arts bodies and organisations. The Council does not wish to create or accentuate the 'ghettoisation' of women, but will address the issue of a perceived cultural marginalisation of women within the arts.

14.3 INITIATIVES

A number of initiatives have already been undertaken by the Council to ensure equality of opportunity relating to gender, not least in the 40% representation of women within the new board. In 1993, the Council appointed four delegates to attend the Arts Council of Great Britain's conference, 'Women in the Arts: Notions of Equality'. At staff level, contacts within this network have been maintained. The Council accessed funding from the European Union's New Opportunities for Women programme to improve the employment opportunities of women and to provide theoretical and

practical training in the technical and administrative areas of visual arts, theatre, music and community drama. This programme ran until the end of 1994 and was closely monitored by the European Union as a potential model for other European regions. An ad hoc committee which represented artists, trainers, administrators and board members managed the programme and advised the Council on wider issues relating to women in the arts. The Council has also recently introduced specialist seminars for staff and board members to promote equal opportunities awareness.

14.4 THE FUTURE

The Arts Council will:

Operate all employment practices in accordance with its detailed Equal Opportunities Policy and will encourage client/partners to do the same.

Ensure incorporation of issues relating to gender and equal opportunities into market research surveys, performance indicators and monitoring procedures.

Pay attention to the gender breakdown of representation on boards of management of all arts organisations.

Identify factors which contribute towards vertical and horizontal segregation, draw up recommendations which address these and implement as appropriate.

Pursue funding partnerships within European programmes and with other bodies to promote women in the arts in Northern Ireland.

14.5 ARTS AND DISABILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The Arts Council has undertaken much work recently in the field of disabilities, including promotion of the Arts and Disabilities Forum. The first Arts and Disabilities Conference in Northern Ireland was held in May 1994. Support has been given to a number of arts and disabilities organisations, in particular Open Arts, the Drake Research Project and Share Music. The budget allocated for projects involving people with disabilities has been increased. We also commend the work of ArtsCare in hospitals. We note the following areas which are of major concern in the field of arts and disabilities and feel that they should be addressed in the ways recommended.

14.6 REPRESENTATION

Disabled people should be represented on the boards of arts and disabilities organisations. Ideally they should be in the majority, but we recognise the difficulty of this at present. Nevertheless, it is something to strive towards. The newly established Forum should attempt to increase the number of disabled people represented on it. Realistic ways of involving people with learning disabilities in the consultation process should be sought.

Mainstream arts organisations should also be encouraged to involve disabled people in their strategy and planning. At present, disability organisations rather than individuals should be consulted on all aspects of the work, not just physical access.

14. 7 ACCESS

Access involves more than physical access, but this is of prime importance and all clients should be encouraged to place it high on their list of priorities. Furthermore, any new arts venues must be physically accessible to all disabled people. Details of the accessibility of a building should be published in promotional material. In order to encourage the increased employment of disabled people in the arts, every area of a building should, if possible, be accessible. We commend the achievements of ADAPT in improving access to arts venues.

Access also implies knowledge and it is preferable that promotional material be supplied in an accessible form, for example in large print, on tape, and on talking newspapers. Disability organisations should be kept informed of arts events. To have true access, an understanding of the event is required. This entails provision of signed performances for deaf people and audio-described performances for blind people. In pursuit of this aim, this document is available on audio tape.

14.8 TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Disabled people are underemployed in the arts and each organisation which receives funding from the Arts Council will be urged to pursue an equal opportunities policy with disabled people. Professional training is not easy for disabled people because insufficient thought is given to overcoming practical details and because of attitudinal difficulties. Encouragement and advice should be given to overcome these barriers and support given to organisations who do take on a disabled employee.

14.9 EDUCATION

Children with learning disabilities are deprived of specialist music, art or drama teachers in their schools. Education and Library Boards should be prompted to provide specialist in-service training in arts activities for teachers in these schools. We welcome the work of Replay Theatre Company in this area, and feel that it is desirable to make other specific provision for special schools from time to time.

14.10 PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

The opportunity to participate in arts activities of their own choosing should be offered to disabled people. In amateur arts, disabled people are often excluded because of practical difficulties. Support should be given to overcome these and alternative provision made for participatory events. Activities which bring institutionalised groups into mainstream arts venues are particularly to be encouraged. In a disability context, we share the view that it can be inappropriate to link arts activity with therapy.

Since it is essential for disabled people to be facilitated in their arts activities by the best professionals, there is a need for training. Many artists in Northern Ireland are enthusiastically ready to undertake this work if training is provided.

14.11 DISABILITY ARTS

Disability Arts addresses the varied culture and experience of disabled people. It is a developing movement, in its infancy in Northern Ireland, and needs to be recognised, supported and nurtured by sometimes giving support to visiting groups (from over the water and the border) which provide examples of good practice. Work from this

culture should be judged by others with comparable experience and may require us to develop a new aesthetic.

Sometimes disabled people are unable to attend performances and it is recommended that, where feasible, all or part of touring performances and exhibitions be taken into residential homes.

Chapter Fifteen: CULTURAL TRADITIONS

PRIORITIES

To work in co-operation with the Community Relations Council in support of arts-related programmes.

To develop an integrated and strategic approach to Cultural Traditions arts funding.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

The Arts Council welcomes the Cultural Traditions allocation (£300,000 in 1995/96) which enables it to sustain programmes in Drama, Mumming, Set Dancing, Traditional Music in Schools and Storytelling. Government has indicated that this funding is made on the same recurring basis as other areas of expenditure. However, in changing circumstances it is kept under review and this has given rise to concern for our clients and their forward planning process.

15.2 CRITERIA

Cultural Traditions activities are required to meet all usual criteria for Arts Council funding. The Department of Education also recommends that these "contribute to the mutual understanding of cultural traditions" and that they benefit young people from the ages of five to twenty-five. It is not mandatory that every Cultural Traditions activity involve both sections of the community simultaneously. Clarification of this point may assist those companies which receive such funding to widen the scope of the work they do.

It is stressed here and in Chapter Nine of *To The Millennium* that the Arts Council does not regard the Traditional Arts as the preserve of any one section of the community, but rather as the confluence of various repertoires and stylistic traits in these islands; and, historically, they have been practiced and enjoyed by both Protestants and Catholics.

It is arguable that some - both Protestant and Catholic - perceive participation in traditional music (whether 'Irish' or 'Orange') as an act of politico-cultural assertion, but the vast majority of performers and audiences are involved out of aesthetic and social pleasure.

15.3 RELATIVE ROLES OF THE TWO COUNCILS

The Arts Council's allocation comes directly from the Department of Education. The Community Relations Council receives from the Central Community Relations Unit an allocation which is split roughly three ways between Film, Publications and 'Local Cultural Traditions'. With regard to the latter, aesthetic criteria are not a priority, and may well be absent. However, the line between the Arts Council and the Community Relations Council has tended to be blurred, with both organisations supporting similar projects, and it has been suggested that the two agencies should merge in order to facilitate the decision-making process. Careful consideration was given to these issues at a recent one-day conference held at the Arts Council, where it was agreed that both organisations should retain their integrity, but observe closer co-operation to ensure that Cultural Traditions funding is disbursed effectively.

15.4 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

The Arts Council values the additional funding provided under Cultural Traditions which strengthens arts programmes which require ongoing (and enhanced) support. We will work in co-operation with the Community Relations Council, adopting a pragmatic and integrated approach in the area of Cultural Traditions.

Chapter Sixteen: RURAL AND URBAN ARTS

PRIORITIES

To ensure the provision of a wide range of arts programming of high quality in consultation with local partners.

To implement a rural arts project in co-operation with other bodies, including the Forum for Local Government and the Arts.

To use the National Lottery Arts Fund to increase arts provision in rural areas.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

There are many people in both rural and urban areas whose contribution to the arts has not been realised or whose cultural resources have not been recognised.

Within European and national policies, some ground has been cleared with the imperative of targeting new resources into tackling the 'silence of disadvantage'. Initiatives such as Making Belfast Work and the Rural Development Programme have pioneered understanding about the complex causes and symptoms of 'accessibility' and in backing patient work established on the basis of local ownership and participation. The arts can articulate and enrich local culture. The approach should be creative, resourceful and supple. The arts can be instrumental in promoting many processes, including that of community development.

In liaison with other partners the Arts Council has already built up an important network at different levels throughout NorthEast Ireland. We also need to establish new relationships and alliances.

16.2 CO-OPERATION

The Arts Council will foster co-operation with statutory, voluntary and private sectors to help deliver an integrated policy to tackle disadvantage in both rural and urban areas. Such co-operative effort should address:

Shared transport schemes to encourage mobility.

Positive action on programming, eg 'clustered' touring (i.e. both in touring high quality indigenous events between adjacent geographical areas and in taking advantage of good resources, e.g. theatre space, exhibition space in particular areas to focus toured events).

More imaginative use of venues to encourage non-traditional arts audiences and, so far as the applications allow, the Arts Council will seek to deploy the funds at its disposal so as to help those areas with few existing arts facilities. (See also Chapter 26.)

Encouragement of an information network which links current and new channels.

The development of funding for rural arts resource centres, through the provision of equipment and advice.

We will continue the work carried out with others on a wide range of advisory and support services, including marketing, training, networking, programme planning and sponsorship to develop audiences for both urban and rural arts.

15.3 RURAL ARTS

The Arts Council will co-operate with other interest groups to promote and value community-based arts activity in a rural context. Such bodies would include: the Rural Development Council, NIVT, the Community Relations Council, the Housing Executive, district councils, the Youth Service of the Education and Library Boards, DHSS, DENI and DANI and, in particular, the Forum for Local Government and the Arts.

16.4 URBAN ARTS

In relation to urban arts, we will encourage co-operation between existing arts bodies, of which a number are urban-based (including the Community Arts Forum) and will welcome new alliances between arts and non-arts groups.

16.5 NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Arts Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in partnership with Craigavon, Dungannon and Omagh district councils, have set up a rural arts project. This will involve at different stages research, training and the development of interdisciplinary arts programmes. The project will help to provide practical models for future action.

The projects will emphasise: innovation, participation, new partnerships in design and funding and a mix of professional and non-professional skills.

16.6 WAYS FORWARD

The pattern of dispersed population in rural areas poses particular problems. Measures will be adopted to address this situation:

Artists-in-Residence schemes which employ local artists and facilitators to work on sustainable projects in liaison with local providers and involving new alliances with non-arts groups and bodies.

Developing cross-disciplinary arts tours, e.g. poetry and visual arts, storytelling and music.

A mix of amateur and professional in performance.

A mix of toured and indigenous events/products.

A more flexible approach to venue access for disabled and elderly people.

The Arts Council will encourage arts centres and festivals to include community-based outreach as part of their remit, to take advantage of cultural work undertaken in more remote areas.

Chapter Seventeen: THE VOLUNTARY ARTS

PRIORITIES

To expand and develop the provision of professional expertise for the voluntary arts.

To provide awards to encourage excellence within the voluntary arts.

To ensure, in partnership with local government, that arts centres and other professional arts venues make suitable provision for the voluntary arts through participation and performance.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

There has always been a degree of flexibility in the boundaries between the professional and the voluntary arts, nowhere more so than in Northern Ireland, where opportunities for full professional status in any of the art forms have always been limited. Indeed, in many cases the voluntary movement has provided a seed-bed for the semi-pro or professional practitioner; one has only to recall the many successful actors who first performed in a local dramatic society, the photographers who came up through camera clubs, the musicians who played first in amateur ensembles - James Galway, for instance. Clubs such as the Ulster Arts Club have, of course, a wider role in encouraging and maintaining interest in the arts. While, of course, people pursue literature and visual arts actively, two principal areas of the voluntary arts movement are music and drama.

17.2 MUSIC

Amateur music in the province far outstrips the professional in terms of numbers involved and events provided. There is a flourishing band movement - approximately 200 units inclusive of brass, military, flute, pipe and accordion, marching and otherwise. The Arts Council supports this through umbrella organisations such as the Royal Scottish Pipe Bands Association which received a 50% uplift for 1994/95. There is also an established choral tradition, although interest in this appears to be on the wane at present and needs attention. Of equal importance is the amateur musical or operatic scene, where the standard of productions is recognised as being high.

17.3 DRAMA

Similarly, anyone who attends amateur dramatic productions will be impressed by the sheer amount of energy, hard work and dedication that goes into such events, a pursuit of excellence that is an essential component of any genuine attempt to create a work of art or craft. In this field of activity, the development of community arts over the past fifteen years has given rise to an increased interweaving of professional and voluntary, the former acting as amateurs. This topic is discussed in Chapters Four and Seven. At present, the Arts Council makes a contribution to the amateur dramatic movement through two agencies: the Northern Amateur Theatre Association (NATA) and the Association of Ulster Drama Festivals (AUDF).

17.4 ADULT EDUCATION

In the past forty years, opportunities for gaining experience, education and training in the arts outside the structure of formal education have grown enormously, providing what in former times had been passed down in families from one generation to the next (a legacy of skills which still exists to some extent in the Irish traditional arts). Adult education and the voluntary arts are overlapping categories in this field, and the work of such bodies as the Workers' Educational Association, along with the evening class projects run by colleges of further education and university extra-mural schemes (particularly in literature and the visual arts) represents a base that can be built on for the future. (See also Chapter 12.)

17.5 THE FUTURE

It was in recognition of the importance of participation in the arts and concern for the future of voluntary arts in the UK that led to the formation of the Voluntary Arts Network on whose steering committee Northern Ireland is represented. The ongoing debate on that future will inform our view as we seek to provide appropriate support for those already participating in the voluntary arts and to promote increased access for others. The Arts Council has identified the need for strategic development in this important field of activity and has defined three priorities for action:

To expand and develop the present policy of providing professional input to voluntary arts activity.

To make awards in recognition of excellence in a particular field of the voluntary arts.

To ensure, in partnership with local government, that arts centres make suitable provision for the needs of amateur groups.

Chapter Eighteen: ARTS IN PRISONS

PRIORITIES

We aim to consolidate partnership and develop programme planning and continuity through representation on and co-operation with the Prison Arts Trust.

18.1 ARTS IN PRISONS

Northern Ireland's prison population numbers under 2,000 with a high proportion of inmates in the twenty-one to forty age range and a high proportion of long and life sentences.

The Northern Ireland Office provides an education and a welfare service in every prison. Since the aims of education for adults in custody are the same as those for adults in general, each Education Officer constructs a programme of activities which reflects, as far as possible, provision on the outside. The guiding principles are that adult education is part of a lifelong process and that any activity or interest which provides fresh stimulation to the individual and helps broaden horizons, is of particular value in prison. The aims of the Welfare Service are also broadly based on the personal development of the individual.

The Arts Council has, in the past, facilitated one-off events or projects in prisons and a recent collaboration with Welfare at the Maze has produced successful projects in writing and drama. We aim to consolidate partnership and develop programme planning and continuity through representation on and co-operation with the Prison Arts Trust.

We recognise particular organisational difficulties within prisons. Security clearance for an individual visitor takes an average of eight to ten weeks. Limited contact hours can be further disrupted by other priorities. Segregation in some establishments means that work must be duplicated and numbers reduced. Cost effectiveness is also reduced.

In partnership with the education and welfare departments of the Prison Arts Trust, the Arts Council, through careful planning, aims to maximise input and, in addition to participatory projects by professional artists' will, where appropriate, encourage local touring companies to include the prisons on their schedules.

The continuing incorporation of arts projects within Young Offenders' Centres will be encouraged in partnership with the Probation Service.

Chapter Nineteen: Support for the Arts

Funding the Arts

Local Government and the Arts

Broadcasting

Touring

Festivals

Arts Buildings

Museums and Libraries

The National Lottery

The Role of the Arts Council

FUNDING THE ARTS

OBJECTIVE 8

To double total revenue support for the arts in Northern Ireland by the year 2001, to raise standards and widen access and to address the current and historical underfunding of the arts here.

PRIORITIES

To achieve parity with Scotland in per capita terms in central government funding of the arts.

To publish a joint action plan of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Forum for Local Government and the Arts for stimulating cultural aspects of tourism and recreation.

To support the establishment of a central booking office for arts events in Belfast to maximise funding from box office.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

The case for public funding of the arts has been well made often in the past, most recently in *A Creative Future* (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1993). It improves the quality of life of individuals and thus of society. It prevents access to the arts being confined to a prosperous few. It helps to give employment to talented people within the community.

Any assessment, comparative, statistical or otherwise, demonstrates that the arts in general in Northern Ireland are under-funded in comparison to the rest of the UK and even more so in comparison to some other nations of the European Union. We believe this will be further illustrated by the *Economic Survey of the Arts* commissioned by government. What are the reasons for this?

Firstly, central government support for the arts has often been lower on a per capita basis than the GB average. We believe that, given our economic circumstances and geographical isolation from Britain and continental Europe, our arts funding on a per capita basis should be higher than that of Scotland and Wales. We see no justification,

other than past practice, for a lower rate of funding than Scotland and Wales which has been in fact the consistent situation. The just and realistic target at which all can properly aim is, at least, parity funding in per capita terms with our neighbour Scotland.

It should also be borne in mind that revenue funding of An Chomhairle Ealaíon (the Arts Council in Dublin) is now at a much higher per capita level than that of the Arts Council here. The considerable pressures on our revenue compared to theirs may prevent co-operation proceeding as fruitfully and expeditiously as would otherwise be the case.

Secondly, support for the arts from local government has been most uneven but, in general, it has been at a lower level than in the rest of the UK. It may be said that our councils tend to be smaller and have fewer responsibilities than such other local authorities but, since 1986, district councils have had a statutory duty to make cultural provision and a number have clearly not complied with that duty in any adequate way. We shall seek through the Forum for Local Government and the Arts and bilateral partnerships, to stimulate and encourage increased funding in this quarter.

Thirdly, Northern Ireland is an area of relative economic deprivation, an Objective One area in European terms. The average earnings in our workforce are lower than across the water and therefore less money is likely to be available for arts spending by audiences.

Fourthly, there is no significant tradition of sponsorship by wealthy individuals. This may be because such persons are much less numerous here than in, say, London or New York. It may be also because those possessed of significant wealth here have tended not to be interested in the arts to the same degree as their equivalents in some other places. However, the significant section of our population which has benefited economically despite (or because of) our communal difficulties, should be proud to contribute to arts organisations in Northern Ireland, particularly bearing in mind government tax concessions by way of gifts and covenants.

Fifthly, a number of enlightened business people and companies in Northern Ireland deserve considerable praise for their support for activities here. The Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts has played an important role in this regard and we welcome government's continued support for it. However, once more the availability of such sponsorship here is small. One reason for this is the high proportion of businesses in Northern Ireland which are controlled from elsewhere. The Northern Ireland branches, although earning considerable amounts for their parent companies, often appear to have inappropriately small sponsorship budgets. We will explore with ABSA, and other relevant bodies, the viability of establishing an Arts Trust for Northern Ireland which could seek support from multinational corporations and, indeed, individuals located elsewhere in the European Union and North America. If funds could be attracted for such purposes, they could be dispersed for the benefit of artistic activity here.

Tables

PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE (£)

Year	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	1995-96 (prov)
GB (average)	3.15	3.46	3.93	4.00	3.94	4.04
England	3.09	3.39	3.85	3.91	3.83	3.92
Scotland	3.43	3.86	4.44	4.54	4.62	4.76
Wales	3.70	3.81	4.42	4.49	4.65	4.86
*N Ireland	3.23	3.57	3.88	3.95	4.11	4.04

*Does not include Cultural Traditions funding through Arts Council of Northern Ireland: £300,000 in the current year.

PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE (IR £)

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995 (prov)
An Chomhairle Ealaíon**	2.84	2.90	3.30	3.80	4.64

**The funding responsibilities of An Chomhairle Ealaíon do not include the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland nor the RTE Concert Orchestra which together are expected to have a net cost (after other income) of IR£3.75 in the current year.

This leads on to a sixth area of funding, namely external bodies prepared to grant aid projects here in Northern Ireland. An important example is European Union funds. These may be available for major community art projects, particularly if three or more European states are involved in the project. We will seek to encourage client/partners to develop such relationships. We believe the Arts Council's European and Arts Co-operation Officers, jointly funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and An Chomhairle Ealaíon, will assist in this regard.

Arts projects can already attract funding from European sources where they have a 'heritage' or 'tourism' dimension. A long-term consequence of the Treaty of Maastricht will be the availability of funds expressly for cultural projects. We look forward to Northern Ireland attracting its share of such allocations in the future.

We are conscious that some arts organisations in Northern Ireland have been successful in attracting money from charitable trusts but believe this area could be expanded. We believe the International Fund for Ireland and the American/ Ireland fund both have significant roles to play in this sphere.

Proceeds from the National Lottery are now and will be available for the foreseeable future to be deployed on capital projects. Over a period of time this will strengthen our cultural infrastructure with the construction of new buildings and the renewal of old ones. It will not, however, be available in substitution for existing revenue commitments and such projects will of themselves create heightened revenue demands. (This is further discussed in Chapter 26.)

Bearing all these matters in mind and our aims of widening access while raising standards, the Arts Council concludes that total revenue support for the arts in Northern Ireland should be doubled by the year 2001. Such an increase could come from one or more of the funding sources described above, particularly central government, but realistically it is likely only to be achieved by an early relaxation of the National Lottery Directions to permit arts revenue expenditure. This must not be allowed to erode the principle that this funding is additional to central government support for the arts.

The existence of under-funding points to the importance of:

- (a) Advocacy of increased funding.
- (b) Co-operation and partnership between different funding bodies and the public.
- (c) Maximising efficient use of available resources.
- (d) Spreading information about available funding sources.

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1994/95

excluding Cultural Traditions

12% Visual Arts & Film
18% Drama & Dance
9% Grand Opera House
25% Music & Opera
5% Literature
2% Traditional Arts
2% Education
8% Community Arts
3% Festival/Arts Centres
16% Central Services

19.2 THE ECONOMY

The Arts Council will monitor the economic and creative output of Arts Council-funded activity. The current study by John Myerscough, *The Arts and the Northern Ireland Economy*, will provide a base line for measuring future outputs. Data will be published annually in order to establish patterns and trends in attendance at major art forms and research will continue to be undertaken to identify important characteristics of the market.

The Arts Council will seek the co-operation of universities in research projects which are of interest in relevant fields of activity.

The Arts Council will develop a management information system which will permit the rapid transmission of information and all monitoring data.

Table
NORTHERN IRELAND ARTS ATTENDANCES AT PRINCIPAL VENUES AND FESTIVALS

Thousand	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95
Grand Opera House	190	87 ^a	173	115 ^a	221
Lyric Theatre	42	42	34	54	65
Arts Theatre	–	83	74	67	82
Ulster Hall	40	35	36	37	38
(Ulster Orchestra performances only)					
Ardhowen	13	17	15	17	16
Riverside	19	22	19	17	22
Queen's Festival	70	66	72	73	80
Foyle Film Festival	5	6	7	7	8
Cinemagic	6	8	10	12	13
Derry	–	–	75 ^b	37	28
Totals	385	366	515	436	565

Sources: Company returns: Derry City Council

19.3 TOURISM AND THE ARTS

We believe that the people of Northern Ireland could enjoy considerable economic benefits from the development of the arts in relation to tourism. This is particularly so as the peace continues with a 56% rise in tourism during the first six months of 1995. A study has been commissioned by the Tourist Board which will examine the existing relationship between the arts and tourism industries in Northern Ireland. It will examine both the opportunities for, and the constraints on, the further development of arts-based tourism in Northern Ireland and will outline the advantages and disadvantages which might follow from further developments. The report will be completed before the end of 1995. We will then prepare an action plan for tourism and the arts in co-operation with central government, the Forum for Local Government and the Arts and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Such an action plan could consider marketing schemes between hoteliers, travel agents and main venues to develop overnight packages, discounted accommodation or tickets for events and other links throughout the service industry. Planning of events could be designed to provide an arts dimension to visitor destinations. Encouragement of crafts-workers and artists could contribute to the tourist experience. The development of festivals as a tourist attraction could build on existing successes such as the Belfast Festival at Queen's, the John Hewitt Summer School, major community projects etc..

19.4 CO-OPERATION AND RESOURCES Since actual demand, let alone potential claims, greatly exceed the resources available, it is vital that those resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Artists or companies who fail to live up to this standard can deprive others of the means to survive. With that in mind, it is imperative that arts organisations here co-operate to the fullest extent to maximise the use of resources.

One obvious area of co-operation is the development of a centralised booking system for arts venues in Belfast. A feasibility study on this is now nearing completion. The Arts Council will support the implementation of its recommendations

Benefits can be obtained from cooperation without additional expenditure being incurred. That is one of the reasons the Arts Council considers it a priority to establish the Consortium for the Arts in Northern Ireland which has already been referred to in Chapter One.

Co-operation between the Arts Council itself and other bodies outside Northern Ireland is discussed at Chapter 27.6.

19.5 MARKETING THE ARTS

Effective marketing of the arts brings two benefits. It encourages more people to see, hear and appreciate what is being produced and performed. But it also helps arts organisations and artists to survive and thrive by increasing funding through box office and purchases.

We will encourage the development and use of cost effective marketing techniques based on research data which is currently available on a yearly basis through Target Group Index (TGI) which identifies current attenders. This data, combined with box office information gathered at point of sale using systems technology, will give an insight into the demographic characteristics of current attenders and provide information by which potential new audiences may be reached.

By continuing the provision of marketing training modules within European Union-funded arts management courses, we will provide opportunities for managers to integrate marketing into their strategic planning.

Chapter Twenty: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE ARTS

PRIORITIES

To provide, by 2001, in co-operation with local government, a dedicated arts facility within a radius of 20 miles of every person in Northern Ireland.

To work with district councils through the Forum for Local Government and the Arts and through bilateral partnerships.

To seek the appointment of a designated arts officer in each district council area.

To use the most effective incentive schemes to stimulate local government support for the arts.

To receive an arts development plan from each district council within fifteen months of the publication of this document.

20.1 INTRODUCTION

Every district council has a statutory duty to provide cultural activities under Article 10 (1) of The Recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order 1986. As district councils are the principal democratic agencies responsible for planning and development of services at a local level, their role is a strategically important one. They are key players in local arts provision because of their role in overcoming the problems of geographical isolation, their awareness of the needs of the communities they seek to serve, their economic support for the mechanisms for delivery and their level of service which broadens public appreciation of the arts.

We recognise the contribution that district councils can make to the development of arts provision in Northern Ireland generally. This occurs through their investment in arts buildings, through the programmes they promote and through the direct support they give to arts organisations. Furthermore, local government expenditure on the arts in total has risen to the point where it comes close to that of the Arts Council itself.

20.2 PARTNERSHIP

The Arts Council is not an isolated player. We recognise that an effective local arts strategy is dependent upon working partnerships at various levels. Such partnerships should recognise mutual interest in strategic and planning issues but also sensitively reflect local aspiration. The Arts Council will seek to establish closer relationships with district councils, both formally and informally, and to find ways to ensure effective consultation and to make best use of local strengths. Where appropriate, this might involve entering into bilateral partnership agreements to stimulate expansion or encourage enterprise.

20.3 POLICY AND RESOURCES

There is surprisingly little consistency between districts and their policies on the arts. Some areas have made a substantial investment and help to bring the arts within the reach of a broader audience. A growing number of councils are developing permanent dedicated facilities. Each area should define its own model of development- imposing

inappropriate external targets is not the right way to proceed. However, we are committed to raising standards of service generally, to increase opportunity for people to enjoy the arts, and will strive to correct gaps in provision, where they exist. We therefore invite all districts to prepare and submit a plan for the development of the arts in their area over a five year period, within fifteen months of the publication of this document. Some districts are starting from a very low funding base and, in these circumstances, quite modest improvements could bring about worthwhile benefits. To this end, the Arts Council will encourage growth by introducing incentives in support of local arts investment. In 1994/95, monies were made available to match, on a pound for pound basis, increases in arts spending by the lowest spending councils.

In 1994/95, the Arts Council also introduced a new competitive award for excellence in local government arts work of £10,000.

20.4 FORUM FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE ARTS

Fundamental to the principle of partnership is the belief that district councils should be consulted and should consult each other about the development of arts policy. In November 1994, the Forum for Local Government and the Arts was established. Each district has three representatives on the Forum. Of these, one is an elected councillor, one an officer (normally the arts officer) and one a representative of the voluntary arts committees or local artist. We believe such an arrangement draws on the three key areas of strength in each district. The Arts Council is represented by three members of Council and two officers.

The Forum has elected a steering committee under the chairmanship of Councillor Arthur Doherty of Limavady. It has already proven to be an effective means for co-operation and communication.

The Forum has resolved to meet three times yearly. One of these meetings forms part of a larger conference for the arts drawing a wider attendance from throughout the province to consider matters of interest and common concern. We believe the Forum will play a vital role in many areas of the strategic development of the arts in Northern Ireland and provide an effective means for the exchange of information between the Arts Council and the representatives of the districts.

20.5 APPOINTMENT OF SPECIALIST STAFF

Many district councils employ specialist staff. Where there is an arts officer a district generally benefits from a more holistic and co-ordinated approach to arts provision. The Arts Council therefore seeks the appointment of a designated arts officer for each district.

We also recognise the role of Arts Officers' Group in promoting local networking, exchange of information and providing mechanisms for the distribution of exhibitions and performance.

Table
Estimated Number of Arts Administrators in Population

	Full-time	Part-time
Local Authorities	39	55
Arts Council	37	–
Independent Organisations	41	21
Theatre-based Managements	28	2
Performance Companies	34	6

Note 1: 'Part-time' is taken here to include both employees working limited hours and those whose duties include responsibility for the arts as part of a wider brief.

Ref	Council
1A	Antrim
2A	Ards
3A	Armagh
4A	Ballymena
5B	Ballymoney
6B	Banbridge
7A	Belfast
8B	Carrickfergus
9A	Castlereagh
10A	Coleraine
11A	Cookstown
12A	Craigavon
13A	Derry
14A	Down
15C	Dungannon
16A	Fermanagh
17C	Larne
18B	Limavady
19A	Lisburn
20B	Magherafelt
21B	Moyle
22A	Newry & Mourne
23C	Newtownabbey
24A	North Down
25A	Omagh
26C	Strabane

A – Arts Officers

B – Community Relations Officers operating an Arts Programme

C – Council Officers operating an Arts Programme

Chapter Twenty-One: BROADCASTING

PRIORITY

The Arts Council will work with the major broadcasting organisations to maximise their support for and coverage of the arts in Northern Ireland and to promote a fair share of regionally produced work on television and radio networks.

21.1 BROADCASTING

Broadcasting is an enormously important medium for making the arts available to the general public. Television and radio are immediately available to almost everyone, in their own homes, and at the flick of a switch. A wide range of art forms can be sampled without additional cost. Home-based media are vital to those who are unable to or have not chosen to visit arts venues. This access is of particular value to those living in rural areas and to the elderly and infirm.

What particular role has broadcasting in a Strategy for the Arts in Northern Ireland ? On the one hand, it is important in reporting and reviewing arts events and arts news in the province. We welcome the marked and lively approach that has been taken by the BBC and UTV in the immediate past. It is also a highly effective means of marketing the arts and can be influential in this role. Broadcasting has helped to develop increased interest in the arts here and has been part of that development.

In a wider context, however, concern has been expressed, which we share. This concern centres on whether the arts in Northern Ireland receive their fair share of the network production which we, in common with the rest of the country, mostly watch. A survey by Dr Sylvia Harvey of Sheffield University showed that actual BBC TV network output in 1991/92 was nineteen hours from Northern Ireland whereas the target based on our share of the UK population was 167 hours. This is an extraordinary disproportion.

It means that organisations within the province producing work of national or international quality are not fairly represented in the media of their own country. It means that we ourselves who watch the networks may be in danger of suffering some sense of inferiority from the absence of our artistic endeavours from our television screens.

It means, more broadly, that a misleading impression of Northern Ireland is given to the rest of the United Kingdom when adequate representation of the cultural life of the province is not provided to balance the inevitable commentary of violence and terrorism.

We consider that the television networks should pro-actively and urgently address this imbalance. We welcome the recently announced intention of the BBC to increase significantly regional broadcasting. We would wish to encourage co-operation between the networks, ourselves and our client-partners to ensure maximum opportunities for artists of all disciplines living in Northern Ireland.

Chapter Twenty-Two: TOURING

PRIORITIES

To co-operate with local authorities, promoters and touring companies in ensuring the provision of an imaginative programme of touring events and exhibitions across Northern Ireland.

To promote touring as an important catalyst for widening access to a range of art forms throughout the community.

22.1 INTRODUCTION

Central to our strategy is the provision of the arts outside Belfast. Much has been done through touring to convey arts events to every district. Fifteen district councils now have professional arts officers who are able and willing to take an active part in deciding what is toured and in helping the Arts Council to tread the delicate line between the culture which is provided for people and the culture people themselves choose to enjoy. We look forward to a closer association with the Arts Officers' Group and with other interested local arts bodies.

22.2 THE WAY FORWARD

At present, the cost of touring is shared between the Arts Council and the local promoter, often the district council. It has been suggested that such shared promotion touring be entirely abolished and local areas be left to choose their own tours, linking up with other districts, but we feel that not all districts, and particularly not those which rely heavily on volunteers, would find this provision either adequate or desirable and it would not guarantee fairness in geographical provision. Moreover, there seems to be a desire, as shown by a recent customer research, that centrally organised music tours should be continued.

We will continue to monitor the situation and to carry out further market research into the effectiveness and value-for-money of touring provided by the Arts Council and also into audience requirements. However, it is also important to consider other alternatives. In particular, we will review the position by testing other options in two or three districts which have long been served by professional arts officers.

We will in the short-term effect a number of necessary modifications to the present touring system. These changes have been identified to improve consultation with the districts in two key areas: what is toured; and the scope for including artists in the life of the district in which they are touring.

While we recognise that touring arts events is important, it is not the only way to provide access to the arts and the imaginative use of transport schemes to bring local groups to urban events will be encouraged.

22.3 RATIONALISATION

Changes are also necessary to the touring system to ensure consistency in the funding arrangements and charges applied to it. Hitherto, dance appears to have occupied a privileged position with special measures to promote it as a relatively new art form. It

has been toured directly with the Arts Council assuming all the promoting risks and costs. This is no longer desirable. Dance will in future be promoted along the same lines as other art forms. A fee, albeit below the true economic cost, will be charged to the promoter. Direct touring, where the Arts Council bears all risks and charges, will cease. All performing arts will therefore be toured through shared promotion touring.

Some drama by small outside companies, puppets, mime and one-person shows will be included in shared promotion touring to increase variety. However, the principal emphasis of these changes is to increase local identification with touring events, and increase the audiences which attend them.

22.4 The districts should not be passive recipients of tours but should have increased involvement in shared promotion touring. They should, first and foremost, have a say in what is toured. Arts officers, arts committees, local people with talent and knowledge, should be consulted over what is chosen to tour. They could be invited to submit requests and a possible 'menu' could then be devised. The Arts Officers' Group currently facilitates communication between the professional providers but it may be more appropriate to consult the districts through the Forum for Local Government since some areas do not, as yet, have arts officers. The position will be kept under review. The process of consultation should, where possible, include some kind of show-case to inform choice. The Forum will be advised at the earliest opportunity of our touring proposals.

22.5 The district councils and the touring companies should have a financial interest in what is toured so that they are encouraged to produce a capacity audience. Performing arts companies will, where possible, receive a share of the box office returns (in addition to a minimum guarantee) to achieve this objective. The effectiveness of tours will be evaluated and the findings published.

22.6 Performing arts tours by Northern Irish companies should, from time to time, originate in, and be rehearsed in, towns outside Belfast (see also Chapter Seven). This could provide all kinds of spin-offs - some economic, but chief of which is the closer involvement of the area in its own arts provision. Artists should be encouraged to increase their involvement in the areas in which they tour. They might consider including the same districts on their tour schedules thus building up a relationship with the venue and with potential local sponsors.

22.7 Touring exhibitions can be given a local flavour. They may comprise the work of artists living in a particular area, without undermining artistic standards. A tour of works by artists based in a locality, could start there before proceeding to other districts which may increase its attractiveness to a business sponsor.

22.8 Literature could be toured in conjunction, with publishers, libraries, the Education and Library Boards, booksellers and local promoters, being entirely of literature, or having a literary flavour.

The touring artists will be encouraged to involve themselves in some educational projects in the area, often, but not necessarily always, in schools. They could also give professional input to amateur societies, WEA classes etc.

Residencies might be set up for artists who would undertake to work in an area for four weeks or so on an agreed project. This work would culminate in a presentation which would increase the quality of a local event or festival.

22.9 It is particularly important to increase the number of young people who attend arts events. One way of doing so is to increase tours to schools and to combine them with innovative educational programmes. These would use artists who are trained in, and skilled at, communicating with young people. Visits to schools by artists, prior to a tour, will also be encouraged, comprising short performances or talks. Alongside this, tours of events which are of appeal to a younger age group will be encouraged. It is vital to reach this section of the population, as this group will form the audience of the future.

22.10 Arts touring may hold one solution to the perceived barriers to attendance by visiting a wide variety of venues, (where such facilities conform to legal requirements). Access for disabled people will also be taken into account. The imaginative use of venues will be encouraged through touring to improve social access to the arts. For example, a literature and music tour might attract an audience in a pub, a library, or an arts centre which might not be the case at a more conventional venue. District councils will be encouraged to undertake an audit of possible venues, so that they can be assessed for their suitability for tours. Community centres may often make suitable arts venues. A refurbished bus could provide an imaginative place for a touring photographic exhibition.

Where possible, the touring programme, or some part of it, should also visit venues where people are normally deprived of arts provision - for example, residential homes, day centres, or hospitals.

2.11 Community and participative projects will be used to complement and generate local enthusiasm for professional tours. Bilateral arrangements between districts will be encouraged. Amateur productions which already tour in order to compete in festivals, might extend their productions for general audiences by touring.

Sample works from visual arts exhibitions could be installed in towns in advance of a tour. While these would not form part of the main exhibition they could be shown in a local library, community hall or shop window, to inspire interest. Craft has already been toured by arts officers and the Arts Council. This is a good way of focusing public attention on design and thus to encourage wider attendances at arts centres, museums and galleries.

Joint touring has occurred with success in the past, particularly with music and literature, and, if well planned, may lead to a growth in the audience. Multi-art form touring should be developed.

22.12 The strength of co-operation with other Arts Councils, particularly notable in music through the close association between the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Music Network, is also apparent in drama and will be encouraged and broadened. The recent appointment of a Co-operation Officer will generate further cross-border collaboration. We will encourage further links in border areas where geographical

proximity suggests that additional benefits could occur. New audiences could be generated through such collaboration and it may be possible to obtain funding from agencies which have a particular interest in the border regions.

Chapter Twenty-Three: FESTIVALS

PRIORITIES

To encourage the development of the quality and range of festival events to include local work of high calibre as well as new and internationally renowned artworks and events.

To support the training needs of festival organisers.

To promote festival co-operation between Northern Ireland and our neighbours .

To support the wider participation and access for local communities in festival programmes, particularly youth, the elderly and people with disability.

23.1 INTRODUCTION

Festivals have the potential to encapsulate some of our aims for arts activities throughout Northern Ireland. They encourage 'on-the-ground' participation, often from people who have not previously been involved in arts events. They are an ideal opportunity to mix art forms and to interweave the professional with the amateur, using each to stimulate interest in the other. They provide the perfect arena for community arts and an opportunity for each locality to celebrate and promote its own identity. They bring to their locality cultural events over and above those which are already in place and provide their audience with the occasion to participate in something special. They are an obvious area for collaborative funding between the district councils, business sponsors, local trusts, community relations and cultural traditions funders, the Tourist Board and the Arts Council. Finally, they are a way of ensuring a good geographical spread of activity. They deserve our continuing support.

23.2 FUNDING

The present anomalous situation whereby regional festivals are funded from the festival budget, and local Belfast festivals are funded from the community arts allocation, will be altered. In future, the festival budget, expanded if need be, should fund all festivals, including those in local areas of Belfast.

23.3 ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Many festivals are run by enthusiastic local people with professional back-up. These organisers should be facilitated in developing their expertise, and encouraged to join together to discuss programming co-operation. Moreover, a training day to cover topics such as programming, sponsorship, marketing and technical advice might be arranged for festival organisers. It would be important to include organisers from festivals in the Republic and speakers might be invited to generate and promote ideas.

23.4 TOURING

It is important that events toured by the Arts Council co-ordinate with festivals and are available to be booked by the areas holding a festival. These areas should continue to receive priority in the booking system. Additionally, it will be possible for festivals to take advantage of artists based in their community for some time and working on specific community projects, as recommended in Chapter 22 (Touring) and Chapter 16

(Rural Arts) of this strategy. Amateur companies could also be encouraged to provide a piece for their local festival over and above their main production.

23.5 PLANNING

A central diary of events would help considerably to prevent one local festival competing with another. At present, most festivals take place at more or less the same time, generally October. This makes co-operation between the regions easier but causes a dearth of activity at other times. Some festivals, however, such as Armagh Together and Newry 850, extend over a longer period and Omagh is considering alternative timing. Festivals programmed in the summer months would provide entertainment for tourists. This is likely to produce advantageous economic consequences. In such cases, part-funding may also be received from the Tourist Board which is at present pursuing an event-based strategy.

23.6 BELFAST FESTIVAL AT QUEEN'S

Belfast Festival at Queen's has celebrated its 32nd year and we commend this achievement and the commitment which provided a programme of more than 350 events in 1994. We see the Festival as an example of harnessing a high level of commercial sponsorship for the arts and wish to encourage the increased involvement of Belfast City Council. The Festival should be a platform for talented indigenous artists and companies as well as introducing new and internationally renowned names to Northern Irish audiences. We welcome the comparatively recent inclusion of community arts and youth work, including youth dance and youth drama, and would like to see such work in more of the major venues. We should also like to see the visual arts element of the Festival expanded and invigorated. We welcome continued and increasing co-operation with the Republic within this festival. In accordance with the Festival's aim of exposing people to new experiences, we should like to encourage more vigorous fringe activities, or by including several art forms in one event. Belfast Festival has become an established feature of our cultural calendar. We wish to see it develop by promoting wider participation and access for local communities in festival programmes particularly youth, elderly people with disability - and to see a major effort undertaken to develop new audiences.

Chapter Twenty-Four: ARTS BUILDINGS

PRIORITIES

To provide, by 2001, a dedicated arts facility within a radius of 20 miles of every person in Northern Ireland.

To co-operate with local authorities in sharing responsibility for the arts facilities required.

To use the National Lottery Arts Fund to promote the establishment of new theatres, galleries and other facilities and the conservation of existing buildings.

To expand provision where needed, particularly in the west and rural areas, while sustaining existing facilities in Belfast.

24.1 CREATION AND RESTORATION

Few art forms flourish out of doors. Suitable buildings, whether purpose-built or adapted, are indispensable. It is one of the functions of an Arts Council to try to secure the availability of such buildings, a function which, within the resources available, we shall seek to carry out as effectively as possible. However, nearly all major exhibitions, concerts and performances in the province take place in Belfast, the major centre of population, to which most people have reasonably ready access. This has led to a feeling amongst those who live farthest from Belfast that they are being unfairly deprived of the enjoyment of some art forms. We are not unsympathetic to this view; but it is no more possible to provide every small town with its own Opera House than to provide it with its own acute surgical hospital. A degree of compromise is unavoidable. We shall certainly support the provision of new buildings such as the Ardhowen Theatre in Enniskillen, and refurbished ones such as Clotworthy House at Antrim, in other parts of the province, but for some art forms, Belfast will of necessity remain the principal centre: and we hope the City Council will continue to regard the city as the cultural capital for the north, and accept this wider responsibility. When completed, the new Belfast Waterfront Centre on the Lagan, and the Ormeau Baths Gallery, will add notably to the stock of arts buildings in Belfast. They are the more welcome because, in recent years, a number of buildings have for various reasons been lost to the arts: for example, the Wellington Hall, the Grove cinema, and the King George VI Memorial Hall. It is therefore all the more important to put to best use the other existing assets, of which the most significant are the Grand Opera House and the Ulster Hall.

It is our hope that high priority can be given to a major upgrading of the facilities at each of these buildings. Phase Three of the scheme for the restoration of the Opera House has been several times deferred, and is now long overdue. It involves the modernisation of the backstage area, better accommodation for artists, and the provision of integral booking facilities. In the case of the Ulster Hall, which also stands in need of extensive backstage modernisation, we should wish to see the restoration of the minor hall as bar and circulation space by the relocation elsewhere of the Group theatre, perhaps in a specially-adapted auditorium designed to serve also the flourishing amateur drama movement. In Derry, the demand for a new theatre could be

met by the adaptation and upgrading of St. Columb's Hall or by a new specially designed theatre. In a number of provincial centres we should wish to see enhanced provision for the showing of films.

While it is not the role of the Arts Council itself to manage arts buildings, it will be anxious to ensure that all buildings so used are properly staffed, managed, maintained, and equipped; not least those which are of historical or architectural importance, such as the Elmwood Hall, the Lyric Theatre, and the Old Museum buildings; and that new buildings are of a high standard of architectural excellence.

24.2 THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE

The Grand Opera House has entered a new phase in its management, its promotion and its evolution. A new director has been appointed and a newly-formed Board of trustees has begun to open up a new era for the theatre, taking over from the previous direct management by the Arts Council. Since its restoration and re-opening in 1980, it has been a vital element in the renewal of Great Victoria Street and the adjacent Dublin Road which, in the 1990s, were transformed into the city's entertainment and recreation vortex. Although mindful of Clive Priestley's comments, the Arts Council did not consider that cuts in its funding were feasible at this time, but the present level of support will be kept under review as fuller data becomes available. Its new independent management will continue to present Opera Northern Ireland productions and it will present at least 3 other professional local productions per year. The new trust will be responsible for the management, direction and financial control of the theatre and will increase its efficiency to give greater value for money. In accordance with our overall views on the efficient use of resources, we will require the Grand Opera House to co-operate with other client partners in the operation of its booking office. The Arts Council will wish to see that the considerable annual subvention to the theatre brings an appropriate return in artistic terms. Co-productions with other theatres in Ireland could prove a fruitful source of work of high standard. This could contribute to the essential role the Grand Opera House plays in our cultural life. A million people live within forty minutes of the theatre and we welcome the increased proportion of that million now going through its doors.

24.3 ARTS CENTRES

The Arts Council will continue to help, where it is possible and appropriate, to fund new arts use for old buildings, without eliminating the need for new, well-designed, purpose-built facilities. The National Lottery Arts Fund will be of great significance in providing the resources for such developments. It is the duty of the Arts Council to consider carefully and fairly all applications it receives as a lottery distributor. It would not be proper to bind our discretion by preferring certain applications in advance. However, it is proper to recognise that certain parts of the province, particularly in the west, have a significant under-provision of theatres, galleries and art centres at present. This under-provision will be addressed as a matter of priority. As stated elsewhere, increase in the arts in rural areas is also a priority. We will take into account all relevant considerations including the publicly expressed view of bodies with expertise. Where appropriate - there will still be a role for the Capital Programme for the Arts. We would here restate our priority to provide by 2001 a dedicated arts facility within a radius of twenty miles of every person in Northern Ireland.

Chapter Twenty-Five: MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

PRIORITIES

To promote museums and libraries as venues and resources for the arts.

To encourage museums and libraries to include more contemporary art and literature in their collections and to commission, as well as purchase, the work of living artists.

25.1 INTRODUCTION

Museums and libraries throughout Northern Ireland play a vital role in the promotion and presentation of the arts. As focal points for the cultural life of the community, their programmes and premises form a key element in the network of arts venues across the province.

The major infrastructure they represent are, and will continue to be, vitally important to the work of the Arts Council.

25.2 GENERAL STRATEGY

The following should be the key components of our strategy for museums and libraries:

The use of museums and libraries as venues for arts events.

The importance of museums and libraries for cross-community arts projects.

The use of museums and libraries as centres for the dissemination of information on the arts.

The importance of linking the work of museums and libraries with other arts organisations.

Encouraging closer links between the education service and museums and libraries in regard to the arts.

25.3 IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY FOR LIBRARIES

Within the literary sphere of Arts Council activity, libraries have been used for poetry readings and lectures. The promotion of literature through libraries can be further built upon to great benefit. Besides promoting literature generally through their collections, a more coherent programme of talks and readings could be presented in library venues. Information on writers' groups and literary organisations could be made available to libraries, while it would be beneficial for these organisations to know about the facilities that libraries can offer to them. Of particular educational importance are a number of library activities: children's book weeks, author visits, writers-in-residence, and festivals of writing. The Arts Council acknowledges the role of the Education and Library Boards as the bodies responsible for managing libraries and will liaise with them in advising on and funding such events.

The oral tradition could also be further encouraged, for example, through story-telling programmes both for schools and the general public.

The appreciation of music and poetry can be creatively encouraged by Arts Council-funded projects. The expertise of the Arts Council can also be useful in advising on the collection of music books and scores, while talks on music should be actively promoted and funded.

Libraries provide important venues for Arts Council touring exhibitions. The benefits of such public venues are manifold. The visual arts are presented to a wide cross-section of the community, including people who might not otherwise visit a museum or gallery. Besides hanging Art Council exhibitions, many libraries have ongoing programmes of art exhibitions and thus provide an important support system for visual artists. Talks and lectures on aspects of the visual arts are popular and should be further encouraged. Libraries also benefit from the Arts Council loan scheme for art works. They should be encouraged to commission or purchase original works by living artists for their premises.

25.4 IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY FOR MUSEUMS

A venue such as the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum makes an excellent setting for traditional arts projects such as Set Dancing, demonstrations of traditional instruments, or sessions with the Armagh Rhymers.

Music is an art form which works well with visual aids, and the story of 18th- and 19th-Century emigration was interpreted by setting the letters of Irish emigrants to folk music in an exciting educational project organised by the Arts Council and the Ulster-American Folk Park. The scope and value of such multi-discipline projects are considerable, and should be further encouraged.

The Arts Council and the Ulster Museum have enjoyed a productive working relationship which can be further built upon. The Ulster Museum has hosted the Arts Council's major exhibitions, and was the only facility in the north capable of housing such projects. The Artist-in-Residence project has been successful in introducing the contemporary visual arts to the museum, and helping both to break down barriers and to aid the understanding of contemporary work. This should also be encouraged in other museums. The collecting policies of our museums could be broadened to include more contemporary work, and where possible works should be commissioned from artists and crafts people.

In general, the Arts Council will encourage museums to receive more contemporary exhibitions. The Arts Council will consider the recommendations of *A Time for Change* recently published. It intends to continue its policy of buying the best work by living Irish artists. It will now consider and form a policy on how any disposals from the collection should be made in future.

25.5 NORTHERN IRELAND MUSEUMS COUNCIL

A Northern Ireland Museums Council was established in December 1993 to co-ordinate a strategy for local museum development and to ensure the most cost-effective use of public funds. The role of the Northern Ireland Museums Council is to

provide services for local museums and to advise appropriate authorities and agencies, including public and private bodies, on local museums and heritage developments.

We will maximise co-operation with the Northern Ireland Museums Council and any new federal museum structure.

Currently, the development of seven to nine regional museums is proposed. This development should be examined in relation to the Arts Council strategy for regional development.

Training is another area where we will co-operate with NIMC and particularly in areas of training need common to arts organisations and museums, such as marketing, conservation, collection care, touring exhibitions, design and display.

Chapter Twenty-Six: THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

PRIORITIES

To provide, by 2001, a dedicated arts facility within a radius of 20 miles of every person in Northern Ireland.

To achieve the highest standards of excellence in the architectural design of new or restored buildings.

To encourage applications from all types of organisations, across the community, for arts projects, professional or amateur - which should address the important issues of public good and access for disabled people.

26.1 NATIONAL LOTTERY ARTS FUND

The creation of the National Lottery Arts Fund is the most important development in the arts in the United Kingdom for many years. It has created an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen and enrich arts provision and facilities.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is charged under the National Lottery Act with responsibility for distributing 2.8% of one-fifth of the proceeds allocated to the arts. The money is disbursed in accordance with the formal Directions issued by the Secretary of State. In general, funds must be spent on capital projects, in the form either of buildings or equipment. Only in exceptional circumstances will they be available to meet revenue demands associated with new projects supported by the Lottery (or related to such projects). Partnership funds from other sources will be required. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that National Lottery funds will not be available in substitution for existing revenue commitments. On the contrary, they may of themselves create further revenue demands.

While allocations under the National Lottery Arts Fund are governed by legislative directives, this form of public investment in cultural infrastructure occurs within a strategic framework. So far as the applications allow, the Arts Council will seek to deploy the funds at its disposal so as to help those areas with few existing arts facilities. (This topic is further discussed in Chapter 24.) The Arts Council is precluded from itself promoting or soliciting applications.

To assess the effect and potential benefits of projects and to carry out monitoring, the Arts Council has set-up a system to administer National Lottery Applications. Decisions regarding projects are recommended to the Arts Council by the Lottery Committee comprising some members of the Council and representatives of informed external opinion.

The principal criteria for applications have been widely published and, inter alia, place emphasis on the need for the highest standards of excellence in the architectural design of new buildings. Applications must be for the public good and address the important issue of access for disabled people. We welcome applications both from professional and amateur arts bodies, and appropriate standards will be applied; but in each case

minimum threshold standards of artistic quality are required. Priority will also be accorded to projects in which the arts represent the key element.

The success of the National Lottery Arts Fund will, to a great extent, depend on the quality of the applications received.

To ensure that information about the National Lottery Arts Fund is widely distributed, the Arts Council conducted a public awareness campaign. Since then we have recorded a substantial level of interest from a wide range of groups and organisations across all sections of the community. It is clear from this evidence that demand is profound and we will be guided by the same standards of fairness in allocating these funds as are applied to all other funding decisions.

26.2 MILLENNIUM

One-fifth of the National Lottery proceeds go to the Millennium Fund. This will be allocated by the Millennium Commission with the object of supporting projects which look back over this millennium or forward to the new one and will be seen by future generations as marking a significant moment in national or local history. We believe it is important that Northern Ireland secures as much as possible of these funds for cultural purposes and that they be spent to best effect. We share some concern that has been expressed about the first decisions of the Commission as they relate to Northern Ireland.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: THE ROLE OF THE ARTS COUNCIL

PRIORITIES

To allocate funds made available by central government and the National Lottery for the arts.

To advocate the causes of the arts to central and local government and the public generally.

To advise the public and private sectors on artistic matters.

To assist artists and arts-activists.

27.1 THE NEW COUNCIL

The Arts Council became a statutory body on 1st September 1995 when an Order in Council came into effect. Prior to this the role of an arts council in Northern Ireland was undertaken by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland 1994. This was a company limited by guarantee which had taken over the assets and liabilities of the former Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The present members of the Arts Council, appointed by the Minister for the Arts in August 1993, are the members of the new statutory body. The members have worked closely together since their appointment. They have collectively prepared this Strategy with the assistance of the officers of the Arts Council. The functions of the Arts Council are set out in Article 4 (1) of the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. They are as follows: to develop and improve the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts; to increase public access to, and participation in, the arts; to encourage and assist: (i) the provision of arts facilities and events; and (ii) co-ordination and efficient use of resources for the arts; to assist the provision of administrative services and training for or by any body providing facilities for, or in connection with, the arts; to advise the Department and other government departments, district councils and other bodies on matters relating to the arts and such other functions as are conferred on the Council by any other statutory provision.

In addition, the Arts Council has statutory functions under the National Lottery Act, 1993. In performing its functions, the Arts Council's role can be summarised as follows: to allocate funds made available by central government and the National Lottery for the arts; to advocate the causes of the arts to central and local government and the public generally; to advise the public and private sectors on artistic matters; to assist artists and arts-activists.

27.2 CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Clive Priestley, in his report, recommended that: "The Board itself should be unmistakably the driver of the strategy and of its own processes."

The Minister for the Arts in deciding to set up a statutory body rather than, as before, a voluntary body, has emphasised both the importance of the arts to society in Northern Ireland and the centrality of the Arts Council itself in the development of the arts. This was reinforced by the appointment of a new Council which is composed of

people with a considerable degree of knowledge and experience in one or more art forms and related fields.

It would be inconsistent with the duty to deliver the *Strategy for the Arts in Northern Ireland* to hand over its powers, in effect, to committees very largely made up of persons who are not members of the Council. It is the Council's intention not to devolve responsibility down to committees, as was previously the case, but to consult panels of external advisers before making decisions regarding grants, awards, scholarships and bursaries and at other appropriate times. Public nomination of such advisers was invited.

27.3 THE STAFFING STRUCTURE

To facilitate delivery of the Strategy, a specific reporting structure has been designed. This required adjustments to and extension of duties previously undertaken by many of the Council's staff and new posts were created to support the extended range of functions. Improving the Council's organisational effectiveness is an important function in securing proper and speedy response to changing contexts and in helping the Council play a more efficient developmental role in securing the success of the arts in Northern Ireland.

In evaluating whether or not the existing management and staffing structure was an appropriate framework for its new strategic thrust, the Council invited assessment by the Business Development Service of the Department of Finance and Personnel. Its recommendations were developed from the new emphasis contained in the draft strategy and were used to inform a restructuring which has now been put in place. Adjustments to existing posts and the introduction of new ones were effected to maximise efficiency, to strengthen the Council's capacity to plan and respond to change, and make best use of the existing skills and dedication of the Arts Council's staff resources.

The functions of the Arts Council are discharged by its directorate. The revised structure consists of the Chief Executive, assisted by four heads of department: Strategic Development; Performing Arts; Creative Arts; Finance, Personnel and Administration. In addition, the system is supported by two new units: Public Affairs and Lottery.

These changes will assist in delivering the Strategy by ensuring that the aims and objectives and priorities are pursued by the Council and its staff. While the Department of Strategic Development will have the principal responsibility in this field, all officers of the Council are involved in its implementation.

27.4 THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

The Arts Council has embraced its important new duties as a National Lottery distributor in addition to its traditional role. The Council has established a fully accountable system and an information process at minimum administrative cost but with maximum customer-orientated effect.

27.5 STANDARDS OF SERVICE

The Arts Council seeks to achieve high standards of service to the artist and public based on mutual respect and to support the needs of the arts wherever possible. In order that it can remain responsive to these needs, the Arts Council will monitor its own performance, practice and advisory services through staff appraisal and performance measurement systems and will prepare and publish a Charter Statement.

27.6 EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Since its foundation, this Arts Council has maintained a close relationship with other Arts Councils in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. Benefit has been derived from these relationships and it is planned to intensify the exchanges and the information flow which results from these contacts. The closest rapport is with the Arts Council in the Republic of Ireland and a recently-established joint committee has optimised this relationship. Combined appointments of a European Affairs Officer and an Arts Co-operation Officer have brought and will bring many benefits on both sides of the border.

Inter-council relationships occur at many levels, from the formal meetings of the chairmen and chief executives, to regular contacts between subject directors and officers. The Council has recently forged new co-operative links with the London Arts Board and it is hoped that this relationship will result in the exchange of events and placement of artists.

The Council's separate departments also maintain regular contact with independent arts organisations and institutions throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It is intended that these relationships will be further consolidated.

International exchange and exposure to internationalism in the arts is valued by the Arts Council. International collaboration, between Northern Irish communities and communities abroad will be encouraged by the Arts Council. While the prime responsibility for promoting cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy rests with the British Council, we continue to play a vigorous role in the development of arts and cultural affairs overseas. The Arts Council has a special relationship with the British Council office in Belfast and, amongst other things, contributes to two international projects funded by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland; the Northern Ireland cultural programme in North America and Northern Ireland cultural programme in Europe.

We will appoint an International Arts Officer in partnership with the British Council.

The Arts Council holds the conviction that those who have the opportunity to visit Northern Ireland should be encouraged to learn more about our artistic life and take away a balanced and informed view about our cultural achievements. Numerous events presented in the USA and Europe have resulted from this programme. The Arts Council has established and will sustain constructive contact in the United States with the National Endowment for the Arts, Ireland America Arts Exchange and the Irish American Cultural Institute. Our access to networks in the United States and our resources have enabled artists from Northern Ireland to participate in international events to which individuals artists and small-scale arts organisations would not readily have access. We intend to consolidate these contacts and increase the exposure of our

artists to a wider audience and, through exchange events, enrich the experience of local audiences. Benefit has come to our artists through Visiting Arts, on which the Arts Council is also represented. This organisation makes widely available a wealth of information about incoming events and performances and provides support and international experience for promoters in Northern Ireland.

27.7 POSTSCRIPT

Over the past two decades, Northern Ireland has frequently and sometimes daily over sustained periods, dominated international television screens and the headlines of the world's press. Our shattered buildings and our grieving and beleaguered people gave visible and verbal testimony to an endemic civil unrest. Our formerly little-known spoken accent has become the stereotypical voice of the stage and screen villain. We feel this grave distortion obfuscates outside understanding of complex political problems which underlie the evolution of our maligned community. In the past twenty years, more than 200 books and 3,000 academic articles and papers have been published on 'the Northern Ireland Problem'. The availability of this material allows the English reading world to be better informed about life in our province or about the ways in which it has changed during the period of the present 'troubles'. Unrelenting critical attention has for a long time focused on our foibles. This high political profile sometimes detracts from the impressive achievements of our artists, although it is claimed by some that the political turmoil has drawn them to attention. Celebrity has been lavished on our poets, playwrights and performers but practical difficulties of presentation and a modestly documented history of the visual arts has inhibited painting and sculpture from achieving its critical deserves.

Historically, Belfast missed the advantages of expansion in the late 18th - and early 19th-century but it developed speedily into a place of Irish and British consequence with mid-19th century industrialisation. Now it is typical of many urban areas in the north of Britain suffering serious economic decline. Although we have substantial unemployment there is encountered everywhere energetic proof of determined enterprise. The days, however, when Belfast was a world leader in linen manufacture and the shipbuilding industry are long past but the city, its hinterland and the province work assiduously to rebuild and revitalise our debilitated environment.

Recent years have brought economic, social and political change which could not have been predicted in the early 1960s. Many things have altered in this short period to improve the environment for all inhabitants. Additionally, recognition of two cultural traditions is now accepted and strategies designed to familiarise each community more accurately with the history, traditions and practices of the other are in operation. Engagement in cultural pursuit has always been a cross-community activity and has contributed effectively to social and economic life. The Arts Council has since its inception supported art and cultural manifestations from wherever they have emanated. Financial support decisions have been made on achievement or excellence and with enthusiasm the Arts Council joins with other agencies in funding the arts of both traditions and all cross-community arts activity. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the prime distributor of public support for the arts in the province. Its annual reports succinctly chronicle the evolution of the arts in the community.

Established in 1943, the Council's first funds were provided by the Pilgrim Trust and matched by the Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland. Since then, however, arts funding has been provided primarily by government. The annual budget of the Arts Council has increased from an initial £3,000 to £6,660,000 in 1995/96.