

# Creative Climate Cities Profile DUBLIN



GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

918 sq. km



POPULATION

1,347,359



GDP

\$163,510  
(PPP) million

## CITY STRATEGY LINKS

Dublin City Council Cultural Strategy 2016–21

Dublin City: Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018–22:

Dublin Climate Change Action Plan 2019–24





# Welcome to Dublin



## Culture Fact

The Irish literary tradition is one of the most renowned in the world – famous for four Nobel Prize winners and numerous writers, poets and playwrights, as well as the highly-regarded International Literature Prize, instituted in 1994.



## Climate Fact

Dublin City emits approx. 2,810,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to 5.1 tCO<sub>2</sub> per capita per year (for 2016); the sectors that produced the most emissions were the residential, commercial and transport sectors<sup>1</sup>.

## Introduction

Dublin, capital of the Republic of Ireland, is an ancient city where cobbled streets, medieval castles and Georgian splendour merge into a hub of international business, innovative gastronomy, and modern landmarks such as the iconic Samuel Beckett Bridge. The city was first documented in stories of 8<sup>th</sup> century Viking raids, and has survived periods of economic bust and boom and prosperity and conflict; it is just over a century since the Easter Rising of 1916, in which opposition to the British government's centuries of occupation led to the creation of the modern Irish state in 1922<sup>2</sup>.

The city is famous for its literary figures including Seamus Heaney, James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett and Anne Enright, alongside internationally-renowned musicians such as Sinéad O'Connor and Bono. In 2010, Dublin was designated as a UNESCO City of Literature<sup>3</sup>. Dublin is also known for its vibrant live music scene, comprising both large venues and a unique pub music network which encourages new and emerging creative talent. Its cultural infrastructure includes 62 museums, 51 public libraries, four universities and 53 art galleries – including the National Gallery of Ireland, Irish Museum of Modern Art and National Concert Hall. Major new cultural developments are also being planned, including the new **Parnell Square Cultural Quarter** and **Dublin City Library**. It also is known for its landscapes and natural heritage – in 1981, North Bull Island was designated as a Biosphere by UNESCO because of its rare and internationally important habitats and species of wildlife. Dublin's unique history and lively culture alongside its reputation for hospitality, good humour and convivial pub culture, continue to attract tourists, with 5.9 million visiting from overseas in 2017<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Dublin Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024.

<sup>2</sup>HISTORY. <https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/easter-rising>

<sup>3</sup>Dublin's involvement is resourced by Dublin City Council and managed by the Dublin City's Public Library Service. Read the Literature Strategic Plan 2016-2018.

<sup>4</sup>World Cities Culture Forum. <http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/cities/dublin>



# Highlights

1

## Creative Programmes & Campaigns

The City Arts Office developed an 'art and ecology' initiative to engage artists with scientists, botanists and ecologists in order to explore challenges relating to the natural environment.

2

## Resources & Support

Dublin Maker is a celebration of the maker movement and takes the form of a show-and-tell experience where inventors and makers showcase their creations. The event combines creativity, ingenuity, resourcefulness and sustainability.

3

## Partnerships & Innovation

The Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership is working with schools, universities, community groups, NGOs and local businesses to inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature.

4

## Policy & Strategy

Dublin City Council's Cultural Strategy (2016–2021) explicitly recognises environment in the context of sustainable cities and is based on: 'Economic Development, Environmental Sustainability, Social Inclusion, and Culture'.

## Environmental Ambition

Climate change is already impacting Dublin: Dublin Bay's average sea level has risen by twice the global average in the last 20 years – however the city is taking action, committing to a 40% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Dublin City Council's Climate Change Action Plan (2019-2024) identifies the city's main environmental impacts and lays out its framework for responding to and mitigating the risks of climate change, focussing on energy, the built environment, transport, resource management, resilience and nature-based solutions.

In addition, Dublin City Council Cultural Strategy (2016–2021) acknowledges that 'a sustainable City is based upon the foundations of, and the interactions between, Economic Development, Environmental Sustainability, Social Inclusion, and Culture'. Dublin has the opportunity to demonstrate how arts and culture can support the sustainability of the city – in line with its fourth strategic priority: 'We will honour our past and focus on our future'.

## Connecting Creative & Climate Action in Dublin

### 1. Creative Programmes & Campaigns

**Creative content and activities that engage audiences on themes of climate and the environment**

- Dublin City Council organises the annual St. Anne's Park **Rose Festival** which includes a farmers market, live music, a living

history exhibition and the Big Bear Planetarium, alongside plant sellers, nurseries, garden centres and florists. It also includes the Biodiversity Hub which engages audiences on the environmental issues affecting the UNESCO **Biosphere** - for which St. Anne's plays an important role.

- The **National Botanic Gardens of Ireland**, located in Dublin, hosted 'Plant Power' as part of the Festival of Farming & Food Science Week. The programme includes local food producers showcasing locally-grown and sustainably-produced food as well as offering visitors the unique opportunity to visit the National Herbarium and the collection of preserved plant specimens from around the world.
- Dublin City Arts Office, based at the **LAB**, is a specialist service within Dublin City Council that represents a strategic investment in the arts by the City Council. As laid out in the **Arts Plan** (2014-2018), The City Arts Office developed an 'art and ecology' programme – managed by the Art & Ecology Project Co-ordinator – to engage artists with scientists, botanists and ecologists in order to explore challenges relating to the natural environment. The **Red Stables Summer School**, which featured art and ecology events in St. Anne's Park, Dublin 3 and North Bull Island.
- **Common Ground** and Seoidin O'Sullivan's project **HARD/GRAFT** is a sustainable community orchard proposed for community sites across Dublin that is in tune with the seasons. It is funded and supported by the Arts Council Ireland, Dublin City Council Arts Office, and Creative Ireland Dublin City Programme (2018). Richmond Barracks Museum hosted a HARD/GRAFT panel discussion on the topic of sustainable cities, including: greening Dublin City, land access, food access and spaces of 'commoning'.

- The **Velo-City 2019** ‘Cycling for the Ages’ conference includes an **open-call** for creative practitioners, cultural organisations, collectives, communities and neighbourhoods to submit proposals to be part of Velo-city for performances, readings, workshops, showcase events (including photography and film), interactive art installations to maximise people’s engagement with cycling.

## 2. Resources & Support

### Investment, training and materials that support environmental knowledge and practical action

- Dublin City Council supports various **events** each year, including many which are arts and culture based, for example **Dublin Maker**. Dublin Maker is a celebration of the maker movement and takes the form of a show-and-tell experience where inventors and makers have an opportunity to showcase their creations in a carnival atmosphere. The event combines creativity, ingenuity, resourcefulness and sustainability.
- As part of Dublin City Council’s Economic Development and Local Enterprise Office’s event sponsorship application process, applicants (such as cultural organisations) are asked to provide information related to their event’s sustainability measures e.g. use of recycled materials, waste reduction and management.
- The Local Enterprise Office encourages businesses to adopt sustainable working practices through programmes such as LEAN - a training programme which helps businesses

increase productivity whilst reducing waste - and ‘Profit with Purpose’ events which help SMEs and micro enterprises embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals into their operations. The Local Enterprise Office also sponsors events which promote innovation and sustainability such as the Responsible Innovation Summit.

## 3. Partnerships & Innovation

### Diverse disciplines and communities sharing and co-developing ideas and resources that accelerate environmental action

- The **Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership** is working with schools, universities, community groups, NGOs and local businesses to inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature. The Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership will oversee the collaborative planning, preparation and implementation of a Strategic Plan to fulfil the principles and aims of UNESCO’s ‘Man and the Biosphere’ programme.
- Dublin City Council, in partnership with various stakeholders, developed **MODOS** – a pioneering circular economy business training programme. The programme includes participants working in cultural event management and is supporting them in embedding sustainability into their event operations.



- Dublin City Council, in partnership with Wexford County Council and Fingal County Council, initiated a research project in 2017 titled **An Urgent Enquiry** with funding from the Arts Council under the 'Invitation to Collaboration' scheme. Each local authority hosted a think tank for artists, scientists and biodiversity experts to present approaches to art, biodiversity and climate change. The resulting 'An Urgent Enquiry' Artists Residency Commission offered artists the opportunity to reside for three months in each county to explore the biodiversity of each area and the effects of climate change. The research will result in new work in autumn 2019.
- **Dublin City Council Culture Company** runs numerous cultural place-making projects each year. The National Neighbourhood programme builds cultural projects in community settings and often involves natural and cultural heritage initiatives, connecting artists, groups and villages with libraries, museums and creative places. Environmentally-themed projects include: **Sea Songs on the Shore** – songs composed and performed by children on the theme of environment and sea conservation; and **Willow Zen Garden** – a creative garden project in Fairview Park by the Ballybough Craft Group and the Marino Art Class, supported by the architect Evelyn D'Arcy and the Newgrange Willow Weavers.
- **Dublin** is a member of **UNESCO Creative Cities Network**, a network created in 2004 to promote cooperation within and between cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.

## 4. Policy & Strategy

### Guiding policy and strategy frameworks that drive climate and environmental action, investment and accountability

- Dublin City Council's Cultural Strategy (2016–2021) explicitly recognises environment in the context of sustainable cities: 'a sustainable City is based upon the foundations of, and the interactions between, Economic Development, Environmental Sustainability, Social Inclusion, and Culture'. In addition, its fourth strategic priority offers much scope for environmental action: 'We will honour our past and focus on our future'.
- Dublin City's Culture and Creativity Strategy (2018-2022) prioritises cultural infrastructure and use of public space, including the provision of green space, committing to 'creating a positive energy in the City, through the development of green spaces, play spaces and seating areas throughout the City'.
- The Dublin City Development Plan (2016-2022) provides an integrated, coherent spatial framework to ensure Dublin thrives as a competitive, resilient, socially inclusive and sustainable city. Cultural and built heritage is recognised as an essential element of a sustainable approach to the future development of the city.
- Dublin Climate Change Action Plan (2019-2024) acknowledges the climate risks to natural and cultural heritage. Dublin's strategic approach to flood adaptation includes heritage, committing to the objective: 'protect, and enhance if possible, biodiversity and cultural heritage'.

# Where Next?

## Spotlight

### AUSTIN'S LIBRARIES

The **Dublin Bay Biosphere** is a biosphere reserve comprising Dublin Bay, North Bull Island and adjacent land, including parts of Dublin. The reserve, led by Dublin City Council, actively works to encourage sustainable development between people and nature, working with the National Parks & Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and hosting various events which integrate arts and culture with the environment.

Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership and the Irish Underwater Council wanted to raise awareness of local marine life and ran an underwater **photography competition** to encourage photographers to share their Dublin Bay images. **EuroMAB 2019**, a biennial four-day conference convening stakeholders from the 302 UNESCO Biospheres, provides the opportunity for collective approaches to manage the interactions between people and nature and support the conservation and celebration of natural and cultural heritage.

A number of opportunities have been identified:

#### 1. **Share good practice**

Research creative and cultural initiatives across the city which engage with environmental themes and practices, making them publicly available through an online resource. This will encourage new collaborations and good practice exchange and help build environmental knowledge, awareness and inspiration within the sector.

#### 2. **Collaborate**

Organise a regular meeting - or working group - to support ongoing collaboration between cultural and environmental departments and implementation of city strategy. Meeting topics could include: environmental management advice for cultural buildings and events; public art commissions and artist advocacy; and citizen outreach and engagement activities. Connecting with local creative and environmental businesses, academics, community leaders and other city stakeholders could produce new knowledge, partnerships and resource.

#### 3. **Develop implementation plans**

Dublin City Council's Cultural Strategy (2016–2021) explicitly recognises environment in the context of sustainable cities: 'a sustainable City is based upon the foundations of, and the interactions between, Economic Development, Environmental Sustainability, Social Inclusion, and Culture'. This vision now needs to be supported by implementation plans and targets, identifying partners and resource where required. Connect with key city stakeholders, businesses and public bodies to share ideas, resources and create joint initiatives.



4. **Include environment within cultural infrastructure developments**

Dublin City Council's Cultural Strategy commits to enhancing local cultural and creative infrastructure (for example, the planned Parnell Square Cultural Quarter in Dublin City and new Dublin City Library) within its third strategic priority. Look for opportunities to integrate environmental sustainability in capital projects from building design to environmental performance and management.

5. **Provide practical support to artists**

Embed environmental sustainability in public art frameworks, not just in terms of encouraging creative programming and practical guidelines relating to the environmental impact of materials, sourcing, construction and transportation.





## With special thanks to:

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