

CREATIVE SCENE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2020



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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES

CREATIVE SCENE IS THE CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES PROGRAMME FOR NORTH KIRKLEES, WEST YORKSHIRE. MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES INVESTMENT, CREATIVE SCENE SEEKS TO ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE AND BE INSPIRED BY THE ARTS.

It operates across the Batley & Spennings Dale and Dewsbury constituencies, in the Kirklees Local Authority area, where involvement in the arts is significantly below the national average.

Creative Scene has been developed and is managed through a consortium, led by The Lawrence Batley Theatre, Kirklees Council, and The Batley Festival Group.

In 2013, the project set out with an initial £2.25m investment until 2017, and has now secured additional funding of £1m from Arts Council England, with an ambition to secure at least an additional 25% in matched funds and resources, to further develop the programme from January 2018 until December 2020.

OUR MISSION:

We want to see more people in Dewsbury, Batley, Mirfield, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Birstall, Liversedge, Gomersal and Birkenshaw – and all the places in between, creating and experiencing great art, of all kinds.

OUR VISION:

Creative Scene is about making the arts a part of every day life.

We want to encourage, invest in and support a thriving arts scene in this area that is accessible and relevant to the people that live here.

By 2020, we want this part of West Yorkshire to be known as a place where the people here create and commission fantastic and accessible arts and cultural activities. People lead, take part and make things happen – art is a part of every day life.

By 2020, North Kirklees will have established a pioneering model that enables access to a range of arts events and opportunities for people in this sub-urban area. There will be a dynamic and vibrant arts scene, which puts the towns of this part of West Yorkshire on the regional and national arts

and cultural map. National touring companies will want to tour here, regional organisations will offer learning programmes and co-creation projects with our informed, enthusiastic and creatively connected community.

The offer will be born out of the places and people here, but with universal themes and stories to tell. It will draw inspiration from our towns and cultures and heritage, but not be backward looking – the vibrant arts ecology will be helping to shape the future of our places and spaces. The area will have a clear story to tell about how arts and culture can, and has, contributed to cohesion and Placemaking.

OUR VALUES AND AIMS

OUR VALUES:

Our core philosophy is centred on the relationship that comes when we co-programme and co-commission with, and for, the people in this area.



Making space – to develop knowledge and skills, for new thinking, for creative exchange, for questions, for reflection.



Inclusive – valuing contributions and giving voice to a diversity of expressions.



Sharing – knowledge, learning, ideas, networks and resources.



Being authentic, and positively disruptive.



Responsive, forward looking and open to conversations.

OUR AIMS:



Increase the number of people from our area going to see, taking part in and being inspired by the arts – in the places where they live, shop, work, socialise and play.



Test out new ways of marketing and promoting the arts, finding new audiences and inspiring more people to try out and visit new events.



Explore new ways of making and presenting the arts that's distinct to our place, has relevance and meaning to the cultures and communities that have shaped it.



Grow leadership and support talent in the area, so as to develop a cultural infrastructure that is resilient to change and responsive to the social and economic climate.



Find out what people value about the arts experiences they take part in, and the impact on our towns and communities.



Explore a new ecology for developing, producing and presenting, and in doing so, to make a lasting change in the way people take part in, make, and experience the arts.

OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME

1. Increased frequency of engagement in arts and culture from people living in the area.
2. A network of new places and spaces for the arts – in clubs and pubs, community centres, outdoor sites in parks and open spaces and at the heart of town centres.
3. Models of commissioning that non-professional arts venues, artists and producers feel confident in continuing.
4. New talent emerging from the area and artists excited about the potential to come and work here.
5. New partnerships for initiating, curating, commissioning and producing the arts.
6. A group of cross-sector leaders and advocates who can promote the importance of arts and culture and sign-post to future opportunities.
7. Increased social networks (online and real-time) across groups and communities providing ways to let people know what is on offer.
8. Improved connectivity between the area and the surrounding cultural infrastructure.
9. More accessible information at points where people can come across it easily.
10. A recognition and commitment by funders and investors of the value of this approach and sustained resources to make it happen.

WHAT WILL SUSTAINABILITY LOOK LIKE?

Creative Scene has set out to create a shift in supply and demand and to develop approaches that can be continued after the current period of Arts Council England investment.

All of our activity is geared towards creating a cultural ecology, in order to generate an appetite and expectation that great art can happen here, as well as, the means to produce and present it for North Kirklees.

Our evaluation approach will assess the contribution of the programme to the cultural ecology regionally, to ensure on-going, ambitious arts opportunities beyond the current investment.

As we embark on the next phase of the programme, we are considering legacy options and working with key stakeholders to identify potential for future products, services, partners and producing capacity.



OUR PEOPLE & PLACE

THE CREATIVE SCENE AREA IS HOME TO 180,000.

The arts and cultural attractions in these neighbouring areas – for example, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Opera North, The Piece Hall, The National Coal Mining Museum – provide distinct opportunities for cultural participation from our area, and the opportunity to collaborate with other organisations in the region to develop marketing and outreach activities.

Yet this area can feel like a ‘hinterland’ to the bigger cities, and the smaller towns - Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Birstall and Mirfield - and their suburbs are often over-looked and can struggle for attention and investment. This is an area of limited arts infrastructure; there are no professional arts venues, and travel times and costs and other access issues limit the opportunity for many potential audiences to travel further afield to access arts and culture.

Our area is rich in diversity and cultures. Dewsbury and Batley are highly ethnically diverse, with 14% of households of Pakistani heritage (10 times the rate across England) and 13% of Indian heritage (six times the England rate). These are predominantly Muslim South Asian communities, with distinct cultural traditions and expressions, some of which are not recognised within current funding structures.

It is relatively young – the under-30 population rate is 25% higher in Dewsbury and Batley: 13% higher throughout North Kirklees, than in England as a

whole. However, there are very limited spaces or facilities available for young people to meet, either as audiences or creators.

New models of community ownership are emerging around local authority run spaces such as town halls, museums and galleries.

Voluntary and amateur arts groups are struggling to survive against funding cuts, the increased costs of producing their activities, and the need to renew membership.

Well-established festivals such as the Batley Festival, Cleckheaton Folk Festival and the annual Heckmondwike lights switch on provide an event infrastructure in which to programme new arts experiences.

Whilst there are pockets of professional arts activity, there are comparatively few opportunities for progressing arts involvement from first engagement to regular practice. To counter this, Creative Scene has set up a temporary making space, ‘Brigantia’ and brought artists together in this space, offering training opportunities as well as rehearsal, research & development and making space.

Our programme provides the structure to meet these opportunities and challenges, to secure on-going investment, and play an intelligent, informed and connected role as a guide for incoming work, organisations and commissioning funds.

DEVELOPING AN ECOLOGY

THIS PLAN MOVES CONFIDENTLY FROM WHERE WE ARE NOW TO PROPOSE A SERIES OF PROJECTS THAT CAN SUPPORT AND STIMULATE AN ARTS ECOLOGY IN THE AREA THAT IS CONNECTED TO THE WIDER LEEDS CITY AND WEST YORKSHIRE REGION BY 2020.

In the first four years we have established an operating structure, built strong relationships, laid the foundations for partnership, and assessed the potential for audience development based on demand and appetite, as well as where there is low engagement

Our future ecology is one that will be made up of different projects that reflect the assets, interests, partners and the potential of the area we are working in.



Creative Scene: Outputs from an action research approach to placemaking through cultural engagement

CLECKHEATON

BATLEY

HECKMONDWIKE

DEWSBURY

MIRFIELD

OUR PROGRAMMING AND COMMISSIONING CRITERIA

THE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT WE PRESENT, PRODUCE AND COMMISSION WILL BE:

DISTINCT

From what's previously been on offer in this area – sometimes radically so.

RELEVANT

Drawing on contemporary stories and issues in our communities, creating new work that is fresh and dynamic.

ENGAGED

With the potential to involve people in development and decision-making, co-creation and production.



We will support artists, companies and creative producers who want to develop work that aligns with these criteria and to present work in 'non-traditional' spaces including pubs and social clubs, public squares, parks and town centres, on the street, in workplaces, at transport hubs, in neighbourhood centres, libraries and museums.

We will seek out artists and companies who want to co-create with our communities and who find the people and the area a rich source of artistic inspiration.

COMMUNITY VOICE AND DECISION MAKING

Creative Scene's legacy will only be successful if stakeholders from the area are identified and engaged at all points throughout planning and delivery.

We build this strong voice by connecting with people, events and social groups on the ground, and offering a variety of ways to engage in decision-making.

DIGITAL PRESENTATION, COMMISSIONING, TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Creative Scene has always utilised and positioned digital technologies as a key part of our artistic process and creative content, and as a way of engaging new audiences. Digital work in unconventional spaces and public places has the potential to attract curious audiences, many who have not engaged with the arts before.

We will develop and invest in digital product and experiences through our outdoor arts commissioning and in creating online content.

KEY PROJECTS 2018 – 2020

THE CULTURE COUNCIL & ARTS ADVENTURERS: PEOPLE TAKING THE LEAD

Creative Scene wants people to have a say in the kinds of arts they want to see.

One of our main ways to do this to date has been to develop a group of community commissioners and advocates. They are an active group of people from all walks of life – from students to homemakers, solicitors, café owners, health workers, retired teachers - with a passion and commitment to what the arts can achieve in our area.

They started as a small group of interested individuals with a clear stake in the project; they have influenced and brought in others. Through the arts they have developed something extraordinary, a scene, a movement with a momentum – 'The Culture Council'.

The Culture Council will work with Creative Scene to establish the legacy for the project and to explore the potential to develop and share a pool of volunteers with skills in arts and cultural events – **the Arts Adventurers**.

COMMISSIONING AND PRODUCING: PLACEMAKING AND EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

Creative Scene recognises that we need to present the arts in ways and places that overcome the barriers that audiences from our area experience: travel time, affordability, inaccessibility or lack of venues.

We have listened to local people and taken note of the kind of things they want to see. We have tested out different places, programming and commissioning in outdoor and found spaces and have some amazing town centres, parks and public spaces in which to make things happen.

We have production and event expertise within the team and emerging local talent and capacity to produce work. We will develop new commissions for our festivals and towns, made especially in response to our place and communities. They will be a flagship for accessibility, diversity, and inclusive practice.

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

We will offer a range of participation and engagement opportunities that are clearly linked to our commissions and the audiences we want to develop.

This will include artist's workshops and residencies in places such as libraries, markets, shops, sports clubs, community centres, factories and cafes. We will work with and train local artists to curate and deliver these, to facilitate rich conversations and to develop local capacity.

ON TOUR THEATRE FOR FAMILIES AND FOR ADULTS

We have built a network of venues and promoters that can host affordable touring performance right at the heart of the community and we will continue to support two urban touring circuits for small-scale performances. These will happen in venues such as pubs, clubs and community spaces in the areas where access to see shows is limited.

WE ARE PUBLIC: WEST YORKSHIRE

We will work with arts and cultural organisations to explore how we can make the fantastic cultural offer in our wider region accessible to the people here, by developing and testing a new membership scheme and website to promote a mix of what's on in the region.

DEVELOPING TALENT: BUILDING BRIGANTIA

Brigantia is the name of a temporary creation space we have established with artists from the area on the empty fifth floor of an office block; it's also the name for an emerging movement to bring creativity out into the open in our towns and communities. The Brigantia brand will offer a varied programme of support and opportunities for people from the area to develop and progress their talent, as artists, performers, producers and promoters.

EVALUATION

AN ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH

Creative Scene is an action-research programme, this means we are in a cycle of testing out new and different approaches that develop audiences for, and excite people about the arts.

As part of all our projects we:

- Reflect on what worked and what didn't
- Capture lessons through project de-briefs, external evaluations and share these with others
- Share the learning of the programme widely.

As we are part of Arts Council England's Creative People and Places programme, we take part in the national evaluation. This is managed by Arts Council England, working with research agency Icarus.

Our project evaluations feed into the three key questions:

- Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by the arts?
- To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?
- Which approaches were successful and what were lessons learned?

We will also commission our own Place research and evaluation.

This will explore how our programme is setting out to nurture and grow the arts scene or ecology in this area of lower frequency of arts engagement and without a traditional arts infrastructure.

We will be exploring:

- Leadership & Advocacy
- Placemaking
- Talent Development
- Community Celebration & Cohesion
- Social Capital & Networks
- Resources

UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES – INSIGHTS RESEARCH

Creative Scene uses annual audience mapping and profiling from The Audience Agency to understand who our events are reaching, and this in turn informs our audience development plans.

We want to better understand patterns of engagement – how often people attend, their motivations and the barriers to coming along. We provide opportunities for audience feedback, carry out surveys and focus groups to help inform our understanding. Insights will be shared nationally, and used to inform our programming, engagement and marketing activity.

A KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP: WE ARE PUBLIC WEST YORKSHIRE

Creative Scene are working in partnership with The University of Huddersfield on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

The project will bring together cultural venues from across West and South Yorkshire to curate a combined cultural offer, and test how it can be promoted and made accessible to the population of North Kirklees. We want to explore how to encourage audiences to cross between venues/art forms and support development of new marketing channels. This project aims to shift perceptions about the use of 'big data' and embed some vital data skills into participating organisations. Partner organisations will establish how to share data effectively to extend audiences and to create mobility, whilst protecting their individual relationships with audiences.

The project will develop and test a website/ digital platform, collating a South/West Yorkshire offer and membership opportunities for purchasing tickets and accessing opportunities to cultural events. Many of the venues or events will be free - so the platform and the membership offer will have added value for audiences, providing a one-stop shop, a trusted brand and some special events and packages such as artists' talks and backstage tours.

FUNDRAISING AND INCOME GENERATION

- Our ambition is to deliver over 30% match funding made up of cash, in kind and partnership resources. We have to date secured a cash match of over £30,000 of commissioning funds for 2018-2020, including from local organisations and from European programmes. Our Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the University of Huddersfield will contribute £80,000 towards our evaluation activities.
- We will support groups to develop their own fundraising capacity through bid-writing surgeries; and seek to bring people from the wider area into our festivals and events.
- We have developed strong relationships with community groups and businesses which means that we secure significant in-kind support, in the form of free spaces, volunteer stewards, marketing activity and discounts.
- We will generate income from ticket sales and donations; being aware that the cost of tickets can be barrier to attending arts and cultural events for some.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

DECISION MAKING – AUDIENCES AT THE START OF COMMISSIONING AND PROGRAMMING.

At the heart of our programming and commissioning decisions are our audiences. We understand audience development as a cycle of activity that is concerned with growing audiences (both existing and new), increasing reach, and building deeper relationships. In the area we are working, with no professional presenting venues and few producing companies, it is a process that is about more than marketing to, or engagement of, new audiences for existing work and venues.

Our Audience Development strategy is a top-level approach to Creative Scene’s audience development ambitions, and will be supported by individual programme plans with targets. It uses a set of core principles that inform our Audience Development and programming approach such as:

- Commission and programme artistically excellent arts and cultural events that are relevant, inspiring and surprising for the population
- Be open to and encourage creative input and ideas from businesses, partners and individuals – enabling and supporting, as much as delivering directly.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

We have set out clear objectives that align with Creative Scene’s business objectives and support Arts Council England’s Goals.

- To achieve an engagement figure of 41,500 over 3 years via participation, attendance and digital engagement:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Audiences | 29,603 |
| Participation and Engagement | 3,465 |
| Digital Engagements | 8,500 |

- By September 2019, to have explored methodologies for establishing a greater understanding of the loyalty and frequency of engagement patterns of our audience (on and offline) i.e. not a one off attendance pattern but a sustainable shift in attendance.
- To deliver specific audience engagement projects that test new methods and extend our reach into under-represented markets in order to support opportunities for lesser-engaged groups to partake and benefit from the Arts Council investment.
- By January 2020, to engage at least 30 business partners to help increase engagement and participation amongst target groups.
- To develop and utilise digital technologies that enhance access and engagement and experiment with how we capture, create, produce and distribute in order to develop our online audience engagement.

We collect audience data at each event and venue and invite people to sign up to receive future marketing information. We carry out surveys and questionnaires at all events to delve deeper into the audience experience, and often offer opportunities to follow up with online questionnaires. We have devised ways to engage audiences in fun activities that enable us to collect data, as well as to engage audiences in conversations about what barriers they experience to attendance, what they value about the arts and what they would like to see more of in their area.

We will embed these methodologies further and integrate the feedback into our audience development approaches; promote online booking and data collection where possible; develop our audience database of contacts and explore ways to share this data in meaningful ways with our legacy partners.

OUR MARKETING STRATEGY

OUR MARKETING PLANNING FLOWS FROM OUR AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS. INDIVIDUAL MARKETING PLANS WILL BE DRAWN UP FOLLOWING PROGRAMME DESIGN AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN EARLY 2018.

Our marketing approach will be responsive to the canvas we use for presentation and programming - often outdoors, in community venues, at festivals and town centre events. Placing these arts opportunities in familiar, accessible spaces and places has broken down a key barrier to engagement – having to step over the threshold of a building, and the marketing tools we use will be applicable to these settings.

We know that more traditional communication channels attract interest and attendance – flyers, posters, social media and PR; and in some cases these more traditional methods of communicating are in fact ‘innovative’ for our markets.

We will seed some marketing innovations to test how we can reach our target audiences including digital marketing.

The Creative Scene brand stands not for an organisation, but for a way of working, and a programme of very varied events and activities that take place in a range of locations and settings. We have begun to establish brand awareness, trust and reputation. The visual positioning of the brand has evolved and started to become a badge of quality – a recognised cultural provider of experiences in the area. We will continue to develop the Creative Scene brand and seek new ways to raise brand awareness.

We will explore how we can extend the Ambassadors for our work across North Kirklees and how this can contribute to marketing not just events and activities, but advocate for the Creative Scene.

Creative Scene 2018



A full version of this business plan is available on request. Please contact hello@creativescene.org.uk



The Creative Scene in North Kirklees, West Yorkshire was first imagined by a consortium of The Lawrence Batley Theatre, Kirklees Council, and The Batley Festival Group. Thanks to this partnership which continues to lead and steer the programme, to our research and evaluation colleagues at the University of Huddersfield, and to our critical friend Dr Erinma Ochu.

If you'd like to get involved and start your own arts adventure, please contact hello@creativescene.org.uk

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