

Culture Plan

**a place-based Culture
Strategy for Plymouth**

2021-2030

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Plymouth Culture is a sector support organisation established to provide independent support, guidance, brokerage and strategic leadership to the creative and cultural sector in Plymouth. Plymouth Culture is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and receives core funding from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation and Plymouth City Council.

In our capacity as the strategic lead for the creative and cultural sector in Plymouth, we have coordinated and authored this Culture Plan on behalf of the city and the sector following extensive engagement work.

Once published Plymouth Culture will continue to play a lead role in ensuring the plan is implemented but this is a plan beyond Plymouth Culture and will be owned and actioned by all stakeholders.

Executive Summary

Work on this Culture Plan began in early March 2020, just weeks before the Covid-19 global pandemic put the UK into lockdown. At this point we rightly questioned the value, role and efficacy of developing a ten-year plan when the creative and cultural sector was in critical shock and all our futures remained uncertain.

However, in consultation with sector stakeholders it became clear that this plan was a necessity and that, despite having a ten-year horizon, was relevant to the immediate future of the sector. It was also clear that our long-term strategic ambitions should not be detached from the short-term recovery plans for the sector. The arrival and impact of Covid-19 was in fact an opportunity to stop and reflect on the sector, the city and the world in a new light. As such, this plan has been written during a pandemic and through that lens, and we feel it is all the better for it. This unexpected and unprecedented time has brought our global societal issues from the margins to the centre and allowed us to think beyond the next project to the systems, processes and structures that require change within our sector and our society.

The result is not simply a plan which responds to Covid-19 but rather a more considered plan that recognises the role the creative and cultural industries can play in reimagining and recreating a better, fairer, greener, more sustainable and equitable world. But in order to do that we need to model systemic change within our own sector. To do this we continued to ask ourselves two key questions throughout the process of developing the plan: 1) What was wrong with yesterday?¹ and 2) How does our collective action build a more resilient sector?

This plan aims to establish an ambitious cultural vision for Plymouth. One that builds on our strong cultural foundations and creates a framework for future decision-making.

The plan is timely, albeit acknowledging the influential interruption of Covid-19. As we consider the legacy of Mayflower 400 and the international spotlight it has placed on Plymouth, coupled with the opening of significant cultural assets such as The Box and the Market Hall, as well as anticipating the arrival of the British Art Show (BAS9), it is important that the plan builds a coherent, future-facing narrative for culture.

It is essential that the plan is owned by the creative and cultural sector and championed by stakeholders from all sectors across the city. That is why our extensive engagement process has included a variety of stakeholders and is built upon their collective contributions. Whilst the conversations were wide-ranging and often divergent, we were able to identify consensus around the unique characteristics of Plymouth:

- Plymouth's creative and cultural sector has a DIY culture; an inbuilt entrepreneurial spirit where change and innovation is driven from the grassroots, artist-led community.
- The co-investment model built between Plymouth City Council and Arts Council England has been highly successful and makes Plymouth a trusted partner for funders, evidenced by funders such as British Film Institute (BFI) renewing funding in the city.
- The sector and city are edgy and raw, built out of a working-class, naval history.
- We have built a reputation for doing things differently, something we make no apology for, meaning Plymouth has been and continues to be a pioneering city.
- Our city, its communities and culture, have been shaped by the natural environment. We are a waterfront city where we embrace the horizon as a point of arrival and departure.
- The Britain's Ocean City brand presents an opportunity to create a distinctive identify for the city.

Whilst these attributes make Plymouth distinctive, they contribute to persistent challenges within the sector:

- A history of waiting for permission, and over reliance on grant funding in certain cases.

¹ Culture Reset 2020, Claire Doherty and David Micklem

- An active independent and freelance community which is vulnerable due to a lack of structural, sustained support.
- Limited strategic collaboration regarding marketing and audience development efforts despite an open and generous relationship between organisations.
- Limited success securing business sponsorship and external investment outside of arts and culture funding.

Consequently, this plan is not focused on the next big project, title or event but rather, recognises that behavioural change will drive structural change and in turn sector and city transformation. It focuses on the adoption of shared values and an investment in real collaboration in order to create the conditions in which creativity can flourish in everyone. Ultimately the plan seeks to develop a diverse and resilient creative and cultural sector in order to position it as the driving force for economic and social prosperity in Plymouth.

We have identified three key drives which underpin the plan, the community, the environment and the economy, and three priorities that will enable us to realise our ambitious vision place - our spaces, people - our community and sector - our creative economy.

Now, more than ever, we recognise the need for the plan to be agile and so it will be accompanied by an implementation plan. In the immediate future this will be a sector recovery plan but will evolve over time through a managed process of monitoring, evaluation and refinement.

Foreword

Plymouth is a vibrant cultural city and we are committed to placing culture at the centre of our work to make it a fairer, greener city for everyone. We are in no doubt about the value that culture brings to our city and our communities. It will play a pivotal role in making Plymouth 'one of the most vibrant waterfront cities in Europe' and Britain's Ocean City.

Ten years ago, when we published the first Culture Strategy for Plymouth - Vital Sparks, we committed to long-term strategic investment in culture alongside key partners such as Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery. This strategic partnership has been highly successful and enabled Plymouth to become a leading city for Contemporary Visual Art, culminating in the opening of The Box, described as the most significant cultural initiative in the UK in 2020.

This plan is a necessary step in shaping and driving the next phase of our cultural development. We have no plans to slow down our efforts and in fact we see this plan as a clear statement that our ambitions have global horizons.

We are proud to be an industrial city built on an entrepreneurial culture and a pioneering spirit. This plan is ambitious but it is rooted in Plymouth, where we are proud to do things differently. It makes it clear that our priorities are our communities, our planet and our creative sector so that we can achieve real change for the benefit of everyone. We are acutely aware of our city's role in history and the need for us to rebuild the systems and processes we operate in order to make a greener, fair, more sustainable and inclusive city a reality. We recognise we still have work to do.

I want our cultural offer to define us as a playful, welcoming city; a brave city that doesn't shy away from the global challenges we face and instead continues to take risks, stand up and stand out. I want our cultural identity to be shaped by our communities and to do that, our cultural offer needs to be an entitlement not a privilege.

I wholeheartedly endorse the Plan for Culture and the approach to making culture more inclusive, accessible and visible for all who live, work, study and visit our incredible city.

Cllr Tudor Evans OBE
Leader Plymouth City Council

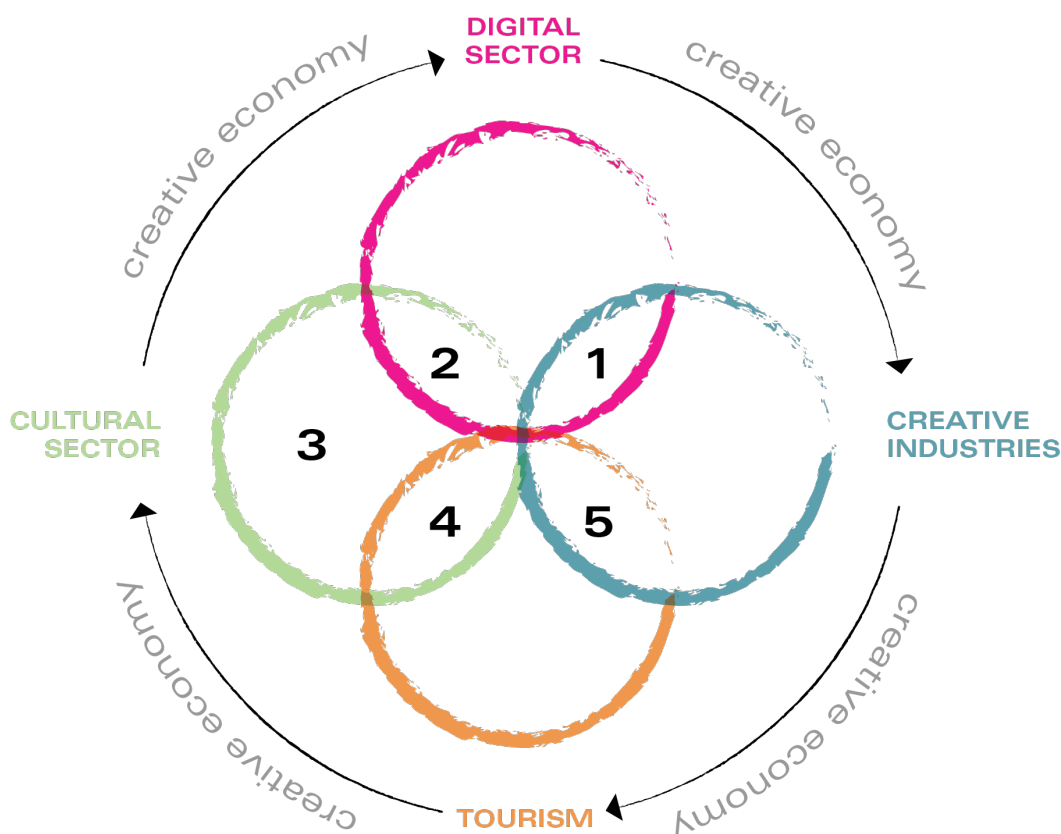
Background

What is Culture?

Culture is who we are. It is our identity, shaped by our past and which defines our future. It is all that we do, how we live and express ourselves. It is what gives our communities and our city its soul. A strong cultural identity can make a place distinctive and attractive. It also has the power to bring communities together, improve health and wellbeing, imagine and construct a better future.

We embrace this definition of culture through this plan. By adopting a place-based approach, this plan makes the case for culture as an integrated part of our city and daily lives. It seeks to move away from the view of culture as a sector only, and move towards culture as a mechanism and driving force for addressing our civic agendas as a city.

For the purposes of this plan we have taken account of the wider creative industries extending beyond funded arts and culture to include heritage, cultural tourism and commercial operations including design, digital technologies and media. We have worked within the DCMS definition of the creative industries but have excluded telecoms, sport and gambling from the plan remit. It is this definition we use when referring to the creative and cultural industries and are the parameters we have used when calculating economic impact.



Key

- 1) Publishing, computer games, software publishing, computer programming, computer consultancy activities
- 2) Film, TV, music, radio
- 3) Heritage, retail of music and video recordings, manufacture of musical instruments, reproduction of recorded media
- 4) Heritage
- 5) Arts, museum activities

We recognise the value and role of creativity across the entire economy, and the sector's ability to create high value jobs. As such, we make reference to the wider creative economy within the Plan. This takes into account the creative people and projects that operate within other sectors, contributing extensively to the economy as a whole.

Throughout the plan we apply the following definitions:

Funded arts and culture - cultural organisations and arts projects that are delivered through public or private funding, either full or part-funded.

Culture - a collective term applied to the arts and heritage sector which may include funded and non-funded activity, but also a term that applies to the identity, values and behaviours of the city.

Creative Industries - Cultural and creative organisations and initiatives that operate through both funded and commercial income streams.

Creative Economy - Creative roles and activities that take place within non-creative or cultural businesses.

Creative Ecology - The complete creative and cultural environment made up of funded, non-funded and commercial activity.

Why do we need a Culture Plan?

All future-facing, leading cities need a Culture Plan as a critical component of the wider place-making agenda. There is an abundance of evidence to demonstrate the significant economic and social impact of culture at an individual and city level. As such, the Culture Plan is not a stand-alone document but is designed to complement non-arts agendas and integrate with existing city strategies to achieve our collective ambitions for Plymouth.

The Culture Plan provides a framework for decision-making and helps to direct resources to identified priorities. The Plan outlines how we grow and sustain a thriving cultural sector in order to positively impact the lives of individuals and the economic and social prosperity of the city. It has been compiled by the sector and key stakeholders to ensure that it is collectively owned and that individuals and organisations understand the contribution they can make towards achieving our long-term ambitions. Ultimately this ensures that we have a strong, collective sector voice within the city and that culture in Plymouth remains an investable proposition to partners external to the city.

The Plymouth Plan remains the City's overarching strategic plan, looking ahead to 2034. The Plan sets out a shared direction of travel for its long-term future bringing together a number of strategic planning processes into one place. The Plan sets out the aspiration to be a healthy and prosperous city with a rich arts and cultural environment and we see the Culture Plan sitting alongside this as a mechanism for achieving the strategic objectives.

Policy INT4 is of particular relevance as it seeks to delivering a distinctive, dynamic, cultural centre of regional, national and international renown and sets out how the city will support a thriving arts and cultural sector.

The arts and cultural sector has the ability to have a positive impact across a wide range of topic areas ensuring this Culture Plan also contributes to the following policies:

Policy HEA1 Addressing health inequalities, improving health literacy.

Policy HEA2 Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

Policy HEA4 Playing an active role in the community.

Policy HEA7 Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment.

Policy GRO1 Creating the conditions for economic growth.

Policy GRO2 Delivering skills and talent development.

Policy INT3 Positioning Plymouth as a major UK destination.

Policy INT6 Enhancing Plymouth's 'green city' credentials.

Policy INT8 Celebrating diverse communities.²

For the reasons outlined above, the Culture Plan does not specifically include actions relating to sport. However, we see sport as part of the wider cultural identity of the city and recognise that the lines between some art forms and physical activity, such as dance, are rightly blurred. As such we will work closely with the Plymouth Sports Board to ensure the Culture Plan complements the Plymouth Plan for Sport³. Where possible we will align our efforts around our shared ambitions to ‘get people active’ and ‘reduce health inequalities and improve people’s health and wellbeing’.

The mutually beneficial relationship between culture and the visitor economy remains important for Plymouth. We have worked closely with Destination Plymouth to incorporate the theme ‘Our brilliant culture and heritage’ into the Plymouth Visitor Plan and see the Culture Plan as a mechanism for delivering again this objective.

It is important to note that this Culture Plan does not replace existing plans such as The Visual Arts Plan - Go Beyond⁴, The Public Art Plan⁵ and Plymouth Principles and the Music Report. These plans have been invaluable in shaping this plan and will continue to be delivered within the wider strategic framework of the Culture Plan.

The plan is also aligned with national policy and thinking. We have taken account of National and Local Industrial Strategies to identify how this plan can support headline ambitions for inclusive growth. Equally, we are mindful of the times we are living in and the need to reflect, reimagine and rebuild, and so have paid close attention to recommendations for recovery, such as Cultural Cities Recovery, published October 2020⁶.

The plan responds to the Arts Councils strategy, Let’s Create⁷, and the four investment principles. These principles naturally align with the ambitions and approach set out in this plan. They provide a framework, creating the conditions needed for the growth and evolution of the sector and the city.

Where are we now?

Plymouth is by no means starting from scratch when it comes to a cultural offer. Over the last ten years, since the first cultural strategy was published, there has been a strategic and sustained investment in culture. This has been evident in the preservation of the local authority arts budget, in comparison to other cities and despite budget pressures, and the coordinated efforts of city and cultural leaders to leverage investment into the sector.

This decade of collaboration and investment has resulted in an increase in arts and cultural organisations across the city. According to the most recent Inter-Departmental Business Register data available, 365 business units (i.e. companies or sole traders) classed as “Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services” are based in Plymouth. This accounts for 6% of all enterprises in Plymouth and is reflective of the sector profile across the South West and the rest of England.

² <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/planningandbuildingcontrol/plymouthplan/approvedplymouthplan>

³ https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Plymouth_Plan_for_Sport.pdf

⁴ <http://plymouthculture.co.uk/visual-arts-plan/>

⁵ <http://plymouthculture.co.uk/public-art-plan/>

⁶ <https://www.corecities.com/sites/default/files/field/attachment/ACE316%20Cultural%20Cities%20Enquiry%20V10.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>

The sector makes a significant economic contribution to the city. It is important that this is understood and valued by all stakeholders so, to support the development of this plan, Plymouth Culture commissioned Audience Agency⁸ to gather baseline economic data for the sector.

Using the definitions outlined above, the creative and cultural sector employs 1,520 people in Plymouth. A further 610 indirect jobs are supported by the cultural sector, resulting in a total of 2,130 direct and indirect jobs in the creative and cultural industries in Plymouth.

The sector is dominated by small and micro organisations with just a handful of larger cultural organisations. Employment is clustered within these large employers with the three largest cultural-sector employers in Plymouth employing 29% of the cultural workforce, and the largest five employing 39%. Cultural-sector jobs are concentrated in the St Peter & the Waterfront and Moor View wards, together accounting for just under half of employees.

Using Gross Value Added as a model for economic output, the cultural and creative sector in Plymouth accounts for £69.1m of economic output per year. When indirect effects are taken into account, this increases to an economic output of £98.8m.

The productivity of the sector is £69,000 GVA per full-time employee, higher than the average across all sectors in Plymouth which is £49,770.

The development and growth of the sector has attracted additional funding. Plymouth secured a funding uplift of 38% from Arts Council England (ACE) for National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) in the 2018-22 round. Ten Plymouth organisations were granted NPO status for 2018-22, placing Plymouth 26th out of all English Local Authorities in terms of NPOs per head of population. In total Plymouth NPOs were granted £16m over 2018-22, around £59 per resident. This places Plymouth 13th out of all English Local Authorities in terms of NPO funding per head⁹.

The social impact created by the sector is equally important and significant. Many of our creative and cultural organisations are working in wards and neighbourhoods across the city with hard-to-reach communities and individuals. They are engaging the most disadvantaged and marginalised residents, working on the front line to make a difference to the lives of those individuals, something that has never been more evident than during the pandemic.

Plymouth has an over-representation of less-engaged Audience Spectrum segments: 21% of adults fall into one of the 'Highly engaged' Audience Spectrum segments, 42% a Medium Engagement segment, 37% a Lower Engagement segment. This compares with 25%, 41% and 33% of adults in England as a whole.

According to the TGI survey, adults in Plymouth are less likely than those elsewhere in England to attend almost all areas of arts and culture – most notably opera, museums, jazz, classical music, ballet, and theatre.

This data is essential in helping to paint a picture of the cultural offer and impact within the city. Ultimately though, it shows us that we have work to do. Work to understand and measure the full reach and impact of the sector; work to standardise data collection and monitoring across the sector; work to deploy data as a decision-making tool across the sector and the city.

This baseline data, and an awareness of the gaps it presents, has helped to shape this plan and the associated action plans.

⁸ Plymouth Culture - Culture Strategy Research report, Audience Agency, December 2020

⁹ The NPO funding received from ACE is just one source of investment into the city and is included because it represents a sustained, strategic relationship with the city. Many other funders are supporting cultural organisations and initiatives such as British Film Institute, British Council, Innovate UK, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and numerous trusts and foundations to name a few examples.

VISION

Plymouth is a magnet city, attracting artists, creatives and social activists. Our city's appeal is characterised by our commitment to people and planet and evidenced by our unique cultural offer that reflects, includes and values our diverse communities.

Plymouth has been on a cultural journey for over a decade. Strong civic and cultural leadership has already enabled Plymouth to build a reputation as a city of culture. This vision acknowledges all that has gone before and charts a path for our next phase of cultural development; one that focuses on amplifying and connecting what we have, strengthening the sector and situating culture at the heart of city planning and decision-making.

Incredible work over recent years has shone a spotlight on Plymouth, drawing national and International attention. Our job now, as outlined within this plan, is to sustain this energy and convert attention to engagement. We want people to be drawn to the city to live, work, visit, study and invest in ways that support our vision for a culture-led fairer, greener, sustainable city.

Key Drivers


Three key drivers will sit at the heart of all decision-making to ensure this plan works to create a greener, fairer sector and city.



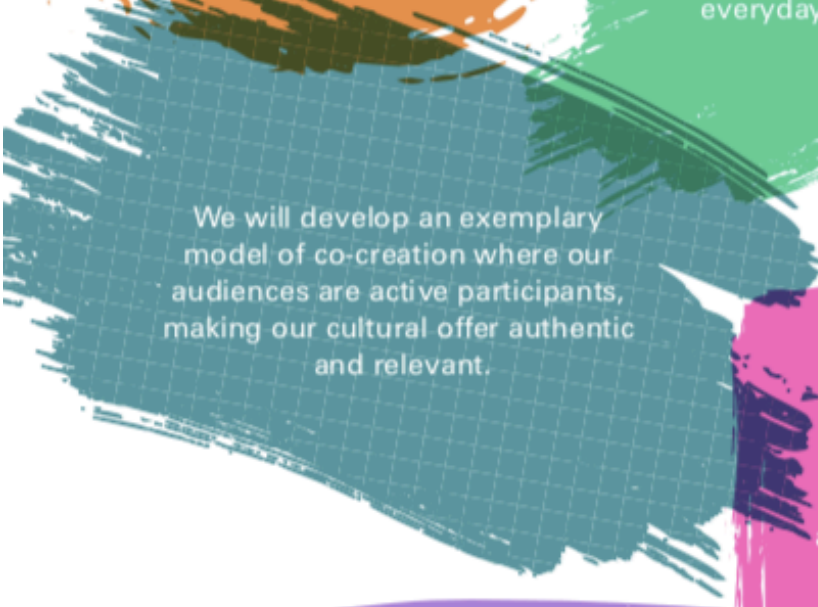
AMBITIONS



We will embrace our unique blue-grey-green landscapes, unlocking assets in our built and natural environments to create memorable experiences only imaginable in Plymouth.




We will make cultural encounters part of the everyday for everyone.



We will develop an exemplary model of co-creation where our audiences are active participants, making our cultural offer authentic and relevant.



We will be the UK's leading city for immersive cultural experiences, recognised for our ability to use digital technology to engage communities and build cross-sector connections.



We will embed equality at every level of the sector to actively support diversity of voice and celebrate the creativity in everyone.

IMPACT

We want the Culture Plan to drive positive change at the individual, sector and city level. Our ambitions are therefore reflective of the type and scale of change we wish to see.

We want the collective impact of the plan to result in -

- Plymouth building a reputation as a fun, playful city.
- Residents feeling a sense of pride in Plymouth borne out of a strong cultural identity.
- The cultural offer reaching across the city to every visitor, resident, neighbourhood and community.
- The cultural sector attracting and retaining a diverse audience who are actively involved in making culture.
- People talking about culture and engaging in conversation because it is fun, challenging and visible.

In quantitative terms we want to¹⁰ -

- Unlock 5 new spaces for culture annually.
- Increase jobs in the creative and cultural sector by 30% by 2030.
- Introduce 10 new cultural initiatives in neighbourhoods annually.
- Increase our core arts audiences by 20% by 2030.
- Increase our non-arts audiences by 30% by 2030.
- Reduce environmental impact of our sector helping to reach the city's ambition for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- Secure £0.5m annually in non arts funding by 2030.
- Increase out-of-Plymouth visitor numbers to cultural venues and programmes by 40% by 2030.

¹⁰ NB - baseline data will be required to monitor progress against targets. Targets will be reviewed annually and detailed in the implementation plan.

Modelling the Change

We need a different approach if we are going to achieve a different outcome. This is about behavioural change.

In order for our city to achieve its cultural ambitions, we will adopt and demonstrate the following characteristics in all our cultural decision-making:

Take risks. Plymouth has a history of being daring, bold and radical and now more than ever, we need to be prepared to take some risks. In the unpredictable world in which we live, status quo is not an option, nor is it desirable. As such, we need to think radically about our cultural offer to ensure we are, and remain, a future-facing city.

Feel the fear. In order to achieve the much-needed systemic change in the sector and across society, we need to get comfortable feeling uncomfortable. If we can learn to trust in the process and partnerships, we can tolerate an element of fear that will ultimately allow us to push the boundaries. We might fear change, fear the unknown, fear uncertainty but if we can allow ourselves to operate in that fearful space, it will be where the most important and exciting ideas and collaborations emerge.

Stewardship not ownership. Our approach to leadership needs to evolve. This means adopting a stewardship model where we see our role as facilitators and think about the long-term consequences of decisions rather than simply short-term gains. In so doing we will create the conditions for culture and community to flourish.

High quality is non-negotiable. It is important that we open and maintain a critical debate regarding quality. High quality must be a hallmark of our cultural offer, both in terms of our built assets and our programming, regardless of scale or location. For this to be possible we need to establish a benchmark and invite honest and open discussion about the term quality. We know that with a diverse ecology a single measure of quality is not possible or indeed helpful. Instead, we need to evolve a set of quality metrics such as those set out by Arts Council England using a series of Quality Metric Statements:

- Concept: it was an interesting idea
- Presentation: it was well produced and presented
- Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before
- Challenge: it was thought-provoking
- Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention
- Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again
- Local impact: it is important that it's happening here
- Originality: it was ground-breaking
- Risk: the artists/curators really challenged themselves with this work

- Excellence: it is one of the best examples of its type that I have seen

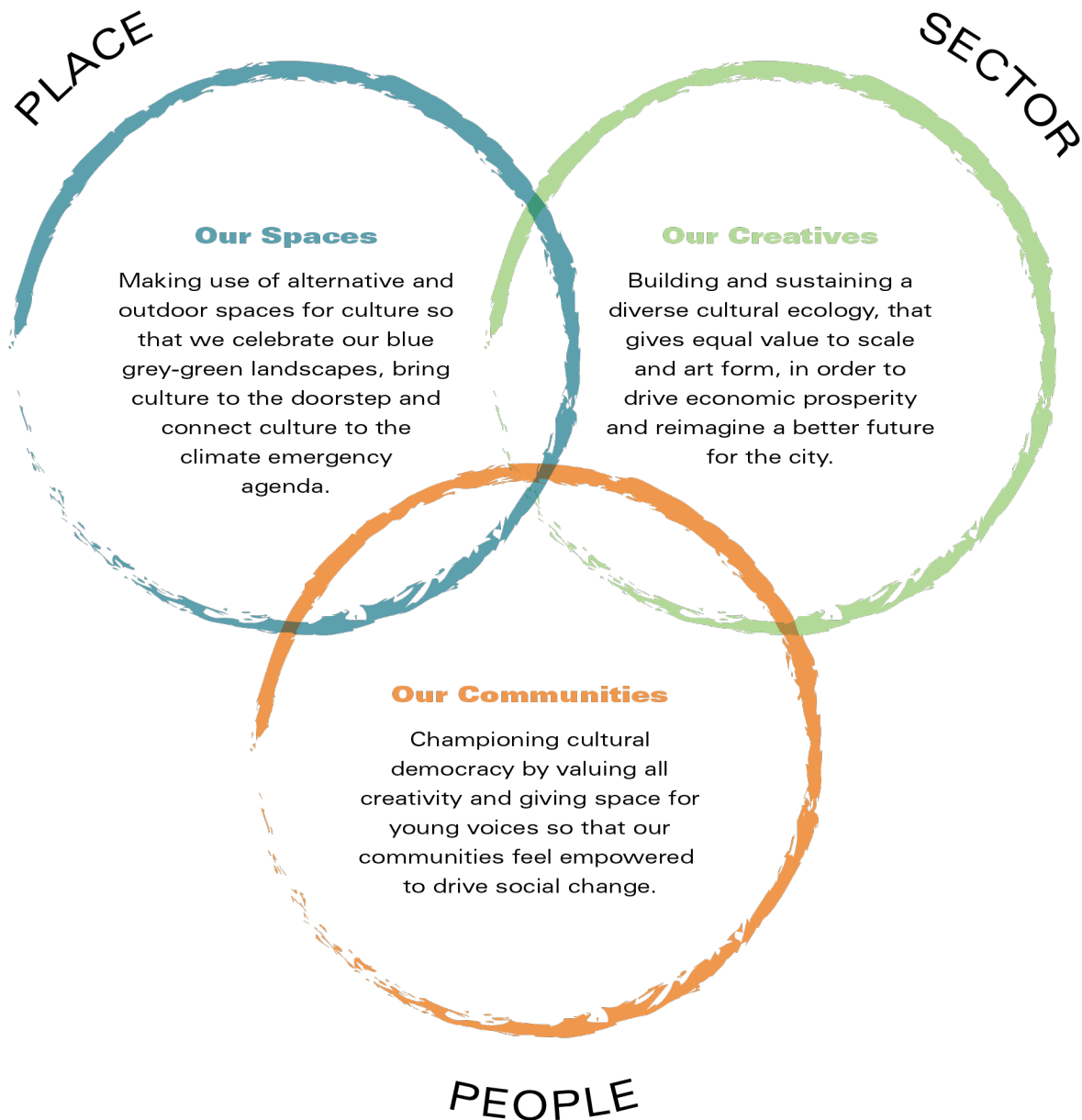
Inclusivity drives diversity¹¹. Inclusivity will sit at the heart of all we do. We will not consider inclusivity a problem to be solved or a project to be delivered. Instead, we will embed inclusivity as a decision-making tool in all that we do, in the knowledge that doing so will invite diversity. It is diversity at every level of our cultural sector, from content production, to curation to leadership, that will drive a higher-quality, more ambitious and relevant cultural programme.

Collaboration built on trust. The cultural sector in Plymouth has built a reputation for open and honest communication between partners, which has undoubtedly been a component of its success. In this changing world we need to move beyond simply sharing information and develop a truly collaborative approach. This will need to include sharing data, pooling resources, distributing responsibilities and understanding city needs not just organisational/individual needs. This collaboration will only be possible through deep trust in one another, formed through generosity and maintained through shared values.

¹¹ The term 'diversity' is used in the broadest sense and refers to race, age, gender, sexuality and socio-economics. The plan recognises the need for increased diversity in the sector, in every sense, and calls for a focus on inclusivity in order to improve diversity. We want everyone to have fair and open access to culture and will need to take specific actions to improve access for those who have been under-represented.

Approach

The plan will focus on three strategic priorities which will shape decision-making and resource allocation.



Our Spaces

The city is our venue. The waterfront our stage. The architecture our canvas.

Plymouth is uniquely situated. An urban, post-war concrete jungle boasting a city designed by celebrated architects. A city flanked by Europe's finest waterfront, the first UK National Marine Park, and eight nature reserves with sprawling green spaces, parks and woodlands.

Plymouth is a city that, despite being rebuilt at speed and to a budget, has been purposefully designed to connect with and embrace its natural assets. Abercrombie and Watson, the architects behind the city masterplan in 1944, intended that your eye would be drawn to the Hoe and the sea beyond; that the grid-like formation would accommodate garden city spaces; that the white Portland stone would provide a neutral backdrop for colour to be added; that the open, airy feel of the city would enable the man-made structures to sit in harmony with nature.

The encouragement and potential for movement, exchange, vibrancy and imagination has been designed into the city.

Plymouth has always been brave and radical. It has been a city that does more than simply imagine what could be, but rather it reimagines its own future. Our challenge and opportunity now is to not only reimagine but realise a different future. Our spaces and places, and how we interact with them, are central to this process.

Blue, grey, green. Our natural assets are unique, with our urban city flanked by green spaces and a spectacular waterfront. The blue-grey-green landscape creates alternative places and spaces for culture to exist that will transform the city but also the way in which culture is seen and experienced.

The city itself provides us with the backdrop we need to create world-class culture, that is homegrown and authentic to Plymouth. This work could only exist in Plymouth, not just because of where we place it but because of the source of its inspiration. This is about our cultural offer truly reflecting our surroundings and about our environment driving content creation. A symbiotic relationship where culture brings our city to life and our city breathes life into culture.

Art, culture and creativity should fill our streets and adorn our buildings. It should light up our waterfront and be seen dancing along our shoreline. It should be heard from the rooftops and felt in quiet places of reflection. It should be visible that culture is alive in our city.

Proximity is key. The value of hyper-local cultural activity is not just as a response to Covid-19. It is absolutely essential to driving an audience development agenda.

This is not outreach. This is not about cultural organisations taking their work out into communities. No, this is more than that. This is about site-specific work located in places and spaces that people and communities inhabit on a day-to-day basis, so that the cultural encounters are on their terms.

Our residents and visitors alike should experience culture on their doorstep, literally. It should be a day-to-day encounter which normalises culture, makes it feel part of their lives and gives them the confidence to access and engage with the full cultural offer.

Everyday doesn't mean ordinary. Placing culture in everyday locations and scenarios does not mean we have to dumb it down. Wherever art, culture and creativity is situated it should be the highest-quality example of that type of work that can be found. Non-traditional and non-arts audiences deserve the highest-quality cultural offer. This is a question of access not quality. The work should absolutely challenge, enchant and engage audiences everywhere. It should be extraordinary regardless of scale, budget or location.

Living heritage. We know our place in history and we acknowledge all that this entails, from slavery to colonialism and from piracy to political unrest. We will continue to be informed by our past but it does not have to define us.

Plymouth is a welcoming city. A city not only of departure but of arrival. For centuries, people have been drawn to Plymouth as a city of refuge that offers the possibility of an alternative future. A city shaped by the ocean as a point of arrival and departure, where different cultures collide to create communities and to shape our cultural identity.

Our heritage should be a live conversation, one which invites dialogue about the past, present and future. An open conversation with multiple voices helping us to reflect on our history and take decisive action for a better future.

Permanent, temporary and transient. Working in the alternative, outdoor and public spaces requires time, curatorial consideration and aftercare. There is value in long-term, permanent initiatives as well as fleeting, pop-up interventions.

We will actively adopt and implement the eleven principles of the Public Art Plan for Plymouth. We will carefully consider how art in the public realm is developed, delivered, maintained and removed to ensure a meaningful and curated programme is agreed and valued. We will develop mechanisms for decision-making which involve experts in this field and which prioritise relevance, co-creation and quality as key metrics for decision-making.

Climate emergency. We can't celebrate and access our natural assets without taking climate emergency seriously. The reason we want to place our unique natural landscape of Plymouth at the centre of this plan is so that we can mainstream the conversation about climate emergency and use culture to drive social action.

We must not create a cultural offer that simply celebrates our unique setting. It must be a programme that facilitates dialogue about climate emergency and leads to action, ultimately protecting and preserving our environment. Arts and culture have the ability to engage audiences in global agendas whilst driving individual action by visualising data, communicating information and evoking a personal, emotional reaction that leads to positive activism.

We will give thought, therefore, to not only content but process. We will consider the environmental impact of cultural activity across the city and take decisive action to eliminate or offset this impact. We will build a sector that has, in itself, demonstrable green credentials. We will also build a sector that understands the central role it has to play in the climate emergency agenda, here in Plymouth and beyond.

We need to talk about the high street. High streets up and down the country have been in decline for years. There has been active encouragement to redesign high streets and reconsider the role they play outside of a retail offer. Now, more than ever, we need to completely reimagine the high street.

Culture and creativity offer a potential , but it needs to run deeper than simply driving increased footfall or making the city centre look and feel more attractive. This is not about culture offering a short-term fix, but rather a long-term plan for a reimagined, repurposed high street.

For this to happen we need to understand what our long-term vision is. We need to consider ownership models that facilitate this change and value creativity as a planning and decision-making process rather than simply the packaging at the end. We need creatives to sit at the heart of this strategic planning conversation for transformative change to happen.

Creating the conditions - key actions

1. Unlocking outdoor and alternative spaces for culture through city-wide partnership.
2. Curate an annual calendar of cultural events, owned by the sector programmed across the city.

3. Curate an annual talks programme exploring issues of climate emergency and environmental equality.
4. Secure cultural representation on city-centre developments to reimagine and transform our high street.
5. Establish a public art committee, with accountability for the adoption and implementation of the Public Art Plan for Plymouth.
6. Support the development of a digital platform that promotes and facilitates the use of vacant spaces for cultural initiatives.

Our Creatives

Our artists and creatives are the change-makers, the radical thinkers, the social activists. They create movements for change and will be the ones who reimagine a global future.

The artists and creatives in our city are the individuals who will make our cultural ambitions a reality. We need to create the conditions for artists and creatives to start and grow their careers in the city, and to ensure they have the necessary infrastructure to thrive. It needs to be evident internally and externally to the city that Plymouth is the cultural destination of choice for creatives.

A healthy sector needs a diverse ecology of individuals and organisations, and, as such, we need to value our freelance artists and creatives as much as our established cultural institutions. An ability to support long-term stability for the sector as well as an open, honest and generous culture will enable individuals to take risks, build collaborations and drive cultural and social innovation.

Our spaces and systems need to be inclusive and accessible and this is only possible if creative individuals are involved in decision-making.

Cultural ecology. We know that for a healthy ecosystem to function, it must have all components and they must operate in balance. This means large and small, emerging and established organisations existing harmoniously. This is not an either- or situation. We need a full ecology to exist to foster the ideas and energy, but also to create the network of progressing that makes it possible for organisations and individuals to stay and grow within the city. It is the full complement and critical mass of the creative ecology that will make it vibrant and sustainable.

We recognise the value of and need for not-for-profit cultural organisations, publicly funded arts, commercial creative enterprises and cultural tourism products. We need all sub-sectors to thrive in order to create a robust sector which continues to drive economic and social prosperity for the city.

Creative economy. The creative and cultural industries are a growth sector nationally and this is mirrored in Plymouth. They are a resilient sector, growing during recession and outstripping the performance of other sectors. Importantly, though, one of the unique characteristics of the sector is the spillover effect it creates. The impact of culture and creativity is felt far beyond the sector boundaries, from the influence it has on place-shaping and the contribution it makes to business development in other sectors.

We recognise the potential to nurture a thriving creative economy within Plymouth; where creative and cultural activity intersects with the wider economy to create cross-sector collaborations. A thriving creative cluster will drive economic growth by bringing design-thinking, digital expertise and a strong visual identity to all businesses open to collaboration. The presence of a creative cluster will naturally attract dynamic people and businesses to the city, further building our cultural identity and reputation as a creative city.

Driving decision-making. To create a happy, healthy, inclusive and prosperous city culture needs to sit at the heart of decision-making. The cultural sector has much to offer wider societal agendas and should not be confined to a sector silo. The sector's ability to engage communities, communicate information, create user-centred solutions and positively impact wellbeing outcomes, means that it should be part of city-level decision-making. Culture needs to sit at the heart of the city's strategic approach to planning, partnership and investment in order to drive better social and economic outcomes for all.

Diversity of voice. Our cultural ambitions will not be met unless there are structural changes made to the way our sector operates. We cannot grow our audiences or bring new entrants into the sector if it is not reflective of our Plymouth communities and society.

We need to improve inclusivity in all cultural organisations and at all levels in order to bring diversity of voice into the sector. More than simply creating space for diverse voices, we need to really listen, so that those voices help shape strategic plans, methodologies and content. For too long, inclusivity and diversity has been discussed only in the context of audiences, but sector development and audience development go hand-in-hand. Diversity in board, management and practitioner roles will improve decision-making and produce critically-engaged work that excites, engages and challenges existing and new audiences.

Stabilising the structure. The structures that make up the cultural sector are fragile, often built on personal energy, generosity and volunteering. Whilst this drives a dynamic DIY culture, which has been incredibly important in Plymouth, it is not sustainable; people become burnt out, the true cost of initiatives is never fully understood, and it can reinforce sector hierarchies.

We know we are in a climate where funding is scarce and is only likely to become more challenging. As such, we need to find alternative ways of working, through collaboration, so that the funding can be used efficiently and resources can be deployed to maximise impact. In particular, we need to acknowledge the responsibility large and funded cultural organisations have in supporting small and emerging initiatives, organisations and practitioners.

The reality is that there is simply not enough financial resource to support everything and everyone. Therefore, we need to establish a transparent and robust process for identifying and agreeing priorities for the sector and city, and create a support mechanism. This is not about creating a parent-child dependency, nor it is about centralised control of culture. This is about creating the conditions for innovation and creativity to thrive by providing the secure scaffolding on which the sector can grow.

Retention and attraction. Plymouth has an enviable reputation for creative arts education and through the combined offer of the two universities, art college and further education college, attracts a considerable number of students to creative and cultural programmes.

This supports the vibrancy of the sector and the city but for us to continue to attract students, we must retain graduates. If graduates have a clear progression route with tailored and accessible support, which nurtures graduate start-ups and emerging artists, students will see the creative and cultural industries as a viable career option. Graduate retention breeds student attraction and we continue to feed the sector with new and diverse voices thus enhancing the cultural offer of the city.

Plymouth has an extensive support package, including incubation spaces, networks, funding, advice, training and mentoring, but it needs to be better connected and visible.

Social enterprise. The sustainability of the sector remains a challenge. It is vital that in the next phase of the sector and the city's development, consideration is given to the development of new business models. Of particular interest is the role that social enterprise might play in evolving the sector through an alignment of shared cultural and social values.

Where possible, we want to see a balanced portfolio of funded, not-for-profit and commercial activity. This means diversifying income streams and investment sources. There is a need and opportunity to position the creative and cultural sector in a way that makes it possible to leverage non-arts investment. This will also involve developing our understanding of how public and private, social and commercial investments can sit side-by-side for cultural initiatives.

Future jobs. The jobs market is changing and we have a responsibility to prepare the next generation with the skills and attributes necessary to lead a socially and economically prosperous society.

The creative and cultural industries are central to the future jobs agenda in two ways: 1) the growth of digital and emerging technology jobs within the sector, and 2) the creative and digital skills the sector can bring to the wider economy. Jobs within the emerging and immersive technologies sphere have flourished and look set to grow exponentially in the coming years.

Plymouth has had its eye on this horizon and has developed world-class expertise and facilities in the field of immersive technologies. This presents an opportunity for Plymouth to become a leading city for the design and delivery of immersive experiences. In particular, we are developing a reputation for cross-sector collaborations and community engagement through the use of immersive technologies that create experiences unique to Plymouth. As a leading hub, there is potential to create jobs, support start-ups and attract investment in this field.

Creating the conditions - key actions

1. Adopt best practice across the sector including the 5 Guiding Principles - A Fair Trade Model for Freelancers¹² and Resurgam¹³ inclusive growth charter.
2. Design and embed a cultural leadership programme to identify and nurture future leaders.
3. Map the sector support provision across the city to identify clear progression routes for graduates and new sector entrants.
4. Build on the iMayflower programme to secure further investment and jobs within immersive technologies/experiences.
5. Establish a Cultural Compact comprised of cross-sector stakeholders to leverage city investment by linking cross-city agendas with culture.
6. Develop appropriate support structures to build and sustain the creative ecology.
7. Embed collaboration programmes within NPO budgets as an annual programme.
8. Promote the Resurgam Spend4Plymouth initiative within the cultural sector to increase local procurement of cultural and creative services.
9. Establish a music partnership to implement the recommendations within the Music Report.

¹² Fuel initiated the Freelance Task Force along with over 100 sponsors (including Theatre Royal Plymouth and the Barbican Theatre Plymouth who sponsored June Gamble and Charlotte Kransmo respectively), in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on freelancers within the Theatre/Live Arts industry. The 5 Guiding Principles: A Fair Trade Model for Freelancers was created by Alister O'Loughlin and Miranda Henderson with contributions from June Gamble and Charlotte Kransmo (all members of the original Freelance Task Force and South West Freelance Task Force).

¹³ Resurgam: Plymouth's Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan (<https://www.resurgam.uk>) is a collective effort by cross city, cross sector stakeholders to make the city more resilient and grow back better than before to ensure that the benefits of growth are experienced by all Plymouth's people, and that a fairer, healthier, safer and greener city is achieved.

Our Communities

Our communities are the authors, curators, directors, producers and co-creators of our culture. Our empowered communities will drive social change.

Our communities¹⁴ are more than just passive consumers of culture. They are active participants responsible for making and shaping culture. Plymouth's unique reputation for socially engaged practice and community-led regeneration, which exists in pockets of the city, presents an opportunity to create an approach to the co-creation of culture unlike any other city.

It's this approach that will enable the city to develop a more sophisticated plan for audience development, where we see genuine diversification and retention of audiences. It is this meaningful relationship with audiences, as co-creators, that will move our cultural offer beyond simply fun and engaging to become relevant, authentic, challenging and inspiring. It is in this space that the ability of arts and culture to empower communities to drive social change, improving the social and economic outcomes for all, will be clearly demonstrated. Thus, we position culture as a driving force for transformation across non-arts agendas.

¹⁴ Throughout this plan we use the term 'community' to refer to residents of Plymouth. Residency may be permanent or temporary, for example as students or visitors. Communities may form around a geography or interest and we embrace both within this plan.

Cultural democracy. We want to extend and diversify our cultural audiences. We want to retain and grow our existing, core arts audiences in order to achieve our ambitious vision for the cultural offer in Plymouth. In equal measure, we want to reach and engage non-arts audiences.

Although these are highly-divergent audiences, adopting and investing in cultural democracy as central to our approach will resonate to the full audience spectrum. Cultural democracy as a methodology will mean that our audiences are more than passive consumers; more than engaged supporters, they will be active participants. As such, they will co-create our cultural programme as active decision-makers in the commissioning, funding, creation, production and distribution of culture.

The effect of this approach will be twofold. For our non-arts audiences their active participation in co-creating the cultural offer will mean that it is relevant, reflective of the issues and voices of their community of interest. As such, this connects them to the cultural offer, giving them shared ownership in it. They will know that culture is for them and won't feel a need to seek permission to access the cultural offer.

For our core arts audiences, cultural democracy will have a profound effect on the type and quality of cultural work produced, ultimately enhancing their experience. The cultural offer will be more ambitious, more challenging, more topical, more diverse and more engaging. It will reflect Plymouth's communities of interest but will be globally significant.

The voice of young people. Plymouth is a young city, making it paramount that young people are at the heart of shaping and making culture. We not only want them to be a core audience segment, but we want their voices to be evident in what, how and where culture is made and located. In order for that to become a reality, we need to involve young people at every level of our cultural offer so that they are part of decision-making.

We want our young people to be proud of Plymouth and to feel a personal connection to our cultural identity. We know that they are the leaders of the future and, as such, we need to create the opportunities for them to shape the future of Plymouth. This is about more than career pathways, it is about building confidence, making connections, exploring identity and empowering young people to lead happier, healthier more fulfilled lives. That connection to place will encourage young people to make Plymouth their home and to continue to invest in building a thriving city.

Creative Education. We know that early childhood experiences and encounters of any kind have a profound effect on future outcomes, none more so than creative and cultural encounters. We want our cultural offer to integrate with our schools and education providers so that every young person has access to art, culture and creativity in the curriculum. Additionally, we want creativity to be embedded in all subjects so that we can develop creative thinkers, agile problem-solvers and resilient future leaders.

Plymouth's unique mix of educational expertise within marine, science, technology and creative arts means that we have the potential to provide access to a balanced Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum at every level of the education system.

Social action. Without doubt, we want our cultural offer to be fun and playful, to enchant and delight audiences. However, we know that culture and creativity have the power to do far more. Culture can reach and transform communities in ways that other agendas and organisations can't. When used correctly, culture can be a vehicle for communication and for opening discussion on a wide range of important issues.

We want to be a city that harnesses the power of culture to create space for open dialogue and conversation about our most pressing societal issues. We want to use culture to challenge perceptions and encourage curiosity to such an extent that individuals and communities are compelled to take action. We want creativity to help communities imagine a better future and to equip them with the skills to make social change happen.

We will be a city that embraces social activism and values the role of culture in building resilient communities capable of driving grassroots movements that create a better, fairer more sustainable future for Plymouth and its people.

Creating the conditions - key actions

1. Position the BAS9 as a key component for sector recovery by focusing on social practice, audience development and community engagement.
2. Develop a consistent model of youth engagement, including at board level, across the NPOs which can be rolled out across the cultural sector.
3. Embed the Fab City concept in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
4. Support Plymouth's cultural education offer through collaboration and advocacy.

Programmes of Work

We have identified five programmes of work which will enable the plan to be implemented. Specific projects and initiatives will sit within each programme that will form an operational business plan which, in turn, will be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals.

Our city is our venue

We will look to create an infrastructure across the city that facilitates individuals and organisations to deliver culture in all communities and locations. For example, this might include physical structures, power points, access to transport, Wi-Fi connections, licensing relaxations and live streaming technologies. Ultimately, we want to remove the barriers and mobilise our partners to put in place the infrastructure needed to enable amazing things to happen.

Culture is alive

We will seek to curate a programme of activity across the city on an annual basis. This will involve multiple partners and is not looking to centralise activity but rather make it visible and accessible with a collaborative approach to marketing and programming. This will work hand-in-hand with the above work programme to make sure venue and neighbourhood activity is connected so that audiences can grow and diversify.

Creative economy

We want to create support structures that enable individuals and organisations to have a sustainable and fulfilling career within the creative industries. By building a thriving cultural sector, we know there will be spillover benefits for the wider creative economy, offering job opportunities and economic growth potential.

Community clusters

We want to plug culture in at the community level so that culture and creativity supports the creation of healthy, happy, resilient communities. To do this we know we need to work in focused communities over the long-term but it is important that we have the ability to connect and activate these communities across the entire city in order to influence decision-making and drive positive change.

Data story telling

We want to get better at collecting, sharing and translating data so that it tells a story about the work and impact of the sector in the city. It is important that we use data effectively so that we can make informed decisions and craft a compelling narrative.

Funding, Finance & Investment

Funding for arts and culture has seen a steady decline over the last decade, both at national and local level. In many cities, the retention of a non-statutory arts and culture service and revenue budget has been unachievable, resulting in department and budget cuts. With the challenges presented by a post-Covid world on top of an extended period of austerity and inevitable economic recession, the future landscape for public funding in the arts looks bleak.

Plymouth City Council has remained committed to culture, and actively championed the retention of arts and culture budgets. Simultaneously, the Council has worked hard to develop a strategic partnership with Arts Council England to achieve a co-investment model for NPOs, Mayflower 400 and The Box. This is commendable, and certainly bucks the trend in other cities, and will need to continue in support of this plan.

As we enter the next phase of cultural development, we will need to work hard to retain, increase and diversify funding and investment into the sector if we are to achieve the ambitions set out in this plan. The focus of this plan means that we need to not only consider the amount of investment but the way in which funding decisions are made, how funding flows within the sector and how funding reflects the direction of travel set out in the Culture Plan.

It is therefore recommended that we take a four-pronged approach to funding, finance and investment into the creative and cultural sector.

Retention of public arts funding

We want to retain and, where possible, increase the existing level of Arts Council NPO and project funding into the city. In the current climate it will be a challenge to ensure the level of overall funding from this source does not decline. This will require a collaborative, coordinated approach across the sector to share information, pool resources and create a coherent, investable proposition.

Widening of public funding

The plan makes it clear that our priority is to position culture within the mainstream conversation, helping to achieve the objectives of the Plymouth Plan and addressing societal and city challenges around health, education, housing, quality of life, inclusive growth and community cohesion. Therefore, we need a partnership approach across sectors and an associated mechanism for attracting large-scale public investment into the city. This needs to be a coordinated, strategic approach where each sector and partner understands the role they play and value they bring to a shared agenda. The opportunity to leverage funding into arts and culture through partnership with other sectors and shared agendas has never been a stronger reality.

Alternative funding models

The reality is that funding and resources will reduce so the creative and cultural sector needs support to develop new funding models. Avenues such as crowdfunded, social investment, equity investment and philanthropic giving are all operating to some degree, but we need to build the capacity and capability within the city for these funding strategies to be effective. Again, there is merit in considering a coordinated approach to this work in order to share skills and resources and disseminate best practice.

New income streams

As well as funding models, the sector needs to review its business models. New streams of income or business structures might present an opportunity for organisations to remodel the proportion of funding verses income. Covid has forced many organisations and individuals to adapt their offer and delivery, raising interesting questions about the future use of buildings, how you monetise digital content, how you create a hub-and-spoke model in order to redistribute resources across the city, how you collaborate effectively and how you build resilience and sustainability. Learning from business models within other sectors is appropriate and this is the time to disrupt the models that exist.

Creating the conditions - key actions

1. Developing an investment strategy to sit alongside the Culture Plan which is approved and owned by the Cultural Compact.
2. Identifying suitable training programmes for artists and cultural organisations to develop new business models and fundraising skills.

Consultation Process

This Culture Plan is the outcome of an extensive and robust engagement process. The Arts Development Company¹⁵ were commissioned through an open tender process to undertake a programme of stakeholder engagement. This was adapted in response to the pandemic and emerging thematics to include 38 one-to-one interviews, three externally facilitated workshops, three consultation workshops and five partner-led focus groups. Sector stakeholders have also contributed feedback through the Covid Sector Survey (completed June 2020) and the draft Creative and Cultural Industries Sector Recovery Plan.

This engagement work has been accompanied by work undertaken by the Audience Development Agency, following an open tender process, to collect economic and social impact data relating to the creative and cultural sector in Plymouth. Data from the full report has been used within this plan.

Consultees

Adrian Vinken - Theatre Royal Plymouth
Alix Harris - Beyond Face
Amanda Lumley - Destination Plymouth
Amanda Ratsey - Plymouth City Council
Ann Holman - Our Plymouth
Anna Navas - Plymouth Arts Cinema
Andrew Brewerton - Plymouth College of Art
Beth Richards - Take a Part
CAMP - CAMP Directors
Charles Hackett - Destination Plymouth
Chris Bennewith - University of Plymouth
Chloe Hughes - Plymouth City Council (The Box)
Claire Turbutt - Plymouth City Council
Councillor Nick Kelly - Conservative party Leader Plymouth
Councillor Tudor Evans - Labour Party Leader Plymouth and Leader of Plymouth City Council
David Draffan - Plymouth City Council
Debbie Geraty - Plymouth Music Zone
Diane Mansell - Plymouth Waterfront Partnership
Donna Howard - KARST
Dr Sarah Chapman - University of Plymouth, Arts Institute
Elinor Eaton - Plymouth City Council
Gabi Marcellus-Temple - Wonderzoo
Gareth Hart - Iridescent & PSEN
Gem Smith - Take a Part
Hannah Sloggett - Nudge Community Builders
Hannah Rose & Rachel Dobbs - LOW PROFILE
Helen Chaloner - literature Works
Ian McFadzen - Plymouth Science Park
Jack Harman - Hutong & Grassroots Music Alliance Plymouth
James Edgar - Plymouth Design Forum
Judith Robinson - Plymouth City Council (The Box)
June Gamble - Plymouth Dance
Kate Farmery - Plymouth City Council (The Box)
Katy Richards - CAMP
Kim Wide - Take a Part
Laura Kriefman - Barbican theatre Plymouth
Lindsay Endean - Mayflower 400
Lindsey Hall - Real Ideas
Liz Slater - Plymouth City Council
Lucy Rollins - Flock SW
Mandy Precious - Theatre Royal Plymouth

¹⁵ <https://theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk>

Marianne Locatori - Theatre Royal Plymouth
Matt Pontin & Lisa Howard - Fotonow
Mark Trewin - City College Plymouth
Nicola Moyle - Plymouth City Council (The Box)
Nigel Hurst - Plymouth City Council (the Box)
Nina Sarlaka - Plymouth City Council
Paul Brookes - Plymouth City Council (The Box)
Patrick Knight - Plymouth City Council
Phil Rushworth - Independent Producer
Richard Stevens - City Bus Plymouth
Rupert Lorraine - University of Plymouth
Rhys Morgan - VAP
Sarah McAdam - Plymouth Marjon University
Slain McGough Davey - Wonderzoo
Steve Hughes - Plymouth City Centre Company
Stuart Elford - Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce
VAP Directors - VAP
Victoria Allen - Plymouth City Council
Zoe Sydenham - Plymouth City Council
Students Plymouth Marjon University - Focus Group
Barbican Theatre Rebels - Focus Group
Funky Llama Theatre Royal Plymouth - Focus Group
Plymouth and Devon Freelance Task Force - Focus Group
Beyond Face - Focus Group