



**Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cultural and Creative Strategy Review
2015-2020**

Cultural Life | Creative Work



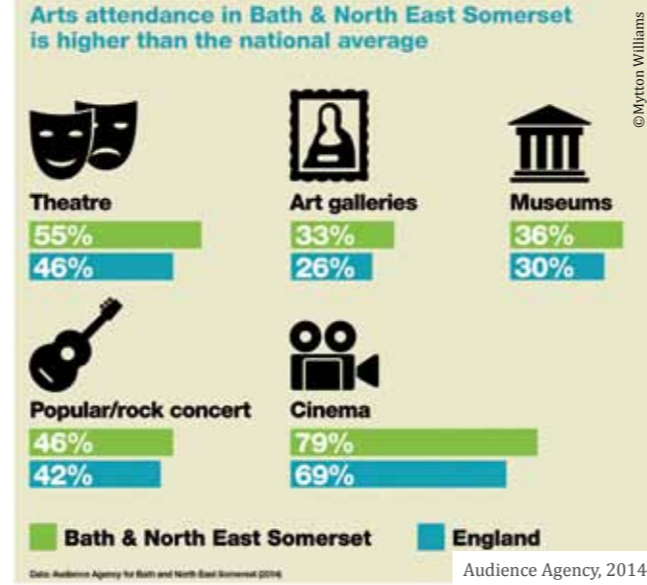
1. Introduction

Culture and creativity 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 touch the lives of everyone in Bath and North East Somerset, whether visitors, local residents or businesses. 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 which are reinterpreting Bath's tradition of invention and creativity for a modern age. Our cultural reputation, inspiring environment, and our leading educational facilities continue to attract highly skilled people working across diverse fields such as web and digital technology, architecture, publishing, and television and film production.

This Cultural and Creative Strategy Review is a strong statement of the value of culture and creativity to the local community. It is also a clear commitment to working together to increase participation in creative activities of all kinds.



Bath Film Festival (Bath City Farm, Twerton)



Bath Fringe Festival: Dot Comedy at Bedlam Fair



Bath Dance College & Sue Hill School of Dancing, Radstock (The Forum, Bath)



Creativity Works, Radstock

2. Executive summary

Vision

Bath and North East Somerset will be internationally renowned as a beautifully inventive and entrepreneurial 21st-century place with a strong social purpose and a spirit of wellbeing, where everyone is invited to think big – a 'connected' area ready to create an extraordinary legacy for future generations.

Collaboration, creativity, imagination and innovation are at the heart of this ambitious new strategy review. Our challenge now is to work together to build on our world-class heritage as 'a masterpiece of human creative genius' (UNESCO) to create an inspiring cultural and creative sector. It has long since been shown that a healthy society and a strong economy are inseparable from a vigorous cultural and creative environment. It does not just create jobs, broaden education and attract visitors. It lifts the spirits, deepens connections across communities and makes people feel better about where they live.

Our Cultural and Creative Strategy Review is built around ten core propositions concerning our ambition and activity,

audiences and participation, and infrastructure and connectivity. Specific actions are set out to take forward each proposition.

The case for the strategy review

The arts, culture, and creative industries are widely recognised for their positive impact on the economy and society.

Purpose of the strategy review

The strategy provides a framework for action which encourages a coherent, collaborative approach across the sector, Council and funding bodies to ensure cultural and creative excellence for all, and economic sustainability and growth.

The three key areas to address are:

- + Ambition and Activity
- + Audiences and Participation
- + Infrastructure and Connectivity



Illuminate 2015: 'Flat Georgians' by Petra Freeman (Pulteney Bridge)



Creativity Works: 'Exemplary work in socially engaged arts & delivery of creative projects that make a real difference to people's lives' (Arts Council England)

3. The case for the sector

The arts, culture, and creative industries are widely recognised for their positive impact on the economy and society.

“Employment in the creative and cultural economy in B&NES is increasing at over twice the national rate”

Economic impact

Employment in the creative and cultural economy in Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) is increasing at over twice the national rate at a time when the creative industries are recognised as ‘one of our most powerful tools in driving growth’ (DCMS), worth £77bn a year to the UK economy as a whole. Creative industries generate £183m in GVA in B&NES with 700 businesses employing 4,200 people supported by a further 2,500 individuals in self-employment, while arts and cultural activities in B&NES generate at least £157m and provide over 6,000 jobs.

Arts Council England (ACE) identifies five key ways that arts and culture can boost local economies: ‘attracting visitors; creating jobs and developing skills; attracting and retaining businesses; revitalising places; and developing talent.’ Bath is rated by NESTA as one of the UK’s creative-digital hotspots, particularly for architecture, publishing, and design, with much potential for wider economic growth.

The economic power of the cultural sector is highlighted in B&NES’ own Economic Strategy Review 2014-30 (ESR): ‘the city’s reputation as an international visitor destination is also a driver for the cultural sector in Bath. The wider visitor economy, covering the tourism, leisure, culture and retail sectors accounts for 15,500 jobs, 25% of total employment in the city, and generates £315m GVA annually.’

Social value

Increasingly, the arts and culture are entwined with initiatives to foster social inclusion, promote mental health and wellbeing, and inspire children and young people. Research offers robust evidence that participation in the arts can contribute to community cohesion, and reduce social exclusion and isolation.

Research also demonstrates that taking part in arts activities has a positive impact on dementia and depression, and improves the likelihood of students from low-income families getting a university degree. The intrinsic value of culture and creative learning is at the heart of B&NES’ Child Friendly City initiative.



The Guild Co-working Hub: creative-tech workspace in central Bath



The egg: theatre for children and young people



Art at the Heart, RUH: ‘Stitch in Time’ workshop for dementia patients, exhibited at 44AD Gallery



Glynn Hayward, Complete Control: double BAFTA-winning interactive digital agency

4. Where are we now?

As a world-class heritage destination, Bath and North East Somerset owes its timeless appeal to centuries of creativity and innovation. The city offers an unbeatable lifestyle combining cultural and sporting excellence, breathtaking architecture, health spas, independent shops, markets and cafes, all in a remarkable countryside setting. Culture and lifestyle are cited by 38% of those moving to the area (and 44% residents) as a key incentive for living in B&NES. Bath is a great place to live, work, play, and do business.

The area has a unique concentration of cultural and creative enterprises, varying from small self-employed businesses and individual artists and writers to large commercial businesses, together with a higher education sector working at the cutting edge of culture, creativity, and digital technology.

Strong creative links with Bristol and the South West are encouraging inward investment, as demonstrated by the recent industry-focused AHRC funded collaboration between Bath Spa, UWE, and Bristol universities, ‘Bristol and Bath by Design’, and the Arts Council-funded ‘Cultural Destinations’ project. B&NES lost National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding for 2015-18, leaving just one NPO-funded organisation, Creativity Works (£271,000). Other cities with comparable populations did significantly better, in terms of the number of organisations awarded NPO funding: York (4), Norwich (4), Oxford (6), Exeter (7), Brighton (8). The new strategy will address this.

Bath and Bristol form the largest tech cluster outside London and Bath’s employment growth in the knowledge economy of 7% far exceeds the national figure at 2% (ESR). We are in a prime location, along an internationally-recognised creative innovation corridor from west London to Cardiff and future electrification of the Great Western mainline will improve capacity and comfort for commuting.



Singapore 'Gardens by the Bay' designed by landscape architects, Grant Associates



Future Publishing: international publisher and UK No 1 for technology magazines



Holburne Museum

There are pockets of deprivation and rural isolation in B&NES, and challenges exist around young people's mental health and lack of engagement. Numerous creative and cultural bodies in the area already undertake socially-engaged arts projects that make a real difference to people's lives. For an area renowned for millennia for its healing waters, there is scope to deepen and broaden participation in creative and cultural activity to promote positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

The importance of a world-class, vibrant cultural and creative sector is detailed in the ESR for B&NES with 'Creative and Digital' being identified as one of the key sectors, and 'Arts and Culture' being identified as one of the core sectors for growth and new jobs. Targets include 'more residents and workers participating in cultural activity' with a '20% increase in local residents attending events', and 'more sustainable local cultural businesses', with one of the key outcomes being 'improved health and wellbeing for local residents and workers'. Challenges and opportunities include attracting an increased level of investment into the area through more diverse funding sources, and taking full advantage of our status as a key UK hotspot for creative and tech industries.

5. Priority themes

Three priority themes have emerged from discussions in wide-ranging sector consultation with over 150 organisations and through research. This process was led by Bath Bridge with a sector-wide steering group. Together, these themes point to ten areas of action which are described in the following section.

Ambition and activity:

1. World-class culture
2. Creative economy
3. City identity and B&NES

Audiences and participation:

4. Visibility and discoverability
5. Audiences and engagement
6. Children and young people
7. Nurturing talent

Infrastructure and connectivity:

8. Venues and work spaces
9. Collaborative networks
10. Financial sustainability and infrastructure

1. World-class culture

B&NES is creative, imaginative, and innovative: beautifully inventive. We have an exceptional range of festivals. But we can and should aim higher. We need to see ourselves within a national and international context in terms of programming, funding, and marketing: do we measure up? What could we do better?

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 selling points.

✦ Work in partnership to deliver a lively contemporary cultural programme that meets the highest standards of international excellence.

✦ 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.



MediaClash, publisher and creative-digital agency

2. Creative economy

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

Action

✦ 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 Voluntary and Community Sector providers' (ESR).



3. City identity and B&NES

How can we reimagine ourselves for the 21st century, building on our heritage of extraordinary creativity and innovation? What legacy we will create for future generations?

Actions

✦ Promote Bath as a cultural beacon and centre for the creative-tech industries.

✦ Promote Bath as a unique world city of imagination and innovation.

✦ Develop and promote the concept of Bath at the centre of a constellation of excellence e.g. Radstock's national excellence in dance, and an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, Creativity Works; major annual music festivals in Bath, Iford and Keynsham.

✦ Develop an enhanced role for the local libraries for connecting communities, work, and culture.

✦ Work with regional and national partners and stakeholders to develop a more complete and visible 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.

“Creative skills and a creative workforce are important to innovation and growing a knowledge-based economy”

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS)



Iford Arts Festival

4. Visibility and discovery

We need to tell our story better, amplifying what we do in a coherent, powerful way: to residents, visitors, business, and investors. At the heart of the strategy review is the development of an engaging digital marketing strategy to raise the sector's profile locally, nationally, and internationally to facilitate its success.

Actions

✦ Promote the sector at a national and international level; make use of our award-winning creative-digital marketing and design agencies 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):** produce 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 and Sydney Gardens).

✦ Develop a simple but effective, 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.

✦ Consider a city-wide approach to booking: working with Bath Festivals (which manages booking for 120

organisations), local festivals, universities (Bath Spa Live, ICIA at the University of Bath).

5. Audiences and engagement

We need to understand our audiences to encourage sustainability and diversity of participation. We have diversity across cultural forms, such as for example, the theatre, with the Theatre Royal Bath, the Ustinov Studio, Natural Theatre, and Kilter Theatre. An Audience Agency profile report for B&NES commissioned for this strategy review, showed that engagement with the arts is unusually high with 80% of B&NES residents taking part in an arts, cultural, or sporting activity at least once a month, and attendance for most art forms greater than the national average by around 20% or more. Conversely, some people never or rarely engage with culture and creativity, something this strategy review will seek to address.

Actions

✦ Use digital technology to gather audience data and 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.

✦ Align the cultural and creative offer with the profile of the planned new workforce attracted by the presence of creative and tech businesses.

✦ 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 initiative.

✦ Expand our audience base beyond B&NES: to the West of England, national, and international audiences.



'Forest of Imagination' arts festival for children and families

6. 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, Bath Spa University's world-leading postgraduate course in writing for young people, specialist theatre at the egg, leading creative learning research organisation 5x5x5=creativity, and a strong tradition of working with HE and schools.

Actions

✦ Support and promote high-quality activities and events: opportunities to fire the creative imagination.

✦ Consult with children and young people on the choice of creative experiences and activities.

✦ Ensure social inclusion through our specialist organisations and many voluntary groups.

✦ Build on our national reputation for excellence in this area by furthering the work of, and collaborations between, our specialist enterprises.

✦ 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.

7. Nurturing talent

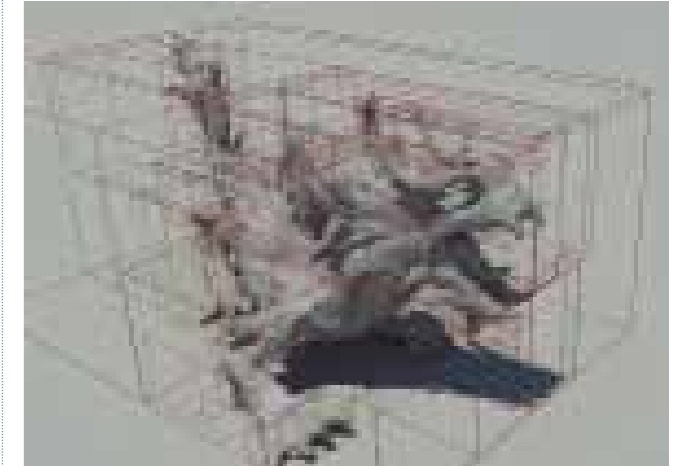
To encourage sustainability and diversity we need to encourage new talent into the sector and establish a framework in which it can develop. We need to celebrate and support those who are working at a national or international level in the sector, and who might take on a leadership role.

Actions

✦ Develop supported points of entry for:

- ▶ Young cultural 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



Centre for Digital Entertainment, University of Bath. £20m investment in university-industry research: animation, games and visual effects



Bath Spa University Publishing students: social media coverage at TEDxYouth@Bath (Komedija)

8. Venues and work spaces

The premises and related infrastructure needs of arts and cultural enterprises in B&NES are varied, from basic studio spaces and professional facilities for artistic creation, rehearsal, performance and exhibition. We have new state-of-the-art spaces for broadcast and film (The Commons, Bath Spa University) and for art and performance (The Edge, University of Bath) and should collaborate to make best use of these.

“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”

B&NES Economic Strategy Review, 2014-2030

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.



The Edge building at University of Bath: UK no.1 university for Architecture

✦ Council to work with Invest Bristol Bath (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): explore, with strategic development partners and regional stakeholders, viability of the development of a central, international-standard, large exhibition space (for example, suitable for an international contemporary art biennale or major touring exhibitions).

✦ Collaborative, joined-up working across the Council and sector will facilitate the provision and improvement of permanent or temporary venues and work spaces.

✦ 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.

9. Collaborative networks

Collaboration is at the heart of this strategy review. It can raise the profile and effectiveness of cultural organisations with benefits across infrastructure and operations, marketing, and programming. The recent Craneworks Centre for Invention initiative has shown that the sector can pull together. Sustainable collaborations are increasingly a feature of major funding bids, as demonstrated by our seventeen museums recently working together to secure ACE funding.

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.



The Fashion Museum, and London Fashion Week Gold Award-winning Bath Spa University fashion students, make this an area of national recognition for Bath

✦ 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 and put together collaborative funding bids across B&NES and sectors.

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

10. Financial sustainability & infrastructure

Financial sustainability is key for funding bodies who want to be sure that their investment will be of long-term benefit. The B&NES Economic Strategy Review, launched in November 2014, describes the importance of the sector and hence the case for tailored support to sustain it. The Council, despite extreme financial pressure, will wish to enhance the economic

and social benefits through continued investment in the sector. This strategy review aims to provide the framework for that investment and to create an coherent ecosystem for the sector.

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.

✦ 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.

✦ Increase cost-effectiveness through collaboration.

✦ Develop touring for our excellent productions and exhibitions.

✦ Reposition the sector and support individual organisations for success in the next ACE National Portfolio Organisation funding round (2018).

✦ Communicate clearly the contribution of the Council, across departments, to the sector (and the wider benefits of this).

“Insufficient attention has been paid to the synergies between the interlocking sectors of the cultural and creative industries ecosystem.”

Warwick Report: Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth, 2015

Cultural and Creative Investment Board (CCIB)

Made up of key public sector funders (e.g. Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Local Economic Partnerships) with B&NES Council, Bath Tourism Plus, and three cultural and creative sector representatives to:

✦ Provide ethically robust, diverse, sustainable governance

✦ Support the development of culture and the creative industries

✦ Identify strategic priorities and possibilities for investment and advise the Council on the level and allocation of its support to the sector

✦ Facilitate cross-department funding and working within the Council on major projects

✦ Implement the strategy review 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

Cultural and Creative Bath Partnership (CCBP)

Representing the sector, this brings together Creative Bath, Cultural Forum, and The Guild Co-working Hub to:

✦ Represent the sector to the CCIB

✦ Coordinate activity across the sector

✦ Develop ideas, collaborations, and connections

✦ Identify areas for research e.g. audience, impact measurement, creative industry cluster mapping

✦ 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 and individuals

Self-initiated and self-governing groups are often defined by area of interest or through a specific project. This strategy review, through the CCBP, will encourage networking and collaboration across these groups and with individual enterprises.



The Makery: bestselling book and 60,000 taught new craft skill in last five years



Bath Literature Festival celebrates twenty years in 2015

Cultural and Creative Strategy Review

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With thanks to MediaClash for design and layout,
and to all those who supplied images

