

# **Partner, Investor, Champion:**

**An introduction to  
the Arts Council  
England's role  
in placemaking**



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August 2018**

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# 1. Introduction

*“Investment in places can do important things – it can galvanise civic life, it can stimulate economic activity...it can give a voice to individuals who feel they have not been heard. The Arts Council...must become a greater catalyst for change, taking the initiative by encouraging individuals, organisations and communities to start as well as sustain cultural projects in hitherto neglected areas across England.”*

**Sir Nicholas Serota**  
**Chair, Arts Council England, March 2017**

Place matters. It matters to individuals and communities – our employment opportunities, social lives and sense of identity are shaped by where we live. It matters to local agencies that work to help places prosper and deliver services that respond to local circumstances and needs. And it matters to national policymakers, who increasingly recognise that centralised strategies and funding streams need to be able to adapt to the realities of life in different parts of the country. It is no surprise then that placemaking initiatives are burgeoning around the world, from the Placemaking Leadership Council in the US to the EU *Culture for Cities and Regions* programme.

In the UK there is growing interest in the role of arts and culture in developing thriving communities and shaping places where people want to work and live. This is partly a debate about social fragmentation and disenfranchisement, in which arts and cultural participation has the potential to promote wellbeing, to bring people together and to inspire social change in some of the least

affluent and most marginalised parts of the country. It is also a debate about innovation and growth, in which the arts and cultural sector is seen to play a role in local economic development through talent and skills development, knowledge exchange, tourism and links with wider creative industries.

Since its inception Arts Council England has helped to establish high quality cultural venues and organisations and created opportunities for people to experience the arts in cities, towns and rural areas across England. While some of the largest recipients of its funding are major cultural institutions in London, the Arts Council makes significant investments outside the capital through its regular funding of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs); project grants; strategic investment in touring and capital; and targeted schemes such as *Creative People and Places*. Much of the Arts Council's day-to-day work involves championing arts and culture at local level and building local partnerships, particularly with local government – where this works best, Arts Council regional offices and local authorities are close collaborators in the development and delivery of cultural plans for places. The Arts Council has recently launched an enquiry to explore the potential future for culture in cities across the UK.

The Arts Council intuitively applies the lens of place to its activities, and is beginning to develop a detailed account of its place-based investments and partnerships and its methodology for working in places. To support this work, The Arts Council commissioned Catherine Bunting and Tom Fleming to carry out a brief review of its activities in six locations, exploring how culture helps to shape those places and the difference that the Arts Council makes through its investments and other kinds of support.

## Our approach to the review

Our first step was to work with the Arts Council to select six case study locations. Our choice was guided by impact (places where arts and culture have played a particularly significant role in economic and/or social development); pragmatics (places where we had existing knowledge or access to data) and balance (achieving a geographic spread and a mix of urban and rural places, of different sizes, with different governance structures). The places covered in this report are Greater Manchester, Cornwall, Nottingham, Norwich, Hull and Barking & Dagenham – although there were many other places that would have generated equally interesting insights.

To build an initial understanding of how the Arts Council works in these places, we interviewed Arts Council Area Directors and other staff with responsibility for partnerships and activities in the six locations. We carried out a brief review of evidence of the impact of arts and culture and Arts Council investments in our selected places. Finally, we interviewed six people with detailed local knowledge to gain an alternative perspective on what arts and culture mean to places and the strengths and limitations of the Arts Council as a local partner.

This report does not attempt to pinpoint the precise contribution of the Arts Council in our six locations. Successful cultural strategies for places emerge from partnerships that have developed over time, in which agencies align their activities in pursuit of shared goals. As such it can be difficult to identify the difference that individual organisations have made, and to establish causality between specific investments and wider impacts. Nonetheless, with the rapid reduction in local authority funding for culture, and the imminent withdrawal of European funds, it is helpful for agencies to better understand their own distinctive strengths and modes of working in places – to target resources as effectively as possible, and to enable evidence of impact to be gathered in a more systematic way.

This report takes the Arts Council further along that path. It does so by describing the role of the Arts Council as a key investor, advocate and enabler for culture-led place-making; and as a broker encouraging new types of partnership and models of investment in which LEPs, local authorities, higher education, tourism, community and voluntary services and culture, sport and heritage organisations are developing shared ambitions and agendas for places. It builds on the important work being done to demonstrate the difference that arts and culture are making to places (Local Government Association, 2017) and identifies themes for the Arts Council and its partners to develop as they continue to explore how to maximise the impact of cultural investment for communities across the country.

## List of contributors

We are grateful to the following individuals for their contributions to this project:

- Mike Emmerich, Founding Director, Metro Dynamics
- Peter McGurn, Chief Executive, Goodwin Trust
- Barbara Matthews, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Culture) and Head of College (Art, Architecture, Design and Humanities), Nottingham Trent University
- Nikki Rotsos, Director of Customers and Culture, Norwich City Council
- Melissa Severn, Cultural Connector, Creative Barking and Dagenham
- Ross Williams, Chief Executive of Krowji and Creative Kernow

## 2. How the Arts Council works in places

The Arts Council is a national agency with its investment and governance organised around five geographic areas (North, Midlands, London, South East and South West) and a staff presence in every region of England. The Arts Council's principal investment stream is regular funding to National Portfolio Organisations: £409m will be distributed annually to 830 arts organisations, museums and libraries between 2018 and 2022. During this period the Arts Council will also allocate £97m annually in National Lottery Project Grants (previously Grants for the Arts) and £72m annually in Development Funds, which support strategic programmes that increasingly allow resources for arts and cultural development to be targeted at specific places. Recent and current examples include:

- Creative People and Places: a £37m fund to support the development of community-based arts programmes in places where engagement with the arts is low
- Cultural Destinations: a £3m fund for collaborations between the arts and culture and tourism sectors
- Creative Local Growth Fund: a £1.5m fund to develop partnerships and leverage funding for creative and cultural enterprise in LEP areas outside London
- Great Place Scheme: a £20m partnership with Heritage Lottery Fund to support cultural and heritage organisations to work together to address social and economic challenges in 16 places across England
- Ambition for Excellence: a £35m fund to support the creation of artistic work for major national moments, with 80-90% of funds to be committed outside London
- Local Cultural Education Partnerships and Music Education Hubs: which enable cultural organisations, schools, local

authorities, voluntary and community groups, higher education and other partners to work together to align cultural education for young people

- Strategic Touring: a £35m fund from 2015-18 to support touring work, focusing on areas where arts engagement and provision are low – now being absorbed into the Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants

Perhaps less well-known is the Arts Council's day-to-day work at local level which involves building relationships; advocating for culture; leading or supporting local cultural planning; investing small amounts to create partnership structures or pump prime new initiatives; and acquiring detailed knowledge of the needs and resources of places that ultimately feeds into the organisation's mainstream investments.

This report will shine a light on these aspects of the Arts Council's work that are strategically important but often overlooked, and identify some of the key impacts of the Arts Council's funding in places:

- Growing and diversifying the local economy
- Strengthening the tourist offer
- Attracting and retaining talent in places
- Fostering links between culture and the wider creative industries
- Developing distinctive places with strong identities
- Boosting local pride and confidence – often in 'forgotten' places where traditional industries have declined

There has been considerable debate in recent years about the imbalance in the Arts Council's funding between London and the other regions of England – a debate that reflects broader concerns about the London-centric nature of the UK economy. The Arts Council's commitment to enable more widespread participation in arts and culture can be seen in the gradual increase in the proportion of national portfolio funding that is given to organisations outside the capital (from 54% in 2012-15 to 56% in 2015-18 to 60% in 2018-22) and in the growth of its place-based strategic funds, many of which are focused wholly or to a large degree on places outside London.

As the Arts Council's placemaking activities gather momentum, it seems a timely moment to go beyond the question of how the Arts Council's funds are distributed geographically and consider what it means for a national development agency to work in a place-based way. By taking a coordinated approach to

place, the Arts Council can help to maximise the growth and innovation of major cities; to enhance the quality of life for communities across the country; to build audiences and thus markets for culture; and to ensure places aren't left behind. As a national agency, the Arts Council is also in a strong position to connect places: so that they remain outward-looking; so that local pride flourishes in a context of tolerance and openness; and so that local partners continue to learn from and exchange best practice with each other and with placemakers across Europe and globally.

In the case studies that follow we explore some of the ways in which arts and culture are contributing to the economic and social development of places and provide insight into the Arts Council's key partnerships, investments, activities and challenges in six locations. In the concluding section we reflect on the Arts Council's overall approach to placemaking and identify some future opportunities and challenges.



### 3. Placemaking case studies

Our six case study locations are a sample of different types of place across England, of different sizes, with different governance structures and part of different regional networks. Our case studies are organised thematically, with each case study focused on what we considered to be the key outcome of public investment in culture in that place, and we draw on the best available evidence to demonstrate the impact of specific investments where possible. The nature, size and quality of the evidence base

varies by place, and this is reflected in our case studies: in some places we are able to describe the collective impact of the Arts Council's major NPOs, for example, while in others we focus more on the Arts Council's role in local partnership structures. The table below provides an overview of the case study locations and key outcome areas, along with the total level of investment by the Arts Council in each place in the three-year period 2015/16 to 2017/18.

Case study location	Type of place	Arts Council investment 2015/16-2017/18				Key outcome area
		Regular funding	Strategic funds	Project funding	Total	
<b>Greater Manchester</b>	Urban city-region; combined authority	£41.3m	£40.5m*	£10.4m	<b>£92.2m</b>	Driving the economic growth of a global city
<b>Cornwall</b>	Rural county; unitary authority	£6.4m	£9.0m	£2.6m	<b>£18.1m</b>	Connecting and diversifying the rural economy
<b>Nottingham</b>	Major city; member of Core Cities group	£11.8m	£7.5m	£2.5m	<b>£21.7m</b>	Developing a thriving creative ecology
<b>Norwich</b>	Mid-size city; member of Key Cities group	£9.5m	£2.7m	£1.8m	<b>£14.0m</b>	Defining place and promoting quality of life
<b>Hull</b>	Mid-size city; member of Key Cities group	£5.6m	£21.4m	£1.7m	<b>£28.7m</b>	Boosting local pride and perceptions
<b>Barking and Dagenham</b>	London borough	£0.3m	£0.7m	£0.3m	<b>£1.3m</b>	Building community capacity and confidence

\* A further £78.8m was awarded in development, capital and transition funding to The Factory in Manchester between 2015/16 and 2017/18

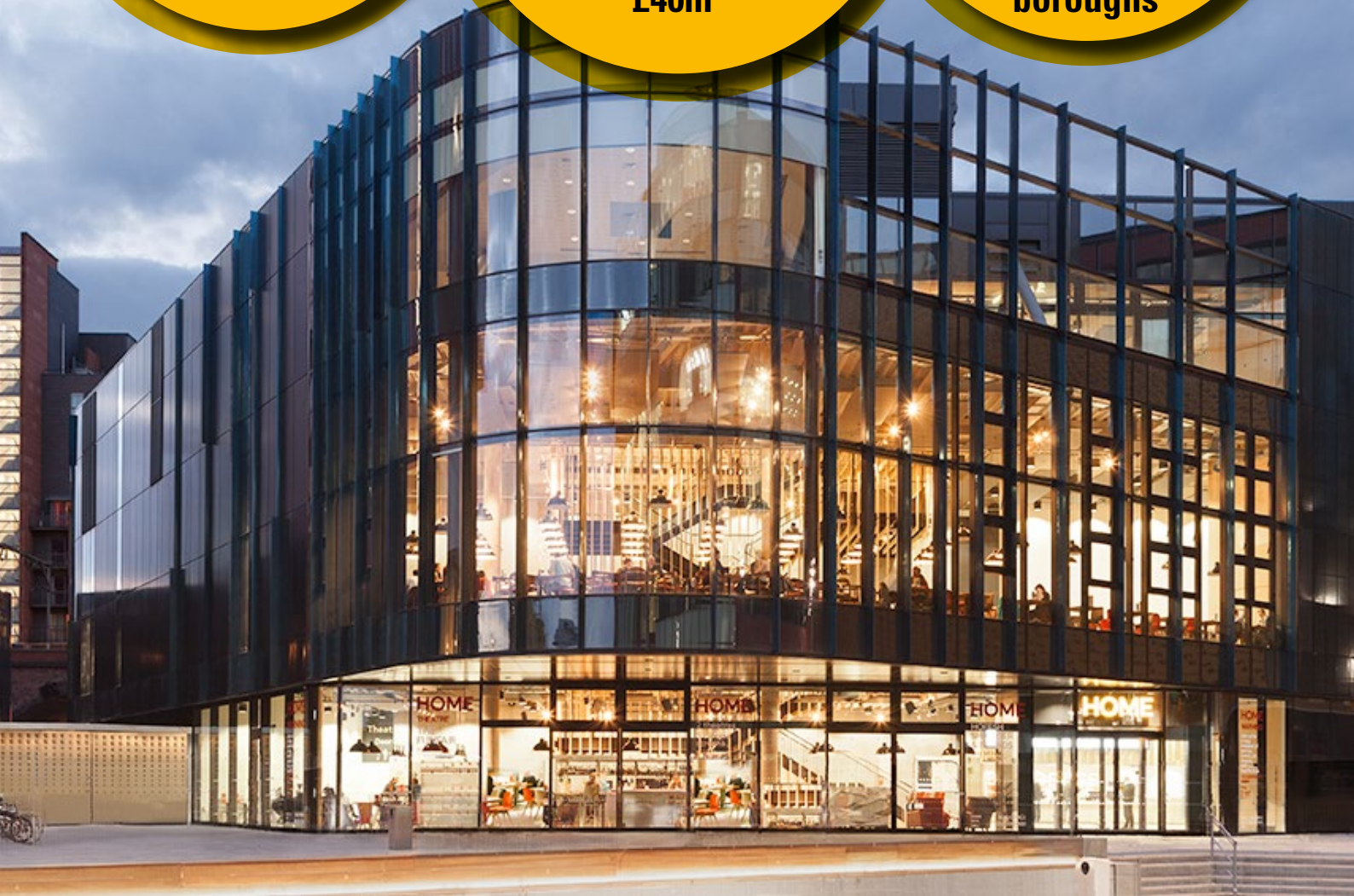
## 3.1 Greater Manchester: Driving the economic growth of a global city

### Key Arts Council impact in Greater Manchester

**Long-term  
co-investor, funding  
9 of 15 major cultural  
institutions in  
Manchester city that  
generate £136m  
GVA**

**Backing  
new initiatives,  
including Manchester  
International Festival  
– a ground-breaking  
global event with an  
economic impact of  
£40m**

**Supporting  
collaborative  
action to grow  
cultural provision and  
participation across  
ten Greater  
Manchester  
boroughs**





Home to 2.8 million people, Greater Manchester is the largest sub-regional economy outside London and the South East. The city of Manchester has undergone radical transformation in the last twenty years, with huge changes in physical infrastructure, a 17% population increase between 2004 and 2014 (New Economy, 2015) and an economy that has doubled in size. After major redevelopment to repair the destruction caused by the IRA bomb in 1996, and a successful Commonwealth Games in 2002, Manchester has reinvented itself as a modern post-industrial city – and there is evidence that the cultural sector has played a significant role in Manchester's renaissance.

Manchester City Council has long seen strategic investment in culture as a driver of economic development. Since 2005 the Council, in partnership with the Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, the city's universities and other key agencies, has led major capital builds in Manchester's cultural sector, revitalising the city's artistic life and creating a world-renowned cultural offer. In 2016 Lonely Planet ranked Manchester – a 'dynamo of British culture' – as the 8th best city in the world to visit.

- Whitworth Art Gallery reopened in 2015 after a £15m redevelopment, attracting 440,000 visitors and receiving 17 awards in its first year, including Visit England Large Visitor Attraction of the Year (Ekosgen, 2016)
- HOME, Manchester's centre for visual art, film and theatre, creative industries and digital innovation, and an Arts Council NPO, opened in 2015 and welcomed over 1 million visitors in its first year (Ekosgen, 2016)
- The Central Library, Royal Northern College of Music and Manchester School of Art have undergone major refurbishments; multi-million pound investments will create new exhibition spaces at the Museum of Science and Industry and Manchester Museum

*"The city leaders in Manchester have understood that the arts are part of civilisation – they don't want Manchester to be just a utilitarian working town. It's about ratcheting up expectations of what the city could be – and remembering that Manchester is a place that was world class"*

**Mike Emmerich, Metro Dynamics**

The Arts Council is a long-term co-investor in Manchester's cultural infrastructure and will invest over £75m in 21 NPOs in the city between 2018 and 2022. The Arts Council was instrumental in the creation of Manchester International Festival (MIF), the world's first festival of original work which takes place every two years at venues across the city. Now revenue funded by Manchester City Council and the Arts Council, the 2017 MIF cycle received £5.5m from the public sector which leveraged a further £5.8m in private sector and earned income (Manchester City Council, 2017a).

MIF has grown in ambition, international reputation and impact since it began in 2007. Between 2015 and 2017 attendances grew by 21% to over 300,000 and the economic impact of MIF increased by 4% to £40.2m. While MIF is a major draw for international tourists, 10% of tickets are made available at reduced cost to Greater Manchester residents on a lower wage; residents account for 66% of all visits to MIF. In 2017 88% of MIF visitors agreed that the Festival helps to make Manchester a world class cultural city (Manchester City Council, 2017a).

From 2020 MIF will have a permanent home at Factory, a £110m arts venue that will enable audiences of up to 7,000 at a time to experience the broadest range of cultural forms. Factory is one of the Arts Council's most significant new NPOs and is expected to support almost 1,500 jobs and add £1.1 billion to Manchester's economy over the next decade.

Beyond MIF, the scale of cultural investment in Manchester has enabled a further 15 of the city's major cultural institutions, 9 of which are NPOs or lottery funded by the Arts Council, to make a significant collective impact:

- 5.5 million visits in 2015/16, up 24% since 2013/14
- Economic impact of £135.9m GVA – including £45.3m GVA generated through additional tourist expenditure attributable to visits to cultural organisations
- 1,662 volunteers contributing 128,337 volunteer hours; the value of cultural volunteering hours increased from £1.4m in 2013/14 to £2.0m in 2014/15
- Engagement with 80% of Manchester's state schools and wide-ranging community groups including mothers and babies, adults with skills or health needs and older people with dementia (Ekosgen, 2016)

While much of the focus on cultural development in Greater Manchester has been on the city of Manchester itself, the cultural and creative sectors are contributing to the prosperity and attractiveness of the wider city region. Between 2010 and 2013 the creative and digital sector was Greater Manchester's fastest growing sector in terms of employment and joint fastest in terms of output growth (Manchester City Council, 2017b); tourism is worth £7.5 billion annually to the Greater Manchester economy, and in 2014 the top five visitor attractions in Greater Manchester were all cultural venues and museums (New Economy, 2015). Looking ahead, the stimulus of the Northern Powerhouse and the introduction of the Combined Authority – with its recently launched Culture and Social Impact Fund – create a new opportunity for cultural organisations across Manchester to collaborate more closely in developing the region's cultural economy – and ensuring that Greater Manchester becomes a thriving place for everyone.



## The challenge of inclusive cultural growth

While the economic and cultural growth of Manchester is a relative success story for the UK, challenges remain both for the city and its cultural sector. Manchester City Council recognises the need to address low levels of physical health and mental wellbeing, rising homelessness, a lack of high quality social housing and significant income inequality (Manchester City Council, 2017c). Manchester's cultural organisations have long understood the need to work together to extend their reach beyond the city centre and to engage audiences other than the educated 'metrocultural' market that may be close to saturation (Walmsley, 2017). As one interviewee pointed out, the challenge for Manchester's publicly funded sector is to fully penetrate the consciousness of a city whose culture is proudly working class and rooted in its twin passions of football and pop music:

*"There's more to do in terms of cultural institutions making themselves relevant to local people...has Manchester decided what it wants in terms of culture?"*

**Mike Emmerich, Metro Dynamics**

The opportunity for the Arts Council in core cities such as Manchester and wider city-regions is to lead the development of a genuinely world class cultural offer that generates the same 'heat and light' as London's cultural scene, whilst ensuring that opportunities are relevant and accessible to local people. This is a big ask in a time of austerity, and requires all the relevant local partners to 'come to the table'. Stronger Together, a £1.5m project funded by the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund through the Great Place scheme, will see all ten Greater Manchester districts work together to increase parity of cultural provision and grow engagement and access across the region. With enough ambition, commitment and cooperation, such projects have the potential to transform the way cities and regions approach inclusive cultural growth.

## 3.2 Cornwall: Connecting and diversifying the rural economy

### Key Arts Council impacts in Cornwall



**Major capital investor in flagship institutions (Tate St Ives, Hall for Cornwall) that drive the visitor economy**

**Funding cultural development to help transform 'forgotten' towns**

**Strategic partner working with local agencies to concentrate investment in areas of opportunity and need**

A rural and coastal county, Cornwall's economy and identity are shaped by its distinctive landscape, its history as the centre of the world's tin mining industry and its rich Celtic culture. Despite pockets of affluence, Cornwall is one of the poorest parts of the UK and one of two 'less developed regions' qualifying for EU Cohesion Policy grants. Challenges include small local economies, often disconnected from each other; a predominance of small and micro sized enterprises, heavily reliant on local markets; low wages and low productivity; and limited opportunities for people to find work where they live (Cornwall and Scilly Isles LEP, 2017).

The cultural and creative industries have a strong role to play in bringing people into the Cornish economy, attracting and retaining young talent and building the Cornish 'brand'. Cornwall's second fastest growing sector is 'arts, entertainment and recreation' (Cornwall Council, 2017) and between 2011 and 2015 the number of creative firms in Cornwall increased by 26%, compared to an 11% increase in the number of firms overall (TBR, 2017). Cornwall's 70+ museums attracted 1.5m visits in 2015, up 22% on the previous year; the 1 million tourists to Cornwall that cite a museum as one of their main reasons for visiting contribute £2 billion to the Cornish economy every year (Cornwall Council, 2017). Creative businesses in Cornwall recognise that the county's cultural assets are integral to the visitor economy, diversifying the offer from 'bucket and spade' tourism to more sustainable year-round opportunities (TBR, 2017).

Since 2010 the Cornwall Cultural Investment Board has fostered synergies between the cultural and creative industries and provided an exemplary partnership model that enables Cornwall Council, the Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP and local cultural leaders to align activities

and investments, exchange knowledge and create efficiencies. The Board is an effective forum for strategic thinking and enables partners to address the challenges of working across a large rural area by developing joint opportunities and concentrating investment town-by-town.

*"The partnership between the Arts Council and the County Council has been really positive and has led to match funding"*

**Ross Williams, Creative Kernow**

Arts Council investments and activities in Cornwall include:

- 8 NPOs receiving £9.4m from 2018 to 2022, including Cornwall Museums Partnership – a unique consortium that credits seven small Cornish towns with national museum status
- Co-investor in major capital projects including the extension of Tate St Ives, the redevelopment of Hall for Cornwall and the creation of Krowji, Cornwall's largest creative hub in ex-mining town Redruth
- *Real Ideas Organisation*, the Arts Council's Bridge Organisation for the South West – currently supporting over 1,000 young people to overcome complex challenges and move into work or long-term learning
- Cornwall 365, a Cultural Destinations project to market culture as part of Cornwall's year-round tourist offer
- Cultivator, a Creative Local Growth Fund scheme to boost skills and growth in Cornwall's creative and cultural economy (£0.5m Arts Council investment leveraging £3m in European Structural and Investment Funds)

## Transforming Cornwall's forgotten towns

Camborne and Redruth is Cornwall's largest urban area and has pockets of intense deprivation. Struggling with the loss of heavy industries, Redruth is seen as a 'forgotten' town with low aspirations and poor educational attainment (Wigmore, 2016); unemployment and domestic violence are significant problems (Mumford, 2014).

Keen to 'shake off the doubts of the 20th century', Redruth Council supports artist-led regeneration projects, festivals and street arts and parades, while cultural investment from external partners including the Arts Council is starting to build energy and momentum in the town. Based in Redruth's old grammar school, Krowji is a creative centre that provides workspaces and services for painters, jewellers, furniture makers, web designers and theatre companies. It offers a creative retail space that attracts visitors and businesses to the area and plays an active role in Redruth town centre by organising events in empty shops and supporting the town's annual festivals. The Arts Council was a partner in the first phase of the Krowji redevelopment along with Redruth Town Council and Cornwall Council, with match funding provided by the European Regional Development Fund.

Four Arts Council NPOs are based at Krowji including umbrella organisation Creative Kernow, which will receive £850,000 from the Arts Council from 2018-22 to run creative programmes across Cornwall such as FEAST – a community arts fund that over 8 years has supported 500 projects in more than 2,100 community organisations to audiences of over 800,000 (Cornwall Council, 2017). An innovative model for distributing funding to dispersed communities, FEAST projects encourage participation and tackle mental health problems, isolation and rural disadvantage; every £1 of Arts Council investment in FEAST leverages a further £10 in local authority funding, sponsorship and earned income.

Following Krowji, Kresen Kernow will be Cornwall's new archive centre based in the historic Redruth Brewery building. With an £11.7m Heritage Lottery Fund award, Kresen Kernow will enable people around the world to learn about Cornwall and drive a heritage-led regeneration that is expected to create over 300 jobs and £40m of investment in the town, with redevelopment around the site to include housing, offices, retail, a hotel and a micro-brewery.

Cultural placemaking projects such as Krowji and Kresen Kernow have the potential to be transformational for towns like Redruth. While the outcomes will take years to evaluate, collaborative investment and development that is in tune with the history and identity of the town are helping Redruth to rediscover its old confidence. Research with residents in 2017 found that local people recognise the potential of Redruth as a 'creative hub – if we can make it interesting, people will come'; 71% of residents felt that one of Redruth's strengths was 'bringing the community together through festivals & events' (PFA Research, 2017).

*"Redruth feels quite different to how it did 15-20 years ago. There's a feeling that Redruth's on the up – people feel proud to be here"*

**Ross Williams, Creative Kernow**

## 3.3 Nottingham: Developing a thriving creative ecology

### Key Arts Council impact in Nottingham

Supporting  
creative and  
digital industries  
across  
Nottinghamshire  
and Derbyshire

Long-  
term investment  
in the visual arts  
sector, creating an  
environment that  
attracts talent and  
encourages  
start-ups

Funding  
cultural  
tourism initiatives,  
generating  
economic impact  
of £32m



Nottingham is one of the UK's ten core cities and the largest urban area in the East Midlands, with a population of over 700,000 across the city and its suburbs (NS 2011 census). Once the centre of the global lace-making industry, with more recent success in bicycles, tobacco, pharmaceuticals and a range of service sectors, Nottingham today has a strong mixed economy with thriving creative, digital and technology sectors and a nationally significant retail and leisure core. The city has a young and rapidly growing population, with over 70,000 students at two major universities.

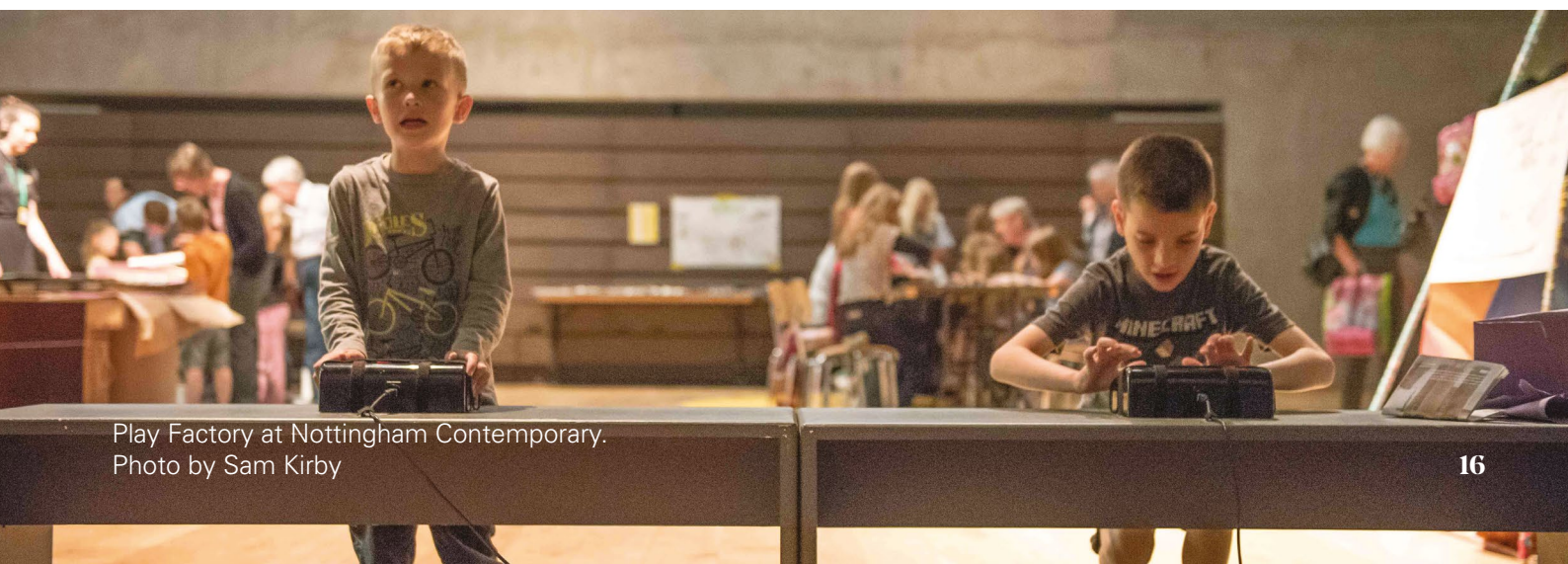
Nottingham is also a vibrant cultural centre in which sport, arts and heritage combine to shape an exciting, forward-looking place. Achieving UNESCO City of Literature status in 2015 was a catalyst for stronger partnership working in Nottingham's cultural sector and today the cultural development of the city is overseen by the Strategic Cultural Partnership, comprising leaders from Nottingham's cultural, education, tourism and local government sectors.

*“The Nottingham Strategic Cultural Partnership is a positive development for the city...an important sector-led platform”*

**Barbara Matthews,  
Nottingham Trent University (NTU)**

Cultural investment in Nottingham focuses on infrastructure and organisational development. Nottingham's Creative Quarter, a business district of shops, cafes, arts and entertainment, won a European Enterprise Promotion Award in 2015. The Arts Council will invest £22.8m in 14 NPOs in Nottingham between 2018 and 2022, supporting the ongoing development of new institutions such as Nottingham Contemporary and New Art Exchange, the UK's largest gallery dedicated to culturally diverse contemporary visual arts, and enabling leadership roles for established organisations such as Nottingham Playhouse and Nottingham City Museums and Galleries.

A key focus for the Arts Council in Nottingham has been the development of a sustainable and maturing visual arts ecology. In partnership with the City Council, Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham, Arts Council capital and NPO funding has helped to establish and connect world-class city centre venues (Nottingham Contemporary) with contemporary art in diverse and less affluent communities (New Art Exchange) and workspaces for artists that revitalise ex-industrial sites (Backlit, Primary). Arts Council grant funding supports individual artists to engage with the city's infrastructure, developing studio expertise, collaborating with major institutions, showing their work commercially and crossing over with Nottingham's 2,000+ creative and digital businesses. The effect is a creative environment that attracts and retains talent, particularly among the student body, and offers opportunities for creative businesses to start and scale.



Play Factory at Nottingham Contemporary.  
Photo by Sam Kirby



## Boosting the visitor economy

Nottingham is increasingly recognised as a tourist destination. The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire visitor economy has experienced six consecutive years of growth and tourism contributes an estimated £466m to Nottingham's economy. In 2015, ten of the city's major cultural attractions generated 1.9m visitors, a sizable proportion of the 10.7m visitors to the city that year (Nottingham City Council, 2017).

The Arts Council actively invests in the development of cultural tourism in Nottinghamshire and neighbouring Derbyshire and in 2014 awarded a Cultural Destinations grant of £350,000 to the Grand Tour, a programme of contemporary arts exhibitions and events in historic venues across the two counties. Delivered by a consortium including Nottingham Contemporary, Derby Museums, the Harley Gallery, Chatsworth and the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Destination Management Organisations, and supported by the D2N2 LEP, the Grand Tour included two seasons of exhibitions with specially designed itineraries and marketing strategies to maximise visitors and overnight stays. There were 461,818 visitors to Grand Tour events in season 1, of which 38% said the Grand Tour was the main reason for their visit; these visitors generated a total expenditure in the local economy of £7.6m. Visitor numbers in season 2 rose to 1.2m and the total economic impact of the programme was estimated at £32.2m (SQW, 2017).

A further award of £150,000 will support a third season of the Grand Tour in 2018, promoting the cultural offer of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire as a 'total concept' that combines industrial heritage, country houses, art, museums and landscapes such as Sherwood Forest. The Arts Council's total investment of £0.5m has established connections between the cultural and tourism sectors in the East Midlands that otherwise would not have been made and provided a cost-effective way for participating venues to raise their collective profile (NGI Solutions, n.d.).

## The need for a 'whole place' approach

Culture plays a significant role in Nottingham's economy and in the lives of local residents. The city's cultural infrastructure, heritage assets and partnerships, particularly a strong commitment to culture by the higher education sector, provide a solid foundation on which to build. The Arts Council is seen as a helpful broker and enabler in Nottingham's most significant cultural developments, providing direct finance, leveraging funding and using its judgement to support organisational business planning that aligns commercial viability with audience engagement and artistic development.

*"Arts Council support is not just financial investment, it's advocacy and leadership."*

### Barbara Matthews, NTU

Partners need to continue to develop a 'whole place' approach to cultural development and investment in Nottingham – but this will be challenging given that the city is under-bounded, with half of the population living in suburban districts outside the city boundaries. This makes it more difficult to develop a coordinated strategic approach across Greater Nottingham in which the city and its suburbs (which mostly lie in neighbouring District Councils) can work together with shared purpose. The D2N2 LEP has identified the creative and digital industries as a key growth sector, creating a context in which the Arts Council could bring districts together and broker a conurbation-wide approach to culture. The Big House, a £5m programme part-funded by European Regional Development Fund with match funding from the Arts Council's Creative Local Growth Fund, will offer grants, coaching and peer-to-peer learning to the region's creative and digital businesses, and represents an encouraging step towards more joined-up provision and support.

## 3.4 Norwich: Defining place and promoting quality of life

### Key Arts Council impact in Norwich

**Funding and developing arts and culture to help create a vibrant, distinctive place to live, work and visit**

**Strong partner, advocate and convenor, enabling cultural organisations to be central to the development of the city**

**Supporting a collaborative programme to develop Norfolk and Suffolk's tourism offer**

Norwich is a young and expanding city in the county town of Norfolk. Historically a major manufacturing base, with a large shoemaking industry, Norwich transitioned in the 1980s and 1990s to a service-based economy and today is an important hub in the East of England for retail, tourism, culture and sport; Norwich is ranked 6th in the UK for day visits (New Anglia Cultural Board, 2016).

The arts are highly visible in Norwich and contribute to the vitality of the city centre and variety and quality of life in the wider region. Literature is part of the history and identity of Norwich and the city has a large independent publishing sector relative to its size. The University of East Anglia (UEA) is a global centre for creative writing; the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library was the busiest library in the country for six consecutive years to 2011/12; and in 2012 Norwich became England's first UNESCO City of Literature.

From 2018-22 the Arts Council will invest £14.9m in 7 NPOs in Norwich including

- Writers' Centre Norwich, which launched in 2003 as a collaboration between the Arts Council, UEA, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council and transformed from a small-scale experiment to a leading literature development agency; in 2018 it will become the National Centre for Writing based at medieval site Dragon Hall, with a 120-seat cultural venue, a high-tech education centre for young people

and community spaces for writers and translators

- Norfolk and Norwich Festival, East of England's flagship summer arts festival, which reached audiences of over 57,000 in 2016 and works year-round with communities across the region to create opportunities to experience and participate in the arts
- Norfolk Museums Service, which runs ten museums and a study centre across the county and generated 400,000 visits in 2016/17 and 50,000 visits by school children, up 8% on the previous year (Norwich Museums Service, 2017). As well as core NPO funding, the Arts Council has awarded Norfolk Museums Service £1.1m over three years to deliver SHARE Museums East, a programme of training and development for museums across the East of England

The Arts Council's sustained investment and support are enabling Norwich's key cultural institutions to collaborate to grow their audiences and become important strategic partners in the development of the city.

*"The Arts Council has stood by and supported organisations to refresh and reform"*

**Nikki Rotsos, Norwich City Council**



Writers' Centre Norwich:  
BCLT Summer School 2015.  
Photo: Anita Staff

## Strong cross-sector partnerships

Cultural development in Norwich is characterised by a whole-city approach and effective partnership working between the Arts Council, local government, higher education, tourism and business. The size of the city has made it straightforward for partners to develop a shared vision for culture and to maintain an open dialogue about progress and challenges. Norwich City Council has retained its commitment to culture despite budget cuts, and credits the Arts Council as a strong partner and advocate. The city's higher education sector makes a significant contribution to creative life in Norwich, from UEA's award-winning creative writing programme to Ideas Factory, the art, design and media consultancy at Norwich University of the Arts and the new £5.7m creative arts building at City College Norwich. Our interviewee explained that culture has become a core strength of Norwich and central to the city's identity and ways of working.

*"We all see culture as something which underpins what the city does".*

**Nikki Rotsos, Norwich City Council**

## A creative hub for the wider region

The New Anglia LEP recognises the importance of culture and creativity to the wider Norfolk and Suffolk region. Digital, creative and IT is one of the LEP's 'high impact' sectors and culture is estimated to be worth £83.6m to the regional economy, employing 5,800 people in over 1,000 businesses (New Anglia Cultural Board, 2016). The Cultural Board is the LEP's sector advisory group on culture, supported by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, and enables Norwich's cultural leaders to work with peers from across the region on a shared strategy for growth. In 2015 Arts Council Grants for the Arts funding of £150,000, matched by the LEP, led to the launch of Look Sideways: East, a tourism campaign that brings together the region's destination management organisations and cultural businesses and events to create a year-round calendar of events and bespoke visitor packages to attract tourists to the East of England. The programme has secured a further £300,000 from the Arts Council's Cultural Destinations fund, again matched by the LEP, to develop the region's cultural visitor economy over the long-term. The Arts Council is investing further in the region with £0.5m from the Creative Local Growth Fund to help develop StartEast, a finance and training programme to support the development of creative businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk, with mentoring and talent development provided by the region's NPOs and key cultural institutions.

Norwich City Council is now leading the development of a 2040 vision for the city and there are opportunities for the cultural sector to strengthen its role in promoting Norwich as an interesting and distinctive place to live and visit and helping the vitality of the city centre spread to the outer edges of Norwich and the wider region. The Arts Council will continue to be a key partner – brokering relationships, making strategic use of different forms of investment and demanding excellence from its long-standing portfolio of funded organisations.

## 3.5 Hull: Boosting local pride and perceptions

### Key Arts Council impact in Hull



**Long-term investment in cultural infrastructure that enabled a successful UK City of Culture bid**

**Partnering with the local authority to develop the derelict Fruit Market area into a thriving cultural quarter**

**Encouraging cultural organisations to develop community activities and grow audiences in less affluent parts of the city**

Hull has become an exemplar city for culture-led regeneration since its successful bid in late 2013 to become UK City of Culture 2017. A mid-size city in Yorkshire, Hull's economy was built on trading and seafaring. While Hull is still a busy port today, the city has struggled with the decline in fishing and loss of heavy industry. Unemployment is falling but remains high relative to the national average, particularly for 16-24 year olds, and there are areas of significant deprivation across the city. Hull City Council and its strategic partners, including the University of Hull, see arts and culture as a vital ingredient if the city is to reverse its economic decline and enhance the life chances of its citizens.

The Arts Council has been working closely with Hull City Council for several years, helping to build capacity in the local cultural sector and supporting the city to get to the stage where it could bid to be UK City of Culture. The Arts Council has invested in a major upscaling of programming and audience development at key NPOs in Hull including Hull Truck Theatre and Freedom Festival.

The Arts Council was instrumental in the development of the Fruit Market area of Humber Street which in 2008 was near derelict and cleared for redevelopment. When the redevelopment fell through, the Arts Council worked with the local authority to encourage organisations to apply for project grants and the Arts Council made small investments in a jewellery gallery, a museum of club culture and a ceramics workshop. Private investment followed and ten years later the Fruit Market is a thriving and popular cultural quarter that was central to Hull's UK City of Culture bid. Along with other national agencies such as Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and the BBC, the Arts Council's focus on Hull intensified in the years leading up to 2017: total Arts Council funding for Hull was £21.0m in 2016/17 compared with £5.0m in 14/15 and £4.3m in 12/13.

Hull's year as UK City of Culture successfully combined:

- An ambitious artistic programme with highlights including Blade, Nayan Kulkarni's 75m artwork that was made at the local Siemens factory and installed in the main city square overnight; the opening of Humber Street Gallery, a new space for contemporary visual arts; and a stunning upturn in visitor numbers at the refurbished Ferens Gallery, host for the 2017 Turner Prize
- Extensive community engagement that took activity well beyond the centre so that Hull 2017 felt 'owned' by the city
- A large-scale volunteer programme in which over 2,400 volunteers contributed 337,000 hours of volunteering at a financial value of £5.4m

The preliminary evaluation of Hull UK City of Culture 2017 (University of Hull, 2018) provides an initial overview of impact across the year. For example, there were 5.3 million audience visits in 2017 across over 2,800 events, with just over half of attenders from Hull postcodes; 9 out of 10 residents took part in Hull UK City of Culture activities; with two out of three residents improving their knowledge of the city's culture and history. The projected value of tourism in 2017 is on track to contribute more than £300 million to Hull's economy. Nearly 800 new jobs have been created in the visitor economy and cultural sector in Hull since 2013, a direct result of investments totalling over £219 million, which are fully or partly attributable to Hull's UK City of Culture status. Irwin Mitchell's UK Powerhouse Report Winter 2017 described Hull as a 'rising star' in terms of GVA growth, crediting UK City of Culture for drawing visitors to the city, boosting hotel occupancy and increasing consumer spending (Cebr, 2018).

*“2017 was a great year...it put a spring in people’s step, across the whole city. Everyone felt better about themselves that year”*

**Peter McGurn, Goodwin Trust**

### **Building from a low base**

The question for Hull now is how to embed a culture-led approach to the development of the city beyond the spotlight of a UK City of Culture year. This may not be straightforward: Hull remains a poor city; the economic environment is challenging; and Hull’s cultural organisations are only just beginning to develop the capacity and partnerships that will be required for the sector to create lasting benefits for people across the city. Historically, arts participation levels in Hull have been relatively low. The surge of enthusiasm for arts and culture that was seen in the city in 2017 needs to be nurtured if *demand* for cultural experiences

is to grow alongside the *supply* of cultural infrastructure.

The Goodwin Trust in Hull offers an encouraging example of how arts and cultural involvement can be developed in communities that do not typically engage with ‘formal’ culture. Founded in 1994 by residents on Hull’s Thornton Estate, the Goodwin Trust is a social enterprise that employs 200 people and runs services to improve quality of life for communities across Hull. The Goodwin Trust’s flagship arts programme Estate of the Nation, part funded by the Arts Council and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, aimed to enable all 5,000 residents of the Thornton Estate to experience the arts, with activities including a community radio station, an artist in residence programme and a large-scale light installation as part of the UK City of Culture year.

The Goodwin Trust leads Back to Ours, Hull’s Creative People and Places programme and the Arts Council’s largest investment (£2.4m) in the city from 2017-20. Back to Ours will engage



local people as audiences, participants, creators and commissioners and bring the arts to life in homes, workplaces, public spaces and health and education settings. The Goodwin Trust has also been awarded just under £300,000 from the Arts Council's Creative Local Growth Fund to run Creative ENRG, a two-year programme providing business support to creative start-ups across Hull and East Yorkshire, targeting areas of deprivation and under-represented groups.

*"Hull's a post-industrial northern city. Life is still hard for a lot of people because it's poor. Arts and culture help people feel better about the place they live in – like there's more to life than an endless struggle."*

**Peter McGurn, Goodwin Trust**

Organisations in Hull have found that arts and culture can support the wellbeing and resilience of communities – but only if opportunities are introduced in a gradual way, by practitioners that relate to and are trusted by local people. Middle Child theatre company, which recently became an Arts Council NPO receiving £600,000 from 2018-22, is based in the Goodwin Trust's youth centre and develops work in partnership with residents of the Thornton Estate, including drama sessions for children and free performances for Goodwin Trust clients.

*"Estates like ours are very carefully balanced – economically, socially, politically – arts and culture have a role to play in making these places more stable"*

**Peter McGurn, Goodwin Trust**

## **Excellence in infrastructure and engagement**

The Arts Council needs to adopt a balanced approach in cities like Hull, strengthening anchor cultural institutions in the centre whilst supporting community-based programmes over the long-term and ensuring that its funded organisations continue to extend their reach beyond mainstream audiences. The Goodwin Trust is working with Arts Council NPO Opera North to create an opera on the Thornton Estate, beginning by introducing opera to the community in 'half hour slices'.

*"The Arts Council puts pressure on its NPOs to work with communities... that's a good way for the Arts Council to behave."*

**Peter McGurn, Goodwin Trust**

By responding to the needs and resources of local partners and communities, and making deft use of its existing assets and investments, the Arts Council can help Hull to build on the joy and learning of the UK City of Culture year and ensure that culture becomes core to the city's identity and purpose.



## 3.6 Barking & Dagenham: Building community confidence and capacity

### Key Arts Council impacts in Barking and Dagenham

**Supporting residents to make decisions about arts programming; empowering people to take part in the life of the borough**

**Primary funder of Creative Barking and Dagenham – a six-year programme to enable local people to experience the arts**

**Building confidence, developing skills and creating employment opportunities**



Barking and Dagenham is one of London's most rapidly growing boroughs, with a young and diverse population. For many years life in the borough revolved around its two major employers, Ford and pharmaceutical company Sanofi, which provided local communities with a social life and sense of identity as well as jobs. The decline of traditional industries has had a profound impact on Barking and Dagenham, altering the physical environment, creating economic fragility and leaving a white working class community without a clear sense of status or security (Barking and Dagenham Independent Growth Commission, 2016).

*“The whole nature of the borough's changed – it's a lot younger – a lot of people feel isolated – it's not the place it used to be. It's quite a divided borough”*

**Melissa Severn, Creative Barking and Dagenham Cultural Connector**

At the same time, Barking and Dagenham is a growth point for London. With large amounts of land, cheap housing and skilled and unskilled labour, the borough has a major role to play in accommodating London's growing population and is a strategic focus for development. As a recent Growth Commission report explained, the principal challenge for Barking and Dagenham Council is to prepare the borough for the scale and pace of change to come, ensuring that growth benefits all communities – which will only be possible if residents are brought together to develop a shared understanding of what it means to live in Barking and Dagenham and how the area might be different in the future. Arts and culture have a strong role to play here in creating opportunities for people to participate together; providing a forum for exploring concerns and hearing conflicting voices; and promoting a positive vision of the borough (Barking and Dagenham Independent Growth Commission, 2016).

Barking and Dagenham has a history of pioneering community arts activity and key organisations today include Arts Council NPO Studio 3 Arts, Boathouse Studios and Gallery, Green Shoes Arts, which develops arts projects with people experiencing social deprivation and health issues, and Icehouse Court, a new studio space run by Arts Council NPO Bow Arts. Barking and Dagenham Library Service has recently been awarded Arts Council NPO funding to run Pen to Print, a programme comprising intensive skills development for writers, author events, an annual reading festival and creative writing workshops and competitions. The cultural offer is set to expand further, with plans for a new base for the film industry in Dagenham and a live music venue and independent cinema in Barking Town Centre.

The Arts Council has been working in an intensive way in the borough since 2011 and has a strong partnership with Barking and Dagenham Council, based on a shared ambition to promote innovation, nurture talent and support communities to produce, share and learn about culture on their own terms. The Arts Council's most significant investment in the borough is Creative Barking and Dagenham (CBD), a six-year arts programme funded in two phases by Creative People and Places with a total grant of £1.6m. CBD is run by a consortium including Studio 3 Arts, Barking and Dagenham Council, Barking and Dagenham CVS and Barking Enterprise – a partnership that enables key local agencies to work together more strategically. CBD commissions high quality, locally owned arts projects across Barking and Dagenham and is underpinned by a network of Cultural Connectors, a group of over 150 local residents who act as champions, volunteers and decision-makers.

Key CBD activities include:

- Landmark commissions such as WELL, a performance exploring the history of medicine in the disused Sanofi factory, developed by professional artists and local people who once worked at the plant
- GLOW – Barking and Dagenham’s first winter lights festival which sold out to over 2,000 visitors in 2017
- A partnership with the Royal Opera House offering trips for Barking and Dagenham residents to see ballet and opera at low cost
- New adult art schools and support for local people to develop creative business and event ideas

CBD is transforming the profile of arts audiences in Barking and Dagenham. In the first year of the second phase there were over 17,500 engagements with CBD activities and 65% of these were by groups that are less affluent and typically have little engagement with more formal forms of arts and culture (Ball, 2017).

*“GLOW festival – that was amazing – loads of people went to it. Often you go to things in Barking & Dagenham and you’re the only one there – Glow was a complete sell-out, anyone and everyone was there. It creates that sense of identity”*

**Melissa Severn, Creative Barking and Dagenham Cultural Connector**

## Giving power to local people

Cultural Connectors are the heart of CBD and a key mechanism for enabling local people to make decisions and take responsibility for the arts and cultural activities that happen in their area. In the first phase of the programme, arts commissioning was decided by panels where at least 60% of the voting power was held by local residents; the second phase includes a partnerships fund where partner organisations pitch ideas for cultural activity in the borough, bringing in at least 50% match funding, and Cultural Connectors decide which activities to support. Cultural Connectors also help to arrange trips, curate and produce festivals and perform and steward at events.

The Cultural Connectors network is an opportunity for local residents to develop new skills – our interviewee told us that her experience had enabled her to apply for a new job in a different field. She also felt more at home in the borough:

*“The other thing I’ve got out of it is that I feel very rooted here now. It’s a lovely feeling – we’ve got so many friends here and a lot of that is from Creative Barking and Dagenham”*

**Melissa Severn, Creative Barking and Dagenham Cultural Connector**

The process of making decisions about art creates a forum for local people to voice opinions and make collective decisions about the activities that will most benefit the borough. Whilst relatively small in scale, CBD is an example of the type of local democracy that will help Barking and Dagenham communities to embrace the changes to come over the next decade.

*“Too often it feels like things are done to boroughs like this. Because it’s deprived, they assume people are stupid and don’t know anything about art. We get to choose and we make it happen – no-one is doing it for us. It gives you influence”*

**Melissa Severn, Creative Barking and Dagenham Cultural Connector**

### **Embedding the CBD approach**

The Arts Council is now helping to secure the legacy of Creative People and Places projects. In Barking and Dagenham, this is partly about harnessing the excitement generated by CBD to date, extending the programme’s reach to more people in the borough and ensuring that volunteering and decision-

making responsibilities don’t rest with the same group of enthusiasts. As a recent CBD evaluation pointed out, it is also about creating mechanisms for local people to be involved in arts commissioning on an ongoing basis and developing a borough-wide approach to income generation for cultural programming, including strategic partnerships with new private sector companies establishing themselves in the area (Ball, 2017). Barking and Dagenham Council’s cultural strategy for 2017-22 makes a commitment to ‘community inspired’ culture and acknowledges the importance of the Cultural Connectors and organisations such as Studio 3 Arts in developing democratic approaches for producing and experiencing culture. CBD offers a promising example of how the Creative People and Places philosophy can be ‘mainstreamed’ at local level.



“Merchant of Venice by Studio 3 Arts” by Mark Sepple.  
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## 4. Reflections on the Arts Council's impact in places

The Arts Council is clearly a major and long-term contributor to the cultural dynamism of places across England. In many cases it is the primary investor – e.g. for organisational development, which in turn enables the cultural sector to play an active role in the social and civic life of a place. The Arts Council has also been a key advocate of a coordinated approach to arts and cultural investment in places – working hard to leverage investment from the LEPs and supporting local authorities to continue investment in culture as cuts deepen. To say the Arts Council has facilitated the culture-led transformation and renaissance of many places across the UK, and in turn generated a set of economic, social and civic spillovers, is not an overstatement.

Our case studies are partial descriptions of places and only begin to explore the ways in which arts and culture shape places and the role of culture as a placemaking tool. However we are able to make some broad observations about the Arts Council's approach to this important agenda.

### Placemaking is an (implicit) Arts Council strength

Historically the Arts Council's investments were more straightforwardly artform, organisation or artist-led. Over time, the Arts Council has recognised that cultural practitioners and organisations tend to thrive in creative communities or 'ecosystems' – and that different places have varying levels of infrastructure, capacity and audience participation. Place-based factors have become key drivers of the Arts Council's investment decisions. This is in part a pragmatic solution: other funding sources (e.g. via the LEPs and local authorities) are often geographically bounded, requiring a place-

based approach to co-investment. But it is also a strategic innovation: arts and culture make sense in context; arts and culture are expressive of our identities, which relate to our multiple senses of place; and investment in arts and culture is therefore a profoundly place-based and thus placemaking endeavour. This is why the Arts Council has aligned its investment and partnership considerations closer to specific places, and our case studies indicate that this has helped the cultural sector to grow, innovate and collaborate – and increase its contribution to civic engagement, regeneration and the visitor economy.

### A variety of intervention models

Our case studies highlight some key features of the Arts Council's placemaking approach:

- Visioning and cultural planning: tailoring a strategic approach to arts and culture in different types of place; setting agendas, commissioning research
- Catalyst, broker and advocate: investing (capacity, expertise and finance) in partnership structures to enable cultural organisations to play an active role in placemaking, particularly with local authorities and LEPs
- Enabler: investing in cultural infrastructure, organisational development and engagement using a judicious mix of NPO, project and strategic funding
- National perspective: combining local knowledge with a national overview to encourage collaborations, share practice and challenge parochial thinking

The case studies also show that the Arts Council's role varies by place – as indeed it should. Perhaps the most obvious difference is that in more 'mature' cultural ecosystems (Greater Manchester, Nottingham), the Arts Council is one of a large number of agencies involved in cultural development and is likely to play a more adaptive and supportive role, whereas in 'fledgling' cultural ecosystems (Hull, Barking and Dagenham) there is space for the Arts Council to take a leadership position and more directly influence local cultural priorities and plans. A strong regional structure enables the Arts Council to be highly sensitive to place.

## Opportunities and challenges

Our research has identified a number of themes for the Arts Council and its partners to consider as they develop their placemaking roles:

Understanding potential and need – part of the Arts Council's place-based work involves identifying and targeting places where most or all of the ingredients that enable successful cultural placemaking are present: an active strategic partnership; cultural leaders and champions; key structures and processes (such as a local cultural strategy or framework) and a degree of energy and ambition. In these places the Arts Council is able to deploy its mix of funding and convening tools and make small interventions that have big impacts. At the same time, Creative People and Places has shown that there is an opportunity for the Arts Council to be more directive in shaping partnerships and programming in places of low cultural provision. The Arts Council's next ten-year strategy can set out a rationale for the Arts Council's strategic role in different types of place, and provide a framework to help the Arts Council and its local partners to identify shared priorities.

Investment decline – public sector investment via local authorities has reduced dramatically and is likely to decline further. The Arts Council will need to continue its pragmatic approach of working with local authorities that are demonstrating a commitment to investment in arts and culture, rather than those which have reduced investment and support. This 'meet us half way' principle has been important in securing continued commitment to culture in many places. With lottery receipts also in decline, and EU funds set to end, the Arts Council and partners will need to work hard to leverage other investment sources via e.g. the private sector and planning gain.

The shifting landscape of place – in some places, devolution is bringing combined authorities which enable sub-regional or city-region approaches; in other places, administrative boundaries are too tightly drawn, making pan-conurbation partnership more difficult; in rural areas, the lack of an urban core makes a place-based approach more complex. The Arts Council will need to develop a sophisticated understanding of the difference between an administratively defined place and a culturally defined place if they are to develop even more progressive approaches to placemaking.

This short paper has described some of the ways the Arts Council is supporting culture in placemaking. But it also signals the need for a more extensive research project which is able to develop a detailed understanding of the opportunities for a place-based approach at such an uncertain time for investment and partnership. A collaborative research programme on culture-led placemaking would be a welcome intervention that would help the Arts Council and partners to develop more structured and evidence-based approaches.

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Tom Fleming is a leading international expert on cultural policy and the creative economy. As director of Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy, he leads an interdisciplinary team which undertakes research and develops strategy and policy for culture and the creative economy – for national governments, local authorities and institutions. Much of his work explores the role of culture in place-making and growth, with multiple place-based cultural strategies, evaluations and investment plans undertaken.

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