

**West of England Local Enterprise Partnership
Board meeting – Thursday 18 January**

Creative and Culture

Culture West

In October 2023 the Combined Authority (CA) was successful in securing £1m through Place Partnership funding from Arts Council England, contributing to just over £3m investment into the region, £1.5m from the Combined Authority and the remaining from our regional partners. This is the only award in England to a CA and it represents one of the largest awards made to date. Arts Council England have already indicated that they see our programme as national pathfinder in terms of sharing learning from our delivery across the country.

This new programme was co-created between February and May 2023 with over 150 regional based creative and cultural organisations including representatives from grassroots music and night-time economy, creative freelancers, cross sector partners including health, education and environment and the Unitary Authorities to establish a series of priorities for the bid.

The funding is for a 2 -year region wide programme (ending January 2026) which has 4 interconnected themes which will culminate in a step change for the region and build on the region's international reputation as *the* place for creative and cultural innovation. The investment will be used to provide more work for creative professionals across the West of England and increase access to creative spaces, give mentoring and business advice for freelancers, start-ups and established sector organisations, commission new festivals, engage more schools with creative learning experiences and provide industry-led skills training and advice. The resulting benefits of this programme aim to improve lives, support local economies, help regenerate neighbourhoods and bring people together.

The 4 themes include:

- Theme one: building a more resilient funding model for the creative sector; this will include supporting 100 freelancers through a grants programme to develop their creative practice and access skills, training and mentoring to grow their businesses. We will upskill freelancers and creative organisations to benefit from more work opportunities in education, health, environment and regeneration settings and build organisational capacity to secure commissioned funding as a long -term source of income. We will pilot the UK's first Arts Membership model, similar to a gym membership but for arts and culture to trial new ways of private giving and reducing cultural organisations dependence on public funding.
- Theme 2: through our new Cultural Education Hub every child and young person in the West of England can access a high- quality cultural experience each year, in or outside their school. We will lock in with schools the value of creative skills and critical thinking and how the arts can accelerate learning across all curriculum subjects and grow the creative skills of our young people. We will develop inclusive, ambitious and effective pathways through from education into the cultural workforce, ensuring marginalised young people have access to and are supported to thrive in a creative career.

- Theme 3: establishing a new regional Creative Agency which is a central point for bringing together a network of employers and training providers supporting creatives at every point in their career which will increase innovation in our region and grow the sector's economic impact.
- Theme 4: increasing the diversity of our cultural workforce and in particular retaining and nurturing diverse talent through mentoring, business advice, commissions and residencies, increasing platforms for diverse talent and access to creative spaces and to skills and training.

The programme has brought together over 35 regional partners to lead on delivery (*please see Culture West Delivery Structure PDF for further details*) and there will also be over the 2 years a series of open grants and commissioning opportunities as well as 2 rounds of grants specifically for freelancers.

Create Growth Programme 2023-2025

The West of England and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly were one of 6 successful Local Area Partnerships that have been awarded £1.275m from DCMS to support local creative businesses to unlock economic growth. The Create Growth Programme aims to support high-growth creative businesses to scale and become investment ready through a targeted business support package.

The programme consists of three complementary strands:

- A bespoke business support programme
- Access to a £7m finance fund delivered by Innovate UK
- Investor outreach activities

The Combined Authority are the lead partner in a consortium that includes North Somerset Council, Watershed Arts Trust, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP and Creative UK. In the South West region, there are 2 separate business support programmes; one based in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly delivered by Cornwall and IOS LEP and Creative UK and the other in the West of England delivered by Watershed in partnership with the Combined Authority.

In June 2023, DCMS announced an expansion of the Create Growth Programme with an additional £10.9 million in funding, to expand the programme to cover six new geographical areas. Following a successful bid to DCMS in partnership with Creative UK, the Combined Authority won £520k to expand the programme to cover Devon. Therefore, in addition to the programmes listed above, the Combined Authority will be leading a third business support programme in Devon with delivery partners Creative UK launching in April 2024.

To date the Create Growth Programme has supported 30 businesses through an 8 month bespoke business support programme, delivered by Watershed which started in May 2023 and wrapped up in December 2023. Support included sector specific training, workshops, facilitated peer to peer support, founder talks and networking opportunities. In addition to the support programme delivered the 30 businesses received a £2,500 grant in August 2023 to spend on mentoring, coaching and consultancy which they will be able to access until August 2024.

The programme will support a further 32 businesses through a second cohort starting in March 2024. Demand for cohort 2 was high, 46 full applications were received and the CA is currently confirming 32 successful applicants.

Including these applicants, please see the programme data below:

| Local Authority | Successful Applicants Cohort 1 & 2 | % |
|------------------------|---|----------|
| BANES | 11 | 18 |
| Bristol | 37 | 60 |
| North Somerset | 6 | 10 |
| South Gloucestershire | 8 | 13 |

| Sub Sector | Successful Applicants, Cohort 1 & 2 | % |
|-------------------------|--|----------|
| Advertising & Marketing | 20 | 32 |
| Architecture | 1 | 2 |
| Arts & Culture | 9 | 15 |
| Craft | 2 | 3 |
| Createch | 5 | 8 |
| Design | 6 | 10 |
| Fashion | 2 | 3 |
| Gaming | 2 | 3 |
| Music | 3 | 5 |
| Publishing | 3 | 5 |
| TV & Film | 9 | 15 |

| Protected Characteristics | Successful Applicants Cohort 1 & 2 | % |
|----------------------------------|---|----------|
| Global Majority Led | 9 | 15 |
| Women Led | 18 | 29 |
| Disabled Led | 7 | 11 |
| Diverse Led | 26 | 42 |

Author: Sarah James, Cultural and Creative Lead, West of England Combined Authority

Culture West - Delivery Structure

Financial resilience for the sector and its workforce

Theme Lead: Nona Hunter & Emma Cox, West of England Combined Authority

The Value of Artists

Developing a series of Learning Resources with Creative Freelance Artists to showcase routes into the Visual Arts

Bath Spa Uni, Bath School of Art Film and Media

Freelancer Grants

100 grants of £2,000 for Creative Freelancers

West of England Combined Authority

Arts Membership Model

Delivering a regional pilot of a new arts membership model

Bath Spa University, North Somerset Council

NHS Green Social Prescribing

Sustain the cultural workforce by increasing reach into the health system as a long-term source of funded work

Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board

Skills for Cultural Social Prescribing

Building the capacity and skills for cultural orgs and creative freelancers to work in health and care and attract health commissioning funding

creativeshift

Cultural Education Hub

Theme Lead: Simon Lock, West of England Music and Arts

Cultural Education Hub

A new regional Cultural Education Hub will transform creative and cultural education in and outside all schools in the region through targeted support for schools, young people and creative and cultural practitioners and organisations. Our vision is to ensure every child and young person in the West of England can access a cultural experience each year, in or outside school

West of England Music & Arts in partnership wider steering group

Citizens for Culture

Creation of a citizen-led cultural delivery plan for the West of England region

Citizens In Power, St Pauls Carnival, Trinity Community Arts

Video Marketing

Video marketing campaign covering the 2 years of the Culture West Programme. Throughout the campaign they'll pay and guide 10 underrepresented trainee filmmakers in the South West

Latent Pictures

Social Mapping

Social Mapping brings all the stakeholders and programme participants together to answer a question set about their creative work, collaborations and outputs. As they answer these questions a dynamic and interactive node network is built in real time, giving the community of participants access to their collective data whilst uncovering the tacit collective knowledge and relational infrastructure for those looking to track impact in that community.

Free Ice Cream

Creative Careers/Skills

Theme Lead: Ruby Sant, Bath Spa University
Creative Agency Hub Lead: Emily Bull, Creative Agency Hub

Creative Agency Hub

A new regional Creative Agency, developing integrated/flexible pathways into the creative industries specifically for young people (16-30) from under-represented backgrounds. Support includes:

- Workshops, talks, webinars and facilitated conversations to support creatives and freelance practitioners- 16 per year, supporting up to 100 people.
- A range of short courses, industry masterclasses and paid traineeships.
- Creative/digital upskilling.
- Paid commissions for emerging young artists.
- Paid work Placements to gain skills producing a creative project.
- Critical artist support, peer led for young people to share practice, ideas and develop critical techniques
- 4 x SME/ micro-org creative start-up support events per year, supported The Studio Bath
- Re-emerging artists programme, for 60 artists over 2 years based in Ston Hill Campus and across meanwhile spaces in Somer Valley, NE Somerset, North Somerset including Weston-super-Mare

Creative Youth Network (Lead), Super Culture (Co-Lead), North Somerset Council, Bath Spa University and Boomsatsuma

Supporting, Showcasing and Retaining Diverse Creative Talent

Theme Lead: Sado Jirde & Derek Tanner, BSWN

Diaspora! Festival

A brand new festival for the West of England showcase BIPOC Global Ethnic Majority artists from the city's different diasporas.

Diverse Artists Network

Creative Apprenticeship Pathway

Will train 30 participants in year one and 60 in year two to accredited Entry Level 3 and 4, providing routes into industry for Technicians, Producers, and Events Assistants.

MUTI Immersive

Power Fest

A festival showcasing local and diverse talent

Creative Power Town

Noods Levels Presents Two Step

Partnering with creative music businesses in the region with young creatives to develop a 2 year cohort period. 2 cohorts over 2 years.

Noods Levels CIC

Incubation Programme

Connect Black and racialised creatives to industry expertise and networks, commission new work through a dedicated incubation programme and provide coaching and mentoring that will nurture that diverse talent and enable it to thrive. 10 x £5,00 Creative Freelancer Grants

BSWN

Themes/Leads

Projects/Delivery Partners

Golden Threads

Provide ongoing advice, consultancy support, and accessibility audits to the Culture West programme and its partners, ensuring full accessibility to the programme's activities and improving accessibility for disabled creatives across the sector.

WECIL