

WEST OF ENGLAND CULTURAL PLAN



The power of culture to transform and
enrich lives, places and businesses



West of England
**LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP**



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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“The region offers a unique confluence of creative and digital companies. The areas of interest cross over, from board games to video games, and our universities have courses that cross over the sector. This makes it a really interesting place to work; there’s lots of energy, new creatives, new markets, creativity and connections here.”

Tom Rawlings,
Founder of Auroch Digital,
a games design and development
company



FOREWORD



We are so lucky to live here in our world famous cities, in our amazing market and coastal towns and in our most beautiful countryside, all rich with heritage and culture. Local people enjoy an enviable and vibrant calendar of arts events,

while TV programmes made here in the West of England are celebrated right across the globe.

However, our region has been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many people in the hospitality, tourism, retail and creative sectors have lost their incomes and jobs. Many of these people were freelancers, excluded from much government support. We are also dealing with the fallout from Brexit.

In the coming years I am determined we do much more than just survive, but go on and really thrive – to build back even better and progress far further. I want to protect and nurture our irreplaceable natural environment and ensure more local people than ever before have the opportunities to achieve their full potential. Above all, I want to put our truly great West of England region even more firmly on the map for national and international success.

Our world-class cultural and creative sectors are crucial. My £2m West of England Culture and Creative Economy Recovery Fund is nurturing our highly talented home-grown artists, composers and musicians to help ensure people get back on their feet and develop their skills.

I am proud that the West of England is attracting international investment from key international players to benefit both us and them. More than 500 businesses across the South West have been boosted directly from Netflix investment creating 1,000 jobs across the UK.

The West of England Combined Authority's recent £12m investment in the Bottle Yard Studios sends a strong, confident, and really important message to the world – that our amazing creative sector here in the West of England is thriving and growing apace. I am also supporting small businesses and freelancers with a programme of professional development and paid placements for young people.

Those who know the West of England come to love it – its super creativity and its can-do attitude enables us to take action and achieve results. This Cultural Plan will ensure even more people fall under the West of England's spell to build upon our already outstanding national and global success.

Dan Norris,
West of England Mayor

“For us, cultural inclusion is fundamental to social and economic inclusion, as without the freedom, opportunities, and space to freely express culture, heritage, and identity, true inclusion is not possible.”

Sado Jirde, Director,
Black South West Network

INTRODUCTION

Culture and creativity
are central to the identity
of the West of England.

| IMAGINE

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| CONNECT

| THRIVE

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INTRODUCTION



Culture is not an add-on to daily life or the economic work of the region, it is a critical support to both. The major challenges we face, regionally and globally, will be solved by creative people and the economic opportunities that follow the pandemic will be grasped by those who can see beyond the immediate and imagine a different path.

The West of England Cultural Compact is an agreement between local and regional government and Arts Council England; to engage with this strategic application of culture, the arts and creativity for the benefit of people in the area. It is the only Cultural Compact, of 20 in the first instance, to work at regional level. As such, it presents unique opportunities and challenges; it also offers a microcosm of England as a whole and any solutions we find locally will have ready application nationally.

Our early work has highlighted the cultural richness of our region, and the breadth and distinctiveness of our assets. Vibrant artist communities thrive where rents are lower and meanwhile spaces are available. The large, fixed cultural assets cluster in Bath and Bristol where population density ensures a high footfall. As a region our task is to connect and empower these assets and to focus a proportion of their energies towards the benefit of the region and its residents.

The pandemic rocked the creative and cultural industries to the core, but the unprecedented support from Government and the Combined Authority means that we will be able to recover quickly and to achieve greater reach than before. Were it not for the £24 million Culture Recovery Fund, distributed through Arts Council England, and the £2 million allocated by the West of England Combined Authority to support creative talent in the region, we would be facing years of slow and painful recovery.

To deliver culture for people and the economy in the West of England, we have developed this Cultural Plan, which sets out themes for strategic focus and a series of ambitious proposed initiatives to deliver on these themes.

We work on a set of simple premises – that our region needs to be at the forefront of economic growth and taking a lead in solving the great problems of the day; that this will be accomplished by the best and most creative people from all backgrounds and cultures; that the West of England needs to both attract and grow such people in order to thrive; and that culture is a central means of accomplishing this. The Cultural Compact will align resource to deliver this vision in the region and the Cultural Plan is an overview of the richness we build on and our intentions for future growth.

Professor Sue Rigby, Chair of the West of England Cultural Compact

“This region is a magnet for the creative industries. It has never been so vibrant in the South West. Innovative companies and people surround us, and it feels exciting to be here. It feels like a hub for creativity and business, where we can draw on the skills of other creatives in the area. It makes things easier and feels supportive.”

**Mark and Lisa,
founders of Plenderleith
Scantlebury, specialists
in art fabrication, mould
making and casting experts**

CULTURAL COMPACTS



Cultural Compacts are for the “co-creation and co-delivery of an ambitious vision for culture in a place” (Arts Council England).



The creation of Cultural Compacts was a key recommendation of the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry, an independent enquiry into the cultural resources of Britain’s cities, aimed at developing new models that will help arts and culture thrive in our cities.



Cultural Compacts are partnerships designed to support the local cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development, with a special emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector itself and the local authority.



The West of England Cultural Compact was the only Arts Council England supported pilot cultural compact with a regional remit, embracing the diversity of our culture and creativity, our residents and businesses, our cities and communities.

CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND THE WEST OF ENGLAND



CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND THE WEST OF ENGLAND

The West of England is home to the world famous cities of Bristol and Bath, which are complemented by the rich cultural and industrial heritage of South Gloucestershire, coastal heritage of North Somerset, and vibrant and diverse communities and outstanding natural landscapes. With a population of over 1.1 million, it is a place where talented people work, ideas flourish and businesses grow.

We are an economic leader with an economy worth over £35 billion a year. We have one of the highest rates of employment in the country (79%), and over 45,000 businesses; the West of England competes on a global scale.

The West of England is 'globally significant, high-growth creative cluster' (2018 Creative

Industries Sector Deal). We are a region where creative, digital and high tech meet traditional industry and heritage.

Creativity and the economy

The UK creative industries are a major economic force, contributing over £100 billion to the UK economy each year. The creative sector is one of the fastest growing industrial sectors in the UK, growing five times faster than the national economy.

Regionally, the value of creative industries in the South West has increased by 27% since 2010, with significant growth in the West of England.

The region is internationally recognised as a powerhouse for innovation and invention, with the most productive digital cluster in the UK. Our creative businesses contribute around £2bn to the regional economy each year. We have the most productive digital cluster in the UK and over 800 million people each month watch digital content produced in Bristol and Bath.

Skills and employment

Our cultural and creative sector employs 50,000 people and is home to nearly 7,000 businesses. We are home to a talented and

skilled workforce, with a strong mix of independent freelancers, creative studios and high-tech incubators.

Four world-class universities, a network of colleges and training centres all contribute to a highly skilled pool of innovative and exciting artists and creators. Programmes including creative workforce for the future are nurturing the talents in our communities, supporting inclusive growth for the sector.

Culture across our communities

Our region is home to cultural assets of global significance that define the quality of place and play a crucial role in economic performance, community cohesion and wellbeing.

Established cultural institutions with international reach and recognition work collaboratively with emerging and rising talent to champion the creative and nurture the independent spirit.



CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND THE WEST OF ENGLAND

An extensive and eclectic calendar of festivals and events creates opportunities for local residents to engage with performing arts, music, visual arts, design, cinema, and heritage attractions in their neighbourhoods and across the region.



50,000

EMPLOYS 50,000 PEOPLE

7,000

NEARLY 7,000 BUSINESSES

£2bn

CONTRIBUTING £2bn TO REGIONAL ECONOMY

>78%

OVER 78% OF RESIDENTS ENGAGED WITH THE ARTS, MUSEUMS, AND/OR PUBLIC LIBRARIES AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS – HIGHER THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE



>800m

OVER 800 MILLION PEOPLE EACH MONTH WATCH DIGITAL CONTENT PRODUCED IN BRISTOL BATH AND SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

JOBS CREATED IN THE REGION BY 2036:

+40,300

CULTURAL, TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

+40,000

CREATIVE & DIGITAL

CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND THE WEST OF ENGLAND

THE WEST OF ENGLAND IS HOME TO:

91+

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

45

DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

BATH

DOUBLE DESIGNATED UNESCO
WORLD HERITAGE SITE

BRISTOL

UNESCO CITY OF FILM

5G

WORLD'S FIRST PUBLIC
TRIAL OF 5G AT MILLENNIUM
SQUARE AND WE THE
CURIOUS, BRISTOL

4

WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITIES



UK'S THIRD
LARGEST TV
SECTOR

OVER 445 PRODUCTION
COMPANIES INCLUDING
OSCAR-WINNING AARDMAN
PRODUCTIONS

UK'S MOST
PRODUCTIVE
TECH SECTOR

FAST-GROWING
GAMING SECTOR

INCLUDING CHART-TOPPING
GAME PLAGUE INC.



UPFEST

EUROPE'S LARGEST STREET
ART FESTIVAL



UNBOXED: CREATIVITY
IN THE UK

NEWSUBSTANCE PRESENTS
'SEE MONSTER', IN WESTON-
SUPER-MARE, COMMISSIONED
AS ONE OF TEN MULTIMEDIA
PROJECTS FOR FESTIVAL UK 2022

IMAGINE

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REGIONAL RECOVERY



IMAGINE

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REGIONAL RECOVERY

2019 was a record year for international visits into the region, breaking the milestone of 1 million international staying trips for the first time. Bristol and Bath featured in the top 12 destinations in the UK.

Sadly, the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on business and workers across the cultural ecology in the West of England, as it has across the country. Businesses in culture, tourism and hospitality have been particularly affected by restrictions on operations and requirements for social distancing. These businesses are some of the last to recover income streams while being at the forefront of demand to rebuild community, society and cohesion.



Impact of Covid-19

In 2020, over 70% of the arts, entertainment and recreation workforce in the West of England had been furloughed according to a survey by the Office for National Statistics. At the height of the pandemic, cultural organisations made between 30% and 70% of their workforce redundant. The number of vacancies being advertised fell by over 50% between March and April 2020.

The region's visitor economy experienced a £700m loss of revenue (March to June 2020), with an estimated 56% drop in hotel room sales and a 62% drop in footfall to visitor attractions.

Response to the pandemic

The region's Metro Mayor, Dan Norris, working with local leaders and organisations has led the response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic with a range of new measures. This included doubling the value of the regional recovery fund to channel support to small creative businesses and freelancers. This support will ensure we remain the location of choice for cultural and creative industries.

Culture and Creative Economy Recovery Fund

This £2m investment fund has been established alongside £300,000 Creative Scale-Up funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. It offers a £800,000 business support programme (including continuation of the Creative Scale Up programme) and a £1.3m grant fund for SMEs across the West of England Combined Authority working in the creative industries.

The Creative Scale-Up programme has so far supported over 70 businesses to grow through expert mentoring, business development grants and a facilitated programme of peer-to-peer support.

Since June 2021, the investment fund has supported creative businesses (including freelancers) to reformulate their operating and financial models, explore new business opportunities and review business plans in response to Covid-19. Delivered across two strands of activity, this funding has made nearly 400 individual interventions, in the form of either a grant or business support.

CREATIVITY – THE NEXT REVOLUTION

Agricultural, industrial, digital, *creativity*
– the next revolution will not be in
what we know, or what we can do,
but in what we choose to think
and make. Machines will not
make the future, people will.



| IMAGINE

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CREATIVITY – THE NEXT REVOLUTION

Agricultural, industrial, digital, *creativity* – the next revolution will not be in what we know, or what we can do, but in what we choose to think and make. Machines will not make the future, people will.

Making good choices, and making brilliant connections between ideas, will drive the next decades of progress towards a more equal society and to net zero. Creativity is everyone's.

The West of England is an incredibly vibrant, diverse and creative region. It includes the two thriving cities of Bristol and Bath along with divergent towns and communities. The region is recognised as a national and international cultural and tourist hot spot, with a vibrant mix of urban, rural and coastal areas providing an exceptionally diverse cultural ecology.

But the West of England is also one of the country's economic success stories. It is the most productive city region in England outside London, with a breadth of innovative businesses and a highly skilled workforce. With economic links to Wales, the Midlands, London and the South West, ensuring a strong economy recovery in the West of England will help to drive a wider national recovery.



Outstanding cultural assets, and the overall cultural offer within a region, help to define the quality of place. They are crucial to economic performance, social cohesion and wellbeing contributing significantly to the local economy and pivotal in contributing to a sense of place around which people build a sense of community. They act as a draw for residents, businesses and visitors alike covering a broad range of facilities and activities such as cinemas, theatres, restaurants, festivals, museums, historical sites, and public open spaces.

We will make sure that the people of the West of England can take a lead in this next revolution, by embedding culture at the centre of everything we do.

“Cultural diversity is what drives new ideas and initiatives. When people from different backgrounds come together, they are able to draw on a variety of experiences, upbringing styles, cultures, stories, customs and so on. All this helps develop new ideas that would not have been thought of otherwise.”

Lidia Drzewiecka,
Founder of global brand agency
Visuable

OUR VISION



We will create a region which is an international exemplar of the power of culture to transform and enrich lives, places and businesses.

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OUR COMMITMENT TO CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

The Cultural Plan identifies areas of focus and cross-cutting themes to amplify and support world-class culture and creativity across the West of England.

Our four areas of focus are:



**CULTURAL AND
CREATIVE SKILLS**



**CREATIVE
FREELANCERS,
START-UPS
AND SMES**



PLACEMAKING



WELLBEING

CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SKILLS

We are investing now in the next generation of disruptors and makers.

Our next great innovation, be it environmental or technological, could come from anywhere, from anyone.

The creativity of every child and young person in the region should be given space to flourish; and that emergent talent should be given every means to succeed.

WE WILL:

- **start where it is most impactful, by ensuring that culture is included across the school curriculum**
- **develop inclusive, ambitious and effective skills pipelines for culture in the region and beyond**
- **promote pathways into the creative and cultural industries**
- **ensure that creativity forms part of the expectations of employers of their staff**

OUR PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

- **Cultural Sector School Twinning and Cultural Curriculum Exemplars**
- **Targeted cultural and creative careers support**
- **Regional Technical Level Qualifications and Apprenticeships Programmes**
- **Music Sector Pathways**

OUR COMMITMENT TO CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

CREATIVE FREELANCERS, START-UPS AND SMES

Creative freelancers, start-ups and SMEs are the beating heart of our cultural economy.

We will prioritise recovery from the impact of Covid-19, but also focus on the need to thrive and prosper in the period ahead.

And in so doing, attract new inward investment, new creatives and businesses to call the region their home.

WE WILL:

- support the continued growth and post-pandemic recovery of the creative industries in the region
- nurture the creative talent that is central to the West of England's distinct cultural and creative ecology in order for it to thrive
- attract significant national and international investment to drive future growth and development of the sector

OUR PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

- Freelancer Transition Programme
- West of England Good Employment Charter
- Industry Leading Accelerator Programme
- Targeted Inward Investment campaign

PLACEMAKING

Embedding a rich and equitable cultural offer is central to healthy, happy, thriving communities and to building the character and distinctiveness of place that makes people want to visit, work, and live in the West of England.

Investment in culture drives productivity and employment and contributes to the regeneration of areas and revitalisation of our high streets. It helps to bring communities together – opening up new perspectives, encouraging participation in civic life.

WE WILL:

- **place culture at the centre of placemaking, community-making and regeneration strategies**
- **ensure that the value of cultural investment is promoted and understood by local and regional government and business**

OUR PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

- **Cultural Infrastructure Toolkit and Charter, and Cultural Value campaign**
- **Maximising our region's Cultural Hubs and Assets**
- **Regional Sustainable Living Centre¹ and ancillary Sustainable Living Hubs**
- **Immersive Digital Experience**
- **Working with partners to create a coherent and compelling narrative for the West of England**
- **Regional Mega-Event**

¹ The intellectual property for this specific model is owned by CD Land Management and Achates Philanthropy; it is noted that other models exist.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

WELLBEING

Culture is an essential part of a life well lived. Arts and culture-based interventions offer new and surprising ways to promote the health and wellbeing of communities and to help them flourish and grow.

Participation in culture is a fundamental human right, as outlined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The initiatives under this focus area seek to unlock the potential of culture to transform the lives of people in the West of England who are most at risk of social exclusion, as well as wider communities.

WE WILL:

- ensure that all residents and visitors can access culture and cultural activities for their own wellbeing, development, and enrichment
- put culture at the heart of happy, thriving, and healthy communities

OUR PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

- Strategic support for social prescribing
- Arts and Homelessness Civic Plan
- Widening access to culture, including:
 - Targeting specific barriers for groups and communities
 - Disabled Access Support
 - Supporting libraries to deliver cultural experiences

OUR COMMITMENT TO CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Our three cross-cutting themes are:



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We will support cultural initiatives that promote changes in behaviour and contribute to accelerating our transition to Net Zero Carbon.



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

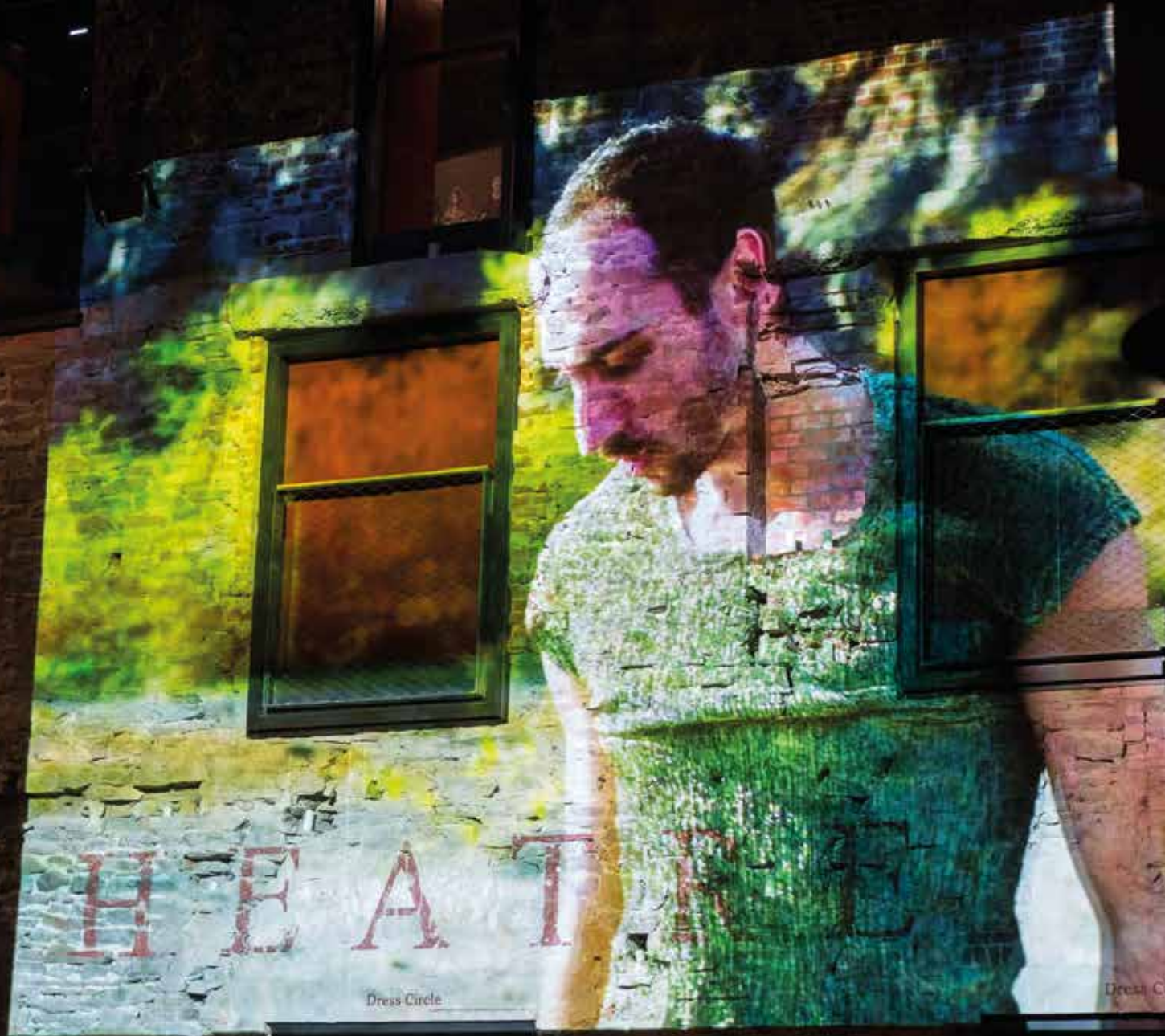
We will support activity that further cements and amplifies the region's position as the UK's engine for digital and creative innovation.



INCLUSION

A focus on engaging and creating pathways into culture and the wider creative industries including target groups underrepresented within the sector and those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

THE WEST OF ENGLAND CULTURAL COMPACT



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THE WEST OF ENGLAND CULTURAL COMPACT

The purpose of the West of England Cultural Compact is to focus and amplify the role of culture in the region, as a driver for economic success, placemaking, community cohesion and personal wellbeing.

Culture can be harnessed to support individuals, communities, and businesses to thrive – this is the role of the West of England Cultural Compact. We will

- work to understand and support the cultural ecosystem of the region
- promote policies and practice that regard culture as central to the purpose of local and regional government, business and community groups
- influence and attract funding for cultural activities in the region
- ensure that the value of culture is promoted, and that the value of investment in culture is evaluated and publicised
- link cultural ambitions with wider regional agendas to amplify impact
- develop a plan for culture in the West of England.

The approach of the West of England Cultural Compact recognises that cultural provision across the region is not equally distributed and that the West of England is a diverse ecology of communities, geography and infrastructure. We also recognise the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the cultural ecology and workforce across the West of England, with cultural and creative freelancers and SMEs amongst those most affected.

The West of England Cultural Compact will play a convening and coordinating role, drawing on the density and strengths of our existing networks, evolving good practice models and supporting opportunities to share knowledge and approaches, and to direct strategic investment and resource where it will have the greatest impact.



WORKING TOGETHER

In looking forward to a prosperous future for the region we will work with the cultural and creative sector and a breadth of wider sector stakeholders to build on the strategic priorities of our great region.

We will balance recovery measures with longer-term strategic ambition, which includes the priorities of Metro Mayor Dan Norris to put the West of England on the map for national and global success whilst ensuring the ongoing resilience of culture in the region and the creation of decent jobs and training opportunities.

Together we will develop, and deliver, our West of England Cultural Plan.

For further information contact the West of England Cultural Compact Secretariat via wofeculturalplan@westofengland-ca.gov.uk



“The Creative Scale Up programme is brilliant; in that it brings arts organisations together – people at a similar stage in their careers and company development – with an opportunity to share best practice and the problems that we’re facing,”

Luke Jerram, artist

“The best thing about the region is the good skills set in the sector which allows you to grow employees. There’s opportunity to network and talk with others plus excellent support systems and great creative facilities.”

Pascal Hughes, Founder and Director, Noiser podcast company

IMAGE CREDITS**Page 1**

Artist Luke Jerram's temporary installation, *In Memoriam*, on Weston-super-Mare beach, September 2021
© Mark Gray

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Luke Jerram's, *In Memoriam*. NHS Walk, September 2021. Referencing those people who have been in hospital and care homes during this crisis, the flags are created from NHS bed sheets and arranged in the form of a medical logo.
© Paul Blakemore

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Dyrham Park, South Gloucestershire
© South Gloucestershire Council

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Two visitors at the Roman Gym, in the Roman Baths, using audio equipment and wearing face masks
© Roman Baths/Visit West

Page 8 (left to right)

Box at Bristol Hippodrome, with two young women seated and smiling © Visit West

A man in a bright, purple-themed, feathery costume in the parade for St Paul's Carnival, Bristol
© St Paul's Carnival CIC

Pervasive Media Studio's "Shadowing" by Chomko & Rosier, winner of Watershed's 2014 Playable City Award.
© Farrows Creative

Steph Reeves from Arts Enlarge CIC and the Lamplighters in Redfield, Bristol. June 2021
© West of England Combined Authority

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Culture Weston's (socially distanced) Dance Walks
© Chelsey Cliff

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Students at the Bath School of Art, Film and Media, Locksbrook Campus, Bath Spa University
© Bath Spa University

Page 11 (left to right)

Visual Impairment Welcome Day at Arnolfini, Bristol's International Centre for Contemporary Arts © Alice Hendy Photography for Arnolfini. All rights reserved.

The Centre for the Analysis of Motion, Entertainment Research and Applications (CAMERA) at the University of Bath © University of Bath

Page 12 (left to right)

Ellen Robertson (as Poppy) on the set of *The Pale Horse* (BBC One) – Episode 02, behind the scenes at the Bottleyard Studios, South Bristol. © James Pardon/© Mammoth Screen 2019

A still from "Part 2" showing a mysterious cluster of tentacles reaching out toward the performer. Larkhall is one of the region's CreaTech companies listed on the Creative Industries Council Top 100 Ones To Watch 2021
© Larkhall

Large graffiti mural, including the words 'peace', 'love', 'unity' in St Werburghs, Bristol © West of England Combined Authority

A colour drawing of 'SEE MONSTER' – the world's first and only repurposed North Sea offshore platform that will be transformed into a large-scale public art installation in Weston-super-Mare, located at the town's seafront Tropicana site. © NEWSUBSTANCE

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Bristol Sounds, Bristol Harbourside © Visit West

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Part of 'Pages of the Sea in Weston-super-Mare, part of 14-18 NOW, the national WW1 Centenary Art Programme'.
© Paul Blakemore

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Female arts festival volunteer wearing a high-vis jacket with "Culture Makers" written on the back © Adam Leppard

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Morag Myerscough artist workshop Participant's image, courtesy of Culture Weston

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A composite image capturing the movement of three of Bristol's iconic dock cranes lit up for 'Crane Dance Bristol' – a one-off performance from Laura Kriefman, from Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio, for the headline event at Docks Heritage Weekend. © Jon Rowley

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Ramshacklicious' Band at the End of the World, Bedlam Fair, Bath Fringe Festival. Performed in collaboration with Bath Spa University acting students. © Mark Dawson

Two young boys in matching red overalls stand in front of a stationary small plane in Aerospace Bristol – a museum located in Filton, South Gloucestershire.
© Aerospace Bristol

'How Do You Feel?' wellbeing activities at Arnolfini, Bristol's International Centre for Contemporary Arts © Lisa Whiting Photography for Arnolfini. All rights reserved.

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Bristol Old Vic, internal. Housing and photography project.
© West of England Combined Authority

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An event taking place in a bookshop; four young women seated and talking. © Black South West Network

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WHIRLIGIG, Weston-super-Mare © Paul Blakemore

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kraftwerk re:werk performed by Paraorchestra at WOMAD festival 2019 © Guy Petersen



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