



REMADE:

A Cultural Investment Strategy for Lancashire

Executive Summary



Lancashire
Enterprise Partnership



Image: Painting The Town, Blackpool Pleasure Beach
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Foreword

Lancashire's culture – a tremendous conflation of people, history, language, traditions, art and cultural assets - is central to what defines our county as a place of creativity and making, ideas and innovation.

A county of stunning coastline, rich countryside and canals that cut through historic cities and industrial towns, Lancashire is a place of unique contrasts and credibility. It is home to the UK's first mass leisure resort as well as its oldest continual festival. It originated the Spinning Jenny in the nineteenth century and the jet engine in the twentieth century, and, where once the industrial spirit and passion of its people brought cotton and textiles to the world, they now attract international renown for their research into new and emerging technologies and Michelin stars and awards for their world class food and drink. We are incredibly proud of Lancashire's culture.

As a sector, culture and the arts attract over £7 million investment from ACE, augmenting the £34 million County Council and Local Authority combined total spend on culture. It employs 13,620 people and sustains 6,648 businesses. As a Local Economic Partnership, our main role is to drive the growth of Lancashire's economy through securing national investment, working with private and public partners, and ensuring we get maximum benefit from initiatives related to the Government's Industrial Strategy and the Northern Powerhouse. We know that whatever the future brings, growth will be increasingly driven by creativity and innovation and we understand the value that culture brings in making our highstreets, towns and cities more vibrant, attractive and appealing places.

Image: Ludus Dance - Light Up Lancaster
© robinzahler.com

Over the years, we have directly supported a wide range of creative and cultural programmes and initiatives across the county. From overseeing the launch of the first Local Digital Skills Partnership in the country, to investing in priority cultural infrastructure projects such as Eden Project North in Morecambe, Showtown, the new Museum of Fun and Entertainment in Blackpool and The Making Rooms in Blackburn, to provide a real boost to the area in terms of jobs and growing visitor numbers, through to establishing close partnerships with our world-class universities to grow the role they play in supporting creative businesses and the wider community.

We have also championed the development of some of the county's key cultural programmes which help to reconnect communities to our historic and current strengths as a place that forged much of the modern world, including the British Textile Biennial and the National Festival of Making, who we have directly supported to develop a STEM focus within their programme.

Just before the dawn of this new decade we gave our full support for a county-wide bid for Lancashire to be UK City of Culture in 2025. Lancashire 2025 presents a unique opportunity to take a truly visionary, collaborative approach to reframe Lancashire as an integrated, inclusive, virtual city of the future and to showcase the diversity and accessibility of our urban, coast and countryside offer to draw in visitors and drive economic development.

These cultural initiatives, along with many others, make an enormous contribution to establishing our county as a fantastic place to live, work, visit, and invest. And so, in fully acknowledging the importance of culture and its influence on Lancashire's continued growth and success, and to enable everyone in the county the right to a wide and rich cultural life, we have created this strategy, the first Cultural Investment Strategy for

Lancashire and the first ever cultural strategy to be commissioned by a LEP in the UK.

Its publication coincides with the unfolding global pandemic, a time of great uncertainty across many sectors. As we work to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Lancashire's creative and cultural industries and how we can best support the county's creative economy through this crisis, we draw confidence from the measures outlined in this strategy. Its implementation is now more important than ever to the sustainable development of Lancashire and as part of the county's wider post COVID economic stimulus activities.

This strategy has been developed with the support and expertise of Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy, who we commissioned to undertake research and provide evidence and insights to help inform our thinking and approach.

It has also been created in consultation with our partners, and with a common sense of purpose, and shows how through targeted investment, the strategic integration of culture into the county's growth plans will shape a more positive future for everyone.

With plans for its delivery underway, we look ahead to 2030 with renewed optimism and focus and welcome conversations with those who share our ambition for a Lancashire Remade.

Steve Fogg,
Chairman - Lancashire Enterprise Partnership



Executive Summary

Lancashire is a diverse county of considerable geographic, demographic and political complexity. This diversity is both a challenge and a strength, but it presents a unique opportunity for Lancashire to chart a new trajectory and reclaim a leading role in a post-Brexit UK.

This Culture Investment Strategy provides a considered perspective on the impact of focused and sustained investment into the county's cultural offer as part of a wider approach to stimulate economic growth across Lancashire. It is the LEP's first Cultural Investment Strategy and it comes at a time when the direct and indirect benefits of culture to people and places is better understood and for which the evidence is increasingly compelling.

The soft power of culture - the way in which it subtly augments the quality, distinctiveness and energy of the places we live, work and play in and unquestionably improves the lives of individuals and communities by enhancing their health and wellbeing - is a vital element of civil society and is absolutely essential to Lancashire's future prosperity. For culture is the mechanism through which Lancashire can tell its story to the world. It is the route to renew and grow its international connections. It is an instrument to be used to help build influence and develop collaborations. It is the way in which Lancashire will realise its ambitions for growth and relevance and through which it will enrich the lives of its communities.

This Strategy is about increasing the readiness of the county to respond to opportunities to help leverage strategic investment for cultural and creative initiatives: initiatives that can act as drivers for growth, catalysts for innovation and magnets for talent. It fully acknowledges the county's existing nationally and internationally significant arts and heritage provision on offer,

which is matched by a patchwork of vital locally-significant activity, but it also recognises the challenges created by the physical, social and political diversity of Lancashire and exacerbated by the historical significant underfunding of the county by national funders. This includes Arts Council England (ACE), who currently invest £7 per head annually across Lancashire's 1.5 million residents, compared to our nearest large cities of Liverpool (£35 per head) and Manchester (£38 per head).

These challenges, experienced by Lancashire's cultural sector as limitations to their capacity, resource, ambition and aspiration, impact deeply, not just at a sectoral level, but at county level too, within the strength of its social fabric, its economic position and its potential influence and relevance. Yet, even with so much ground to make up, there can be no doubt that culture is the single most unique and important tool at our disposal that has the ability to really cut across the physical, administrative and social boundaries and make a meaningful and substantial difference to the growth of Lancashire's economy.

Importantly, then, the Cultural Investment Strategy also recognises that the same diversity that divides the county, also presents opportunities for Lancashire to build a more sustainable, resilient and collaborative cultural sector. It outlines a clear approach to bring about the step change required to help Lancashire meet the challenges of a new era head on.

By The Numbers: Lancashire's Cultural Sector...



*Source: BRES (2017)

We have...



^Source: Lancashire County Council
*Source: ACE Investment Dashboard 2018/19

Visitor economy generated



Source: DCMS (2018) Connected Growth - A manual for places working to boost their digital, cultural and social connectivity.

1. 2030 Vision & Outcomes

Our vision for 2030 is one in which culture sits at the heart of our approach to increasing Lancashire's economic growth; where building on, and investing in, Lancashire's diverse cultural and creative strengths results in driving innovation right across the county to make its distinctive places more dynamic, more resilient and more open to all, ultimately changing the way people view and value Lancashire forever.

For Lancashire to reinstate its position as an economic powerhouse, it needs to harness the potential of its soft power to restore its influence and relevance on a national and international scale. To do this, the role of culture in Lancashire must be remade and the value that culture brings to Lancashire must be acknowledged as our point of difference.

This Strategy will facilitate the remaking and recognition of culture to deliver the LEP's vision for Lancashire against the following agreed outcomes:

- 1. Increased Connectivity:** A better connected cultural and creative sector that sees the main urban areas, smaller towns and rural areas, working collaboratively to build scale, presence and impact. By working together, the diversity of places in Lancashire can more effectively develop a clear offer and role, which resonates locally, nationally and internationally for audiences and markets.
- 2. Enhanced Capacity:** A stronger, more diverse, sustainable and appropriately skilled cultural sector – delivered by scaling up organisations, nurturing talent and ideas, skilling up creative practitioners and developing and deepening audience knowledge engagement to support the next generation of leaders, innovators and culture seekers. Cultural organisations and infrastructure will be positioned to deliver positive outcomes for economic growth, high-quality real and virtual places, increased collaborations across businesses of all sizes and structures and audience development and reach.
- 3. Improved Crossovers:** An international reputation for the strength, depth and ingenuity of our partnerships and

collaborations. These will promote convergence and innovation across our strengths in culture, creativity, research, science, technology and manufacturing.

- 4. Bolder Commissioning and Innovative Infrastructure:** National and international recognition for the strength of our connected cultural and creative infrastructure, and for delivering high quality work to diverse audiences in historic and state-of-the-art buildings and more widely through Lancashire's communities, businesses, higher education, colleges and schools, resulting in a more widely engaged, diverse and developed audience base.
- 5. Compelling Cultural Narratives:** National and international recognition for the distinctiveness of our places, people and environment; with Lancashire's cultural offer and cultural life making the area a highly attractive place for residents, visitors, workers and investors.

Overseen by a Cultural Investment Board, these outcomes will be delivered through a Cultural Investment Plan, built around a thematic framework anchored by the following four priority action areas:

- 1. Fit For Purpose Infrastructure:** Projects will support more resilient and sustainable local economies and contribute to the regeneration and revitalisation of urban centres for the benefit of residents, visitors and the growth of Lancashire's wider economy. This includes supporting transformative projects already in the pipeline, such as Showtown, the new museum of fun and entertainment in Blackpool, Eden Project North in Morecambe, Linear Park in East Lancashire and the Re-Imagining of The Harris in Preston.
- 2. Scaling-Up Events and Festivals:** Scaling up the county's increasingly popular and growing portfolio of festivals and events will better connect its cultural offer, increase reach and visibility, boost the visitor economy and enrich the lives of residents by enabling them to access world class experiences on their doorstep. Potential opportunities include supporting a county-wide bid for the UK City of Culture 2025, future rounds of Creative

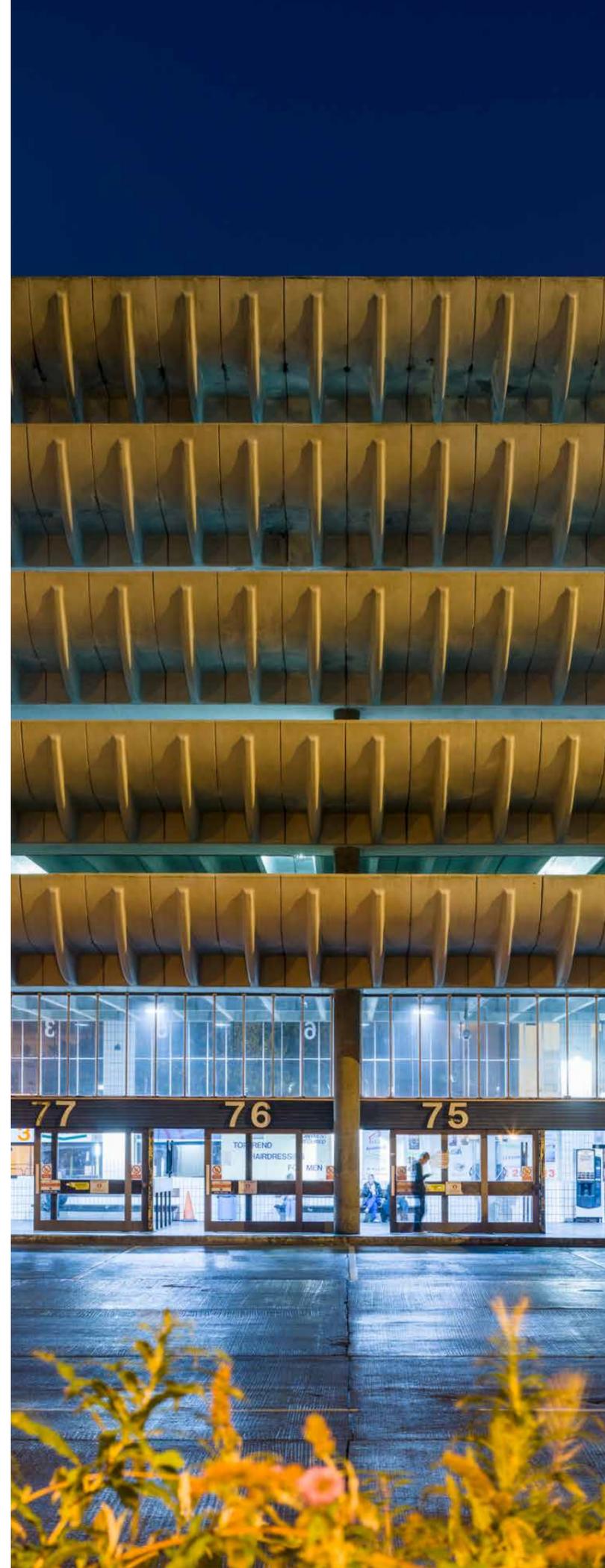
People and Places, and the UK-wide Festival of Creativity and Innovation planned for 2022.

- 3. Supporting Convergence:** A programme of activity that connects the county's strengths in research, advanced manufacturing, science, technology and engineering with its growing creative strengths. Potential projects include scaling-up the National Festival of Making and British Textile Biennial to enable it to deliver innovation and industrial change throughout the year and working with university partners to support a collaborative R&D hub and platform to drive innovation and growth in knowledge-intensive sectors across creative, culture, science and technology.
- 4. Building Capacity:** A programme of activity that actively pursues the disruptive and transformative impact of advanced technology and pushes the boundaries and capabilities of product design and development to boost future skills, develop a more agile workforce and deliver sustainable prosperity and sectoral resilience across the breadth of Lancashire's cultural and creative industries. Projects include, building on Creative Lancashire's existing creative enterprise support programmes; working with the region's universities and the Lancashire Skills Hub to develop a tailored skills and capacity-building programme for a new cultural workforce; developing culture's role in strategic commissioning in health and wellbeing, and developing a county-wide strategy for increasing film and TV production and capability.

At both strategic and tactical levels, the component parts of this Cultural Investment Strategy will be strongly connected to the LEP and county's overall strategic goals and frameworks, including the Local Industrial Strategy and The Greater Lancashire Plan, to form part of a considered and co-ordinated approach to deliver the necessary step-change in the role and performance of culture in Lancashire as a driver for economic growth.

This Cultural Investment Strategy, or **REMADE**, as it will be known, henceforth, is, therefore, the first stage in providing 'a big plan' for unlocking the transformative power of culture, in a Lancashire where the full potential of people, place and economic growth are realised together.

Image: Preston Bus Station (Keith Ingham and Charles Wilson - BDP)
© garethgardner.com



2. Culture & Growth



“Lancashire gave birth to the industrial revolution and is now the home of the non-industrial revolution.”

Andrew Dixon,
Culture Creativity Place

*Image: Southpaw Dance Company -
Rush © mirikaphotographic.com*

In Lancashire, between 2015 and 2016, the cultural and creative industries sector grew by 4%. It currently employs 13,620 people across 6,648 VAT registered businesses. Of these, over half (7,035) are employed in the fast-growing IT, Software and Computer Services sector. The next biggest sector, Advertising and Marketing, employs 2,040 people, whilst 1,280 people are employed in Music, Performing and Visual Arts.

In terms of business numbers, Advertising and Marketing companies in Lancashire account for 6,648 of the county's creative businesses, Lancashire's IT, Software and Computer Services companies account for 3,350 firms, Music, Performing and Visual Arts account for 841 of the county's businesses and Film, TV, Video and Photography account for 653 businesses. It is worth highlighting that both the business numbers and employment figures stated here do not capture all of Lancashire's businesses or workers, as many self-employed and start-up businesses are missed as they are not VAT registered.

The transformative and revitalising power of culture



Number of Jobs in Creative and Cultural in Lancashire

IT, Software and Computer Services:	7,035
Advertising and Marketing:	2,040
Music, Performing and Visual Arts:	1,280

Source: BRES (2017)



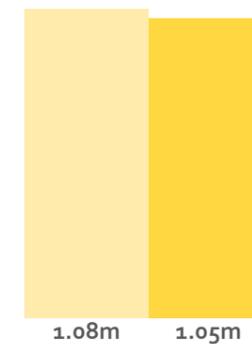
Number of Creative and Cultural Businesses in Lancashire

Advertising and Marketing:	6,648
IT, Software and Computer Services:	3,350
Music, Performing and Visual Arts:	841
Film, TV, Video and Photography:	653

Source: MINT (2017)

NB: It is worth highlighting that both the business numbers and employment figures stated here do not capture all of Lancashire's businesses or workers, as many self-employed and start-up businesses are missed as they are not VAT registered.

The social and economic spillovers of culture



1.08 million	creative occupations outside the creative industries
1.05 million	with the creative industries

Source: BEIS & DCMS (2018) Creative Industries Sector Deal

As a sector, culture and the arts attract over £7 million investment from ACE, augmenting the £34 million County Council and Local Authority combined total spend on culture. At Local Authority level, 9 out of 12 districts employ at least one dedicated arts or cultural specialist, or someone within one of its Directorates who has a remit for arts/cultural development within their role. However, in all cases, each district supports a range of cultural programme, activities and venues within its footprint as part of broader plans and approaches to infrastructure and community development.

Libraries, Museums, Culture & Archives

The collections, venues and services managed by Lancashire County Council's Libraries Museum, Culture & Archives Service (LMCA) reflect the diversity and uniqueness of Lancashire offering a range of cultural experiences, virtually and face-to-face.

The purpose of the LMCA service is to offer information, inspiration and connectedness, and to strive continually to create opportunities for

visitors and users as well as increasing access for those who may not already be engaged in culture. Their library service includes 64 public libraries, 6 mobile library vehicles and a Home Library service. Their museums service provides public access to, and engagement with 6 historic buildings, displaying collections and exhibitions illustrating Lancashire life, such as the Gillow furniture collection at Judges' Lodgings, and the internationally recognised mills and working machinery at Queen Street and Helmshore.

Their Conservation and Collections team, comprising conservators, curators, technicians and designers, provides specialist support to museums and heritage sites across Lancashire and offers a paid service to organisations and individuals across the region. Whilst their archives service collects and preserves the county's unique and irreplaceable archives, which contain over 1.5 million documents dating from the 12th Century to the present day, and makes them available for personal, family or community history and heritage.



Heritage – Protecting cultural assets for economic impact

In addition to contributing to our national sense of place and enhancing the wellbeing of our communities, the UK heritage sector is also an important source of economic prosperity and growth. It now contributes £13.1 billion directly to the economy in England, with every £1 of GVA generating a further £12.1 billion in the wider economy. It employs 196,000 people directly and an estimated additional 156,000 people in the wider supply chain.

It is through the contemporary use of heritage assets – as visitor attractions and for creative and cultural production – that significant parts of the cultural sector gain their inspiration and distinctiveness. Therefore, it is hugely important that we continue to invest across the whole range of Lancashire's heritage assets and activities to ensure they remain a part of the Lancashire story going forward and find new relevance for generations to come.

In 2020, Lancashire County Council confirmed an annual £936,000 commitment to support the running costs of Queen Street Mill in Briercliffe and Helmshore Textile Mills for the next four years, helping to ensure their long-term future.

Under a memorandum of understanding, the County Council and the National Trust are working together to find solutions for the future of these mills, which were reopened to the public by the council after a short period of closure due to budget cuts. Ways in which the mills can generate income and minimise costs, while also conserving the buildings and collections and providing public benefit, are also being considered by the partnership. This will enable potential operators or partners, including local community groups and businesses, to understand how they can be part of the future of the mills.

Artisan makers & producers – Exporting the Lancashire brand

The county's artisan makers and producers play an equally important role in the interpretation of Lancashire's heritage and the way in which visitors and residents both access and understand aspects of the Lancashire brand. By delivering sustainably homegrown appetising food and drink and traditional and contemporary art and craft products to buyers, they help to boost tourism, provide employment opportunities that support Lancashire families, connect to a more circular economic approach and generate prospects for export outside the county.

The UK is a world leader in craft, specifically, generating £3.4bn for the economy, with 150,000 people employed in businesses driven by craft skills. With high levels of micro-enterprises and self-employment, craft is at the vanguard of wider employment and business trends, and increasingly craft is adding value to high-end British exports.

Figures for high-end craft products made in Lancashire reflect this national picture, personified by organisations such as Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire Cheese and Lanx Shoes, both great present day examples of artisanal producers rooted in Lancashire who also incorporate a sense of place as part of their core brand proposition.

In addition, the continuing popularity of County Shows, coupled with the rise of contemporary craft markets around the county through the efforts of organisations such as Hopeful & Glorious, Crafty Vintage and others, have helped to showcase Lancashire's best and most innovative makers to new audiences as part of wider schemes created by cultural organisations and LA's to develop audiences, increase footfall to highstreets and develop a connection to place through cultural product.

Facilitating the collaboration between businesses and other sectors at a local level, potentially through the Local Enterprise Partnership, local authorities and growth hubs, with support from the Crafts Council, could help to ensure business support, training, advice and mentoring is fit for purpose. Events such as The National Festival of Making and the British Textile Biennial already offer opportunities to showcase this type of collaboration.

Image: Liz West & Graham & Brown - Art in Manufacturing © richardtymon.com

Tourism – Developing audiences for accelerated spend

In 2016, tourism contributed £4.8 billion to the UK economy and directly employed 1.56 million people, representing 4.8% of UK employment - a 7.4% increase in employment figures for this sector since 2011.

Of the £4.8 billion contribution made by the tourism sector, £16.9 billion was generated through heritage tourism spend and £15.2 billion was generated through domestic cultural tourism spend on arts, culture and entertainment activities and events, festivals and exhibitions.

In Lancashire, the tourism economy, or 'visitor economy', continues to grow. Blackpool remains the number one visited seaside resort in the UK and on a wider regional scale the visitor economy generated £4.25 billion for Lancashire in 2017, up 2.9% since 2016. Day visitors generated £2.06 billion in 2017, an increase of 3.2% on the previous year, and staying visitors generated even more at £2.2 billion, an increase of 2.8%. Overall, visitor numbers increased from 67 million to 67.63 million over the same period and the number of jobs created by the region's tourism and hospitality sector increased by 1%.

Culture and the local industrial strategy for Lancashire

The DCMS recently published guidance for the LEPs on integrating all its sectors into Local Industrial Strategies. For arts and culture, it emphasizes how investment in culture can

multiply the benefits of investment in other infrastructure. In one example, which is particularly relevant for Lancashire, it states:

"Culture can attract and integrate new development to create a cohesive sense of place. For example, cultural programming around new major infrastructure (e.g. HS2) can assist integration into the fabric of a place and help to build buy-in from communities."

For creative industries, the DCMS guidance highlights how local strategies can be targeted at weaknesses within the sector - this includes identifying and narrowing existing and emerging skills gaps, acknowledging and reducing challenges obtaining finance and investment – and emphasizes the need to encourage R&D and convergence:

"While the creative industries are highly innovative and an important part of the UK's research agenda, they can lack the capacity for strategic, cross-sectoral R&D, including linkages with universities."

In terms of Heritage, the DCMS guidance includes a case study of the cross-Pennine work being done by Historic England to understand the potential for growth that vacant textile mills offer, something of real relevance to Lancashire. This work shows that economic benefits are not always fully captured by purely private investors due to the poor condition of many assets. It states that the "project concluded that across West Yorkshire and the North West there is 3 million sqm of untapped economic potential which could provide 35,000 homes, 200,000 jobs, £9bn GVA and £23m PA in Business Rates."



Image: Ruth Jones & Cherry Tree Bakery - Art in Manufacturing © richardtymon.com

Mindful of the DCMS guidance, the LEP's emerging Local Industrial Strategy for Lancashire is being built on its current priorities and draws from the previous Strategic Economic Plan from 2014. At the heart of the Strategic Economic Plan from 2014 was the concept of the arc of prosperity:

"The overarching purpose of the Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal is to re-establish Lancashire as an economic powerhouse and a national centre of excellence in advanced manufacturing by maximising its clear competitive strengths and capabilities in the aerospace, automotive, energy and health science related sectors...the LEP will harness the power and potential of our national industrial hotspots; our key strategic sites; our key clusters of high value activity; and our internationally recognised centres of excellence in research and innovation."

However, while the Strategic Economic Plan acknowledged the importance of heritage and the visitor economy in supporting the development of the strategic vision for Lancashire, culture was not specifically mentioned (though creative industries were).

In contrast to this, and in line with the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal, which identifies opportunities for culture to add value and, in some cases, play a central role – e.g. through a focus on housing, skills, infrastructure and placemaking initiatives, the Local Industrial Strategy will acknowledge the direct and indirect impact of culture and the creative industries on the growth of Lancashire in the way they can support:

- **Skills:** With culture playing a leading role in attracting and retaining talent to high-value industries to generate an uplift in the skills market within the cultural sector in order to improve its performance (growth, innovation and resilience).
- **Placemaking:** With culture – from festivals to innovative cultural infrastructure – energising places, providing spaces for creative expression, inspiring participation and enhancing the attractiveness of urban centres as a complement to the wider retail and leisure mix.
- **Jobs:** With culture and the creative industries delivering high growth and capability to enhance the competitiveness and growth of knowledge-intensive industries such as advanced manufacturing and life sciences.

A cultural investment strategy for Lancashire

In recognition of the transformational role that culture will play in the growth of the county and in reinstating its position as an economic powerhouse, the LEP's Cultural Investment Strategy for Lancashire will become a key component in strengthening Lancashire's competitive advantage. It will outline how, where and when coordinated support should be invested to ensure the talent, heritage and identity of the county plays a starring role in a re-imagined cultural offer: a Lancashire remade.



Image: Showtown - Blackpool's Museum of Fun & Entertainment (Due to be completed 2021)



3. Culture & Creativity in Lancashire

“Lancashire is a county with many amazing assets, such as access to the coast, the lakes and the hills. Its towns and cities have beautiful Victorian Art Galleries, which could be world leading.”

**Lubaina Himid,
Artist**

Across Lancashire, locally significant cultural ecologies are enlivening places and helping to re-shape their economies. In urban centres such as Blackpool, Blackburn, Burnley, Lancaster and Preston, increasingly growth-orientated creative enterprises are helping to generate jobs and spillovers, often in former industrial settings. Along the coast, culture is closely linked to long-standing traditions of leisure tourism, a core part of the entertainment industry or ‘experience economy’. Inland, the beautiful natural environment of places such as the Ribble Valley and the Forest of Bowland, provides an inspiring setting for artists and artisans, who, in turn, are facilitating growth in cultural tourism and rural making.

A globally connected community

A changing population, especially in the urban centres and in Pennine Lancashire, is bringing a new youthful, diverse and globally connected community into the county. In turn, this globally connected community is opening up opportunities for growth and innovation in the creative economy and wider cultural sector. Opportunities for market development – from Mumbai to Warsaw – and new trajectories for cultural production are helping to renew the identity of Lancashire as a place of innovation and making, and developing opportunities for our cultural organisations to grow alongside these new audiences and to create employment.

A culture of making

Even before the Industrial Revolution, Lancashire’s status as a fertile county that made the most of its natural assets was established through its culture of producing. Its agriculture and innovative approach to horticulture were nationally renowned. Blackpool led the way as the UK’s first example of hothouse cropping, pioneering the growing of tomatoes and other fresh produce under glass houses, which became and remains one of the most important, sustainable industries in Britain’s food producing policy. Whilst the Fylde, once Lancashire’s milk can and provider of its breakfast egg and Friday fish, alongside Lancashire’s other rural districts, has long provided the rest of the country with fruit, vegetables, prizewinning livestock, chicken and dairy. By the middle of the 19th Century, Lancashire had developed into a hotbed of making and manufacturing, a reputation that has remained to this day.

Now, Lancashire’s connection to the act and process of making is celebrated in a growing number of events, most importantly the National Festival of Making in Blackburn. It is a tradition carried on by the county’s world-class advanced manufacturers, such as BAE Systems, Evans Vanodine International, Victrex and Darwen Terracotta, who recently collaborated with artist, Grayson Perry, to create his tiled artwork, ‘A House For Essex’ for the ‘Structures in Ceramics Exhibition’ at Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery; by designer makers and crafts people, artists and producers, such as internationally-renowned and commercially successful sculptor, Charles Hadcock, based at Roach Bridge Mill in Salmesbury, and by some of Lancashire’s cultural organisations, including the re-imagined Harris Museum and Art Gallery in Preston, who are putting the concept of ‘making’ at the heart of their strategies and programmes. Indeed, it is through craft, design and making that the cultural life of the county continues to thrive – from the innovation and resourcefulness of its festivals, to the specialisms of its universities.

“Lancashire is not just a place where things get made, rather this is where the future will be remade. For the creative and cultural sector, Lancashire is a place that allows freedom and space for greater experimentation. Pioneering spirit together with creative risk and experimentation - that’s how the future will be done.”

**Debbi Lander,
Lancashire 2025**

More widely, culture is part of the growing sense of civic confidence seen in the revitalization and regeneration of our urban centres. While there is still much to do, in Blackpool, Blackburn, Burnley, Lancaster and Preston, cultural and creative activity and infrastructure are playing a part in helping shape more attractive, liveable urban centres and neighbourhoods across Lancashire that businesses want to invest in.

The rise of festivals across the county, from Highest Point in Lancaster, to the award-winning festival, Lightpool, in Blackpool, to Lancashire Encounter in Preston, are all part of Lancashire’s response to a growing market for cultural experiences, a trend that is shaping placemaking and tourism strategies across the world. The annual National Festival of Making in Blackburn is another strong example in action of Lancashire’s approach to connect creativity to the wider economy. Through its Art in Manufacturing programme, The National Festival of Making pairs artists and makers with the county’s diverse spectrum of traditional and advanced manufacturers to create new world class works of art and to share and showcase the

UK’s reputation as a powerhouse of making and digital technologies. So too, The British Textile Biennial, also hosted across Pennine Lancashire, further connects people to the industrial past by highlighting the nation’s creation, innovation and expression in textiles against the backdrop of the impressive infrastructure of the cotton industry in places connected by the 20 mile stretch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

Cultural tourism

Of course, cultural tourism is something that the county has specialised in since the Victorian era. Blackpool is one of the most famous seaside resorts in the world, with visitors coming from all over the globe, attracted by the fame and popularity of its offer and the ongoing popularity of ballroom dancing. The town that once pioneered working-class entertainment is now taking a world leader in the way it maximises its cultural assets for physical and social renewal – from the success of the Comedy Carpet - a unique celebratory piece of public realm, to the community engagement programmes led by LeftCoast and the work of The Grand Theatre in actively engaging new audiences, through to the development of Showtown, a major new museum of fun and entertainment, which will, for the first time, capture Blackpool’s unique heritage and contribution to the cultural life of the UK for future generations.

Dynamic partnerships

Strong and dynamic partnerships and networks exist across the county. Organisations including, Creative Lancashire and the networks it supports (comprising POWWOW, Conversations in Creativity, SoundBytes and Screen Opps), Digital Lancashire and Arts Lancashire, the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership, as well as five Local Cultural Education Partnerships, facilitate collaborations across the county and build capacity for Lancashire’s creative and cultural sector. Indeed, a Creative Enterprise Toolkit and Programme has been developed by Creative Lancashire in collaboration with Nesta specifically to build capacity in creative and cultural sector organisations, with a focus on the generation of intellectual property to create more opportunities for the county’s creative and cultural businesses to thrive and grow.



Meanwhile, Lancashire’s universities are increasing their footprints and impact beyond teaching and research, playing ever stronger roles in local communities through knowledge exchange with industry, commissioning of events and festivals, and providing professional support for entrepreneurs and cultural professionals. Individually, higher education institutions manage theatres and art galleries that cater for the wider community. They also manage programmes of support for artists and deliver cross-department crossover projects which bring culture together with technology and other specialisms across a broad spectrum.

Our universities, of course, are also vital providers of cultural and creative talent, infusing the Lancashire economy with highly skilled and entrepreneurial people. With the ongoing expansion and diversification of the universities, and a continuing shift toward stronger industry partnerships and closer alignment to civic and place-making agendas, their role in supporting the growth and innovation of the Lancashire cultural sector will become even more important.

A cultural infrastructure deficit

The blossoming of culture in the county is inherently linked to the people who live and work in Lancashire – a community who get involved, are resourceful and like to make. Despite this, their success is too often severely hampered by Lancashire’s significant entrenched challenges, which limit the capability of culture to play a productive role in economic development and its ability to guard against community fragmentation and dislocation in order to deliver social outcomes.

The size and scale of Lancashire’s cultural institutions and organisations is a fundamental issue. While the county has nine organisations that are part of ACE’s National Portfolio, a sign they are judged to be of national importance, none operate at the size or scale of the more generously funded, or strategically positioned, organisations to be found in Manchester or Liverpool, or even those in smaller places such as York or Derby. Indeed, many of Lancashire’s NPOs operate on significantly less funding than other comparable organisations in comparable places.

Image: Highly Sprung Theatre - SpareParts Festival © clairewalmleygriffiths.com

NPO, SSO & CPP Distribution across Lancashire

National Portfolio Organisations (NPO)

- 1 Horse + Bamboo - Rossendale
- 2 In-Situ - Pendle
- 3 Lancaster Arts - Lancaster
- 4 Ludus Dance - Lancaster
- 5 More Music - Morecambe
- 6 The Duke Playhouse - Lancaster
- 7 The Grand Theatre - Blackpool
- 8 The Grundy - Blackpool
- 9 The Harris - Preston

Sector Support Organisations (SSO) working right across Lancashire

- 10 Curious Minds
- 11 Lancashire Music Hubs

Creative People and Places Organisations (CPP)

- 12 LeftCoast - Blackpool and Wyre
- 13 Super Slow Way - Peninne Lancashire



Case Study: In-Situ

International Visibility Through Self-Sustaining Intercultural Art and Community

Background

In-Situ is an embedded arts organisation based in Pendle. Since 2012, it has worked alongside the local community to create visible, self-sustaining art and culture through a range of collaborative artworks, events, local and international artist residencies and partnerships with other organisations.

Approach

In-Situ works by being fully present in their locality. Their work has both immediacy and cultural longevity because it draws from their reciprocal exchange with the community and its global connections.

"We host artists and practitioners and the indigenous and diaspora communities of Pendle host us. We are creating an art of relationships that derives from chance meetings and the people living here."

Paul Hartley, Director, In-Situ

Focusing on collective effort, the ingrained ethos of Pendle's radical heritage, their work promotes dialogue and understanding to imagine futures, innovative shared approaches that push boundaries and tackle taboos.

International residencies have informed the intercultural aspect of In-Situ's embedded practice and have also provided the catalyst for the organisation's audience development.

Early work with Pakistani artist, Zoya Siddique, in a British Council funded project with Beacon House in Lahore, provided an opportunity for In-Situ to engage with Pendle's Asian community for the first time, changing the way both arts organisation and community connected and collaborated from then on.

Later, In-Situ's work with internationally acclaimed American artist, Suzanne Lacy, resulted in *The Circle and the Square*, a large-scale community work involving 1,000 participants. It sparked unprecedented artistic ambition locally, has since been shown at international Biennials in San Francisco and Sydney, and led to a legacy of community conversations, intercultural and cross-sector projects and collaborations as well as a new base of operations next to Brierfield Mill.

Looking Forward

In-Situ will continue their embedded, long term approach to developing place responsive art and cultural experiences to make meaningful social impact and to create the conditions for artists to co-create exploratory, relevant and responsive work in Lancashire. It's an approach that has enriched their own creative practice and enhanced the work of their partners and the lives of people in the communities with whom they work. Most notably, it's platformed Lancashire's cultural strengths and diversity to the wider world like never before.



Image: Worldbeaters Music, Spark!, Lightpool Festival
© clairewalmsleygriffiths.com

Beyond the county's NPOs, there are simply not enough large, cultural organisations which can deliver the scale, reach, agility and quality of cultural experiences enjoyed in other parts of the UK. Empirically, smaller cultural organisations often lack both the strategic muscle required to give confidence to investors that the sector can scale up with minimal risks, and the capacity to experiment with new technology, new ways of reaching audiences, to use data and research, or to generate innovative funding models and more. This creates a 'chicken and egg' dilemma, where the sector needs to scale-up to deliver on its potential and to ensure relative parity of investment to other parts of the country, but it lacks the capacity to do so.

In terms of funding per head of population, ACE spends £7 per head across Lancashire's 1.5 million residents, compared to £35 in Liverpool and £38 in Manchester. Local authorities (LAs), as relatively small districts (or unitary authorities), do not have the spending power and, in some cases, have sought to disinvest from culture as a response to the UK Government's policy of austerity. This in turn reduces opportunities to attract investment from other sources and build capacity so that the county can more effectively attract investment from ACE, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other sources.

This cultural infrastructure deficit is also partly a question of geography and reflects the relative size of Lancashire's urban centres. In addition, the cultural organisations of Lancashire are not evenly distributed, meaning that many communities are not as well served as others.

However, where focused investment in culture has been made in Lancashire, success has followed. The achievements of Lancashire's two Creative People and Places programmes, LeftCoast in Blackpool and Super Slow Way in Pennine Lancashire, show the benefit of sustained partnership working and collaborative practice in communities with traditional low engagement with culture. In a different way, the new Cultural Compact in Morecambe Bay, Great Places Lakes and Dales - the result of a joint submission to ACE by the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region partners, South Lakeland District Council, Lancaster City Council, Barrow Borough Council - is successfully piloting a model which connects the distinct and different cultural assets of the three localities' to boost future creativity, investment, innovation, jobs and prosperity.

Though there are networks and consortia in the county that are focused on making culture more accessible to the hinterland communities of Lancashire, including the very successful Spot On Lancashire, a network of 35 library and 25 rural promoters who host small scale touring shows across the whole county, run by the independent Lancashire, based Culturapedia, broadly speaking, Lancashire's marketing and audience development systems are not as joined up as other parts of the UK.

The county's diverse population has international connections, particularly in East Lancashire, where Pendle based cultural organisation, In-Situ, supported by Super Slow Way, have developed a longstanding collaboration with Los Angeles based performance artist, Suzanne Lacy, to make a participative and contemporary artwork exploring the cultural and spiritual backgrounds of Pendle's diverse community which is now touring the world. In other parts of the county, strong examples of larger national and international cultural organisations working in Lancashire include the long-standing partnership between the Royal Shakespeare Company and The Blackpool Grand Theatre, the work of Manchester International Festival across the region and the BBC Philharmonic's partnership with Lancaster University. In general, however, Lancashire's international connections and collaborations are not as well developed as they could be and there is scope to build stronger partnerships to help grow local capacity and reach larger audiences.

The university connection

Lancashire's universities lead the way in many respects and are already a real driver of innovation and growth for the county's cultural sector and wider creative economy. Lancashire Forum Creative, UCLan's innovative leadership and business growth programme, contributes to building capacity and leadership within Lancashire's creative and cultural organisations, whilst Imagination Lancaster at Lancaster University is an open and exploratory research lab that investigates emerging issues, technologies and practices to advance knowledge and develop solutions that contribute to the common good. Through the emerging Local Industrial Strategy, the ability of the wider university sector to play a pivotal role in driving more cross-sector and convergent work between sectors will be vital as the proactive alignment of institutional and civic interests could provide fruitful opportunities for Lancashire's universities and the county more broadly.

Looking beyond the robust work of these existing initiatives, as well as those at Lancaster Arts and the Institute for Creative Exchange at Edge Hill University, there is much good practice across the UK to inspire a step-change in the way our local universities support culture-led investment and the creative economy. As an example, the University of Sheffield has played a defining role in setting up the Sheffield Cultural Consortium, attracting inward investment (such as the Cultural Destinations Fund), delivering cultural programming (such as via the Festival of the Mind and Off the Shelf festivals), and driving creative and technology growth (as partners to the Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Park) across Sheffield. In Bristol, the University of West of England helped revitalise the city's cultural infrastructure by taking space, investing in collaboration and driving business development in organisations such as Spike Island, Arnolfini and the Pervasive Media Studio in Watershed. In Exeter, the University of Exeter's new Cultural Strategy has focused on establishing 'purposeful partnerships' via commissioning, joint ventures and talent development activities.

Lancashire's Local Industrial Strategy will bring our universities ability to do even more to the fore. In partnership with industry, they need to build upon the county's economic strengths and existing momentum. The county's strengths in advanced manufacturing could be made even more competitive through developing more connections with its creative industries - for example, in interdisciplinary R&D and the creative application of new technologies. Specialist university sector specific assets, such as the Lancaster University Health Innovation Campus, could provide scope to explore links between culture and health, and technology and wellbeing, which would further the innovative capacity of the county. The new Harris Quarter cinema development in Preston, for which partners including ADI.tv and UCLan are exploring ways to embed cutting-edge digital innovation to the screen industry, could establish new strategic and delivery partnerships for UCLan and provide local talent with access to advanced equipment through a purpose-built flexible space for live performances and production.

Figures 1- 5 give a flavour of some of Lancashire's key cultural assets: examples of Lancashire's unique cultural history and heritage, including cathedrals and country houses, castles, canals, places of popular entertainment, regional and local festivals, which make a huge contribution to the distinctive cultural offer of Lancashire.



Case Study: Blaze Arts

Creating And Retaining The Next Generation of Lancashire's Cultural Leaders

Background

Blaze Arts aims to develop the next generation of cultural producers. It focuses on young people taking the lead through co-creating projects which are inspired by youth culture, art and heritage and provides progression routes for young people who want to work in the cultural sector.

Blaze Arts believes that putting young people at the heart of decision-making is critical to creating responsive, adaptive and problem-solving pioneers and young creative leaders for the future and ensuring organisations can remain relevant in the long-term.

Approach

One of the organisation's flagship programmes, The Harris Young Producers (HYP), a partnership project with The Harris Museum and Art Gallery, provides opportunities for young creatives to programme their own events, workshops and exhibitions.

Whilst in Generation Change, an ongoing project produced in partnership with Super Slow Way and aimed at developing socially engaged art activists, young creatives from Burnley are working with artists to use art as a tool to address social issues and create positive change in their lives and communities.

Blaze Arts is now working across five heritage sites across the North West to deliver a series of youth-led live and digital festivals under the name of Festival of Hope as part

of Hope Streets, a five year Curious Minds programme creating strategic partnerships between the heritage and youth sectors in the North West.

Matt Wilde, the Director of Blaze Arts, forged his own path into the cultural sector with the support of the organisation he now runs and leads by example.

"The opportunities I had during Blaze's inception as a London 2012 Cultural Olympiad project shaped the foundations of my skills and values. As a participant, I was given authority to curate a youth-led festival that was powered by young people and celebrated the talents and ideas of the people around us. From collaborating with cultural leaders and artists to study visits at festivals, Blaze gave me experiences I never knew existed."

Now an independent charity with a constitution stating that young people aged under 30 will lead Blaze Arts at all levels, we've shared our work at the International Culture Summit, Music Mark, the Museums Association Conference, Erasmus+ projects and at the European Parliament."

Matt Wilde, Director, Blaze Arts

Looking Forward

Longer term, Blaze Arts is focused on growing its team and building more partnership opportunities that can offer more young people concrete career pathways and paid opportunities in the arts, culture and heritage sectors across Lancashire.

Figure 1.

Cultural Assets in Central Lancashire

Preston, Chorley & South Ribble

Selected Highlights (See Full Report for Detailed List)

1. **Astley Hall Museum & Art Gallery** - A mid-17th Century Grade I Listed museum and gallery set in 43.75 acres of parkland in Chorley, offering a full programme of cultural events throughout the year.
2. **Curious Minds** - Leaders of the Cultural Education Challenge in the region and the North West of England ACE Bridge Organisation champions for creative education and learning.
3. **Harris Museum Art Gallery & Library** - The UK's first blended museum, library and gallery and an ACE National Portfolio Organisation. Once its £10.7m transformation is complete The Harris will fulfil a bigger role as a hub at the heart of Preston and for the county.
4. **Harris Quarter Cinema Complex** - Partners, Preston City Council, Muse and Maple Grove are currently developing this new cinema and leisure complex which will form a significant part of the wider regeneration of the Harris Quarter which also includes:
5. **Preston Bus Station Public Plaza** - A large new public area that serves to increase the connection between the Grade II Listed bus station building and Preston city centre. In addition, as part of wider development plans for the Harris Quarter, UCLan are working with Lancashire County Council and Preston City Council to develop **Project GASP**, an augmentation of Preston Bus Station to include a contemporary gallery, cultural hub and rooftop sculpture park.
6. **In Certain Places** - A curatorial partnership based at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). Since 2003, through interdisciplinary projects and interventions, the organisation has worked with artists to question, test, disrupt and shape Preston.
7. **Lancashire Archives** - A physical and online repository for the collection and preservation of the county's unique and irreplaceable archives. They contain over 1.5 million documents dating from the 12th Century to the present day and are available for personal, family or community history and heritage. Operated and managed by Lancashire County Council.
8. **Lancashire Encounters** - An annual festival hosted in Preston celebrating the breadth of Lancashire's diverse cultural offer with high quality and high-profile arts.
9. **Peoples Production Lab** - A hackspace and collaborative platform for creative and digital practice - led by **They Eat Culture** - programming, commissioning and producing quality arts and cultural work into the cultural life of Preston and Lancashire.
10. **Preston Caribbean Carnival** - The largest and longest running cultural celebration in Preston, excluding Preston Guild, attracting tens of thousands of visitors each year.
11. **Preston Guild** - A significant cultural event in Preston dating back to 1179. Takes place every 20 years to celebrate the establishment of a Guild Merchant by Henry II and the renewal of the town's royal charter.
12. **Preston Guild Hall and Charter Theatre** - A vibrant and versatile entertainment venue with a concert arena and theatre for music, comedy and family shows, incorporating the Charter Theatre (capacity: 716 seats) and Grand Hall (capacity: 2,034).
13. **Preston Mela** - One of the longest running and most dynamic melas in the UK celebrating South Asian art and culture.
14. **Samlesbury Hall** - 14th Century manor house and gardens. Includes a museum, gallery and events programme throughout the year.

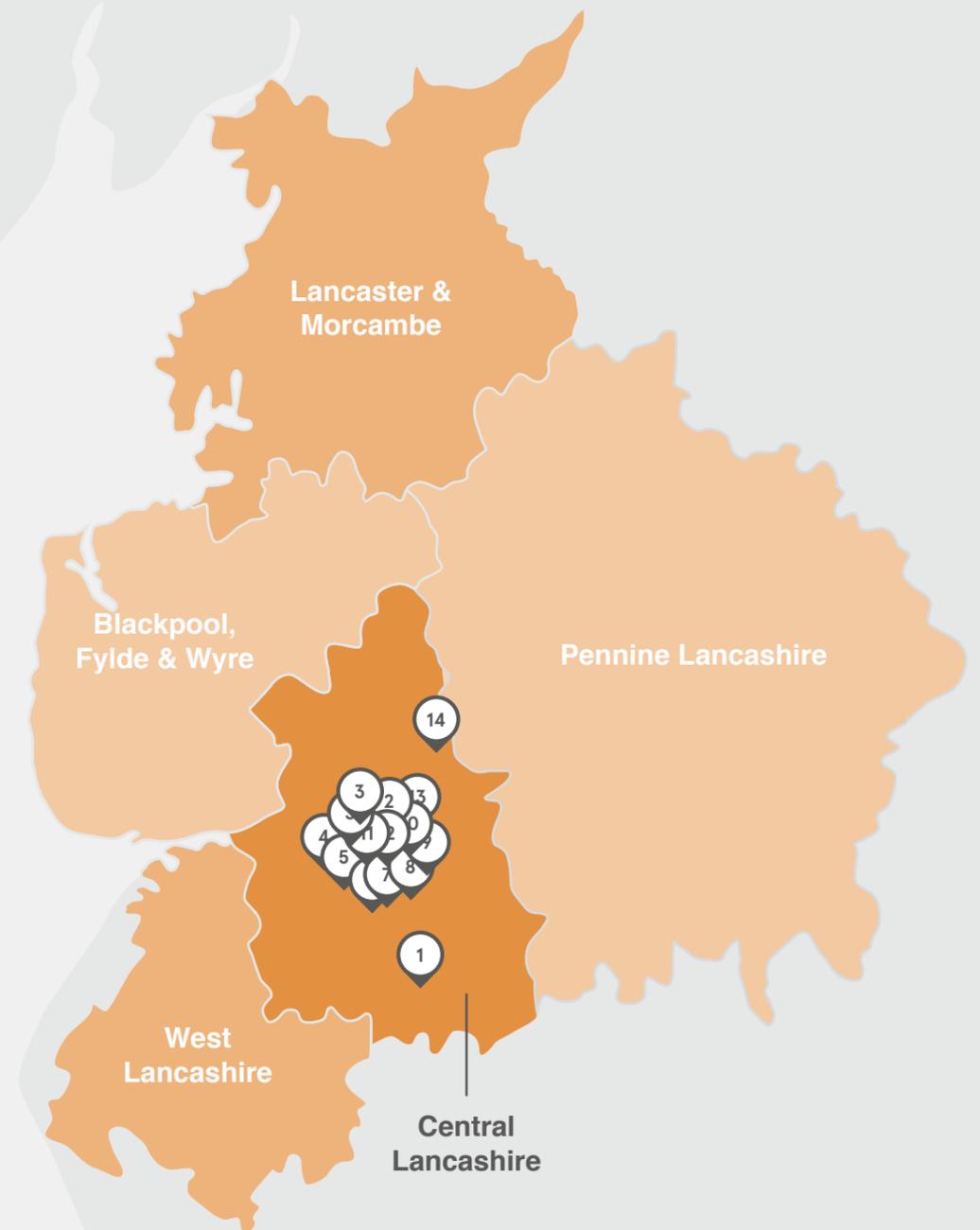


Figure 2.

Cultural Assets in Pennine Lancashire

Blackburn, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle & Rossendale

Selected Highlights (See Full Report for Detailed List)

- Burnley Youth Theatre** - An ACE National Portfolio Organisation, this youth theatre programme produces creative activities, productions and events engaging children, young people and families, housed in a purpose-built venue in Burnley, which includes a 158-seat theatre, three studio spaces and two outdoor spaces.
- Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery** - One of the first purpose built free museums to open outside of London in 1874, now operated by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Houses a rich and fascinating collection covering fine art, decorative art, Egyptology, coins, manuscripts, natural history, social history and South Asia. It also holds the only permanent gallery of Indian and Pakistani culture in the North West.
- Burnley Mechanics** - A modern multipurpose, fully accessible venue in the former Grade II Listed Mechanics' Institute in the market town of Burnley. Facilities include two bars, two performance venues, basement studio and daytime bistro.
- Clitheroe Castle** - Clitheroe Castle Museum has dominated Clitheroe's skyline for over 800 years. It tells the story of Clitheroe and its surrounding area: the formation of the land 350 million years ago; the people who have lived in the area - their work, their homes, their leisure times; and legends and folklore.
- Culturapedia** - A Blackburn based independent arts company enabling people to access and promote high quality professional arts on their doorstep in non-traditional venues, including village halls, parks and libraries. Their largest service is Spot On Lancashire, an ACE National Portfolio Organisation, covering a network of 35 library and 25 rural promoters who host small scale touring shows across the whole county.
- National Festival of Making** - A unique, annual celebration of UK making, from the factory floor to the kitchen table, hosted in Blackburn. Presenting a programme of work that combines Art, Manufacturing, Making and Communities with commissioning international and national artists to create world class works, a free participatory family festival and Makers Market, curated by Hopeful & Glorious, producers of showing and selling events for artists, makers and designers from across the North.
- Helmshore Textile Mills and Museum** - Two original Lancashire textile mills, Higher Mill and Whitaker's Mill, together known as Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, located in Rossendale Valley.
- Horse and Bamboo** - An ACE National Portfolio Organisation, this puppet and mask theatre company serves the community of Pennine Lancashire and delivers national and international touring productions for adults and children. Based at The Boo theatre in Rossendale, which hosts a year-round programme of puppetry films and other performances.
- In Situ** - An ACE National Portfolio Organisation and an innovative, socially relevant arts organisation based in Pendle. Aims to use art to challenge current thinking about environment, people, place and culture; to create art of action and for art to contribute to society as a whole.
- SuperSlowWay** - An arts programme in Pennine Lancashire shaped by local communities working alongside a wide range of local, national and international artists and producers. One of 21 ACE Creative People and Places Programmes and one of two in Lancashire. The other is LeftCoast operating across Blackpool and Wyre.
- The British Textile Biennial** - Programmed and delivered by Super Slow Way. Previously branded 'Fabrications', this major event throws a spotlight on the nation's creation, innovation and expression in textiles against the backdrop of the impressive infrastructure of the cotton industry in Pennine Lancashire.
- The Making Rooms** - A makerspace, Fab Lab and co-working space in Blackburn where creativity, technology and advanced manufacturing come together in a community facility for use by businesses, artists and students. Supported with LEP funds and resources.
- Queen Street Mill** - The last surviving 19th century steam powered weaving mill in Harle Syke. Originally built in 1894 for the Queen Street Manufacturing Company and now maintained as a museum by Burnley Borough Council.

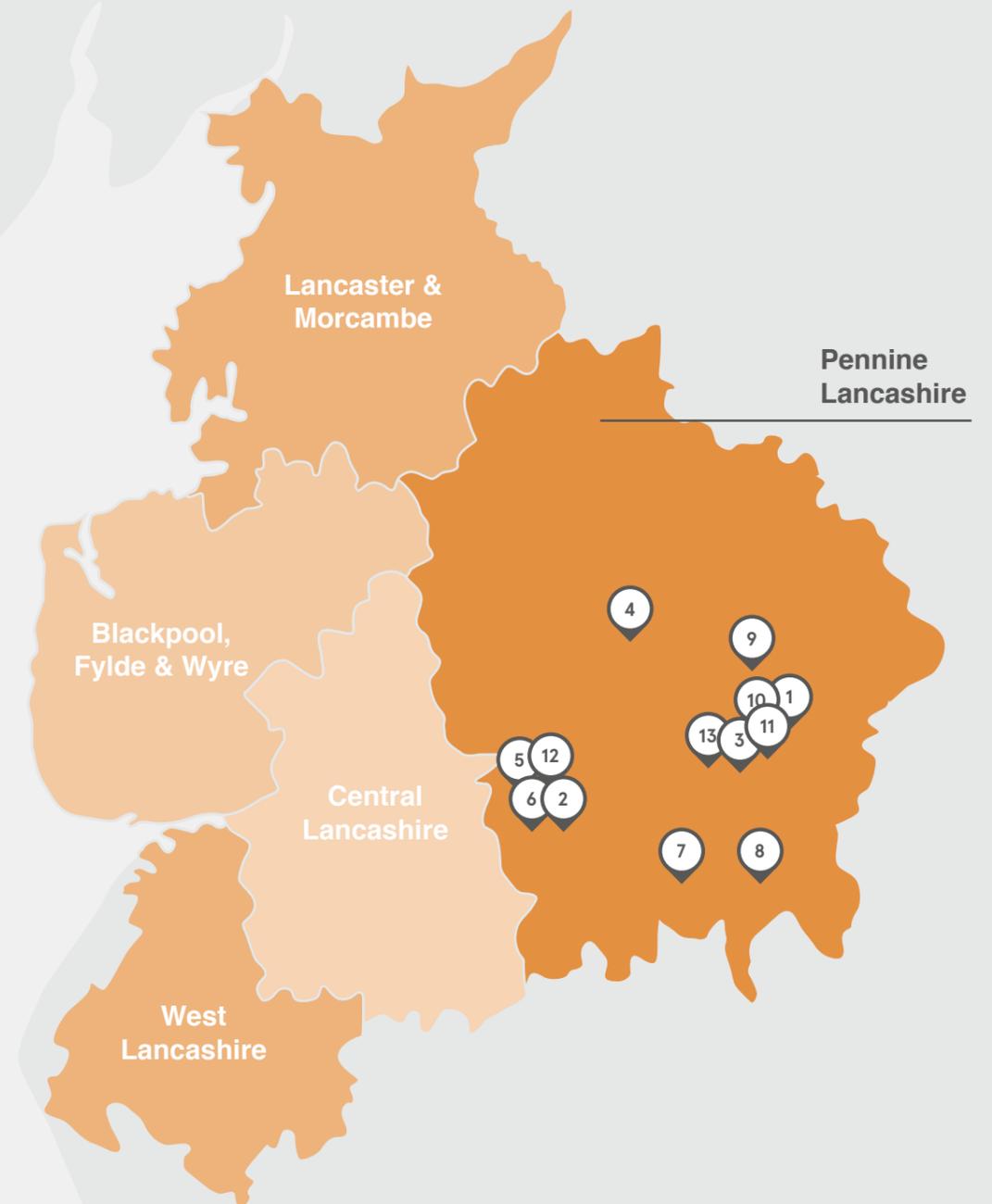


Figure 3. Cultural Assets in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre

Selected Highlights (See Full Report for Detailed List)

1. **Art B&B** - Art B&B is an artist designed boutique hotel for art lovers in the heart of Blackpool and the first project of its type from Blackpool's creative communities. Delivered in partnership with LeftCoast and funded by ACE, Power To Change, Blackpool Council and the Coastal Communities Fund.
2. **Blackpool Illuminations** - World famous annual light festival featuring six miles of traditional festoons and tableaux along the Promenade and illuminated tram tours every evening. Attracts 3.5 million visitors over 66 nights in September and October each year. The programme also includes **Lightpool**, an award winning annual two week celebration of all things light and fire across Blackpool promenade and town centre, providing an amazing mix of live performance and light-based art installations. Programmed in partnership with LeftCoast and supported by the Coastal Communities Fund and Blackpool Council.
3. **Blackpool Tower, Ballroom, Circus and Eye** - One of the UK's most iconic landmarks. Dating from 1894 and modelled on the Eiffel Tower, the tower and its entertainment complex is known to audiences across the globe and is one of the venues for the Strictly Come Dancing television show.
4. **Grundy Art Gallery** - One of the UK's most significant contemporary art galleries and an ACE National Portfolio Organisation. Recent exhibitions have included acclaimed artists including Martin Creed, Brian Griffiths, David Hockney, Pierre Huyghe, Heather Phillipson, Susan Philipsz and Matt Stokes.
5. **LeftCoast** - An arts programme in Blackpool and Wyre shaped by local communities working alongside a wide range of local, national and international artists and producers. One of two ACE Creative People and Places Programmes in Lancashire. The other is Super Slow Way in Pennine Lancashire. LeftCoast is also funded by The National Lottery Community Fund.
6. **Lytham Festival** - An annual five-day UK music festival, presented by Cuffe and Taylor and Live Nation, hosted on Lytham Green, showcasing global superstars along with up and coming music talent, attracting an audience of over 70,000.
7. **Showtown** - Currently in development following receipt of £4 million funding from the legacy fund for the Great Exhibition of the North and £4 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this museum and visitor attraction will, for the first time, tell Blackpool's extraordinary history through participatory immersive and inclusive artefacts, film, music and performance.
8. **SpareParts Festival** - The UK's first annual festival of transport inspired arts, performance and spectacle, dedicated to transport, travel and motion, hosted in Fleetwood and programmed by LeftCoast supporting Fleetwood Festival of Transport.
9. **St Annes International Kite Festival** - Attracting 80,000 visitors, the UK's largest annual kite festival featuring professional kite flyers from all over the world is hosted on the wide-open beach in St Annes On the Sea.
10. **The Grand Theatre** - An ACE National Portfolio Organisation and one of the few remaining theatres of great architectural character, designed by Frank Matcham. It has a magnificent 4-level auditorium with 1,100 seats. Presents an all-year-round programme covering all live art forms and enjoys partnerships with the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Dance Company Wales.
11. **The Pleasure Beach** - Founded in 1896, The Pleasure Beach is the UK's most iconic ride intensive theme park attracting over 5 million visitors a year. Home to the legendary Big One and Valhalla, the Hot Ice Show and large-scale event venues including The Paradise Room and The Attic.

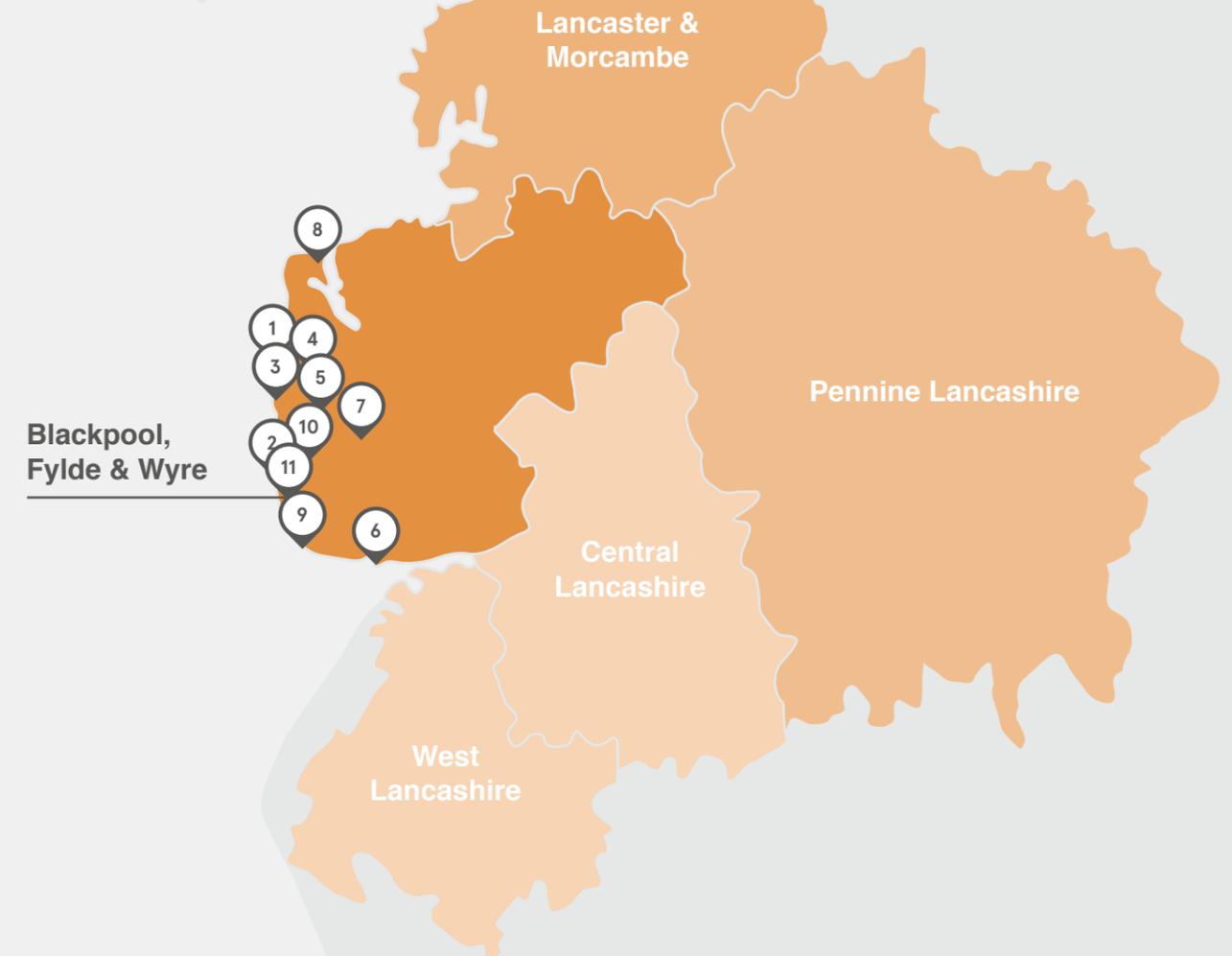


Figure 4. Cultural Assets in Lancaster and Morecambe

Selected Highlights (See Full Report for Detailed List)

1. **Deco Publique** - A creative practice based in Morecambe. Deco Publique produce cultural festivals and creative projects that support placemaking and regeneration, including The National Festival of Making and Vintage By The Sea.
2. **Eden Project North** - Led by the team at the hugely successful Eden Project in Cornwall, this unique and ambitious project seeks to reimagine the seaside resort for the twenty-first century. As a ticketed, sustainable and transformative visitor attraction featuring large indoor environments, housed within iconic pavilions combining exhibits, performance, learning, play, immersive experiences, world-class horticulture, art, food, beverage and retail spaces, the project has far-reaching environmental, social and economic ambitions.
3. **Highest Point** - An urban music and arts festival taking place in Williamson Park in Lancaster. Curated and produced by Skiddle, the summer event hosts live music gigs, club nights and industry panels in the city and surrounding areas.
4. **Lancaster Arts** - Lancaster University's award-winning arts provider and an ACE National Portfolio Organisation, supporting cultural and artistic engagement at the highest level through a programme of internationally-renowned contemporary theatre, dance, visual art and classical music, in the campus-based performance spaces - the Nuffield Theatre, the Peter Scott Gallery, the Great Hall, extending into the city itself and beyond.
5. **Lancaster Castle** - Lancaster Castle's origins date back almost 1,000 years. This Grade I Listed Building occupies a city-centre hilltop location on the site of three successive Roman forts and has been described by English Heritage as "not only the North-West's most important historic and archaeological monument but also of international importance".
6. **Light Up Lancaster** - A magical, annual city-wide festival of lights and art by local and international artists, illuminating the city's heritage buildings, public spaces and community corners.
7. **Ludus Dance** - An ACE National Portfolio Organisation and Lancashire's leading dance development organisation working across a wide range of social, educational, mental health and wellbeing settings, especially with children and young people.
8. **More Music** - An ACE National Portfolio Organisation and a music and education charity based in the West End of Morecambe, with over 25 years of experience delivering workshops, training, performances and festivals across the district, region and beyond.
9. **Morecambe Bay Partnership** - A charitable organisation working to make more of what is distinctive about Morecambe Bay and to bring more to the communities around the Bay through the conservation, protection and celebration of its communities, heritage and environment. Their Headlands to Headspace programme includes a series of significant landscape art and heritage inspired art commissions.
10. **The Dukes Playhouse** - An ACE National Portfolio Organisation and a much-praised repertory theatre and cinema in Lancaster. Lancashire's only professional producing theatre, producing five shows a year including an outdoor promenade performance and a Christmas family show.
11. **The Storey** - High quality workspace, studios, creative hub, performing arts venue and contemporary eatery in the heart of Lancaster.
13. **Vintage by The Sea Festival** - An award-winning annual festival in Morecambe celebrating 20th Century art, design, music and dance, fashion and beauty with 'happenings' around every corner from classic cars to donkey rides and pop-up performances.

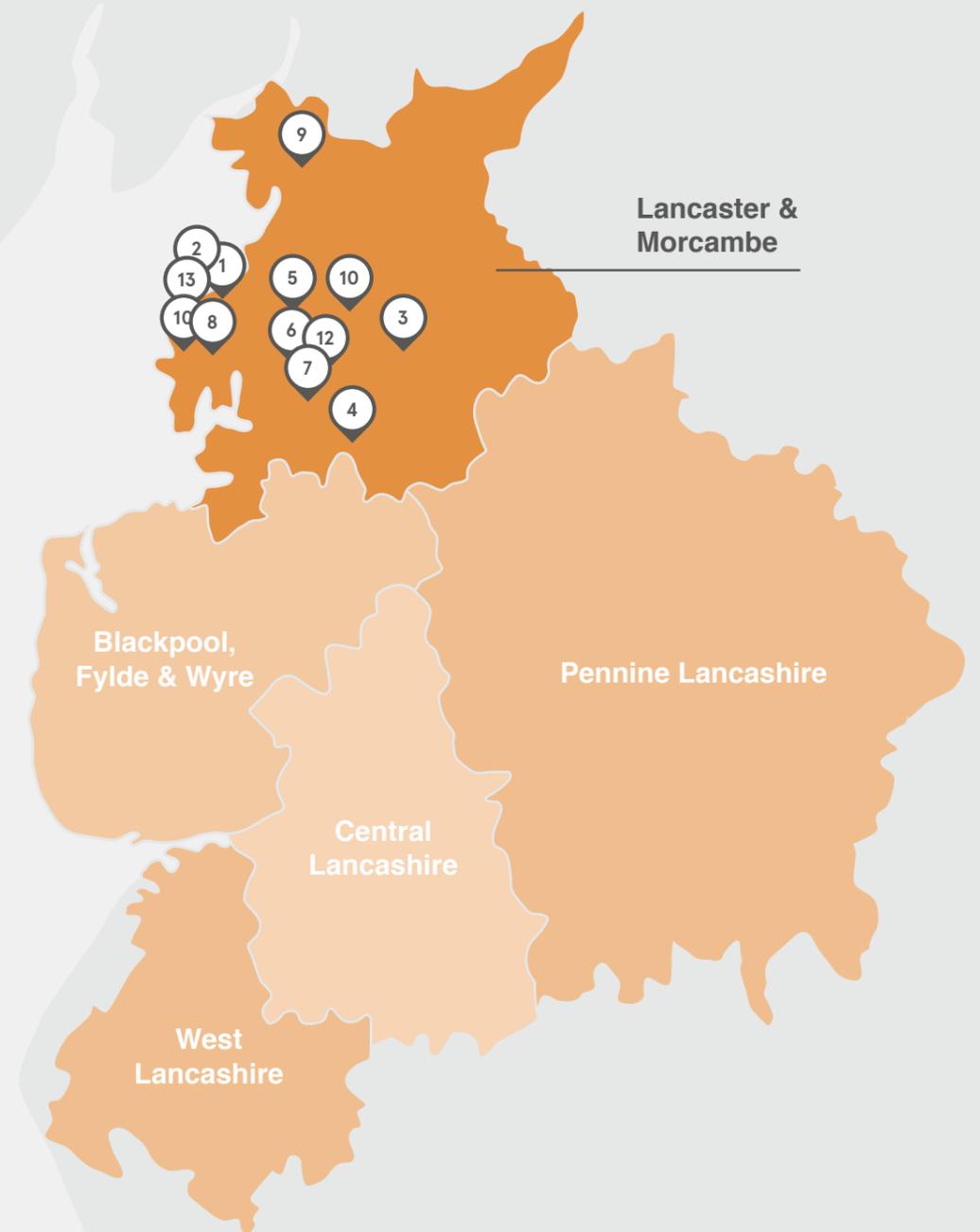


Figure 5.

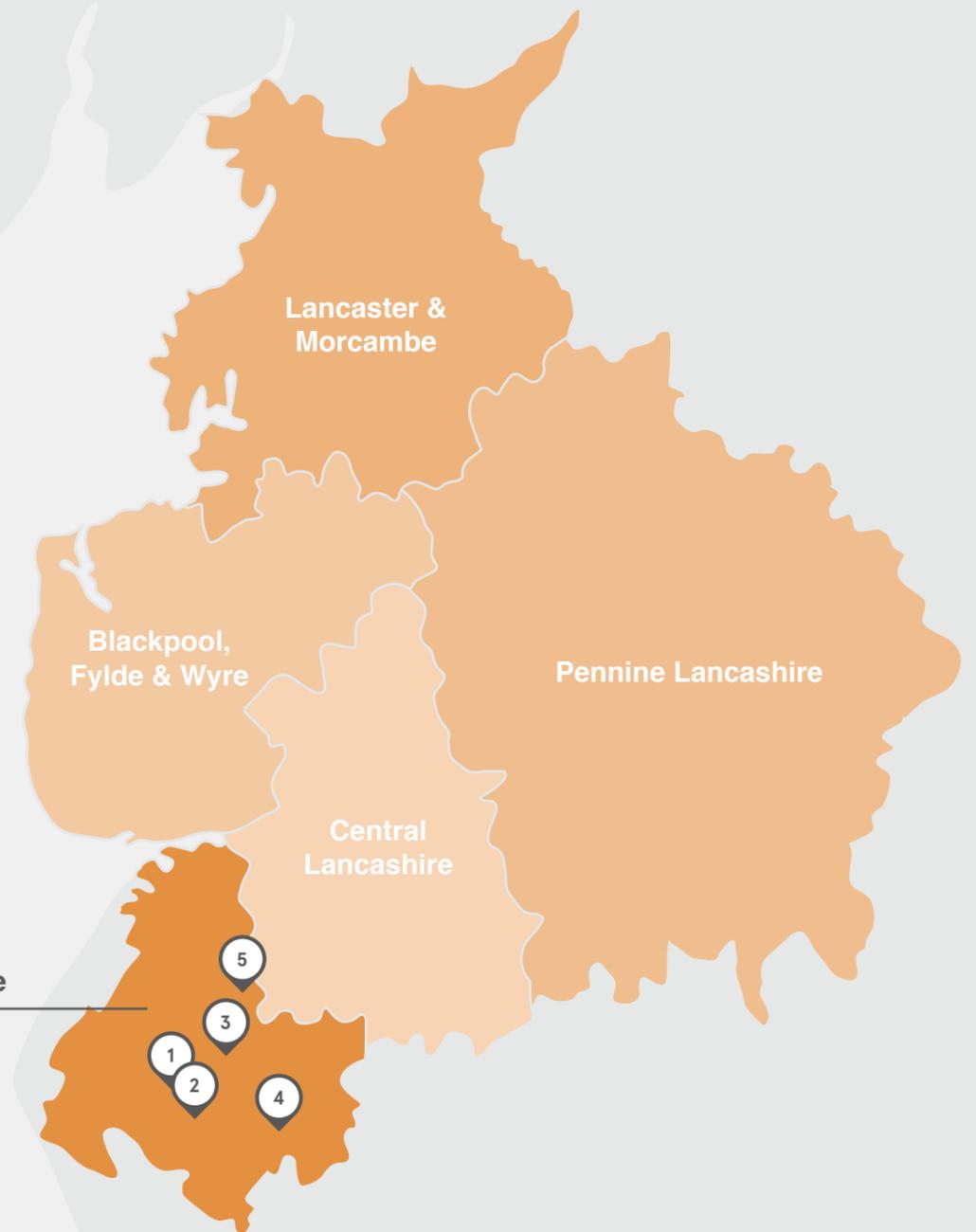
Cultural Assets in West Lancashire

Burscough, Ormskirk & Skelmersdale

Selected Highlights (See Full Report for Detailed List)

1. **Chapel Gallery** - An arts centre in Ormskirk combining internationally regarded artists exhibitions with contemporary art and craft from across the UK and career development support for local artists.
2. **Edge Hill University Arts Centre & Institute for Creative Exchange (ICE)** - The Arts Centre hosts the Performing Arts Department as well as the Rose and Studio Theatres. ICE is a practice-led and theoretically grounded interdisciplinary research forum which connects the University with the digital and creative economy and cultural institutions.
3. **The Arts Centre at Burscough Wharf** - A 100 capacity venue for events, exhibitions, cinema showings, theatre productions, live music, dance and comedy.
4. **The E-Rooms** - A not-for-profit social enterprise, serving the community of Skelmersdale and West Lancashire and offering a range of activities and entertainment including music tuition, rehearsal studios and recording studios to live music, comedy and theatre.
5. **Rufford Old Hall** - Rufford Old Hall, owned by The National Trust, is a beautiful Tudor building surrounded by Victorian and Edwardian gardens.

West Lancashire

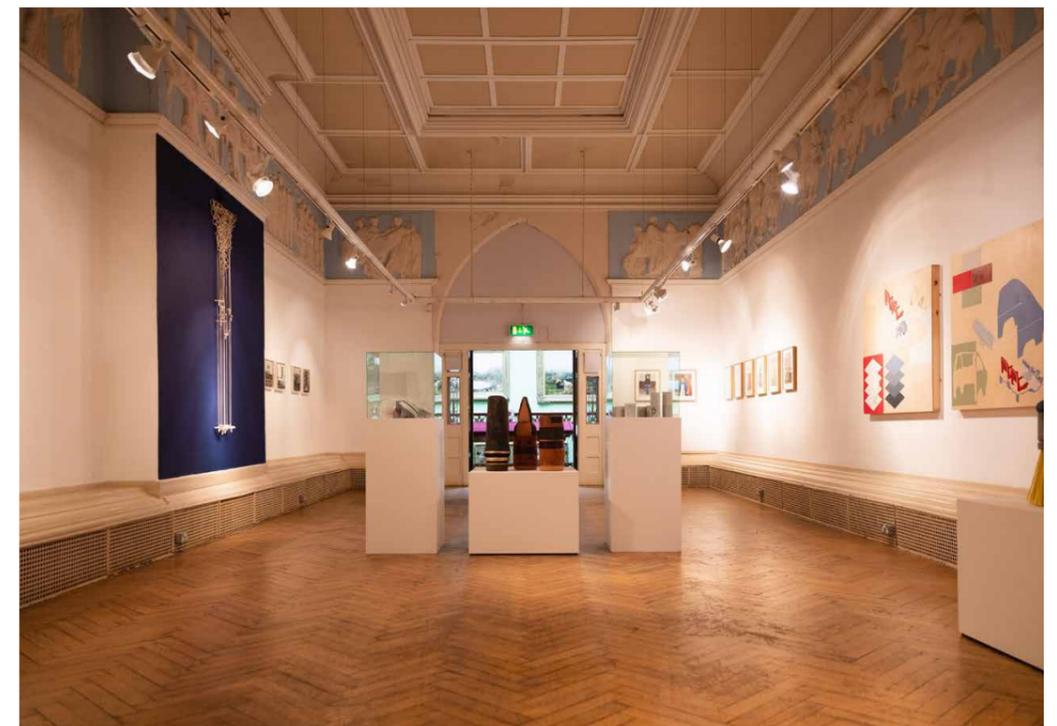


3.1 Cultural Strengths in Lancashire

- **Established organisations:** Nine Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) delivering excellence, reach and innovation in cultural provision. These are: The Grand Theatre (Blackpool); The Dukes Playhouse (Lancaster); Lancaster Arts (Lancaster); Ludus Dance (Lancaster); More Music (Morecambe); The Harris Museum & Art Gallery (Preston); Horse & Bamboo (Rossendale); Burnley Youth Theatre (Burnley) and In-Situ (Pendle); Curious Minds and One Sector Support Organisation delivering across the county: Lancashire Music Hub. In addition, Curious Minds – the ACE Bridge organisation serving Lancashire - exists to improve the lives of children and young people by increasing opportunities for their active participation in arts and culture.
- **Place-based programmes:** Two ACE-supported Creative People and Places programmes – Super Slow Way in Pennine Lancashire and LeftCoast in Blackpool and Wyre – provide tailored local cultural provision, helping to build distinctive communities and places. In addition, Spot On Lancashire, Lancashire’s rural touring network enables people to access and promote high quality professional arts on their doorstep in 25 non-traditional venues including village halls, parks and 35 libraries. Spot On Lancashire is run by Blackburn based independent arts organisation, Culturapedia, who in partnership with Cheshire Rural Touring Arts, form the Cheshire Lancashire Touring Partnership and are part of the ACE national portfolio.
- **Culture and education partnerships:** Five Local Cultural Education Partnerships – in Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, Lancaster and Preston – are helping to build a local talent base and ensure culture is not squeezed from the educational experience of young people. Blackpool was one of the first across the country and was used as a case study of excellent practice by ACE.
- **Growing creative networks:** Organisations including Creative Lancashire, Digital Lancashire and Arts Lancashire are facilitating collaboration across the county and building the capacity for the cultural sector. These networks and the hubs that support them, including co-working and studio spaces such as Society 1, Make North, The Birley and Cotton Court in Preston, Abingdon Studios in Blackpool, The Storey in Lancaster, Prism Contemporary in Blackburn, Landmark in Burnley and Strawberry Fields in Chorley, are all facilitating exchange, building capacity and nurturing innovative practice.
- **Growing creative industries:** In 2016 there were 13,440 people in creative employment across the county following a 4% growth in the sector between 2015 and 2016. Within these figures are some genuine innovators in design, digital and festivals.
- **A county of festivals:** A growing festival ecology, which is generating significant tourism and spearheading approaches to ‘making’ and cultural production, includes Lancashire Encounter, Lytham Festival, Highest Point, the National Festival of Making, Lightpool, Fleetwood Music and Arts Festival, the British Textile Biennial, Vintage by the Sea, Cloudspotting and the once-in-a-generation, Preston Guild.

- **A solid museums and heritage sector infrastructure base:** Ranging from significant historic buildings, museums and collections including those at Gawthorpe Hall, Haworth Art Gallery, The Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Lancaster Castle and Towneley Hall, to the unique industrial heritage found all over the county. Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery in partnership with the V&A are also currently working with secondary school students from across Blackburn to benefit from a national programme aimed at supporting design education.
- **A network of 64 public libraries:** Ranging from small community-focused libraries through to large city centre premises, which deliver a wide spectrum of services to 3.7 million users from health and wellbeing, through to skills and activities focused on young people and vulnerable groups.
- **Local cultural ecologies:** Independent artists groups and networks are working with larger cultural organisations to give real distinctiveness and texture to the cultural life of Lancashire, as well as providing jobs and driving cultural tourism. Exemplars in mobilising creative activity include the work of Deco Publique, Morecambe Artists’ Colony, Mid-Pennine Arts and Culturapedia.
- **Excellent university sector:** Edge Hill University, Lancaster University, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and University of Cumbria are expanding their civic and creative roles, supported by a strong FE sector. The new campus being developed by UCLan in Burnley shows their ambition stretches beyond their existing footprints. University Centre Blackburn College (UCBC), Blackpool and the Fylde College and Myerscough College also contribute to the excellent skills base in the county.

Image: INDUSTRIALISED Exhibition - Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery © richardtymon.com



3.2 Cultural Weaknesses in Lancashire

- **Size and capacity:** A lack of large-scale cultural organisations of comparable scale, reach and resource to other parts of the UK with a similar population and urban profile (e.g. Kent – which, like Lancashire, does not have a core city at its heart). Whilst this does give some agility and a leaner, less subsidy-dependent sector than elsewhere, the lack of scale and capacity limits opportunities to be ambitious and build on cultural potential.
- **Geographic challenge:** The combination of relatively small urban centres spread across a large area, compounded by inconsistent provision of public transport and issues with digital infrastructure in some rural areas, together with the benefits/disbenefits of proximity to large cities, which both provide opportunities (e.g. audiences and resources) and challenges (attracting investment and audiences which might otherwise provide value to Lancashire).
- **Austerity and funding:** Historically, Lancashire has received lower levels of national funding per capita - in terms of funding per head of population ACE spends £7 per head across Lancashire's 1.5 million residents, compared to £35 in Liverpool and £38 in Manchester. This has been compounded by austerity and reduced investment in culture, libraries, parks and heritage by County Council and across local authorities right across the county.
- **Under-leveraged connections to larger NPOs:** Though some touring and partnership work does take place, the county, as a whole, does not benefit from proximity to larger scale more (relatively) generously funded ACE NPOs across the country.
- **Lack of a coherent Lancashire story:** Historic changes to the county's shape, the sheer number of borough councils and unitary authorities and the diversity of its geography and community, have made crafting a credible, external-facing cultural identity difficult. At a local level, progress has been made via the Creative People and Places programmes in Blackpool and Wyre and Pennine Lancashire, also via the National Festival of Making in Blackburn and the launch of the Lancaster Story by The Lancaster Place Board, but these narratives need to be better connected into the development of an overarching Lancashire story.
- **Underplayed strengths:** Lancashire's strengths in academic research, advanced manufacturing, science and technology are not as connected to culture and creative industries as they could be. Whilst our universities excel at transnational working, opportunities to apply their broad research expertise at a local level are too often missed and the possibilities of exploring and connecting this research to social and cultural impact initiatives are largely overlooked.
- **Creative industries not visible enough:** Though the county's creative industries continue to grow, provision of the types of co-working and collaborative space which could provide visibility and help supercharge further progression of the sector to ensure it continues to thrive alongside those in the bigger cities is lagging.

3.3 Cultural Opportunities in Lancashire

- **Fit for purpose infrastructure:** The key pipeline and planned projects outlined in this strategy will revitalise existing assets and provide state of the art new spaces for Lancashire.
- **More connectivity:** Opportunities exist to better connect the fragmented cultural ecology, internally and nationally and internationally, through strengthened networks, collaboration and partnership.
- **Maximise local strengths:** There is scope to connect-up and maximise the county's strengths in advanced and modern manufacturing, science, technology and research with its creative strengths to encourage innovation.
- **Capacity and scale:** Alongside the infrastructural improvements, increasing the size and capacity of the county's cultural and creative organisations to deliver high-quality work, reach new audiences and be sustainable over the long term could amplify the capacity and scale of the cultural and creative sector.
- **Higher profile:** Investment and support for large-scale events (including a potential UK City of Culture 2025 bid) would increase the profile of the county, bring scale, additional investment, enable more partnership working and help to reach new audiences.

3.4 Cultural Threats in Lancashire

- **Big cities dominate:** The cultural and economic dominance of the larger cities in the North West impacts negatively on the small urban centres and towns of Lancashire.
- **Brain drain:** Talented young people, including recent graduates, are being drawn away from the county for lifestyle and work reasons.
- **Quality diminishes:** As resources become scarcer, and with more cuts to come, the county's smaller scale organisations and its two CPPs, LeftCoast and Super Slow Way, whose funding is being reduced phase on phase, will find it increasingly hard to compete against better funded and connected organisations in larger cities.
- **Innovation and productivity gap widens:** A failure to maximise the county's cultural and creative strengths will see it continue to fall behind the fast-growing technology and service-based economies of the South East.
- **Skills and confidence diminish:** Underpromotion of Lancashire's cultural and creative sectors as relevant, viable and high-quality career opportunities will risk the dilution of the county's skill base and knowledge economy and impact negatively on the diversity of its workforce in this sector. Phase on phase reduced investment into Lancashire's CPPs by ACE will see skills, experience and programming confidence diminish in tandem with their reduced capacity to deliver.
- **Missed opportunities:** The delivery of HS2 and other infrastructure improvements will bring benefits and opportunities to the county that will be missed if they are not matched by Lancashire's provision of quality experiences and attractions – factors that modern towns and cities require to thrive.



Image: British Textiles Biennial, Queen Street Mill © richardtymon.com

4. Lancashire Cultural Investment Plan

For culture to deliver to its potential in Lancashire, strategic investment in infrastructure, people, capacity, skills, networks and programmes is required. The county's existing cultural ecology is currently too fragile and fragmented, but through targeted support it has the potential to help Lancashire challenge anywhere in the UK as a creative place to live, work, visit and invest.

As part of our remit to lead on Lancashire's economic growth, investment in culture and creativity will feature significantly in the LEP's strategic plans to boost the economy. The Local Industrial Strategy provides us with an opportunity to develop a 'connected growth' strategy which recognises that true prosperity is built on social, economic and cultural growth.

In their recently published manual, Connected Growth, the DCMS state:

"Economic growth has social and cultural roots: places need to be liveable in order to be productive... DCMS's contribution to local prosperity is the connectivity we help create, the productive connections between people, businesses, institutions and communities. Connectivity happens because of economic infrastructure, including the right transport links, housing and business facilities. It also happens because of digital, social, creative and cultural infrastructure."

Just as our current economic strategy is based on the concept of developing an arc of prosperity that connects up the major towns and surrounding areas, boosts their key strengths and tackles their weaknesses, so too, the development of this Cultural Investment Strategy for Lancashire. As well as informing the Local Industrial Strategy, it will also see culture and creativity supported across the region and guide the work of the Cultural Investment Board to deliver on its five priority outcomes:

- Increased Connectivity
- Enhanced Capacity
- Improved Crossovers
- Bolder Commissioning and Innovative Infrastructure
- Compelling Cultural Narratives

In order to deliver these outcomes, we have identified four priority action areas:

4.1 Fit For Purpose Infrastructure

Over the next three years, a pipeline of planned and potential infrastructure works in Lancashire could be transformative to the county's cultural and creative industries. The following projects will not only support more resilient and sustainable sectors, but will augment the regeneration and revitalisation of urban centres to boost Lancashire's visitor economy:

Short Term (1-3 Years)

- **Culture Investment Fund & Cultural Development Fund:** The Culture Investment Fund was announced by the DCMS in 2019. Innovative cultural projects, libraries, museums and creative industries will benefit from new funding for the culture and creative sector. Over £125m will be invested in regional museums and libraries around the country. More than £90m will be provided to extend the Cultural Development Fund which uses investment in heritage, culture and creativity to drive regeneration and growth. In total, over the next 5 years, the DCMS will invest an additional £50 million each year in culture and the creative industries across England to revitalise existing assets and to support new cultural development.
- **The development of Showtown:** The new museum of fun and entertainment in Blackpool has received £4 million in funding from the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, a legacy of the Great Exhibition of the North, and £4 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The £13 million museum and visitor attraction will open in 2021 on the Golden Mile and will tell Blackpool's extraordinary history through participatory and immersive exhibitions, artefacts, film, music and performance.

The Re-imagining of The Harris: An ambitious £10.7 million project will make one of the finest museum, library and gallery buildings in the UK more accessible and more suited to the needs of contemporary audiences so that it is able to play an even bigger role as a hub at the heart of Preston.

- **The development of the Canal Quarter in Lancaster:** Currently at public consultation stage, the proposed regeneration of the 6.5 hectare area of Lancaster city centre, containing the old Mitchell's Brewery site and adjacent car parks bounded to the east by the Lancaster Canal, aims to combine contemporary development with hidden heritage to create a diverse residential, commercial, cultural and recreational neighbourhood with sustainability, collaboration and innovation at its heart. The scheme will incorporate elements of a new arts and creative village to enable the co-location of organisations and businesses to create a dynamic new hub. This will be augmented by Lancashire County Council investment into Fraser House at Whitecross to create a new digital hub and co-working space.
- **Making Blackburn: Cultural Master Planning and Assets:** The implementation of a culture and heritage-led master plan for Blackburn will focus on the town's physical and social gateways to making and creativity to take an asset based approach to the delivery of major refurbishment and improvement programmes of key town centre arts and heritage venue. This includes the Cotton Exchange, the Museum and Art Gallery, King George's Hall, St John the Evangelist Church, the Cathedral Crypt and Tony's Ballroom. In particular, the refurbishment of the Cotton Exchange will enable this unique historical icon from the 19th Century to operate as a regionally important, large-scale, flexible space for performance and events.

The intentional use of town and high street funds: To catalyse and augment the collective ambition of Lancashire's left behind, underinvested towns and highstreets, alignment of place-based funding schemes such as Towns Fund, Future Highstreets and Heritage Action Zones, with planned cultural investments across the county could help transform our towns and breathe life into struggling highstreets. LeftCoast's burgeoning Painting The Town programme in Blackpool presents a unique placemaking and profile raising opportunity to reinvigorate Blackpool's highstreets, businesses and homes through a collaboration with Johnstone's Paints to create a branded commercial paint range inspired by Blackpool's people and places, with additional potential for national and international reach.

Medium Term (4-7 Years)

- **Queen Street Mill and Helmshore Mills:** Lancashire County Council and The National Trust are working together under a memorandum of understanding to explore the future of these mills and to identify ways in which the mills can generate income and minimise costs while also conserving the buildings and collections and providing public benefit are also being considered by the partnership. Future development opportunities could enable potential operators or partners, including local community groups and businesses, to be part of the future of the mills.
- **Linear Park:** A feasibility study is being co-commissioned by ACE and Lancashire County Council, Super Slow Way and Canal & River Trust to explore the creation of a park along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. The Linear Park project, which will span a 20-mile stretch, starting in Blackburn and ending in Pendle, seeks to transform canal side assets for cultural, artistic and placemaking purposes in order to attract, nurture and retain highly skilled residents, students and visitors. Inspired by large-scale cultural interventions in industrial regions such as Emscher Park in Germany's Ruhr Valley and metropolitan exemplars such as the High Line in New York, the Linear Park is an ambitious and wide-reaching culture-led regeneration project which will link together communities close to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal with a mix of physical renewal, programming and engagement.

The project could provide transformational cultural infrastructure and experiences in some of the most deprived wards in the Lancashire and the UK, not only in providing a major new cultural attraction for the north of England, but also in helping to drive housing renewal, improve transport infrastructure, and bring about environmental and social improvements. Future phases could also extend into Preston, Lancaster and Burscough to the west, to potentially create a countywide approach to urban regeneration.

- **Project GASP:** The potential of creating a new cultural space within the footprint of an existing functioning hub and heritage asset could inject new life into Preston's cultural infrastructure and Preston's visitor economy and could increase opportunities for Lancashire's residents engage with culture on a daily basis. It also offers an opportunity for UCLAN to expand their footprint and connection to the community.

Long Term (8+ Years)

- **Eden Project North:** This ambitious £70 million development in Morecambe has already received feasibility funding and would provide a year-round visitor attraction, as well as boost the local economy, in the same way the original Eden Project has successfully delivered in Cornwall.
- **Burnley Empire:** The redevelopment of this iconic heritage building in the centre of Burnley could not only revitalise the town centre of Burnley, but create a unique opportunity to develop a brand new specialist training centre for conservation and restoration of heritage buildings to support the development of skills in an under-provided expertise at both county and national levels. Further opportunities to connect this into UCLAN's offer as it expands its footprint and reach into the town, could cement a brand new USP for Burnley and Lancashire.
- **HS2:** The proposed development of a new high-speed railway for the UK will see Preston becoming an HS2 station. Should this development go ahead, cultural investment will help ensure that the increased role and opportunities for the city as a hub will be realised.

4.2 Scaling-Up Events and Festivals

Connecting up the county's cultural offer, increasing its reach and visibility, boosting the visitor economy and bringing benefits that only large, open festivals and events can bring is a priority. LEP support for the following initiatives could help to deliver this:

Short Term (1-3 Years)

- **Developing a new compelling narrative for Lancashire:** The creation of an overarching Lancashire story to help boost inward investment and tourism and attract new audiences. This narrative should connect up events and activities and describe the county in a way that makes it less fragmented and more understandable and accessible for residents, visitors and businesses.
- **The major nationwide Festival of Creativity and Innovation:** Planned for 2022 and backed by £120 million of Government funding the Festival of Creativity and Innovation could provide a way of supercharging the county's existing festivals and events, enabling them to improve the quality of their programming and provision and to increase their reach. As the Government makes more announcements on this, it will be a priority to ensure that Lancashire is as geared up as possible to maximise the opportunity.
- **British Textile Biennial:** Supporting the growth of the success of the inaugural festival from Super Slow Way in 2019, which attracted 52,000 additional visitors to the county, will not only throw a spotlight on the nation's creation, innovation and expression in textiles, but will shine a light on the impressive infrastructure and heritage of the cotton industry in Pennine Lancashire. With real potential to become an ACE NPO, The British Textile Biennial has plans to expand its reach county wide through further connections to other regional cultural assets by 2025, to coincide with City of Culture.

- **Creative People and Places:** Ensuring the continuation and impact of Lancashire's two Creative People and Places programmes, LeftCoast and Super Slow Way, as they come to the end of their respective ACE funded phases, will be vital to retaining capacity, skills and experience within the county; to continuing some of the county's most successful and impactful cultural programmes including, The National Festival of Making, the British Textile Biennial, SpareParts, Lightpool and the burgeoning, Painting The Town programme in Blackpool; and to maintaining connections into some of the county's most hard to reach communities.

Medium Term (4-7 Years)

- **A county-wide bid for UK City of Culture in 2025:** A bid for Lancashire, as a whole, to become the UK City of Culture in 2025 will bring myriad benefits, from raising the county's profile, increasing interest from the private sector, building new partnerships, and catalysing growth in the creative economy. Regardless of whether the bid is successful, the process of bidding will undoubtedly deliver a step change in the position and performance of Lancashire's cultural sector, and in the county's strategic ability and capacity to support the cultural sector. Its legacy will mean continued benefits for Lancashire well beyond 2025 as the county reaps the rewards of sustained investment and takes advantage of the opportunities generated by new cultural assets to achieve greater influence and relevance at both national and international levels.

Long Term (8+ Years)

- **Upscaling Lancashire Encounter:** As Lancashire's pinnacle event, last celebrated in 2012 and next due in 2032, planning for Preston Guild should already be underway. With its recent increased investment from ACE, the development of an upscaled, more focused



biennial Lancashire Encounter procession and programme could be a key part of these preparations, providing the perfect opportunity to explore, test and develop new partnerships, collaborations, commissions, programming, venues and cross platform delivery to engage new participants and audiences. The result could help to reposition Preston, and Lancashire, as a hotbed of creativity renowned for its rich cultural heritage and genuine community spirit and cement the city's, and the county's, status as the self-proclaimed home of Processions in the UK.

Critically, a move away from Preston City Council to a more independent status could provide Lancashire Encounter with an organisational structure better suited to sustainable long-term development and the potential to become an ACE NPO, as well as offering a real prospect of national impact and reach through further connections to other regional cultural assets and events such as the British Textile Biennial and future phases of a county wide Linear Park concept.

- **A collaborative, co-commissioning cross county approach:** To enhance these opportunities further, plans for Preston Guild and Lancashire Encounter to co-commission and collaborate with the British Textile Biennial, could support a joined up, cross county approach to culture. At a community level, this could see Lancashire Encounter become the culminating event for existing annually celebrated Club, Gala and Field Days, which are hosted throughout the summer in Lancashire's rural communities, some of which originated from trade associations, others from church processions, enabling traditionally hard to reach places and people to contribute to and connect into a larger place based cultural events. On a wider scale, the development of a programme around the historical, industrial and spiritual heritage of Wakes Weeks, centred on the longstanding historical and social connection between East Lancashire towns and Blackpool, is a good example of how culture could be used to cut across county lines. If successful, this approach could be replicated across different cultural programmes throughout the year, overriding the county's complex geographical, political and demographic boundaries to link all parts of Lancashire together.

Image: Southpaw Dance Company, Rush
© martinbostock.co.uk

4.3 Supporting Convergence

A programme of activity that connects up the county's strengths in research, advanced manufacturing, science and technology with its growing creative strengths is of real significance. LEP support for the following initiatives could help to deliver this:

Short Term (1-3 Years)

- **The National Festival of Making:** Bolstering commitment to extend ACE's support for The National Festival of Making will enable one of Lancashire's most successful festivals to scale-up its ability to deliver innovation and industrial change throughout the year via programmes such as Art In Manufacturing (AiM). This will enable it to continue to act as a catalyst of innovation in art and industry; grow its role as a development agency through larger scale projects connected to research; continue to connect with Lancashire's Creative People and Places programmes and in particular, Super Slow Way, who were originally co-commissioners of the AiM programme, and consider an application to become part of the ACE National Portfolio.
- **The British Textile Biennial:** The British Textile Biennial, also hosted in Pennine Lancashire connects to the county's manufacturing strengths and industrial heritage by highlighting the nation's creation, innovation and expression in textiles against the backdrop of the impressive infrastructure of the cotton industry in places connected by the 20 mile stretch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, from Pendle to Blackburn, with future plans to extend the programme into Preston and potentially countywide. Partnerships and collaboration with institutions such as University of Central

Lancashire (UCLan), University of the Arts London (UAL) and sector initiatives such as Business of Fashion, Textiles and Technology (BFTT) and NWTexnet hold the potential to supercharge research and development that facilitates innovation in this key UK industry.

To align with this planned expansion British Textile Biennial will seek to assert its position with its own application to become part of the ACE National Portfolio.

Medium Term (3-7 Years)

- **A collaborative R&D hub and platform:** The development of a hybrid R&D and production lab, similar to the Pervasive Media Studio in Bristol, will help to drive innovation and growth across Lancashire's knowledge-intensive sectors - creative, cultural, science and technology. As a hub and catalyst for innovation, with culture at its heart, it will take the core strengths of the local economy and invest in their convergence to drive innovation, provide an active role for arts and cultural practitioners to explore new technologies.

Long Term (8+ Years)

- **Cultural production at the heart of the tourism offer:** The creation of a suite of facilities and programmes which encourage active participation from audiences in making new culture will enable Lancashire to contribute to the UK's Sustainable Development Goals. These goals are part of a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet adopted by United Nations Member States in 2015. To support these goals, Lancashire, could, for example, develop a writers' centre; a gaming hub; a commissioning programme for culture and social technology.

4.4 Building Capacity

Considerable importance must be given to a programme of activity that boosts skills, sustainability and resilience across culture and the creative industries. LEP support for the following initiatives could help to deliver this:

Short Term (1-3 Years)

- **Creative enterprise support:** Alongside university partners, it is vital that the breadth and capacity of existing enterprise support programmes (e.g. Lancashire Forum Creative, the Creative Enterprise Toolkit and Creative Step programme) are increased to better connect up networks and reach more organisations and creative practitioners across Lancashire. This needs to include support for AI and VR technology.
- **Cultural and Creative Skills:** Work with the Lancashire Skills Hub and Creative & Cultural Skills (CCSkills) to develop a tailored skills and capacity-building programme for a new cultural workforce. This should adopt and adapt the four priorities of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2016-2021: Inspire (to generate a pipeline of talent to the cultural and creative sectors and to give credibility to work in this sector); Recruit (work with the cultural and creative sector to recruit from the local talent pool); Upskill (build the technical and management capacity of the cultural sector); and Influence (working with the cultural and creative sector to build support for long-term investment).
- **Cultural Compact:** Providing support for the Cultural Compact in Morecambe Bay, which focuses on one of the key themes of the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic

Region partners – Culture, Creative, and Visitor Economy – will unlock the untapped potential of the area's natural and built environment; wider initiatives including, Eden Project North; creative industries; arts and festivals; and the visitor economy.

Medium Term (4-7 Years)

- **Strategic commissioning in health, social care and town centre renewal:** Hard-wiring cultural delivery into Lancashire's core social and economic development agendas is integral to diversifying the offer of town centres in a time of crisis for high streets. This could include implementing a cultural business improvement district model and a culture for health and wellbeing fund to support social prescribing.

Long Term (8+ Years)

- **Education and culture infrastructure:** The higher education sector in Lancashire could help shape a new generation of cultural infrastructure by first prototyping and then developing new facilities and spaces for research and experimentation including, virtual and augmented reality; artificial intelligence; and contemporary crafts.
- **Film and TV:** The success of Screen Yorkshire in promoting the area as a home for film and TV production shows how successful strong regional initiatives can be. With partners including the Film Hub North (the regional delivery arm of BFI), Screen Skills and Creative England, there is scope for Lancashire to develop its own model based on the strength of its creative community, its heritage and environmental offer.

5. Partnership & Delivery

The establishment of an active, strategic Culture Investment Board made up of representatives of culture, business, higher education, health and the wider public sector, will be key to ensuring that the outcomes outlined in this Cultural Investment Strategy are achieved over the next decade.

The development of a Cultural Investment Board builds on the recommendations set out in the 2017 Feasibility Report commissioned by Lancashire County Council, which made the case for a cultural board that was broad in make-up and ambition across culture, business and local government. It also draws on the recommendations made by the 2019 Cultural Cities Enquiry, which outlined suggestions for how cities can boost funding for culture through the establishment of new shared social investment funds, the establishment of city skills strategies, the development of more portfolio approaches to management of cultural assets, and a bigger role for BIDs (alongside a debate on the establishment of a tourism levy to fund culture).

The Cultural Investment Board will reflect Arts Council England's Creative Case for Diversity and the recommendations of Bazalgette's Independent Review of the Creative Industries to include representation drawn from across the cultural ecology of Lancashire, reflecting its depth and

breadth as well as the geographic spread of assets and programmes. As so much of its focus will be the interaction between culture and place, it is vital that the Board includes representatives of the public and private sector, whose partnership and support will play such an important part in delivering the Cultural Investment Plan. It will also be important to make links to the wider wellbeing and health agenda, connecting into the work of the Lancaster Health and Innovation Campus at Lancaster University and others.

Lancashire's Cultural Investment Board will provide expert advice to the LEP and Local Authorities. It may or may not be an official decision-making entity, but it will play an active role as advocate, champion and critical friend in the decision-making process. This is to ensure culture sits at the heart of the growth agenda and that decisions are informed by experts who share a passion for the role of culture in shaping great places.

6. Lancashire Culture Remade

“Culture in Lancashire can play a transformational role: nurturing a stronger and more diverse economic base, infusing innovative practice and greatly enhancing the quality of place. With the right level of support, investment and coordination, the talent, heritage and identity of the county can play a starring role in a re-imagined cultural offer: a Lancashire remade.”

Lancashire is a diverse county of considerable geographic, demographic and political complexity. This diversity is both a challenge and a strength, but it presents a unique opportunity for Lancashire to chart a new trajectory and reclaim a leading role in a post-Brexit UK.

This Cultural Investment Strategy provides a considered perspective on the impact of focused and sustained investment into the county's cultural offer as part of a wider approach to stimulate economic growth across Lancashire.

From reviewing the county's creative and cultural assets and the ambition and capacity of the county's leading cultural organisations and providers, several key findings were acknowledged.

First, the physical, social and political diversity of Lancashire has created a disconnected cultural sector, unable to readily meet opportunities presented by commercial partners, public funders, or even county initiatives.

Second, even within Lancashire's largest, most resourced cultural organisations there is a

fundamental lack of capacity preventing their development and their facility to bring about the benefits that come with the capability to sustain work at scale and depth. Certainly, a continued reduction in cultural investment at national, regional and sub-regional levels over the years has taken its toll on Lancashire in ways that really matter, impacting deeply not just on the cultural sector itself but on social fabric of the county, and on its economic position and potential too.

Third, a host of missed opportunities, resulting from persistently underplaying and under-utilising our strengths in research, digital innovation, creative skills pipeline, programming and producing, festivals, socially engaged arts which stunt our potential to capitalise, connect and collaborate across sectors and markets, at home and abroad.

Fourth, the struggle to retain creative talent and the overall lack of capacity and resource within our cultural sector has held aspiration in check, preventing the development of the kind of ambitious cultural commissioning programmes of scale that raise profile and drive economic spend to impact on the health of our highstreets and hotels.



Image: Dawinder Bansal: Making of a South Asian Wedding - National Festival of Making © Robin Zahler

Finally, the lack of a clear, shared narrative for Lancashire, a recognisable and relatable story we can reveal and reinforce through the work and efforts of every single programme, project, partner and place is the ultimate missing link in Lancashire's arsenal, affecting the robustness of everything the LEP and every other public body in the county aim to effect.

Yet, even with so much ground to make up, there can be no doubt that culture is the single most unique and important tool at our disposal that has the ability to really cut across the physical, administrative and social boundaries and make a meaningful and substantial difference to the growth of Lancashire's economy.

What is very clear is that if Lancashire is to reinstate its position as an economic powerhouse, it needs to harness the potential of its soft power to restore its influence and relevance on a national and international scale. To do this, the role of

culture in Lancashire must be remade and the value that culture brings to Lancashire must be acknowledged as our point of difference.

Through the adoption and implementation of the Cultural Investment Strategy, the LEP will do both by 2030. Together, with partners, we will take an ambitious and co-ordinated approach to deliver a step-change in the role and performance of culture in Lancashire as a driver for economic growth. We will do this by scaling up the county's innovative cultural production and the networks and hubs which support it, to create a stronger, more confident and cohesive Lancashire.

This Cultural Investment Strategy, or **REMADE**, as it will be known, henceforth, is, therefore, the first stage in providing 'a big plan' for unlocking the transformative power of culture, in a Lancashire where the full potential of people, place and economic growth are realised together.

Recommendations:

There are several practical steps that could help realise the LEP's vision of a more connected, collaborative and ambitious cultural offer for Lancashire and secure continued economic growth for the county. Focusing on the five identified outcomes, the LEP could facilitate:

1. Increased Connectivity:

By better connecting the cultural and creative sector so that the main urban areas, smaller towns and rural areas, work collaboratively to trade together more freely to build a more circular economy, and build scale, presence and impact locally, nationally and internationally through the creation of a shared platform for culture, which dovetails with Visit Lancashire and Invest in Lancashire, could position culture at the heart of the visitor economy and inward investment story. In addition, adopting a co-ordinated cross-sector approach to workforce development, commissioning, programming and communication would ensure the cultural portfolio of Lancashire is better understood and is more collaborative and accessible.

2. Enhanced Capacity:

By creating a stronger, more diverse, sustainable and appropriately skilled cultural sector and audience base, enabled to deliver positive outcomes for economic growth and high-quality places through partnering with Lancashire's universities to nurture talent and ideas and develop tailored skills and entrepreneurship activities to help build the growth and innovation capacity of the cultural sector; investing in the region's CPPs, LeftCoast and Super Slow Way, to ensure maintained capacity and continued delivery beyond their current phases; supporting cross county/regional initiatives such as Light Up the North (LUTN), the network of light festivals in which Blackpool and Lancaster play a leading role alongside Leeds, York, Newcastle/Gateshead and Durham and investing in Lancashire's major cultural gems, including The Harris in Preston and Showtown in Blackpool, to catalyse new interest, influence and relevance for Lancashire's enhanced cultural offer across real and virtual places.

3. Improved Crossovers:

By establishing an international reputation for the strength, depth and ingenuity of our partnerships and collaborations to promote convergence, innovation and creative collaboration across sectors and our strengths in culture, creativity,

research, science, technology and manufacturing through tailored R&D activities connecting culture and the arts to science, technology and manufacturing to establish a rich creative and knowledge ecosystem for Lancashire; capitalising on the rise of cultural champions and private sector partners investing in new infrastructure and backing their hometowns to deliver culture-led growth in Lancaster, Burnley, Blackburn and Blackpool; backing collaborative projects which connect the businesses of Digital Lancashire to key cultural organisations in order to testbed organisational change and digital culture to pioneer new ways of making, working and engaging.

4. Bolder Commissioning and Innovative Infrastructure:

By garnering national and international recognition for the strength of our connected cultural and creative infrastructure, and for delivering high quality work to diverse audiences in historic and state-of-the-art buildings and more widely through Lancashire's communities, businesses, higher education, colleges and schools, resulting in a more widely engaged, diverse and developed audience base, through major projects such as the National Festival of Making and a bid to be UK City of Culture in 2025 or 2029; a network of dynamic creative production hubs in key urban centres which provide the space, facilities and skills support to enable local talent to develop world-class creative and cultural production skills; new cultural infrastructure to anchor major developments, for example, HS2 in Preston.

5. Compelling Cultural Narratives:

Gaining national and international recognition for the distinctiveness of our places, people and environment, ideas and cultural experiences; with Lancashire's cultural offer and cultural life making the area a highly-attractive place for residents, visitors, workers and investors, through an interactive multi-media campaign to showcase Lancashire's cultural assets to audiences and investors (dovetailing with Visit Lancashire and Invest in Lancashire) and an internationalisation programme to boost Lancashire's relevance and influence as a place of diverse culture and history synonymous with world class creating, making, leisure, pleasure, food and drink, in order to help build strong socio-cultural links with priority markets through targeted collaborations and promotional activities.

Case Study: The Grundy

Building Contemporary Collections with Contextual Programming For An International Reputation

Background

The Grundy Art Gallery has been at the centre of artistic life in Blackpool for over 100 years, inspiring audiences through a year-round programme exploring the relationship between contemporary art, entertainment and popular culture.

Recognized as a leading contemporary visual arts venue in the North West, with a growing national and international profile, it makes a significant contribution to the cultural infrastructure of Blackpool. It has been an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation for the past eight years and holds Museums Accreditation status.

Approach

Through ambitious and contextual programming, The Grundy makes the most of its beautiful exhibition spaces and the environment beyond the gallery walls to engage new and traditionally hard-to-reach audiences by exploring the relationship between gallery, culture, communities and place.

It has developed a reputation for nurturing strong regional and national partnerships, most recently with the Tate Artist Rooms collection, which saw the hosting of a Roy Lichtenstein print exhibition in summer 2019. Whilst the international success of The Grundy's Light Programme has positioned the gallery as an international centre for production and excellence in light-based contemporary art.

The Grundy takes a seasonal approach to programming to align with the town's seasonal influx of holiday makers and day trippers, focusing on artists, artworks and projects that have the ability to attract and connect large, diverse audiences over the summer period especially. Broadly focusing on Blackpool as context and content, the most recent summer exhibitions celebrated 250 years of contemporary circus and works celebrating the history of Blackpool Tower Circus.

During the Autumn and Winter, exhibitions are thematically tied to two of Blackpool's biggest visitor attractions, Blackpool Illuminations and the contemporary, Lightpool Festival, where the form and content of artworks focus on 'light', connecting to The Grundy's acquisition strategy for the gallery's growing contemporary light art collection.

In Spring, talent development projects offer 'step-change' solo and group exhibition opportunities to artists for whom an exhibition at Grundy Art Gallery will significantly advance their creative thinking, their career development position and their regional, national and international profile.

Looking Forward

Special projects, such as the recent commissioning of a vinyl record featuring a sound artwork created by young people from the Grange Estate will continue to enhance the Grundy's programme of on-site, in-community and online workshops and interpretation around its exhibitions programme and permanent collection.

7. A County Of Culture For All

Country Shows

Lancashire is home to more than 12 country shows which are members of the North West Federation of Show Societies, including Great Harwood Agricultural Show and the Fylde Vintage and Farm Show.

Heritage & Historic Houses

Historic houses are among the most popular visitor attractions in the county, with notable examples including, Salmesbury Hall in Preston, Gawthorpe Hall in Burnley, Astley Hall in Chorley and Lancashire's oldest surviving family home, Browsholme Hall in the Ribble Valley. They capture much of the history of the area from medieval manor houses to industrial revolution, with many, such as Rufford Old Hall, being of national significance.

Sport

Sport is vital to Lancashire. Professional sports clubs are an important part of life in many towns and cities. Notable long-established football clubs include, Blackburn, Blackpool, Burnley, Darwen, Fleetwood, Fylde, Lancaster, Morecombe and Preston; cricket at League and County level has always been important, especially in East Lancashire. Weekly Park Runs attract thousands of runners across the county at 13 locations from Blackpool to Pendle.

Image: Alice Kettle's Thread Bearing Witness @ Gawthorpe Hall - British Textile Biennial © richardtymon.com

Strategic Sector Support Organisations

Active Lancashire

The strategic lead for sport and physical activity in Lancashire to help bring about active lifestyles. Based in Leyland, but delivering across Lancashire, one of the many national Sport England-led Active Partnerships that drive a sports delivery system across the country.

Arts Lancashire

Exists to support and promote the work of Lancashire's sub-regional arts partnerships and their members, including Arts Partners Pennine Lancashire incorporating Ribble Valley Arts, Lancaster Arts Partnership and Arts Partnership for Fylde. Offering a strategic voice for professional arts and culture in the county, they organise the annual Lancashire Arts Exchange and host, The Gathering, a podcast and event series for artists and creatives.

Creative Lancashire

Dedicated to helping raise the profile of Lancashire's creative talent and to harnessing the economic potential in companies and organisations working in the creative sector through advocating for creativity and design; building collaborations and networking opportunities; offering creative and digital business advice; providing information on finance, funding and growth.

Digital Lancashire

The voice of digital business in the county, lobbying on behalf of Lancashire's digital organisations to ensure the strength and diversity of Lancashire's digital skills-base is heard loud and clear, locally and nationally. They help the county's digital businesses to forge partnerships and collaborations they might otherwise never make, so they can tackle bigger, more ambitious, more rewarding projects together.

Lancashire Cultural Network

A newly established consortium of representatives from across Lancashire, who aim to build common purpose, work collaboratively and drive ambition for culture in Lancashire by providing a mechanism which supports strategic cultural ambition and contributes to the unlocking of investment aligned to a few big ambitions and to identify and improve the evidence base for culture to support its case and align this to wider economic and social priorities.

Lancashire Museums Service

County Council service caring for historic Lancashire properties including Clitheroe Castle, Gawthorpe Hall, Helmshore Mills, Judges Lodgings, Lancaster Castle and Queen Street Mill. Through its Lancashire Conservations Studios, the service delivers a comprehensive range of services for the care and interpretation of cultural heritage from specialists in conservation, curation, collection management and design.

Lancashire Music Hub and Lancashire Music Service

A network of people and organisations based in Chorley, but delivering across Lancashire, working together to champion music education and make sure that all children and young people in the County get access to music making and learning that's right for them. Funded by Department for Education (DfE) administered through ACE to deliver the ambitions of the Government's National Plan for Music Education.

Cover Image: Anna Ray - British Textile Biennial, Queen Street Mill © richardtymon.com

Back Cover Image: Preston Bus Station (John Puttick Associates) © garethgardner.com



Lancashire
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To request a copy of the full report visit the LEP website:

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