

**West of England Local Enterprise Partnership
Board meeting – Monday 6th March**

West of England Cultural Plan

Purpose of the report

1. To update on progress against the West of England Cultural Plan, overseen by the Cultural Compact, chaired by Professor Sue Rigby

Recommendation

For Board members to note background ahead of update and discussion at the meeting.

Overview

The [Cultural Plan](#) launched in February 2022 is a ten-year plan with 4 priorities:

- **Wellbeing:** this priority particularly focuses on how access to arts and culture can boost health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation, and increase life chances for our community particularly for marginalised communities.
- **Cultural and Creative Skills:** this priority is around ensuring young people have opportunities to experience high quality arts and culture in and out of school; increasing the pathways into our creative sector and diversifying our workforce.
- **Placemaking:** this is about placing culture at the heart of local planning especially around regeneration and community. It's also about making the case of the economic and social value of culture to help attract inward investment into the region.
- **Supporting creative freelancers, start-ups and SME's:** this priority is around creating the right conditions and infrastructure for creatives to thrive in the region whether that's through access to funding and investment, strengthening networks, more affordable studio space or increasing opportunities for professional development, training and mentoring.

Wrapping around all of this are 3 cross cutting themes including **Environmental Sustainability, digital technology & Innovation, and inclusion.**

Delivery to date:

New appointment: made in mid- October to roll out the delivery of the Cultural Plan – Creative and Cultural Programme Lead.

Create Growth Programme: The Combined Authority was 1 of 6 regions to be successful in bidding to DCMS for £1.275m to support local creative businesses to unlock economic growth. The Create Growth Programme will support high-growth creative businesses to scale and become investment ready through a targeted business support package. A first cohort of 30 businesses will be selected before end of March 2023 (30% target for diverse and disabled led businesses).

As part of the Create Growth Programme, **Innovate UK** launched a brand-new funding opportunity which closed for applications in early February. UK registered micro, small and medium enterprises in the creative sector can apply for funding of between £10k - £30k for innovation projects to grow their business.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF): The Combined Authority's UKSPF Investment Plan includes plans to spend up to £500k on grants to small cultural heritage and historic institutions and pop-up museums. This will target small entities that are unlikely to be in receipt of any other public funding. The grants are mostly for small scale capital works to help improve amenities. The SW Museum Development network have been approached to identify current needs of the sector and help promote the opportunity when it comes on stream to its membership.

Citizen led decision making pilot – 3 sessions were held in January and February with the cultural sector to begin to shape a process and methodology for a citizen led model which will enable communities to shape cultural policy and influence where regional resources are spent. Successful application to Arts Council England for £14,800 and some match funding through Combined Authority and Gulbenkian Foundation will enable phase 2 of this pilot. The second phase will be more regionally located, working alongside communities and other cultural organisations to test and refine the process.

In the pipeline:

Combined Authority funded pilots include the following:

1. Green social prescribing pilot in Bath and North East Somerset growing the capacity of community organisations to deliver through creativity on public health pathways and influence policy within the Local Care Partnership. Partners include Wesport, NHS and the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Partnership, Bath Spa University, 3SG and B&NES public health team.
2. Succession planning and professional development for emerging and established creatives who work in social prescribing and health and care settings in partnership with Arts and Health South West. Through a recent survey, practitioners were interested in opportunities for skills development, peer learning, mentoring, shadowing and supervision.
3. Early stages in scoping and piloting new apprenticeship scheme for production/technical roles for outdoor arts, live events and theatre as part of a national pilot on Portable Apprenticeships, working in partnership with Bristol based start-up Muti Immersive. Crafting a bespoke approach to tackling market failure by working collectively with industry, a training provider and the Combined Authority to grow and train talent pipeline for the sector. Industry advisory board now recruited.
4. Exploring development of a Regional Production Fund to incentivise and attract more TV and Film production to the region, building on the success of Bottle Yard Studios and others.
5. A task and finish group has been convened to support regional schools develop their Schools Music Development Plan (under the new National Plan for Music from Sept 2024, all schools will be required to have this). Through working with the 2 Music

Hubs in the region, we will support the development of these plans, linking schools to local arts and cultural providers and raising school aspirations regarding a wider creative offer embedded across the school and curriculum.

Cultural Plan Delivery – External Funding Bids – pending and in development

February 2023 to April 2023:

Six funding bids are in development/pending between now and April 2023:

1. **British Film Institute and National Lottery – National Skills Clusters.** £90k match from Combined Authority, £600k from National Lottery, will fund training and work placement programmes, to support routes to employment in below-the-line HETV and film roles for underrepresented groups including young people across the region. Interview held on the 7 February, decision before end of February 2023.

Lead /Partners: Combined Authority Lead, partners: The Bottle Yard Studios, Screen Cornwall, AsOne, Bristol UNESCO City of Film, Exeter University, UWE, Weston College, SGS College, Bath College, KWMC, Calling the Shots, City of Bristol College and Boomsatsuma.

Meeting Cultural Plan priorities: inclusion – a focus on engaging and creating pathways into culture and the wider creative industries for under-represented groups.

2. **Arts Council England (ACE) – Place Partnerships Fund:** Planned £1m in total – £500k ACE and £500k Combined Authority match. Deliverables/outputs: strategic place-based interventions which make a long-term difference and step-change to the cultural and creative life of the region. Combined Authority lead applicant. EOI to go in end of Feb/early March 2023.

Meeting Cultural Plan priorities: delivers on all 4 Cultural Plan priorities including Placemaking, Wellbeing, Talent development and supporting freelancers and creative SME's.

3. **UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Local Policy Innovation Partnerships-** Working with Bath Spa University to support and enhance geographical networks of stakeholders to address social, community, economic and environmental priorities that contribute towards inclusive sustainable economic growth. Submitted 12 January, decision end of March 2023.

Meeting Cultural Plan priorities: utilising community assets and strengths to increase resilience as part of the recovery and as part of building sustainable futures.

4. **National Lottery, Bringing People Together.** Max of £500k for 2- year programme. Funding to increase diverse and inclusive cultural programming across the region. Combined Authority as lead, with partners Truro Cultural Compact, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Cultural Compact, Falmouth University and Bath Spa University (We are the People) also need to identify a Welsh partner for the bid. Plan to submit bid March 2023.

Meeting Cultural Plan priorities: increasing community resilience, diversifying creative sector workforce and growing inclusive cultural offer.

5. **Arts and Humanities Council/UK Research and Innovation: CoStar Network Lab.** Led by UWE with six industry partners including the Combined Authority, this Network Lab will build an arts-led creative technologies capacity with the facilities and resources that will define, shape and lead future hybrid performance and experience across the region. £4.5m bid (plus partnership match) submitted 2 February and interviews to be held in May 2023.

Meeting Cultural Plan priorities: developing a regional immersive hub and economy for the SW as identified in the Cultural Plan.

6. **DCMS through the Arts and Humanities Research Council.** £200k for 2023-24 to support the Bristol and Bath R&D cluster to pilot approaches to how the creative industries/creative tech respond to the challenge of behaviour change in the green transition. CA will be an Executive Board member for duration of the project.

Meeting Cultural Plan Priorities: support cultural initiatives that promote changes in behaviour and contribute to accelerating our transition to Net Zero Carbon.

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