

**December 06, 2007**

## **Arts, sports and tourism make great gains in Budget 2008 – Kennedy**

DUBLIN NORTH'S Fianna Fail TD Deputy Michael Kennedy has welcomed the generous package of funding for the arts, sports and tourism announced in today's budget and says it will allow each of the sectors to flourish during the year ahead.

Deputy Kennedy said: "As the Vice-Chair for the Dail Committee for Arts, Sports and Tourism I of course have a special interest in this area of today's Budget and I am delighted with Minister Brennan's estimates for the year ahead."

"Overall, the 2008 budget allocates €730m for 2008, which is an increase of 8 per cent on 2007. The additional funding will allow for investment in many new projects and will increase the development potential for all the areas under the remit of the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism. These are important areas for the economic, cultural and social progress of the country and I will be keeping a close eye on those projects to receive funding in the North County Dublin."

"In the area of the Arts, where 30,000 people are currently employed, the overall investment is €245m, up 5 per cent on last year. The big winner is the Arts Council which is to receive €85m this year – that's a 6.4 per cent increase on last year's funding."

"In addition to this Section 481, which grants tax exemptions to filmmakers located in Ireland, will be expanded till 2012 - four years beyond it's initial deadline. This act is expected to bolster the Irish film industry, and take advantage of the treasure trove of resources we have in Ireland suitable to the film and TV industry."

"Sports funding has increased to more €336m, with an investment of €116m alone in Lansdowne Road. I particularly welcome the news that €57m has been allocated towards the Sports Capital Programme with a further €20m going to the provision of Local Authority swimming pools."

"My own area of Fingal is currently planning two pools; one in Skerries and one in Balbriggan, as well as an upgrade of the Portrane swimming pool. I will of course be monitoring these projects closely."

"Tourism, which has now eclipsed construction in terms of being Ireland's biggest industry, has been allocated €170m which is up seven per cent on 2007. This will come as welcome news to the thousands of people working in the industry in Ireland."

“Nearly €16m is to go towards key tourism infrastructure, attractions and visitor facilities.”

“In addition to this, €83m will go to Failte Ireland – this will go towards the securing of the Irish stopover of the Volvo Ocean Yacht Race in Galway in 2009.”

“I broadly welcome this Budget’s recognition of the arts, sports and tourism and their individual contributions to Irish society and as Vice Chair of the relevant committee in the Dail, I am delighted to have contributed to the decisions made in the proceeding weeks,” concluded Deputy Kennedy