

What Next? for working with local authorities

Version updated: August 31st 2014

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What Next? for working with local authorities

Summary

What Next? for working with local authorities contains some ideas for how we can make the case to Local Authorities about the value of arts and culture. It supports the broader document titled **What Next?: How to Take Action**. In particular, this document details some ways to go about achieving the goals in the section *Policymakers* section of How to Take Action.

It is an evolving document and if you have ideas to include then please send them to David Jubb (davidj@bac.org.uk) and Clare Thurman (clarethurman@gmail.com).

This document is primarily for the arts and culture sector, and sits alongside *On with the Show*¹ which is a new publication by the New Local Government Network for Local Authorities, which talks about the continued support of the arts and culture despite cuts to funding in this area.

Introduction

"Government funding given to councils to run local services will have been cut by 40 per cent by May 2015. LGA modelling, which factors in reduced funding and rising demand for adult social care, shows that money available to provide popular services like running gyms, parks, libraries and youth centres is likely to shrink by 66 per cent by the end of the decade."

From LGA press release, 12th May 2014, reporting on a survey of local councils undertaken in late 2013
http://www.local.gov.uk/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/6172733/NEWS

Local Authorities play a critical role in defining the impact of arts and culture in our communities. They provide infrastructure and invest public resource. Their advocacy role is essential to promote understanding of the value of arts and culture and to lever additional investment and support.

Since the global financial crisis, Local Authorities have been under huge financial pressure. Cuts from central government have led to funding reductions for both statutory and non-statutory services, inevitably with greater pressure on the latter. During the crisis, some Local Authorities have chosen to squeeze investment in culture while others have opted to maintain or even increase funding as part of local regeneration strategies.

¹ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/On_with_the_show-Supporting_local_arts_and_culture.pdf

The Challenge

Cuts in Local Authority spending are likely to continue in years to come and organisational structures are likely to change as a result. There is an important challenge to engage Local Authorities, across the country, now, to maintain and develop models of support for arts and culture in our communities. This is the focus of this document.

The current context

The election on 22nd May 2014 saw 23% of council seats contested in England. Out of the 161 councils with contested seats, the leadership of 24 councils changed. 15 of these councils switched from being either Labour, Conservative or Liberal Democrat-led to having no overall control.

In May 2015 there will be a national election in which we expect arts and culture to feature in the manifestos of the two leading political parties in a more significant way than in 2010.² There is an opportunity in the winter of 2014 and the spring of 2015 for a coordinated national push to make the case to Local Authorities. We can engage with new and existing Councillors and Council officers. It is an important moment to ensure that arts and culture continue to be championed at a local level. So who's going to do it?

What Next?

In recent months, there has been a What Next? working group looking at various issues related to Local Authorities. One of the results of our conversations has been to create this document which intends to share some ideas for making the case for arts and culture with Local Authorities. It is in response to lots of people asking: how do we go about it? It seeks to help individuals and organisations think through a variety of ways in which they can make a difference at a local level. Most Local Authorities are different and have a different approach to valuing arts and culture. Therefore there isn't a one size fits all approach, rather a variety of options that you can adapt to your specific circumstance.

If arts and culture thrive locally, they will thrive nationally. We think this is one of the most important things we have to do, together. The more good examples of good practice in Local Authorities, the more we will be able to draw attention to these. Is your Local Authority a champion for culture? Or could it become one?

Can you lead this?

If you are reading this and you would like some help to set about some of the suggested actions in this document, then why not join an existing group you can find a full list [HERE](#). But if there isn't one near you then why not join up with a few local colleagues and set one up? There will be quarterly national What Next? meetings when we can share ideas and come together to compare what we have been doing, what's working, what's not working, and what we do next together.

² Local Elections 2014 Research Paper 14/33

http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&ved=0CEoQFjAH&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.parliament.uk%2Fbriefing-papers%2FRP14-33.pdf&ei=ZW22U4yPHuqr0QXEIYGICQ&usg=AFQjCNEyEkziR1HAy8xek60I21wRbIhrA&sig2=PL337ej_mc7DVC3IbvxvQ&vm=bv.70138588,d.d2k

Case studies

What follows is a series of examples of working with local authorities from people working in different parts of the country. Each sets out a series of approaches and some of the results of this work.

Mary Swan

Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Proteus Theatre Company

Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Developing relationships across local authorities and at all levels

Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council support Proteus Theatre, who negotiated a move into new premises to maintain an arts facility for the local council. The County Council structure is changing to a Charitable Trust and the Borough Council is attempting an increase in its commissioning of culture.

Before...

When I first took over at Proteus there were several Arts Officers at both Borough and County Council level, and representation from both on the governing body. However, there was a strange disconnect between the Councillors and the aspirations of Cultural Organisations. A status quo was observed at this level and many arts organisations were seen as 'pet projects' by these councillors. Conversely the presence of Arts Officers meant that although communication felt easier, it didn't always make the difference at Cabinet Level. Witnessing a Cabinet meeting where an arts organisation was used as a political football to the dismay of the Arts Officer - who had no means to stop the Cabinet Member from spouting assumptions as if they were facts concerning the operation and financial status of this organisation - made us aware that the battle is fought and won by influencing councillors at all levels. Officers are vital, but they are often the most knowledgeable and understanding of what you are trying to do. One of the other striking features that still resonates now is that Councils do not tow the party political line. Some of our fiercest champions have been liberal Tories, our most damaging detractors Labour Councillors. Both at a County and Borough Level, Arts and Culture were funded well, but mainly building based, traditional in nature and well established in their communities.

Now...

Now we are in a strong position with the Borough and County Council. A most fortuitous position, since the County Council is changing its structure to a Charitable Trust and the personnel we deal with will change. Meanwhile, the Borough Council is attempting to be the first Council in the Country to commission Culture wholesale! Again, the personnel we deal with is changing and had we not nurtured relationships across the Local Authorities with as many people as possible, we would be in a very different position and viewing these changes with much dread. As it is, the process has not been without its challenges, but we have been able to call upon allies at many levels, and to win the hearts and minds of others to help us weather the current sea change.

When and how did things change?

We simply began to talk to our Councillors, to get to know them, to seek out those who had natural sympathies and interests with Arts and Culture. We also nurtured honest and open relationships with our arts officers, and stopped being defensive and started trying to view it as an equal partnership. This took time, a lot of time, and a vast amount of what, at the time, felt like energy that should be directed elsewhere. However, the result of this was that we were able to negotiate a move into a new premises, where we in turn maintained and developed a much loved arts facility for the local Council that was in danger of being lost to developers. We gained several supporters in the Council by talking a language that they responded to; understanding that previous careers, a question about interests asked of a colleague, or simply asking to present the work of the

company to Cabinet and take questions afterward, would all help toward the sustainability of the company. We were also incredibly lucky, finding Champions for our work quickly at Councillor and Officer level and being able to take those individuals on a journey with us.

What happens next?

The Commissioning process has been difficult to say the least. We have had to fight to ensure those involved really understand the mixed ecology of arts funding. It is always sobering to realise that many councillors simply do not see the difference between amateur and professional artists, that national and international touring and profile has a positive effect on the image of a locality, and that the arts really do make a difference. However, we feel we are turning a corner in this process, but we are certain that the lessons learnt by us and other companies that have had to understand and engage with their LA's should not be lost. Increasingly, for small companies and for artists living outside of large urban centres LA's offer opportunities for support both physically and fiscally where ACE seem to be largely absent.

We hope that What Next? can enable us to share our experiences and learn from others and to eventually create a toolkit or port of call for artists and organisations struggling to engage with LA's.

Top Tips:

- What is important to remember is that Officers and Councillors do not talk the language of the Arts Council, most do not talk the language of Artists (although we found several artists working in the LA's) and they simply do not respond to a 'one size fits all' approach to talking about your company. You have to find the elements of your work and programme that fulfils their needs and speak to those.
- Secondly, be bold; the financial argument that the arts are cheap is not always useful - many times a Councillor has listened to us make a case for a strand of work and then asked 'How much do you need?' - these are often the conversations that end up with a project funded fully. Don't be afraid to voice the ambition.
- Thirdly, understand that people respond to people first, if you can demonstrate that this work will truly help the community - not just on a social level but also define the identity of a locality - then you will find commonality in your ambitions.

Crispian Cook
Executive Director, The Point/The Berry

Eastleigh Borough Council
The expansion of a council's arts team

Eastleigh Borough Council's Culture unit run The Point, the Creation Space, the Berry Theatre, three creative business hubs in the town, and a successful associates programme – as well as a creative learning department offering over 50,000 opportunities a year.

Before...

Culture has always been very well supported by the community of Eastleigh and by the local authority. Eastleigh Borough Council were early adopters of offering innovative and exemplary arts facilities to boost the profile of the borough when The Point was developed 18 years ago as a facility with dance as its USP.

Now...

Although the inevitable efficiency savings have had to be factored in, cultural provision in Eastleigh has been largely unaffected. Work is ever growing, with many new partner organisations both nationally and internationally.

- In the last 5 years, Eastleigh Borough Council has invested nearly £8 million to build our Creation Space and the Berry Theatre, further cementing its ongoing support for culture.
- Large scale Euro-funded creative industries and regeneration projects run by the unit have further proved the importance of culture as a tool for changing towns for the better and providing significant employment opportunities.
- The arts and culture unit has grown from 1 to 25 full-time staff, including a creative learning team of nine people, since The Point was opened.
- We have ensured that arts are embedded throughout the borough and have successfully made the case for delivering the council's three corporate priorities in measurable and significant ways. The team are skilled at writing their own applications and fundraise for much of their own work. This means effective evaluation and excellent project management which results in direct benefits, proving culture's part in delivering these corporate priorities.
- Investment has increased as new facilities have come on stream. It has always been the policy to build up partnership funding so that every £1 the council invests has been matched by grants, income, and sponsorship.
- The arts and culture unit is a full and separate unit within the council, with the Head of Culture being on the same level in the organisation as the Head of Regeneration, Head of Revenue & Benefits, etc, and has a portfolio lead councillor who sits on cabinet with the brief for Leisure (ie Culture plus Sport and Countryside). The facilities are considered to be strategic and come under the purview of cabinet.

When and how did things change?

The service has been growing for the last 18 years from a single person to the large operation that exists today. This development has been incremental and fully costed as we go forward, always having a mixed portfolio of support. The council took a definite stand not to take what could be seen as an easy option and retreat into only statutory provision of services.

What happens next?

Running a service which is relatively expensive for a small council takes careful planning. The Point has recently become an NPO and received a large capital grant for sustainable building improvements, which is a fantastic achievement. We will continue to look at ways to bring down our costs and increase our non-local authority income, but not at the expense of the work.

We will look for new partnerships, both national and international. We would like to see a brokerage agency that could put us together with a potential corporate sponsor. We would say that there is great potential for a London sponsor to raise the profile of their company, their corporate responsibilities and their commitment to the community by doing something significant in the regions – and it would be cheaper than doing the same in London! A million pounds would keep us going for five years, bringing new and dynamic work to the sector.

The next five years will be difficult for local authorities and therefore for regional arts. So it is important to support those authorities who are maintaining services, lobby harder for regional arts, work to put together further partnerships, and lobby for corporate support outside of the capital. It is still a disgrace that London receives 70% of all funding, and that the differential between per capita head spend in London and that in the regions is so wide. More case studies and high-profile conferences on the regional experience rather than on national companies in London should be held.

Top tips:

- Make any case relate specifically to corporate priorities. Authorities have needs and responsibilities to the communities that they support, and you need to show how you can respond to that and give your authority good press.
- Gain a large network of supporters who have experienced the quality of your provision.
- Prove arts and culture attracts investment, jobs and money. Evaluation and evidence is important, and writing reports is important: make them relevant to the readership. We all know how to write reports about our artistic development which speak to grant funders, so we must use the same commitment and analysis for our local authority funders. That does mean writing about jobs, SMEs, and community engagement – but the quality of the art is important too, and will not be forgotten.

Gavin Stride
Director, Farnham Maltings and Caravan

Waverley Borough Council and Farnham Maltings

The journey from a grants culture to a Service Level Agreement, and the value of talking about strategy and delivery as separate activities

Waverley Borough Council is almost exclusively Conservative, with a couple of independents and three UKIP councillors. This case study also touches on the County and the Arts Partnership, which involves the 11 boroughs and districts working with the county.

Before...

The arts didn't have a separate budget but sat within the community grants, which includes the Hoppa bus service and Citizens Advice Bureau. There was a portfolio holder for culture who was fairly engaged, but struggled to make the case for culture to the wider council. It was pretty obvious that in a discussion about CAB, sheltered accommodation and the arts centre, Farnham Maltings was going to lose.

Now...

Farnham Maltings has a Service Level Agreement, through which we deliver the strategic ambitions of the borough. We meet four times a year with senior officers and sometimes councillors to discuss their ambitions and how we are responding. These meetings feel equitable – we rotate the meetings between their offices and ours, agreeing minutes and actions. We also spend time in each meeting discussing what challenges the borough faces. This has resulted in us mentoring the other small arts centre in the borough, who are still grant-funded. Together we run the Museum of Farnham and have developed a joint dementia programme.

We also now co-ordinate the Surrey Arts Partnership, on behalf of 11 boroughs and districts and the county. Each partner contributes an amount based on population, generating a pot of around £100k for joint projects. Co-ordinating the partnership has allowed us to emphasise a relationship in which the LA, rightly, identify their priorities – sometimes in response to hard facts like the 30% increase in over 85s we are expecting over the next 20 years. All of this allows the officers to report back to their council in ways that are compelling.

When and how did things change?

There wasn't one single event. We realised that we needed to change the language and nature of the relationship in which councillors spoke about 'hand outs' and 'arty stuff'. From day one we spoke about not being a building but an organisation that has an ambition to contribute to the shape and character of the town and borough. We spoke about quality of life and social capital. We always spoke in the early days about investment rather than grants.

We then began to work with the borough on a Cultural Strategy. We asked councillors what kind of borough they wanted to see. They talked about connectedness, a sense of place, fear of crime, and young people. Once they had a Cultural Strategy in place, which we helped them write, it was then relatively easy to talk about how this might be delivered. We began to speak about the LA being the strategic body and that we would deliver those ambitions – which are measurable and monitored. As an aside, we spoke about the funding we brought in from ACE and others as investment into the borough. It just changed the dynamic. We asked for a SLA, describing it as a more business focused model, in which they could influence our energies and benefit from our external fundraising skills.

We had to convince people one at a time. We made sure we were doing work in every bit of the borough: we worked and continue to work with traveller children and child carers, and we asked the borough which their priority wards were, and set up after-school clubs in each of them. It's worth mentioning that when we started

to work across the borough, each councillor had a small fund to encourage activity in their own ward, and they were always happy to invest to see work happening there.

We had to be generous, listen, and be surprised by who our allies were and who we might have imagined would support us but didn't. We needed to take the politics out of supporting us and convince the authority that we were valued and popular. You cannot underestimate the value of a well-timed letter from a constituent saying how much they value what we do – not as part of a campaign to save us. We also produced a document twice a year called 'reasons to be cheerful' that we sent to every councillor, describing some of our achievements and stories.

What happens next?

The SLA continues. The borough also wanted to set up an independent trust to run the Museum of Farnham. We suggested that it would make financial, organisational, and governance sense if we took it on for them, to which they agreed. It shifted their and our thinking away from us an arts centre and towards us as a cultural organisation – so we are now talking about the future of the library and the Adult Education Centre. We are also hosting the hustings for the next election.

In the future we hope to better contribute to the shape and character of the town. Recently, the town council, with money we jointly secured from Mary Portas, put up entry signs to the town that say 'Welcome to Farnham – Craft Town'. Sometimes things need talking into existence.

Top tips:

- Speak about contribution to the quality of people's lives. Councillors are entirely audience (voter) focused.
- Don't defend. We are generally running mission-led organisations and we need to retain an unshakable belief in the value of what we are doing, otherwise we are vulnerable.
- Form unlikely alliances. The police pay for some of our arts programme; the army have invested in a large craft residency programme, as they struggle to resettle ex-Gurkhas into the community.

Fiona Allan
Chief Executive, Curve Theatre

Leicester City Council

Cultural support as a result of applying for the UK City of Culture title

Leicester City Council is the unitary authority serving Leicester, the largest city in the East Midlands, and the 10th largest in England. Leicester's population is over 300,000 and has two particularly distinctive features: it is one of Europe's first plural cities, meaning no dominant ethnic majority; and has a very young population, with 30% of residents being under 30 years.

When and how did things change?

In 2011, Leicester elected its first City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, who had previously held positions as leader of the Council, and MP for South Leicester. The Council runs De Montfort Hall and six museums and galleries across the city, as well as supporting a range of cultural and community festivals and major organisations, including Curve Theatre and Phoenix Digital.

In 2012, Leicester's Cultural Partnership Board – an independent collective of cultural leaders, set up with the support of Leicester City Council – were asked by the City Mayor to consider the risks, costs and benefits of Leicester applying for UK City of Culture in 2013. After much consideration and several public consultation sessions, the group met back with the City Mayor with an unequivocally positive recommendation – and highlighted how culture could help fulfil the Mayor's new Economic Action Plan for the city, delivering against ambitions for job creation, training, enterprise culture, tourism growth, and social wellbeing agendas, creating a thriving city centre and a distinctive identity for the city.

The City Mayor enthusiastically backed the bid, convening a weekly meeting in his office for cultural leaders and broader city partners, including those in tourism, the media, the Chamber of Commerce, the universities, and the Council of Faiths. Without the City Mayor championing the City of Culture bid, it would not have been possible to gather such an influential talent pool together on a weekly basis. Ideas flew, opportunities were identified, consultation and briefing events were held across the city, and excitement mounted.

In short, a bid was submitted, and Leicester was fortunate to be shortlisted to the final four cities to present a pitch to the judging panel in Derry-Londonderry in late 2013. An ambitious programme was worked upon, involving national and international partners, as well as strong roots in Leicester's multicultural communities. Social media campaigns, outdoor advertising, and newspaper, TV and radio coverage contributed to a real feeling of community support as the final bid team headed to Derry, led by the City Mayor and followed by a TV crew from BBC East Midlands Today. We were an eclectic bunch – an elected mayor, a comedy festival director, the director of culture for the council, a theatre CEO, a young artist and a senior business leader – but in the final presentation we spoke with passion, belief and a single voice.

A month later, at a breakfast gathering around TV screens in the foyer of Curve Theatre, a couple of hundred of Leicester's cultural, business, education and public sector leaders – and a good smattering of media – gathered to hear the results. And the winner was... Hull. We accepted defeat with good grace, but many tears were shed at the prospect of possibilities lost.

Not to be deterred, Sir Peter declared to the gathering that Leicester City Council would continue to support culture, that we would become a 'City of Culture' with or without the title, and that culture would remain key to his strategies for the city moving forward.

Now...

And since then it has been so. Culture, business and higher education continue to have a much closer connection. The cultural community is more cohesive. The value of culture to the city's place-making, urban regeneration, economic development and tourism agendas is now widely understood and accepted. The universities promote the city's cultural assets and a cultural leader has been appointed to our LEP. The Council is contributing to a number of cultural capital projects – to the continued improvement of the city's Cultural Quarter, and notably to the new Richard III visitor centre – as well as continuing their support for major cultural organisations and festivals. Culture is visibly becoming a second strategy for the whole city, and in the words of the City Mayor: "Culture is a vital part of life in a 21st century city. Celebrating the city's cultural diversity and investing in its cultural infrastructure will improve Leicester's future prosperity, as well as the quality of life for everyone who lives here."

What happens next?

We feel as though we are in a much better place. There is a palpable sense of growth in the city now, a sense we are moving forward together and being recognised for our achievements, that culture is now being more broadly recognised as an essential good, not a drain on resources. And, importantly, that Leicester City Council are true partners in our cultural endeavours: that we are all on the same side. There is a greater deal of trust and understanding now between the cultural sector and the council. And I'm delighted to report that Leicester recently rated at No 9 in a national survey of local authority support of culture, via the NCA 50p For Culture campaign.

Top tips:

- Consider the widest impacts of culture. Gather evidence.
- Understand the local agenda, and make an argument for how culture can help deliver this.
- Don't just argue the intrinsic value of culture – we may all believe it, but we need to create a holistic argument that stacks up and creates a case for support.

Dave Moutrey
Director & Chief Executive, HOME & Cornerhouse

Manchester City Council
Cultural growth as a result of the Commonwealth Games

Before...

Manchester fell into economic decline during the 1970s. Heavy industry suffered a downturn from the 1960s, and was greatly reduced under the economic policies followed by Margaret Thatcher's government after 1979. Manchester lost 150,000 jobs in manufacturing between 1961 and 1983. Regeneration started in the 1980s, much of it fuelled by new self-belief created on the back of the Manchester music scene, the growth of the Higher Education sector, and two failed yet effective bids to host the Olympic Games. However, the pace of regeneration increased significantly off the back of two key events: the huge terrorist bomb in June 1996 that damaged a large part of the city centre, and the XVII Commonwealth Games, which was the largest multi-sport event staged in the UK prior to the 2012 Olympics.

When and how did things change?

The Games were considered a success for the host city, providing an event to showcase the transformation of Manchester following the 1996 bombing. The Games formed the catalyst for the widespread regeneration and heavy development of Manchester, and bolstered its reputation as a European and global city internationally. Rapid economic development and continued urban regeneration of the now post-industrial Manchester continued after the Games, which helped cement its place as one of the principal cultural cities in the United Kingdom.³

It was the success of the Commonwealth Games in 2002 that paved the way for further sustained growth of the cultural sector. Manchester saw great benefits from presenting the games with an economic and social legacy for the city. All of this was built in a unique public and private sector partnership. In the run-up to the games, the city's leadership set out to ensure that the momentum would not be lost once they were over. Together with regional and national sports agencies, the city's leaders worked to establish national centres of excellence in sport at various games facilities to give them a life after the games were over. The most notable is the Manchester Velodrome, where the British Cycling Team has been based since 2002. The main athletics stadium was altered for Manchester City Football Club to relocate to and secure overseas investment from the Emirates. Following the Commonwealth Games, the BBC took the decision to move a large part of the organisation from London to Manchester, which led to the creation of MediaCity in Salford.

To help their post-games thinking, the City commissioned a series of reports to help focus economic strategy, which culminated in *Creating an Ideopolis*⁴ by the Work Foundation.

Culture was seen to be important to the city's economy growth strategy. Firstly, it was part of creating a distinctive 'knowledge city' offer and secondly was also important an economic sector in its own right with significant numbers of cultural and creative micro-businesses and SMEs in the city region.

Alongside the growth in sporting infrastructure, the city wanted to support and encourage the growth of cultural and creative industries. As a result of their desire to support the Ideopolis approach, and see Manchester promoted in the UK and abroad as a cultural as well as a sporting city, they established Manchester International Festival in 2007. Then in 2008 the global economic crash happened, and in 2010 a

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Commonwealth_Games

⁴

http://www.theworkfoundation.com/downloadpublication/report/45_45_creating%20an%20ideopolis%20case%20study%20of%20manchester.pdf

new coalition government took charge of the country and introduced far-reaching austerity measures. Their policies led to significant cuts in government funding and the arts were not excluded. However, Manchester continued to think differently.

Now...

Manchester continues to see the importance of cultural and creative industries to the economic growth of the city. From the Bridgewater Hall to the creation of Urbis, Manchester is an exemplar of cultural regeneration. The City Council is committed to putting culture at the heart of its regeneration plans as vital fuel for the local economy, supporting jobs, developing talent and skills, and attracting inward investment, business visitors, and tourists.

The City of Manchester's commitment to arts and culture as central to the city's economic growth strategy remains strong, and the benefits can be seen. Manchester tops the Boho Britain index of the UK's 40 largest cities, as a result of its mix of ethnic diversity, gay friendliness and technological innovation⁵. Manchester is also the third-most visited city in the UK by foreign visitors, after London and Edinburgh, and the most visited in England outside London. It is ranked as a beta world city by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network⁶. It is the fastest-growing city in England, and one of the biggest economies in the UK. Culture remains an important part of this.

What happens next?

Following the re-opening of the refurbished central library and extended and refurbished Whitworth Gallery, a new 6,500m² purpose-built centre for international contemporary art, theatre, film and books will open its doors for the first time in spring 2015 in Manchester, as part of the vibrant new development on First Street. It will be called HOME. At a time when the arts world is facing severe cuts, this is a tremendous opportunity which will help support and attract jobs, as well as helping to put Manchester firmly on the map as a leading cultural destination.

The new venue for the new arts organisation will be at the heart of the 20-acre First Street site, and will be the anchor for a dynamic new creative quarter, drawing together the creative energy emerging from Knott Mill to the west and Hotspur Press to the east. This innovative and ambitious regeneration project, which also includes 116,128m² of commercial space, will play a vital role in the city's economic future, attracting additional leisure and retail investment and unlocking 10,000 jobs.

At the moment, Manchester is continuing to grow economically, and the arts and cultural sector continues to get strong support from the City Council. However, Manchester City Council, like many others, is under considerable financial pressure, so maintaining their position is going to be challenging. If the city's economic growth continues, then there is every opportunity for Manchester to continue to strengthen its cultural offer for the benefit of local communities and the economy.

⁵ http://www.demos.co.uk/press_releases/bohobritain

⁶ "The World According to GaWC 2010". Globalization and World Cities Research Network. Retrieved 18 September 2011.

Andrea Stark
Chief Executive, High House Production Park

Thurrock Council and High House Production Park
Creative industries collaborating with local government and their local enterprise partnership to drive regeneration and growth

Thurrock Council is a unitary authority located along the Thames to the east of London. It has a population of 158,000 and is now in the grip of major regeneration.

Before...

Prior to the development of High House Production Park, arts and culture were not a strategic priority for the council. There was very little infrastructure, acumen or professional experience to generate major opportunities and resources for high quality cultural experiences. There was an arts officer, a heritage officer, and a small civic cultural centre, as well as amateur and voluntary sector activity organised around its members' enthusiasms.

Now...

High House Production Park opened at the end of 2010. You can see a film about this [here](#).

With advice from HHPP, Thurrock Council agreed a statement of its strategic priorities for arts and culture, called [Unleashing Creative Ambition](#), and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership adopted the creative industries as a priority sector in its Strategic Economic Plan.

When and how did things change?

Things began to change in around 2007. Local ambition was effectively brokered, and the future re-imagined through a bold shared vision of the creative sector shaping and leading the delivery of strategic priorities central to the area's health and prosperity.

High House Production Park was the game changer project. Its purpose, scale and ambition drew in major investors, even though this sort of venture had not happened before. It was the quality of the idea that attracted people, though thinking outside the box was the rational thing to do, as the status quo was not working well for communities in Thurrock.

Now the collective leadership of partners on the Park works as part of the wider collective leadership of Thurrock as a place. The range of activity includes:

- Acme Studios supporting the development of artists' networks
- the Royal Opera House co-ordinating the delivery of a Thurrock Cultural Entitlement in partnership with the local Head Teachers Alliance
- the Park as the new home of Thurrock Music Hub
- The Backstage Centre hosting Opportunity Thurrock, a big careers event attended by thousands of young people. Industry activity and cultural events held at the Park are the real world of work opportunities offered to students and apprentices.

Everyone involved in the changes has been united by a thirst to achieve more by working with others. Normal practice now is to work beyond your own institutional footprint, confidently, coherently, and collaboratively.

What happens next?

- Supporting council colleagues and their developer to build new film studios and a major housing scheme next door to the Park

- Getting to know colleagues from public health who are keen to look at new ways of working
- Building a strategic relationship with University of the Arts London to create more progression routes and to support emerging talent
- Embedding this way of working by doing more of it

As ever, what needs to happen now is to choose the right opportunities and to make them stick. We are in a far better position to do this.

Top tips:

- Make it easy for others to work with you
- Form a practical alliance with creative and cultural organisations in your local area
- Come up with co-ordinated approaches to shaping and delivering great evidence-based solutions – but be a great storyteller, as data and evidence get you only so far

The case

In 2013, the Local Government Association published a range of case studies⁷ on how local investment in arts and culture impacts on local economies and economic growth. The report identifies five key ways that arts and culture can boost local economies:

1. Attracting visitors
2. Creating jobs and developing skills
3. Attracting and retaining business
4. Revitalising places
5. Developing talent

A recent LGA briefing stated "*Opportunities to experience the arts are hallmarks of sustainable communities, in which citizens are healthy, law-abiding and engaged in civic life.*"

LGA briefing: Debate on the importance of culture and arts to the economy⁸

The 2014 Arts Council England report⁹ identifies the following evidence to support the case of the arts, which is grouped into the following categories: The Economy; Tourism; Health and wellbeing; Society; Education.

The Economy

- Business in the UK arts and culture industry generated an aggregate turnover of £12.4 billion in 2011.
- The arts and culture industry employed, on average, 110,600 full-time equivalent employees in the UK and 99,500 in England during the period 2008-11. This represents about 0.45 percent of total employment in the UK and 0.48 percent of all employment in England.
- For every £1 of salary paid by the arts and culture industry, an additional £2.01 is generated in the wider economy through indirect and induced multiplier impacts.

Tourism

- In 2011, 10 million inbound visits to the UK involved engagement with the arts and culture, representing 32 percent of all visits to the UK and 42 percent of all inbound tourism-related expenditure.
- Overall in terms of culture, the UK is perceived to be the fourth best nation out of 50.

Health and wellbeing

- Research has evidenced that a higher frequency of engagement with arts and culture is generally associated with a higher level of subjective wellbeing.
- A number of studies have reported findings of applied arts and cultural interventions and measured their positive impact on specific health conditions, including dementia, depression and Parkinson's disease.
- The use of arts, when delivered effectively, has the power to facilitate social interaction as well as enabling those in receipt of social care to pursue creative interests.

⁷ Driving Growth through local government investment in the arts

http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=5d54ddf4-1025-4720-810a-fd077d5dbf5b&groupId=10180

⁸ Debate on the importance of culture and arts to the economy

http://www.local.gov.uk/briefings-and-responses/-/journal_content/56/10180/4034925/ARTICLE

⁹ The value of arts and culture to people and society – an evidence review <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/value-arts-and-culture-people-and-society-evidence-review>

Society

- Culture and sport volunteers are more likely than average to be involved and influential in their local communities.
- There is strong evidence that participation in the arts can contribute to community cohesion, reduce social exclusion and isolation, and/r make communities feel safer and stronger.

Education

- Learning through arts and culture improves attainment in all subjects
- Participation in structured arts activities increases cognitive abilities
- Students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree
- Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment
- Students who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer and are 20% more likely to vote as young adults

Examples of local impact

The Economy:

Milton Keynes Council invested £197,000 in the 2012 Summer of Culture and International Festival. This was used to bring in an extra £1 million from participating organisations and the total economic benefit to the town was estimated to be £6.4 million.

Major cultural events in **Liverpool** generated £73 million for the local economy in 2012, with the city council taking a leadership role in driving growth through the visitor economy using four key events: the Olympic Torch relay, the Music on the Waterfront, the Mathew Street Music Festival and the Sea Odyssey giant marionette spectacular.

Hepworth Wakefield

Based in Wakefield, Yorkshire, the £35m gallery was designed by British architect David Chipperfield and was built with funding from Wakefield Council, Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. It was the centrepiece to the city's £100m regeneration, intending to boost the local economy and attract further investment. Charitable trusts including Yorkshire Forward, the Homes and Communities Agency, and the European Regional Development Fund also gave money to the project. It is a registered charity.

It was hoped that the gallery would add about £3m to the local economy and attract 150,000 visitors in its first year. It successfully attracted that number in its first five weeks. Two and a half years after its opening it reached 1,000,000 visitors, far exceeding the projected 400,000. Although admission to the gallery is free of charge, the success of The Hepworth is of great importance to the local economy; it was estimated that just under £16m had been brought into the Wakefield economy by visitors coming to The Hepworth by the end of 2013. The gallery is a partner of Tate Plus, a project aimed at increasing public access to the national collection of British and international modern and contemporary art.

Society:

The Brick Box is a community interest company specialising in transforming space through combined arts events. It was commissioned by the regeneration team at Newham Council to reclaim the under-utilised public space below the A13 flyover in Canning Town, London. The area had degenerated and was a hotspot for antisocial behaviour and public drinking. Throughout the summer of 2013 The Brick Box created an urban 'village green', which hosted a programme of free arts activities alongside live music, film and dance. The organisers used visual arts and film to summarise the success of the event, alongside an evaluation report that was delivered to the council. The criteria reported on, as requested by the council, were: the outputs delivered, an assessment of the use of the space for different forms of activity, estimated visitor numbers, and the wider lessons learnt regarding community involvement and participant demographics.

The success of this event demonstrated that there would be sufficient interest from the community in such activities if the resources were provided. In view of this, the council has incorporated the lessons from the project into the long-term plans for the landscaping and transformation of the area. The success of the A13 Green project also allowed The Brick Box to secure funding (match funding from Arts Council England and private developers) to put on a similar project—'Light Night in Canning Town'—which is now in its second year. The Brick Box maintains good relations with Newham Council and will be applying for another commission to deliver another 'A13 Green' project.

Health and wellbeing:

'Colour your Life' is an Arts and Education on Prescription service funded by Durham County Council Public Health Department. The programme aims to provide free access to artistic and creative activities promoting positive mental health and wellbeing using professional experienced artists and tutors. The programme supports people of all abilities whilst providing opportunities for friendship in a safe, welcoming and supportive environment and is open to adults age 16+ with provision for family groups as well.

ARC, a cultural venue in Stockton-on-Tees, runs a programme of activities for adults with learning disabilities, following the closure of a day centre. Feedback from participants indicates that they value the mixed use of the space, and the opportunity to interact with different kinds of people including practicing artists—a benefit of encouraging activities within the building that go beyond the scheduled activities.

Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly uses dance, design, crafts, visual arts, theatre, writing and singing, as a way to help people with their physical, emotional and mental health. It works in the community with people with mental health problems and those with long-term conditions, and with older people in care homes, particularly targeting dementia. The organisation works with around 20 freelance practitioners, and sees its work as building the inner resources and resilience of its service users, to cope with their problems and enjoy a better quality of life. The organisation is currently contracted through the NHS and local authority budgets. Jayne Howard who leads Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly and has a background in the NHS.

First Step Approaches

A menu of first step approaches that describe simple ways to make contact, maintain contact and develop contact with your LA at different levels, in order to make the case

a) Find your local MP and councillors

To find your local MP visit <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/>. The Parliamentary website also has lists of MPs in name or constituency order, which includes brief biographical details, website and email addresses where available.

To find out which is your local council(s) visit <https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council>

b) Making contact

- Write to them and tell them about your work in your local area, how it impacts on the community and why it is important.
- Invite them to come and visit your work

Write to your local MP and councillors highlighting your organisation, how many local people you reach and the benefits they enjoy from engaging in arts activities. Remember to include facts and figures as well as local good news stories that they can relate to or be associated with.

Ask them to incorporate arts and culture priorities in their own campaign pledges and if they are an MP to help raise the profile of arts and culture in Westminster.

End your letter with an invitation to come and visit, perhaps to see a performance, class or workshop, rehearsal or to tour your facilities and to meet your artists, participants and supporters to hear first-hand about their experiences.

c) Research

Before you meet with or write to your local MP, research their key priorities and interests and check whether they are involved in any All Party Parliamentary groups relevant to your work, and whether they have recently been identified as advocates in this area.

- Follow them on social media to find out more about the issues they are interested in
- Find out if they circulate regular e-newsletters

Your message

Select the issues that are most relevant to the activities, needs and aspirations of your organisation.

When you are writing your message ask yourself:

- What can we contribute to the debate?
- Which issues can we speak on with confidence and experience?
- Where can we provide specific examples, data and case studies?

Be clear on what it is that you are asking for or advocating for. Are there broader campaign messages that you want to link your local message to or are you asking for a specific change to be made in your local areas?

d) Meetings

MPs usually have a number of staff working for them, some at the House of Commons and some in the constituency office. These include researchers, case workers and secretaries. Meetings may be arranged by different people depending on whether it is to be held locally or in Westminster.

To arrange a meeting you will need to explain who you are, why you want to meet, how long you will need and who will be attending.

Provide the MP with a short (2 x A4 max) briefing note including information about your work or your organisation. Try to only cover the essentials (who, what, where, when, why and how) and some background facts for context.

e) Events and visits

In your invitation explain about the number of people you interact with and how they benefit. Be clear about what you would like the MP/councillor to do (watch a performance, make a speech, meet young people, etc).

- Before the event send a briefing about your organisation and the event itself.
- On the day, have a briefing pack available to provide some facts and figures, case studies and one or two pieces of marketing material such as an annual review or season brochure.
- Talk about how your work meets the agenda(s) for which your guest is responsible.
- Have a photographer on hand so that you can include photos in local new stories and press releases.
- After the event, ask them to do something specific as a follow-up action, such as asking a parliamentary question.
- Write a thank you letter to your guest and remind them of what they have undertaken to do on your behalf, and add them to your mailing list for future mailings.

f) Other local allies

Think about the contacts your organisation has already – with trustees, sponsors, donors, local businesses. Could any of these be developed further to grow your links with politicians and local ‘movers and shakers’?

Look into making contact with your Local Enterprise Partnership and Chamber of Commerce. (LEP replacing RDAs, Chambers of Commerce)

There may be a Chancellor of a local Higher Education institution who could be an influential local advocate for your work.

Examples of sustained partnerships

The following case studies focus on models where local MPs and cultural organisations are working together through a formal arrangement.

North East Cultural Partnership

Culture has been a key factor in the economic and creative growth of the North East and the Culture Partnership for the North East captures the clear enthusiasm for building on this.

The aim of the partnership, which includes all 12 local authorities, arts and cultural organisation, businesses and educational organisations, sport and tourism, is to build on the strong foundations laid through the North East's cultural regeneration so that it can harness the power of culture to promote health and well-being and to forge a dynamic and successful economy.

The partnership recognises the value of culture across the whole area and is aiming to raise the profile of the sector to ensure the North East has a strong, influential and coherent voice at regional, national and international levels. The Culture Partnership was established by ANEC following discussions involving a wide range of stakeholders and a result of a local authority member led task and finish group who drew on the insights of expert contributors.

This unique partnership is about jobs, profile, quality and well-being; protecting assets and enhancing our economic and social offer. It was launched on 17 July 2013 at Durham Castle.

The Culture Partnership Board consists of 12 local authority politicians with responsibility for culture in their councils and 12 members drawn from across the breadth of other sectors. It is jointly chaired by Councillor David Budd, Deputy Mayor, Middlesbrough Council and John Mowbray OBE, Immediate Past President of the North East Chamber of Commerce.

Arts and Creative Industries Commission, Brighton and Hove

The Brighton & Hove Arts & Creative Industries Commission is independent from the council. It's a partnership made up of prominent members from the arts and creative industries in the city. Despite its independence the commission has strong links with the city council and is one of Brighton & Hove's main partnerships. Commissioners give their time and expertise free of charge. The Brighton & Hove Arts Commission is involved in numerous activities. It develops policy, raises funds, provides advice and delivers programmes. They also work with the Arts & Cultural Projects Team on events, including White Night and The Children's Festival.

The Arts & Creative Industries Commission meets four times a year. It has a Chair, two Vice Chairs, and an Executive Sub Group of eight people that advises and acts as a steering group on membership and procedure. There are 30 members who have a place as an individual, as a political appointment (there are six councillors) or as a representative of an organisation. Individual members network on behalf of the Arts & Creative Industries Commission and inform the group within the creative sector they represent. Commissioners, politicians and officers sit on national and local partnerships to advise and champion the cultural and arts sector. The Arts & Culture team at Brighton & Hove City Council provide the executive function for the commission through the provision of strategic and administrative support.

The Commission was set-up by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive of Brighton & Hove City Council in December 2004 in recognition of the importance of arts and culture to the city and to capitalise on the very successful partnership work during the city's 2002 campaign for the European Capital of Culture. We are part of the city's family of partnerships and are represented on the Local Strategic Partnership, a formal group which has a key role in the governance of the city.

Useful websites

Parliament website – www.parliament.uk

Ministerial responsibilities - www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ministerial_responsibilities

Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee -
www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/culture_media_and_sport.cfm

Department for Culture, Media and Sport - www.culture.gov.uk

Local Government Association - www.lga.gov.uk

Arts Council England – www.artscouncil.org.uk

Bacc for the Future campaign - www.baccforthefuture.com

Conservative Party - www.conservatives.com

Labour Party - www.labour.org.uk

Liberal Democrats - www.libdems.org.uk

38 degrees - www.38degrees.org.uk

50p for Culture Campaign - <http://www.mytheatrematters.com/supporter/50p-culture>

Further reading

Cultural Commissioning Programme

http://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/practical_support/public_services/cultural-commissioning/full-report-opp-for-alignment-arts-cultural-orgs-public-sector.pdf

Quick Glossary

Aggregate external finance

The total amount of money given by central government to local government. It consists of the revenue support grant (RSG), ringfenced money and business rates. Councils raise money on top of this amount through council tax.

Area devolvement

Area devolvement is the devolvement of certain council matters to area bodies, which would include councillors of that locality. While not a central feature of the Local Government Act 2000, it is already apparent that such arrangements can be a vital part of reconnecting with communities. These mechanisms range from those that are purely consultative to those taking a significant number of decisions and the scrutiny of services at the local level. Public attendance at such meetings is often higher than for other council meetings.

Audit Commission

The [Audit Commission](#) is a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation ([quango](#)) that is responsible for ensuring that public money is spent efficiently, economically and effectively. It carries out research nationally on delivery performance within the public sector, and is responsible for a range of inspection processes.

Central local partnership

A regular meeting between the Local Government Association (LGA) and Members of Parliament (MPs) in order to discuss policy issues.

County council

The upper tier of two-tier authorities, counties are generally responsible for core services. The lower tier district councils are usually responsible for more local services.

District council

Also known as borough or city councils. The lower tier in a two-tier system, districts are responsible for delivery of local services, while counties take on core services.

Executive

Part II of the Local Government Act 2000 stipulated that councils should create a separate decision making executive body. This executive should consist of senior councillors, who have responsibility for council service portfolios and can take the form of a leader and cabinet, an elected mayor and cabinet, or an elected mayor and council manager. Councillors who are not on the executive have the role of scrutinising the work of the executive.

Full council

Meeting attended by every councillor in a local authority. Council decisions are voted on and policy and budgeting matters considered.

Government Offices

A network of nine Government Offices for the English Regions representing ten central Government Departments and the primary route for the delivery of a wide range of policies. Further information is available from <http://www.gos.gov.uk>

Local Government Association

The Local Government Association (LGA) represents all of the local authorities in England and Wales, just under 500. Formed in 1997, the LGA's mission is to promote better local government, act as a voluntary lobbying organisation on behalf of members and give practical advice and guidance on policy.

Local Strategic Partnerships

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) seek to improve quality of life locally. The Government intends that they be used to coordinate better local service delivery. They should involve all sectors of society: public, private, community and voluntary. LSPs are optional, although required for some local authorities in order to receive neighbourhood renewal funding. See: www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1133894

Metropolitan

Usually called metropolitan, borough or city council, these are single-tier authorities, with responsibility for the delivery of all services in their area.

Parish and town councils

Parish and town councils (sometimes collectively – and confusingly – referred to by the Government as "local councils") are the smallest and most numerous form of local government. There are estimated to be approximately 8,300 town & parish councils in England, plus a further 1,500 parish and community meetings not formally structured as councils. These councils have a wide variety of powers, mainly linked to planning, environmental health and leisure services.

Quango

Stands for quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation, sometimes referred to as a non-departmental body. Although quangos are part of national government they operate at a distance. For example, the [Audit Commission](#) is a quango.

Scrutiny

The Local Government Act 2000 requires authorities to set up overview and scrutiny committees. Their purpose is to hold the executive to account and to also support the council in terms of policy development and contribute to the council's community leadership role through scrutiny of local services – both council and non-council services.

Members of the executive will, therefore, not be able to sit on an overview and scrutiny committee. Such committees also have to reflect the party political balance of the authority.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development means improving quality of life without compromising the future. A process of planning in local authorities, which integrates social, economic, and environmental perspectives, and must include significant discussion with the communities involved.

Unitary

A unitary is a single tier authority, which means it has responsibility for delivering all services in its area. English unitaries can be called council, district, city or borough. Rutland is a unitary authority, but is called a county. Welsh unitaries can be called council, borough, county or city and county.

Value For Money

Part of the remit of the [Audit Commission](#) is the review of value for money achieved by local government. This is typically constructed around consideration of the "3 es":

1. economy (acquiring inputs - staff, assets & services - at the lowest possible price)
2. efficiency (maximising the outputs achieved from a given set of inputs)
3. effectiveness (selecting the outputs that produce the greatest possible contribution to a given set of outcomes)

Local Authority Terminology glossary

More can be found here <http://localgovglossary.wikispaces.com>