



13 BLENDED PRIORITIES

WITH SHORT, MEDIUM & LONG TERM ACTIONS

A regional “What’s On” directory so everyone can easily find cultural events and activities

**PRIMARY
THEME:**



**SECONDARY
THEME:**



We want to work with Councils and Cultural Networks to create an easy-to-use local and regional directory showing what’s on, where, and how to join in, including smaller venues and community groups. Because people don’t know what’s happening locally. So that everyone can find and enjoy cultural life where they live, in an inclusive and accessible way.

Short-term

Install physical noticeboards; encourage standardised listing format; pilot digital “What’s on” tool with a focus on underrepresented groups, ensuring non-digital access for residents with low digital confidence; meets accessibility standards and includes feedback mechanisms.

Medium-term

Expand digital tool and its analytics and data tracking; collaborate with social media platforms; provide digital literacy support; ensure community co-design, ethical framework and evaluation; appoint Marketing & Communications lead/team.

Long-term

Create a fully functional regional cultural directory with promotion and outreach strategy. Integrated across NHS, schools, social care, and transport systems; build permanent Cultural Ambassador network; maintain hybrid physical + digital system and use data to inform cultural policy.

Open public buildings, parks and unused spaces for cultural activity

**PRIMARY
THEME:**

**PLACE
MAKING**

**SECONDARY
THEME:**

ECONOMY

We want to work with Councils, Developers, and Land Trusts to open up parks, libraries, schools, heritage buildings, and unused spaces for cultural use, with fair access and local support. Because people need affordable, welcoming places to gather and create. So that culture becomes part of everyday community life.

Short-term

Open public buildings beyond 6pm; pilot cultural events; identify suitable buildings with local authorities and allies; ensure staffing, safety, utilities coverage and maintenance; consider residents' concerns (noise, traffic) and wider community consultation. Consider accessibility for all (physical, sensory, language).

Medium-term

Support cultural activity in underused spaces; combine multiple types of public spaces; clarify Creative Hub responsibilities; establish interim management and staffing plan. Include training or guidance for staff/volunteers on inclusion and community engagement.

Long-term

Establish Creative Hub for long-term management; ensure sustainable staffing, payments, governance and funding models for long-term maintenance and accessibility. Focus hub on enabling public space usage rather than becoming a general-purpose cultural centre. Include mechanisms for ongoing community feedback and co-governance so the hub evolves with local needs.

Repurpose unused or heritage buildings into community cultural hubs

**PRIMARY
THEME:**



**SECONDARY
THEME:**



We want to work with Local Authorities and Landowners to repurpose unused or heritage buildings as community cultural hubs. Because they can bring people together and prevent decay. So that everyone has access to creative spaces that celebrate culture and heritage.

Short-term

Promote existing spaces which focus on reusing old building and bringing new life to these spaces. Negotiate temporary rental reductions; safeguard against landlord exploitation; consider residents' and community feedback.

Medium-term

Establish an oversight committee whose role is to feed into the management of the space, including safety, utilities and bills, and oversee programme management. Clarify ongoing cost of maintenance of the space; protect listed buildings. Track usage and impact ie visitor numbers, community engagement, to inform long-term planning.

Long-term

Evaluate long-term use; formalise maintenance and governance using established methods for citizen-led decision making so management remains responsive to local needs. Ensure staffing, oversight, and funding for sustainability is considered, alongside identifying temporary vs permanent usage for potential longer term commitment to this scheme.

4 Make cultural spaces and events accessible to everyone

**PRIMARY
THEME:**

WELLBEING

**SECONDARY
THEME:**

**PLACE
MAKING**

We want to work with Councils, Venues, and Organisations to make access needs clear and ensure spaces, events, and activities are open to everyone — physically, financially, and emotionally. Because too many people still feel excluded. So that culture truly belongs to everyone.

Short-term

Identify access needs; include co-design with lived-experience experts so solutions genuinely meet community needs. Consider the need to install ramps, quiet spaces and language accessibility. Balance specificity and breadth of access; ensure costs of staging events do not prevent activity.

Medium-term

Train staff/volunteers; promote and invite communities via social media, regional What's On app and traditional community noticeboards for further reach; Use feedback from communities to inform outreach approach, implement ticket discounts; assess current regulations and existing accessibility measures. Work with the cultural sector to ensure accessibility is part of organisational culture, tracking outcomes and feedback to inform ongoing improvements.

Long-term

Establish ongoing systems for engagement, discounts, and accessibility for underserved groups; ensure sustainable funding and monitoring. Formalise accessibility standards for all funded events and spaces to create consistency across the region and regularly review and report on performance and progress. Consider how digital and hybrid participation can increase access for those who can't travel.

Create citizen panels to help guide cultural funding and decisions locally

**PRIMARY
THEME:**

WELLBEING

**SECONDARY
THEME:**

ECONOMY

We want to work with Councils and Mayoral Cultural Boards to set up small local cultural assemblies or citizen panels to help guide funding and decisions. Because local voices know best what their communities need. So that decisions are made with communities, not for them.

Short-term

Establish citizens' panels, based on the principles of Citizens' Assemblies, for neighbourhoods involving a diverse mix of local voices. Include guidance or training for panel members on equity, inclusion, and unbiased decision-making. Pilot reporting on funding impact; clarify scope, funding, and level of government; address impartiality, bias and resourcing concerns.

Medium-term

Encourage local business funding. Review panel outcomes for transparency. Ensure accountability for agreed actions. Add mechanisms for rotation to ensure accessibility and reflection of diverse interests.

Long-term

Ensure integration with wider city/regional decision-making connected to cultural strategy and budgets. Seek funding from government and local councils. Form independent oversight/ombudsman; formalise rules, recruitment, impartiality; building trust through transparency; define juror skills and remit.

Celebrate local identity through storytelling, festivals and cultural events

**PRIMARY
THEME:**

**PLACE
MAKING**

**SECONDARY
THEME:**

WELLBEING

We want to work with Councils, Cultural Orgs, and Placemakers to celebrate local creativity, history, and landmarks through storytelling, festivals, and shared events. Because people want pride in place. So that communities feel recognised, safer, and more connected.

Short-term

Collect data via research, citizen- informed surveys, and event listings; advertise What's On digital tool and more traditional promotion methods like neighbourhood noticeboards to expand reach. Use story-telling activities in existing community events to ensure data collection is representative of citizens. Celebrate diverse cultures and faiths; ensure budget and safety. Ensure minority voices are represented, including youth and older people.

Medium-term

Develop community hubs; create culture charter; define KPIs; involve local policing for safety (for community reassurance); reach communities without online access. Consider partnerships (schools, libraries and local organisations) that link local artists to encourage story-telling way of celebrating local culture. Include evaluation and feedback mechanisms to understand which events or initiatives strengthen community pride and cohesion.

Long-term

Form dedicated culture team; integrate storytelling into placemaking and annual festivals; leverage technology and media; include targeted outreach and inclusive cultural representation. Add mentorship opportunities for local creatives so the celebrations also build skills and capacity, using digital archiving to sustain cultural memory. Use of storytelling, outside of festivals etc as a wider tool for celebrating culture.

Shared creative resource hubs that provide space, information, funding and collaboration opportunities

**PRIMARY
THEME:**



**SECONDARY
THEME:**



We want to work with Councils and Cultural Networks to create shared creative resource hubs — bringing together space, funding, and information. Because collaboration needs shared infrastructure. So that creative activity becomes easier and more connected.

Short-term

Obtain council buy-in; make support and resources available; build skills and recruit volunteers; establish culture fund; ensure hubs share info and host events to get people more involved and more aware. Include basic evaluation/feedback to understand what works.

Medium-term

Host events to fund building maintenance; develop skills programmes; expand info-sharing; provide digital access to shared online resources/training; clarify funding and fair salary distribution. Monitoring impact on local creative activity: who is participating, which skills are being built, and what barriers remain.

Long-term

Build self-sustaining hubs; integrate a wider network of resources; ensure fair salary balance; hubs must be practical, impactful, and sustainable. Consider impact measurement strategy.

Embed creative learning in schools and connect students with local cultural organisations

**PRIMARY
THEME:**

SKILLS

**SECONDARY
THEME:**

WELLBEING

We want to work with Schools, Education Leaders, and Cultural Partners to embed creative learning into school life and link with local arts providers. Because creativity builds confidence and aspiration. So that every child grows up inspired by culture and sees creative careers as possible futures.

Short-term

Sustain and evaluate existing programmes; map existing teaching methods; baseline approaches; expand knowledge of regional culture to inspire creativity in children; share learning and examples from other areas; define clear methods for engaging children with regional culture; provide funded workshops and performances by local creatives in schools in their area.

Medium-term

Train teachers to embed cultural learning across subjects; providing support and resources so teachers have guidance and materials to sustain creative learning; link schools with arts providers in structured partnerships, shared projects, or co-delivered lessons; learning from local artists through storytelling and placemaking; cover maintained (e.g. local authority) and non-maintained schools (e.g. academies, free schools).

Long-term

Develop and implement policy-supported curriculum; generate school-led funding through performances or alternative funding mechanisms; inspire creative problem-solving; Link pupils to future creative careers; Ongoing evaluation to ensure equity and access.

Make cultural funding transparent so people can see where money goes and who benefits

**PRIMARY
THEME:**



**SECONDARY
THEME:**



We want to work with Local Authorities, Arts Council England, and Funders to make cultural funding open and fair — publishing who gets what, where, and why, and involving local people in decisions. Because people feel decisions are hidden and unfair. So that citizens can see where money goes and trust that funding reflects all communities.

Short-term

Collect funding data (local and regional); Publish accessible reports in easy-to-understand formats (i.e. pie charts) online and in community spaces; communicate to citizens; ensure transparency and address inequities by highlighting gaps in funding and communities currently underserved.

Medium-term

Develop consistent reporting framework; collect citizen/funder feedback; produce impact evaluations; allow citizens to remain involved and influence decisions through consultations, panels, and/or feedback loops.

Long-term

Establish Oversight and Scrutiny Panel; embed diverse communities (underrepresented groups, different regions, income levels, age ranges); formalise processes; reduce bias; amplify artists' voices; systematically use data to address gaps and inequalities; periodic review and learning.

10 Provide affordable shared creative spaces, equipment and resources for artists and communities

**PRIMARY
THEME:**



**SECONDARY
THEME:**



We want to work with Councils and Cultural Networks to provide shared, affordable access to creative spaces, equipment, and resources for artists, communities, and small groups. Because people want to create but can't find affordable tools or venues. So that more people can make, collaborate, and grow creative businesses locally.

Short-term

Identify properties for creative allocation by involving regeneration teams, regional authorities, landlords, and business networks, and make sure it is affordable. Clarify who decides priority for access, how inclusion is ensured, and whether some spaces are designated for specific groups or projects. Create clear mechanisms for community input on what spaces are needed most. Include basic evaluation to see who is using the spaces and whether short-term access is effective.

Medium-term

Establish a mentoring framework for skills exchange that includes graduates, apprentices, and other experts. Offer digital and remote mentoring options for those who cannot access physical spaces. Ensure there are benefits that can be measured in meaningful ways, such as participation numbers, skill development, or follow-on projects. Avoid this becoming "a tick box process."

Long-term

Create self-sustaining cultural spaces with equitable access, similar to the warm spaces scheme. Clarify how commercial businesses could engage, whether through sponsorship, partnerships, or renting spaces, while defining a clear balance between community access and commercial use. Ensure sustainability plans cover funding, staffing and maintenance. Ensure spaces do not exclude people who cannot attend in person. Build a framework for long-term sustainability that includes ongoing community feedback to adapt the spaces over time.

Improve fairness in funding by supporting under-represented groups and monitoring funding equity

**PRIMARY
THEME:**



**SECONDARY
THEME:**



We want to work with Funders, Councils, and Local Businesses to work with smaller, underrepresented groups to make funding fairer. Because current systems benefit a few. So that all creatives have a fair chance to grow and sustain their work.

Short-term

Collate existing data and provide audits to an independent evaluator, meaning the collected information is organised and shared for objective external review. Identify gaps, begin new funding relationships, and consider a mechanism for tracking initial outreach to ensure accountability.

Medium-term

Approach potential investors and funders. Propose investment in underrepresented groups. Implement constant monitoring and re-evaluation to refine the process. Clarify what metrics are being used and how success will be measured through key performance indicators (KPI).

Long-term

Annual reporting; reassess markers (KPIs); use data-driven policy; and include citizen engagement to improve fairness and accountability, clarifying what this engagement looks like. Ensure underrepresented groups are involved in setting KPIs and assessing impact. Include feedback loops so communities can influence future policy and emphasise transparency in reporting to adjust funding priorities.

12 Improve access to culture through better and more affordable transport options

**PRIMARY
THEME:**

WELLBEING

**SECONDARY
THEME:**

**PLACE
MAKING**

We want to work with Councils, Funders, Businesses and Cultural Organisations to work together to develop creative solutions for more affordable and accessible transport options across the region for creativity and culture. Because people do not have equal access to creative opportunities. So that people are better connected with creative and cultural opportunities.

Short-term

Pilot a subsidised one-price ticket covering transport and events by trialling it at selected venues, involving transport providers. Clearly communicate how people find out about the scheme and who is eligible. Define the logistics of the trial, including whether it applies across the Mayoral Combined Authority zone (such as a kids go free bus offer) or only buses serving participating venues. Include evaluation to understand how such a scheme works in practice.

Medium-term

Evaluate uptake and reach and identify underserved areas. Use postcode analysis, survey feedback. Pilot "Culture Bus Stops" at existing hubs. If Culture Bus Stops are explored, significant questions raised by citizens would need to be addressed, including where would you stop, how often will the bus run, how do people know about it, and therefore how many people will use the bus. Refine eligibility, create feedback loops so participants can report issues and improvements, ensure branding and communication are clear.

Long-term

Establish permanent "Culture Bus Stops"; curate monthly programmes; ensure accessibility; offer flexible options such as relaxed buses; include a clear communication plan; and use a Citizens' Oversight Panel for evaluation. Some felt "Culture Bus Stops" could get more people involved while others asked for it to be removed asking key questions that would need to be addressed, such as where the buses would stop, how often they would run, how people would know about them, and therefore how many people would use them. Consider exploring related ideas such as a multi-pass that offers access to travel.

Establish ongoing citizens' juries so communities continue influencing cultural decisions

**PRIMARY
THEME:**

WELLBEING

**SECONDARY
THEME:**

ECONOMY

We want to work with Councils to make consultation ongoing and leadership rotating. Because communities change and power should too. So that decisions stay fair and grounded in lived experience.

Short-term

Set up a Citizens' Jury in Unitary Authority areas; create a Culture Rep / Facilitator. Ensure strong and clearly articulated independence from the Local Authority; and represent diverse lived experience by being clear about how diversity will be defined and recruited, including age, disability, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, and geography.

Medium-term

Maintain regular consultation and decision-making cycles; establish a fixed admin team; evaluate jury diversity and impact and clarify how often this diversity and impact will be reviewed; rotate leadership to balance continuity and renewal and specify how rotation is decided, whether by election, appointment, or another process; and ensure the evaluation process reaches a widespread section of the population.

Long-term

Formalise the Citizens' Jury role; integrate its outcomes into the cultural plan; provide wellbeing safeguards and protections to address risks such as bias, political interference, and lack of follow-up; and ensure the jury has meaningful influence and fixed-term rotation. Include ongoing training and support for jurors to ensure informed decision-making, and strengthen the sustainability of participation so it does not rely on ad-hoc enthusiasm. nd outreach strategy. Integrated across NHS, schools, social care, and transport systems; build permanent Cultural Ambassador network; maintain hybrid physical + digital system and use data to inform cultural policy.



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