

# Cultural and Creative Strategy Review

Bath & North East Somerset  
2015-2020



# Foreword

## **Creativity and culture are vital to the economic and business life of Bath and North East Somerset.**

Culture is the life-blood of our community, and creativity and culture touches the lives of everyone in Bath and North East Somerset, whether local residents, local businesses, or visitors. Participation in heritage, arts, and other cultural activity enables people to celebrate, grow, learn, think and debate – the hallmarks of a community with a strong identity whose citizens are active in local democracy.

The City of Bath and its surrounding area is home to a significant cluster of creative businesses who are taking forward Bath's tradition of invention and artistic interpretation for the modern age. Our cultural reputation, inspiring environment, and our leading educational facilities continue to attract highly-skilled and globally talented people working across diverse fields such as website and systems development, photography, architectural activities, publishing and television and film production.

I know from my work as a local Councillor, just how important it is for Bath and North East Somerset to be a creative place that offers opportunity to all. I welcome this Cultural & Creative Strategy Review as a strong statement of the value of creativity and culture to the local community, and as a clear commitment to working together to increase participation in cultural activity of all kinds.

**Councillor Paul Crossley**

**We will work together to create an inspiring and entrepreneurial twenty-first century Bath and North East Somerset, internationally-renowned as beautifully inventive with a vibrant cultural and creative sector, strong social purpose and a spirit of wellbeing.**

Collaboration, creativity, imagination and innovation are at the heart of this ambitious new strategy. Our challenge now is to build on our world-class heritage as a 'a masterpiece of human creative genius' (UNESCO) to create a stunning legacy for future generations.

Together, we will raise the profile of our rich, diverse culture and our innovative creative industries to tell our stories, attract more funding and investment and develop opportunities for everyone to flourish.



# Aims of the new strategy

- Raised ambition and confidence
- Resilient diverse funding
- Increased national and international investment in creative industries
- Widespread engagement from participants and audiences
- Diverse and inspiring leadership
- More collaborative working
- To reverse the situation which led to a loss of ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding 2015-18: Creativity Works (£271,000).
  - Other cities,NPO: York (4), Norwich (4), Oxford (6), Exeter (7), Brighton (8)

# Culture and creative industries: economic strategy

The importance of a vibrant cultural and creative sector to our local economy is detailed in B&NES Economic Strategy Review 2014-30 (ESR) which identifies:

**Arts and Culture** as a Core Sector

**Creative and Digital** as a Key Sector --- for growth and job creation.

## Economic Strategy Review aims include:

- 'More residents and workers participating in cultural activity'
- '20% increase in local residents attending events'
- 'More sustainable local cultural businesses'
- 'Improved health and wellbeing for local residents and workers'



# Strategy development

- **Wide-ranging sector consultation** identified shared value and ambitions (e.g survey)
- Desk research to examine **models of good practice from other areas**; evidence base of measuring impact of culture and creative industries (economic, health and wellbeing)
- **Audience Agency analysis** of B&NES cultural consumption by household
- **Steering group** consultation

**Over 150 organisations contributed to the consultation process**

## ➔ **Four core priorities identified for creativity and culture in B&NES**

1. Increase the **quality and visibility** of our creative activity
2. **Increase** the availability and range of **workspace and exhibition space**
3. Grow and **deepen public engagement** and providing opportunities for trans-generational creative and cultural engagement
4. **Maximise economic and social value**

## ➔ **Development of ten emerging themes, now developed into actions**

# From consultation to action

## *Ambition and activity:*

World-class culture

Creative economy

City identity and B&NES

## *Audiences and participation:*

Visibility and discoverability

Audiences and engagement

Children and young people

Nurturing talent

## *Infrastructure and connectivity:*

Venues and work spaces

Collaborative networks

Financial sustainability and infrastructure



# World-class culture

Our rich and diverse culture, for example in theatre, includes leading organisations such as the Theatre Royal, Ustinov and egg theatres, together with alternative theatre such as The Naturals and Kilter Theatre. We have an unbeatable range of festivals across all cultural forms including classical and popular music, film, literature, performing arts, and a digital festival; we also hold key creative industry collections for the nation, such as that of the Fashion Museum.

## *Actions*

- Develop effective **national and international marketing**: shout about – be proud of – our existing excellence and expertise.
- **Make more of our gateways/entrances to the city** to welcome visitors and promote events: our culture should be visible at street level: it's one of the city's major USPs.
- **Work towards a major award** such as UNESCO Creative Cities Network; European Capital of Culture 2023.
- **Maximise opportunities for collaboration with regional, national and international centres of cultural and creative excellence**; for example, build on our world-renowned spa heritage and the European spa town networks.
- Maintain the area's profile as a centre for major events through the development of a **year-round programme of events and festivals'** (ESR).
- Ensure **access to excellence for all**.



# Creative economy

This is a proven strength for B&NES, but requires action to ensure that we remain competitive in terms of workspace, skills, and have a suitably attractive and distinctive offer for national and international business – and for expanding home-grown companies.

## ***Actions***

- Ensure availability of **superfast broadband** across B&NES, essential for creative-digital industries and important in facilitating a broader geographical spread of businesses across the area.
- **Communicate the distinctiveness of our offer** to attract national and international businesses looking to relocate to the Bath-Bristol-Cardiff corridor.
- **Encourage a high level of creative-digital skills across all ages** in our workforce to meet current and future demand (working with the LEP, FE and HE).
- **Regenerate our historic market towns, through culture and the creative industries**, to create distinctive, connected, and affordable places to live and work – linked with the city of Bath through transport (e.g. green cycle routes), high-profile branding and business facilities.
- 'Provide **tailored support to small business and VCS providers**' (ESR).

# City identity and B&NES

## Actions

- Promote the city of **Bath** as a **cultural beacon** and **centre for the creative-tech industries**: **a city of imagination and innovation**.
- Develop and promote the concept of **Bath at the centre of a constellation of excellence** e.g. Radstock with its national excellence in dance, and an ACE NPO Creativity Works; major annual music festivals in Bath, Keynsham and in Iford.
- **Enhance the role of local libraries** in connecting communities, work and culture.
- Work with **regional and national partners** and stakeholders to develop a more complete cultural and creative offer for residents and visitors (and for the enormous number of students) living in the West of England.
- Expand **collaboration and joint working** between grassroots cultural and creative organisations in the West of England.



# Visibility and discoverability

## Actions

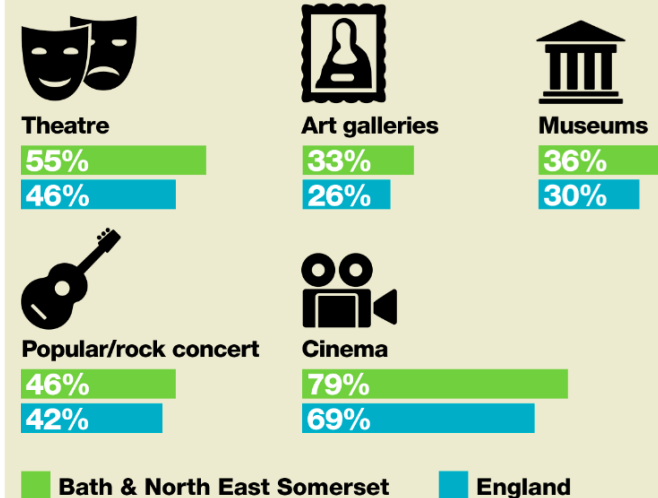
- **Promote the sector at a national and international level;** make use of our award-winning creative-digital marketing expertise and young vloggers.
- **Promote new experiences:**
  - **Be a Local Tourist:** build on the Discovery Card and existing open-week events to encourage residents of all ages to discover what's on offer on their doorstep.
  - **Bath Art and Culture map** (BAC map): a beautifully-designed, pop-up culture map to highlight the diversity of venues and promote year-round events and/or a monthly calendar of events and activities.
  - **Curate the city:** develop Bath Lanes and Parades: new cultural routes, peppered with surprise and delight, to join up cultural venues (e.g. from Roman Baths to Holburne Museum via *Northanger Abbey's* alleyways, the Corridor arcade, Victoria Art Gallery, Pulteney Bridge, to the Holburne Museum).
- Develop a **simple but effective and comprehensive What's On platform**, building on existing systems and working with Bath Box Office, Bath Tourism Plus, and B&NES-based creative-digital businesses.
- Combine the platform with **innovative digital marketing**, the Discovery Card, Bath Passport, and audience data analysis.
- **Evaluate booking and ticketing:** working with Bath Festivals (which manages booking for 120 organisations), local festivals, universities (Bath Spa Live, ICIA), and the creative-tech sector to consider a city-wide approach.

# Audiences and engagement

## Actions

- Use **digital technology to gather audience data and generate insights** to measure and deepen audience experience, and highlight opportunities to increase participation.
- **Research the participation gap** identified within specific communities and develop strategies to address this.
- Work with local employers to **promote engagement in volunteering programmes** (ESR).
- Extend access to the health and wellbeing effects of culture and creativity: we will **lead nationally with our cross-sector approach to the new Social Prescription**.
- **Expand our audience base beyond B&NES**: from the West of England, national and international

Arts attendance in Bath & North East Somerset is higher than the national average



Data: Audience Agency for Bath and North East Somerset (2014)

An Audience Agency profile report commissioned for this strategy, showed engagement with the arts is unusually high with attendance for most cultural forms (especially theatre, art, and cinema) greater than the national average by around 20%.

# Children and young people

Culture and creativity for children and young people is an area of national and international excellence for B&NES with the UK's only dedicated children's literature festival, a world-leading postgraduate course in writing for young people, leading creative learning research organization, 5x5x5=creativity, and a strong tradition of working with schools and HE.

## *Actions*

- **Support and promote high-quality activities** and events: opportunities to fire the creative imagination.
- **Consult with children and young people** across B&NES on the choice of creative experiences and activities.
- **Ensure social inclusion** through specialist organisations such as Creativity Works and our many excellent voluntary groups e.g. Mentoring Plus.
- Build on our established national reputation for excellence in this area by furthering the work of, and **collaborations between, our leading specialist organisations.**
- The **Council will facilitate the organisation of suitable spaces** for activities and events to enhance the lives and learning of all children and young people in B&NES



# Nurturing talent

To encourage sustainability and diversity we need to **encourage new talent** into the sector and **establish a framework in which it can develop**. We need to celebrate and **support those who are working at a national or international level** in the sector, and who might take on a leadership role.

## *Actions*

Develop supported points of entry for:

- Young cultural and creative entrepreneurs
- Specialist internships (to improve diversity)
- Professional and community volunteering
- Diverse cultural leadership (existing and emerging) and ambassadorship
- Active networks
- Collaborative project groups
- Patronage/ business sponsorship

# Venues and work spaces

*The main constraint to further future growth in the city's knowledge economy is the lack of appropriate business space of the right type and right quality. (ESR)*

## **Actions**

- **Increase availability and diversity** of workspace hubs for creative and cultural industries along the lines of Bath Guild Co-working Hub, Bath Artists Studio, The Makery, and Glove Factory, also for satellite hubs in neighbouring market towns.
- **Council to work with IBB** to make space available for companies seeking to expand and those moving to the area.
- Develop **high-visibility temporary exhibition and museum-type spaces** (e.g. during the Christmas Market).
- Examine requirements for destination venues and spaces across **West of England and explore opportunities for collaboration.**
- **'New creative hub established' (ESR, 2014-30).** Explore, with strategic development partners and regional stakeholders, viability of the development of a central, international-standard, large exhibition space (e.g. suitable for an international contemporary art biennale or major touring exhibitions)
- **Promote sector networking** and social space: mix of provision with an initial focus on the Cultural & Creative Bath Partnership and The Guild Co-working Hub space.

# Collaborative networks

*Partnerships and collaborations, both within and outside the sector, are considered by many to be very important to sectoral survival and development. (Arts Council England)*

## **Actions**

**Work differently, smarter, cross-sector**, public and private: raise our ambitions through a shared commitment to excellence for all and the creation of a city ready for future challenges and opportunities.

**Be more joined up as a sector** through collaboration, and consider possible mergers and partnerships to promote a common sense of identity and purpose.

**Work collaboratively with the HE sector** to access expert, up-to-date advice, for example on funding, and to put together collaborative bids across B&NES and sectors.

Seek suitable **national and international partnerships** to raise our profile, expand horizons, and help facilitate large (e.g. EU) funding opportunities.

# Financial sustainability and infrastructure

## *Actions*

- **Put in place a new, ethically-robust, Cultural and Creative Investment Board** to support the Local Authority funding process and ensure strategic working between different bodies investing in culture in B&NES.
- Through a **new collaborative Cultural and Creative Bath Partnership**, deliver an infrastructure to support the sector, make beneficial connections, and deliver high-quality, up-to-date advice on funding and financial strategy.
- Develop long-term strategies for **working across sectors and with a wider variety of funders** to increase income.
- 
- **Increase revenue** from public engagement, including tourism, using digital technology and **high-quality arts marketing**.
- **Reduce costs** through collaboration e.g. **sharing space, resources and marketing**.
- Develop **touring** for our excellent productions and exhibitions.
- Reposition the sector and support individual organisations for **success in the next Arts Council 'National Portfolio Organisation' funding round (2018)**.
- Communicate clearly the **contribution of the Council**, across departments, to the sector (and the wider benefits of this).

# Implementation of the strategy





# IMPLEMENTATION

## **Cultural and Creative Investment Board (CCIB)**

Made up of key public sector funders (Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Local Economic Partnerships) with B&NES Council, Bath Tourism Plus, and three Cultural and Creative sector representatives.

- Provide ethically-robust, diverse, sustainable **governance**
- **Support the development** of culture and the creative industries
- **Identify strategic priorities** and possibilities for **investment**
- **Facilitate cross-department funding and working** within the Council on major projects
- **Implement the strategy** and prioritise short and long-term goals, set targets and milestones
- **Work with key cultural organisations**, locally, regionally and nationally, to develop transformational projects
- Attract and **coordinate where necessary external funding** for cultural projects
- Identify and facilitate large-scale opportunities e.g. major national and international bids

# IMPLEMENTATION

## **Cultural and Creative Bath Partnership (CCBP)**

A new group bringing together Creative Bath, Cultural Forum and The Guild Co-working Hub to:

- **Represent the sector** to the CCIB
- **Coordinate activity** across the sector
- Help facilitate the **sharing of expertise**
- Develop ideas, **collaborations and connections**
- Identify areas for **research** e.g. audience, impact measurement, creative industry cluster mapping
- Collate and **communicate feedback from the CCIB**, and from specialist groups and individuals
- **Foster a collegiate and collaborative approach** among culture sector enterprises
- Be **supported by B&NES Economy & Culture Team** in coordinating the promotion of sector networks and specialist groups

## Specialist Groups

(varied: some are already in existence; self-governing)

### *Purpose:*

- Share expertise
- Pool resources for economies of scale
- Develop collaborative groups for projects and funding bids
- Collaborate on creative programming

### Sample groups:

Cultural forms: Visual Arts, Architecture, Design, Music, Performing Arts, Theatre, Publishing and Writing

### Festivals

Creative industries

Artists Studios

Participation: Hard to Reach

Volunteers

Funding Expertise

Children and Young People

Craneworks

TheatreBath

DanceBath



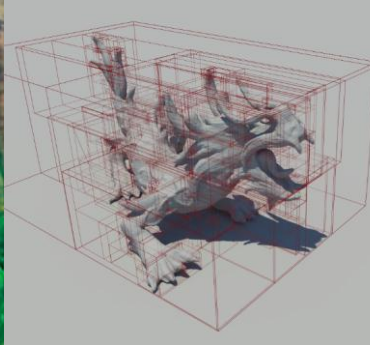
TechRadar

Shared publicly - Apr 16, 2014

#ContactLenses

Do you like the idea of having a camera in your contact lenses?  
Check out Google's latest patent:





## Cultural and Creative Strategy Review

Project lead and writer: Katharine Reeve

with Celia Mead and Stephen Taylor of Bath Bridge; and  
researcher, Diana Newport Peace.

