



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Places for People

National Policy on Architecture




Department of Housing, Local
Government & Heritage 2022
www.gov.ie/housing

The National Policy on Architecture outlines ways to promote and embed quality in architecture and the built and natural environment over the coming years in Ireland.

The policy objectives are supported by a range of actions intended to build towards achieving the policy vision:

The power of architecture and design to support a more sustainable and resilient society based on knowledge and creativity and driven by leadership and inclusive participation.

Successful implementation depends on the communication of this vision to gain the support and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in public and civil society.



**The National Policy
on Architecture
promotes the power of
architecture and design
to bring about a more
sustainable society.**

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Foreword.

Minister Darragh O'Brien



I believe that architecture is about people and for people. The buildings, places and spaces that are made, shaped, used and managed by people define the social and physical context of our lives. The decisions we make about the environments that surround us directly affect our quality of life, our identity, our health and welfare, sense of place and how we use our time.

The high-quality places we inherit and those we make today not only serve our needs for shelter, commerce, culture, leisure and mobility, they also anchor us in the past and accompany us into the future.

Ireland has signed up to European and international commitments to address the complex challenges of sustaining and stabilising the Earth and its resources. We have formally declared a climate emergency and simultaneously we have a housing crisis. The National Policy on Architecture seeks to put architecture at the centre of how we respond to these complex, interdependent pressures in order to achieve human-centred outcomes.

The role of architecture in guiding how we may house a growing population is easily understood; however architecture is critically connected to the ways we plan, reuse and build well in the future to mitigate and adapt to climate change and sustain our planet.

Since 1997, successive architecture policies have helped to raise awareness of the many ways architecture benefits us all. These policies have supported innovative and sustainable initiatives over many years, which have increased the body of knowledge and organisational networks.

A critical success factor in implementing this policy will be the willingness of public and private sector organisations to lead innovative creative and practical approaches to solving complex built environment problems, through interdisciplinary and inter-organisational structures, processes and projects.

Darragh O'Brien, TD
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
April 2022

Foreword.

Minister Malcolm Noonan



In Ireland our incredible architectural heritage shows the value of good design, high-quality, lasting materials and practical craft skills. Our built heritage enlivens our localities, inspires new creativity and reminds us that buildings were hard won from local materials – stone, earth, iron, wood and water – and were valued and maintained over centuries.

The built heritage shows us the way forward for the circular economy: to value the embodied carbon, work with buildings that have already proven their durability, reuse and incrementally repair them, valuing the human skills involved and limit new materials and components to those that are compatible, carbon neutral or low-carbon, and locally sourced.

It is essential now that we think clearly about the ways we engage with, reuse and develop our surroundings. Changes to our climate are accelerating, with obvious effects and challenges. Ecological pressures are mounting. Our physical resources are finite and vulnerable to overexploitation.

Our new National Policy on Architecture sets out the ways this Government will lead on delivering high quality, coordinated built and natural environment action, while supporting the objectives and priorities set out in Housing for All, the National Development Plan and the Climate Action Plan.

I look forward to working together to progress the actions set out in this Policy over the months and years ahead.

Malcolm Noonan, TD
Minister for Heritage and Electoral Reform
April 2022

Executive Summary.

The National Policy on Architecture will promote and embed quality in architecture and the built environment in Ireland, for increased environmental, economic and social sustainability and resilience.

The policy vision emphasises the power of architecture and design to support a more sustainable and resilient society based on knowledge and creativity and driven by leadership and inclusive participation. This vision reflects the priorities distilled through analysis of the consultation submissions.

The policy supports the implementation of architectural and built environment priorities including Project Ireland 2040, the Climate Action Plan 2021, Housing for All and Town Centre First. In the European context, policy direction and funding mechanisms stem from the European Green Deal, including the Renovation Wave, Just Transition and the New European Bauhaus. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals influence both national and European priorities.

Four objectives support the policy vision:

Sustainability

Respect our past – shape our future – prioritise environmentally sensitive buildings and places to achieve sustainable development goals

Quality

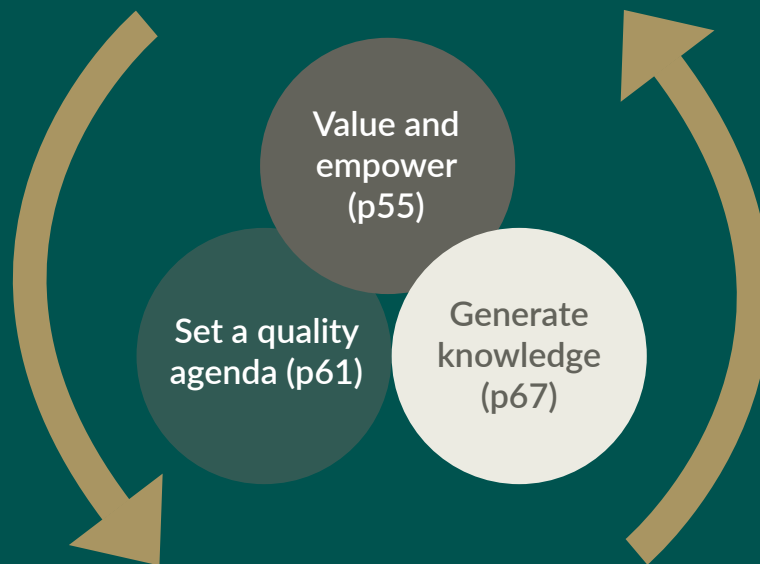
Design and deliver quality buildings and spaces for all

Leadership

Advocate for leadership to prioritise quality architectural outcomes

Culture

Foster a culture that values architecture as both art and science, serving people, place and planet



Many of the actions recommended by stakeholders during the consultation process span all four objectives. As a result, the implementation programme is organised, not under the objectives themselves, but under three categories of actions.

These three categories are:

Value and Empower

Value architecture, empower people: foster culture change for sustainability

Set a Quality Agenda

Set a quality agenda to achieve sustainability

Generate Knowledge

Enhance the evidence-base through research, education and knowledge exchange

‘Value and Empower’ is primarily about people and culture; ‘Set a Quality Agenda’ is about robust methods and frameworks; and ‘Generating Knowledge’ is about generating and using information. The three form an interdependent triangle, which, when addressed holistically, will achieve the objectives of the policy.

A delivery board, chaired by the Principal Architect in the Office of Public Works/State Architect and including representatives from Government Departments and public bodies, will oversee the implementation programme.

Three initial priority actions are identified as foundations for the implementation programme: create a public sector information loop; agree a set of national design quality criteria; and analyse architectural and built environment research needs and data requirements.

The delivery board will be responsible for scoping out the actions and will work with all stakeholders to prioritise and schedule projects to ensure implementation.



Butler Gallery, Kilkenny by McCullough Mulvin Architects. Highly commended, RIAI Awards 2021.
Photos by Ros Kavanagh.



Kingston University Town House, London, by Grafton Architects.
RIAI award winner, 2021; Mies van der Rohe Award for
contemporary architecture, 2022.
Photos by Dennis Gilbert and Ed Reeve.

Introduction.

National policy context

The National Policy on Architecture sits within a broad national environmental policy context, which includes the National Development Plan and National Planning Framework, the Climate Action Plan 2021, Housing for All, Town Centre First, Our Rural Future, national obligations under the EU Water Framework Directive and sectoral national strategies such as the National Biodiversity Plan 2017-2021, Heritage Ireland 2030 and Culture 2025.

These regulations, policies, programmes and strategies respond to European and international commitments, which have been put in place to address social and environmental challenges. Government and EU initiatives have set strategic objectives for: compact growth, strengthened rural economies and communities, urban and regional redevelopment, carbon neutrality and climate-resilience, enhanced amenity and heritage, sustainable management of water, waste and other environmental resources and sustainable mobility.

The built environment requires significant investment to meet current and forecast population growth (5.7m people by 2040). Therefore, Ireland must: repurpose (and reuse for housing) existing buildings, public places and infrastructure, adopt new construction techniques and materials, improve living standards and accommodate

new developments, all while making the transition to a sustainable, circular economy and society. The success of this transition is affected by a range of issues including affordability, low levels of built environment research and development, low levels of construction capacity, and lengthy development timescales.

Project Ireland 2040, the Climate Action Plan and Housing for All are the combined national response to the types of systemic issues identified above. The Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board and Construction Sector Group are working collaboratively with construction sector representative organisations on coordinated sectoral responses, including improvements in productivity, innovation and skills.

Housing for All has a wide breadth, including housing standards, sustainability and quality-of-life issues; balancing the planning system in terms of land use, value-sharing and community gain; and tackling vacancy and urban regeneration. The Town Centre First policy is an objective of Housing for All.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) is currently reviewing procurement policy for public works projects; the aim being to leverage highly skilled inputs for quality outcomes while controlling cost and schedules.

Successful implementation of the National Policy on Architecture will be a major factor in framing the quality of the built and natural environment for Ireland's current and future population.

The Climate Action Plan 2021 proposes ambitious and multi-sectoral actions relating to sustainable use of the environment and all of its natural and cultural resources. These actions include area-based local initiatives specific to the built environment; creativity and innovative thinking to bring about a carbon-neutral, circular economy; and research, innovation, data collection and tools to evaluate and improve the environmental performance of materials and buildings.

The climate change sectoral adaptation plans created under the National Adaptation Framework for many areas, including the Built and Archaeological Heritage, Health, Biodiversity, Flood Risk Management, Transport Infrastructure and Water Infrastructure are also relevant.

Architecture is an art form (Arts Act 2003) as well as a practical, technical undertaking. It will be supported by Championing Architecture, the Arts Council's new architecture policy. Culture 2025 has three principles, all of which relate closely to this policy: recognising the value of culture and creativity to the individual and society, including through a sense of place; supporting creative practice and cultural participation and cherishing our cultural heritage.

A principal function of the National Policy on Architecture is to support collaboration between central and local government to complement the implementation of the national built environment and culture priorities that are listed above.

The policy will enable actions that help to: strengthen the evidence base through research, education and knowledge sharing; illustrate the benefits that architecture and design creativity bring for a high-quality environment, society and economy; and utilise capacity, leadership and innovation.

National built environment policy landscape

- Strategy or policy
- Standards
- Manual
- Guidelines

Planning policy



Housing & built environment policy



Architecture & built heritage policy



Climate policy



Architecture is critically connected to the ways we plan, reuse and build well now and in the future to mitigate and adapt to climate change and sustain our planet.

International & European policy context

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, by addressing the global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

At European level, the imperative of climate change is the focus of EU initiatives, stimulus packages and research programmes, most importantly the European Green Deal, which aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent. Many practical steps are underway to put these aims into practice, such as publishing the Circular Economy Action Plan (2020), adopting the International Construction Measurement Standard and implementing the EU Level(s) initiative, a voluntary new reporting framework to improve the sustainability of buildings.

The approach to research, territorial and social funding at a European scale in the Framework Programmes – such as Horizon Europe, the European Structural and Investment Funds, and the European Territorial Cooperation Programme (URBACT, an instrument of Cohesion Policy) – is inclusive, cooperative and strategic in support of political priorities.

In 2020, the Commission published the New Leipzig Charter on the transformative power of cities for the common good. The Charter provides a policy framework for an integrated and sustainable approach to urban development in Europe, and a broader understanding of culture and cultural heritage as resources for increasing the resilience of urban centres.

These multiple initiatives confirm that the European Commission is increasingly cognisant of the importance of the built and natural environment, sustainability and citizens' quality of life for social cohesion. High quality architecture and built environment for all is therefore an emerging environmental, economic and cultural priority at European level. This priority is currently centred on the New European Bauhaus, the cultural and creative heart of the Green Deal, which was launched in January 2021.

The New European Bauhaus proposes that the quality of the entire built environment is a strategic imperative; that construction serves artistic, aesthetic, cultural, social and psychological needs as well as environmental, economic and technical purposes. Collectively, these needs and purposes

The policy will act as a bridge to disseminate European level architectural policy and quality priorities, both current and emerging, within Ireland.

are strategic drivers of the multi-billion euro Green Deal framework and will be instrumental in the transition to circularity of governance, the built environment and society.

The European Commission published *Council conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative* in November 2021. This formal communication invites Member States to undertake a broad range of actions, including to 'enhance policy coherence for high-quality architecture and built environment through appropriate coordination ... to embed a quality-based and holistic approach in all policies and activities that have an impact on the built and living environment'. The National Policy on Architecture is Ireland's response to this invitation and the implementation of the policy actions will address its specific recommendations.

The New European Bauhaus was itself built on the concept of Baukultur, which translates as 'building culture' and embraces the idea of building well. The Conference of EU Ministers of Culture signed the Davos Declaration, *Towards a high-quality Baukultur for Europe*, in 2018. This is a shared vision to deliver quality in the built environment, which is conceived as a common good with collective responsibility.

The Davos Declaration highlights the central role of culture and cultural heritage in the built environment.

The European Commission will use the New European Bauhaus to promote the Davos Baukultur Quality System, which is a set of quality principles developed from the Davos Declaration, to underpin high-quality, holistic built environment decision-making. The eight Davos criteria are: governance, functionality, environment, economy, diversity, context, sense of place and beauty. Each criterion must be considered in the process of designing and procuring a project to achieve a high quality outcome.

The European Commission report, *Towards a shared culture of architecture: investing in a high-quality living environment for everyone (2021)*, is the first time that national level architectural policies and practices have been analysed and synthesised at EU level. The report contains a quality assessment checklist that aligns with both the Davos Baukultur Quality System and the European Quality Principles for EU-funded Interventions with Potential Impact upon Cultural Heritage (ICOMOS, 2020).

The report also showcases best practice projects, including two case studies from Ireland – Clonakilty 400 and the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Design Review initiative. It illustrates

that measures such as the strategic placement of architectural expertise, coordination between stakeholders and use of high-quality criteria at all governance levels and all stages, are feasible in practice and result in people-centred high-quality living environment outcomes.

The timing of the parallel processes at European and national level has been of great benefit to the development of the National Policy on Architecture.

Role and purpose of the policy

The policy will support national and local architectural ambitions to deliver a high quality built environment for everyone, to wisely use finite resources and to achieve measurable quality in public sector programmes, procurement and project delivery at a national level.

The National Policy on Architecture will support and promote quality and sustainability in the design and delivery of built environment plans, programmes and projects at national, regional and local level.

Scope of the policy

The National Policy on Architecture will support and promote quality in researching, understanding, designing, managing, enhancing and reusing our existing built environment assets as well as delivering sustainable new places and spaces. It will support long-term spatial planning and public awareness strategies. The policy will contribute to addressing sustainability issues including societal well-being, climate change and urban regeneration. It will promote and support interdisciplinary research and digital innovation as the bases for tackling and informing challenges.

During the lifetime of this policy, significant changes are likely to take place nationally, in town and city centres and across urban and rural communities.

These changes will require people to be proactively involved at all decision-making levels; to contribute their creative thinking, skills and perspectives; to co-create, build, manage and regenerate a high quality built environment, which is affordable and accessible to everyone. This policy will support greater public engagement and access to knowledge about the importance of safeguarding our built heritage and natural environment.

Societal wellbeing requires places that are designed to encourage healthy and inclusive social interaction, accessibility and cultural engagement. Environmental wellbeing requires the safe-guarding and restoration of the natural environment to support pressurised ecosystems, the repair and adaptation of cultural buildings and their settings, and the appropriate design of new buildings and landscapes.

The continued development and regeneration of our traditional settlements, villages, towns and cities requires the conservation and re-imagining of our existing built heritage as well as well-considered new architecture. This policy supports the strategic approach to town centre revitalisation – the Town Centre First policy (established as an integral part of Our Rural Future and Housing for All).

A coordinated approach is essential to combat vacancy and underuse of traditional town buildings and to deliver development that is: at an appropriate scale, design and layout; in proportion with the character, scale and grain of historic town centres; and accommodating of the existing natural and built environment.

A broad range of stakeholders contribute to shaping, designing and delivering the built environment.

Stakeholders of the policy

The National Policy on Architecture recognises the vital roles that the public, communities, and all built environment professionals play in our transition to a more sustainable society. Many stakeholders, whether individuals, large corporations or public bodies, contribute to the creative renovation of buildings, housing and public places, and to the development of new buildings and spaces.

The significant challenges posed by climate resilience and circularity of materials and energy (to minimise carbon use) require strengthened links, cross-collaboration and motivated leadership and governance. All government departments, sectors, institutions and the construction industry are stakeholders in the successful implementation of this policy.

As well as built environment professionals, a broad range of other stakeholders shape, design and deliver the built environment. Natural environment stakeholders require the considered integration of human and natural capital to stabilise our impact on the Earth's resources. Research, education and training stakeholders seek evidence based research to foster traditional skills and new knowledge to ensure that ever-evolving needs are

met. Communication stakeholders increase awareness and circulate best practice, stimulating interest and involvement.

All stakeholders increasingly value the skills base of both traditional trades and the emerging green, blue and digital occupations, which are vital to realising the vision of this policy, as well as the major investment programmes outlined in Project Ireland 2040 and Housing for All.

The policy will support multidisciplinary collaboration, public engagement and community-led, co-design initiatives that use responsible design principles to integrate new developments into town and village settings. Co-creation can result in places where society and life flourish, while decarbonising our built environment, integrating nature-based solutions for river catchment areas into placemaking and accommodating a growing population.



The Hanging Gardens, Limerick, by Carr Cotter Naessens and Denis Byrne Architects. RIAI Award winner, 2019.
Photo by Paul Tierney.



Field, Stonewall, House, County Galway, by Taylor McCarney Architects.
RIAI Award winner, 2021. Photo by Donal Murphy.

Snapshot of international and European policy influences on Places for People



- United Nations
- European Union
- Council of Europe
- Swiss Confederation



Leinster House, Dublin, conservation and restoration by the Office of Public Works.
RIAI Award winner, 2020. Photos by Con Brogan Photography.

Developing this policy.

The National Policy on Architecture was developed through cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders and Government Departments and through a public engagement and consultation process.

An advisory group supported the policy development. This was composed of representatives from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (formerly both the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government), Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (formerly the Department of Education and Skills); the Office of Public Works; the Health Service Executive; the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland; the schools of architecture, the City and County Architects Association, the Arts Council, the Heritage Council and the Irish Architecture Foundation.

The discussion document, Places for People, set out five themes covering best practice approaches (knowledge and innovation; leadership) and three priority subject areas (designing for climate resilience and sustainability; designing quality places for public benefit; respecting our past, shaping our future).

The public engagement process generated over 120 submissions from 123 individuals and organisations.

The submissions were made by community organisations, individuals, representative bodies, membership organisations, NGOs, local authorities, building professionals, designers, heritage practitioners, academic institutions and the public sector.

There were also 11 multi-disciplinary workshops, an online survey, which received 38 responses, 5 videos created by Grangegorman Development Agency and associated media activity. These inputs were analysed and synthesised into briefing reports that were then further examined by the advisory group to support the development of the policy.

In addition to the public consultation process, a review of national and EU policies was undertaken to ensure alignment, where appropriate. A comprehensive consultation report was prepared following analysis of the submissions and a review of the previous Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015.



Waterford Cathedral Square by GKMP Architects.
Commended, RIAI awards 2014. Photo courtesy
Waterford City and County Council.



Lee Point Student Accommodation, Cork by Scott
Tallon Walker Architects. RIAI Award winner, 2021.
Photo by Philip Lauterbach.

National Policy on Architecture Vision.

The power of architecture and design to support a more sustainable and resilient society based on knowledge and creativity and driven by leadership and inclusive participation

The National Policy on Architecture promotes the power of architecture and design to bring about a more sustainable society. Leadership is central to delivering this vision of quality, which is built on research, knowledge and innovation. Combined with design creativity and agreed quality criteria, user requirements are translated into attractive, generous, accessible and sustainable spaces and places. The actions of this policy will promote high quality built environment design and construction to benefit all.

The National Policy for Architecture provides a direct policy link to the ongoing pan-European initiatives outlined above. These will set the future architecture priorities for the European Union under the umbrella of the European Green Deal. They are about building a sustainable future through creativity, innovation and imagination, with an ambition to go 'beyond buildings', to bring benefit to the whole of society.

Three phrases that underpin the intent of the New European Bauhaus are also essential to understanding the vision of this policy:

- necessary can be beautiful
- good design improves lives
- a more beautiful and humane world.

**“Architecture is a visual, physical, narrative of hope.”
(Mary Robinson, Venice Biennale 2018)**



Grangegorman Urban Quarter, Dublin, developed from an award-winning Masterplan by Moore Rubell Yudel and Duffy Mitchell O'Donoghue. Photo by Tom Coakley, Barrow Coakley Photo and Video, reproduced courtesy of Grangegorman Development Agency

Governance Arrangements.

The governance model outlined below will bridge the gap between the policy vision and its implementation. It takes into account the structures of public administration; ambitions of national and international policies and programmes; successful models of public engagement with architecture, culture and spatial planning and the mechanics of knowledge exchange between actors with differing interests and objectives. In doing so it strikes a practical balance between international best practice and Irish structures and processes.

The policy will be overseen by a high-level group (the Delivery Board) chaired by the Principal Architect in the Office of Public Works (the State Architect). It will include high-level representatives from the Heritage, Planning and Housing divisions of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, as well as other Government Departments, public bodies (including the Arts Council and Heritage Council) and the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland.

Delivery board role

The delivery board will prepare a multi-annual work programme, with inbuilt flexibility to enable it to respond to emerging political, environmental, social and economic priorities.

It will be responsible for programme management and will manage internal and stakeholder communication and dissemination.

The delivery board should, at a minimum, meet four times per year. Each meeting will be attended by two or more representatives of an expert group, which will be established to guide implementation.

The functions of the delivery board will include:

Structured engagement with the implementing bodies of priority national built environment initiatives: Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board, Construction Sector Group and/or Coordination Group; Climate Action Plan; Housing for All; Town Centre First (etc.).

Adopt goals for the implementation programme from the policy report, enhanced as necessary by evolving national and European architectural and built environment policy direction.

Set up an Irish New European Bauhaus steering group to support the European Commission's New European Bauhaus initiative, and participate in the proposed EU-wide informal network for exchange of information and experience.

Establish an expert advisory group, representative of a wide range of environmental and cultural stakeholders and sector representative organisations with an architecture and built environment remit, to guide the delivery board in implementing the action programme.

Agree and set a multi-year action programme in close consultation with the expert group with key performance indicators, goals, timelines, a review schedule and annual progress reports.

- Initiate the following priority actions in first year (design of actions to be scoped with expert group):
 - » Create a virtual public sector information loop (output is an online knowledge exchange service)
 - » Formulate national design quality criteria (output is a report with recommendations)
 - » Analyse architectural and built environment research needs and data requirements (output is a review report with recommendations)
- Set an overarching implementation schedule

- Set and standardise relevant eligibility and assessment criteria for the funding programme in partnership with the expert group, so that funded projects include clearly attainable and demonstrable goals (see below)

Facilitate cooperation between implementing organisations to structure practical methods of cooperation, e.g. partnerships, memoranda of understanding; protocols; codes of practice; performance delivery agreements.

Support partner organisations to combine objectives to volunteer to drive and co-create mutually beneficial actions.

Seek commitments for funding or other resources from public sector bodies which will benefit from the delivery of specific National Policy on Architecture actions and make the case for multi-annual funding for the policy implementation programme similar to equivalent programmes across government (e.g. tourism).

Devise a range of funding methods to encourage actions to be pursued by partnerships of cross-sectoral implementing bodies, with not more than 50% of annual budget to be allocated to competitive grant funding.

Devise a method to be inclusive to accommodate a diverse range of interest groups in refining and scoping proposed actions while maintaining a balance of voices.

Design and manage communications, tracking, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

- Each initiated action will be assigned measurable indicators and progress will be tracked (indicators to be agreed with expert group)
- Disseminate completed outputs and reporting on all funded initiatives / schemes, with reports logged and filed in a central and accessible location
- Require promoters of initiatives and schemes to submit annual updates on status and final report

Further notes on the implementation and communication of the policy are contained in Appendices 2 and 3.

Objectives, action areas and desired outcomes.



The aims for the National Policy on Architecture, which were developed in response to the consultation process, have been distilled into four key objectives:

Sustainability

Respect our past – shape our future: Prioritise environmentally sensitive buildings and places to achieve sustainable development goals

Quality

Design and deliver quality buildings and spaces for all

Leadership

Advocate for leadership to prioritise quality architectural outcomes

Culture

Foster a culture which values architecture as both art and science, serving people, place and planet

The four objectives are not ordered by priority or implementation sequence.

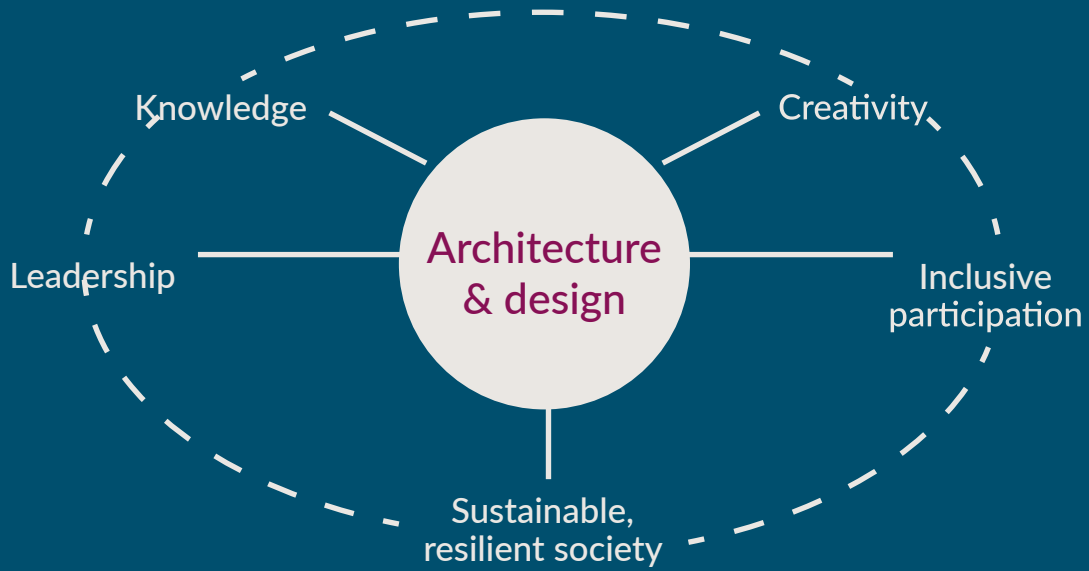
A number of focus areas are identified under each objective within the text that follows. These describe approaches to architecture and the built environment that will be of key importance in implementing the policy, and through which positive outcomes can be achieved.

The objectives, and their associated focus areas, emphasise embedding quality architecture at all levels of design, facilitating and strengthening connections to achieve quality, and promoting architecture as an art form integral to Irish culture and wellbeing.

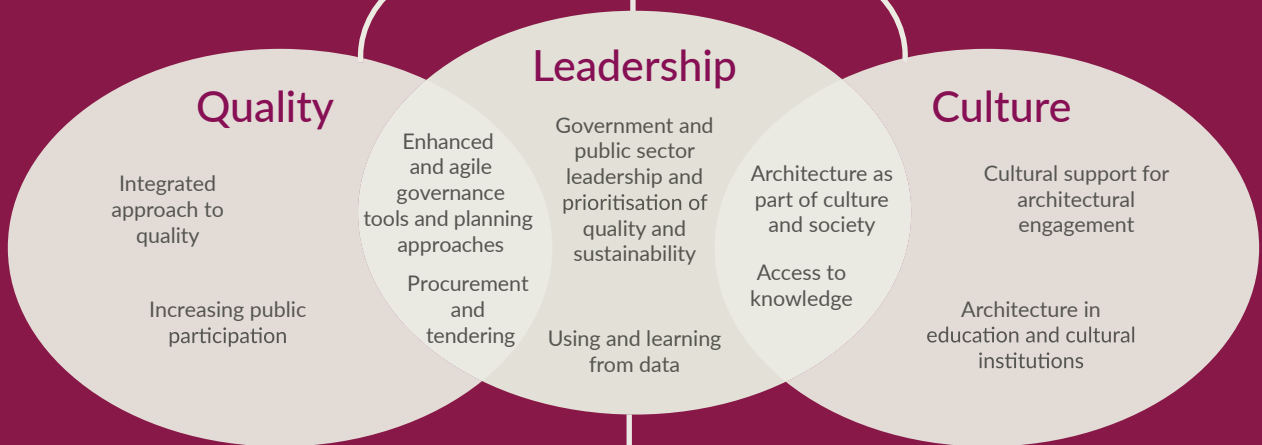
Some of the focus areas described in this chapter and action areas set out in Tables 1 and 2 are new, while others build on initiatives commenced or completed under the previous Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015.

The policy will act as a living document, a means of defining intended outcomes while providing flexibility with respect to the way in which these are implemented.

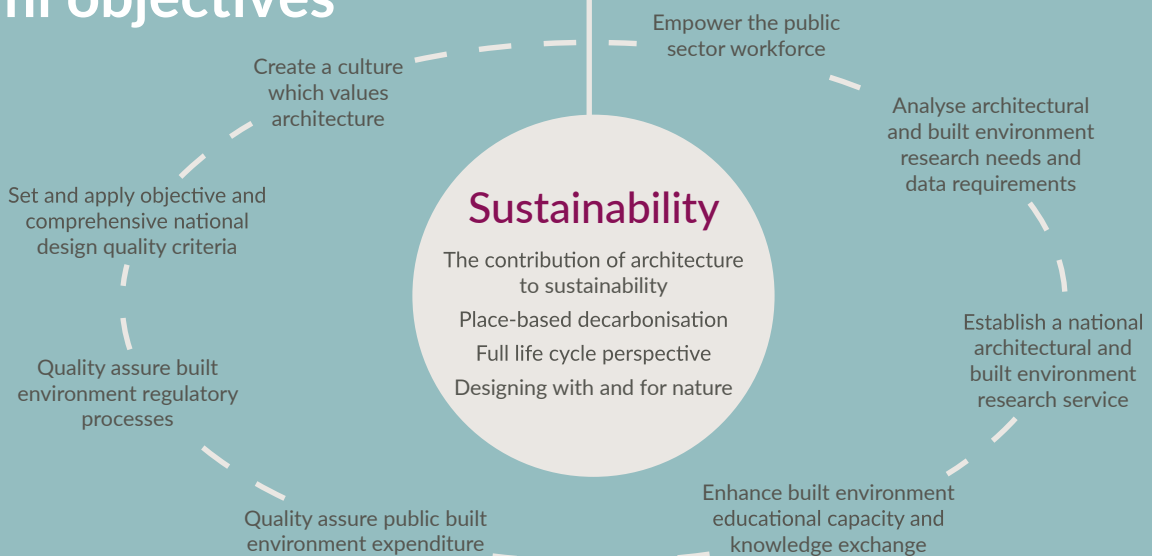
Vision



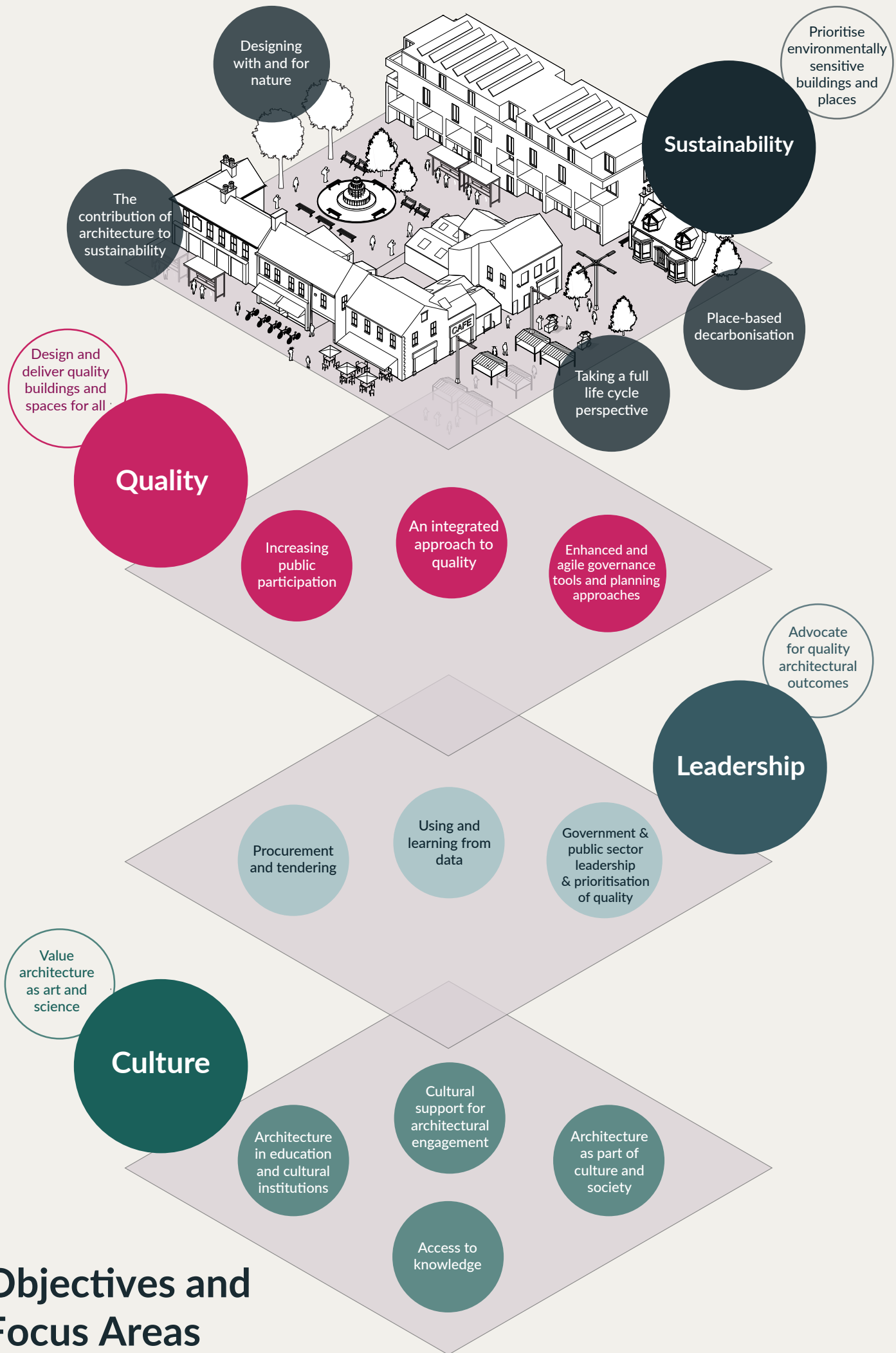
Objectives and focus areas



Selection of action areas to fulfil objectives



Action areas influence choice of key performance indicators



Objectives and Focus Areas



Meath County Council HQ by Bucholz McEvoy Architects. RIAI Award winner 2018.
Photo by Michael Moran.

Objective 1: Sustainability.



The aim of Objective 1 is to prioritise and support sustainable practices with respect to reuse, refurbishment and conservation of buildings as well as well-considered interventions and infill, and new buildings and places where necessary. Carbon neutrality, and building longevity, flexibility and adaptability are essential to environmental sustainability.

Respect Our Past — Shape Our Future — Prioritise environmentally sensitive buildings and places to achieve sustainable development goals

The contribution of architecture to sustainability

Buildings should be designed and built for minimal energy inputs and optimal long-term performance and adaptability to help reduce greenhouse emissions to sustainable levels. The policy will support creative ways to adapt, retrofit and reuse existing buildings and structures to optimise the use of traditional skills, appropriate materials, renewable energy and resources, and to incentivise the adoption of carbon-neutral technologies, processes and techniques, aiding the transition from fossil fuels.

By reusing, repairing, adapting and upgrading buildings in a sensitive and holistic way we help Ireland move towards a carbon-neutral society (with net-zero emissions) and circular economy. This policy will support regeneration and training partnerships, assisted by EU programmes, to undertake projects of high quality design and conservation, giving learners on such projects traditional and modern design and technical skills processes and techniques, aiding the transition from fossil fuels.

In line with commitments made through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement (2015) and Sustainable

Development Goals (2015), and the EU Green Deal and Urban Agenda, the Irish Government has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Throughout the transformation to 2050, billions of euro will be invested by government in construction, renovation and refurbishment projects.

The Climate Action Plan details levels and types of governance, structures and processes, targets and budgets, to help achieve such a transformational change. Another part of the challenge is to ensure financial aids and guidance measures support everyone to understand what true sustainability for homes, public buildings and places, landscapes and infrastructure really means and requires.

Ireland has committed to a Just Transition in climate action to ensure that the burdens of change are fairly borne by all sectors of society and that no groups or communities are left behind.

These ambitions are core to Project Ireland 2040 and the Climate Action Plan and to the long-term revitalisation of our urban centres and historic towns and villages. This policy will support them by raising public awareness about the role of architecture in increasing energy efficiency, retrofitting and the design and delivery of a sustainable high quality built environment.

Place-based decarbonisation

Changes in land-use, planning policy, and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and our existing building stock will be key drivers in achieving climate change goals. They will bring about many changes to our built and natural environment, both in terms of housing, public buildings and public spaces and also the wider systems and infrastructure that support these, such as transport, water and waste services, cultural resources and amenities.

Therefore, the transformation to sustainability requires a cultural shift in the governance of our built and natural environment. The transition to net-zero carbon cannot succeed without public acceptance and coordinated public and private sector actions.

The design of new buildings and infrastructure must be well considered from an environmental perspective. Climate neutrality means designing and constructing new buildings and infrastructure with radically reduced carbon footprints in construction and much longer lifespans.

Local and national architecture and design strategies will prioritise the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings with particular focus on urban centres: avoiding or minimising the demolition of existing structures, prioritising vacant buildings and brownfield sites and safeguarding cultural assets as a community resource. Where new build is justified, these strategies may favour “loose fit” structures: flexible, long-life buildings, constructed with sustainable materials that better adapt to future circumstances and changed uses.

Place-based decarbonisation means carefully screening where and which buildings should be permitted and assessing their projected quality, longevity and usability as part of life cycle analysis. It means working with and repairing the existing building stock wherever possible, rather than planning new construction by default, and repurposing materials as well as re-imagining buildings for reuse.

The design of buildings and multi-functional public spaces should make it easier for the public to make carbon-neutral and low-carbon choices, for example

in where they live and how they travel. But it is hard for many stakeholders to visualise what these commitments will mean: what a net-zero emission built environment will look like, will cost, and what opportunities and benefits it might bring.

The actions of this policy will provide an aid to engage with, understand and put into practice a sustainable built environment.

The policy actions will integrate conservation perspectives and practices into the mainstream for high-quality renovation of traditionally constructed buildings and care of natural resources. This broader awareness of the materials and skills of the past, working with local natural resources, tools and landscapes, will help to shape the design, materials and technologies of future buildings and places.

Actions will support practical solutions for local and sectoral involvement in addressing climate change through existing and new structures and partnerships, such as activation of local supply chains repurposing building components and materials.

“Imagine a Europe that supports, cares for and listens to those less frequently heard; one that renovates existing buildings to make homes, schools, places of culture that are carbon neutral, beautiful and distinctive; one that builds resilience to extreme weather events using nature based solutions; one that attracts people of all ages to live good quality, socially connected lives.”

(Orla Murphy, New European Bauhaus High-level Roundtable member)

Taking a full life cycle perspective

It is important to consider the climate and environmental impacts across the whole building life cycle, as these occur across resource and material inputs, operation and construction and in demolition and disposal. The concept of the circular economy is to use, repurpose and reuse, with minimal reprocessing and a short, ideally local, supply chain.

Emerging and interconnecting concepts include design of buildings for disassembly, use of building materials that sequester carbon, free-to-use carbon counters, digital innovation, augmented reality and smart communities, grass roots initiatives, community engagement and circular governance to aid the transition to a circular sustainable economy.

The initiatives undertaken as part of the Climate Action Plan, as well as new regulations, will assist in determining whether and how buildings should be refurbished and retrofitted or – only where essential – demolished and replaced by zero-carbon options, with their materials and components dismantled, collected in materials banks and reused with minimal reprocessing.

These new requirements demand collaborative research and innovation into carbon-positive materials and advanced construction methods suited to Irish circumstances. They also require training in the right skills, not just for effective energy upgrading – including thermal upgrade of traditionally constructed solid masonry wall buildings – but also designing for disassembly, specifying and refitting building components to be fit for a series of purposes over time, dismantling and sorting redundant elements, and repurposing or reusing them.

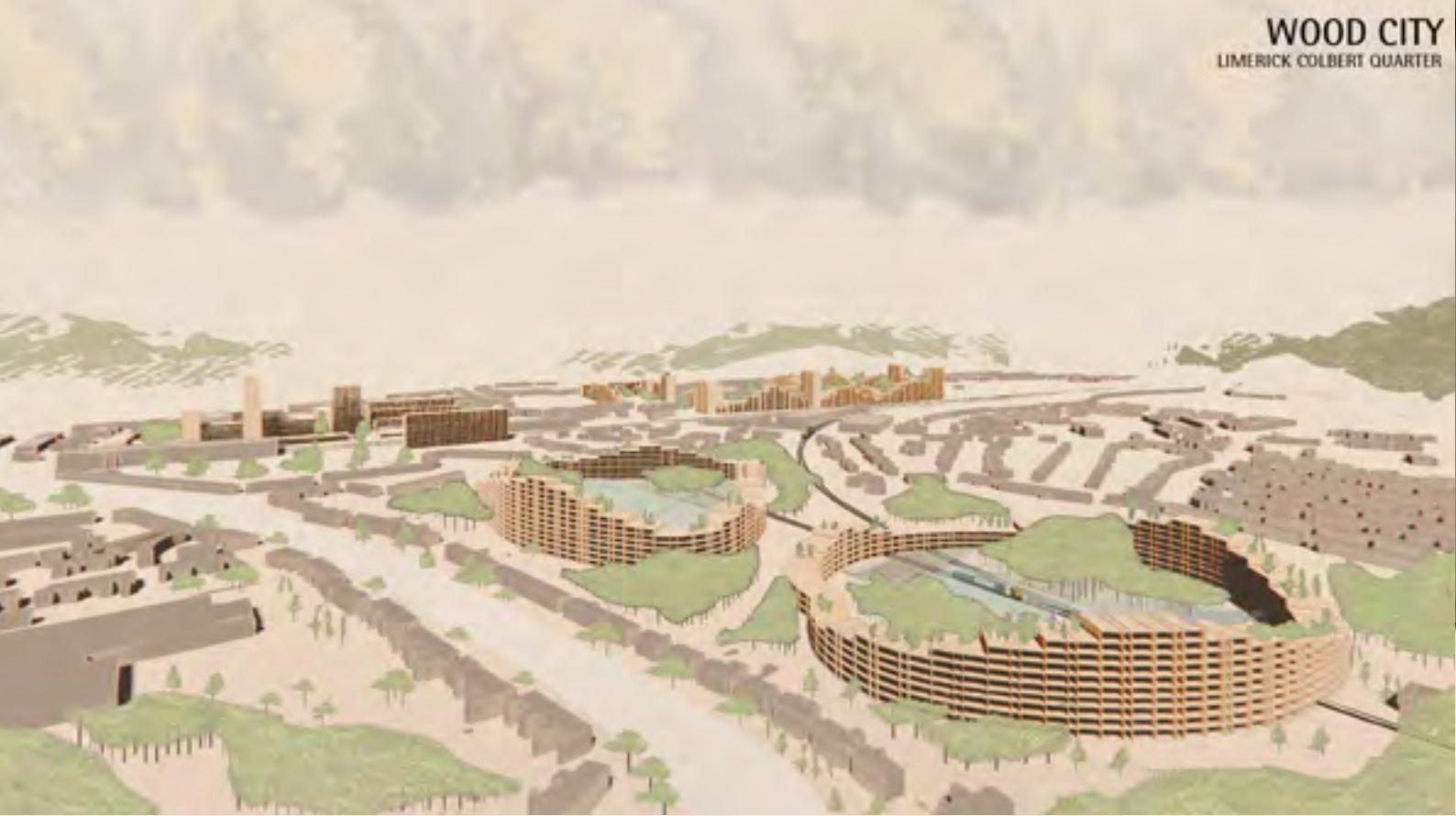
Designing with and for nature

Significant adaptation of the built environment will be required to cope with the effects of climate change, including increased frequency and ferocity of storms and flood events, sea level rise, which will threaten coastal settlements, coastal erosion and urban heat islands.

Architectural input at local authority plan-making stage will help to achieve an optimal solution so that climate adaptation measures are designed and well integrated into infrastructural plans and the wider public realm, through sustainable, nature-based urban drainage solutions, flood and coastal defences and sustainable energy generation.

Appreciation is steadily increasing in Ireland about the multiple adverse impacts of the built environment on nature. There is growing capacity and demand for the development of green and blue infrastructure to regulate drainage and heat build-up, for offsetting traffic impacts in town centres and providing alternative means of transport, for the integration of native materials and for the design of nature-based climate solutions to mitigate urban flooding, all beneficial climate adaptation approaches.

Actions relating to this objective are integrated into all of the action areas in Appendix 1 – with a particular relevance to areas 2: Set a Quality Agenda and 3: Generate Knowledge.



Limerick Colbert Quarter proposal by Bucholz McEvoy Architects. RIAI design review of Colbert Station Quarter for Limerick City and County Council and Land Development Agency, 2020. Reproduced courtesy of Merritt Bucholz.



The Scale of Ply, Dublin, by John Monaghan, Noji Architects. RIAI Award winner 2018. Photo by Alice Clancy.



House for a Gardener, County Down by
LiD Architecture. RIAI Award winner, 2021.
Photo by Brian Cregan.



The Custom House Dublin, conservation by
the Office of Public Works.
Photo by Naoise Culhane Photography.

Objective 2: Quality.

2

The aim of Objective 2 is to deliver quality architecture and places, planned and designed with wide engagement and accessible to all, in rural areas and villages, towns, cities and suburbia as an essential element of social sustainability.

Design and deliver quality buildings and spaces for all

An integrated approach to quality

High quality places facilitate inclusion and active participation, which are essential for communities to thrive. They foster accessibility without compromising built or natural environment resilience. They respectfully integrate the tangible cultural heritage and historic urban landscapes that give places their unique character.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underpin the national strategic outcomes of Project Ireland 2040, which support the drive for balanced, sustainable urban and regional redevelopment nationally.

The European Commission report, 'Towards a shared culture of architecture – investing in high quality living environment for everyone' focuses through its case studies on engagement with communities, and the built and natural environment, closely allying best practice to SDG 11, sustainable cities and communities.

Current EU priorities, described above, inform the context and the direction of the development of this national policy with its focus on the

consolidation and revitalisation of historic cities, towns and villages, their communities and their cultural and natural heritage. The three key principles of the Bauhaus are also reflected in this policy: a multi-level approach, from global to local; a participatory approach involving civil society and a trans-disciplinary approach to bridge siloes between viewpoints and professions.

When this policy was being prepared, the European Commission encouraged all stakeholders to organise New European Bauhaus 'conversations' to contribute to the co-design of the process. The RIAI and Department jointly organised a thought provoking and constructive workshop, published it online and submitted it to the Commission.

The Bauhaus workshop focused on management of and engagement with existing built and natural resources, including water – with safeguarding, restoration and reuse as the starting point for future design, in a more integrated and responsible relationship with nature which will also improve public health outcomes.

The workshop highlighted the need to combine poetic and pragmatic approaches: to harness the creative energy and practical contributions that architecture makes to people's places and cultures. It identified the need for structures to support the interconnection of expertise and creativity and the need for sustainable development which supports a fully circular economy. The workshop's focus on participation, inclusion and collaboration closely reflects the 'together' aspect of the Bauhaus.

Increasing public participation

Recognition of the importance of quality and space in the design of our residential accommodation, schools, civic buildings, infrastructure and spaces, including multifunctional play and social spaces is essential.

Architecture has the potential to enrich the lives of communities, especially marginalised communities, and help to make them resilient to future challenges and outside forces. Public debate and engagement encourage awareness and increase understanding of architecture from the creative process of design through to more in-depth understanding of the positive experiential effects of good buildings and public spaces.

Initiatives by large and small organisations, local authorities, voluntary bodies and communities, help participants through co-creation, which connects specialists with users, to creatively imagine new places and buildings, interpret heritage sites and to manage and upgrade places and buildings in different ways.

Existing initiatives such as the Creative Ireland Programme support people to realise their creative potential to support individual and community wellbeing and the creative economy, including through place-making projects.

Increased public participation and involvement in design, planning and development processes deliver positive outcomes, awareness and ownership of projects, and pride in place that endures over time. The role of education, exhibitions and awards for promoting an understanding and awareness of the importance

of the culture of architecture is strategically important in engaging the interest of the wider community.

Receipt by leading Irish practices of international prizes and achievements confirms that Irish architecture has an acclaimed reputation. The acknowledgement and commendation of several Irish projects in the Europa Nostra awards similarly points to the high standards achieved in the practice of architectural conservation in Ireland.

Enhanced and agile governance tools and planning approaches

The challenges of the coming decades such as climate change, emerging technologies, demographic change and new economic models require agile governance tools, soft and hard skills and innovative planning approaches. Architecture is at the point where these issues converge; design thinking is a critical tool to improve the quality of governance and planning decisions.

The operational capabilities of public administration must be enhanced and the culture must become more agile in order to respond effectively. The likelihood of high quality outcomes will be improved and better use of resources gained by sharing and analysing spatial, performance and cultural data.

Participative and valuable methods of work include co-creation and co-design so that interdisciplinary design teams can identify users' requirements at an early stage.

The use of digital engagement tools and cross-disciplinary, collaborative work are also highlighted in the New European Bauhaus and demonstrate the importance and potential of shared knowledge and practice at a European level. These cultural movements can demonstrate to communities and civil society stakeholders how complex needs and multi-level decisions can be transformed into well-designed housing and social infrastructure.

Forward planning models such as urban design framework plans, design reviews and conservation plans help to increase public and specialists' knowledge about the multiple dimensions of an area, complex or building, and to determine the best approaches to retaining what is special about its character and associated values, while accommodating new development or new uses.

The development or adoption of appropriate design quality criteria and indicators for architecture and built environment projects, which draw on current European thinking, are a critical initial step to underpin quality assessment in public procurement by all contracting authorities.

Design quality indicators will enhance the quality of forward planning, design reviews and design briefs, will ensure consistent approaches by local authorities and public bodies and will complement the environmental impact and landscape character assessment approaches. Design reviews are a constructive means of generating debate and developing diverse visions around complex regeneration projects.

Design is exploratory and innovative while the regulatory environment seeks certainty of price, timeline and performance for an affordable output. This policy will explore the opportunities for built environment stakeholders and the public to engage with the regulatory context and the many processes that determine the future of the built environment. This will help to understand assumptions, examine root causes and unlock creative responses to complex and systemic challenges and tensions around infrastructure, landscape, housing and place. The policy will support architects to lead the change to Lean construction practices with increased productivity and reduced costs and waste, including by off-site manufacturing of sustainable materials and components.

Success will depend on building trust and cooperation between the differing perspectives and priorities of government, communities and the private sector.

Actions relating to this objective are integrated into all of the action areas in Appendix 1 - with a particular relevance to areas
1: Value and Empower and
2: Set a Quality Agenda.



Goethe Institut, Dublin by Henchion Reuter. RIAI Award winner 2019.
Photo by Fionn MacCann.



Grangegorman Urban Quarter, Dublin. Moore Ruble Yudell Architects, DMOD Architects, Mitchell + Associates, Landscape Architects.
Photo by Marie-Louise Halpenny, reproduced courtesy of Grangegorman Development Agency.

Primary Care Centre, Bray, County Wicklow by Henry J. Lyons. RIAI Award winner 2021. Photo by Donal Murphy.





Wild Atlantic Way Viewpoint, Co Kerry by Paul Arnold Architects. RIAI Award winner 2021.
Photo by Lorcán Ó Cinnéide.



Cork Criminal Courthouse by the Office of Public Works, Wilson Architecture and Bluett and O'Donoghue. RIAI Award winner 2019.
Photo by Ros Kavanagh.

Objective 3: Leadership.



The aim of Objective 3 is to encourage leadership within the public sector and to show the importance of leadership at all governance levels and across the community of architects, architectural technologists and architectural conservation professionals in practice, education, engagement and policy/advisory/regulatory roles, to support the delivery of high quality built environment policies, programmes and projects.

Advocate for leadership to prioritise quality architectural outcomes

Government and public sector leadership and prioritisation of quality

Built environment matters and challenges require public debate, interrogation, understanding and acceptance. The enhancement and encouragement of public participation and involvement of key stakeholders (such as architects, engineers, planners and builders) are essential to achieving quality in procurement, planning, infrastructure, urban design, housing, health and education outputs and outcomes.

The actions that help to deliver Objective 3 will promote leadership in integrated spatial and climate change planning, mitigation and adaptation for environmental resilience and the safeguarding of the finite resources of the built and natural environment.

The report, *Towards a shared culture of architecture*, recognises the key role of the public sector in the promotion of leadership in designing, re-imagining and conserving the built environment for social well-being, long-term environmental sustainability and economic viability.

Existing initiatives developed by national, local and built environment stakeholders will be supported by actions under this policy objective to assist leaders across the sector.

Matters of interest include exchange of specialist advice, proactive engagement with technological design and evaluation tools, publication of exemplars, design briefs, quality selection criteria and best practices, refinement of awards schemes, and the enhanced role and scope of pre-qualification within frameworks. In regard to use of architectural competitions, a 'stepping stone' approach should be encouraged to allow newer and smaller practices establish themselves and develop their skills in a positive and incremental manner in collaboration with established, larger practices.

The State is a significant investor in the built environment and a major commissioner of architecture. Many public sector functions intersect with and affect built environment quality, from the design and construction of new infrastructure to the accommodation of essential services.

Maintaining in-house expertise in government departments, public sector organisations and local authorities enables these organisations to articulate and achieve the optimum outcomes.

Priorities may range from long-term property development, management and building renewal strategies, to collaboration for better cross-sectoral decision-making, e.g. of public health, natural environment or cultural policies, as well as the design, procurement and management of building projects and programmes. Leveraging sectoral excellence is a priority of the DPER Supporting Excellence Action Team report (2021) to improve capital delivery capability. Its actions align with the objectives of this policy.

Implementation of this policy is integral to meeting Ireland's climate change targets, particularly with regard to the consolidation of urban living as the core mechanism for sustaining communities and providing a high quality of life, benefiting from the most efficient use of resources, infrastructure and services.

It will require strong and articulate leadership to communicate a sense of purpose and pursue a shared vision for the built and natural environment. It requires State organisations such as Government Departments, the Office of Public Works (OPW), executive agencies and local authorities to take key leadership roles.

The Office of the State Architect in the OPW is well placed to act as a champion and advocate for high architectural, conservation and landscape standards in the public sector, with a focus on information exchange and consistency in respect of standards and quality criteria within architecture and the built environment. The policy will support the State Architect in the role of providing advice to Government and State Agencies on building and property needs, including the care of publicly owned and occupied heritage buildings, which is an action of the Supporting Excellence report.

**“We have to be open to ideas rather than ideologies, and the brains and beauty that architecture has.”
(Ciaran O’Connor, State Architect)**

Using and learning from data

The use of digital opportunities and innovation for public authorities to build databases on built environment character and their actual performance is critical to long term climate change planning strategy and action.

The adoption of measures such as the EU Level(s) Framework and high-quality design criteria for the built environment are essential in order to make comparable assessments, identify key performance indicators and understand the quality of development and its impact on natural and culturally significant sites.

Data is essential for public authorities to track and monitor the built environment over time, to ascertain climate change factors and to make adequate projections on long term risks and vulnerabilities.

High quality, carbon-neutral or low-carbon, durable public buildings that complement the natural landscape and support ecosystems, provide compelling experiences of contemporary architecture and design for users and visitors. By incorporating learning, educational, and dissemination opportunities, public sector commissioning clients can amplify their many benefits for communities, culture and nature.

Several current EU initiatives focus on raising awareness of the value of cultural heritage and the opportunity it provides for public sector leaders to engage with local communities for heritage-led regeneration projects that retain the best attributes and values of a place, which have accrued over decades and centuries.

Multi-criteria analyses are appropriate to projects involving structures of cultural and/or architectural heritage interest, from colleges and hospitals to museums, as they more effectively describe the interdependent, cultural, social and environmental benefits and impacts, which are not captured by cost-benefit analysis.

Procurement and tendering

The policy promotes consideration of the full life cycle of building – taking a long term view on the comparative costs of design and development, operation, maintenance, demolition and disposal, embodied carbon and the value of the building or place to the communities it serves. It prioritises quality architectural design for long-term value (social, environmental and economic outcomes) in addition to an understandable focus on budget and affordability.

Public procurement seeks to manage risk while ensuring fairness, transparency, an open market and value for money. Commissioning bodies must balance the often competing demands of quality, cost and timely delivery. The prioritisation of design quality throughout the procurement and construction phases is an important risk management tool and indicator of success in the operational phase.

The procurement of architectural design services should generally be sought on the basis of an inclusive, definitive design brief and realistic capital budget. This is the foundation of successful procurement of consultancy services and of the desired building; it underpins robust procurement and reduces delays in design and construction by limiting repeated design changes during construction.

The ongoing review of the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF), initiatives underway by the Project Ireland 2040 Construction Sector Group, and the work of the Government Construction Contracts Committee all focus on ensuring maximum value for money while sustaining a modern, innovative and resilient construction sector that enables Project Ireland 2040 to succeed.

The next phase of the CWMF will develop procurement and contracting strategies that prioritise quality solutions, support the most efficient means of delivery, embed appropriate risk management measures within the project development, procurement and construction stages, and deploy digital solutions throughout the project delivery.

The desired outcome of this leadership objective is to complement the ambition of Project Ireland

2040 by promoting built environment design quality in implementing planning frameworks, regulatory processes and funding programmes across Government.

Public and private organisations which facilitate architectural excellence have a track record of bringing about positive change in the built environment and protecting architectural heritage. Their contribution is essential to achieving the national strategic outcomes of Project Ireland 2040 and this policy.

The Supporting Excellence: Capital Project and Programme Delivery Capability Review [January 2021] examines constraints on the capacity of contracting authorities to follow best practice in delivering capital projects. The National Investment Office of DPER proposes to identify sectors for which centres of excellence are needed, to support and advise delivery entities. This approach anticipates the inclusion of an architectural advisory service within a centre of excellence. The design and management skills of architects and architectural technologists are essential to improving efficiencies and costs, participating in research and innovation in sustainable materials and components, and using digital tools such as BIM, all of which are priorities of the Building Innovation report (DPER, 2020)

The Build Digital element of Project Ireland 2040, to stimulate innovation in the construction sector, will provide and develop guidance and expertise. The exponential growth of data-driven, technological design and communications tools for architecture is accelerating.

These disruptive changes are altering the roles of all built environment occupations and require leadership and strategic planning by educational institutions and public authorities. The solutions must include the creation and interoperability of digital evidence-bases for built environment planning, development and management, not just to measure progress but also to ensure that Irish building and environmental data is reflected in the software used to underpin design decisions.

Actions relating to this objective are integrated into all of the action areas in Appendix 1 -
1: Value and Empower,
2: Set a Quality Agenda and
3: Generate Knowledge.



Cavanagh Bridge, University College
Cork by O'Donnell+Tuomey. RIAI Award
winner 2019. Photo by John Tuomey.



Marconi Station at Derrigimlagh,
County Galway by Denis Byrne
Architects in association with TTT
(Thirty Three Trees). RIAI Award
winner 2017. Photo by John Lalor.



Cobh Tidy Towns group visiting public realm improvements at Clonakilty, County Cork.
Photo courtesy Capital Projects Implementation Unit, Cork County Council.

Monkstown Village Project, County Dublin. DLR Architects. RIAI Award shortlist, 2019.
Photo by Donal Murphy.



Objective 4: Culture.

4

The aim of Objective 4 is to promote architecture as a continuum, inextricably linked to society's past, present and future as both an art form and a science. This objective recognises the contribution that architecture makes to the form, character and health of places, communities and livelihoods.

Foster a culture that values architecture as both art and science, serving people, place and planet

Architecture as part of culture and society

Culture, at its most fundamental, is about customs evolving from the myriad interactions of people over time, forming the characteristics of places and societies ('the way we do things here'). Awareness that architecture is a part of the culture of all societies helps to crystallise the relationships between people, the places where they live and their cultural values.

The act of architecture is about creation: combining science, technology and process of design to create practical and beautiful solutions for the environment, human needs and a future that is reliant on the quality of these design decisions.

Expanding and sharing knowledge about the culture of architecture increases an understanding and appreciation of contemporary architecture as well as traditional buildings, settlements and architectural and archaeological achievements of the past. Greater awareness prompts public interest and inspires creativity and innovation in contemporary design as a response to past achievements.

Architectural research, analysis and communication also increase the range, visibility and accessibility of the evidence on which built environment decisions are made, to the benefit of all stakeholders.

This policy supports greater awareness of the role and benefits of architecture within Irish culture. Cultural change generally happens slowly and on many levels, through awareness of different ways of thinking and doing, motivating people to acknowledge and adapt to change at an individual and organisational scale.

The implementation of this policy will, through research, exemplars and guides, increase the integration of architecture within Irish culture. Successful communication of the results of these actions will demonstrate the benefits of architectural creativity and inventiveness.

**“What we construct, what we build as physical matter, represents our culture. It’s to do with heritage, but it’s also to do with where we place our value.”
(Shelley McNamara, Grafton Architects)**

Cultural support for architectural engagement

Cultural experiences foster identity, vibrancy and community. The European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 demonstrated the importance of access to cultural heritage in society. This has been further amplified by pandemic restrictions in 2020-2022. Cultural experiences and cultural institutions are integral parts of urban development and place-making and are at the heart of regeneration, often providing a first step to ignite interest in a forgotten place.

The support of the previous policies (Action on Architecture 2002-2005 and the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015) helped national and regional cultural organisations to remain deeply involved in communicating the ideas, processes and results of architecture through a range of formats and channels such as exhibitions, festivals, debates, films, co-creation events, and television.

Several programmes work with communities to examine existing physical infrastructure and identify the potential opportunities for communities, artists, children and young people to engage in harnessing creativity and placemaking in local areas. Well-integrated consideration of cultural, leisure and play activities within architectural and urban design projects brings positive social and economic impacts.

Client and public awareness of the important long-term cultural dividend of building projects will be fostered by consolidating and expanding the infrastructure of architectural engagement.

Access to knowledge

A culture of architecture is underpinned by knowledge and research. This policy aims to increase the pace, breadth and depth of research by and about architecture in Ireland, while increasing the accessibility of this knowledge through digital innovations, educational partnerships, programmes and research strategies.

The dynamics of twenty-first century culture are changing fast for architectural practices: design proposals must now be assessed for 'fitness for purpose' against an expanding range of sustainability factors, with the potential for multiple responses to be generated instantaneously using algorithms.

These new realities, risks and opportunities are disrupting where architects and others place themselves in the built environment value chain. They are radically changing the types of knowledge and skills that will be required to practice all built environment disciplines, whether new build or work to existing buildings and places. The curricula and delivery methods of built environment education must adapt speedily to this technology-driven, circular economy and society.

The current pace of digital, social and environmental change is forcing unprecedented decisions about the built environment, encapsulated in the ambitions of Project Ireland 2040. However, the evidence base to support built environment decisions is under-developed in some respects, unlike sectors such as agriculture and health.

A wider range of essential built environment baseline and performance data should be identified, routinely collected and analysed using structured and quality-assured processes in order to enable sector policymakers and commercial interests to assess strengths and weaknesses, forecast trends and anticipate the design and delivery of optimum responses.

Ireland needs to enhance built environment research and knowledge generation for all settlements and situations – historic, contemporary and future – and create forums for engagement, dissemination and feedback across research institutions, regulatory bodies and built environment occupation representative bodies. This is essential in order for architecture to enhance the outcomes for people, place and planet, to prioritise quality and to avoid repeating past mistakes.

The policy implementation will support the structuring of interactions between research funding, education, practice and the wider built environment ecosystem for mutual benefit and as a springboard for collaborative innovation. It will include building and sharing knowledge with the public to support wide engagement, dissemination and discussion about architecture.

It will link Irish architecture and built environment research with European opportunities for research and collaboration, such as the Knowledge and

Innovation Communities and Innovation Hubs of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the New European Bauhaus Lab.

Architecture in education and cultural institutions

The report, Towards a shared culture of architecture, highlights the role of education at many stages from the initial engagement with the very young to the education of the educationalists themselves. The case studies compiled in the report operate at different levels and are beneficial to inform views on the many dimensions of the value of architecture. Included in the studies are the education of skilled craftspeople and the promotion of specialist areas through the creation of educational hubs, funding programmes, tax incentives and awards.

This policy advocates increasing capacity in third and fourth level built environment education and enabling research agendas to support regional and local development policies, the development of infrastructure and the consolidation of historic towns and villages, as well as to drive and nurture individual excellence.

The policy promotes strategic coordination of trades' skills training to include architectural awareness models and to ensure retrofitting requirements embrace traditional building and vernacular as well 'green' construction and energy upgrading skills.

The policy supports strengthening the programmes related to architecture in primary and secondary school curricula and aligning them with teacher and student support programmes. The concept of 'catching them young' favoured across Europe and used in existing initiatives in Ireland, encourages greater engagement with children and youth.

Embedding awareness of architecture and the built environment from early years will assist in future public engagement with climate change design initiatives. It will help to promote the role of architecture, by illustrating the benefits of good quality.

Critically, it will stimulate practical involvement in implementing the cultural shift to enable

humanity to reduce climate stress. This approach is advocated by the New European Bauhaus and expressed in the behavioural change actions of the Climate Action Plan.

An important aim of this policy is to raise awareness of how architecture impacts on lives, to give people the ability to articulate what high quality architecture means to them and how it can meet their cultural as well as environmental, social and economic needs.

The actions will encourage public and school-age participation and collaboration, and closer engagement with the processes that give rise to quality building projects.

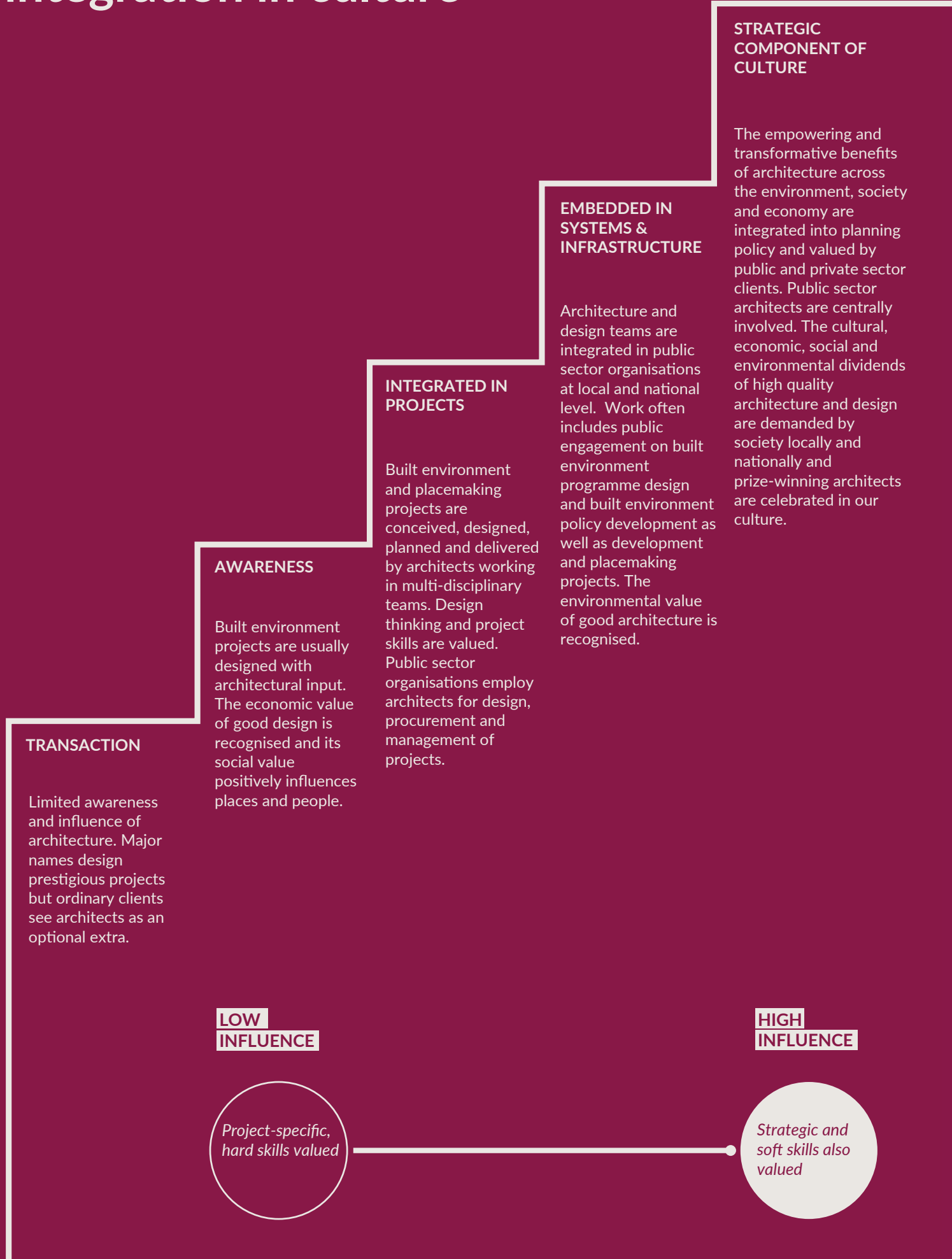
The implementation programme proposes a range of initiatives across sectors that will contribute towards this objective of enriching culture through making architectural quality an integral aim of protecting, managing and developing the built environment. It will help people to view good architecture as an important part of Irish culture.

The implementation of this policy may be informed by the successful implementation of the Danish policy on architecture, which with constrained resources sought the cooperation of cultural institutions to successfully drive many actions.

Actions relating to this objective are integrated into all of the action areas in Appendix 1 –

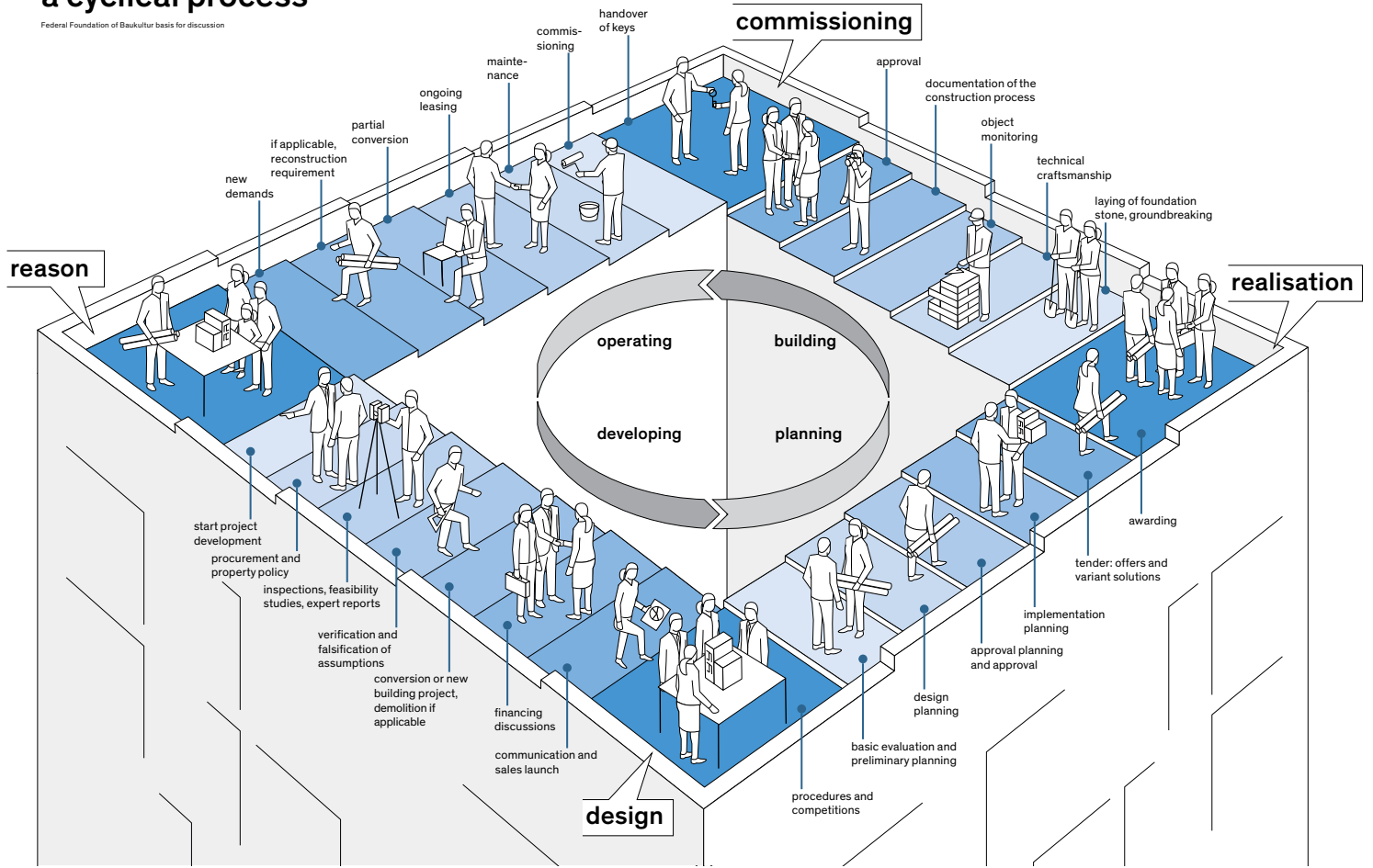
- 1: Value and Empower,**
- 2: Set a Quality Agenda and**
- 3: Generate Knowledge.**

Ladder of architectural integration in culture



Baukultur functional chain – a cyclical process

Federal Foundation of Baukultur basis for discussion



© Federal Foundation of Baukultur, design: Erfurth Kluger Infografik



Carlingford Castle, County Louth, interventions by Howley Hayes Architects. RIAI Award winner, 2021. Photo by John Lalor, National Monuments Service, DHLGH.



Coláiste na Coiribe, Galway. Creative Schools Programme, 2021. Photo by Anita Murphy. Reproduced courtesy of the Arts Council.



Ireland House Tokyo Design Competition (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and RIAI). Winning design, Henry J. Lyons Architects. Reproduced courtesy of Henry J. Lyons and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



Beach Road House, County Galway by Ryan W. Kennihan Architects. RIAI Award winner, 2021. Photo by Shantanu Starick.

Getting into Action.

Selecting implementation priorities

The consultation process clearly indicated four priority areas, sustainability, quality, leadership and culture, which have become objectives.

The policy vision describes the power of architecture and design to support a more sustainable and resilient society based on knowledge and creativity and driven by leadership and inclusive participation.

Together the policy vision and the objectives reflect a desire for collaborative involvement in all aspects of imagining, designing, developing, managing and safeguarding the built environment for high quality outputs and outcomes. They express the need for a holistic approach, which encompasses the continuum of past, present and future and the whole range of built, cultural (including archaeological) and natural environmental resources.

Action Areas

Many of the suggestions and recommendations made by the policy stakeholders relate to more than one, or indeed all four, of the policy objectives. As a result, the implementation programme is organised, not under the individual objectives themselves, but under three categories of actions (action areas).

The action areas are:

Value and Empower

Value architecture, empower people: foster culture change for sustainability.

Set a Quality Agenda

Set a quality agenda to achieve sustainability.

Generate Knowledge

Enhance the evidence base through research, education and knowledge exchange.

'Value and Empower' is primarily about people and culture; 'Set a Quality Agenda' is about robust methods and frameworks; and 'Generate Knowledge' is about generating and using information. The three form an interdependent triangle, which, when addressed holistically, will achieve the objectives of the policy.

- **Value and Empower** actions support the architectural and built environment workforce to successfully implement the policy vision and to stimulate awareness and involvement by civil society. They are intended to support all who show leadership, activate solutions (at all levels and spanning many organisations and groups) and motivate people to participate, learn, adapt, teach and share.
- **Set a Quality Agenda** actions enable those people to work to high standards. They highlight methods and tools for putting leadership into practice (e.g. design quality criteria, knowledge exchange platforms).
- **Generate Knowledge** actions provide the evidence and information needed to work towards a truly sustainable built environment. Knowledge builds capacity and capability in the workforce and influences leaders on the design of policies and programmes. Generate Knowledge actions improve and sustain the architecture and built environment evidence base (e.g. research, data, education).

Action programme headings

Action programme headings are identified under each of the three action areas. These are more focused topics within each action area. They will enable the identification of individual actions that contribute to achieving the objectives of the policy. They are listed below and described in more detail in the following text.

1. **Value and Empower**
 - 1.1 Create a culture that values architecture
 - 1.2 Empower the public sector workforce
2. **Set a Quality Agenda**
 - 2.1 Set and apply objective and comprehensive national quality criteria
 - 2.2 Quality-assure public built environment expenditure
 - 2.3 Quality-assure built environment regulatory processes

3. **Generate Knowledge**
 - 3.1 Establish a national architectural and built environment research service
 - 3.2 Enhance built environment educational capacity and knowledge exchange

First stage implementation actions

The action areas and programme headings listed above – and described in greater detail below – provide a framework under which actions can be identified that enable the implementation of the policy over the short, medium, and longer term. Some of these are set out in the table in Appendix 1 under ‘steps towards delivery’.

In addition, three priority actions have been identified that – once in place – will enable more detailed action points to be tackled. These are:

- **Create a virtual public sector information exchange network** (output is an online user-access service)
- **Publish national design quality criteria** (output is a table of agreed criteria and associated indicators)
- **Analyse architectural and built environment research needs and data requirements** (output is an analytical review and research scoping report with recommendations)

This action is described in greater detail in box 1 below

This action is described in greater detail in box 2 below.

This action is described in greater detail in box 3 below

The implementation programme will build momentum, breadth and depth by connecting the outputs of supported projects to subsequent actions, leveraging cumulative gain.

Action Area 1: Value and Empower.



Value architecture, empower people: foster culture change for sustainability

Purpose

The profound scale and effects of impending climate changes will affect how and where people build, use, adapt and recycle buildings and places. This is poorly understood and often highlighted in terms of financial costs and redundant occupations, creating a very real risk of confusion, inertia and paralysis. The behavioural change and citizen engagement actions in the Climate Action Plan 2021, Housing for All [particularly action 22.2] and Town Centre First are complemented and augmented here.

This action area will also support specific built-environment and culture-change actions such as Creative Ireland Climate Action and the Irish Architecture Foundation's Reimagine placemaking scheme, to raise awareness, activate constructive involvement and motivate public sector leaders to engage in collaborative placemaking practices. Existing motivated stakeholders are a critical asset, whose energy can be harnessed for mutual advantage through structured and securely funded mechanisms and initiatives for lasting organisational and societal benefit.

Outputs and outcomes:

Successful awareness-raising, co-creation and co-design initiatives by local authorities and the public sector will result in tangible, high-quality outcomes with more resilient environments and engaged communities. Improvements will be evident to knowledge and skills levels, policy levers and guidance which will assist a wide range of stakeholders to plan, design, create and use the built environment in a more sustainable way.

A culture will develop which values the full range of creative, innovation and communications skillsets held by motivated architects and the built environment workforce.

1.1 Create a culture that values architecture

Purpose

A culture that values architecture will inspire and motivate involvement by diverse communities in sustaining the built environment, including its archaeological heritage. It will increase levels of partnerships to undertake mutually beneficial actions. Committed stakeholders will have access to a variety of communication modes to generate interest in the importance of design quality and user experience.

An integrated approach will have structures and tools to extract more value from projects and programmes of all scales, to also build in-house skills, raise awareness and learn from results.

Outputs and outcomes

Many methods will be used to share experiences and illustrate the centrality of the living environment and its knowledge, skills, practices etc. to help spark communal involvement in practical climate-related placemaking projects.

A culture that integrates architectural thinking will aid the expansion of initiatives, existing awards schemes and networks. Increasing public visibility will transform understanding and generate community engagement with ways of sustainably designing, repairing and managing places.

Mutual understanding will increase levels of trust and cooperation between interest groups, public bodies and communities, using participatory methods of placemaking. Greater awareness that a culture which values architecture also benefits the environment, society and the economy will be generated.

1.2 Empower the public sector workforce

Purpose

The public sector must shoulder the implementation of many shifting, complex and interlinking demands. Organisations are not always resourced to address emerging priorities such as the expected impacts of climate change, urban regeneration and circular economy strategies, or new methods of public engagement, in addition to carrying out regulatory functions.

Empowerment means optimising the skillsets of architects and related professions and the adoption of proven models for engagement and practice, to add to organisational capacity and capabilities, leading to improved outcomes for the organisation. Structured information exchange and increased levels of engagement offer opportunities to interact on issues connected to the implementation of planning, procurement, building control and other built environment regulatory frameworks and more timely and targeted dissemination of new information. This approach supports the NIO focus on creating centres of excellence, which will resource the expertise necessary for capital project delivery.

Outputs and outcomes:

Greater and more effective utilisation of the soft skills as well as project skills of architects and other built environment professionals. This will broaden appreciation for local, sectoral and national built environment leadership. Public sector workers will contribute to and benefit from a range of research and education and information exchange opportunities, more easily enabling them to cooperate on specialist thematic advisory committees and groups (e.g. on historic buildings; design review panels), and upskilling / continuous professional development (CPD) initiatives. Actions will support collegiate approaches and exchange experiences e.g. running pilot projects, enhancing the dynamic capacity of GIS (geographic information system) datasets or trialling post-occupancy evaluations.

Leaders and decision-makers will seek to create optimal organisational structures and operational capacity to make best use of existing resources. Success will increase the visibility of Irish public sector architects at an international level, in policy development, research and exchange of best practices. It will increase the opportunities for sharing solutions for common built environment design, management and operational challenges and be a discussion board to improve collaboration, e.g. to instigate joint involvement in projects etc.

First stage implementation action:

1. Create a virtual public sector information exchange network.

Create a virtual public sector information exchange network to enable clear and consistent stakeholder reporting around EU level policies, programmes, directives and emerging opportunities and challenges.

Output:

Online user-access service for inter-authority information exchange and links; circulation of EU, national and sectoral updates and forum for information exchange e.g. on best practices and sector forecasts

Outcome:

An online forum will provide a knowledge base to alert bodies about emerging EU built environment updates on architectural initiatives and link to best practice guidance from the European level amongst public sector stakeholders.

A forum will provide a means for public sector users to interact with each other on good practices and issues connected to the implementation of planning, building control and other built environment regulatory frameworks. It will provide a mechanism for vertical feedback with regulators on issues relating to implementation of policy and legislation. Advance notice of upstream regulatory and policy developments will aid public bodies to forecast operational capacity and capability requirements. It will increase the opportunities for sharing solutions for common built environment design, management and operational challenges and be a discussion board to improve collaboration.



Participatory design workshop, National Museum of Ireland and Irish Architecture Foundation with Stoneybatter Youth Service and architect Muhammad Achour, 2021. Photo by Paul Sherwood. Reproduced courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation.



Kilmainham Courthouse, Dublin, adaptation and reuse by OPW Architectural Services. RIAI Award winner, 2017. Photo by Ros Kavanagh.



Letterkenny, County Donegal, Cultural District consultation, 2020 for Reimagine project by Irish Architecture Foundation, led by Pasparakis Friel Architects. Photo by Paul McGuckin. Reproduced courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation.



Dublin Civic Trust, 18 Ormond Quay, Dublin. Restoration by Kelly and Cogan Architects. Winner, European Heritage Award (Europa Nostra Award) 2021. Photos Dublin Civic Trust / Ros Kavanagh, reproduced courtesy Dublin Civic Trust.

Action Area 2: Set a Quality Agenda.

2

Set a quality agenda to achieve sustainability

Purpose

A nationally-agreed quality agenda for managing, protecting and developing the past, current and future built environment will promote quality in design, delivery and performance in use, in accordance with existing and emerging best and most sustainable practices. A quality agenda will ensure that regulated processes and public expenditure relating to the built environment are assessed according to objective, measurable quality requirements.

A quality agenda is distinguished from conformance with regulatory requirements, as the latter set a pass / fail threshold. Over time and from adoption of a quality agenda, quality expectations linked to evolving EU and national policy will influence amendments to regulatory standards.

Outputs and outcomes:

Increased certainty amongst all built environment actors as to the quality expectations held by critical stakeholders such as clients, regulators, tenderers (professional services and contractors), developers, product suppliers and the public, etc. Common understanding of the dimensions of architectural and built environment quality will percolate into sector discourse and into the public realm through awareness programmes.

2.1 Set and apply objective and comprehensive national design quality criteria

Purpose

To set and consistently apply nationally applicable built environment quality requirements drawing on international, European and Irish priorities. They will objectively describe and measure dimensions and qualities relevant to architecture, the built environment and landscape design, delivery, performance and use, to achieve environmental, social and economic sustainability. Such criteria will improve overall quality by making the dimensions of quality capable of objective review by all parties at all stages.

Outputs and outcomes

The application of national quality criteria and guidance actions will improve the design and implementation of architecture and built environment. Quality criteria will assist the delivery of the objectives of Project Ireland 2040, Housing for All and the Climate Action Plan and will support all stakeholders to measure the short- and long-term environmental, social and economic sustainability of progress and outcomes in addition to assessing the outputs of individual project contracts.

The application of design quality criteria is also a structured risk strategy to reduce the cost of quality. This is the cost of necessary quality control measures to achieve the intended quality in a project / plan / programme, which in the built environment can include risks from health and safety failures.

First stage implementation action: 2. Publish National Design Quality Criteria

Publish objective and comprehensive national design quality criteria in line with circular economy principles, to apply to all phases of built environment design, construction, management, use, conservation, repurposing and disassembly.

Output:

A table of agreed objective design quality criteria and associated indicators, which summarise and reference national and European design quality and circular economy principles (Davos, 2021; European Commission, 2021; ICOMOS, 2020). The criteria will enable consistent evaluation and reporting on conformance with the intended quality at each stage of the life cycle of the building or place and its components.

Outcome:

The criteria will strengthen the quality of public procurement by functioning as an objective test of the cost-quality ratio described in the Public Procurement Directive (2014).

Second stage: application of national quality criteria (see Table 2)

2.2 Quality-assure public built environment expenditure

Purpose

Quality assurance can be promoted at local / regional / sectoral by development of architectural policies in line with the national quality agenda and the priorities of this policy. Quality assurance will support opportunities for design innovation. It will incentivise public sector building owners / guardians to maintain the State's building stock in good condition over the long term, including historic buildings and estate, using well-established tools such as conservation management plans. It will reduce avoidable expenditure on new buildings instead of repurposing existing buildings.

Quality assurance will prioritise the collection of data on building stock, mapping characteristics, condition and usage and analyse built environment evidence, to tackle target supports to address long-term vacancy, underuse and dereliction, avoid poorly devised renovation models, upgrade the public realm in accordance with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets guidance and eliminate the need for duplication of expenditure on remedying failure or neglect. State funding models and procurement requirements should be designed to avoid unintended adverse effects on built environment quality, cultural landscapes and the natural environment.

Outputs and outcomes

The State will be assured that public sector built environment expenditure is of measurable lasting environmental, social and economic benefit, which promotes innovation and quality, creating, repairing or repurposing capital assets. Buildings and places will continue to perform as effectively as intended for generations, spanning changes in purpose or function and withstanding the effects of a changing climate.

2.3 Quality-assure built environment regulatory processes

Purpose

The regulatory frameworks (planning, building control, including workforce regulation, construction products, construction waste) have separate objectives and requirements. All have a bearing on the achievement of quality throughout the full sequence of complex processes that regulate a building project from initiation and planning to completion and at reuse / end-of-life stages.

Structured quality linkages between these regulatory processes should be designed and tested, including by reference to the national quality criteria, to benefit environmental, social and economic outcomes for all stakeholders. Quality implementation should be supported by guidance and the allocation of quality monitoring roles at local authority level. It will be further embedded by the creation of multi-disciplinary town teams with appropriate skillsets, which collaborate and coordinate on all aspects of urban protection, management, development and community engagement.

Outputs and outcomes:

Quality handover processes will give assurance to stakeholders that current and future performance expectations (fitness for purpose over the long term) as well as regulatory pass / fail requirements are not only designed but monitored through all regulatory stages.



George's Place, Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin by DLR Architects and A2 Architects. RIAI award winner, 2019.
Photo by Marie-Louise Halpenny.

Action Area 3: Generate Knowledge.



Enhance the evidence-base through research, education and knowledge exchange

Purpose

Support for research and innovation is essential to create and maintain a fully sustainable and circular built environment, and to support Irish involvement in European built environment research programmes and projects. At present, architecture and the built environment are not prioritised in Irish research streams or research facilities. This situation comes at the cost of potential funding opportunities, and poses a risk to the successful delivery of national programmes, such as Housing for All and the Climate Action Plan.

Some State organisations and third and fourth level bodies undertake research and some professional institutes have set up research initiatives, however there is no national policy direction or research facility and architectural and built environment research outputs are not centrally accessible in a research repository, limiting their visibility and uptake. Knowledge requirements spanning all design and delivery aspects of the built environment have not yet been identified in a coordinated manner. A research scoping study by University College Dublin, funded by the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015 (unpublished, 2017) outlined the existing situation and recommended actions, which remain valid.

Outputs and outcomes:

Investment in an architecture and built environment research and testing facility and selection of priority funding streams will greatly improve the availability of information to underpin built environment decisions. Measuring and monitoring research and analysis projects will increase the likelihood of achieving intended outcomes. A national research focus and testing capability will increase involvement in and circulation of knowledge from European built environment research projects. A research culture will generate innovative responses and new networks of designers, policymakers, public sector bodies, educators, researchers and producers.

3.1 Establish a national architectural and built environment research service

Purpose

A permanent, structured and networked research entity for identification, collection, analysis, innovation and forecasting of architectural and built environment design, delivery and performance data and needs, which will support government policies and enable progress to be measured against relevant indicators. It will provide evidence to support emerging EU and international built environment design and performance standards and best practices.

Research will support local and sectoral plans such as local and regional development plans. Research will confirm the efficacy of digital solutions in the Irish setting, such as building information modelling or artificial intelligence design software. Such research will support the framing of urban consolidation policy that adopts European and SDG indicators for sustainable urban living, prioritising use of existing resources and the 10 minute town concept.

A research entity will increase the potential for national participation in EU and international architecture and built environment research projects. It will communicate and disseminate, e.g. through an observatory, the above evidence base to underpin best practices to support public bodies,

including planning authorities on implementing town regeneration, climate adaptation, etc. Useful models for consideration are Teagasc, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority and the Health Research Board.

Outputs and outcomes

The production and maintenance of nationally applicable and accessible data streams spanning historic and modern building typologies, ages, materials, performance, etc. will enhance capacity for ongoing analysis of built environment data to inform future building and place policy and design decisions. It will enable adoption of historic building information modelling. This will inform the direction of Renovation Wave, urban consolidation policy and Town Centre First implementation. It will increase commercial research into innovative built environment design and construction products, including in EU projects. It will improve quality of forward planning decisions. It will measure aspects of building performance not currently monitored for actual embodied energy performance, enabling full life cycle assessment of existing as well as proposed buildings. A research entity or observatory could potentially work on an all-Ireland basis.

First stage implementation action:

3. Analyse architectural and built environment research needs and data requirements

Analyse architectural and built environment research needs and data requirements and scope entity requirements: governance, resources, boundaries of research operations and range of required facilities [e.g. research repository, testing capability]

This will include:

- Mapping existing research sources and analysing gaps
- Identifying the breadth and depth of research requirements
- Collating architecture and built environment data requirements; and
- Identifying suitable research methodologies and communications vehicles, as well as alignment with existing and proposed facilities

Output:

An analytical review and research scoping report with recommendations.

Outcome:

A comprehensive overview of built environment design and delivery research needs in relation to current structures, methodologies and funding mechanisms, informing governance, investment and function of the proposed research entity, and optimum alignment with existing research and funding entities, service-users and national and European built environment research and innovation priorities.

Second stage: Devise, propose and formalise legal basis for the research entity with governance and information management requirements (see Table 2)

3.2 Enhance built environment educational capacity and knowledge exchange

Purpose

To systematize quality, oversight and review in formal and non-formal built environment education and training programmes and continuing professional development. Enhanced capacity will future-proof built environment education and training provision to ensure a steady supply of capability and capacity especially in light of urban regeneration, digital, circularity and climate complexities and challenges, less exposed to cyclical extremes and to issues relating to construction employment structures.

There is currently no forum for cross-sectoral discussion and knowledge exchange on matters related to the design, delivery, performance and management of the built environment. Such a forum will aid the work of the Project Ireland 2040 Construction Sector Group; implementation of the Climate Action Plan, and enhance the potential for collaboration with the Circuléire initiative, etc.

Outputs and outcomes

A national centre of excellence for built environment education and training, with a focus on traditional and circular skills. It will ensure ongoing alignment between education and current and anticipated competence needs and will complement the proposed Project Ireland 2040 sectoral centres of excellence and Build Digital Project. Digital capabilities will be harnessed to provide improved access to knowledge and education and to support information platforms. Sector leadership will support excellence at all phases of formal education and training and in providing continuing professional development.

A structured built environment knowledge exchange forum for built environment professional institutes, construction industry and product representatives and public sector authorities (central, local, regional, sectoral) will increase opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration e.g. on tackling skills gaps and mismatches. It will increase awareness of common blockages, improve the potential to share design of CPD initiatives and conferences and enhance the potential for joint public/private collaboration in EU funded research and development projects.

It will improve connections between design and delivery interests, e.g. on matching circular economy ambition with solutions. It will give a platform for shared communications on common matters e.g. through publication, exhibition and promotion. It will improve dissemination of technical information on architecture, the built environment and landscape and enable more stakeholders to contribute to State of Ireland reports (Environmental Protection Agency, Engineers Ireland), etc.

YEAR 6
Cobi's bench

"My bench is in the centre of the buildings, it's nice and bright, a nice place to sit."

"Between the two gardens here, especially during the summer it's full of light."

"This space is very generous I suppose ... there's people sitting everywhere. This is where the main flow of students comes through."

YEAR 5
Adam's bench

"My bench (...) here's about 10 of us. I quite like this area. Out there it's noisy especially during break and lunch. When you come in here all you can hear is the noise."

"I quite like this bench. I've been sitting here for nearly three years now. It's quiet. The people beside us and across from us we all know each other. It's like a little neighbourhood you could nearly call it at this stage."

YEAR 2
Anna's bench

"This is the bench where my friends and I sit. It's where we can always find each other."

"It's one of the darker spots in the atrium. Most of the more respected plain students will get to sit in the brighter areas, the most desirable in the atrium."

"Areas full of light from the atrium are usually taken by the older students (...). That's what everyone seems to

YEAR 5
Adele's bench

"This is my bench ... A bit noisy at the moment, it was someone's birthday."

"I like sitting here because there's so much light in this area. And it's close to the shop and the toilets, so it's in the middle of the school. And there's a radiator at the back ... it does get cold sometimes."

"A lot of people sit on the radiators because there's not as many benches as there are students."

YEAR 2
Emma's stairs

"My group, we sit at the top of the stairs... for Christmas we are going to put snow up on the bars."

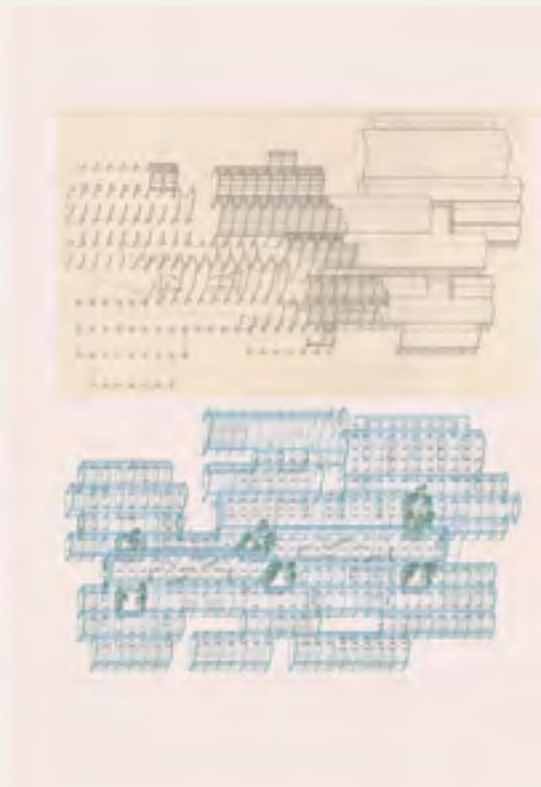
"It's near the pithouse(s). You can see people walking by, and if they are friends that don't sit at you table they can stop and say hi, there's plenty of room for everyone."

"We talk about swimming (...) This is kind of our quiet space, but also noisy."





St Brendan's Community School, Birr, County Offaly, conservation management plan by John McLaughlin Architects and Queen's University Belfast . RIAI Research Award winner 2021 and recipient of Getty Foundation 'Keeping it Modern' research grant. Exhibited in the Irish Architectural Archive, Dublin. Photos and drawings by Peter and Mary Doyle, Ros Kavanagh and JMLA.



What will National Policy on Architecture success look like?

- Public value is placed on high-quality architecture, with communal recognition of the **creative, innovative and respectful** ways it serves people, place and planet
- There is broad awareness and appreciation of the quality of Irish architecture within Ireland and Europe and the difference it can bring to making more **sustainable and resilient communities**
- **Intrinsic societal value** is placed on culture and cultural heritage
- Public and private sector decision-makers accept the **importance of all dimensions of quality** – the social and environmental as well as economic, and the intangible as well as tangible aspects of the environment
- Leaders at all levels prioritise quality architectural outcomes, knowing that they **benefit nature and society and enhance the knowledge base** through a culture of continuous improvement
- Towns and urban centres are transformed into **vibrant, inclusive and diverse** living environments, generating awareness of best architecture and placemaking practices and their importance to human health and well-being
- Carbon-neutral and climate-positive building, renovation and repurposing projects and places, and reduced supply chain risks, **benefit the environment and enhance local employment** and commercial innovation prospects
- Placemaking and individual building projects and programmes projects include **collaborative restoration** of, and greater appreciation of, ecosystems and habitats
- **Engaged and involved public / communities** work for common purpose with authorities: enemies are turned into advocates and anxiety into awareness and proactive involvement, and using toolkits aids involvement in processes for better overall outcomes
- Continuous improvement of the skills base is evident across all roles, with self-sustaining vertical and horizontal feedback loops which **share knowledge and spread best practices**



An Ríocht, Scoil Chríost Rí, Boys National School Limerick, by Drake Hourigan Architects. RIAI award winner, 2019.
Photo by Donal Murphy.

SMALL TOWN LIFE



Free Market touring architectural exhibition 2019 at Castleblayney, County Monaghan. RIAI Award winner, 2020. Photo by Paul Tierney.



Free Market, Irish National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2018. RIAI Award winner 2020. Photo by Ste Murray.



IAF Reimagine Tallaght, County Dublin: 'Melt the Walls', Public Judging Round, 2019.. Photo by Ste Murray. Reproduced courtesy of the Irish Architecture Foundation.

Appendix 1:

Key Steps To Implementation

The following tables set out a broad range of sector requirements categorised into action areas from the public consultation and interdepartmental consultation processes undertaken in 2020 and 2021. This analysis and distillation has been augmented by evolving national and European policies, plans and programmes.

This list in Table 2 is preliminary and may be augmented or revised by the policy delivery board and expert group as they develop the implementation programme. Some action areas and actions may be further refined or adapted to the capacity and capability of the lead organisation or its management requirements.

1. Value and Empower

Value architecture, empower people: foster culture change for sustainability

- 1.1 Foster a culture that values architecture
- 1.2 Empower the public sector workforce

2. Set a Quality Agenda

Set a quality agenda to achieve sustainability

- 2.1 Set and apply objective and comprehensive national quality criteria [to measure building, place, landscape and living environment design, delivery and performance quality and environmental resilience]
- 2.2 Quality-assure public built environment expenditure
- 2.3 Quality-assure built environment regulatory processes

3. Generate Knowledge

Enhance the evidence-base through research, education and knowledge exchange

- 3.1 Establish a national architectural and built environment research service
- 3.2 Enhance built environment educational capacity and knowledge exchange

List of key actions and steps

First stage implementation actions

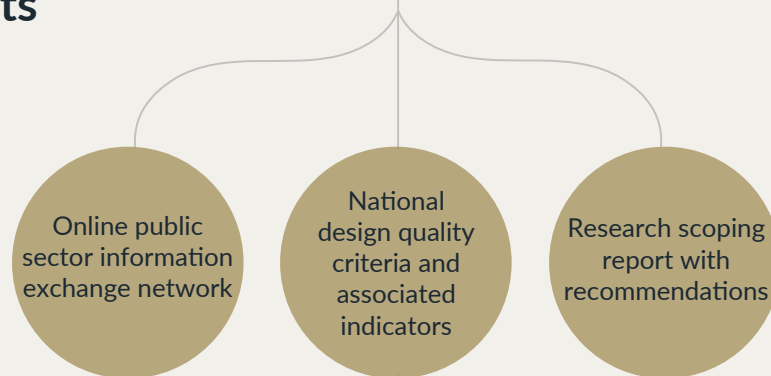
Table 1

1	Text ref	Action area	Action programme		
	1.2.1	Value and Empower	Foster a culture that values architecture		
	Step	Output	Timeline	Lead	Key Stakeholders
	Create a virtual local and public authority and sector information exchange network to enable clear and consistent stakeholder reporting around EU level policies, programmes, directives and emerging opportunities and challenges	Online user-access service for inter-authority information exchange and links for circulation of EU, national and sectoral updates and as forum for information exchange e.g. on best practices and sector forecasts	Q4 2022	DHLGH; OPR; OPW; LGMA, CCAA, DPER (NIO)	DECC; all Departments and public bodies with built environment responsibilities
2	Text ref	Action area	Action programme		
	2.1.1	Set a quality agenda	Set and apply objective and comprehensive national design quality criteria		
	Step	Output	Timeline	Lead	Key Stakeholders
	Publish objective and comprehensive national design quality criteria in line with circular economy principles, to apply to all phases of built environment design, construction, management, conservation, repurposing and disassembly	Table of agreed objective design quality criteria and associated indicators, which summarise and reference national and European design quality and circular economy principles	Q4 2022	OPW	DHLGH; DECC; Departments and public bodies with built environment responsibilities; professional institutes; academic institutions
3	Text ref	Action area	Action programme		
	3.1.1	Generate knowledge	Establish a national architectural and built environment research service		
	Step	Output	Timeline	Lead	Key Stakeholders
	Analyse architectural and built environment research needs and data requirements and scope entity requirements: governance, resources, boundaries of research operations and range of required facilities [e.g. research repository, testing capability]	Analytical review and research scoping report with recommendations	Q4 2022	DHLGH	DPER; DECC; DFHERIS; CCAA; HEA; SOLAS; OPW; OPR; EPA; ESRI; SEAI; RIA; LDA; LGMA/CCMA; academic institutions; professional institutes; CIF; IGBC

Action categories (centre) and action areas (p54)



First stage outputs



Types of second stage actions (led by delivery board)



List of key actions and steps

Second stage implementation steps and potential outputs (led by Delivery Board)

Table 2

1	Text ref	Action area	Action programme		
	1.1	Value and Empower	Foster a culture that values architecture		
	NPA Objectives		Indicators of success		
	Sustainability Quality Leadership Culture		<p>Accessible, practical information suited to a wide range of user groups, illustrates ways of cooperation to increase the quality of local places;</p> <p>Increased sense of common purpose between stakeholder categories in agreeing and achieving quality outcomes for all users of architecture and the living environment;</p> <p>Deeper and broader public discourse about architecture and living environment issues and solutions (including long-form media articles and critical analysis);</p> <p>Greater appreciation of architecture as a continuum, linking the present with the past and the future, and for learning from the low-energy building solutions and practical skills of past traditions to help pivot to circularity and sustainability</p>		
	Steps towards delivery of desired outcomes		Potential output(s)	Lead	Key stakeholders
	Run an annual NPA event to present progress and outputs by partner organisations, to disseminate and communicate the policy		Annual policy update held as public information conference / seminar	DHLGH and OPW	RIAI; Arts Council; IAF; Heritage Council; TCAGSM / Creative Ireland; D/FHERIS; DECC
	Devise lifelong learning 'awareness-raising' modules in architecture and built environment quality, based on the national design quality indicators		Suite of training units and modules jointly devised by stakeholders, with content tailored to specific demographics	DHLGH; TCAGSM (Creative Ireland); Arts Council; IAF;	OPR; Local and regional authorities; built environment professional bodies; environmental NGOs; civil society organisations (e.g. Tidy Towns)
	Increase content on architecture and built environment in first and second level art and technical subjects learning units with sustainability overview, incl. concepts such as the circular city and 10 minute town; support teacher upskilling		Review report, outlining organisational and funding requirements for inclusion of awareness-raising architecture and living environment content in school curricula, including proposals on bridging gaps, to support the Education for Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030	DHLGH; Arts Council; IAF	Association of Teachers Education Centres; Techno-Teachers;

<p>Enhance local authority capacity for creative and cultural engagement by including architecture as an art form within the LA Arts Officer role; support time-bound placement of architect communicators in public authorities in the Arts Office</p>	<p>Set of recommendations on designing and resourcing architecture engagement mechanisms within local authorities Arts Offices with a creativity, climate change, integration and communication brief; undertake a pilot architect placement project</p>	<p>LGMA; Arts Council; IAF</p>	<p>DHLGH; DRCD; DECC;</p>
<p>Build local authorities' multi-disciplinary team-working capacity, e.g. support digital platforms and local online tools for accessible information on sustainable town living and regeneration models; increase synergies between Creative Teams and local authority policy and operations teams (e.g. planning; transport; regeneration; housing);</p>	<p>Review of current local authority multi-disciplinary work practices with recommendations for optimising cross-departmental art, culture and built environment information flow and collaborative projects, to include best practice case studies</p>	<p>LGMA/CCMA/ CCAA</p>	<p>DHLGH; OPR; DTCAGSM</p>
<p>Support existing best practice participatory engagement methods and augment with additional methods focused on specific citizen-local authority placemaking interface opportunities, e.g. development plans, regeneration schemes, Town Centre First initiatives</p>	<p>Local and regional authority guidance on active citizen participation in regulatory and best practice placemaking functions, including by creative and innovative means, illustrating models e.g. Creative Ireland Climate Action, Engage with Architecture, Fab Lab Limerick and Reimagine</p>	<p>DHLGH,</p>	<p>LGMA, OPR, LDA, IAF,</p>
<p>Disseminate this policy and the EU Towards a shared culture of architecture report through the Creative Ireland Programme, by the local authority Creative Teams network and through the communications channels of public service bodies</p>	<p>Dissemination and communication programme, containing architecture policy and practice training and train-the-trainer units created as online resources and exhibitions, suited to delivery online to public and to complement staff CPD by local and public service bodies</p>	<p>DTCAGSM (Creative Ireland)</p>	<p>DHLGH; OPR; Heritage Council; Arts Council;</p>
<p>Agree categories of design and evaluation criteria and communications methods suited to all built environment-related award schemes and related promotion (travelling exhibitions, awards publications etc.) for mutual awareness-raising benefits; recognise the contribution of planning authorities and planning staff in architecture awards schemes; enhance the visibility of Irish architecture in EU and international awards schemes</p>	<p>An architecture and living environment quality assessment toolkit, collaboratively created by awards scheme sponsors and organisers; new OPW and RIA awards scheme and / or inclusion of extra categories in existing schemes recognising support for high-quality architecture; awards bodies to seek and support Irish entries to the New European Bauhaus and EU Mies van der Rohe awards and promote successful applicants in mainstream and online media</p>	<p>Awards bodies; OPW; RIAI; DHLGH; Arts Council; IAF</p>	<p>DHLGH; LGMA/ CCAA; NGOs; civil society organisations; Tidy Towns</p>

	Enhance and embed architecture as an art form; e.g. promote architecture as an art form in arts funding streams; support Arts Council's Architecture Policy, Championing Architecture (2022)	Agreement on specific ways to increase promotion of architecture as an art form with D/TCAGSM (including Arts Council, national cultural institutions)	DHLGH, TCAGSM Arts Council	RIAI, National Cultural Institutions
2	Text ref.	Action area	Action programme	
	1.2	Value and Empower	Empowering the public sector workforce	
	NPA objectives		Indicators of success	
	Sustainability Quality Leadership Culture		Coordinated national approach, with quicker resolution of issues and blockages using creative and practical design and delivery solutions; Proactive, responsive public sector organisations, flexibly allocating resources to built environment priorities in a timely manner;	
	Steps towards delivery of desired outcomes	Potential output(s)	Lead	Key stakeholders
	Set a public sector architecture and built environment leadership agenda, to agree and operate holistic built environment quality and sustainability objectives and strategies across the public service, in support of spatial planning and natural resources management and organisational property management; also to support opportunities for public sector architectural leadership growth by formalising structures for vertical and lateral knowledge exchange	Protocol, to be agreed by relevant public sector bodies, setting out parameters and objectives of public service architecture and built environment quality agenda in support of climate and sustainability, to include circular built environment requirements e.g. care of historic buildings; Signatory bodies to devise inter-authority communications mechanisms for discussing planning, design, procurement, delivery, management, conservation, regeneration and energy challenges (see also 3.2)	OPW (State Architect)	DPER; DECC; DHLGH and Departments and public bodies which employ architects and built environment advisors; LGMA/ CCAA; built environment professional institutes;
	Map current public sector architectural resources and team structures (all roles including in planning function); clarify public sector architectural capacity requirements to implement national built environment and climate policies, plans and programmes; roles include the State Architect and public sector architects and policy and implementation roles required for architecture and placemaking protection, management and development; clarify proposed conservation and repurposing officer role	Report containing overview of numbers, grades and geographical distribution of existing public sector services related to architecture; recommendations for a model structure for optimal architectural services delivery across the public sector (including conservation and repurposing officer set in Programme for Government), estimating need in relation to national / sectoral / local regulatory requirements and policies, plans and programmes and ongoing organisational obligations;	DHLGH; OPW; LGMA/CCMA	CCAA/AACO

	Examine existing architectural capacity in spatial planning public bodies and identify capability requirements	Review, with recommendations on integration of architectural expertise within spatial planning functions including optimal levels, distribution and specialisms, e.g. architectural heritage, life-cycle assessment etc.	DHLGH	ABP, OPR, LGMA/CCMA/CCAA
	Promote the NIO Supporting Excellence Action Team report public sector capability development actions which relate to architecture and built heritage	Support Supporting Excellence report actions, including no.3, Build the role of the State Architect in the Office of Public Works in the provision of advisory services for Government and State Agencies for building and property needs including the care of Heritage buildings owned and occupied by the State.	DPER (NIO); OPW;	Departments and public bodies”
	Support rollout of inter-disciplinary pilot projects and exemplar programmes and methods in the public sector using national and European quality criteria tools, utilising in-house architectural and conservation expertise	Pilot programme of public body trials, pilots, case studies utilising best practices; publication of successful exemplars which improve service delivery, to include guidance on adopting, scaling and adaptation of tools, covering the continuum of historic, current and future built environment	DHLGH	DECC; OPW, HSE, LDA, LGMA/CCMA/CCAA/AACO
3	Text ref.	Action area	Action programme	
	2.1	Set a Quality Agenda	Set and apply objective and comprehensive national quality criteria	
	NPA objectives		Indicators of success	
	Sustainability Quality Leadership Culture		Objective nationally agreed, design quality criteria are set in plans, programmes and projects with quality indicators that enable outcomes to be measured; Quality criteria and indicators are integrated into requirements, guidance and other tools for consistency of implementation and reduction in incidence of post-project remediation Enhanced ability to assess quality of implementation of Project Ireland 2040, Housing for All and the Town Centre First initiatives	
	Steps towards delivery of desired outcomes		Potential output(s)	Lead
Prepare guidance on the incorporation of the national design quality criteria into built environment programmes, plans and policies, including capital works		Devise text for incorporation into national and sectoral policy and guidance, with advice on setting and evaluating quality criteria and indicators at all stages of architecture and built environment management and development from options appraisal to post-occupancy evaluation	DHLGH	DPER (OGP); Departments and public bodies; LGMA/CCMA

4	Text ref.	Action area	Action programme		
	2.2	Set a Quality Agenda	Quality-assure public built environment expenditure		
	NPA objectives		Indicators of success		
	Sustainability Quality Leadership Culture		State funding models and procurement requirements support the holistic evaluation of quality across capital and current expenditure relating to the built and living environment with improved immediate and long-term outcomes for environment, client and society; More effective, outcome-orientated management of the public building stock and cultural landscapes, utilising inherited resources which reinforces sense of place and identity; Increased supports for practical solutions which improve built and living environment quality and enhance information exchange		
	Steps towards delivery of desired outcomes		Potential output(s)	Lead	Key stakeholders
	Evaluate national built environment direct and indirect funding and procurement mechanisms to assess intended value-for-money objectives against actual outcomes (measured from national design quality criteria)		Review containing recommendations for implementing strengthened eligibility and assessment requirements of funding and procurement mechanisms to attain measurable high-quality outcomes	DHLGH, OPW	DPER (OGP); D/Finance; LGMA
	Promote innovative and hybrid funding options for non-commercial historic built environment projects		Guidance document to increase awareness of funding models for historic built environment regeneration projects and exemplars of best funding and reuse practices within EU Member States for social and cultural reuse	DHLGH	TU Dublin
	Support the OPW (Office of State Architect), the OGP and the Government Contracts Committee for Construction to increase use by public bodies of existing outcome-focused procurement measures, e.g. research and innovation partnerships; architectural competitions, and inclusion of small practices; and in the development of proposed tools, e.g. conservation contracts; green procurement including design for disassembly and the development of metrics for life-cycle costing, to measure and verify carbon content of building projects		Public works conservation contract published by OGP and made available to all contracting authorities following OPW review of trial; guidance from OGP on procurement and contracting policies to support, measure and enhance architectural quality and sustainability in capital works procurement; publication of green procurement roadmap and design guidance (CAP 2021, p.121); development of life-cycle costing and analysis metrics by OGP working with IGBC	OPW; DPER (OGP)	DHLGH; LDA
Devise standardised post-occupancy evaluation templates for use by contracting authorities to track building project performance outcomes		Available suite of standard post-occupancy evaluation templates and guidance for use by public authorities	OPW	DHLGH; DPER (OGP); LGMA	

<p>Undertake a Lean value stream map of categories of waste in built environment design and delivery processes; make recommendations from mapping exercise on thematic and process improvements; e.g. potential of regulatory amendment and/or digital innovation to enhance processes and outcomes</p>	<p>Review report describing and mapping the current flow of actions and steps in the built environment value chain, with recommended changes to unblock / remove all categories of waste for improved process quality and efficiency</p>	<p>DHLGH,</p>	<p>OPW, DPER (OGP), OPR, LGMA; professional institutes and sector representative bodies; academic institutions</p>
<p>Broaden and enhance national GIS dataset capacity to identify, characterise, and measure the performance of the public estate, including the historic built environment and cultural landscapes; support public sector bodies (e.g. OGP, LDA) to measure sustainability and climate impacts of and on the built environment (e.g. using databases covering embodied carbon, life-cycle costs, materials, cultural heritage etc.); to collect and analyse data e.g. carbon costs of development, thermal upgrading / retrofitting outcomes etc.</p>	<p>Suite of layers added to existing GIS platforms which indicate location, type, age, condition etc. of publicly-owned historic buildings; Expanded range of public bodies' data collection and reporting requirements, to improve the policy evidence-base, with baseline and performance metrics and climate indicators, which track built environment sustainability levels and trends, enable targeting of supports, knowledge of property condition to reduce vacancy and dereliction, and communicate the health of places</p>	<p>DHLGH, DPER (OGP and open data unit); LDA; LGMA</p>	<p>OPR; EPA; ESRI; IGBC; All public bodies with built environment responsibilities;</p>
<p>Promote the publication and use of architectural policies by city councils and/or regional assemblies and support knowledge exchange between architectural policymakers in Irish and EU authorities</p>	<p>City / region architectural policies compiled by local / regional authorities to embed quality of built environment management including forward planning and property management, and incentivise creative collaboration with communities and EU</p>	<p>DHLGH; OPW</p>	<p>Local and regional authorities</p>
<p>Investigate adoption of collaborative design research initiatives and product competitions to stimulate innovative design development of zero carbon and net positive materials and component design for disassembly in public and private procurement</p>	<p>Report with recommendations for incorporation of design and product competitions into CWMF, summarising mechanisms operated for similar initiatives in other EU states</p>	<p>DHLGH, OPW; DPER (OGP)</p>	<p>Professional institutes and sector bodies; academic institutions;</p>
<p>Devise best practice guidance for publication and exhibition of built environment case studies</p>	<p>Publication and exhibition templates and guidance for use by public bodies to record and disseminate projects including online publication and in-house or travelling exhibitions</p>	<p>OPW, DHLGH</p>	<p>All public bodies which procure buildings</p>

5	Text ref.	Action area	Action programme		
	2.3	Set a Quality Agenda	Quality-assure built environment regulatory processes		
	NPA objectives		Indicators of success		
	Sustainability Quality Leadership Culture		Quality linkages are integrated and monitored across regulatory frameworks, verifying and tracking ‘fitness for purpose’ at all stages at national and local levels; Broad adoption of life cycle tools which clearly indicate sustainability by measurement of specified indicators; Awareness and wide use of guidance documents, which clarify and advise on best practice in protecting, managing and developing the historic built environment; National focus on landscape identification and assessment as evidence to underpin quality of forward planning		
	Steps towards delivery of desired outcomes		Potential output(s)	Lead	Key stakeholders
Incorporate national quality and circular economy criteria and verification mechanisms (taken from 2.1) as relevant within built environment regulatory frameworks and statutory guidance		Coordinated regulatory and guidance text for input into future revisions of Planning and Development Act and Regulations; Building Control Act and Regulations; Construction Products Regulation; Construction Contracts regulations; European Union (Waste Directive) Regulations [C&D waste], etc., and associated statutory guidance	DHLGH; OPW	DECC; RIAI; EPA; public and private sector built environment bodies	
Examine inclusion of OPW as statutory consultee on legislation and regulations affecting design quality in the built environment, and as consultee in relation to infrastructural programmes		Report outlining merits of the proposition and recommending steps	DHLGH	LGMA; OPR; DPER; OPW	
Identify and map usage of sustainability and spatial modelling tools by planning authorities, which deliver positive architectural outcomes, including in respect of architectural heritage and the circular economy		Review report on use of sustainability and spatial modelling tools for optimal architectural outcomes within the planning system, illustrating best practice case studies and containing recommendations on methods of incorporation into forward planning and development management processes	DHLGH; OPR	LGMA/CCMA/CCAA/AACO	

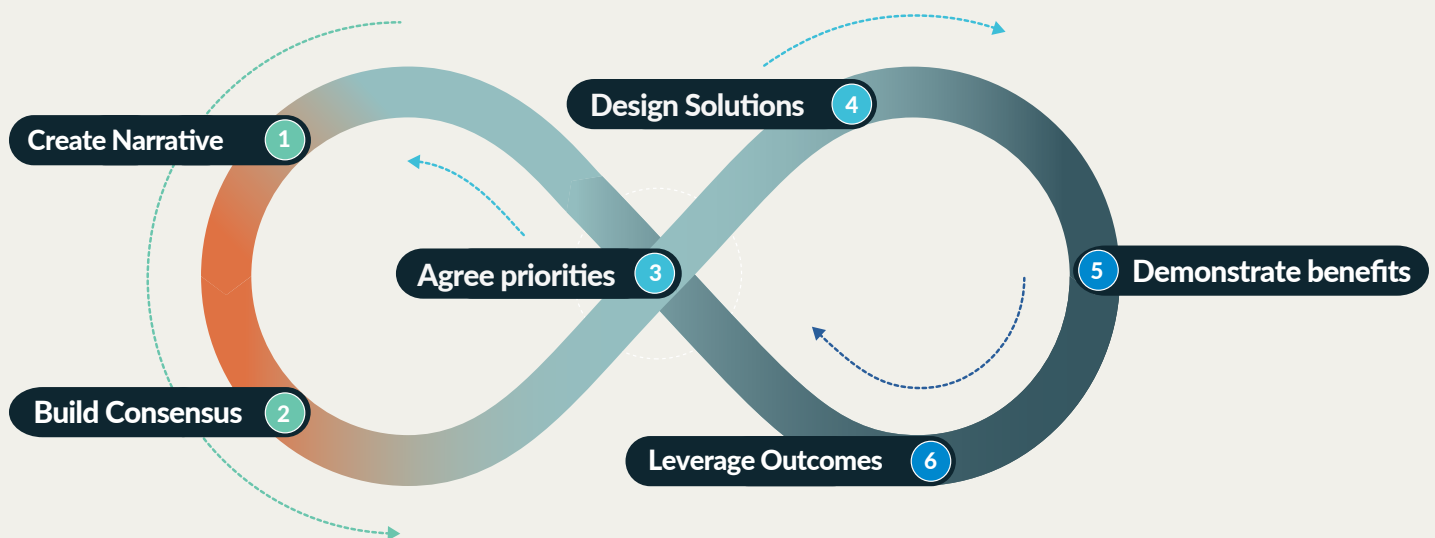
<p>Promote public sector use of EU Level(s) Framework to improve take-up of life cycle tools which measure sustainable building design and construction practice, including mainstreaming within regulatory processes of environmental product declarations and other carbon counters and selection of optimum tool(s) for life-cycle assessment of traditionally constructed buildings; Conduct stakeholder consultation on incorporation of specific sustainability tools into regulatory frameworks</p>	<p>National suite of design and construction sustainability assessment tools for verification of life-cycle environmental performance, health and comfort, and cost, value and risk spanning the traditional, modern and proposed built environment; with recommendations on optimal methods of incorporation into planning and development regulatory frameworks</p>	<p>DHLGH; DPER (OGP)</p>	<p>OPW; DECC; LDA; OPR; professional institutes; construction sector bodies; IGBC; SEAI</p>
<p>Support the production of a National Record of structures and areas protected under the Planning and Development Acts, to create an integrated dynamic mapping database for active risk and quality management, supporting urban and rural regeneration and property management</p>	<p>GIS-based National Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas database, containing national and planning authority interfaces with publicly accessible layer</p>	<p>DHLGH; DPER (open data unit);</p>	<p>LGMA</p>
<p>Undertake national landscape character assessment (including historic landscape characterisation); Draft statutory planning guidance on landscape character assessment; Support EPA to produce SEA guidance on evaluating landscape and cultural heritage character (including architectural and archaeological heritage) to include specific and objective impact indicators</p>	<p>National Landscape Character Assessment (data framework and dynamic, interactive GIS character map, interoperable with existing land-use data systems); publish statutory landscape character assessment guidance and Strategic Environmental Assessment landscape indicators guidance (for integration into SEA guidelines for regional assemblies and planning authorities; draft, 2021)</p>	<p>DHLGH; DPER (open data unit); EPA;</p>	<p>DECC; TII; LGMA/CCMA; government departments; built environment professional institutes and representative organisations;</p>
<p>Publish statutory guidance relating to sustainable development of the historic built environment incl. reuse of protected structures for residential accommodation (cf. Housing for All action 20.2); criteria for high and large-scale buildings in historic urban areas; etc.</p>	<p>Statutory forward planning and development management guidance documents [standalone or included in review of existing statutory planning guidance];</p>	<p>DHLGH</p>	<p>LGMA/CCMA;</p>
<p>Promote best practice placemaking models across local and regional authorities, drawing on: proposed national quality criteria; RIAI Design Review; European Commission OMC design quality criteria; ICOMOS European Quality Principles (2020); conservation plan method (Australia ICOMOS)</p>	<p>Dissemination of best practice approaches to urban regeneration, repair and character restoration for improved design – and implementation-phases and measurable environmental and social benefits from placemaking initiatives</p>	<p>DHLGH; OPW; RIAI</p>	<p>OPR; LDA; LGMA/CCMA;</p>

6	Text ref.	Action area	Action programme		
	3.1	Generate Knowledge	Establish a national architectural and built environment research service		
	NPA objectives		Indicators of success		
	Sustainability Quality Leadership		Accessible, national source of research expertise and quality-assured outputs reduces reliance on assumptions or partial data; Increased capacity for holistic data collection, research, analysis and recommendations; Research outputs enhance the quality of national built environment decision-making; Increased numbers of relevant research projects are funded at national and EU level with downstream effect on knowledge base		
	Steps towards delivery of desired outcomes		Potential output(s)	Lead	Key stakeholders
	Devise proposals for research entity in line with requirements		Formalised legal, governance and funding structures	DHLGH	D/FINANCE; DPER; DFHERIS;
Agree and cost multi-annual research programme		Physical facility established with research programme, funding and key staff in place	DHLGH	D/FINANCE; DPER; DFHERIS;	

7	Text ref.	Action area	Action programme		
	3.2	Generate Knowledge	Enhance built environment educational capacity and knowledge exchange		
	NPA objectives		Indicators of success		
	Sustainability Quality Leadership Culture		Thorough, cross-disciplinary approach to quality assurance in built environment education and training (NFQ levels 5-10; all occupation types), informed by feedback loops / knowledge exchange; Flexible nationwide responses which address identified skills gaps and mismatches in built environment design and delivery occupations and leadership / management roles; Increased student (including post-graduate), apprentice and trainee numbers, reflective of current social demographics; Efficient, timely horizontal and vertical dissemination of relevant local, national and EU information to support high quality built environment practice in the public sector; Dynamic public-private sector engagement which advances common thematic and process priorities through groups, conferences, events, publications and CPD delivery		
	Steps towards delivery of desired outcomes		Potential output(s)	lead	Key stakeholders
	Establish a national centre of excellence for architectural and built environment education and training, with formal connections to the above research entity and further and third level education and training providers; with functions e.g. to provide trainer upskilling programmes, include a traditional buildings investigation unit and skills hub (to impart traditional site skills and the application of digital skills to conservation, e.g. historic building information modelling); connect Irish skills programmes with EU-level priorities, e.g. Renovation Wave, New European Bauhaus; and illustrate architecture and built environment career options		Dedicated centre, standalone or within leading academic institution, with a national, future focus on architectural and built environment knowledge and skills development for sustainability (environmental, social, cultural and economic), including piloting the transmission of research outputs from the research entity with academic institutions and review for incorporation into curricular revisions	DHLGH, OPW	DFHERIS, DPER(OGP), OPR, SOLAS, HEA, SEAI, IGBC
	Identify areas which need oversight and quality review with respect to teaching outcomes in architecture and built environment in third level and further education institutions, with a focus on emerging knowledge and skills needs and challenges (e.g. digital, circular economy) and practical delivery modes		Creation of oversight committees / panels of built environment professional institute representatives which interact with education and training representatives to periodically review attainment of learning outcomes and give guidance from sector skills-needs forecasting	RIAI; OPW	Built environment professional institutes; schools of architecture, engineering, planning and surveying (incl. landscape, heritage and natural environment)

<p>Devise additional Commercial Skills Academy programmes to upskill public authorities</p>	<p>Suite of modular training programmes and CPD initiatives on built environment thematic priorities for contracting authority representatives operated by the Commercial Skills Academy</p>	<p>DPER; RIAI; SCSi</p>	<p>DHLGH; LGMA; OPR; regional assemblies; professional institutes</p>
<p>Create virtual sector knowledge exchange forum and network</p>	<p>Online network for circulation of EU, national and sectoral updates e.g. New European Bauhaus and exchange forum e.g. on best practices in existing or emerging specialisms such as urban design and building conservation, and disseminating sector forecasts and other built environment publications and projects</p>	<p>DHLGH; OPR; OPW; LGMA, CCAA; sector institutes; [etc.]</p>	<p>Public bodies with built environment responsibilities, representative organisations and built environment NGOs</p>
<p>Organise annual multi-disciplinary conferences for dissemination of advice and best practices in architecture, built heritage, placemaking & landscape by leading and emerging public sector and local authority architects</p>	<p>Annual calendar of specialist, multi-disciplinary conferences on priority topics with peer-reviewed, published proceedings</p>	<p>DHLGH & OPW jointly as co-chairs of NPA delivery board</p>	<p>Built environment professional institutes; schools of architecture, engineering, planning and surveying (incl. landscape, heritage and natural environment)</p>
<p>Assemble a traditional buildings and towns knowledge and research output dynamic database and profiling model and use to recommend best practice models for town regeneration, aiding investment and SDG implementation (e.g. Scotland’s Town Partnerships and the Scottish initiatives, Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and Heritage and Place Programme)</p>	<p>Knowledge hub, linking information, research database and best practice models for regeneration of traditional buildings and urban areas in Ireland and comparable places, to complement Town Centre First initiative</p>	<p>DHLGH; DRCD</p>	<p>LGMA</p>
<p>Encourage public authorities to facilitate ‘meanwhile’ architectural, educational and cultural uses in pop-up venues, e.g. exhibition and performance spaces, living labs, in underused historic town buildings, operated by not-for-profit entities</p>	<p>Short guidance for public authorities on supporting architectural, cultural and education awareness events and exhibitions in underutilised publicly owned town centre buildings, with illustrations of methods used in successful case studies</p>	<p>DHLGH</p>	<p>LGMA/CCMA/CCAA/AAACO; OPR; academic and training institutions; Arts Council; IAF; Creative Ireland; civil society groups</p>

Appendix 2: Implementation Strategy



1. Set out a compelling vision

Co-create a strategic narrative through a work plan with compelling vision, defined targets and advocacy for an open mindset which encourages knowledge exchange and continuous improvement

2. Convene a wide range of stakeholders

Encourage broad participation by convening and listening to a wide range of perspectives and skillsets, creating an ongoing country-wide feedback loop

3. Create partnerships and work programmes

Research collective responses to societal challenges through inter-disciplinary collaboration and support architects to generate new insights

4. Create toolkits and guides as common resources

Create common resources such as quality criteria, toolkits and guides to improve design and delivery outcomes for places, spaces and buildings and increase awareness and understanding

5. Create feedback loops and disseminate new knowledge

Demonstrate real-life application by examples, studies and pilots showing the beneficial effects of good architecture for climate, nature, economy, health and wellbeing

6. Learn by doing and reviewing

Enable strategic investments in high-quality placemaking at scale and of a nature that matches the policy ambition, leverages other national and EU funding opportunities and creates value through civic capital

The goal of the implementation programme is for all architecture and built environment stakeholders to contribute to the continuous improvement of the body of knowledge. The action outputs of the programme will become building blocks towards achieving this goal. Each will be part of the wider process of broadening and deepening the impact of architectural knowledge and expertise, for societal and environmental benefit.

The main objectives of the governance and implementation framework include:

1. Build awareness of, and demonstrate the benefits of, this policy and its enabling purpose across the public and private sectors and society
2. Build a cross-sectoral consensus around the policy vision, objectives and goals through key stakeholders agreeing common purpose
3. Create a policy partnership structure and work programmes to target, initiate, monitor and review priority actions
4. Devolve action design, problem-solving and resources to policy partnerships with first-hand experience of the relevant issues
5. Design feedback mechanisms and report on effectiveness of the policy implementation across government and the built environment sector

6. Commit to three-yearly reviews of the strategy, work programme and metrics/indicators to inform the subsequent three year work programme.

Many national and local organisations will be involved in the design and delivery of the implementation programme. It will be based on the assembly of a broad architectural alliance representing the complex, interconnected network of built environment policy, operations, education, design and delivery systems and advocacy and communications organisations. Given this relative complexity, it is essential that the governance framework reflects and contributes to long-term policy-making by embedding connections to other national initiatives such as Project Ireland 2040, the Climate Action Plan, Housing for All, the Town Centre First policy, Heritage Ireland 2030 and Culture 2025.

Implementation requires engagement at national, regional and local levels in the public sector as well as the mobilisation of various sectors, intermediary organisations, education and training providers and wider Irish society. Partnerships and methods of collaboration should be agile, to respond as best fits each circumstance. Cross-sectoral partnerships will increase understanding, create a common purpose and forge relationships.

Principles for implementing this policy

Enriching our culture by integrating architecture

- The NPA will articulate the value of architecture as part of Irish culture, as a positive force that mirrors and shapes societies and supports people's identities and values
- The NPA will promote a culture of evidence-based decision-making focussed on the needs of people, place and planet, as designing for environment and society is the only way to bring about a sustainable economy
- The NPA will advocate for the wider use of creative empathy, collaborative approaches, and design and materials expertise to increase understanding of the indivisible connections between the natural environment, architecture, spatial planning and human well-being

Empowering people through architecture

- The NPA will value inter-disciplinary built environment knowledge and will build enduring relationships forged by a common purpose
- NPA implementation will be measured, monitored and reviewed by the implementation advisory group in conjunction with key stakeholders
- The NPA will be implemented in line with European and Irish cultural and built environment and architectural policies that prioritise a people-centred and quality-driven approach to architectural decision-making

Meeting evolving needs through architecture

- The NPA will be a living policy, adaptive and responsive to needs expressed by existing research and emerging evidence across all sectors and levels, for mutual benefit
- Implementation will use quality and Lean principles to focus on the architectural needs of environment, society and economy and will deploy efficient and effective processes to work towards meeting them
- NPA priority implementation areas will be revised as built environment stakeholders prioritise, refine, design and collaboratively implement actions, in line with best practices and supporting built environment policies, regulations and requirements
- Each successive phase of NPA implementation will contribute to a knowledge and leadership feedback loop, disseminated in many ways from research papers and guidance to online platforms and social media

Proposed changes to direction or priority during the implementation period will be assessed against these principles.



Nano Nagle Place, Cork by Jack Coughlan Architects. RIAI award winner, 2020.
Photo by f22 Photography.

Appendix 3:

Communication Strategy

The communication strategy will guide communities, users, building clients, public authorities, built environment professionals, contractors and educators to meet the very complex design and communications challenge set out in this policy and other built environment plans. Communicating the vision and progress of the National Policy on Architecture to all stakeholders is a critical undertaking. It must motivate a wide variety of individuals and organisations to undertake roles in the implementation of the policy, demonstrate and measure progress and disseminate the outputs and outcomes to all stakeholders.

The communications approaches will draw on the expertise of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage communications unit and the established communications strategies of all partner organisations. Fixed communications requirements will include an annual report itemising progress and disbursement of funds.

It is envisaged that the initial introduction to and awareness-raising strategy about this policy should be carefully designed with key stakeholders, to promote the National Policy on Architecture vision, objectives and actions. The strategy will highlight the role of the policy to public authorities and communities alike in support of the National

Development Plan, the Climate Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Plan, Culture 2025 and Heritage Ireland 2030 in order to garner their immediate interest and support.

The ingredients of this communications strategy are similar to those used in a change management exercise: to listen, discuss, illustrate, exchange and listen again; to find common ground and interests and reduce fear, to build trust and motivation for first actions such as exemplars, pilots, trials and small-scale initiatives.

The policy actions will involve communication with many categories of stakeholder – those whose careers are in the built environment; those who are, have been or may become clients (public or private) and those who are interested, those with an opinion about architecture or their own local area.

The steps of awareness-desire-knowledge-ability-reinforcement, known by the acronym of ADKAR, used in many organisations, will help to communicate this policy's objectives. Using ADKAR, the strategy will focus on the biggest concerns of citizens to explore how architecture can bring about positive changes at local scale, such as Town Centre First, or the concept of the 15 minute city.

Each category of stakeholder is equally deserving of knowing where they fit with the policy implementation and encouraged to participate.

- Public / critic: the information will be general, raising awareness of the value of architecture and design in the built environment through social/online media, promotion campaigns, short case studies or participatory initiatives operated with NPA funding.
- Client: from those professionally involved in procuring buildings to private citizens thinking about a house extension, the information is informative about the benefits of quality, of engaging competent designers and builders and the approaches to consider to prioritise architectural quality and measure success from the first stages of a potential project to the commissioning of the finished building.
- Career: detailed, technical information that clarifies the centrality of spatial design and a holistic approach, the benefits from collaborative working methods between architects and other built environment professionals from the initial stages of options appraisal; the stages of public or other procurement processes and leadership of project management teams.

The policy will use a measured, engaging, consistent and participatory approach through print and digital media, to seek suggestions at every stage and illustrate where opinions have been accepted and integrated into implementation.

Transparency about progress will be a cornerstone of the annual reporting requirements, to show how actions are progressing and indicate difficulties or barriers.

The communications channels will be connected to the proposed knowledge exchange platform, to enable all types of information and documentation to be uploaded, from citizen science / distributed effort projects to reports outlining complex technical research from our leading universities, with listening tools for those who may otherwise feel excluded and feedback hubs for types of interest group.

Appendix 4:

Glossary, Abbreviations and References

Glossary of some architectural terms

Architecture is a designed response to the human requirement for shelter, expressed as a living expression of culture and an integral part of human identity. Architecture and design run from the scale of a building detail – such as a door handle – to the building, to the street and even to the scale of a landscape, town or city.

Architectural heritage is an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of the structures and designed landscapes of our past, not only of great artistic achievements but also the everyday works of craftsmen, which have acquired character and special interest through their intrinsic quality, continued existence and familiarity. ([Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011](#))

Architectural research is investigation into new or improved knowledge or ideas about design for the built environment and includes a variety of sub-disciplines including, for example, building technology, environment-behaviour studies and history of architecture.

Baukultur is a German word to describe human activity that changes spaces and the living environment in a positive way, including existing buildings – including built heritage – as well as contemporary buildings, infrastructure, public spaces and landscapes. It also refers to forward-

thinking planning procedures for future built environment plans, programmes and projects. Baukultur refers to procedures and ways of planning on the one hand and methods of construction, reuse and repurposing, embracing traditional and local building skills as well as innovative techniques (see [OMC, 2021, p.123](#))

Built environment is the sum of the structures and infrastructure in spaces and places, in which people exist in proximity and actively shape and which in turn impacts on people's lives and behaviour

Creative practice research is a form of academic research which incorporates an element of practice in the methodology and research output (see [OMC, 2021, p.124](#))

Cultural heritage is a set of resources inherited from the past which people perceive as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions (see [Council of Europe Framework Convention, 2005, Article 2](#))

Davos Baukultur Quality System is an instrument to enable the assessment of Baukultur qualities in places using eight criteria (see [Davos Declaration 2018](#))

Design quality indicators are tools which allow the design quality of building and place projects to be evaluated by all interested parties at all stages of the planning, design, construction and occupation stages; they include the Davos Baukultur Quality System, the Towards a shared culture of architecture [evaluation sheet](#) and the [UK Design Quality Indicator](#) toolkit. [The Design Manual for Quality Housing](#) (2022) sets out urban design quality indicators.

Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. [Article 1, European Landscape Convention](#), 2000.

Living environment is a balanced composition of the artificial and natural environments, which include both outdoor and indoor spaces (see [OMC, 2021, p.125](#))

New European Bauhaus is a creative and interdisciplinary initiative that connects the European Green Deal to our daily lives and living spaces. It calls on all Europeans to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds and souls

Smart communities are regions where citizens, governments, companies, and institutes work together

with innovative technological solutions to enhance the quality of life by providing better services.

Spatial planning is the methodology used for coordinating proposals for the development of places at local, regional and national scales, through setting objectives and actions in development plans which are used to assess programmes and projects, with the aim of sustainably using resources

Urban design is the collaborative, multi-disciplinary process of designing and shaping the physical elements of buildings, streets and spaces and their interrelationships, at the scale of neighbourhoods, towns and cities (see [Best Practice Urban Design Manual](#), 2009 and [Retail Design Manual](#), 2012, p. vi)

Appendix 4:

List of abbreviations used in this policy

AACO: Association of Architectural Conservation Officers

ABP: An Bord Pleanála

CCAA: City and County Architects Association

CCMA: City and County Management Association

CIF: Construction Industry Federation

CPD: Continuous professional development

CWMF: Capital Works Management Framework

DECC: Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

DFHERIS: Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

DHLGH: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

DPER: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

DRCD: Department of Rural and Community Development

DTCAGSM: Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

ESRI: Economic and Social Research Institute

GIS: Geographic information systems

HEA: Higher Education Authority

HSE: Health Service Executive

IAF: Irish Architecture Foundation

ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites

IGBC: Irish Green Building Council

LDA: Land Development Agency

LGMA: Local Government Management Agency

NEB: New European Bauhaus

NGO: non-governmental organisation

NIO: National Investment Office

NPA: National Policy on Architecture

OGP: Office of Government Procurement

OMC: Open Method of Coordination [an EU mechanism for intergovernmental policy making]

OPR: Office of the Planning Regulator

OPW: Office of Public Works

RIAI: Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

RIA: Royal Irish Academy

SCSI: Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland

SEAI: Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

TII: Transport Infrastructure Ireland

UN SDGs: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

URBACT: European Territorial Cooperation Programme

Architecture and built environment policies and related publications

Irish architectural policy publications:

[Places for People: National Policy on Architecture discussion document \(2019\)](#)

[NPA Consultation Report \(2021\)](#)

[Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015: Towards a Sustainable Future: Delivering Quality within the Built Environment \(2009\)](#)

[GPA Annual Report 2009-2010](#)

[GPA Annual Report 2011-2012](#)

[GPA Annual Reports 2013-2015](#)

[Action on Architecture \(2002\)](#)

National framework policies

[Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework \(Government of Ireland, 2018\)](#)

[National Development Plan 2021-2030 \(Government of Ireland, 2021\)](#)

[Construction Procurement Reform](#)

[Capital Works Management Framework](#)

[Climate Action Plan \(Government of Ireland, 2021\)](#)

[Housing for All \(Government of Ireland, 2021\)](#)

[Town Centre First \(Government of Ireland, 2022\)](#)

[Circular Economy Strategy \(Government of Ireland, 2021\)](#)

[Heritage Ireland 2030 \(Government of Ireland 2022\)](#)

[Culture 2025 Éire Ildánach \(Government of Ireland \(2020\)](#)

[National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 \(\(Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, 2015\)](#)

Relevant Government publications

[Design Manual for Quality Housing \(Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022\)](#)

[A Living Tradition, a strategy for our built vernacular heritage \(Government of Ireland, 2021\).](#)

[Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets \(Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2019\)](#)

[Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines \(Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018\)](#)

[Bringing Back Homes \(Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018\)](#)

[Local Area Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities \(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013\)](#)

[Local Area Plans Manual \(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013\)](#)

[Retail Planning Guidelines \(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012\)](#)

[Retail Design Manual \(Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012\)](#)

[Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines \(Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011\)](#)

[Advice Series \(Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2007- present\)](#)

[Shaping the Future – case studies in adaptation and reuse in historic urban environments \(Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2012\)](#)

[Construction Sector Group - Building Innovation \(Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2020\)](#)

Supporting Excellence – Capital Project and Programme Delivery Capability Review (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2021)

Supporting Excellence Action Team Report (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2021)

Policy Proposals for Ireland's Towns (Heritage Council, 2015)

Building for Everyone: A universal design approach (National Disability Authority, 2012)

Improving the energy efficiency of historic buildings (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022)

Hidden in plain sight – the identification, repair and reuse of early urban buildings (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022)

National Policy on Architecture advisory group representatives:

Office of Public Works: Office of the State Architect
Department of Education, Planning and Building Unit

HSE Estates: Chief Architectural Advisor

City and County Architects Association

Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

Schools of architecture, represented by School of Architecture, University of Limerick

Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíonn

Heritage Council

Irish Architecture Foundation

Relevant links:

Creative Ireland Programme

Irish Architectural Archive

Circuleire

Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

European and international initiatives and publications related to architectural policy

European Commission:

Communication from the Commission on the New European Bauhaus (2021)

Council Conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative (2021)

Towards a shared culture of architecture – investing in a high-quality living environment for everyone (2021)

New Leipzig Charter (2020)

Urban Agenda for the EU

New European Agenda for Culture (2018)

Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022

European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage (2019)

Heritage, Contemporary Architecture and Design in Interaction (2015)

European Forum for Architectural Policies

Survey on Architectural Policies in Europe European Forum on Architectural Policies (2012)

Conclusions on Architecture: taking stock European Forum on Architectural Policies (2013)

Shaping the Future – A Forum on Architecture: culture's contribution to sustainable development EFAP conference and general assembly, rapporteur notes; Dublin (2013)

Council of Europe

European Landscape Convention (2000)

Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Council of Europe (Faro Convention, 2005)

Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985)

United Nations

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)

UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015)

Urban Maestro (UN-Habitat)

Other links

Architects Council of Europe: EU architectural policies

Davos Declaration 'Towards a high-quality Baukultur for Europe' 2018

Davos Baukultur Quality System (2021)

ICOMOS European Quality Principles with potential impact upon Cultural Heritage (2020)

Urban Agenda Partnership on Circular Economy, Handbook on sustainable and circular reuse of spaces and buildings (2019)

Bento, J. Laopoulou, T. Spatial design leadership: the role, instruments and impact of state architect (or similar) teams in fostering spatial quality and a place-making culture across five European states. (UCL Bartlett School of Planning, 2019)

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Pike Architects, under construction, 2020. Photographs by Grafton Architects,
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