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Solent Cultural Plan

Insights Report
January 2024

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Quotes included in this report are verbatim comments from the interview consultations and workshops to date.

A1. Project introduction

A1.1 GETTING THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF INSIGHT

Why consult and research now? There's plenty of information out there, and more than a few strategies. Do we just want to be seen to have listened to stakeholders before we produce a(nother) strategic plan? Or do we really want to (in fact, need to) engage as part of a longer-term collaborative model that seeks to maximise the potential of regional place-based working?

Our approach is the latter and it is as critical hyper-locally as it is regionally. The component parts of Solent do not and cannot act in isolation. The importance of regional plans, positioning and representation across its cities, districts and boroughs will become ever more important to Solent. The Plan development process will support leading players, including local authorities, on their journeys as they build understanding of the current landscape, its challenges and opportunities. In other words, what you are dealing with and how the role of improved cultural identity can benefit, e.g. community wellbeing through engagement on one hand and inward investment on the other.

Culture in Solent does not and cannot act in isolation of course – whether engaging through social agendas, tourism, environment, education, health, heritage or infrastructure. Regional planning and coordination in culture is also important to maximise the support for and potential of our sector. Local and inbound audiences don't see geo-political and historic borders, and this should be our starting point, even if that makes a practical and clean definition of the borders of the plan harder to pin down..

This strategic plan development process therefore necessarily tries to inform on a number of levels – recognising the distinct offers and territories across the region, but also taking a collective view where beneficial (whilst not proposing any 'one-size-fits-all' solutions). The finite resource profile alone for each local authority requires as much.

A1.1.1 Our approach

Stage 1 – Establishing the evidence base

The mechanics of the research and analysis phase will be familiar to many. But the questions we frame within the methodology is where we can generate additional insight. To build a robust appraisal of the current and potential state of culture across Solent, we have undertaken a number of specific reviews:

- An assessment of economic value to identify market and revenue growth potential;
- A review of relevant cross-cutting local, regional and national strategies;
- A review of local authorities – plans and ambitions, staff and other resources; programmes and funding, partnerships and infrastructure;
- Mapping of cultural provision – acknowledging wider networks and supply chains;
- Sample comparators: relevant case studies drawing on place and thematic markers;
- An overview of market trends (and forecasts), taking a look at relevant policies from safety to environment to skill;

- A set of audit exercises to curate findings – situational analysis (SWOT, PESTLE), needs analysis, cultural place wheel analysis etc.

This Insight Report is the collated and curated evidence base for the strategic plan to follow.

Stage 2 – Stakeholder engagement

In addition to the extensive desk research, a targeted engagement programme has been undertaken.

We have conducted a series of one-to-one stakeholder consultations to explore a number of issues from a regional, more local and organisational context. (We continue to have individual consultations as recommendations and insights suggest.) Through this and in-person workshops we have the potential to chart a clear and evidence-based route to drafting a strategic plan that has stakeholder and partner representation and buy-in.

Within the budget and timeframe the public, e.g. participants, visitors, attenders, volunteers, and those less engaged fall outside the scope of this engagement. But every consultee has some form of public / audience engagement at the core of their practice and operations.

A1.1.2 Important note on findings

These reports seek out critical commentary. The process does not seek to act as an advocacy tool for pipeline funding bids. We have interrogated what is important to cultural players, funders, local authorities and influencers, from across the publicly-funded, private and third sectors. In engaging we ask how we can be better individually and collectively.

A2. Engagement approach and profile

A2.1 SCALE AND SCOPE

This Insight Report presents findings from a series of 1:1 interviews, desk research, workshop activity and a series of stakeholder engagement workshops. The purpose of the report is to secure a mandate for the direction of strategy development – vision, areas of focus, critical themes, level of ambition etc. This report provides a view of what the engagement phase has revealed, leading to early themes and priorities.

"I don't see that vibrancy and urgency in our region, if I'm being brutal"

"Don't do it half-heartedly. If we're going to do it, do it properly and let's create something we're proud of."
Stakeholder comments

The research, consultation and analysis that has informed this interim report has been conducted between September and December 2023.

One-to-one consultations were conducted with representatives from a variety of culture, creative and other sectors. The table below sets out who has responded to consulting approaches to date, from a cultural database of over 150 contacts, supported by Solent Partners' full network database to ensure cross-sector engagement across consultations and workshops.

Some of those consulted also participated in the in-person workshops taking place in the region. A number of outstanding consult targets may also be re-approached at a later date, subject to need. Previous consultees may also be re-contacted to conduct follow-up interviews to explore key issues in more detail.

The review and strategy needs to address numerous, wide-ranging questions, including:

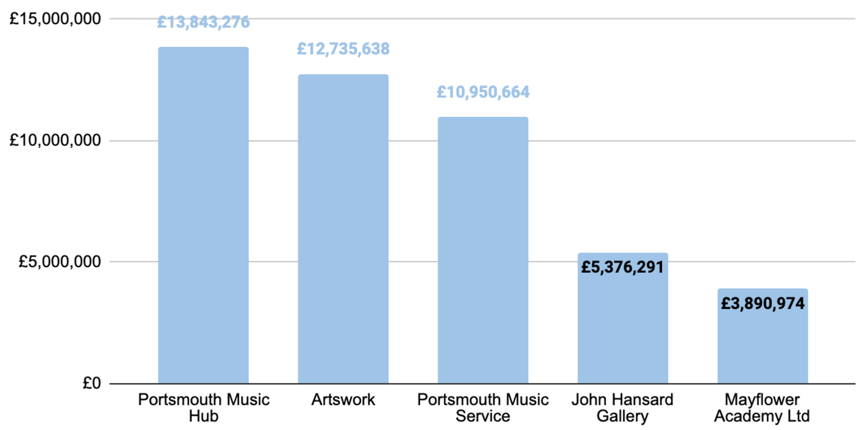
1. How can Solent work better together, especially through the roles of local authorities and Solent Partners? What should they do / avoid; when should they lead / follow?
2. Can culture learn from other sectors in: embedding a sustainability ethos (including Carbon Net Zero); championing Solent's values / brand positioning? What will create positive distinctiveness?
3. How to increase revenue without impacting inclusion.
4. Barriers to building the cultural and creative industries: pandemic-lag; education / skills gaps, access, funding, supply chains etc.?
5. What do existing / prospective cultural entrepreneurs need to prosper?
6. How can digital technologies support – income generation, marketing, data capture, creative and best practice exchange?
7. Which cultural organisations could collaborate (more), and what could that look like regionally? Who could grow through new partnerships?

A2.2 CULTURAL ASSET MAPPING

As part of the asset mapping component, the project team has identified 457 (DCMS category) sector assets in the Solent region. 228 organisations / businesses have been included in funding analysis.

The data set included the entity and website name, district of location with the Solent region, and Arts Council England funding amount (where applicable). As a dynamic resource, it will be supplied as an addendum to the final Cultural Plan, to support ongoing data analysis, visualisation (as below) and reporting.

Figure 1. Top Arts Council funded organisations in the Solent region over the past decade.



B1. SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis is a tried and tested tool, but has lost none of its usefulness over the years. By contextualising the internal issues with those external issues that Solent has less influence over, practical routes forward can be derived.

Strengths & Weaknesses assess skills, resources, culture, historical factors, management, communications and so on – internal factors which are within the control and influence of the lead authorities – in funding, planning, facilitation and delivery.

Opportunities & Threats cover governmental matters, wider funding issues, other organisations' behaviour and priorities and so on. These factors are external and normally beyond the scope of direct management and influence.

The chart addresses only issues directly relating to arts & culture, and some elements will be related to wider policy and management issues, e.g. post-pandemic policy, masterplanning etc. Many smaller issues have arisen, but have not been detailed here in order to focus on the main topics.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Broad and deep cultural asset base including organisations of local, national and international significance. 2. Cultural strategies in place for several local authority areas, and cultural development agencies (Southampton Forward, Portsmouth Creates, The Island Collection). 3. Further & higher education cluster. 4. High quality green capital, including a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and a National Park 5. Southampton UK City of Culture 2025 bid and legacy. 6. Strategic investments via ACE, Levelling Up. 7. Workforce – The creative economy in Solent employs 40,000 people, more than Brighton and Bournemouth combined. 8. The home of the original modern music festival, and of windsurfing. 9. Global hub for marine and maritime sectors.	1. Poor connectivity within and across whole region, leading to fragmentation. 2. Visitor economy is often focussed on cruises, rarely leading to local visits. 3. Lack of coherent place narrative – Solent / Hampshire / Central South / individual towns. 4. Lack of – or under-investment historically in culture from strategic development agencies (e.g. Solent LEP, ACE). 5. Lack of data sharing across region. 6. Lack of collaborative approach to funding and investment. 7. Emerging evidence base for investment in cultural & creative industries.

Opportunities	Threats
1. New interest in the cultural & creative industries from strategic economic development agency i.e. Solent Partners, with inclusion in strategies such as Solent 2050. 2. New interest from strategic funders e.g. ACE (Portsmouth Place Partnership investment, new NPOs…) and Historic England (Gosport Heritage Action Zones). 3. Film Office development. 4. New Freeport, with target markets including creative industries. 5. 'Pilot & roll out' model. 6. Greater networking within and across the region and sector e.g. Folio New Forest. 7. New investment in cultural infrastructure e.g. Fareham Live. 8. Cultural tourism is an underdeveloped visitor economy market. 9. A shared cultural narrative to support increased prominence of the cultural sector, leading to strategic investment.	1. 'Central South' positioning instead of / alongside 'Solent' positioning could cause confusion. 2. Devolution deal for pan-Hampshire, not Solent. 3. Proximity to London / Bournemouth & Poole / Brighton leads to brain drain. 4. Position of Solent Partners as lead organisation. 5. Political uncertainty / turmoil locally and nationally, leading to short term thinking, competitiveness, and lack of regional collaboration. 6. Feelings of inequality across the region for strategic investment / prioritisation. 7. Issues with over-tourism, or over-reliance on the tourism economy, in certain areas. 8. Dependence on maritime economy leads to cultural economy being deprioritised. 9. Lack of artist studios / creative spaces. 10. Cost of living and property prices make economic stability difficult for low-wage or freelance creative workforce. 11. Changing roles of local authorities as cultural funders or leaders.

B2. PESTLE analysis

PESTLE is an analytical tool most often in marketing planning. As a tool it can be used to provide an overview and track the environment that a place / organisation is operating in, which can be especially useful when a new plan or product / service is in development.

Political	
Three unitary councils, five district councils, and a county council	– Local elections / leadership – stability of long-term policy commitments and delivery teams. – Different types of councils and different parties in power can inhibit collaborative working. – Uncertainty about financial positions of local authorities nationally. – Regional partnerships and policy imperatives – whether that is the national Let's Create arts strategy, cultural strategies or local regeneration plans, Solent needs to connect these visions with local and regional partnerships.
Revenues	– Funding implications from local settlements and strategic priorities / plans.
Regional – Solent Partners, Arts Council England, destination management organisations	– Changes to LEP funding models and the emerging Solent Partners. – Devolution deal for Solent rejected in original form; pan-Hampshire deal still under consideration. – ACE has provided funding for this work, and is growing its investment in the region. – Multiple DMOs across the region, with an ambition to bring the Solent regional tourism offerings under one body.
National	– National government policy and influence on funding and investment, e.g. Levelling Up, Towns Fund, Shared Prosperity Fund, with a general election expected in 2024. A new government is likely to introduce a new model and investment settlement for regional regeneration, which could create a funding lag. – Inflation in general costs and the supply chain – people, services and materials. – De-prioritisation of creative and cultural education in the national curriculum. – Brexit / cost-of-living crisis and local authority funding crisis is creating ongoing political and economic uncertainty.
Economic	
Post-pandemic and cost-of-living crisis	– Responses have included identifying cultural sector as a key driver of economic recovery and regeneration. – Propensity to stay in the cultural sector, especially on a freelance or self-employed basis.

Development & investment	– Regeneration – active and pipeline projects, including visitor attraction / culture venue / heritage site investment, town centre masterplanning, coworking spaces. – Levelling Up for Culture designation for Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth, New Forest, IOW - demonstrating investment locally and regionally across the Solent region. – 4 x Heritage Action Zones (Gosport x 2, Newport, Ryde). – Levelling Up Funding (£5.8m for East Cowes, £20m for Portsmouth, £20m for Southampton, £13.6m for Isle of Wight, £18.1m for Gosport). – 7 x new National Portfolio Organisations in region. – Freeport.
Work	– Key sectors in Marine / Maritime, Defence, Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering, Visitor Economy, Transport & Logistics creates a mixed economy, but Marine / Maritime is dominant. – Some geographical areas have an overreliance on one sector for employment opportunities. – It is estimated that the creative sector contributes over £600 million to the regional economy. – The creative economy in Solent employs 40,000 people, more than Brighton and Bournemouth combined. Over 21,000 people are directly employed by creative businesses. A further 19,000 people are employed in creative roles by businesses operating in other sectors. – Creative employment is above the national average in New Forest, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth. – Clusters of creative employment exist in Southampton, Portsmouth, Eastleigh, and New Forest. – Cluster of higher education institutions providing a knowledge economy. – Average wages and levels of qualification vary significantly across the region.
Connectivity	– Three international gateways (Port of Southampton, Port of Portsmouth, Southampton International Airport). – Home to the biggest cruise port in the UK. – Ongoing uncertainty about Brexit, which has created labour and skills shortages, and increased tariffs on exports.
Social	
Health & wellbeing	– Overall levels of deprivation across the Solent region are average in comparison to other similar regions – but pockets of deprivation do exist especially in Gosport, Portsmouth and Southampton – The overall population is ageing, particularly in the New Forest.
Trends	– Post-pandemic lifestyle and consumer behaviour trends – a continued reluctance to attend cultural venues and ticketed events, magnified again by the cost-of-living crisis. – Digital experience and visitor journey (see below also) – adaptive shift in marketing and research spend / activity.

	– Opportunities for accessibility, diversity and inclusion. – Inward migration to the region exceeds outward migration, but those of working age are declining, suggesting a dominance in retired people moving to the region.
Technological	
People	– Skills and talent development – there is a focus on the areas noted in the Economic section. – Flexible working and impacts on local services. This is an emerging factor / opportunity.
Digital & tech	– Data capture and management – whether plugging into regional 'Big Data' projects or more local and/or culture-led. – Media and communication infrastructure (hardware and software) – usage, attitudes etc., understanding how residents engage, its hotspots and preferred channels. – Digital infrastructure and transformational, innovation. – Renewables and best practice.
Legal	
Data	– GDPR and data protection – the role of the Councils and key agencies in managing and using resident data.
Planning & development	– Culture sector and provision status – as discretionary provision by local government. – Local policy and management.
Environmental	
	– Carbon neutral agenda & green energy solutions, including carbon capture and storage solutions from the Solent Cluster and new facilities at Fawley Petrochemical Complex. – UNESCO Biosphere Reserve on the Isle of Wight. – New Forest National Park Authority, and nearby South Downs National Park. – Unique tidal patterns of Solent, enabling marine and maritime industries. – Climate change is increasing flood risk and coastal erosion. – Heritage and conservation – the relationship between culture and heritage through venues, conservation areas, ports / docks & waterfrontages, parks and open spaces, biodiversity and access. – Natural environment conservation – the relationship between culture and heritage through venues, conservation areas, ports / docks & waterfrontages, parks and open spaces, biodiversity and access. *"The psychology of the water is very powerful."* Stakeholder comment

B3. Culture place wheel™

This wheel was populated at the end of the initial consultation phase, presenting a consultancy team view. Whilst subjective and indicative, it presents an assessment of where Solent is currently and where changes could be made and the impacts they could have with current plans and programmes in mind. This has proved very informative when looking at planning and investment priorities, as well as the audience development potential.

This is a Solent-wide analysis. Clearly some programmes, venues and local strategies have a notable influence, but the (subjective) ratings seek to present a balanced view.

The Place Wheel™ sets out an array of useful, connected criteria – 6Ps:

Policy I People I Place I Partnerships I Platforms I Product / Market

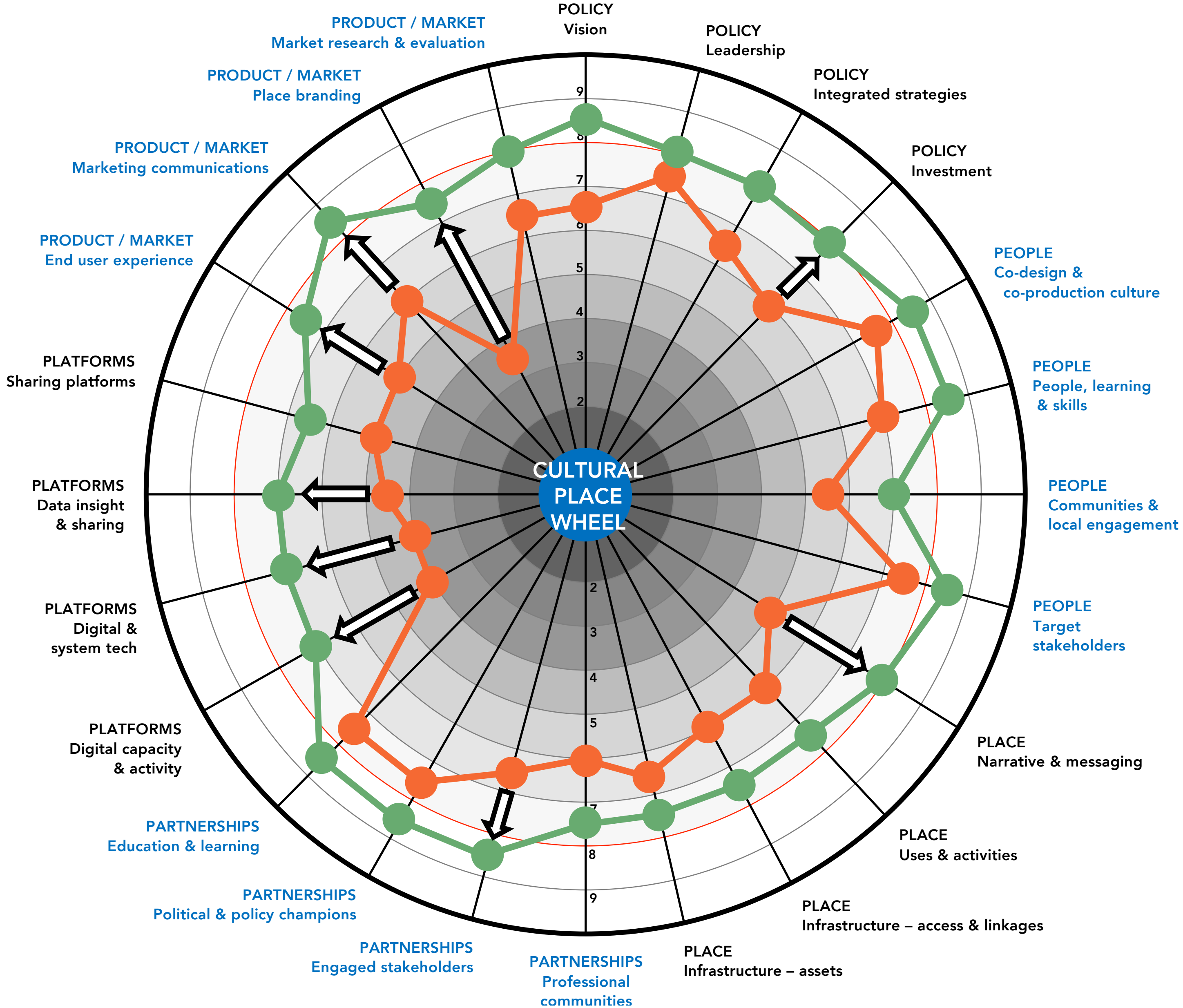
These help to build a picture of where a place is, and where it could move forward if a strategy was successfully implemented.

Using the Wheel as an exercise is a provocation to stimulate a strategic debate – not to generate an agreed ‘result’ or data set.

Some supporting annotation follows, but the wheel sets out a rating for a number of audience-focused criteria (0-10, where 0 is extremely poor and 10 is perfection).

Key to the Wheel:
The green line represents the current level of performance and the orange line presents the possible uplift from a successful development cycle in c.5 years’ time post-investment or shift in approach – e.g. a new strategy. The white arrows highlight where marked changes – more transformational – are seen as achievable targets within the emerging plans.

Figure 2. Culture place wheel



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Element	Rating	Commentary
POLICY		
Vision	6.5 > 8.5	A strong baseline of current and emerging plans and investments can be strengthened by the new Plan's vision, and its clear and consistent dissemination.
Leadership	7.5 > 8	An increasingly identifiable leadership group is working in partnership as standard working practice. This can further develop and be more recognised and engaged with by the sector and at a regional level.
Integrated strategies	6.5 > 8	Shared plans and programmes should drive progress and strategy realisation in the next few years. The convergence of agendas like the numerous cultural strategies, cultural tourism, Carbon Net Zero and place-based regeneration are embedding integrated thinking more and more as standard working practice.
Investment	6 > 8	Areas of impactful and legacy investment can be pointed to as successes, e.g. Southampton UK City of culture bid. More layered support across skills, micro-funding, action research etc. as well as larger and capital programmes is increasingly in demand.
PEOPLE		
Co-design & co-production culture	7.5 > 8.5	An era of austerity and crises has necessitated an ever more partnership-driven sector. Solent, and especially parts therein, have responded. This now needs to be more reflected in its governance, funding, regionally connected voices and the balance of local – regional – international supply chain and creative networks, building on key investment and legacy programmes.
People, learning & skills	7 > 8.5	Multiple creative and academic hubs / partners are responding to opportunities, and these can be further joined up and expanded to connect and share experiences, skills and the opportunity to learn and exchange. There are numerous pockets of good practice. This is both a quick win and a transformational one (in terms of strategic priority setting), with consistent focus, not least from local authorities and academic partners.
Communities & local engagement	5.5 > 7	Connectivity and co-creation is present in pockets, but it is partial and fragile at a regional level (better within the cities and some other areas). However, there is more than enough good practice to continue to make progress. The core role that the sector views for its local communities is genuinely encouraging. *"There is a very real unevenness in cultural and creative engagement."* Stakeholder comment

Target stakeholders	7.5 > 8.5	All local authority stakeholders are committed to taking an appropriate leading / partnership role. Without this the wider stakeholder network will struggle. A set of clear strategic recommendations with delivery plans will aim to build collective resilience and grow the stakeholder base at a regionally-connected level, tapping into some strong localised networks.
PLACE		
Narrative & messaging	5 > 8	Solent has a lot to offer, but it is not necessarily the most coherent and consistent voice nationally / internationally, and therefore lacks effectiveness. It is possible, and success stories can be evidenced. Regionally the cultural quality and offer is well understood on the whole, but can operate (and therefore communicate) in pockets of isolation. A more singular narrative can be built on the shared values that are emerging as part of this process, to enable confident and diverse messaging to flow to target audiences and stakeholders more effectively. *"We need to remain a bit rebellious."* Stakeholder comment
Uses & activities	6 > 7.5	There are so many good and distinctive cultural offers to local communities and target audiences and participants. The ability to build volunteer and local economy networks to support local, activity-led engagement is always challenging, but collaboration could have a positive impact.
Infrastructure – access & linkages	6 > 7.5	This is about systems, networks and operating models more than physical infrastructure. Local and regional connections need to grow, but the ability to do so exists with Solent Partners and local authority support (and that of established platforms like Portsmouth Creates etc.). Focused effort towards digital and communications capability could help to build networks and relationships in a relatively short period of time.
Infrastructure – assets	6.5 > 7.5	The landscape, public realm, heritage and venue assets of Solent are strong and when viewed together could help position the region plan more confidently for the long-term. Of course, transport and related connectivity is never perfect and the coastal geography brings its own issues.

PARTNERSHIPS		
Professional communities	6 > 7.5	A decent degree of sector activity does result in clusters of organisations and their supply chains supporting each other. This could continue to focus on place-based and thematic activity – tapping into wider agendas as it does (social, economic, environmental).
Engaged stakeholders	6.5 > 8.5	With a well-mapped stakeholder network, engagement has clearly worked hard to re-establish itself post-pandemic and through networks and key programmes (e.g. UK City of Culture bid). This needs to continue as shared agendas provide reasons to engage, and open up new funding and creative opportunities. *"Folio is now 17 partner organisations and 200 freelancers. We run regular networking and opportunities have grown out of those events."* Stakeholder comment
Political & policy champions	6.5 > 8.25	The energy, openness and ambition of key officers and organisations does get recognition and support from executive (councils, LEP). Post-pandemic, a strengthening narrative can now use a shared strategic direction to rally champions through renewed advocacy.
Education & learning	6.5 > 7.5	The educational sector, notably FE, has strong relationships with key events. Locally, schools also. Increasingly the University of Suffolk (Business School, Centre for Culture & Heritage etc.) is a resource that could be engaged with as a joined-up sector. These relationships have traditionally been based on specific relationships and funded programmes. This could evolve to be a more proactive and strategic response to needs and opportunities.
PLATFORMS		
Digital capacity & activity	4 > 7	This is an area where a degree of regional coordination and support could have a significant impact. Whether the goal is selling more (advance) tickets, engaging with new sections of local communities or getting really good at social media, there are a number of low-cost achievable quick wins that targeted training and skills exchange could deliver to.
Digital & system tech	4 > 7	With some notable exceptions (generally organisations of scale and strategic bodies) there needs to be organisational and sectoral step-change in the use of digital systems. From 'what's on' to data capture and application, the sector is generally behind more commercial counterparts.
Data insight & sharing	4.5 > 7	With capability, capacity and systems, the management and sharing of data can be moved forward. This is happening organically if sporadically at the moment. Again, this could be impactful with relatively low investment needs. The role of the local authorities is key, connecting the sector into wider business and enterprise programmes.

Sharing platforms	5 > 6.5	A cultural place / destination with a coordinated response to the opportunities of activity through digital platforms includes creative ways to attract audiences, partners, volunteers etc. The traditional supply chain can be better understood, enhanced and tracked through shared programmes.
PRODUCT / MARKET		
End user experience	5 > 7.5	The digital deficit / opportunity has been noted above. Joining this up with the strong in-person engagement of many cultural organisations and freelancers / entrepreneurs could help to drive growth through recommendation, referral and repeat engagement.
Market communications	5 > 8.5	Campaign and promotional activity has some exemplars, but many struggle to use the channels available to them effectively. Skills as much as capacity are an issue, especially for smaller organisations. So third-party and partner activity is important and can develop further. Audience / user insight needs to improve.
Place branding	3.5 > 7.5	Solent has many distinctive cultural heritage features and strong attributes – but they are not often weaponised to build a sense of place alongside the more familiar maritime narratives. In audience / visitor terms, the role of Solent Partners in narrative and culture alongside local authorities is highly relevant to how Solent and sub-regional cultural offers market itself as part of the wider regional campaigning and positioning. *"If 'The Solent' is a construct, then let's create it."* Stakeholder comment
Market research & evaluation	6.5 > 8	Evolving data sources and cluster platforms are raising awareness in the value of collective data capture and analysis. As individual organisations, some standardisation in research and data analytics could be a powerful planning and advocacy tool.

B4. Sector consultation

B4.1 OVERVIEW

In order to produce this report, we have utilised a range of consultation methodologies, including:

- One-to-one conversations with targeted stakeholders;
- Three exploratory workshops held in Portsmouth, Southampton and Newport;
- Online discussions with Solent LEP Business Taskforce and Creative Network South.

The conversations and workshops have explored topics such as:

- The role the local authorities play as enablers, facilitators, funders, barriers;
- Prioritising a local approach to supplier and staff;
- Skills development needs and volunteering opportunities;
- Tourism and visitor economy;
- Accessibility and inclusion;
- Funding;
- Programming and commissioning;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Partnership working;
- Community engagement and liaison;
- Data, insight, evaluation;
- Marketing and communications;
- Audience development;
- Social return on investment;
- COVID-19 impact and recovery.

These areas will be considered for inclusion in the full plan, supplemented by the data analysis, economic analysis and desk research, to identify where the most impact and improvement can be facilitated via strategic development.

B4.2 CONSULTATION

One-to-one consultations were conducted with representatives from a variety of culture and creative sectors alongside other stakeholders.

Targeted consultee organisations to date are detailed in the table below, often with multiple contributors. This list is 'live' and as such continues to develop.

A series of stakeholder engagement workshops were held on the 7 – 8 December 2023 at the John Pounds Centre in Portsmouth, the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton, and Quay Arts in Newport.

Approximately 90 people attended from the cultural and creative industries, universities, local authorities, third-sector and other key bodies.

These workshops tested some early and emerging themes developed from the desk research and one-to-one consultations already undertaken, through use of stimulus questions and facilitated discussions.

Organisation
A Space Arts
Art Asia
Aspex Gallery
BlackBox Theatre Company
Creative Network South
Eastleigh Council
Fareham Council
Gosport Council
Hampshire County Council
Hampshire Culture Trust
Havant Council
Isle of Wight Council
Makers Guild CIC
MAST Mayflower Studios
New Forest District Council
New Forest Heritage Centre
New Forest Show
New Theatre Royal
Portsmouth City Council
Portsmouth Creates
Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust
Royal Armouries – Fort Nelson
Solent NHS
Solent Partners
Solent University
Southampton City Council
Southampton Forward
The Berry Theatre
The Brickworks Museum
The Diving Museum
The Island Collection
University of Portsmouth
University of Southampton
Winchester School of Art

All sessions have had positive engagement – individuals have come to contribute and explore positive routes forward together.

Additionally, extensive desk research has been undertaken to build the picture of existing documents, strategies, data and evidence relating to past and current strategies and initiatives. This has built a picture of Solent's strengths and needs in a local, regional and national context.

Stimulus sheets (see below) were used to help workshop participants to explore the issues around one of four thematic topics:

1. Collaborative Solent;
2. Talented Solent;
3. Place-making Solent;
4. Solent's Creative Ecosystem.

These areas will be considered for inclusion in the full plan, supplemented by the data analysis, economic impact analysis and desk research. The aim is to identify where the most impact and improvement can be facilitated via strategic development and investment.

Further consultations and workshops are planned throughout the development process, to ensure stakeholders inform and influence the plan and action plan.

Figure 3. Stakeholder workshop stimulus sheets (overleaf)

COLLABORATIVE SOLENT

It is estimated that the creative sector in the Solent contributes over £600 million to the regional economy.

"They're very much individuals who were fighting for their own needs."

Local networks such as Folio in the New Forest bring creative practitioners together.

"That stretch of water does make it a bit tricky at times. Because you don't get as much of [Solent-wide] networking as you would want to do."

"Start thinking of yourself as a sector rather than an individual set of companies."

"I do think it's about quality and ambition. It's about working beyond the island or working beyond the region and thinking of ourselves as part of a national creative infrastructure, as part of a European one, as part of a global one."

"There's a kind of preparedness to support each other because of an underdog mentality."

"I was shocked at how disconnected the sector was."

"There is a greater resilience that can be gained by working actively together or operating together. The individual cultural providers would struggle with on their own."

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

How could Solent-wide collaboration be transformational for your organisation and your place?

Where are there good examples of cross-Solent working? How can this be increased or replicated?

Are some places or partners working better than others? Why? What can we learn from that?

How can local authorities and strategic agencies facilitate or enable better collaborative working?

What priorities do current cultural investments deliver to, and what are the strengths / weaknesses / gaps?

What barriers are there to partnership working, and how might they be overcome?

The Intelligence Agency ctconsults.

PLACE-MAKING SOLENT

The United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO found that the UNESCO brand is an important marketing tool, boosting tourist numbers and expenditure, local employment and local house prices. UNESCO designations added £151m per year in financial benefits to the UK economy. It also promotes educational projects and initiatives, encourages global networks and improves international reputations.

"The captive audience is huge, the transport links aren't bad, but the offer is probably quite weak and probably quite disjointed."

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard became one of the UK's top five cultural attractions outside of London (pre-pandemic).

Fareham Live is a c.£17m scheme to build an 800-seat theatre, intended to support the subregion.

"It's significant public investment in the arts and cultural scene for the local area, and the rationale for that is about the long-term sustainability of the town centre."

"We need our politicians to think seriously about start-up space for creative sectors. We should designate some employment land specifically for this or we need to incorporate it into our economic development strategy or regeneration strategy."

"You've got this tremendous potential and so far, as far as I can see, a certain lack of enthusiasm about doing anything about it."

"Culture needs to move up the agenda and that it could unlock greater pride in place and innovation."

"The cultural significance is providing that blend of all sorts of different backgrounds and histories so that it can be celebrated and enjoyed by the people that live and work in the area."

CREATIVE ENVIRONMENTS – PLACES AND SPACES

What role, and degree of ambition, should culture have in place-making through use of the urban, rural and coastal public realm of the Solent?

How can culture be a positive force in place-making and regeneration?

What are local residents proud of? Where do they take their friends and relatives when visiting the area?

What is culture's 'job' in our inspiring and being informed and inspired by landscape and environment?

How can the current funding support be harnessed and sustained? What is the role of the local authorities or strategic partners in developing a creative environment?

How can we better use spaces – parks, waterfronts, high streets etc. – to make culture an everyday activity?

The Intelligence Agency ctconsults.

TALENTED SOLENT

A Space Arts offers "Lucky Dip" bursaries for artists with an SO postcode, selected via lottery to remove barriers to access and inclusion.

Victorious offers multiple opportunities for pathways into the industry, such as the 'Road to Victorious' programme.

Similarly, **Platform One** offers its 'Wight Noize' opportunity.

The Point offers a low-cost membership scheme for creatives to access rehearsal spaces.

The **"Brave Island"** programme offers young people mentoring, funding, experiences and training in a range of creative careers.

"There's a real need to develop a more cohesive offer around creative entrepreneurialism, creative enterprise, skills development, skill sharing across the region."

"Those universities are such pipelines of talent. They have such a wealth of creativity that being able to start retaining some of that felt absolutely crucial."

"Retaining creative talent is a real issue."

"We recognise the creative industry as a business, and they need that special uplift or different strategies that might not fit in with your usual strategies for businesses."

"It's very evident to me that we lack Black Asian minority artists. We haven't developed our audiences to go along with us. There is a gap in creating pathways for young people, young artists and others to come through. This work cannot be done in isolation."

"We need micro funding. We need small and flexible fleet-of-foot bursaries to be experimental to try things out with."

"It's not inevitable that you'll graduate and go to London."

"When it comes to our infrastructure as well, we need these small creative hubs. We know we need artist studios. We know we need more messy spaces, more creative spaces. We know we need more professional creative spaces and shared workspaces."

CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SKILLS – APPLIED TALENT

The Solent is the economic powerhouse of the south coast. How can the culture and creative sector ensure that it is a growing, integrated and visible part of the region's economy?

How can we support the skills development of creative people in the Solent region?

What sort of cultural leadership and support is required from key agencies?

How can the education sector / others better support this ambition?

What's required to help young people to stay in the Solent area, or return sooner?

Where are there good examples of fostering creative entrepreneurialism? How can that be replicated or expanded?

What is inhibiting creative and cultural practitioners from growing sustainably?

The Intelligence Agency ctconsults.

SOLENT'S CREATIVE ECO-SYSTEM

(SAMPLE) STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS

4 x **Priority Places**
Gosport, Portsmouth, New Forest, Isle of Wight

5 x **Levelling Up for Culture** places –
Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth, New Forest, Isle of Wight

4 x **Heritage Action Zones** –
Gosport x 2, Newport, Ryde

Levelling Up Funding –
£18.1m Gosport, £5.8m East Cowes, £13.6m Isle of Wight, £20m Portsmouth, £20m Southampton

Solent's creative economy employs 40,000 people – more than Brighton and Bournemouth combined. It generates over £1.5bn GVA – bigger than Birmingham's.

"No one ever understands South coast cities in terms of cultural identity in the way that no one would ever be so audacious as to not understand Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle… in terms of their cultural identity. That's one of the bigger issues with the broader cultural planning and identity of the region because we don't have the literacy around cultural identity that other areas have."

"Collectively we are not going to get on central government's map if we're not working together."

The new Freeport targets sectors include the creative sector, e.g. Production; Set design & construction; Light & sound technicians; Coding; Virtual reality & AI.

"We are overlooked because we're seen as leafy Hampshire." …"[Solent] has a very different cultural scene to leafy Hampshire."

"It is an extraordinary, special and particular place. It is full of good people doing remarkable things who sometimes aren't aware of each other and there is a leadership role for something that sits outside that isn't competing, that isn't trying to deliver, but can find a common purpose and unite people."

"Our people don't necessarily care about borders, nor do our businesses."

"You've got this extraordinary story about design and innovation in the Solent."

"We're dominated by the maritime economy and we need to change the narrative to be more focused on creative and cultural economy, due to the future fragility of the maritime sector."

"THE SOLENT" AS A CREATIVE ECO-SYSTEM

It what ways could culture be a differentiating part of the way the Solent speaks about itself – to its communities, partners, government, investors etc.?

Can we learn from Northern Powerhouse? What's our 'pitch'? What role does culture play in shaping and sustaining this?

Is there a shared Solent narrative – or parts of one? What might that be?

Maritime heritage dominates Solent's identity. How could culture update this narrative, and grow ownership and pride in it?

How can the cultural sector contribute to and shape wider Solent agendas?

What does the sector need to be more visible, credible and compelling... to funders… industry… potential partners?

The Intelligence Agency ctconsults.

The conversations and workshops have explored topics such as:

- **Proposition & narrative**. The challenge of developing a Solent-wide proposition which is distinct, whilst also celebrating its distinctive cities, towns and environment;
- **Investment**. The need for a clear investment proposition for the cultural sector in Solent;
- **Working practice**. The advantages and challenges of collaboration across the region;
- **Investment**. The need to prioritise the cultural and creative industries for strategic investment, and how that sits within the wider investment needs of the Solent region;
- **Talent**. Skills needs, talent retention & development and the role of the education cluster;
- **Sector needs**. Cultural infrastructure, funding and partnership requirements;
- **Sector needs**. The role of culture in placemaking, regeneration and community building;
- **Sector needs**. How this plan might support other local cultural strategies – and how it supports other plans, strategies, ambitions and policies (including Carbon Net Zero);
- **Sector needs**. How the cultural economy is performing, its links to economic development, and other related sectors such as tourism and leisure;
- **Strategic**. What is needed for a successful Cultural Plan to also be sustainable in the longer-term.

These areas will be considered for inclusion in the full plan, supplemented by the data analysis, economic impact analysis and desk research. The aim is to identify where the most impact and improvement can be facilitated via strategic development and investment.

"We lack a feeling of being a destination."
Stakeholder comment

Further consultations and workshops are planned throughout the development process, to ensure stakeholders inform and influence the plan and action plan.

B5. Economic analysis summary

The methodology for this economic (contribution) analysis is fully detailed in the Addendum. In following a Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) approach, sectors reviewed included Civil Society; Creative Industries; Cultural Sector; Digital Sector; Gambling; Sport; Telecoms; and Tourism.

Data analysis set out the employment across a set of creative industries clusters, which totalled 41,569 jobs. The more traditionally understood cultural industry jobs (creative arts, entertainment, libraries, museums and cultural activities) accounted for 12% of this total (5,085 jobs). Cultural employment value (GVA) was estimated at £220m. It is worth noting that digital jobs represents half of total regional wages and 58% of total GVA from the DCMS combined sectors.

Digital sector jobs contribute a much larger GVA per head (£75,000) than the average DCMS job (£48,000), however DCMS jobs are predominantly knowledge-based and export-oriented, meaning they generate a greater impact for the economy than most population-driven jobs (such as in hospitality and retail services).

The South-East is the largest employer in the UK after London, with 14% of the UK's jobs. This equates to an estimated £125 billion in annual wages and £266 billion in GVA for all industries. The South East contributes 16% of all DCMS jobs in the UK, which means that there is a proportionately larger concentration of these industries in the region. DCMS industries in the South-East generate an estimated £33 billion in GVA per annum, and £24 billion in wages. Averages wages in the South-East are the second highest in the UK (after London), with DCMS sector wages particularly high.

When compared with other parts of the South-East region, the Solent region has a smaller proportion of population and employment, and a predominantly lower-wage and GVA industry profile. This indicates opportunities for growth in DCMS employment, based on proximity to other region employment nodes, a growth in digital and creatives industries, and anchored by many of the lifestyle attributes of the region. Increasing DCMS industry wages in Solent to the London average could increase total wages per annum by £203 million.

The full report also addresses a number of cultural economic drivers, and has informed emerging strategic priorities. It also takes a view on cultural infrastructure. A focus on developing core cultural infrastructure can provide the platform to support extensive performance, development, training and education programmes.

With the changing employment and industry profile of port cities, traditional trade-related jobs can be augmented through innovative and knowledge-based development, and strategies that leverage other strengths in cultural and creative industries.

New or growing cultural hub spaces can emerge from disused private or government sites (for example the Historic Dockyards in Portsmouth). Design and curation of arts hubs need to consider the provision of internal public spaces for tenants to enable greater opportunities for cross-pollination amongst creatives, organisations and audiences.

Cultural organisations can benefit from affordable, accessible spaces available that will accommodate their full schedule of activities. As many of the cultural and creative assets in Solent are small businesses or even individual creatives, the sharing of knowledge and innovations that arise from co-location can be extremely valuable.

"the Spring in Havant is somewhere that does really well in engaging communities."
Stakeholder comment

Local authorities benefit through an increase in people accessing arts services which increases traffic into the region and spending on hospitality and retail. Spending on arts services also has flow-on effects to the local economy through employees of the facilities. Collaborative facilities create opportunities for safe, active and connected communities, which enhances the liveability and vibrancy of the region.

B6. Summary findings

Without repeating some of the findings already contained in the Insights Report, we can make a few overarching observations by way of summary.

The next section starts to set out some emerging strategic priorities. For the Cultural Plan, this will be developed as a set of objectives. So here we have responded with the SMART framework.

Can this strategy have enough focus and specificity as 'Solent'?

As a strategy document, the findings have been navigated to some degree through key areas of focus. This is in response to the brief and early conversations with stakeholders that helped to further define the scope of analysis. A core theme is how sector players work with their partners, communities and councils effectively – within and across local authority 'borders'. This is a positive area to interrogate, and the action planning that should flow from the Strategy can address small, localised tasks as well as longer-term structural, regional initiatives.

"Our approach should be little and often, not big and shiny, for the impact to really be felt."
Stakeholder comment

…and be able to be effectively monitored and evaluated?

Analysis to date has identified a wealth of (cumulative) data capture, analysis and insight, with the potential for more regional data aggregation. A Solent-wide response to this could opportunity be transformational over time in terms of informing planning and operations, but also advocacy and case-making – within councils (and through Solent Partners) and with regional and national funders like Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the next generation of regional investment support funds, post-Shared Prosperity and Levelling Up etc.

Does this report indicate both a shared ambition and a willingness to pursue that ambition together?

Capacity and (financial) resource are always significant limiting factors in activating and sustaining change-making programmes. What has been very evident in this process is how quickly stakeholders have moved past this issue (and not returned to it). There is quite rightly a strong place-based focus, especially where established networks and shared programmes exist. It will be interesting to track how being involved as a regional player and partner is realised. But for now, the examples that the cultural sector and stakeholders can point to as examples of intent and delivery are positive.

"Victorious really put their money where their mouth is. It's lovely to see that relationship and there's very high levels of trust and regard for them locally. Their support for culture is extraordinary."
Stakeholder comment

Can it be relevant to the full spectrum of the cultural offer across Solent – city to rural, major player to grassroots programmes, cross-cutting social and economic agendas – and to the key partner infrastructure that supports it, not least local authorities, further and higher education, and Solent Partners?

Realism and relevance are potential booby-traps for a strategy. They can give stakeholders permission to step away from being a part of the forward programme: "that's not relevant to us". However, the findings have illustrated a diverse potential mix of strategic recommendations that most (and hopefully all) cultural players can find something in it for them – individually or as place-based collectives. This will be a mixture of the regional, and more local or thematically specific or time specific.

What can we aim to achieve in the next 3-5 years? What is a reasonable timeframe to see positive impacts?

Again, any action planning needs to have a blend of short, mid and longer-term activities. Some of these should be developmental and using the opportunities that a regional view affords – pilots, action research that can start in one place and roll-out. Some can be open programmes – like skills training in digital transformation. Some will be about enhancing existing systems, networks and projects, e.g. supporting Southampton Forward, The Island Collection, Portsmouth Creates, Folio New Forest. The key will be to set goals that have a rolling timeframe of delivery, creating opportunities to review, report and then 'go again'. This is important for advocacy and case-making on an ongoing basis as well – most programmes (unless in-house) are supported on a discretionary basis from the local authorities and that is never taken for granted. An ability to report regular positive news and impacts – from the cultural community and the people they serve – is key to being able to maintain momentum in delivery of the strategy for its full period, e.g. 3-5+ years. And then to review and renew its vision.

C1. Towards useful comparators

A targeted group of useful case study exemplars will be included in the full version of the Cultural Plan.

These are likely to include domestic and international examples, such as:

- Barcelona;
- Belfast;
- Bilbao & Santander;
- Gloucester Docks;
- Humber estuary;
- Liverpool & Merseyside;
- Marseilles;
- Teesside.

C2. Emerging strategic priorities

A number of key insights have emerged as this process has progressed. They will all feed directly into the next stage of development for the Cultural Plan, but interestingly they have also found a straightforward connection into wider programmes, including carbon net zero, accessibility & inclusion, and placemaking. There are plenty of positive foundations to build on, and the opportunities to develop a consensus around sector and place-based values can and should help to leverage more collaborative working across key agencies and communities across Solent.

Looking at how the Plan might now be envisioned, the opportunities to demonstrate how it can work in practice can start to emerge. This will directly inform the stakeholder action planning workshops to be scheduled for spring 2024.

"There's a real need to develop a more cohesive offer around creative entrepreneurialism, creative enterprise, skills development, skill sharing across, across the region."
Stakeholder comment

Emerging areas of focus include:

Skills and talent (development). Driving the local economies by prioritising local skills and supply chain, such as introducing a regional database of skilled events professionals and suppliers. This should include all areas of the supply chain, including but not limited to infrastructure, accessibility, marketing, and technical. A focus on creative entrepreneurship and enterprise could be incentivised, encouraging start-ups through training, incubator hubs and micro-grants and other resources.

Higher education. The role of universities can and should connect strongly with a number of agendas – not just a stage as an educational stepping stone. Skills and training certainly, but also new business support as an influential cultural sector leader.

"Those universities are such pipelines of talent. They have such a wealth of creativity and we need to start retaining that locally."

"We're helping students see a future for their culture and creative businesses in the Solent area, offering viable exciting propositions – so it's not inevitable that you'll graduate and go to London."
Stakeholder comments

Of key importance is the attraction and retention of talent. Building on the distinctive and growing creative and academic clusters, Solent can aim to facilitate a nexus of creativity and innovation. Key considerations are to:

- Invest in entrepreneurship, creativity and the arts;
- Embed identity, culture and knowledge within the public realm;
- Provide dedicated support structures for emerging creatives;
- Grow and support entrepreneurship, research and innovation.

Narrative. Culture is a point of place distinctiveness. Adding this richness to maritime heritage and industry can provide new reasons to look at the region and its component parts – as a resident, visitor, business or investor. This will also provide image clarity from other parts of the south coast – both in terms of industry, tourism and scale.

"If you asked Joe Bloggs on the streets of London about the Isle of Wight, they're more likely to talk about Wet Leg than boats."
Stakeholder comment

"The Solent is the brightest light on the map."
Local authority stakeholder comment

Film. As with many other parts of the country film location, film-making and film tourism is being looked at (e.g. FilmWight). Solent has a rich and unique mix of locations and some interesting and relevant creative skills that can attract interest and connect to London. A Solent Film Office is worth exploring further. Insightful reports to date are already informing the necessary design of a future programme and necessary investment plan.

Cultural tourism. Experiential cultural tourism is a growing sector of the tourism economy. Visitors are more likely to engage with arts and culture than attend organised sporting events. Market demand for cultural and heritage tourism has outpaced overall tourism growth, and cultural tourists typically stay longer and spend more than the average tourist. As a port region with a rich history, Solent has the opportunity to continue to expand its diverse local economy, augmented by tourism and creative industries. This will follow in some of the world's well-known destinations that have undergone successful renewal after the rejuvenation of ports. Well-planned redevelopment projects bring new global interest, strong economic returns and demand for integrated mixed-use, commercial, residential, tourist and entertainment development. If visitors via airports stop-off in that city before travelling on, why not in Solent? The offer has the potential to add some 'stickiness' to these (currently) transitory tourists.

Data and insight. A shared approach to programme and initiative development (and therefore planning and funding) requires good data and a collaborative approach by and across local authorities:

- A shared data collection, marketing channel & planning coordination, evaluation and reporting systems.
- A transparent and shared approach to providing grant funding, based on shared goals around SROI and social purpose.
- Liaison with local communities to build relationships through participation and building a voice in cultural development.
- A shared volunteer / casual staff database, including information on those who have completed relevant training and qualifications.
- COVID-19 has accelerated changes in consumer behaviour and has driven more consumers online. Harnessing digital technology as a growth and innovation tool, in a collaborative manner, can help to overcome these challenges. Data and digital training and shared platforms could be explored.

"I was shocked at how disconnected the sector was."

"There is a greater resilience by actively working together or operating together... individual providers would struggle on their own."

"Start thinking of yourself as a sector, rather than a set of individual companies!"
Stakeholder comments

Networks. Increased opportunities for peer networking, collaboration and partnership – building on the good work already underway through partnership & network bodies, and regional agencies.

Piloting. This is about progressive intra-regional working practice - adopting a 'pilot and roll out' approach, which enables certain cultural programmes and players to test new ideas and initiatives supported by the wider sector, with learnings shared amongst peers.

From here, the Cultural Plan's vision and aims will be developed within a clear framework. This is the next major opportunity for the client team to fully engage with and challenge the strategic direction we are recommending and the evidence base we use to justify it.

Based on Solent's attributes, coordinated investment and job creation should focus on:

- Building the core cultural sector;
- Attracting creative and immersive industries;
- Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Enhancing connections with tourism, events and hospitality.

C3. Looking Ahead

C3.1 TOWARDS THE STRATEGY

A number of key insights have emerged as this process has progressed. They will all feed directly into the next stage of development – a full draft Solent Cultural Plan.

There is much to build on. There is a diverse cultural and creative ecology across the region – which is bigger and broader than many realise, even after major collective efforts such as the creditable Southampton UK City of Culture 2025 bid. Many cultural organisations marry both an intense focus on their local communities but also have an outward-facing worldview, which is reflected in their programming and partnerships.

"There's opportunities here to be a big fish in a small pond, unlike in Brighton, or London. There's the opportunity to meet directors, be friendly and welcoming."
Stakeholder comment

Whilst it is fragmented and (often) fragile, the work of the sector players and partners has a straightforward connection into wider initiatives, including place narrative and positioning, masterplanning and public realm, place-making and place-based practice and support services.

Consequently, the opportunity to deliver to a consensus around local visions and values should help to leverage more collaborative working across key agencies and communities in Solent.

The resulting impact on collective visibility, engagement and partnership will help to build a more resilient and strategically-focused network of cultural and creative partners. Looking at how the Plan might now be envisioned, the opportunities to demonstrate how it can work in practice can start to emerge.

The Plan vision and aims will be developed from the evidentiary pillars set out in this document – setting the scale, scope and level of ambition. In other words, setting out, in challenging times, what will success look like in 5-10 years if this strategy is effective.

C3.2 A DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR THE STRATEGY DOCUMENT

This is a very topline 'contents' for the Cultural Plan to follow, for discussion. It will be refined naturally as part of the process, but this is an opportunity to input any key sections, sub-sections or addenda that may be required, as well as tone of voice etc.

A. CONTEXT

1. The challenge
2. The opportunity

B. INSIGHTS

1. Overview
2. Mapping
3. Insights
4. Emerging principles

C. STRATEGIC VISION

1. Vision
2. Aims

D. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Priority 1
    a. Description & rationale
    b. Key actions
2. Priority 2
    a. Description & rationale
    b. Key actions
3. Priority 3
    a. Description & rationale
    b. Key actions

D. ACTION PLANNING & DELIVERY MODEL

1. Role of Solent Partners and local authorities
2. Role of the cultural community
3. Action plan framework

ADDENDUM

1. Sector mapping – detail
2. Comparators
3. Contributors

D. Addendum

D1 CULTURAL PLACE WHEEL – A GUIDE TO RATINGS

Rating	0 – 2	2 – 5	5 – 8	8 – 10
POLICY				
Vision	No shared, coherent vision	Some visions share degrees of ambition and direction, but are not connected	Key stakeholders have aligned visions and cross-reference	Aligned visions inform a place-based vision for culture, networks and key programmes
Leadership	Little to no support, visible or otherwise	Some cultural leaders (or those with the portfolio) active and championing the cultural agenda	Most cultural leaders active – projects, programmes, teams	Multiple leaders active – internal / local authority and external (independent, funded)
Integrated policies	No interest / momentum in developing	Interest in developing aspects, e.g. cultural calendar, skills, shared data, joint marketing	Interested in moving beyond organisational focus to a place-based model	Active in taking a 'smart Solent' approach to place-making through culture
Investment	No budget or accessible resource	Some budget / resource available	Plenty of budget / resource for specific, defined cultural projects	Multi-year budget / resource available (local, audience, organisational, partnership based)
PEOPLE				
Co-design & co-production culture	No open online / collaborative resource, or rarely connect to it (local, regional)	Resource support limited, e.g. information / content, programme strands	Resource helps sustain variety of cultural activity; some link to place partners inc. local authorities	Internal / networked teams are interdisciplinary: within and connected to their places and partners

People learning & skills	No access to creative skills or knowledge	Access to few people with some skills & knowledge	Access to wide range of skills & knowledge / skills development in Suffolk / East Anglia	We openly share and develop skills & knowledge across culture locally / regionally
Communities & local engagement	Locals are socially, culturally & digitally isolated; little / damaged sense of community	Some are digitally and socially engaged through culture but many excluded	Lots of groups but modest collaboration or impact on places through culture	Local-international groups actively involved in co-creation to drive place-based programmes
Target stakeholders	Community, public & private sector not mapped	Stakeholder mapped but not well communicated with	Some engaged networking & comms, informing strategy / delivery to a degree; accessible to some	Fully engaged cross-sector stakeholder engagement to support culture
PLACE				
Narrative & messaging	Identity of places (villages, towns, cities, boroughs, region) not transferred across all channels	Identity limited to few websites / posts. Residents rarely engaged, certainly not year-round	'Cultural place' identity visible online / offline. Good external perceptions. Locals frequently engaged	'Cultural place' offer clear – anchored in place. Visitors and locals dynamically engaged. Co-create narrative.
Uses & activities	Little to no creative, community offerings or activity, bar social media, some ad hoc provision	Some public online and community offerings but hard to access / confusing / partial	Good offers (e.g. via web, social). Harder for smaller cultural players to build support; to 'own' provision	Great use of diverse programmed offer for various groups. Lots of easily accessible activity
Infrastructure – access & linkages	Poor transport, information and digital infrastructure. Generally isolated	Patchy transport / infrastructure. Limited digital device access / connectivity	Transport / access generally good but not for all. Cultural hubs exist to connect / engage digitally	Good, affordable transport / access; online access. Good mix of networks / hubs based on user need
Infrastructure – assets	Poor, disconnected portfolio of 'place-making' cultural assets: online, venue, programme	Some areas of depth, e.g. landscape-inspired, heritage, music, but with limited impact	Strength in numerous areas that can, but don't currently, help to shape wider place-making	Connected, strong creative / cultural asset base enabling impacts, partnerships & investment

PARTNERSHIPS				
Professional communities	People professionally isolated; no sense of cross-function working	Some people / teams engage with others; many excluded	Lots of area of practice, but not cross-functional / organisational or place-based engagement	Local-international groups from varied sectors actively co-create programmes and opportunities
Engaged stakeholders	No community, corporate engagement with culture in 'place'	Some self-serving collaboration across limited groups / networks / places	Lots of collaboration across stakeholders. Mainly project funded	Community / key agency collaboration. Shared resources & skills. Not project funding reliant
Political & policy champions	No policymaker or political engagement with culture in 'place'	Some self-serving collaboration across limited senior and funded networks	Lots of collaboration across policymakers and political leadership. Mainly project funded	Mature, integrated political collaboration. Shared resources & skills. Strategy, not project-driven
Education & learning	Institutions / groups siloed: little community / business partnerships	Limited relationships. No strategy; few project deliverables	Broad relationships. Outputs based on user needs alongside (funded) programme goals and criteria	Broad / deep collaboration across institutions. Problem-solving changemakers are evident.
PLATFORMS				
Digital capacity & activity	Know nothing of initiatives / plans, education partnerships, 'smart' / data-led programmes	Aware of some initiatives. Take part as oversight, observer or resident	Involved in some initiatives but rarely place-making linked. Harder to get voice heard	Diverse part of plans. Sector engagement voices aspirations & solutions. Place-based support
Digital & system tech	No visible shared digital or systemic tech or tools	Use some basic tech but hard-to-use digital or systemic tools	Confidently use various digital or systemic tools and tech	Very supported & involved in adopting right tech and systems for right needs; constant feedback
Data insight & sharing	No awareness of transformational potential of data / data-led strategic (place) partnerships	Data used by a few select departments / programmes but it's basic and siloed	Events / cultural organisations and places use / share data widely, with good governance	Good practice data sharing across place stakeholders normal and hardwired into planning

Sharing platforms	No awareness of transformational potential of platforms	Platforms used by few select teams in basic and/or siloed way	Platforms used widely within organisations and some places. Shared apps / services well-managed	Shared platforms created a place apps / services ecosystem; enables quick, effective, accessible use
PRODUCT / MARKET				
End user experience	Online and physical experience disconnected, partial, hard to find, harder to use. No link to place	User experience fairly accessible and usable, but not fully integrated, especially online	Online / offline experience present to a good degree and as singular offer for all audiences	Online / offline experience co-developed using data, research and place-based evaluation
Marketing communications	Content is weak / out-of-date, big gaps in comms by target audience; ad hoc, generic marketing	A few examples of targeted marcomms activity, but not place integrated / shared (content)	Targeted campaigns. Shared content used. Less effective data capture, analysis, digital marketing	Place-led, data-driven place marketing across all levels and markets for events and as sector offer
Place branding	No discussion or understanding of value of a shared place brand	Basic place promotional guidelines in place; used by lead agencies / local authorities only	Place marketing active, but lacking strategic step-change in working practice (use of data, co-design)	Active, well-managed place brand, driving shared decision-making and investment, informed by data
Market research & evaluation	No awareness of market trends & behaviour, or value to place partnerships	Primary research insight used by a few select teams / programmes but it's basic and siloed	Organisations and places commission new research; share findings through place networks	Market research & evaluation informs place and influences regional investment across the sector

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Partnership Funding	Portsmouth Creates	2023
Portsmouth City Vision 2040	Portsmouth City Council	2020
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Methodology

This study aims to calculate the value of the cultural economy to the Solent region in line with a methodology designed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The methodology considers the employment, Gross Value Added (GVA) and earnings (wages) associated with cultural and creative sectors in the region. This study focuses on the sectors for which the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has responsibility. The sectors that have been reviewed in this study include: Civil Society; Creative Industries; Cultural Sector; Digital Sector; Gambling; Sport; Telecoms; Tourism.

The DCMS publishes official and national statistics regarding the economic contribution to the UK for these sectors. Total annual GVA is published at a national level for each DCMS sector, which can be combined with total employment by sector to calculate an average GVA per employee. Average GVA per employee estimates can then be applied to employment figures in regions such as Solent to determine the gross value added of the DCMS employment in those locations.

Additionally, average annual gross wages per employee for each DCMS sector are published at a regional level, showing the relative earnings value of each sector within each region. This enables average wages to be combined with employment figures in regions such as Solent to determine the earnings value of the DCMS employment in those locations.

Limitations arise where not all industries publish data in the same way, or certain statistics are only available at national or regional levels. DCMS publishes GVA and wages data at a 2-digit SIC level, however this data is not readily available for other industries in the same format. GVA data by industry is published at a national level, while wages data by industry is published at a regional level. Workplace jobs data is by one-digit industry at a region level, while census data by industry is published for smaller geographical areas.

Due to these limitations with secondary data sources and an inability to source sufficient primary employment or floorspace data for cultural and creative industry businesses within the Solent region, this study considers the following geographical boundaries:

- The UK as a nation;
- Regions of the UK (specifically focused on the South East, in which Solent is located);
- The eight districts that make up the Solent region (Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Isle of Wight, New Forest, Portsmouth, and Southampton);
- The set of cultural and creative assets mapped by the project team.

"We need people setting up businesses, finding a home for their creative endeavours, support for cultural production, cultural workers and practitioners. In other words, not a vision for culture which is about people spending money, but also supporting the artists trying to make a living and raise businesses here."
Stakeholder comment

D3.1 DATA ANALYSIS

Solent Industries

Employment published by 2-digit DCMS sector across the eight districts that comprise the Solent region shows a creative industries cluster of 41,000 DCMS jobs. This is largely driven by the digital sector, with jobs in computer programming making up a significant 35% of all DCMS jobs, and other digital / creative sector hybrid jobs (such as publishing, programming and broadcasting, and music and television production) accounting for a further 6% of jobs.

Creative industries jobs in architectural and engineering activities make up 18% of DCMS jobs, with advertising contributing 7% of jobs. Creative arts, entertainment, libraries, museums and cultural activities (defined as the more traditional cultural industry jobs) account for 12% of DCMS jobs in the region.

Figure 1. DCMS Industry Employment in Solent Region Districts

DCMS INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT	%
Publishing activities	832	2%
Motion picture, video & tv production, sound recording and music publishing	1,048	3%
Programming and broadcasting activities	658	2%
Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	14,654	35%
Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis	7,542	18%
Advertising and market research	2,864	7%
Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation services	2,559	6%
Creative, arts and entertainment activities	3,476	8%
Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities	1,609	4%
Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities	6,327	15%
TOTAL SOLENT DCMS EMPLOYMENT	**41,569**	**100%**

It is useful to note that there is overlap between Digital, Creative and Cultural sector industries, meaning that Programming and Broadcasting activities (for example) can be considered all three, while Computer Programming can fall within both the Digital and Creative sectors. More detailed classification requires cross-tabulation of industry and occupation data, which is not publicly available at a district level. For this reason, the industries above have been combined into five higher-level DCMS categories using particular assumptions in order for GVA and wages estimates to be applied. Publishing activities; Production, sound recording and music; Programming and broadcasting activities; and Computer programming have been defined as Digital. Architectural, Engineering and Advertising have been classed as Creative Sector. Travel agency and tour services have been defined as Tourism. Creative, arts and entertainment; Libraries, archives and museums have been classed as Cultural Sector. Sports activities have been classed as Sports.

Figure 2. DCMS Industry Employment Value in Solent Region Districts

DCMS INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT %	GROSS VALUE ADD	WAGES
Digital	17,192	41%	£1,259,906,262	£727,249,238
Creative	10,406	25%	£461,183,566	£399,923,392
Tourism	2,559	6%	£45,418,599	£65,116,314
Cultural	5,085	12%	£220,974,531	£118,388,970
Sports	6,327	15%	£180,538,770	£122,250,294
TOTAL	**41,569**	**100%**	**£2,168,021,728**	**£1,432,928,208**

The analysis shows that the DCMS industries cluster of 41,000 jobs in the Solent region is worth approximately £2 billion in annual GVA and £1.4 billion in annual wages. Although less than half of all employment, the Digital sector represents 50% of total wages and 58% of total GVA, based on higher average wages and GVA per employee for these industries.

DCMS sector jobs represent approximately 8% of all jobs in the Solent region, 7% of total GVA and 10% of total wages. Other industries that contribute to the region's 529,000 jobs include manufacturing, transport and distribution, education and tourism. The total estimated annual GVA of the Solent region is £31 billion, and annual wages are estimated at £14 billion.

Figure 3. Solent DCMS Employment as a Percentage of Total Employment

STATISTIC	DCMS INDUSTRIES	ALL INDUSTRIES	DCMS AS % OF ALL
Employment	41,569	529,100	8%
GVA	£2,168,021,728	£31,034,310,873	7%
Wages	£1,432,928,208	£14,606,863,700	10%

DCMS Sector Impact

Digital sector jobs contribute a much larger GVA per head (£75,000) than the average DCMS job (£48,000), however DCMS jobs are predominantly knowledge-based and export-oriented, meaning they generate a greater impact for the economy than most population-driven jobs (such as in hospitality and retail services).

On average, wages in DCMS sectors are higher than the average of other sectors in the UK, with the South East region recording the second highest wages (after London) in the DCMS industries. The Digital sector and Telecoms recorded the highest average wages of the DCMS sectors, with Creative industries wages also slightly higher than the DCMS average. The Cultural Sector was the only DCMS sector in which the South East recorded lower than the UK average wages.

Figure 4. Average Value of DCMS Industry Employment

DCMS INDUSTRY	GVA / EMPLOYEE (UK)	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE (UK)	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE (SOUTH-EAST)
Civil Society	£17,749	£24,778	£25,446
Creative Industries	£44,319	£35,000	£38,432
Cultural Sector	£43,456	£27,283	£23,282
Digital Sector	£75,593	£37,925	£42,610
Gambling	£126,239	£20,229	£24,997
Sport	£28,535	£17,776	£19,322
Telecoms	£189,301	£39,768	£55,403
All DCMS (excl Tourism)	£48,787	£31,375	£36,000
Tourism (2017 figures)	£38,223	£18,428	£19,205
All Other Industries	£58,655	£26,280	£27,607

South East Region

The Solent region is located at the bottom of the UK's South East (SE) Region. The South East has 684,000 DCMS sector jobs, which make up 15% of all jobs in the region, as well as 13% of the region's GVA and 20% of the region's wages. This indicates that wages in the DCMS industries located in the South East are on average greater than the other industries of employment in the region, while other industries are generating higher average GVA.

Figure 5. South East DCMS Employment as a Percentage of Total Employment

STATISTIC	DCMS INDUSTRIES	ALL INDUSTRIES	DCMS AS % OF ALL
Employment	684,974	4,541,429	15%
GVA	£33,417,681,062	£266,377,092,035	13%
Wages	£24,659,064,000	£125,375,230,403	20%

The South East is the largest employer in the UK after London, with 14% of the UK's jobs. This equates to an estimated £125 billion in annual wages and £266 billion in GVA for all industries.

The South East contributes 16% of all DCMS jobs in the UK, which means that there is a proportionately larger concentration of these industries in the region. DCMS industries in the South East generate an estimated £33 billion in GVA per annum, and £24 billion in wages.

Figure 6. South East as a Percentage of UK

	SOUTH EAST (SE)	ALL UK	SE AS A % OF UK
Population	8,947,913	65,110,034	14%
All Sector Employment	4,541,429	33,582,357	14%
All Sector Wages	£125,375,230,403	£882,544,341,960	14%
All Sector GVA	£266,377,092,035	£1,969,770,000,000	14%
DCMS Jobs	684,974	4,332,300	16%
DCMS Wages	£24,659,064,000	£135,925,912,500	18%
DCMS GVA	£33,417,681,062	£211,359,000,000	16%

Averages wages in the South East are the second highest in the UK (after London), with DCMS sector wages particularly high. Figure 7 shows the large role that the South East plays in generating GVA and earnings from DCMS industries, compared with other regions in the UK.

Figure 7. DCMS Sector Employment and Value in UK and Regions

REGION	EMPLOYMENT	ANNUAL GVA	ANNUAL WAGES
North East	106,968	£5,218,625,098	£2,603,387,184
North West	369,454	£18,024,473,833	£9,975,258,000
Yorkshire and The Humber	277,046	£13,516,184,363	£7,181,309,366
East Midlands	232,058	£11,321,364,361	£6,009,141,910
West Midlands	300,153	£14,643,500,664	£9,281,631,219
East	335,841	£16,384,603,541	£10,333,827,570
London	1,070,358	£52,219,328,422	£42,145,346,250
South East	684,974	£33,417,681,062	£24,659,064,000
South West	372,477	£18,171,956,292	£10,606,282,575
Wales	146,140	£7,129,701,143	£3,458,549,240
Scotland	329,848	£16,092,224,322	£8,397,270,384
Northern Ireland	83,068	£4,052,620,874	£2,340,773,172
All UK	4,332,300	£211,359,000,000	£135,925,912,500

Solent in the South East Region

With a population of 1.3 million, Solent represents around 15% of the population of the South East region of the UK and 12% of the employment. This partly reflects the ageing population of Solent, with a greater percentage of people outside the working age. Solent contains just 6% of the South East's DCMS sector jobs, indicating that greater proportions of employment in these industries are located in other parts of the South East.

Figure 8. South East DCMS Employment as a Percentage of Total Employment

STATISTIC	SOLENT	SOUTH EAST	SOLENT % OF SE
Population	1,349,215	8,947,913	15%
All Sector Jobs	529,100	4,541,429	12%
DCMS Jobs	41,569	684,974	6%
DCMS Wages	£1,432,928,208	£24,659,064,000	6%
DCMS GVA	£2,168,021,728	£33,417,681,062	6%

When compared with other parts of the South East region (such as areas around Kent and Oxfordshire), the Solent region has a smaller proportion of population and employment, and a predominantly lower-wage and GVA industry profile.

This indicates opportunities for growth in DCMS employment, based on proximity to other region employment nodes, a growth in digital and creatives industries, and anchored by many of the lifestyle attributes of the region.

Lifting GVA per job in Solent to the UK average could increase total GVA per annum by £270 million with the same job base. Increasing DCMS industry wages in Solent to the London average could increase total wages per annum by £203 million.

Solent Cultural Asset Mapping

As part of the asset mapping component of this project, the project team identified 460 DCMS sector assets in the Solent region. The data set included the entity and website name, district of location with the Solent region, and Arts Council England funding amount (where applicable).

Using this information, each of the 460 assets was classified into high level DCMS sectors, with the majority assumed to be in the Cultural (45%) and Creative (39%) sectors.

In the absence of primary data on employment or floor area from each asset, high level employment figures have been estimated for each entity, based on funding levels, desktop research (where possible) and sector averages.

This generated a figure of 7,165 jobs in the 460 entities mapped, at an average of 16 jobs per entity. Applying average DCMS industry GVA figures for the UK, and average wages for the South East region to each job, generates an estimated GVA and Wages value for these assets in Solent. Figure 9 shows an estimated £315 million in GVA and £217 million in wages per annum.

Figure 9. Cultural Asset Mapping Estimates

DCMS CLASSIFICATION	ENTITIES	EMPLOYMENT	GVA	WAGES
Creative Sector	182	2,480	£109,911,132	£95,311,360
Cultural Sector	211	3,280	£142,536,177	£76,364,960
Digital	31	620	£46,867,586	£26,418,200
Civil Society	26	635	£11,270,344	£16,158,210
Tourism	1	20	£764,454	£384,101
Sport	9	130	£3,709,505	£2,511,860
TOTAL	460	7,165	£315,059,199	£217,148,691

This employment estimate of 7,165 corresponded quite closely with the sum of employment in the Solent region from the Office of National Statistics data in the industries below, which equated to 7,623 jobs.

- Creative, arts and entertainment activities;
- Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities;
- Publishing activities;
- Motion picture, video and television production, sound recording and music publishing activities;
- Programming and broadcasting activities.

This indicates that the cultural asset mapping exercise has identified approximately 17% of the 41,000 DCMS jobs in Solent, with a core focus on the Cultural and Creative sectors.

Figure 10. Solent Cultural Assets as a Percentage of DCMS Employment

STATISTIC	SOLENT CULTURAL ASSETS	SOLENT DCMS SECTOR	ASSETS AS % OF DCMS
Employment	7,165	41,569	17%
GVA	£217,148,691	£1,432,928,208	15%
Wages	£315,059,199	£2,168,021,728	15%

The remaining DCMS jobs in the region are predominantly in the hybrid Digital and Creative sector industries, including fields such as computer programming, architecture, advertising and design. While not cultural assets, these industries can often benefit from co-location with the core cultural sector, with creative industries growing around core infrastructure, programme investment generating valuable supply chains, as well as benefitting from labour pooling and knowledge spillover effects.

D3.2 CULTURAL ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Arts and culture enrich lives by inspiring creativity, reflection, innovation, and social debate. They strengthen communities and encourage social inclusion and harmony. Access to arts and cultural activity promotes transformative change including equitable opportunities and outcomes in all areas of life. The creative output produced attracts visitors and strengthens community relationships. Few industries can achieve these goals simultaneously.

"Economically, there is a commonality, but socially there is not."
Stakeholder comment

In developing the Solent Cultural Plan, the region's unique points of difference have been identified, including its enviable port location and maritime assets, proximity to London and position within the thriving South East region, existing cultural and educational infrastructure, and growing strengths in high value digital and creative industries. Based on these attributes, coordinated investment and job creation should focus on:

- Building the core cultural sector;
- Attracting creative and immersive industries;
- Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Enhancing tourism and hospitality.

Creative and Knowledge Economy

Of key importance is the attraction and retention of talent. The knowledge economy benefits from co-locating with creatives, as can be seen in innovation precincts globally. Building on te Solent's small but emerging creative cluster, and strengthening connections with the strong DCMS activity in the South East, aims to facilitate a nexus of creativity and innovation. Key considerations are to:

- Invest in entrepreneurship, creativity and the arts;
- Embed identity, culture and knowledge within the public realm;
- Provide dedicated support structures for emerging creatives;
- Grow and support entrepreneurship, research and innovation.

More opportunities for creative industries to thrive means the region's creative talents can develop their business and practice in Solent. Creative hubs and affordable co-working spaces can be platforms for new and emerging businesses within these knowledge and job-intensive industries. These creative spaces allow people to forge connections and generate collaboration, on a self-organised rather than a formal basis. Places that have a critical mass of creativity and rich cultural diversity are key to developing and keeping a skilled workforce in all industries.

Vibrancy and Liveability

Cultural vibrancy is also critical to attracting highly skilled and creative people, businesses, investment, tourists and students, and engaging local communities. All scales of cultural infrastructure contribute to this vibrancy and liveability, from large-scale cultural institutions to public libraries, commercial galleries, live music venues, artist studios, and school performing arts centres. Many of these places operate on an international stage, connecting with overseas partners and audiences, creating pathways for collaboration and trade, for cultural relationships and diplomacy, talent attraction and tourism.

The liveability of a city is a function of characteristics that contribute to quality of life, including employment, healthcare, culture, education and infrastructure. In the Global Liveability Index, culture and infrastructure comprise nearly half of the index weightings, reflecting their contribution to liveability.

"one of the really interesting places that is punching above its weight is Eastleigh Borough Council – locally, nationally and internationally."

"The John Hansard Gallery is where I got my cultural education."
Stakeholder comments

Arts productions are attractions that draw audiences (residents, workers, visitors and students) – which in turn drives demand for cafes, restaurants and pubs. Without attractions, it is difficult for undifferentiated cafes, restaurants and bars to survive.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is a growing sector of the tourism economy. Visitors are more likely to engage with arts and culture than to visit wineries, casinos or attend organised sporting events. Market demand for cultural and heritage tourism has outpaced overall tourism growth globally, and cultural tourists typically stay longer and spend more than the average tourist.

"We're not a sticky destination. We need to be stickier."
Stakeholder comment

As a port region with a rich history, Solent has the opportunity to continue to expand its diverse local economy, augmented by tourism and creative industries. This will follow in some of the world's well-known destinations that have undergone successful renewal after the rejuvenation of river ports.

Places like Canary Wharf in London, the Victoria and Albert Waterfront in Cape Town and Barangaroo in Sydney are evidence that well-planned redevelopment projects bring new global interest, strong economic returns and demand for integrated mixed-use, commercial, residential, tourist and entertainment development.

Cultural Infrastructure

A focus on developing core cultural infrastructure can provide the platform to support extensive performance, development, training and education programmes. In addition to direct benefits for audiences, embedded creatives and various communities of interest, development may attract and build on the existing creative industries workforce in specialist roles (e.g. architecture and design, software and digital content, marketing and publishing) and supporting roles (e.g. manufacturing, finance and insurance, accounting).

With the changing employment and industry profile of port cities, traditional trade-related jobs in industries such as freight, storage, transport and logistics can be augmented through innovative and knowledge-based development, and strategies that leverage other strengths in cultural and creative industries.

The creation of new performing arts spaces has a role to play in this transition, because they are the hubs from which cultural creativity drives other creative industry development. Strong links to educational infrastructure and activities are also vital in growing and attracting talent with a focus on real industry issues.

Hub spaces can be either organic or curated. Organic spaces often emerge from disused private or government sites where other uses were unviable and property values are therefore low. Organic hubs are often temporary because they can precipitate the gentrification process described above, whereby they create what residents and commercial tenants regard as desirable attributes, thereby driving up rents that they cannot afford to pay.
Curated private or government owned facilities tend to be more stable, because they are designated for cultural or artistic use and therefore not subject to the gentrification process. They often benefit from long term or permanent tenants but are most successful when they support a range of creative and commercial activities such as spaces for hire, public classes or complementary tenancies such as cafes or creches.

Co-location and Collaboration

Design and curation of arts hubs need to consider the provision of internal public spaces for tenants to enable greater opportunities for cross-pollination amongst creatives, organisations and audiences. Where facilities may be multi-level, it is also preferable that place activating uses and audience focussed uses are situated at ground level, with non-activating uses such as studios/workshops or offices located at higher levels.

While shared-use spaces can offer lower occupancy costs to tenants through shared overheads, the biggest advantage of co-location is the development of networks and creative ecosystems that link to the wider creative economy. Government ownership and management offer stability and stewardship, but a degree of community control is essential to maintain and grow such ecosystems.

Cultural organisations will benefit from affordable, accessible spaces available that will accommodate their full schedule of activities. As many of the cultural and creative assets in Solent are small businesses or even individual creatives, the sharing of knowledge and innovations that arise from co-location can be extremely valuable.

Providing high-quality, permanent co-located facilities for freelancers and small to medium organisations will also enable them to expand their services and reputations, as the consistency of a space reduces the administrative burden and increases awareness and accessibility by members of the community. This allows more time to be spent on activities relating to the artform directly, more opportunities for professional growth in the industry and more performances to be developed and exhibited.

Community Benefits

Local authorities benefit through an increase in people accessing arts services which increases traffic into the region and spending on hospitality and retail. Spending on arts services also has flow-on effects to the local economy through employees of the facilities. Collaborative facilities create opportunities for safe, active and connected communities, which enhances the liveability and vibrancy of the region. Overall, the establishment of creative innovative venues and precincts with regional and national relevance will enhance the reputation of Solent as a cultural hub and increase employment in DCMS industries.

Community members within the region and surrounding areas will benefit from having an increased supply of arts performances and performing arts services in their local area. This will have a range of benefits including social cohesion and increased sense of place, in addition to educational and health benefits for both adults and youth that participate in arts, educational and training programmes.

For more details contact

Andrew Palmer
Director

Amy Lewis
Culture & Place Consultant

andrew@ctconsults.com
amy@ctconsults.com
+44 (0) 161 228 7512

ctconsults.com
creativetourist.com
culturehosts.co.uk

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