



Northern Ireland
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Programme for Government commitments: Culture, arts and leisure issues

1 Introduction

A Draft Programme for Government (PfG) was introduced to the Assembly on 17 November 2011, setting out the Executive's plans and priorities for the period 2011–15. The overall priorities of the PfG are:

1. Growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future;
2. Creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and well-being;
3. Protecting our people, the environment and creating safer communities;
4. Building a strong and shared community;
5. Delivering high quality and efficient public services.

The Executive also published a Draft Investment Strategy and an Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland. This briefing paper provides an overview of the main commitments and priorities set out within these documents in relation to culture, arts and leisure.

2 Key commitments

The Draft Programme for Government makes a series of commitments that lie directly within the remit of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. These commitments are highlighted in the following table, together with their specified milestones or outputs.¹

Priority	Commitment	Milestones/Outputs		
		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Priority 1: Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future	Support 200 projects through the Creative Industries Innovation Fund (DCAL)	100 projects overall	150 projects overall	200 projects Overall
Priority 4: Building a Strong and Shared Community	Develop sports stadiums as agreed with the IFA, GAA and Ulster Rugby (DCAL)	Develop and agree programme of developments and specific project plans	Implement key milestones and initiate development programme	Implement key milestones
Priority 4	Host the World Police and Fire Games in 2013 (DCAL)	Develop plans and project arrangements	Host the Games	–

Table 1: Summary of key commitments for DCAL in the Draft Programme for Government

In addition to these explicit commitments, the following ‘Building Blocks’ are over-seen by DCAL, or one of its arms-length bodies:

- *Priority 1: Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future*
 - Creative Industries Innovation Fund
 - World Police and Fire Games 2013
- *Priority 3: Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities*
 - Salmon and Eel Management Plans
- *Priority 4: Building a Strong and Shared Community*
 - Arts and Older People Strategy
 - Strategy for the Irish Language
 - Strategy for Ulster Scots Language, Heritage and Culture
 - Annual Support for Organisations Programme (Arts Council)
 - ‘Sport Matters’ – Strategy for Sport and Physical recreation
- *Priority 5: Delivering High Quality and Efficient Public Services*
 - Modernisation of Public Library Service

¹ Northern Ireland Executive (2011) *Draft Programme for Government 2011-15* Belfast: OFMDFM

3 Cross-departmental commitments

The following commitments are over-seen by other Departments but may have implications for the work of DCAL:

Priority	Commitment	Milestones/Outputs		
		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Priority 1: Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future	Support £300 million investment by businesses in R&D, with at least 20% coming from Small and Medium sized Enterprises (DETI)	Support £150m investment in R&D*	Support £75m investment in R&D	Support £75m investment in R&D
Priority 1	Provide financial and other support across government to ensure the success of the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013 (OFMDFM)	Creative industries hub in place at Ebrington	Visitor numbers to the City and visitor spend doubled	City of Culture Programme supported and delivered
Priority 2: Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing	Invest £7.2 million in programmes to tackle obesity (DHSSPS)	Invest £2m in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework	Invest £2.4m in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework	Invest £2.8m in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework
Priority 3: Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities ²	Protect and enhance our natural environment by working to halt the loss of biodiversity (DOE)	Publish revised Biodiversity Strategy Publish an Invasive Species Strategy Have revised Conservation Regulations in place in respect of Birds and Habitats Directives	Designate 15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest Consolidate Conservation Regulations	Designate 15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Table 2: Summary of commitments which may impact on DCAL

² May relate to the Salmon and Eel Management Plans, both of which are coordinated by DCAL.

4 Comparisons with Programme for Government 2007–2011

The previous Programme for Government set out the following targets for DCAL:

- By 2011 to maintain the proportion of library users in Northern Ireland who are satisfied with public library provision;
- To increase the total number of National Museums visitors to 585,000 by 2009;
- By 2011 to increase by 2 percentage points the proportion of the NI population who attend arts events;
- By 2011, halt the decline in adult participation in sport and physical recreation;
- By 2011 to have 125,000 children participating in sport and physical recreation;
- Increase sales in permits for public angling estate across minority groups and tourists by 2% each year to 2011;
- To increase the proportion of National Museums Northern Ireland collections that are accessible via the internet by 2011;
- The Northern Ireland public library network to have at least 6 public access workstations per 10,000 population by 2011 which have access to the internet and libraries catalogue;
- The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland will produce at least 6 searchable databases, all accessible via a single portal by 2011;
- Creation of the Northern Ireland Library Authority by 2009;
- By 2011 to be on schedule to deliver the Northern Ireland 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games Strategy, through monitoring key themes progress at six monthly intervals;
- By 2011 and subject to the normal approval processes to have an operationally viable and commercially sustainable Multi-Sports Stadium for Northern Ireland;
- By 2011 to have a minimum of 10 new or upgraded facilities that will support Northern Ireland player/athlete development in Olympic and Paralympics sports and which will be available for community and school use;
- By 2012 to seek to attract 10 nations competing in Olympic or Paralympics Games for pre-games training or acclimatisation;
- By 2011 to secure agreement of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympics Games (LOCOG) organisers to host the torch relay at 4 Northern Ireland venues.

A comparison between the 2007–2011 and 2012–15 programmes highlights the fact that the following policy areas are not included as key DCAL commitments in the Draft Programme for Government 2012–15:

- **London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games:** delivery of the Games Strategy, ten new or upgraded facilities for the delivery Olympic and Paralympics sports, and seeking to attract ten Olympic or Paralympic teams to pre-Games training camps.
- **Libraries policy:** quantity of facilities per capita and maintaining the proportion of library users satisfied with public library provision
- **Public Record Office:** increasing the level of access to collections.
- **Museums:** the 2007–2011 strategy contained targets relating to the accessibility of collections and numbers of visitors
- **Grassroots sport and physical recreation:** participation levels among children and adults
- **Arts:** increasing attendance at arts events.
- **Angling:** increasing permit sales to minority groups and tourists.

5 Draft Investment Strategy

The Draft Investment Strategy sets out the capital investment allocations for public services in Northern Ireland, and is an updated version of the strategy published in 2008.

Investment in culture, arts and leisure is mentioned in the Strategy. A section on 'skills' specifies that:

Libraries play an important role in helping to improve literacy, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas. The internet has brought about massive changes to the way that society chooses to learn and access information and this is opening up opportunities to expand public access through the use of technology.

The contribution made more broadly by culture, arts and leisure is highlighted as follows³:

Investment in culture, arts and leisure makes significant and material contributions to key pillars of the Programme for Government, in particular the economy including cultural tourism and local economic development, health, education and social inclusion.

The Strategy states that funding for the period from 2015/16 to 2020/21 assumes an increase of 2.7% per annum within the Block Grant that will be made available for capital investment.

³ Northern Ireland Executive. 2011. *Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012–2021*: pp30. This quotation is truncated.

With regard to culture, arts and leisure, the Strategy sets out the investment allocation (as highlighted in the table below) for culture, arts and leisure, with libraries identified separately under 'skills'.

	2011/12 to 2014/15	2015/16 to 2020/21	TOTAL
Libraries	12	70	82
Culture, arts and leisure	149	208	357

The Strategy notes that the figures and allocations for the 2015/16 to 2020/21 period are indicative only, and will be determined by the Executive through a subsequent budget process.

The Investment Strategy indicates that beyond the current budget period 'it is aimed to accelerate deferred investment in key sectors and projects', including the following:

- **Museums:** at both the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh and at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra and continuous improvement at the Ulster Museum, with the potential to generate substantial growth in tourism and income.
- **Sport:** in stadium safety to ensure the viability of sports grounds and safety of the public and in further community based programmes to contribute to improved health and preventative health interventions.
- **Arts:** in maintaining and improving the arts infrastructure to improve wellbeing, access to learning opportunities and cultural activities for local people and tourists.
- **Inland Waterways and Fisheries:** in the inland waterways, canals and fisheries network and infrastructure to contribute to increased tourism and community wellbeing.

In terms of the percentage allocation of capital investment to culture, arts and leisure, the total Investment Strategy budget is £438m, therefore the DCAL allocation makes up 3.48% of the total⁴.

6 Draft Economic Strategy

The Draft Economic Strategy sets out a number of measures and targets intended to 'improve the economic competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy'⁵. It sets out an 'economic vision', defines a number of 'challenges', and then describes an overall framework for both 'rebalancing' and 'rebuilding' the economy. The strategy defines a number of performance indicators.

In general, the actions defined in the Draft Economic Strategy which relate to culture, arts and leisure present nothing new or distinct, with initiatives deriving from those set

⁴ Northern Ireland Executive. 2011. *Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012–2021*: p50.

⁵ Northern Ireland Executive. 2011. *Economic Strategy: Priorities for sustainable growth and prosperity*: p4.

out in the Programme for Government. For example, included under 'Key Rebalancing Measures' are the following:

- Support 200 projects through the Creative Industries Innovation Fund by 2015;
- Develop Regional Sports Stadiums as agreed with the IFA, GAA and Ulster Rugby.

Furthermore, the creative industries are identified as a sector with the potential to 'continue to make important contributions to the NI economy'⁶. The World Police and Fire Games and the Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture in 2013 are noted as 'key events' which have the potential to 'change the global perceptions of NI as a place to live, work, invest and visit'⁷.

⁶ Northern Ireland Executive. 2011. *Economic Strategy: Priorities for sustainable growth and prosperity*: p13.

⁷ Northern Ireland Executive. 2011. *Economic Strategy: Priorities for sustainable growth and prosperity*: p26.