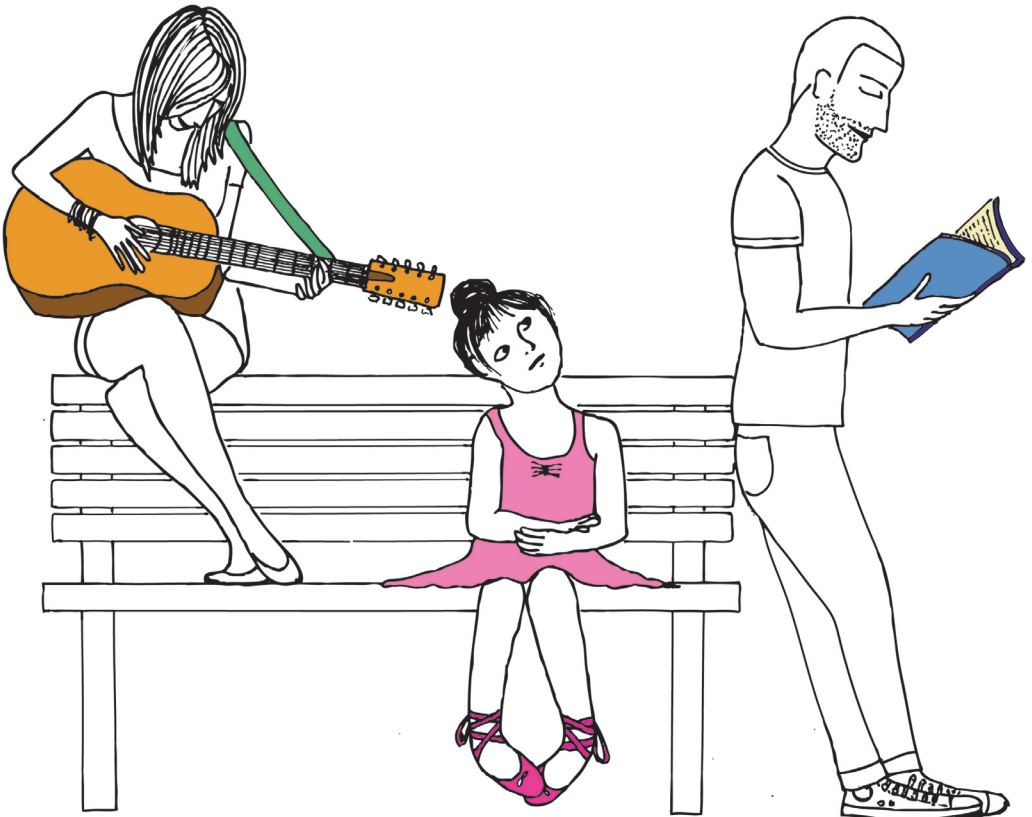


# ON WITH THE SHOW

## SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTS & CULTURE

Dr Claire Mansfield



New Local Government Network (NLGN) is an independent think tank that seeks to transform public services, revitalise local political leadership and empower local communities. NLGN is publishing this report as part of its programme of research and innovative policy projects, which we hope will be of use to policy makers and practitioners. The views expressed are, however, those of the author and not necessarily those of NLGN.

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Published by NLGN

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many organisations and individuals that have given their time and insight to this research through our survey, interviews and case studies. In particular, I thank all of those that took the time to speak to us in Darlington Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Erewash Borough Council, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Northamptonshire County Council, Rother District Council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, St Albans District Council, Wakefield Council, Westminster City Council. In addition, my thanks go to the members of our Advisory Board for their help, guidance and advice.

My colleagues at NLGN have also contributed greatly to this work, and I thank Simon Parker, Laura Wilkes, Vivek Bhardwaj, Reema Patel, Emma Burnell, Rebecca Creamer, Maia Beresford, Elizabeth Hosier, Lizzie Richardson, Chloe Findlay, Martin McKane, Theo Barry-Born and Nina Delany.

And of course I would like to thank Arts Council England, particularly Paul Bristow, for making this report possible.

Any mistakes or omissions are, of course, my own.

**Dr Claire Mansfield**

NLGN

# FOREWORD

**Local government remains the Arts Council's most important strategic and delivery partner. Up and down the country, it is the commitment of local councils to support a healthy cultural infrastructure that is vital to our vision of great art, museums and libraries. I know that councillors understand the value that culture brings – whether in terms of strengthening local identity and pride, boosting the local economy and providing jobs, or in making people's lives better by helping improve their health and wellbeing.**

However, we recognise that councils face major challenges in sustaining their support. There has been financial pressure in the last few years, and further difficult decisions lie ahead. The Arts Council wants to work with local government to overcome these challenges. Without local government's commitment, there is no great art and culture for everyone. We recently announced our investment across England during 2015 to 2018 and we want to talk to local government about how we and they can work together over this period.

But this will not be enough. Local government has a history of entrepreneurialism and innovation that I think will be at the heart of the effort to sustain our cultural sector. Already councils are looking at what new partnerships can bring, new delivery models, and different ways of engaging communities.

This report is timely. As local councils grapple with the challenge of how to build on their commitment to culture in a time of declining resources, it sets out examples from different places and some different types of new thinking in local government. I hope that it helps local authorities across the country think about what they can do to ensure that their communities can continue to benefit from great art and culture.

**Alan Davey**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Local government is fundamental to the health of the arts and culture sector in England. The story of local government's investment and leadership in arts and culture has been a hugely successful one. The economic, cultural and social benefits that have resulted are clear to see in cities such as Liverpool, Bristol and Newcastle and Gateshead, but also in a host of smaller towns and in rural areas across the country. However, in recent years, local authorities have seen their budgets cut drastically and, in response, many have made proportionately higher cuts to their direct cultural provision and to their funding of independent arts and cultural organisations, than to other services. Local authority funding for the arts and culture has fallen by 19 per cent in the last 3 years.<sup>1</sup> This research investigates the extent to which local authorities prioritise and value the arts and culture and also, how councils can continue to support a resilient and flourishing cultural scene in their localities.

As public investment in arts and culture has declined in recent years the impact is felt in those parts of the arts and cultural sector that rely upon local government support. Some changes are obvious, a local museum reducing its opening hours, or a local theatre having more dark nights and fewer locally produced shows. Other changes such as reduced social capital from a shared experience, or a young person unable to develop, or even discover, their talent are less easily quantifiable. Local authorities need to find ways to sustain vital local cultural services, such as libraries, and opportunities to engage with the arts and museums to ensure that local place identities, commonalities, access to information, lifelong learning opportunities and creativity survive.

The story need not be a simple one of decline however; even with significantly reduced budgets many local authorities recognise that

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<sup>1</sup> The National Campaign for the Arts, (2013), *Arts Index - A measure of the vitality of Arts and Culture in England*, [online], <http://static.guim.co.uk/ni/1386244722890/The-NCA-Arts-Index-2013-ebo.pdf>

there is a cost to reducing support for culture. Indeed, the impact upon long-term quality of life may, eventually, lead to even more short-term immediate demands. Local authorities need to continue, and as this report demonstrates, are continuing, to support the arts and culture in whatever way they can. Many of the ways to achieve this are already being taken forward by local authorities.

This report is organised into two sections. The first section will explore the extent to which local government prioritises and values the arts and culture. The second section will look at alternative models of support that are available to local authorities. It will particularly look at the experiences of eight case study areas and will look at differing models of financial and organisational support that are available, while also looking at the different ways councils can work with partners and volunteers in their area.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Survey respondents reported that both local government as a whole and specific authorities value the arts and culture. There is a wide variation in support by area, however. All too often continued support for the arts and culture in an area is reliant on a particular member having an interest in the arts and culture.
- Economic development is the key reason for funding for all authority types, but it is far more important for county councils than for any other authority type. County councils are far less likely to fund the arts and culture for community cohesion than other types of authorities. Community cohesion was most important to district councils.
- In general most local authorities felt that the arts and culture were important to their residents but not essential.
- Local authorities are increasingly looking at alternative models of supporting the arts and culture. Nearly 70 per cent of survey respondents stated that they had implemented or considered implementing stand-alone trusts or community interest companies and 60.7 per cent stated that they had implemented or considered implementing moving from a grant aid to commissioner/provider relationship.

The report includes a set of key strategic recommendations for local authorities to reflect on when considering their future support that councils can give the arts and culture. These include:

- Central and local government should consider how the economic potential of the arts and culture can be recognised in the growth deal process. Culture and creative industries should be specifically referenced as a potential engine for growth and as a useful contributor to the skills development agenda. Resources that are devolved to support economic growth should be devolved in such a way as to enable culture to contribute economically alongside other sectors.
- Local authorities should create a clear vision for the role the arts and culture can play in the economic and social development of their area and embed this within their corporate strategy. This will enable local authorities to use their role as a local leader to bring together other potential partners and investors around their vision and strategy.
- Local authorities that are reviewing funding of the arts and culture should consider all alternative models of delivery as detailed in this report.

The picture that emerges is one where local authorities themselves are adopting innovative new delivery models, are engaging with the cultural sector and with local communities in new and effective ways. This report confirms that local government is well placed to lead the developments necessary to ensure that arts, museums, and libraries continue to play their valuable role in our local and national life.



## 2 VALUING LOCAL ARTS AND CULTURE

**During times of economic prosperity many local authorities invested widely in the arts and culture, and the economic, cultural and social benefits that this brought were clear to see in places like Liverpool and Gateshead. However, in recent years, both Arts Council England and local authorities have seen their budgets cut. As a non-statutory service, the budget for arts and culture has been particularly affected.**

Local government funding for the arts and culture has fallen by 19 per cent in the last three years.<sup>2</sup> Many arts and cultural organisations – particularly smaller local organisations – are struggling to survive. These, sometimes disproportionate, reductions in funding for the arts and culture by local authorities have called into question the commitment of local government members and officers to the arts and culture. However, it is also acknowledged that ‘local government has been the unsung hero of arts and culture funding in the UK for many decades, providing support for cultural activities in local communities long before a national arts council was established’.<sup>3</sup> As austerity has hit, the relationship between local government and the arts and culture has become more complicated.

This chapter creates a clear picture of local government’s current position on the arts and culture. In early 2014, we carried out a survey to assess the extent to which local government values and prioritises the arts and culture and the principle reasons for funding. This section, in particular, will look at the reasons why local authorities do fund the arts and culture and will also look at the extent to which arts and culture is valued and prioritised by local authorities.

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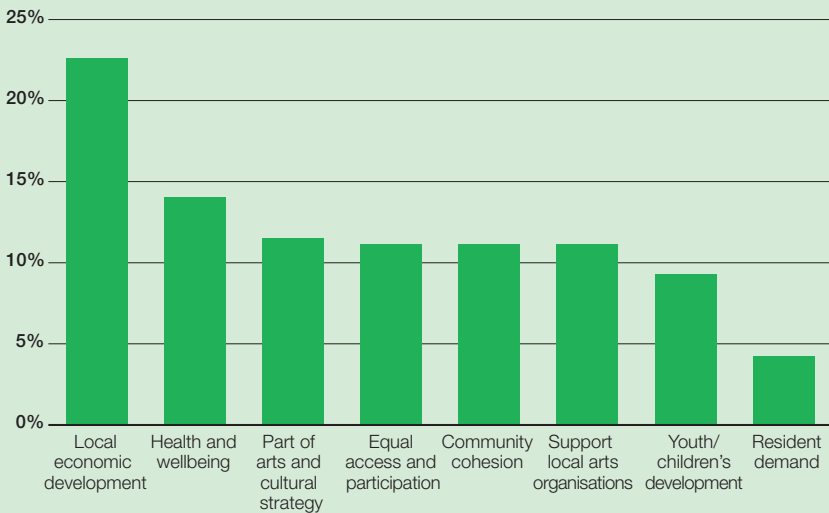
<sup>2</sup> The National Campaign for the Arts, (2013), *Arts Index - A measure of the vitality of Arts and Culture in England*, [online], <http://static.guim.co.uk/ni/1386244722890/The-NCA-Arts-Index-2013-ebo.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Brownlee, D., in The National Campaign for the Arts, (2013), *Arts Index - A measure of the vitality of Arts and Culture in England*, [online], <http://static.guim.co.uk/ni/1386244722890/The-NCA-Arts-Index-2013-ebo.pdf>

## REASONS FOR FUNDING THE ARTS AND CULTURE

As can be seen from Figure 1, the primary reason identified by survey respondents for local government to fund arts and culture is to support local economic development and the second most important reason was to support health and wellbeing. Social issues such as ‘to promote equal access and participation’ and ‘community cohesion’ were less important, although not insignificant. Noticeably, the least important reason identified by respondents to fund arts and culture is due to resident demand – this will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

**FIGURE 1** Top three reasons for funding arts and culture in your area (n=183)



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economically, the arts and culture not only provide employment opportunities but also generate income. Since the late 1990s, arts and culture have been seen as being vital to the burgeoning ‘creative industries’. Culture’s economic value was supported by publications such as *The*

*Creative City*<sup>4</sup> and *The Rise of the Creative Class*<sup>5</sup> and more recently Arts Council England has published a report on the 'Contribution of arts and culture to the national economy'<sup>6</sup> and an 'Evidence review of the economic contribution of libraries'.<sup>7</sup>

A recent study by the LGA estimated that for every £1 spent by councils on the arts, leverage from grant aid and partnership working brings up to £4 in additional funding to the area.<sup>8</sup> The arts and culture are used to drive economic development in many places as is demonstrated by our case study areas. St Albans District Council are using their rich cultural heritage to drive their visitor economy (Appendix 1F) and Wakefield (Appendix 1E) and Doncaster (Appendix 1D) have utilised the arts and culture to regenerate their areas. The arts and culture are used to create a vibrancy in an area. They not only encourage artists to live in the area, but encourage other companies to locate there too. The visitor economy of an area is particularly driven by the arts and culture through festivals and celebrations.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The second most common reason to fund the arts and culture, amongst our survey respondents, was to support health and wellbeing. In April 2013, local government regained its responsibility for public health. For the first time in a generation, councils now have direct responsibility for co-ordinating action to prevent illness and to improve the health of their communities. These changes have placed local authorities in a pivotal position where they can integrate public health with council services such as housing, planning and transport, and co-ordinate spending decisions on 'traditional' health promotion and health protection measures with action on the wider determinants of health.

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4 Landry, C., (2000), *The creative city: a toolkit for urban innovators*, Earthscan Publications, London.

5 Florida, R. L., (2002), *The rise of the creative class*: Basic Books, New York.

6 CEBR, (2013), *The contribution of the arts and culture to the national economy*, [online] <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/contribution-arts-and-culture-national-economy>

7 Arts Council England, (2014), *Evidence review of the economic contribution of libraries*, [online], <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/evidence-review-economic-contribution-libraries>

8 LGA, (2013), *Driving growth through local government investment in the arts*, [online], [http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=5d54ddf4-1025-4720-810a-fd077d5dbf5b&groupId=10180](http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=5d54ddf4-1025-4720-810a-fd077d5dbf5b&groupId=10180)

50 per cent of our survey respondents stated that they are considering using the public health budget to fund arts and cultural activities in their area. There is a major opportunity for arts and cultural organisations to align themselves more closely to public health and the overall objectives of the health and wellbeing strategies. This is a growing trend in a number of areas, and practice exists across the arts, museums and libraries. This has been noted by the NCVO Cultural Commissioning Programme<sup>9</sup> and is particularly explored in our Wakefield case study (Appendix 1E).

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Alongside the intrinsic benefits of providing opportunities to engage with high quality culture and the key role of libraries in communities, arts and culture make a difference socially to local areas. They can 'create place' and civic pride through celebrations of local culture and traditions or skills and literacy of residents can be developed through library services. In addition to this, socially, arts participation has been found to have a positive effect on social cohesion and empowering communities.<sup>10</sup> Social capital is a key determinant of strong and successful communities, that are resilient in times of stress.<sup>11</sup> Providing opportunities to participate in culture is an important means by which local government can help strengthen and maintain social capital.

During the 2000s, local authorities invested in arts and cultural programmes that increased social inclusion, social cohesion and gave cultural identity to places. However, our survey indicated that the social impact of the arts and culture is less of a priority when making funding decisions. An explanation of this could be the difficulty experienced when measuring the social impact of the arts and culture. Economic impact can usually be measured quantitatively, whereas, social impacts are often harder to quantify and qualitative methods are more appropriate. Measuring the social impact of

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<sup>9</sup> NPC, (2014), *Opportunities for Alignment: Arts and Cultural organisations and public sector commissioning*. [online] [http://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/practical\\_support/public\\_services/cultural-commissioning/full-report-opp-for-alignment-arts-cultural-orgs-public-sector.pdf](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/practical_support/public_services/cultural-commissioning/full-report-opp-for-alignment-arts-cultural-orgs-public-sector.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Matarasso, F., (2007), 'Common ground: cultural action as a route to community development', *Community Development Journal*, no. 42, pp. 449-458.

<sup>11</sup> Cuthill, M., (2010), 'Strengthening the 'social' in sustainable development: Developing a conceptual framework for social sustainability in a rapid urban growth region in Australia', *Sustainable Development*, no. 18, pp. 362-373.

the arts and culture is difficult<sup>12</sup> and the arts and culture struggle to evaluate their impact.<sup>13</sup> This is particularly problematic as, at local authority level, an auditory approach more typical to management consultancies is generally preferred as opposed to the longer term qualitative research that can demonstrate the effect of arts and cultural programmes on individuals over a number of years.

Overall, it is clear that arts and culture have benefited from demonstrating their economic contribution. It is natural that when councils are making so many financial savings, discretionary services need to show their return on investment. However, the return is also social. In many cases, the arts and cultural sector provide the social capital that is needed to go hand in hand with economic development. It is through theatre performances, painting classes and choir rehearsals that local communities can build up the friendships and resilience that will see them through the economic downturn. If local authorities can think of innovative ways to support their local arts and culture groups through the next few years, the rewards to their area may be much greater than expected.

## VALUING THE ARTS AND CULTURE

Reductions in funding for the arts and culture by local authorities have called into question the commitment local government members and officers to the arts and culture. This section looks at the extent to which local authorities themselves feel that arts and culture is valued, both by local government as a whole and also by their own authority.

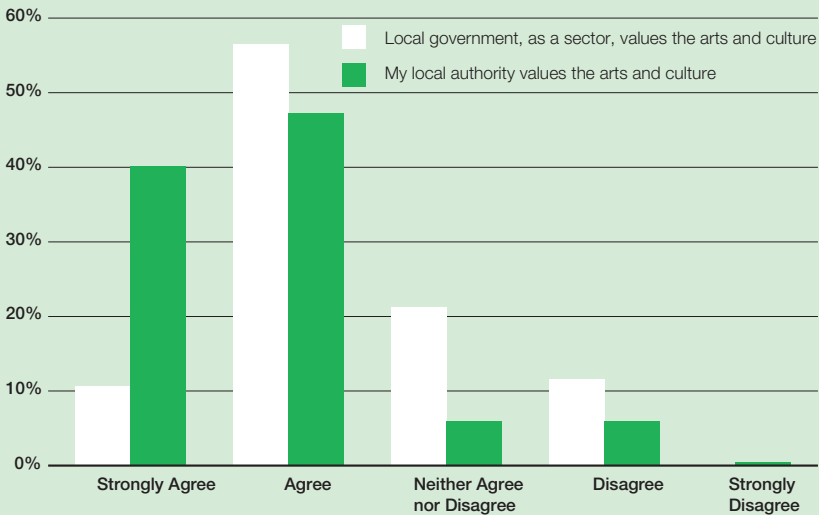
We asked survey respondents the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statements 'Local government, as a sector, values the arts and culture' and 'My local authority values the arts and culture'. As can be seen (Figure 2), encouragingly the general consensus was that both local

<sup>12</sup> Raw, A., Lewis, S., Russell, A. & Macnaughton, J., (2012), 'A hole in the art: confronting the drive for evidence-based impact research in arts and health', *Arts and Health*, no. 4 (2), pp. 97-108.

<sup>13</sup> Hampshire, K. & Matthijsse, M., (2010), 'Can arts projects improve young people's wellbeing? A social capital approach', *Social Science and Medicine*, no. 71 (4), pp. 708-716; Arts Council England, (2014), *The value of arts and culture to people and society*, [online], <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/value-arts-and-culture-people-and-society-evidence-review/>

government (67.2 per cent) as a whole and specific authorities (87.4 per cent) value the arts and culture. 40.2 per cent of respondents strongly agreed that their local authority valued arts and culture. Most of those surveyed stated that their local authority values the arts and culture more than local government as a whole.

**FIGURE 2** The value of arts and culture in local government (n=199)



It was also useful to analyse these results by 'role within the authority' in order to see if there were any differing views of the value of arts and culture based on role. Respondents identifying themselves as arts and culture officers felt that local government as a sector does not value the arts and culture, however, were more positive about their own authority. In fact, they were more confident than senior officers and heads of service that their local authority valued the arts and culture. It appears that while local government as a sector has received 'bad press' through high profile funding cuts such in Newcastle and Somerset, those working within local authorities have far greater confidence that their own authority values the arts and culture.

This is encouraging as, while funding has clearly been cut for the arts and culture, valued dialogue between the cultural sector and local authorities is still possible. This was particularly evident in our case study area of Darlington (Appendix 1H), where the local authority has worked with a local protest group 'Darlington for Culture' to help sustain arts and culture in the area.

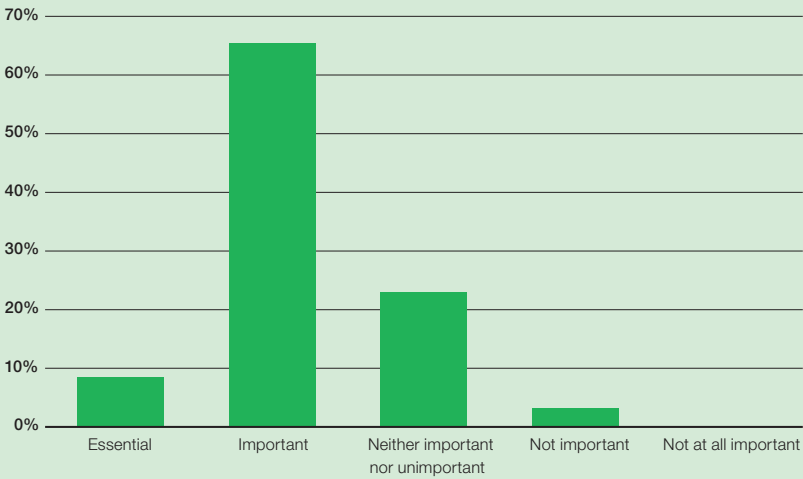
Local authorities are in a difficult position. While they struggle financially to fulfil their statutory duties, they also have a duty to value and focus on what they consider to be important to their residents. Faced with funding cuts, arts and cultural organisations, both nationally and locally, have organised campaigns (e.g. My Theatre Matters and library campaigns) to encourage residents to show their local authority that despite arts and culture not being a statutory service they consider them to be an important, or even an essential service. Significantly, respondents suggested that 'resident demand' was the least important reason when making funding decisions about the arts and culture. The following section looks at how important local authorities perceive the arts and culture to be to their residents.

## RESIDENTS' ATTITUDES TO ARTS AND CULTURE

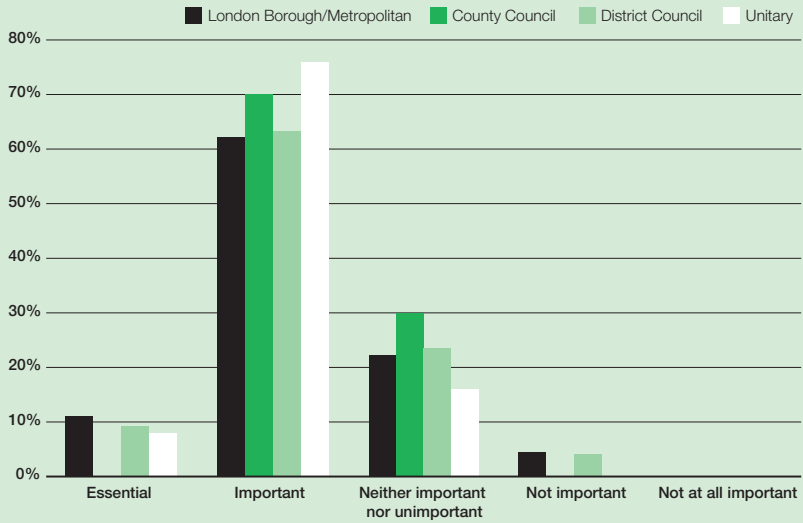
It is clear from Figure 3 that more than half (65.4 per cent) of survey respondents regard the arts and culture to be 'important' to their residents. However, only 8.5 per cent of those who responded to the survey feel that the arts and culture are 'essential' to their residents. This is significant; in a time with so many cuts, when 'the graph of doom'<sup>14</sup> prevails amongst local government, it is the fact that the arts and culture are not considered 'essential' to their residents, which means cuts are occurring to these services. Residents and local authorities alike clearly see the value of the arts and culture and consider them important, however, it is a sign of budget constraints that in some authorities, unless services are 'essential' or statutory, local authority budgets will not be funded. However this needs to be balanced with those authorities which have continued to maintain – and in some cases increase – their support for arts and culture, recognising political leadership and a commitment to ensuring culture delivers benefits for an area.

<sup>14</sup> The Guardian, (2012), 'Graph of Doom: a bleak future for social care services', [online], <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/may/15/graph-doom-social-care-services-barnet>

**FIGURE 3** How important do you think arts and cultural activities are to the majority of your residents? (n=188)



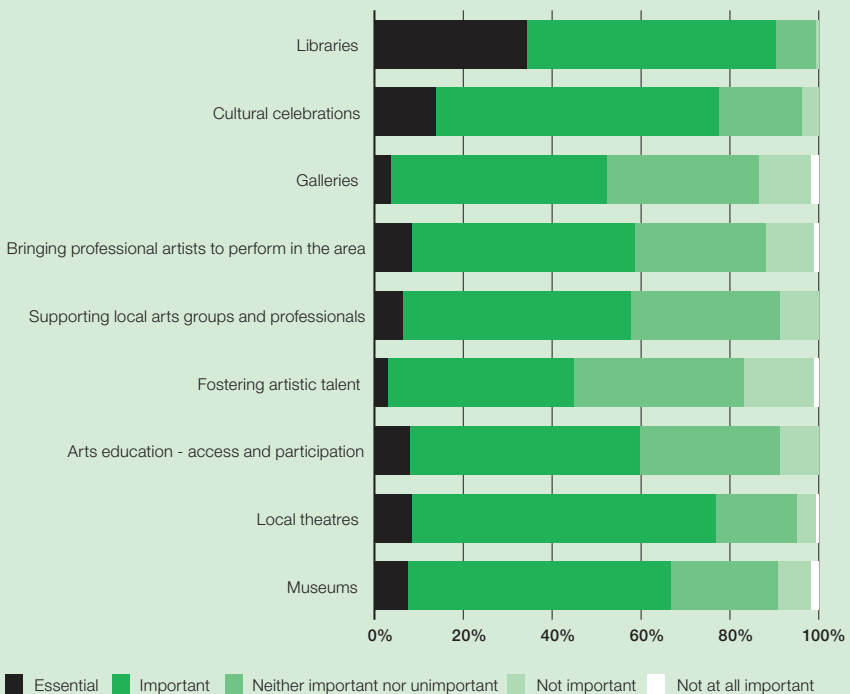
**FIGURE 4** How important do you think arts and cultural activities are to the majority of your residents (by authority type)? (n=188)





Finally, we wanted to investigate whether local authorities felt their residents placed differing levels of importance on different types of the arts and culture in their area. Figure 5 demonstrates that this is clearly the case.

**FIGURE 5** How important do you feel the following are to the majority of your residents? (n=186)



Those surveyed believed that the majority of their residents felt libraries (34.4 per cent) were an essential service and nearly a further 60 per cent felt libraries were important to their residents. While only 13.8 per cent of those surveyed felt cultural celebrations were 'essential' to their residents, 63.8 per cent felt that these events were 'important' to their residents. Local theatres and museums had a medium level of support and were considered important to residents with 76.9 per cent and 66.8 per cent respectively stating that these were either essential or important to their residents. However, galleries and fostering artistic talent fared the least well. Only 3.7 per cent felt galleries

were essential and at 3.2 per cent, even fewer felt that fostering artistic talent was essential to their residents. Perhaps more worryingly for galleries and local talent, 13.4 per cent and 16.8 per cent respectively felt that these were not important to their residents. In general, those that we interviewed felt that residents tended to value arts and culture in their area that they could see and had experienced. Theatres, libraries and cultural celebrations are therefore more valued than fostering artistic talent.

## DIFFERING LEVELS OF SUPPORT

What was apparent from carrying out this research was that, although there are many reasons to fund the arts and culture, it was, in many cases a combination of resident demand and the leadership and interest of members and officers that plays a key role in sustaining arts and culture on some level by local government. In some areas, resident demand was so strong (e.g. Northamptonshire, Darlington) that plans for the arts and culture were rethought. In other areas such as Wakefield, an interested leader and a committed team of officers have sustained the arts and culture through difficult financial decisions and are now seeing the rewards that investments, such as the Hepworth Gallery, are bringing to the regeneration of the area.

However, this does show the extent to which the arts and culture are reliant on local leaders taking a particular interest in arts and culture, and political leadership is absolutely vital. Strong political commitment is important in supporting arts and culture and more importantly in convincing the local community it will be sustained. One suggestion to deal with the inherent risk of reliance upon political leadership was to make arts and culture a statutory duty and request that local authorities produce 'Local Cultural Strategies'. However, in general, those that we spoke to throughout the research did not feel that this would solve the problem. It was felt that a strategy could become a 'tick the box' exercise that was rarely referred to. The true prize for arts and culture lay in ensuring that the authority had a clear vision for arts and culture – whether expressed in a separate strategy or embedded in the authority's overall approach. If the contribution of culture is recognised in the council's overall strategic approach then this makes it less likely that commitment will fall away with changes in political or administrative

leadership. Individual leaders are crucial but personal leadership alone cannot – and should not – be the only thing to sustain support for culture.

This chapter has demonstrated that local government does continue to value the arts and culture. Local authorities value the instrumental benefits of the arts and culture, and particularly associate them with economic development and health and wellbeing. However, at the same time, local authorities are under increasing budgetary pressure. In the face of further cuts, it is essential that local authorities consider alternative models of support to ensure that valued arts and cultural services can be sustained. The next chapter will look at the options available to local authorities and arts and cultural organisations.

## 3 ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF SUPPORT

**Direct local authority funding for the arts and culture is being reduced. Of the councils that responded to our survey 60.7 per cent reported that they had withdrawn financial support from arts and cultural organisations, individuals or events in the last 5 years and 64.4 per cent reported that they expected more funding cuts over the next 5 years. In many local authorities, as with other services, they will have little choice about whether they cut funding to the arts and culture; reducing funding will be considered a necessity. However, the extent to which funding is cut and the level of support that authorities are able to provide to arts and cultural organisations that are at risk is negotiable.**

As established in the previous chapter, local government does, overall, value the arts and culture. However, they are struggling financially to continue to do so as the traditional grant giver. Yet, in addition to this, over 90 per cent of survey respondents disagreed that non-financial methods of support are sufficient to sustain arts and culture in their area. Given that the majority of respondents felt the arts and culture were not sustainable without some sort of financial support, and in light of the fact that budgets, and therefore grants, are being reduced, other models of support are becoming increasingly important. Many local authorities are moving away from being the direct provider or grant giver to museums, libraries and the arts, but alternative models of support are both possible and already emerging. This section will present a number of alternative models of support that local authorities can use to ensure that the arts and culture are sustained in their area.

### ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF DELIVERY

Local government, even before the advent of austerity, has had a strong track record of exploring alternative delivery models to enable cultural services to do more, to be sustained and to ensure a thriving local cultural infrastructure. There are, therefore, a range of models which are being considered. These include:

- **Outsourcing** – local government is familiar with public/private partnerships but these have not often been applied to the cultural sector. An exception is the London Borough of Hounslow (and a number of others) where all cultural services have been outsourced after a competitive tendering process. Contractual arrangements of this nature are not restricted to commercial providers. Greenwich Leisure Limited are an example of an operator in the not-for profit sector who deliver cultural services for local authorities. Meanwhile, Slough Borough Council's library service is delivered under contract by Essex County Council.
- **Shared services** – councils are looking at the potential of sharing services to reduce costs and sustain delivery. Tri-borough (Appendix 1C) and also a number of library authorities explored sharing services as part of the Future Library Programme in 2010.<sup>15</sup> Some shared services are longstanding arrangements, such as Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums. The Lincolnshire One initiative is bringing together ten local authority and independent cultural venues across the county to share services, reduce costs and build new audiences.
- **Charitable trusts** – placing services in an independent trust arrangement has been pursued by local government for a number of years. A number of large museum services, such as Birmingham are managed by trusts having previously been local authority managed. Large scale trusts exist in Wigan, Luton, Peterborough and a number of other places where arts and culture are managed alongside a number of other services such as sport and parks and open spaces. The optimum size and range of services within a trust arrangement will vary, but the key benefits are a reduction in public subsidy through placing the services in an arm's length arrangement which encourages entrepreneurialism and frees up capacity and ability to exploit new income streams. Key, though, is how the local authority and its partners set up a trust. The extent to which it is endowed with resources and the freedom to exploit those resources, will determine its sustainability.
- **Social enterprise** – social enterprise, where services are provided through an organisation which reinvests profit back into its core

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<sup>15</sup> DCMS, (2012), *Future Libraries Programme*, [online], <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/future-libraries-programme>

mission, offers an opportunity to sustain services. Lewisham divested a number of its branch libraries to a social enterprise which derives income from recycling. The income from this is reinvested in the service and the branch libraries, which would have closed, but instead remained open, and are in a relationship with the council's directly provided library service. Social enterprises can also successfully tender for contracts, as Greenwich Leisure has demonstrated.

- **Community ownership and management** – the government's localism policy seeks to strengthen the potential for communities to own and run assets. This has already been seen in the cultural sector, with a number of libraries run under this arrangement. This can be a way to sustain some local services and to engage the community with them, but there are still questions which need to be answered over the extent to which such organisations and services can be run by volunteers and the extent to which the council will still have to provide a measure of support.
- **Existing third sector delivery** – rather than deliver services internally or create new external bodies, some local authorities are turning to successful third sector organisations in or close to their area to deliver new cultural services. The Albany in Lewisham is now also managing a number of other performance spaces and Libraries for both Lewisham and Southwark Councils. In Northamptonshire, Corby Borough Council turned to Northampton's Royal and Derngate (theatre complex) to manage their new venue rather than running it themselves, creating a trust or seeking a commercial operator.

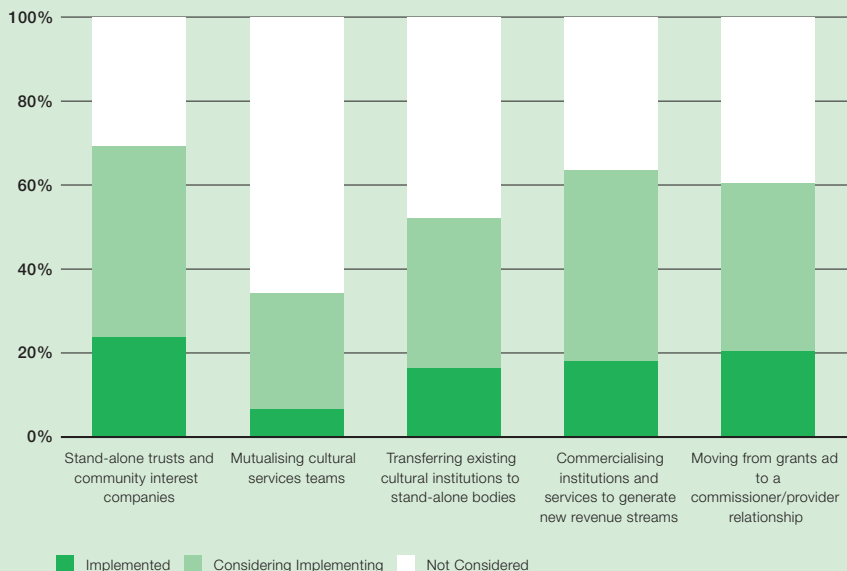
Some local authorities who do not want to lose direct control of cultural assets are managing to make major efficiency savings. Historically the council run Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham has required significant support from the authority. In recent years this has been reduced to the point where the venues trade without any revenue contribution. This approach may be possible in other local authorities with venues of the size and scale of Nottingham, with a large and relatively affluent catchment and a lack of competition, but will not be the case for most authorities who will need to look to alternative models if they are to reduce costs significantly.

It is clear that local government has an appetite to build on this experience to sustain its support for the cultural sector. In our survey we asked if 'arts

and cultural organisations are open to new models of service delivery'. 60.8 per cent of respondent agreed and 23.1 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Very few people (4 per cent) felt that arts and cultural organisations may not be amenable to new models. This is important as it is essential that arts and culture organisations are amenable to and supportive of new models. As will be demonstrated by our case studies, in many cases it can actually be easier for arts and cultural organisations to work outside the constraints of local government.

Our survey also explored the most common types of models being used by local authorities and the extent to which these have been implemented. Figure 6 demonstrates that the model that has been implemented or considered most is stand-alone trusts and community interest companies.

**FIGURE 6** Have you implemented or are you thinking about implementing any of these institutional models to help sustain arts and cultural organisations over the next few years? (n=134)



Nearly the same percentage of local authorities (45.7 per cent) are considering commercialising institutions and services to generate new revenue streams. However, fewer (18.1 per cent) have actually implemented this model. Another popular model of implementation (20.5 per cent), is moving from grants aid to commissioner/provider relationship. In addition a high percentage of survey respondents are considering implementing (40.2 per cent), this model.

In order to understand how councils are innovating and developing alternative models of delivering the arts and culture, we carried out eight case studies of areas that have found alternative ways to ensure that arts and culture are sustained in their area. In choosing these case studies we endeavoured to choose areas that were not only a mix in terms of type of authority and geographical location but also a mixture of authorities that in some cases have traditionally supported the arts and culture and also those that haven't.

These case studies will demonstrate that it is not just the financially healthier authorities or those with a long tradition of arts and culture provision that can support the arts and culture. In general, our research has shown that some local authorities are continuing to support arts and cultural organisations in two ways: first, through alternative models of financial support; and second, through maximising capacity and drawing on resources from outside the local authority. These will now be discussed. A full detailed exploration, including financial savings and the benefits and challenges experienced in each case study area, can be found in Appendix 1.

## ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In particular, three different alternative methods of financial support emerged from the research. These were:

- Putting existing organisations out to trust or similar arm's length arrangements
- Sharing services and resources
- Moving from grant giving to commissioning model of financial support



## TRUSTS

Trusts were the most common 'alternative model' to come out of the survey. Two of the case study areas, Rother District Council and Northamptonshire County Council have set up trusts to protect their assets and services respectively. In Rother's case this was done before austerity and this case study, in particular, demonstrates the ongoing benefits of putting an existing arts and cultural organisation, in this case the De la Warr Pavilion, out to trust. Since the running of the Pavilion was transferred to a trust, the Pavilion has turned around its fortune both financially and artistically. In addition to this, Rother District Council has been able to save £500,000 a year.

Both Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT) and the De la War Pavilion have detailed the advantages of being run as a trust. First, and perhaps foremost, as a charitable trust, organisations are able to access many other grants that they were unable to as part of the local authority. While this sometimes increases the uncertainty of where funding will come from, it does mean that alternatives are available should the local authority reduce or discontinue funding. One arts organisation that is currently run by a local authority reported that they found it hard to source alternative funds (e.g. philanthropy, corporate sponsorship) as this was viewed as 'lining the local authority's pockets'. In addition to this, the trusts that we spoke to reported that there was greater flexibility in running an organisation now that they were distanced from the local authority. Everything did not need to be signed off by the local authority and simple decisions such as pricing in the De La Warr Pavilion café could be made quickly and efficiently.

It was also noted that it is easier to attract specifically skilled staff (and board members) to a trust than to a local authority. Staff with specialisms in their field (e.g. curators) tend to be more attracted to working for trusts, as there is a greater flexibility and their artistic vision is less constrained. In addition to this, a carefully selected board can increase network opportunities for organisations and can often have more specialised marketing and programming experience than would be found in a local authority.

It was essential, however, that the local authority properly supported the transfer to trust with resources and assurances for staff. Both the De La Warr Pavillion and NMPAT were given resources (e.g. building, instruments) to ensure the best possible start for the trust.

## **CASE STUDY: ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL THE DE LA WARR PAVILION (APPENDIX 1A)**

*Towards the late 1990s and early 2000s, Rother District Council was spending approximately £1 million per year on the Pavilion, with limited output. Most of this money was spent on maintaining the building. A new charity – the De La Warr Pavilion Charitable Trust – was set up and management of the Pavilion and its artistic programme was transferred to the trust from the council as of 1st April 2003. Above all the decision to go out to trust from 2000, a decision taken outside the context of austerity, illustrates how the model can be beneficial even when financial or economic constraints are not as immediately threatening.*

## **CASE STUDY: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS TRUST (APPENDIX 1B)**

*The Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT) was established in April 2012 as an independent charitable trust to take over the ownership and management of Northamptonshire County Council's music services. Crucially, the council supported the transition process, provided safety nets and facilitated the transfer of the music services to trust. These are detailed in Appendix 1B.*

## **SHARING SERVICES**

The next two case studies demonstrate the effectiveness of sharing services to increase service efficiency. This can be done either between authorities (Tri-borough) or a smaller organisational basis (Cast Theatre, Doncaster).

A clear disadvantage of sharing services is that in services that have previously existed separately, sharing services inevitably means redundancies and this is one of the principle difficulties of this model. It was generally acknowledged, however, that in order for services and organisations to be sustained, redundancies were a 'necessary evil'. On the other hand, there are advantages to sharing services beyond saving authorities money. In the Tri-borough authorities a single management structure has made considerable savings, whilst also ensuring that those that are employed are some of the highest skilled individuals for the role. In Doncaster, the theatre shares human resources, finances, ticketing and catering with the culture and leisure trust in Doncaster. This not only saves money, but also ensures that expertise is shared.

While there are many advantages to sharing services, it is important that there is a clear understanding of where different organisations or authorities do have independence. As library services are statutory, it was particularly important to ensure that members maintained influence over libraries in their specific area. It is also important to identify areas where it would not be appropriate to share services. In Doncaster, Cast is fully responsible for programming in the theatre as it is acknowledged that this is an area that a leisure service would have different (commercial) objectives and would have less experience.

## CASE STUDY: TRI-BOROUGH COMBINING LIBRARY SERVICES (APPENDIX 1C)

*In October 2010, the neighbouring local authorities of Westminster City Council, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea began planning to combine specific areas of service delivery as a response to financial pressures facing local government. Proposals were drawn up to share library services and in April 2012 the libraries in the three areas came under Tri-borough management. Initially services were integrated under three main lines: a single management structure, service efficiency and an integrated core service. By combining library services for these three borough, the Tri-borough area has been able to make a saving of £1.1m per annum.*

## CASE STUDY: DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL CAST THEATRE (APPENDIX 1D)

*In the early 2000s, regeneration plans were drawn up to revitalise Doncaster and at the centre of these plans was a new theatre for Doncaster – Cast. The original plan was for the theatre to be a stand-alone trust. However, for financial reasons it was decided that the theatre should be run as a charitable subsidiary of the already existent Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT), as they were able to share many services. The subsidiary board was significant as it required the DCLT to recognise that Cast needed to be run on a different basis from other DCLT services. Programming is the responsibility of Cast's director and this is supported by the subsidiary board. DCLT has assisted greatly in setting up Cast and assists with human resources, finances, ticketing and catering. However, Cast is independent in its marketing.*

## COMMISSIONING MODEL

Local authorities are increasingly moving away from grant giving and towards a commissioning model of funding where they commission services based on outcomes, and arts and cultural services are no different. Areas such as Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Wakefield Council (Appendix 1E) have introduced a commissioning model of funding the arts and culture in their area. The arts and culture increasingly have to align their services with the priorities of the local authority. This may be within the corporate strategy, the health and wellbeing strategy, or some other component of the council's strategic planning. This has meant that arts and culture teams have been able to align their budgets with other departments. For example, our survey results showed that 50 per cent of respondents have considered using the public health budget to help fund artistic endeavours in the area.

The commissioning model is one of the strongest to ensure that arts and culture can make a difference in an area, and it ensures that the arts and culture are not viewed in isolation from the rest of the priorities and ambitions for a place. It demonstrates that arts and culture can be embedded within the ambitions that an authority has and therefore enables

culture to demonstrate its value to those who make funding and investment decisions. In addition to this, the model ensures that arts and culture organisations are constantly thinking about the outcomes of their activities and rethinking how they can be made to fit local priorities. As one councillor noted, it ensures that the ‘same old organisations’ don’t get funding every year without thinking about their outcomes.

A disadvantage of this model, however, is that smaller organisations could struggle to establish themselves. While this model will suit larger organisations, many smaller organisations do not have the capacity and expertise to meet regularly with council members and officers to align their activities to local strategic priorities, particularly as many smaller organisations are run on a part-time basis. This could see them struggle to obtain funding. Such issues are being considered by the Cultural Commissioning programme, led by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations,<sup>16</sup> which is seeking to build capacity within the cultural sector to secure commissions and contribute to outcomes.

In addition, this model of funding tends to rely on being able to prove outcomes and successes and while some aspects of an organisation’s activity are easy to prove (e.g. foot fall) others, such as the social capital generated by its activities, are harder demonstrate. There needs to be considerable effort and agreement by the local authority and the arts and culture organisations to define and measure success.

## CASE STUDY: WAKEFIELD COUNCIL REGENERATION (APPENDIX 1E)

*Wakefield Council has been consistently investing in culture to establish Wakefield as a new cultural destination in Yorkshire. This has been done through the opening of a major new art gallery, The Hepworth Wakefield in 2011 and through providing long term support to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. At the same time, the council is ensuring that local residents have equality of access to a rich range*

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<sup>16</sup> NCVO, (2014), *Cultural Commissioning Programme - supporting arts and cultural organisations to engage in public sector commissioning*, [online], <http://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/public-services/cultural-commissioning-programme>

*of cultural resources. To do this the Council's 'Creative Partners Grant Scheme', an open and competitive process for Wakefield based organisations, supports the delivery of innovative cultural activity which engages and increases participation in cultural activity from all residents across the district. In recent years, the grant scheme has evolved to include a commissioning model which is generating strong links between Culture and Public Health to support projects which target improvements to the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable communities in the district.*

## MAXIMISING CAPACITY

While the previous section looked at alternative financial models of support, the next section looks at how local authorities can work with other organisations and residents to maximise the capacity for arts and cultural activities in the area. As arts and culture organisations face funding cuts, this section focuses on the ability of local authorities to broker partnerships with other (national and local) organisations and also the possibility to maximise their capacity to deliver the arts and culture with the support of residents.

## PARTNERSHIPS

In the same way that the previously discussed commissioning model sees arts and cultural organisations working with the council to achieve local outcomes, the council can work with other partners (both local and national) to work towards a more strategic vision for the area. Working in partnership ensures that when local authorities apply for national grants such as Heritage Lottery Funding, they are aware of, and can work together with other organisations in their area that are applying for funding. In addition to this, working in partnership with other providers of arts and culture activities, such as universities or large employers, can ensure that resources and capacity are maximised. St Albans District Council (Appendix 1F) has made gains through partnering with the University of Hertfordshire and St Albans Cathedral. In addition to this, the Museum of St Albans has partnered with the British Museum to help them run the shop in the St Albans Museum. St Albans Museum Shop now buys stock from the British

Museum, which in turn provides staff training. As such, the shop now sells items that bring in much more revenue than before and visitors spend much more money on average at the shop.

Time and capacity, however, needs to be spent on maintaining these relationships. It is important that the authority acknowledges capacity needs to be built within their own teams to make sure that these partnerships are developed and maintained.

## CASE STUDY: ST ALBANS DISTRICT COUNCIL PARTNERS IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE (APPENDIX 1F)

*St Albans City and District benefits from its strong cultural heritage. In order to boost the visitor economy of the area, St Albans District Council created its Visitor Economy Strategy for 2013-18. Part of this strategy and its effects have been to integrate the efforts of sectors such as culture and heritage with tourism, for example through marketing and coordinating events so that they fall on the same weekend. Furthermore, in the context of austerity and strategic economic planning by St Albans District Council, stakeholders in arts and culture have been working together in a variety of partnerships. These partnerships exist between the District Council and other local stakeholders, including but not restricted to new cultural entrepreneurs and existing cultural organisations, as well as with external partners.*

## BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

There are opportunities available to local authorities that are peculiar to the arts and culture. Unlike many other services, many residents are interested, enthusiastic even, in investing time and energy in their local arts and culture scene. Beyond financial support local authorities have the capacity to support arts and culture in other ways. For instance, arts and culture officers and teams can create networks for artistic communities or help leverage funding for projects.

This is particularly important for the new ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ that have emerged in the last few years. These are individuals that would like to see an arts and cultural project in their area, but recognise that there can be no/little financial support from their local authority. The St Albans Film Festival exemplifies this. A local resident wanted to see a film festival in St Albans so set up this venture herself. The council were able to support the project by donating space to set up the box office and helping with venues to show the films. Local authorities cannot underestimate the impact of donating a rehearsal space, helping with marketing, road closures, health and safety issues, insurance, introductions to local businesses and sign-posting to other council departments. This will be essential, given that it is particularly smaller organisations that will inevitably feel that brunt in grant reductions.

However, it is important to note that local authorities cannot just assume that volunteers are all that is needed to sustain the arts and culture in their area. Our case study of the Cultural and Arts Forum Erewash (CAFE) demonstrates that it is important to have officers that are willing to drive projects forward and provide administrative support to volunteers. In addition to this, many of those that have lost their income are trained professionals such as theatre professionals, gallery curators or musicians. Local authorities must not get confused between trained professionals donating time and volunteers with a hobby. These two groups can work in tandem for a while through a crisis but this isn’t sustainable in the long term.

If local authorities are to increasingly work with volunteers it is important that they view volunteers as additional support and a valued asset. In many cases, volunteers felt undervalued by their local authority and did not feel that the local authority was in any way aware of the extent of the time and effort that had been given. Small gestures such as a reception to celebrate the efforts of volunteers in an area can provide the acknowledgment needed for volunteers to feel valued.

In addition to ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ and volunteering, some local authorities have seen the emergence of groups that have been set up to challenge a local authority’s proposed cuts. While some authorities have understandably found it easier not to engage with these groups, other local



authorities (e.g. Darlington) have engaged with protesters and have found that together they can work to sustain the arts and culture in their area.

## **CASE STUDY: EREWASH BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY CAPACITY (APPENDIX 1G)**

*Traditionally Erewash Borough Council did not have a strong emphasis on the arts and culture. After external evaluation advised that they should have a more coordinated strategy for culture for the borough, the council created the posts of two part time arts development officers. Since 2007, the officers have been instrumental in starting the Culture and Arts Forum for Erewash – CAFE. The forum is now run by a committee of volunteers with administrative support being provided by the arts development officers (their time is donated by the local authority). Recently CAFE ran an arts project known as 'rEvide' that filled empty shops with creative workshops, performances, and exhibitions. While the council facilitated the project, volunteers provided the capacity to mobilise the project and make it the vibrant success that it has been. In total 1,630 volunteer hours have made the rEvide project possible. The entire project would not have been possible without the extensive volunteer input.*

## **CASE STUDY: DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL NETWORKS OF SUPPORT (APPENDIX 1H)**

*Historically, Darlington has been the home to a vibrant arts scene. However, faced with reductions of income, it was decided that arts funding would be cut. The public outcry that followed resulted in the emergence of Darlington for Culture, a protest group consisting of local residents and arts practitioners, who objected to the closure of some of the borough's most treasured arts venues. The council responded by setting up an Arts Enquiry Group in 2011, demonstrating resolve and a commitment to responding to resident demand. Darlington Borough Council was able to turn a difficult relationship with Darlington for Culture into a pragmatic and workable one in which residents could both have a say in the future of the arts and were an additional resource as suppliers of local knowledge and as an active public network of interested stakeholders.*

## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Local government has traditionally been a strong supporter of arts and culture. Alongside Arts Council England, local government is one of the primary funders of arts and cultural activities. However, due to the reduction in central government grant in recent years, direct funding from local government to the arts, museums and libraries has been reduced and organisations and services are facing sustainability challenges. This research has demonstrated that, despite cuts, local government as a whole does continue to value the arts and culture. However, in times of financial constraint local authorities are increasingly looking at alternative models of delivery. Their role is moving from one of funder to facilitator.

### THE VALUE OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE.

Local authorities continue to value arts and culture, but the reasons for this often reflect the economic and social priorities for a local area. The principle reason given by respondents for funding the arts and culture was economic development, in particular to boost regeneration and the visitor economy. Councils are also seeking to exploit the contribution that arts and culture can make to health and wellbeing and new commissioning models of funding that work with the public health teams to deliver health and wellbeing objectives are beginning to be implemented.

Less important, however, was the contribution that the arts and culture can make to the social development of an area. Their impact on the social capital of an area cannot be underestimated. It is important that local authorities do not ignore the 'difficult to measure' aspects of the arts and culture as, in future years, it is the social capital of an area that may well reduce the pressure on essential services such as Adult Social Care. Local authorities should not only provide statutory services, they should also guide and lead their area to create a place that residents can be proud of.

With significantly reduced budgets, it is understandable that local authorities are scrambling to keep pressing services such as social care and education ticking over. But, to reduce long-term quality of life may, eventually, lead to even more short-term immediate demands. Local authorities need to continue to support the arts and culture in whatever way they can.

Support for arts and culture varied between authorities. In areas where the council strongly supported the arts and culture, it was often due to a strong leadership, which can depend on a councillor or senior officer with a particular interest in arts and culture. One suggestion to deal with the inherent risk of reliance upon political leadership was to make arts and culture a statutory duty and request that local authorities produce 'Local Cultural Strategies'. However, in general, those that we spoke to throughout the research did not feel that this would solve the problem. It was felt that a strategy could become a 'tick the box' exercise that would be rarely referred to. The true prize for arts and culture lies in ensuring that the authority had a clear vision for arts and culture – whether expressed in a separate strategy or embedded in the authority's overall approach. We recommend that:

- Central and local government should consider how the economic potential of the arts and culture can be recognised in the growth deal process. Culture and creative industries should be specifically referenced as a potential engine for growth and as a useful contributor to the skills development agenda. Resources that are devolved to support economic growth should be devolved in such a way as to enable culture to contribute economically alongside other sectors. While many authorities do value culture, an initiative such as this would encourage those that struggle to see the value to make some provision for the arts and culture to strategically position their support for culture to help deliver local growth, and to understand how devolved growth funds can support this.
- Local authorities should create a clear vision for the role the arts and culture can play in the economic and social development of their area and embed this within their corporate strategy. This will enable local authorities to use their role as a local leader to bring together other potential partners and investors around their vision and strategy.

- Local authorities that are reviewing funding of the arts and culture should consider all alternative models of delivery.

## NEW WAYS OF WORKING

In light of ongoing pressure on local authority budgets, it is essential that local authorities look for alternative and sustainable methods of support and this research has demonstrated that local authorities are increasingly doing this. Nearly 70 per cent of survey respondents stated that they had implemented or considered implementing stand-alone trusts or community interest companies and 60.7 per cent stated that they had implemented or considered moving from a grant aid to commissioner/provider relationship. Alternative models are available, both by restructuring organisational models and maximising capacity. We would recommend that:

- All local authorities and arts and cultural organisations make themselves aware of the different models of support that are available to them. In many cases a change of organisational structure can be beneficial and arts organisations are open to working differently. In particular:
  - *Trust models* provide a much greater degree of flexibility than organisations that are working within local authorities.
  - *Sharing services* enable organisations not only to save money through organisational restructure, but also to share and enhance staff skill sets.
  - *Commissioning models* encourage arts and cultural organisations to align their outcomes with the health and wellbeing and social care priorities for a locality. This can help maximise the impact that they have upon communities while securing sustainability by broadening the partnerships within which they work, embedding their practice socially within communities, and diversifying income streams.
- Local authorities increasingly need to work in partnerships with other organisations and volunteers to sustain the arts and culture in their areas. The following should be considered:
  - *Local and national organisations* can partner with local authorities and share a combined strategy, maximise funding opportunities

and share skills and services to ensure that arts and culture are delivered at a high standard but on a more streamlined budget.

- *Volunteers* can help local authorities to maximise community capacity and foster greater relationships with residents and 'cultural entrepreneurs'. Residents and volunteers will be essential in sustaining the arts and culture locally and local authorities must find new ways of fostering relationships with them.
- Many local authorities have already reduced the number of dedicated arts and culture officers. It is important that local authorities understand the pivotal role that a dedicated officer can have in sustaining the arts and culture of an area. Officers can help partner with other organisations to ensure that everyone is working towards a clear vision. They are also essential to foster, engage and unlock community capacity. Officers can help residents to negotiate difficult funding applications, or other more practical issues, such as health and safety for which guidance is needed.

# APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDIES

## A ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL THE DE LA WARR PAVILION

Situated on the East Sussex coast, Bexhill is the cultural hub of Rother District. The De La Warr Pavilion, initially commissioned in 1935 by socialist mayor 9th Earl De La Warr and constructed in a Modernist style, is the most iconic and important site in this cultural landscape, looking out over the sea front. Since its first opening it has served the purpose of acting as an important node for the regeneration of Bexhill sea front, the town at large, and the surrounding area. Bexhill and Rother District have populations of approximately 40,000 and 90,000 respectively. Now a contemporary arts centre, the Pavilion tends to receive people from Bexhill and further afield, at about a 50/50 split, with the majority coming from within a 30 minute drive. Visitor numbers hover above 300,000 per year.

Following relative prosperity during the years when Bexhill, like many other coastal settlements, had a thriving visitor economy, Rother experienced a decline in the 1980s and 1990s, with increasing numbers travelling abroad for their vacations. During these years, the De La Warr was in danger of becoming semi-derelict and no longer fit to serve the community. Towards the late 1990s and early 2000s, approximately £1 million per year was being spent on the Pavilion, with limited significant positive output. Most of this money had to be spent on maintaining the building and subsidising cups of tea. Bars and catering were losing in excess of £150,000 per annum.

As such, Rother District Council had the foresight to register the De La Warr as both a huge asset and potential liability for the district. Rother District Council was concerned not to allow a Grade 1 listed building to become derelict, and recognised its capacity to kick-start

regeneration. In 2002, the De La Warr secured funding from Arts Council England (£4.1m) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.9m) for its restoration and redevelopment into a contemporary arts centre. A new charity – the De La Warr Pavilion Charitable Trust – was set up and management of the Pavilion and its artistic programme was transferred to the trust from the council as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

## PUTTING THE DE LA WARR OUT TO TRUST

The freehold of the building remained with Rother District Council while its management was transferred to the trust. The council leases the building to the trust at no cost, but this is a ‘fully repairing’ lease, which is to say that the trust are now responsible for the building’s upkeep, repair and all management. The Council continues to fund the trust at £500,000 per year and has in June 2014 agreed to extend this funding for a further seven years. In addition to this, its autonomy has enabled it to fundraise elsewhere.

From the Council’s point of view, Rother District Council has therefore been able to make savings of £500,000 on what it had previously been putting into the De La Warr – these savings now support other much needed local services. The council meets with the De La Warr management on a quarterly basis to monitor progress. Predominantly this is done at an arm’s length, and the most direct involvement the council has is in making the funding agreement. Although the process of transition of this service to trust has not been entirely straightforward, over a decade into the arrangement the benefits are clearly visible.

Overall the benefits of the transformation of the De La Warr from decaying village hall into dynamic contemporary arts centre are in time being felt by all. In particular, the trust has benefitted from its renewed sense of purpose and direction, its autonomy, and the skillset and knowledge of its board members.

## GOING OUT TO TRUST EARLY

Above all the decision to go out to trust from 2000, a decision taken outside the context of austerity, illustrates how this model can be beneficial even when financial or economic constraints are not immediately threatening. Moreover, the council and the trust are now seeing the benefits of the longevity of this engagement. While one of the biggest challenges has been to convince councillors and community that the arrangement is worthwhile, the council's position is also now shifting. The funding contract is gradually less prescriptive as the council and the trust have arrived at a point of mutual confidence and understanding of priorities. While this has taken some time, the trust now experiences a great deal of freedom and can make the most of its board's range of expertise.

One of the major benefits has been the trust's freedom from 'red tape'. This makes for efficient management and the budget can be managed discreetly, giving the board not only more responsibility but also sufficient political distance and capacity to manage funds strategically. Rother District Council continues to offer leadership vision, particularly as two councillors sit on the board. The board's autonomy has enabled it to put together and promote a dynamic programme for the Pavilion, in order to secure funding from the council and Arts Council England.

Moreover, the Pavilion has an influential board. The board itself has a dozen, carefully picked members and is divided into several sub-committees (Fundraising committee / Education and Learning now Audience Development Committee and Building Committee). Its members are diverse: some are local, others from London; some have arts expertise, while others have managerial expertise. Each sub-committee has a particular remit, from thinking about audiences to caring for the building's architecture, and members are appointed according to their particular expertise. This system of governance enables more strategic decision-making and engenders more precision in the future development of the Pavilion as an iconic building, as contemporary arts centre, and as nodal point for the regeneration of Bexhill.



## **B NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS TRUST**

The Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT) was established in April 2012 as an independent charitable trust to take over the ownership and management of Northamptonshire County Council's music services. Although the establishment of such a trust had always been an option in Northamptonshire, the need arose for this after Northamptonshire County Council were aware that they needed to make cuts to the grants they were making to the music services.

Following a wave of popular backing for the music service, with parents, students and staff seeking its preservation, and the council having 'never had a postbag like it', a project board was established to consider a range of options for the council and community. These options ranged from completely terminating the music service to making it wholly independent from the council by putting it out to charitable trust. In the end, the latter option was chosen as an outcome of 'resident demand' and NMPAT was established.

Prior to NMPAT, the music service had been receiving £450,000 per year from the council. With the withdrawal of the council's funding the music service may not have completely shut down; however, some of its most important and exciting services, which do not make money, would not survive. These include free concerts and live music in schools, scholarships and bursaries schemes for students and families with financial insecurity, and county bands and orchestras. In total, NMPAT is now a £5.1 million business. It collects £4.3 million from its clients, who largely are parents of students. The council no longer spends the £450,000 it had previously spent on the music services.

## **SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION PROCESS**

Crucially, the council has supported the transition process. There are six ways in particular in which the council has provided safety nets and facilitated the transfer of the music services to trust. These are:

1. The council is picking up redundancy costs to the date of transfer in perpetuity. As such, staff previously employed by the council being made redundant, would have the proportion of their redundancy relating to council employment covered by the council.
2. The council underwrote the teachers' pension scheme. Thus staff have retained their membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme with no break or adjustment to their benefits.
3. The council transferred ownership of the building that NMPAT operates from at zero cost to NMPAT. This building is currently valued at £495,000.
4. The council offered NMPAT a loan at 1 per cent above Libor rates if needed, although NMPAT have not had to use this yet.
5. The council has continued hosting the trust's website within Northamptonshire County Council's website framework.
6. The council gradually reduced its grant over three years to enable the music service to adjust to its new status.

## BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

NMPAT is also experiencing certain challenges. The absence of a budget the size of the council's behind NMPAT leaves a lurking sense of insecurity, despite some of the safety nets outlined above. Meanwhile, more costs have been passed onto the parents of students in the absence of council funding, staff are paid less and work longer hours, and there is no capital expenditure on instruments. Most music teachers are not entirely happy, but are happier that the music services have survived in the form they have, rather than not existing at all. In general, teachers have mixed altruism with realism.

However, there have also been recognisable benefits. In some areas, moving the music services to trust has allowed for greater freedom to make an impact on the local arts scene. For instance, NMPAT feels less constrained by council restrictions on recruitment. It is also free from

some of the recurrent challenges of being integrated within the local authority framework. Some staff reported having been moved between countless departments during their time working within the council framework, often engendering a sense of uncertainty and frustration.

## C TRI-BOROUGH COMBINING LIBRARY SERVICES

In October 2010, the neighbouring local authorities of Westminster City Council, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea began planning to combine specific areas of service delivery as a response to financial pressures facing local government. The three chief executives and the three leaders of each council met to discuss the possibilities and in February 2011 the three local authorities published a report entitled *Bold Ideas for Challenging Times*.<sup>17</sup>

During these discussions there was a strong alignment of views and a commitment to working together as three boroughs. This was greatly enhanced by the fact that the three local authorities were controlled by the same political party (Conservative). During the discussions, it was immediately apparent that some services such as Policy and Communications and Governance would not work in a Tri-borough system. However it was thought that other services such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Library Services could work well. Library services in particular worked well as it was a discrete service with measurable outputs. All three local authorities felt that the creation of a single library service would help ensure the resilience and sustainability of the public library offer in each Tri-borough authority. The Tri-borough system sought to introduce a single managed library service that could provide an opportunity to sustain frontline services, whilst also ensuring that local sovereignty would be preserved.

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<sup>17</sup> Westminster City Council, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, (2011), *Tri-Borough Proposals Report - Bold ideas for challenging times*, [online], [https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/workspace/assets/publications/tri-borough-proposals-report\\_aw3-1297241297.pdf](https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/workspace/assets/publications/tri-borough-proposals-report_aw3-1297241297.pdf)

Proposals were drawn up and in April 2012 the libraries in the three areas came under Tri-borough management. Initially services were integrated under three main lines: a single management structure, service efficiency and an integrated core service.

- **Single management structure:** A single integrated library service across all three authorities was put in place and was led by a single management structure. A single management structure combined the strategic management of each authority's library service within one management team of four, reducing the number of posts by six. The new management structure has one Head of Service who oversees a team of three senior managers: Community Development Manager, Operations Manager and Reference and Information Manager. Streamlining these posts saved all three authorities a combined total of £315,934 per annum.
- **Service efficiency:** Using a detailed transactional model and applying local operational and professional knowledge the number of staff required to operate each of the tri-borough libraries to the required service level was established. All three authorities had the opportunity to refine the model to ensure it reflected best practice and addressed local circumstances. The model does not factor in specific local environmental factors but does give a minimum base point against which staffing levels can be flexed in accordance with demand. Currently 174 posts are required to run a basic integrated tri-borough lending service (not including reference or specialist services) which is 8 posts less than the previous staffing establishment per borough. This saved all three authorities a combined total of £231,672 per annum.
- **Integrated core service:** The combined existing structures across the Tri-borough libraries used to be made up of 297 full time equivalent posts costing £9,778,003. The core service areas excluding locally commissioned services (e.g. Archives, Home Library Service, Prison Service) cost £8,566,831 and were made up of 259 full time equivalent posts. An operating model was developed to show how an integrated core service could work. This model comprises 231.5 full time equivalent

posts. This model provides a basic service offer that has been implemented across all three authorities. Additional services are commissioned locally by individual authorities. In total this saved all three authorities a combined total of £560,154 per annum.

A summary of savings opportunities can be found in the table below.

	Financial Savings (£)			Grand Total
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	
Single management structure	-	315,934		315,934
Service efficiency	-	173,754	57,918	231,672
Integrated core service	-	420,115	140,039	560,154
Total		909,803	197,957	1,107,760

## BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Up until the point that sharing library services had been considered, each authority offered a slightly different service and these needed to be harmonised or differences agreed upon e.g. fines, loan lengths, salaries. In addition to this, Hammersmith and Fulham had already begun developing their library service to a 'More than a library' brand<sup>18</sup> and had spent considerable time developing their customer experience offer. Two libraries had previously been transferred into community ownership so, in light of this, only four libraries transferred into Tri-borough. Because of this, the savings available to Hammersmith and Fulham were not in the same league as they were for the other two local authorities. However, the authority could still see the advantage of combining their library service. For example, Westminster has a very wide range of library

<sup>18</sup> Hammersmith and Fulham Council, *Libraries Mandate: More than a library*, [online-last accessed 15/07/14], <http://democracy.lbhf.gov.uk/documents/s13365/Item%20c%20-%20Hammersmith%20and%20Fulham%20Libraries%20Mandate.pdf>

services and residents of Hammersmith and Fulham would be easily able to avail of these. One of the most difficult decisions to make was the decision to make 15 staff redundant. Not only was this clearly difficult for those who were made redundant but it was also unsettling for remaining staff. However, all three authorities recognised that if library services were to be maintained for residents, some tough choices had to be made.

The advantages of this model have been two-fold. As has been demonstrated there have been clear financial advantages for all three authorities. In addition to this, there have also been benefits for the residents. Specific benefits for residents have included access to a wider Tri-borough service offering, enabling users to access a wider range of books and other materials including the specialist collections held by each borough. Residents are also benefiting from the differing specialist expertise and experience of staff and a consistency of service standards across the three boroughs.

## THE FUTURE

The three local authorities are continuing to integrate their library services and are now in the final phase of rolling out a common Library Management System, which will see residents of each authority offered one library card that will enable them to borrow a book from any library in the Tri-borough area. Implementing one system has saved a further £800k over a 5-year period by tendering a more competitively priced hosted solution for library management software.

However, cost pressures continue and Tri-borough hasn't insulated the services from having to make future savings. While libraries have avoided closure in the immediate future, no authority can guarantee this on an ongoing, permanent basis. It is also a fact that any local authority can withdraw from the arrangement with the appropriate notice time. There was a view that the arrangement had only been successful as a result of all authorities being controlled by the same political party. However, in May 2014, Hammersmith and Fulham came under Labour control, and early indications are that Labour are,

in general, happy with the arrangement. A review of all Tri-borough services is being undertaken by Lord Adonis amongst others, but this continued successful arrangement has the potential to demonstrate that political difference need not be a barrier to councils working together in a shared services model.

## D DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL CAST THEATRE

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council is situated in South Yorkshire and has a population of just over 300,000. As with other northern cities, Doncaster has particularly suffered from high unemployment and a lack of investment. It has long been acknowledged that the centre of Doncaster has been in need of regeneration. In addition to this, Doncaster was ranked 347 out of 354 local councils in England for resident participation in the Arts.<sup>19</sup>

In the early 2000s, plans were drawn up to revitalise an area of the city that would become known as the 'Civic and Cultural Quarter'. At the centre of this regeneration was a new theatre for Doncaster – Cast – to replace the old Civic Theatre. The new Cast complex, which includes a 600-seat auditorium, a studio and dance and drama workshops, has been erected on the site of a derelict college car park and is at the heart of a £300 million development. It is intended to re-engage the residents of Doncaster with the local arts scene, while also contributing to the regeneration of Doncaster by increasing the appeal of Doncaster to international companies looking for UK headquarters.

## BRINGING SERVICES TOGETHER: THE DONCASTER CULTURE AND LEISURE TRUST

However, in the mid-2000s there was a fear that this regeneration would have to be halted due to financial pressures. Fortunately for

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<sup>19</sup> Arts Council England, (2011), *Active People Survey*, [online], <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/arts-audiences/active-people-survey/>

the new theatre, the plans for its development were so advanced that it would have been more costly to abandon them. However, some plans did need to change. The original plan was for Cast to be a stand-alone trust, but this was altered in 2009/2010 as it was felt that it would be too costly (nearly £1m) for Cast to have its own trust. It was ultimately decided that the theatre should be run as a charitable subsidiary of the Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT), as they were able to share many services.

In 2011 the DCLT, which has existed since 2004, acquired all culture and leisure services. DCLT was formed with the intention of making financial savings to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. However, there are a number of other advantages of bringing services together within the trust. As a trust, DCLT are able to work within a more commercial framework. This allows DCLT more flexibility to make changes to services than would be possible within the council framework.

In any case, financial savings have been significant for the council. With the transfer of the culture and leisure services to DCLT, the council saved £600,000 in the first instance, and more savings are expected over time. In 2010/2011 the council spent £3.2 million on culture and leisure services whereas in 2015/2016 they expect to spend £500,000 to commission the trust to carry out culture and leisure services.

## RECOGNISING CAST'S DISTINCTIVE 'CULTURE'

The council spent £22m on the building for Cast, which is now leased to the DCLT. The Arts Council gave a further £2.1m in capital for the project on the proviso that the theatre had its own subsidiary board. This was significant as it required the DCLT to recognise that Cast needed to be run on a different basis from other DCLT services. DCLT's main interest is leisure centres and these have been run very successfully on a commercial basis. However, there is an understanding that Cast could not and should not be run on the same commercial basis. Programming is the responsibility of Cast's director and this is supported by the subsidiary board. However, there are savings to be made by being a subsidiary of DCLT.



DCLT has assisted greatly in setting up Cast and assists with human resources, finances, ticketing and catering. However, Cast is independent in its marketing. There is a distinct culture between Cast and DCLT in terms of how they operate and an acknowledgement that, as a commercial venture, DCLT will always chase the pounds and look for the more commercial aspect, whereas Cast has a wider remit. These differences are well defined, however, and both organisations continue to have a good working relationship.

The Civic Theatre has now closed in Doncaster and Cast opened its doors in late 2013. Cast sees its role in Doncaster as a catalyst stimulating growth in demand as well as supply of arts. It seeks to achieve this by making arts and culture more accessible to the people of Doncaster.

## **E WAKEFIELD COUNCIL**

### **REGENERATING WITH THE ARTS AND CULTURE**

Wakefield, a Metropolitan District Council in West Yorkshire, is home to 327,600 people in a diverse range of urban and rural communities. IMD 2010<sup>20</sup> ranks Wakefield as the 67<sup>th</sup> most deprived district in England with around 15 per cent of the population living in the top 10 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The council has a strong commitment to arts and culture believing that it can contribute towards improving the economic and social wellbeing of the district. The Leader, in particular, recognises the value of culture as either a tool for regeneration or towards improving the health and wellbeing of local residents. The council has been consistently investing in culture to establish Wakefield as a new cultural destination in Yorkshire. This has been done through the opening of a major new art gallery, The Hepworth Wakefield in 2011, and through providing long term support to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

The council is striving to continue with this development whilst also ensuring that local residents have equality of access to the rich range

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<sup>20</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), (2010), [online], <http://data.gov.uk/dataset/index-of-multiple-deprivation>

of cultural resources. To do this the council's 'Creative Partners Grant Scheme', an open and competitive process for Wakefield based organisations, supports the delivery of innovative cultural activity which engages and increases participation from all residents across the district. In recent years, the grant scheme has evolved to include a commissioning model which is generating strong links between Culture and Public Health to support projects which target improvements to the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable communities in the district.

Through developing strong local partnerships, Wakefield Council aims to maximise investment in the regeneration of the district's infrastructure so as to bring about growth in the visitor economy whilst providing outstanding value for money for local people.<sup>21</sup> Wakefield has been keen to transform itself into a cultural destination and has invested and attracted external investment towards delivering the flagship development The Hepworth Wakefield and improving the wider city centre infrastructure such as the redevelopment of Westgate and Kirkgate rail stations, a new Trinity Walk retail area, and improvements to the public realm.

Wakefield's digital, creative and cultural sector is now identified as being one of the district's six key priority sectors and has experienced the strongest employment growth in recent years with an increase of +26.7 per cent compared to the national average of +0.7 per cent. The latest forecasts from the Regional Econometric Model suggest that this sector is likely to grow by 14 per cent in GVA terms between 2013-2018, equivalent to a £34m increase.

The Hepworth Wakefield opened on 21 May 2011 and in just three years has attracted over 1 million visits and won many awards including being a finalist for the Arts Fund Museum of the Year in 2012. The gallery was designed by renowned British architect David Chipperfield and was built with funding from Wakefield Council, the

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<sup>21</sup> CLOA, (2012), *Visitor economy case studies*, [online], [www.cloa.org.uk/.../2012-08-23\\_Visitor\\_Economy\\_Case\\_Studies.doc](http://www.cloa.org.uk/.../2012-08-23_Visitor_Economy_Case_Studies.doc)

Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire Forward, the Homes and Communities Agency, the European Regional Development Fund and also a number of charitable trusts, corporations and private individuals. The Hepworth Wakefield is now one of the most successful purpose-built galleries in the UK and in the top three most visited galleries outside of London.

Nearby to the Hepworth, the city centre hosts an array of cultural organisations: Wakefield Theatre Royal, Beam and the historic Orangery, The Art House, Unity Hall, a council operated library and museum and a diverse range of local art groups committed to animating the city centre such as Wakefield Art Walk, Wood Street Market and the Long Division Music Festival.

The Art House, a national organisation based in a new purpose-designed centre, focuses on extending equality in visual arts, providing accessible studios and a portfolio of opportunities. It is soon to expand its work with an additional 33 artists' studios through the £4 million refurbishment of a former library building which was offered by the council on a long term, peppercorn lease. Unity Hall will soon open to provide the city with a much needed music/performance venue including managed workspace and conference facilities with a further £4million investment which includes additional financial support by the council.

## THE CREATIVE PARTNERS GRANT SCHEME

Wakefield Council's cultural grant scheme provides funding to support projects or programmes of activity that deliver specific outcomes in support of the council's main strategic goals. With the continuing pressures on council budgets, the grant scheme has seen a reduction in recent years resulting in some loss of funding for cultural organisations. However, there is still a commitment to sustaining the grant scheme as it is recognised as offering local people quality opportunities to participate and access cultural activity. Each year, Creative Partners supports an average of 12 local cultural organisations and engages around 50,000 participants in high quality cultural activity.

In the last year the grant scheme, administered by Sport and Culture service, has introduced a pilot commissioning model, delivered in partnership with Wakefield's Public Health services. The commissioning process has been designed to ensure projects demonstrate value for money and develop innovative new approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable communities through engagement and participation in cultural activity.

The commissioning programme is called Culture Cures and is jointly funded by Public Health and an allocation from Creative Partners. The aspiration for Culture Cures is to reduce inequalities and create a happier and healthier Wakefield through creative engagement to achieve two specific outcomes.

1. Deliver a programme of cultural activities that raises aspirations and encourages healthy lifestyle choices amongst children and young people in Wakefield.
2. Deliver a programme of cultural activities that improves the happiness, mental health and wellbeing of vulnerable people in Wakefield district.

These outcomes were guided by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Wakefield Health and Wellbeing Strategy which also determined the population groups that the projects would deliver to, ensuring the grant fund supports and improves the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable people in the district. As a result, innovative projects creating new models of working are being delivered by Faceless Arts to embed creativity in care home settings and One to One Development Trust to create inspiring and cutting edge multimedia resources around Healthy Eating.

The partnership between public health and the arts and culture in Wakefield has raised awareness about the benefits of cultural commissioning and introduced to public health the advantages of working with arts organisations as a valuable resource to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes.

## F ST ALBANS DISTRICT COUNCIL PARTNERS IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE

St Albans City and District benefits from its strong cultural heritage, in particular the Verulamium Park and Museum, which conserve and display the Roman history of the site, and St Albans Cathedral, which dates from Norman times. Despite this, the city struggles to compete with other destinations and its proximity to London is considered as much of a hindrance as a help. In order to boost the visitor economy of the area, St Albans District Council announced its Visitor Economy Strategy for 2013-18, which aims to “increase the number of visitors to the District, encourage them to stay longer and spend more when they are here”.

Part of this strategy and its effects have been to integrate the efforts of sectors such as culture and heritage with tourism, for example through marketing and coordinating events so that they fall on the same weekend. Furthermore, in the context of austerity and strategic economic planning by St Albans District Council, stakeholders in arts and culture have been working together in a variety of partnerships, some of which have been formalised while others remain relatively informal.

St Albans illustrates how multiple forms of partnerships can contribute to a flourishing arts scene in the context of austerity. These partnerships exist between the District Council and other local stakeholders, including but not restricted to new cultural entrepreneurs and existing cultural organisations, as well as with external partners. Through collaborative practices such as the offering of spaces for venues or combining events so as to generate further publicity and reduce costs by joint marketing, the council has promoted and supported arts in the District that resulted in the council attaining an Arts Council Grant of £76,000 from the Strategic Support Fund to develop a business museum and heritage conversation programme working with other museums and heritage organisations. Furthermore, the District has been twice able to welcome funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Visitor Economy Strategy has provided the platform for the partnership of St Albans District Council arts team and the

Cathedral and has enabled the Museums Project and the Cathedral development project to both secure HLF funding.

Three types of emerging partnerships in St Albans will now be explored.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH EXISTING LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

The first type of emerging partnership in St Albans is with existing local cultural or heritage organisations. An example of this is the recent work between the District Council arts team and St Albans Cathedral. The Cathedral is not owned or funded by St Albans District Council. However, both have recently received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Cathedral has recently secured funding of £390,000 from the HLF for a major development project, 'Alban, Britain's First Saint: Telling the Story', which aims to attract new, diverse and greater audiences to the Cathedral through a combination of further conservation, new interpretation, a more expansive events programme, and the provision of new welcome and learning spaces. Meanwhile, St Albans District Council have secured HLF funding worth an initial £282,000 for the initial development phase of the Museums Project, which will progress to a further £2.5 million for the renovation of the Old Town Hall. That two HLF grants have been offered almost simultaneously to two projects in the District has been made possible by an effective overall strategic thinking and planning provided by St Albans District Council and a range of stakeholders, particularly in the form of the Visitor Economy Strategy.

Moreover, the combination of strategic planning from St Albans District Council with the utilisation of informal networks among stakeholders, for example the closer relationship between the council and the cathedral, has enabled stronger coordination of efforts. This is further evidenced by a number of events. For example, the Alban Weekend, held 21-22 June 2014, combined the Alban Pilgrimage Procession, a Cathedral initiative, on the Saturday with a street festival coordinated by the council on the Sunday. The coordination of these events run by the Cathedral and St Albans District Council have produced a minimum of £10,000 enabled joint savings and

have led to higher overall visitor numbers with over 10,000 people coming to the Alban Street Festival this year, 2014. For instance, this has been achieved through traffic management savings by shutting down streets in the city centre on consecutive days. In addition, joint marketing strategies have worked for a range of stakeholders. For example, the Cathedral used to only contact their own email list and print around one hundred posters to promote the Procession, but now benefit from St Albans District Council's promotion at 17 bus stops, 8 banner sites and through the distribution of hundreds of fliers and utilising the visitor brand website – Enjoy St. Albans.

In 2013 the organisations worked together to deliver the Magna Carta Celebrations. These included the Cathedral displaying one of the original versions of the document which was viewed by over 16,000 people and a concert with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra where joint promotion ensured a full nave with the sale of nearly 550 tickets.

For the last 12 years the Arts Team has worked in partnership with a range of voluntary organisations and parish councils to deliver Larks in the Parks. This neighbourhood building family fun day event takes place simultaneously in 5 different green spaces and the team supplies acts, infrastructure and organisational support. Over the years numbers attending have grown to around 5000 across the 5 sites which with a project budget of £10,000 equates to a spend of £2 per head.

St Albans District Council is establishing an Arts & Culture Network embracing community organisations and 'cultural entrepreneurs'. This group has met twice so far and the intention is to help it to become independent of the authority so it is not perceived as a 'council' organisation. This network has enabled the council to develop a revenue funding programme to secure a three year events plan with clear strategic outcomes as listed below:

- Increasing the visitor economy
- Promoting local businesses
- Building vibrant, cohesive communities
- Promoting local heritage
- Providing new cultural experiences

The majority of the events programme is currently delivered by council officers. In future more local community groups and partnerships will be facilitated to deliver the programme. It is intended to give greater focus to this way of working in 2014 with a view to having a 2015 and 2016 programme delivered primarily through local partnerships. An existing example of this type of delivery was the 2013 Film Festival.

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH 'CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS'

The second type of emerging partnership is between the St Albans District Council arts team and local 'cultural entrepreneurs' or 'cultural activists'. In particular, St Albans District Council is trying to establish effective partnerships with stakeholders who are trying to set up a range of new arts and cultural events, particularly those seeking support that does not predominantly revolve around funding from St Albans District Council.

The best example of this recent trend has been the support offered by St Albans District Council to the St Albans Film Festival. This festival was set up by a St Albans' resident and actor. St Albans District Council offered the festival an empty shop as a Box Office for the five to six weeks before the Film Festival ran in early May. This was next to the main Tourist Information Centre in St Albans, resulting in additional footfall. St Albans District Council charged the festival no rent for the time the Box Office was set up, and only asked the Film Festival to cover the bills for electricity.

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The third type of emerging partnership is between local arts stakeholders and national organisations. The Museum of St Albans has partnered with the British Museum to help them run the shop in the St Albans Museum. The arrangement is such that St Albans Museum Shop now buys its stock from the British Museum, which in turn monitors stock levels. This has enabled the shop to invest less



and achieve higher turnover, approximately double. For instance, it is now possible for the Museums Shop to buy much more specialised and expensive products directly from the British Museum for sale, without having to bulk buy in order to save money. As such, the shop now sells items that bring in much more revenue than before and people spending much more money on average at the shop. In addition to this, the British Museum has provided staff training for those working in the St Albans Museum Shop.<sup>22</sup>

## G EREWASH BOROUGH COUNCIL CAFE – BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Erewash Borough Council is a district council in eastern Derbyshire with a population of just over 100,000. Traditionally the district did not have a strong emphasis on the arts and culture and previously was one of the only districts in Derbyshire not to have an arts development officer. After the Audit Commission advised that there should be a more coordinated strategy for culture for the borough, the council invested more in arts and culture and created the posts of two part time arts development officers. Since 2007, these two part-time officers have been instrumental in starting a culture and arts forum for Erewash – CAFE.

CAFE (Culture and Arts Forum Erewash) is a not-for-profit organisation that was created as a means of supporting the development of culture and creativity in Erewash. CAFE's members include visual artists, arts organisations, makers, writers, performers, curators and arts administrators living and working in Erewash. While the forum is made up of various arts practitioners, the arts development officers were essential to the drive behind the initial set-up. The forum is now run by a committee of volunteers with administrative support being provided by the arts development officers (their time is donated by the local authority). Importantly,

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<sup>22</sup> The Telegraph, (2014), 'Is this town Britain's answer to Hollywood?', [online], <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/10811205/Is-this-town-Britains-answer-to-Hollywood.html>; The Telegraph, (2013), 'Magna Carta goes on tour', [online], <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/uk/10112230/Magna-Carta-goes-on-tour.html>

the local authority is now viewed as 'the middle man', but does not dictate how CAFE should be run.

The aims and objectives of the forum (as decided by the forum members, not the council) are to:

- Raise the profile of and provide advocacy for all arts in Erewash
- Provide a collective voice for key issues
- Act as a catalyst for the development of all arts and creative activity in Erewash
- Enable and support sharing and networking; strengthening the infrastructure of professional, amateur and not for profit arts organisations and individuals
- Raise funds as appropriate

CAFE meets on a bi-monthly basis and administrative support is provided by the two arts development officers. Each meeting tackles a different theme e.g. how arts practitioners can source funding, legal issues for artists, how to create publicity for projects. Through these advice sessions, artists create connections and gain support. These advice sessions are provided by both members of the forum with expertise and knowledge in specific areas and also from outside experts. Through this forum artists create connections and gain support that otherwise would need to be provided by the council or perhaps would not be available at all.

Establishing CAFE was not an easy task and the whole set up process took nearly two years. At least ten meetings were needed before a committee and a constitution were in place. The most difficult aspect was getting people to commit volunteer time since, although they were interested, they were unsure what they would be committing to. In the first instance it was mostly organisations that joined but now it is increasingly individual artists. Another particular challenge was that some individuals looked at CAFE as a forum in which they should show their discontent with the council. As time has gone by though, increasingly people are willing to volunteer and see the arts development officers as an asset to the forum.

## rEvive

'rEvive' is an arts project that was initially jointly funded by Arts Council England and Erewash Borough Council designed to bring professional and voluntary arts by local artists, arts organisations, community groups and schools into the heart of Long Eaton and Ilkeston town centres. Empty shops and centrally located spaces have been filled with creative workshops, performances, exhibitions and retail opportunities with the aim of revitalising the town centres, encouraging increased retail enterprise and engaging local residents and visitors in creative activities. As well as attracting visitors to the area, adding a vibrancy to the town centres and attracting other businesses to view an empty property, there are financial advantages for landlords including offsetting empty property business rates.

While this project was given a council grant of £8,000 from a £52,000 grant that the council received from Department for Communities and Local Government for regeneration, the entire project would not have been possible without the many volunteer hours that have been dedicated to this project. The initial funding paid for some project management time and the project manager worked with volunteers to identify and secure empty shops. Curating and shop repair was also shared between the volunteer and the project manager. While the council facilitated the project, volunteers provided the capacity to mobilise the project and make it the vibrant success that it has been. In total 1,630 volunteer hours have made the rEvive project possible. The entire project would not have been possible without the extensive volunteer input.

Erewash Borough Council demonstrates that even if a council does not have a tradition of supporting the arts and culture it can create and foster the arts and culture in an area through supporting artists and enabling them to network and share knowledge. Through forums such as this the arts and culture is going from strength to strength in Erewash with minimal input from the council. In the future Erewash are hoping to create an Arts Partnership Board for the district that will help to create the Arts and Cultural Strategy. It is expected that members of CAFE would play a part on this board as representatives of the artistic community.

## H DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

Historically, Darlington has been the home to a vibrant arts scene. Previously much of this ran out of some key facilities, such as the Darlington Arts Centre, the Civic Theatre, and the Railway Museum supported by Darlington Borough Council as assets for the local community and the wider region. As a space The Arts Centre was the second biggest centre of its kind in England outside the Barbican in London.

However, when austerity hit, it was decided that arts funding would be cut, including for the Civic Theatre and Arts Centre. The public outcry that followed resulted in the emergence of Darlington for Culture, as a protest group consisting of local residents and art practitioners, which objected to the closure of some of the borough's most treasured arts venues. The council responded by setting up an Arts Enquiry Group in 2011 with a private sector chair to address the question of how Darlington could create the conditions where arts and culture could thrive in the context of austerity, demonstrating resolve and a commitment to responding to resident demand.

As a result of the Enquiry Group, Creative Darlington was established to develop Darlington as a place where art happens, where the arts matter and where the arts and creativity are central to Darlington's future identity and economic success. Perhaps more significantly, Darlington Borough Council was able to turn a difficult relationship with Darlington for Culture into a pragmatic and workable one in which residents could both have a say in the future of the arts and were an additional resource as suppliers of local knowledge and as an active public network of interested stakeholders. At a critical juncture for local arts and culture, a surge of anger, and hence the potential for divisions to become entrenched, was turned into an opportunity.

## THE ENQUIRY GROUP AND CREATIVE DARLINGTON

The Enquiry Group was chaired by a private sector businessman, and included representatives from Arts Council England, local arts organisations, businesses and Darlington for Culture. In total, 1,500 people were involved in the enquiry process. A new model was proposed in which Darlington would focus on its specialism, namely children's and young people's theatre including Theatre Hullabaloo, alongside the borough's broad based arts offer. Creative Darlington would be established with a board whose remit would be to support this specialism and other arts organisations and initiatives as appropriate. The council's role, meanwhile, would be to manage financial risk, leaving the Creative Darlington board with the freedom to manage priorities within the arts and culture sector.

The Creative Darlington board comprises of the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder, the Darlington for Culture Chair, an Arts Council representative, and a range of key stakeholders from within the business, higher education, health, arts and media communities within Darlington and the wider north east region. It is chaired by a business person and the vice chair comes from Teesside University. Although Darlington does not have a cultural strategy as such, the enquiry process and its outcomes have offered an alternative model of how to pursue a thriving arts scene, while the Creative Darlington board offers a forum in which a range of stakeholders can further discuss the direction of the arts, take strategic decisions and apply the strong vision articulated through the initial Creative Darlington priorities.

## MAKING SAVINGS AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE CIVIC THEATRE

At the heart of the new model was the notion of arts as an integral component of place; that is, arts belongs to and can contribute meaningfully to the overall health and economy of Darlington. As a result of the campaigning by Darlington for Culture and the investigations pursued by the council, the Civic Theatre was retained by the council, and with a dedicated Director and small team is

rapidly reaching the point of breaking even. Unfortunately, the Arts Centre could not be saved, and is on the market to be sold. However, importantly, the council has agreed that all of the proceeds will be put back into the arts, match funding a potential new Children's and Community Theatre and supporting all initiatives.

In total, the council has saved between £1.1 million and £1.3 million through these changes and has reduced its expenditure to £200,000, which is channelled through Creative Darlington. Creative Darlington only has one paid member of staff while volunteers now help to operate venues such as the Bridge, a new Visual arts space that receives £10,100 funding and has become in the absence of the Arts Centre a space for projects such as the community arts project that works with adults with learning difficulties.

## DARLINGTON FOR CULTURE

Integral to Darlington Borough Council's decision to set up an Enquiry Group was Darlington for Culture's pressure on the council to respond to resident demand. Although Darlington for Culture initially took form as a protest organisation, with members angry at the council for the decision to close the arts centre, in time it has emerged as an important actor helping to support and build arts in Darlington.

It is a testimony to the genuine commitment of many Darlington for Culture members that they decided to retain the organisation as a network following the closure of the Arts Centre. New committees were established and Darlington for Culture took on a more pragmatic and practical role as a network that could both support and help promote the arts offer, including that which exists outside the main venues. In May 2014, Darlington for Culture held the second Darlington Arts Festival.

Above all, Darlington for Culture has become an important organisation through its ability to provide a network through which the arts can be promoted, supporting Creative Darlington. The willingness of Darlington Borough Council and Creative Darlington to

work with and respond to the concerns of Darlington for Culture, as well as draw upon local knowledge and audience perception, shows how this relationship, through a mutual sense of pragmatism, can work to support arts and culture in Darlington while savings are being made. The survival of the Civic Theatre is a testament to this.

## APPENDIX 2: METHODOLOGY

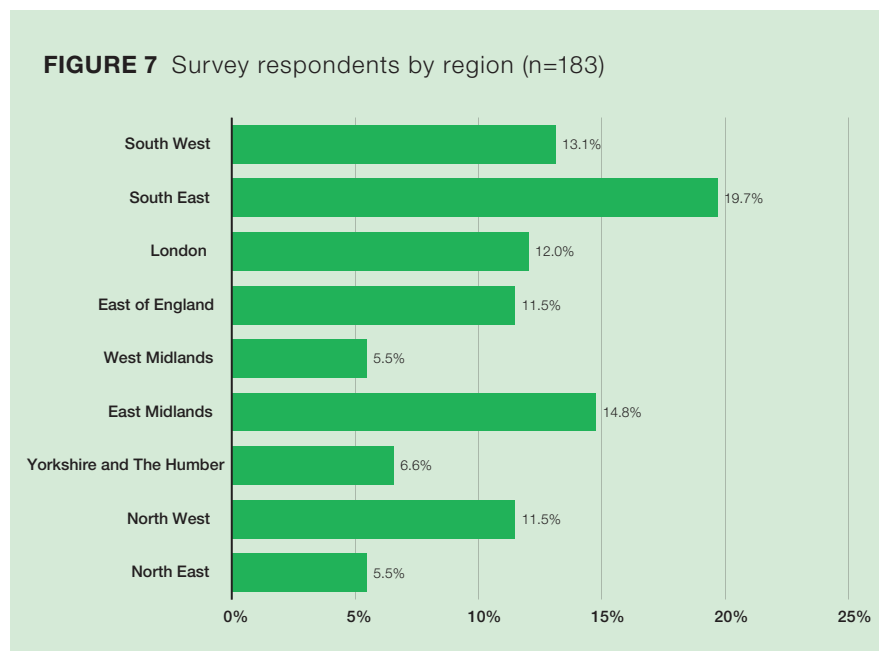
**The methodology for this research had three main components:**

- 1.** A survey was sent to over 1500 senior officers, arts officers and members. In total 211 people answered our survey, although, as indicated on each chart, response numbers varied depending on the question.
- 2.** An advisory board (Appendix 4) of 15 local councillors, officers, academics and representatives from arts and cultural organisations guided this research to set the key questions, check the research findings and discuss the way forward for local arts and culture. This group met twice, once at the beginning of the project and once at the end.
- 3.** We carried out interviews with officers, members and representatives from arts and culture organisations and we case studied eight areas (Darlington Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Erewash Borough Council, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Northamptonshire County Council, Rother District Council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, St Albans District Council, Wakefield Council, Westminster City Council). These areas represented different regions of England, unitary and two-tier councils, different art forms and also varying levels of a tradition of the arts and culture. This ensured that we gained the broadest possible view of the support being given to local arts and culture.



## APPENDIX 3: ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was sent out to senior officers, heads of service, arts officers and cabinet members in local authorities across England at the end of January 2014 and was open for 8 weeks. In total there were 211 respondents. The following bar charts show the region and type of authority that respondents were from and the final bar chart shows their role within the local authority.

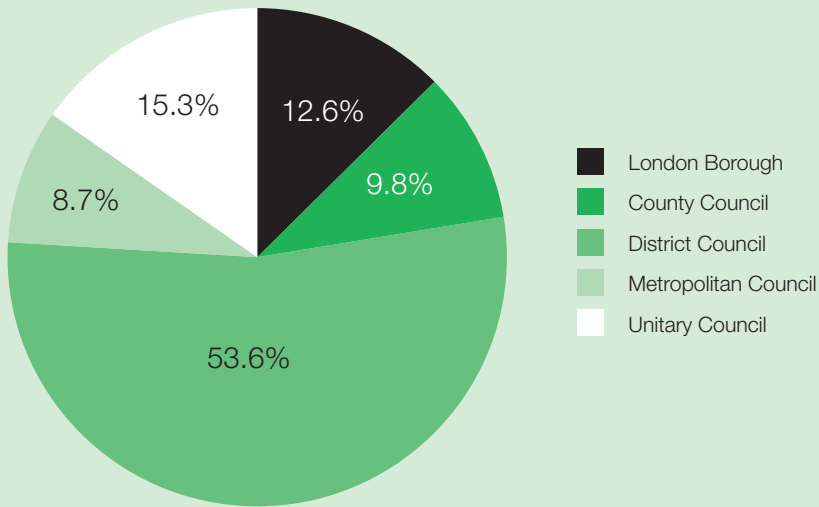


In total 183 different local authorities filled out the survey. As can be seen from the chart (Figure 7), the highest percentage of respondents were from the south east of England (19.7 per cent). This is to be expected as the south east has a greater number of authorities. While there are lower response rates from the West Midlands (5.5 per cent), Yorkshire and The Humber (6.6 per cent) and the North East of England (5.5 per cent), there is enough of a spread of respondents across the regions for no region, in particular, to be

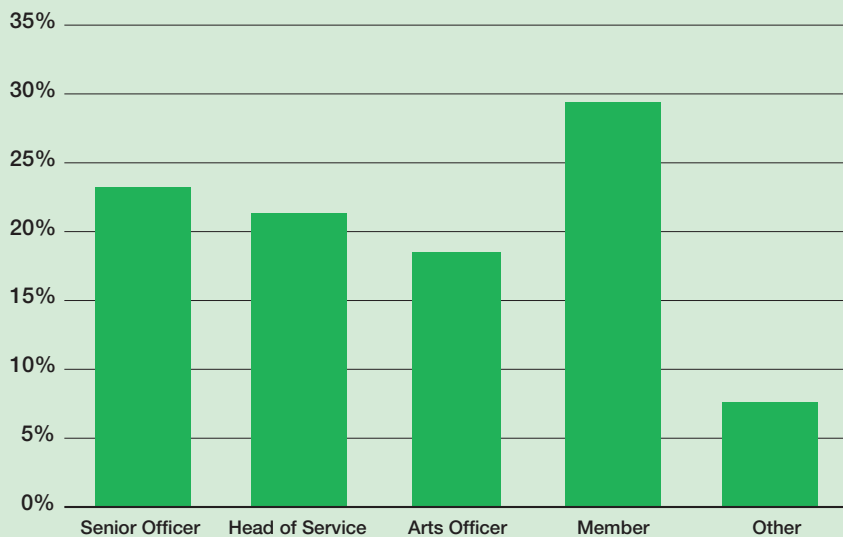
'over-represented'. This was important as the experience of arts organisations can differ depending on their region. For example, the opportunities open to London organisations are not always available for those outside London.

The percentage of responses by type of authority (Figure 8) are, more or less, in line with the percentage of different types of authorities around the country. The high level of response from all types of authority enabled us to compare and contrast if the level of support for the arts and culture differed by authority type.

**FIGURE 8** Survey respondents by type of authority (n=183)



As can be seen by Figure 9, those that responded to the survey were from a variety of roles within the council. In particular, nearly a quarter of those that responded to the survey were senior officers (including chief executives) and nearly a third of those that responded were members. This is particularly important, as it is these officers and members that ultimately decide on the strategies for the local authorities. However, it was also important to incorporate the views of arts officers as they work most closely with artistic communities and are therefore more acutely aware of the pressures faced by these communities.

**FIGURE 9** Survey respondents by role in the authority (n=211)

# APPENDIX 4: ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

## PROF. CHRIS BAILEY

Associate Consultant, &Co Cultural Marketing

## CLLR ROSA BATTLE

Executive Member for Culture & Leisure, Manchester City Council

## JAMES BLAKE

Chief Executive, St Albans City and District Council

## PAUL BRISTOW

Director of Strategic Partnerships, Arts Council England

## DAVID BROWNLEE

Executive Director, UK Theatre and Head of Policy and Campaigns, Society of London Theatre

## ADA BURNS

Chief Executive, Darlington Borough Council

## JAMES CLUTTON

Producer, Opera Holland Park

## GILES CROFT

Artistic Director, Nottingham Playhouse

## BRIAN GAMBLES

Director, The Library of Birmingham

## ANDREW MOWLAH

Senior Manager, Policy & Research, Arts Council England

## ANDREW MUTER

Chief Executive, Newark and Sherwood District Council

## VICTORIA POMERY

Director, Turner Contemporary

## CLLR FLICK REA

Chair, LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, Local Government Association (LGA)

## RICHARD SHWE

Head of Community Services, St Albans City and District Council

## MARK TAYLOR

Ex-Director, Museums Association

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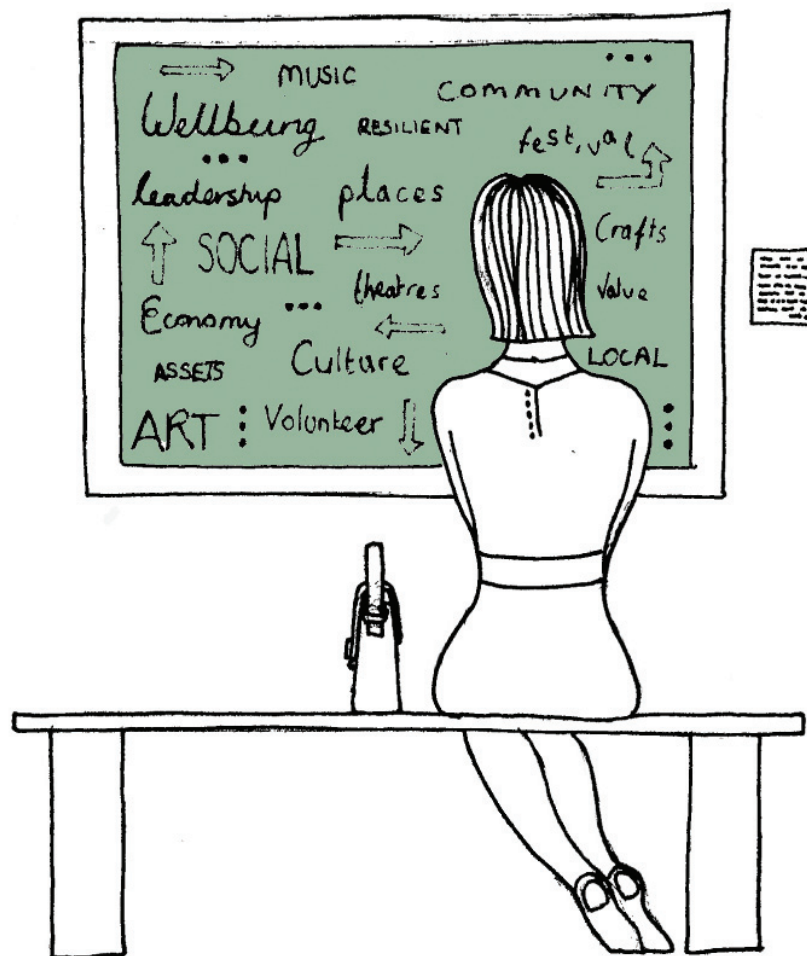
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**ISBN: 978-1-909781-03-0**