

A Cultural Action Plan for North Somerset

MIND BLOWING CREATIVITY
OPENING NOW ACROSS THE UK



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



BY ALLEGRA GALVIN

Contents

INTRODUCTION

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Purpose and Timescale | 4 |
| Scope | 5 |
| Process | 6 |
| Diversity | 7 |
| Local Authority Finances | 8 |
| Context for the Action Plan | 9 |
| Delivery and Timeframe | 11 |
| North Somerset's Cultural Strengths | 13 |

THEMES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Theme 1: Networks | 15 |
| Theme 2: Advocacy & Leadership | 17 |
| Theme 3: Sector Development | 19 |
| Theme 4: Space | 21 |
| Theme 5: Children and Young People | 25 |
| Theme 6: Public Art | 28 |
| Theme 7: Events | 30 |
| Theme 8: Health and Wellbeing | 32 |
| Summary Table of the Actions | 35 |

ANALYSIS OF THE AUDIT

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| A Note on Sample Size | 40 |
| Geographic Spread | 41 |
| Diversity | 42 |
| Business Models | 43 |

APPENDICES

| | |
|---|----|
| Appendix A: Consultation session minutes (internal access only) | 47 |
| Appendix B: Audit questionnaire responses (internal access only) | 47 |
| Appendix C: Inclusion Strategy | 48 |
| Appendix D: Bibliography | 51 |

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Timescale

This work was co-commissioned by North Somerset Council and Arts Council England, reflecting North Somerset's cultural and creative industries' strategic significance in the cultural landscape of the South West. This plan with recommended actions was developed in consultation with individuals and organisations living and working in North Somerset, with the purpose of underpinning the sector's continued growth from 2024-2028. North Somerset remains a Priority Place for Arts Council England and a Levelling Up For Culture place. This plan reflects North Somerset Council's intention to maximise the benefit of Priority Place status for those working in the sector and also reflects North Somerset's Corporate Plan timeline, from 2024-2028.



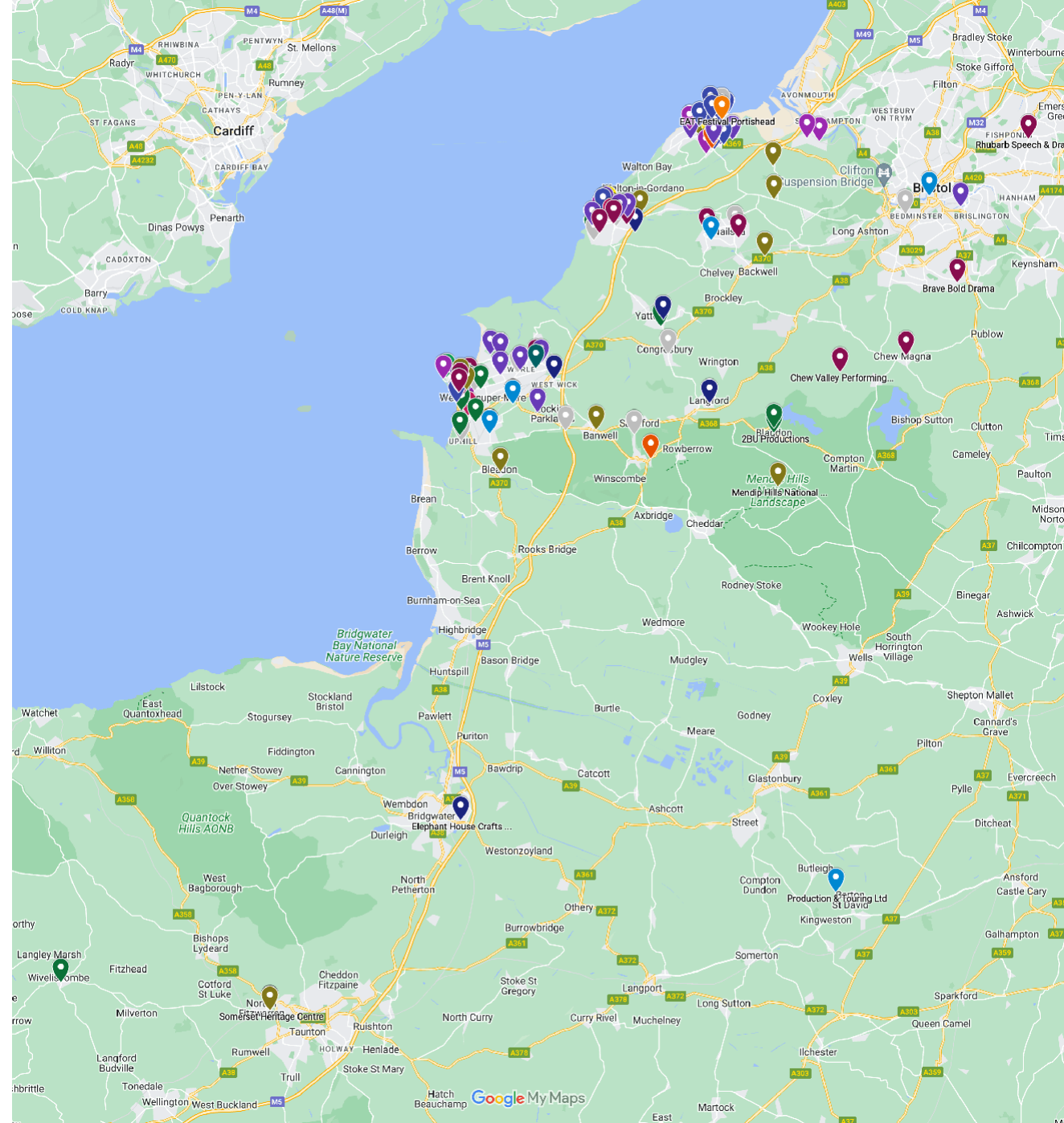
Super Culture, Climate Carnival community procession, Credit: Paul Blakemore

Scope

The action plan has a primary focus on the cultural sector, in particular the art forms supported directly by Arts Council England (Music, Theatre, Dance, Visual arts, Literature, Libraries, Combined arts and Museums practice). However, the audit was not limited to these. We wanted to understand the wider context for culture in North Somerset and not pre-define boundaries. We therefore included creative industries, events and heritage organisations within the scope. As the audit was primarily promoted to those working or volunteering within the cultural sector, they represent the largest proportion of respondents. However, the audit and the consultation sessions include responses from a range of individuals and organisations including illustrators, heritage sites and landscapes, cinemas, creative agencies, events companies and shops. These have created a varied picture of the cultural, creative and heritage environment in North Somerset.

Existing datasets held by North Somerset Council and responses to the audit questionnaire were combined to create a digital map of the cultural, creative and heritage sectors in North Somerset. The results of this work are held by North Somerset Council and Arts Council England, providing them with tools for further mapping, communicating with and convening the sector in North Somerset in the coming years. A list of these individuals, organisations and assets is included in Appendix B (internal access only). This information has been used to create a digital map which can be accessed here:

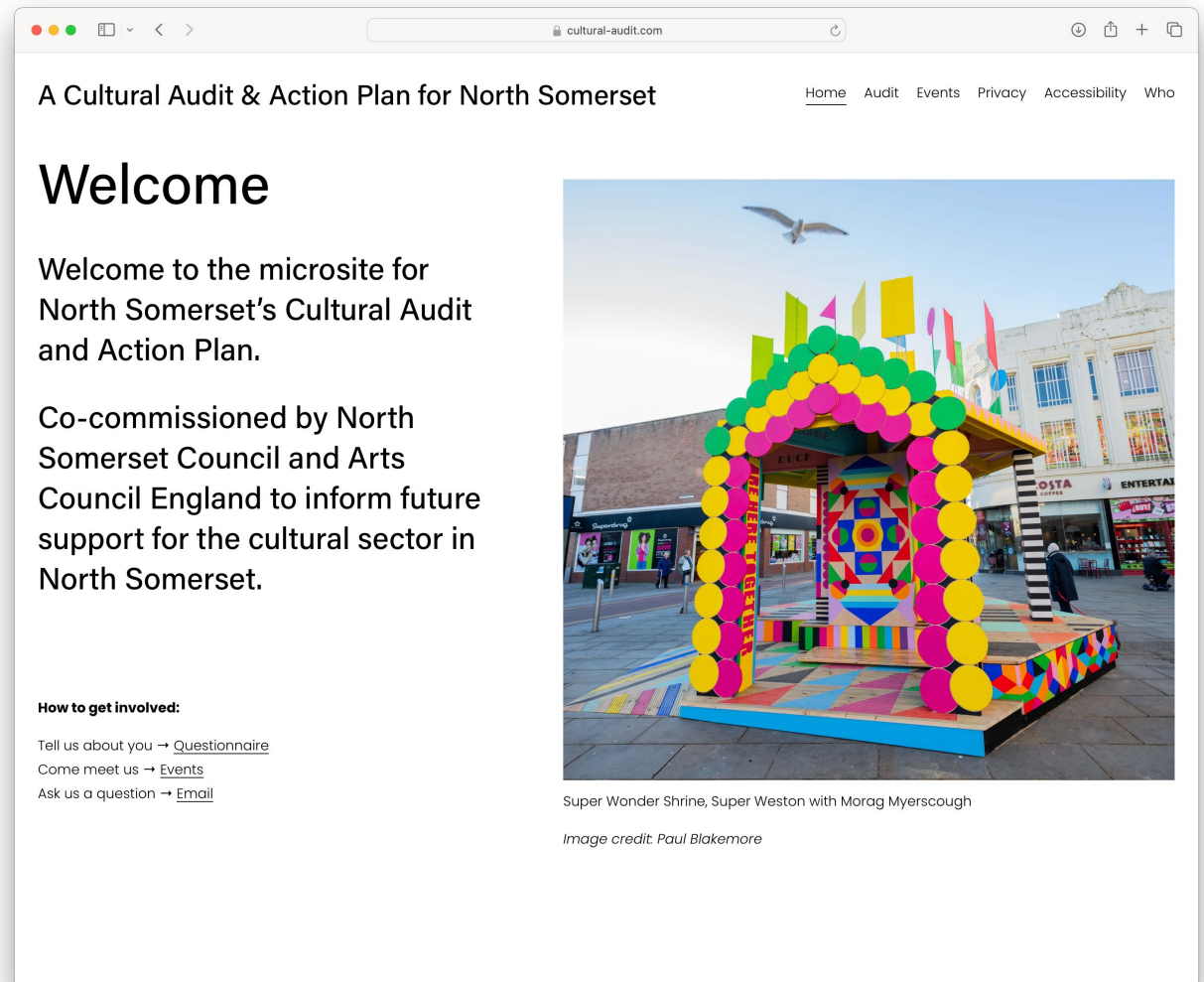
[North Somerset Cultural Audit Map](#)



Process

The audit and action plan were commissioned by North Somerset Council through a public tendering process. The questions for the audit were developed in consultation with Arts Council England, North Somerset Council and key stakeholders including input from Super Culture, Race Equality North Somerset, North Somerset Libraries and the West of England Combined Authority Cultural and Creative Economy Service team. The audit was made publicly available on www.cultural-audit.com. The audit questionnaire was live for eight weeks. The link to the audit was promoted through email and social media networks, including by Arts Council England, North Somerset Council and linked organisations such as North Somerset's library service, Visual Arts South West, the hive and North Somerset-based cultural organisations.

A series of scheduled 1-2-1 consultation sessions were held with 21 individuals identified by Arts Council England and North Somerset Council as key individuals and organisations in the region. Four public consultation sessions were offered: at Clevedon Library, Front Room Weston, The Other Place (a project of Race Equality North Somerset) in Weston and one on Zoom for those unable to attend an in-person session, reaching circa 70 people (of which 49 signed up online in advance, but headcounts on the day were higher). A set of six individual public consultation sessions were also offered at Portishead Library which were all taken up. Notes were taken at each session, which were then collated into a spreadsheet. Responses from the online audit questionnaire also fed through to a spreadsheet. Analysis of these two datasets informed the development of the recommended actions below.



A Cultural Audit & Action Plan for North Somerset

Home Audit Events Privacy Accessibility Who

Welcome

Welcome to the microsite for North Somerset's Cultural Audit and Action Plan.

Co-commissioned by North Somerset Council and Arts Council England to inform future support for the cultural sector in North Somerset.

How to get involved:

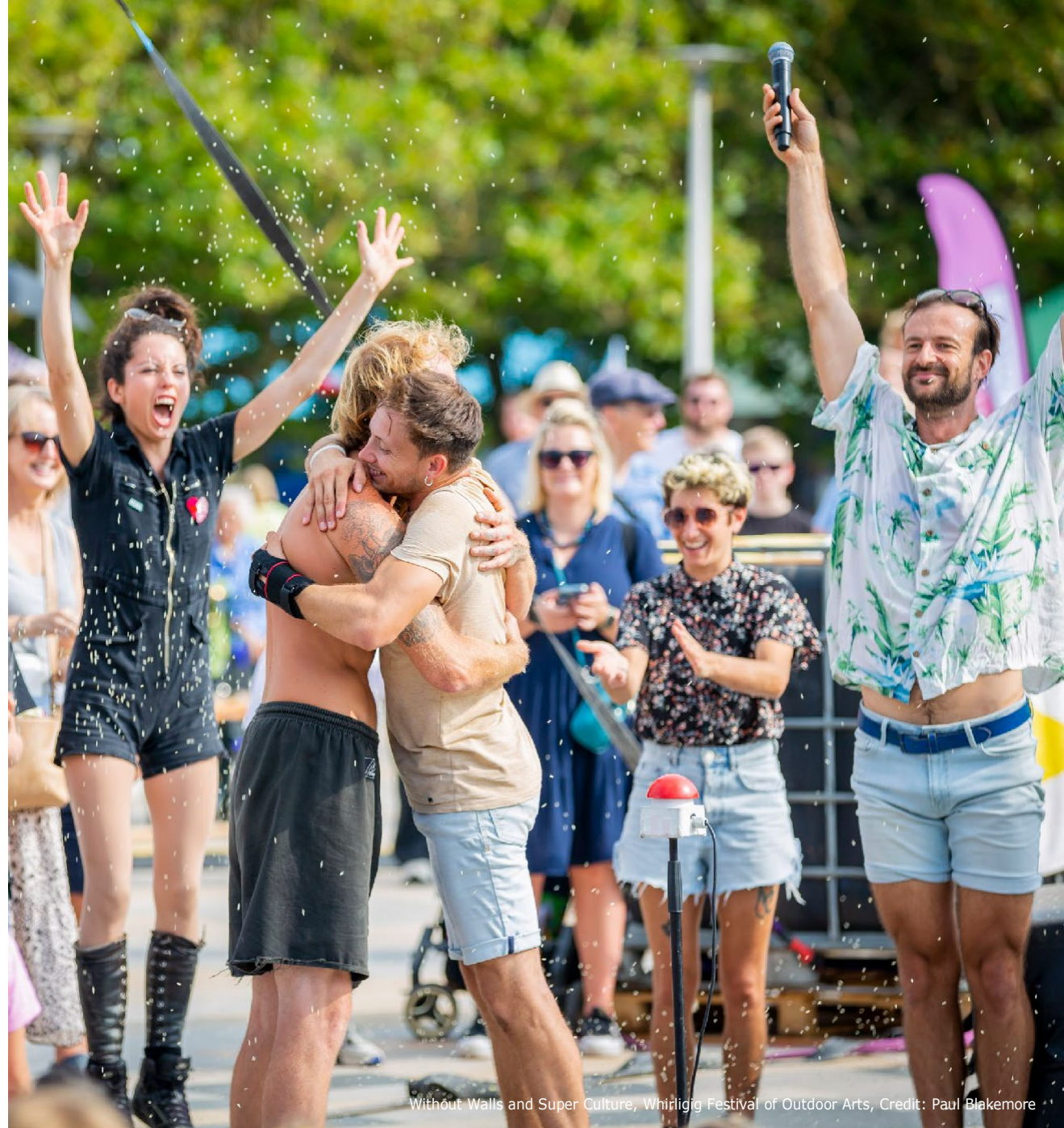
Tell us about you → [Questionnaire](#)
Come meet us → [Events](#)
Ask us a question → [Email](#)

Super Wonder Shrine, Super Weston with Morag Myerscough

Image credit: Paul Blakemore

Diversity

It is important to acknowledge that auditing processes can inherently present barriers to participation from those with protected characteristics. Lack of trust in the process or the outcomes, feelings of extraction when data is requested, not being made aware of the project in a timely manner, lack of access to appropriate equipment, lack of time or means to attend events and exclusive data gathering methods can all contribute to a lower return of information from people with protected characteristics. In light of these challenges, an inclusion strategy was drafted at the outset of the project and a budget was set aside to support participation in consultations. An inclusion advisor was appointed to work alongside the lead consultant, which led to a number of specific adaptations being made throughout the process, including the wording of the questionnaire, the wording of the invitation to public consultation, the venues selected to host consultations and the information made available to participants prior to consultation sessions. The Inclusion Strategy is attached at Appendix C.



Without Walls and Super Culture, Whirligig Festival of Outdoor Arts, Credit: Paul Blakemore

Local Authority Finances

Prior to outlining the key recommended actions that have emerged from this project, it is important to acknowledge the financial context within which North Somerset Council is operating. Across England, councils' core spending power in 2024/25 is 23.3% lower in real terms compared to 2010/11.¹ Whilst councils remain the biggest public funder of cultural services, spending over £1 billion a year, this core revenue funding for culture reduced by over 40% from 2010/11 - 2019/20 because of pressures on council budgets and rising demand for statutory services. Despite an uplift from central government in their latest settlement, a Local Government Association survey found 85% of councils said they would still have to make cost savings to balance their 2024/25 budget.² North Somerset Council have identified a £27 million budget shortfall across the three years to 2026/27 and "may need to take further action to deliver a balanced budget in the future, which could involve decisions to reduce areas of non-essential spending, and potentially make changes to service provision."³

The cultural sector in North Somerset will benefit from the council's successful bid to the Levelling Up Fund and other capital investments including the redevelopment of The Tropicana and Birnbeck Pier as culture and heritage sites. Investment in cultural infrastructure drives local economic growth, reduces spend on acute health and wellbeing services, drives educational outcomes, and improves quality of life for people across the country.⁴ However, capital investment is maximised when it is matched with revenue funding to ensure the long-term sustainability of and equality of access to cultural assets via longer-term, locally led revenue funding from the government.

"There is no substitute for a long-term, sustainable, multi-year funding settlement for councils, to ensure they can continue to invest in important cultural infrastructure, setting the context for thriving, vibrant places in which to live and work."⁵

Within this context, the recommended actions below have been outlined with an understanding that progress for the cultural sector in North Somerset will require effort, imagination and generous collaboration on the part of multiple partners in the years ahead.



1. Local Government Association, Local government finances and the impact on local communities, Policy briefing, 25/03/2024

2. Local Government Association, Local Government Budget Setting Surveys 2024/25, <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-budget-setting-surveys-202425>

3. North Somerset Council Statement of Accounts 2022-23 Narrative Report

4. Local Government Association, Cornerstones of Culture Commission, 2022: <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport/cornerstones-culture>

5. Local Government Association, Local government finances and the impact on local communities, Policy briefing, 25/03/2024

Context for the Action Plan

This action plan was developed with reference to the local, regional and national context within which individuals and organisations in the cultural and creative industries in North Somerset are operating. Of particular relevance to the themes and recommended actions outlined in this plan are the following documents:

- North Somerset Council Corporate Plan and Action Plan 2024-2028
- North Somerset Council Creative Industries Support Plan
- North Somerset Council Culture and Heritage Strategy 2020-2030
- Arts Council England and North Somerset Council Priority Place shared objectives
- West of England Combined Authority Cultural Plan
- Arts Council England Delivery Plan 2021-2024
- Arts Council England 10-year strategy 2020-2030 'Let's Create'
- Weston Placemaking Strategy ⁶

North Somerset Council's Action Plan 2024-2028 is linked to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which do not formally recognise culture alongside the three pillars of development — social, economic and environmental. It is therefore unsurprising that culture does not feature in North Somerset Council's Action Plan, based on this framework. A comprehensive report from The British Council, 'The Missing Pillar'⁷ highlights the link between culture and sustainable development:

"The case studies of British Council programmes in recent years provide concrete examples of how arts and culture play an active and enabling role across the Sustainable Development Goals and how they act as a cross cutting mechanism, be it through direct or indirect impact... However arts and cultural organisations and professionals do not always associate their work with the language of development and the ambitions of agendas such as the SDGs. This disassociation can result in a lack of understanding of the value and impact of arts and culture to social, economic and environmental development, and a divide between policy and practice that can limit the achievement of the SDGs."⁸

The British Council recommends that cultural organisations familiarise themselves with the language of the Sustainable Development Goals, to understand how their work connects to and enables sustainable development and to shift their language to incorporate them. North Somerset Council could reflect this connection more clearly in their corporate planning and support for the sector for example through the distribution of the Community Infrastructure Levy⁹ and shaping Section 106 agreements (see 'Theme 6: Public Art'). The British Council notes

6. https://superweston.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Prospectus_weston_super_mare.pdf

7. The Missing Pillar: Culture's Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, The British Council, 2020 and 2023, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/our-stories/the-missing-pillar-sdgs>

8. The Missing Pillar: Culture's Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, The British Council, 2020, p.40 <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/our-stories/the-missing-pillar-sdgs>

9. Community Infrastructure Regulation 123 List: <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Regulation%20123%20list.pdf>



that it is important both for practitioners in the arts and cultural sector as well as policy makers to be aware of the social and economic dimensions of the creative and cultural sector, to be alive to the role arts and culture can play in facilitating change, and to reflect this in the language of their corporate plans.

10. Arts Council England Delivery Plan ran to March 2024. The next one has been delayed due to the General Election in July 2024, but a similar focus is anticipated.

Whilst acknowledging the constant pressure on revenue budgets, the recommended actions included here describe how North Somerset Council can work in partnership to develop the skills and capacity of the sector to deliver benefits that **reduce pressure on statutory services, deliver against their corporate ambitions, increase inward investment and enhance the reputation of North Somerset**. Developing a strategic approach to collaborating with the cultural sector aligns with Arts Council England's 10 year strategy 'Let's Create', in particular the outcome 'Cultural Communities: Villages towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture'. Arts Council England's Delivery Plan 2021-2024 had five key themes, of which 'strengthening our place-based approach and supporting levelling up' was one.¹⁰ Within this, Arts Council committed to a number of actions that benefit North Somerset including:

- Supporting named priority places, of which North Somerset is one;
- Supporting local government to build leadership and delivery capacity through LGA training programmes for culture portfolio holders and senior officers in cultural and library services;
- Building creativity into the health and wellbeing structure.

There is a limited time frame within which to position North Somerset Council and cultural organisations and individuals working in the area to maximise the benefit of being a Priority Place.

Super Culture, GLOW Festival, Credit: Paul Blakemore

Accountable Delivery of the Recommended Actions

This report was developed by an external consultant through a public consultation process. Following publication of this report North Somerset Council will choose which recommended actions to adopt, and which to leave to future administrations. Built into the recommended actions below are mechanisms to drive the delivery of this plan, including deepening the conversation between North Somerset Council and Arts Council England and increasing collaboration across the sector by developing a culture network supported by a sector development appointment.

These recommended actions aim to put the cultural sector in North Somerset in a resilient, sustainable position, delivering for the people of North Somerset and able to attract increased inward investment in future years. **It should be understood that recommended actions led by NSC that have a budget impact will require additional funding, and that the purpose of this action plan is to demonstrate the need and recommend actions.**

Future funding possibilities include the next round of Creative People and Places funding programme from 2026-2029.¹¹ Examples of programmes in the South West benefiting from Creative People and Places funding include the New Forest's Culture in Common¹² (£1 million) and Sedgemoor's SEED¹³ programme (£1.8 million). A strong application to Creative People and Places in 2025 relies on established collaborative ways of working between the local authority, Arts Council England and the cultural sector and will



11. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places-0>
12. <https://cultureincommon.co.uk/>
13. <https://seedsedgemoor.com/>

benefit significantly from evidence of citizen-led decision-making embedded within that structure. In 2024-2025 a citizen's assembly for culture called 'Citizens for Culture' will be taking place as part of the Culture West programme.¹⁴ The aim of the Citizens for Culture assembly is to develop a delivery plan for culture in the West of England. It would be strategically beneficial to North Somerset and its cultural organisations to ally the sector development actions recommended in this plan with a delivery mechanism that places the ideas and priorities of citizens at its heart. The assembly will take a federated model, meaning a group of representative citizens from North Somerset will be selected to participate in the assembly. Federated networks of sector partners such as cultural organisations and freelance cultural workers and community partners such as third sector and community-led organisations are currently being set up to see through the delivery of the actions recommended by citizens in the assembly in 2025. Citizens for Culture should be viewed as an opportunity for North Somerset to engage in and place themselves at the forefront of citizen-led development of cultural strategy - a natural progression from a consultant-led Audit and Action Plan.

The next round of Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations is also likely to open in 2025. North Somerset currently has a deficit of regularly funded organisations within the National Portfolio and in particular lacks a building-based organisation. Investment from other major cultural funders that focus on reducing inequality such as the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation can also be sought. The powerful contribution of citizens, who may not work in the cultural sector but who understand what it means to be creative and who feel the benefit of culture in their communities, should not be underestimated by the local authority and the sector as a means to ensuring limited resources are directed in the most meaningful ways, and to attracting additional resources.



Artist David Puck, Weston Wallz, Credit: Plaster Communications

IN THE ACTION TABLES BELOW, THE TIMEFRAMES LISTED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Short term: within the next 12 months (July 2024-July 2025)

Medium term: within the next 24 months (up to July 2026)

Long term: within the next 4 years (up to July 2028)

Although some actions are listed as 'long term' to make it clear they are unlikely to come to fruition in the short or medium term, it is expected that steps will be taken towards their delivery within the short to medium term.

For a list of further resources consulted in the development of this plan, see Appendix D: Bibliography.

¹⁴. <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/innovation/culture-west/>

North Somerset's Cultural Strengths

'What do you see as North Somerset's cultural strengths?' was the final, qualitative question on the survey. The responses to this question build a picture of what has been achieved to date, and the positive feelings respondents have about the sector and North Somerset. Respondents highlighted the beauty of the natural landscape and the sea, and how living in this environment was beneficial to the respondents and to their work:

"The beauty of the natural landscapes offers an environment in which art can be crafted with room to breathe and fully engage with local communities"

ADAM FULLER, CO-CREATIVE DIRECTOR, FRONT ROOM,
WESTON-SUPER-MARE



Credit: Marie-Dominique Demers King

Many respondents also mentioned the *"increasingly diverse community"* and the increasing visibility of diverse culture and art forms within their communities, with *"Communities coming together to share their diversity"* and *"becoming more diverse which in turn provides more diversity in the arts."* Significant appreciation was shown for the work of the existing venues and organisations including Super Culture, The Theatre Shop in Clevedon, The Front Room and Race Equality North Somerset's space The Other Place in Weston. Respondents highlighted that whilst there was a lack of infrastructure and coherent support for the sector, North Somerset nevertheless enjoyed a *"grass-roots, community-led and collaborative"* sector,¹⁵ peopled with *"passionate creatives with a diverse set of skills"*. The passion and quality of local artists was highlighted by respondents, and in particular their connection to and interest in working with their local community: *"talented, growing creative community"*, *"homegrown artists with a love for community"* and *"lots of committed individuals supporting new initiatives"*.

Fiona Trim, from The Theatre Shop in Clevedon mentioned the *"Increasing sense of importance of truly local activity rather than relying on Bristol for cultural activities"* and Sue Ascott, a volunteer for Clevedon LitFest, said that North Somerset has a *"population with an appetite to learn and enjoy life."*

This action plan aims to build on the existing strengths of the sector in North Somerset and is indebted to the artists, council officers, cultural organisations and local businesses for their time and expertise given to develop this plan.

15. North Somerset Cultural Audit and Action Plan respondent, April 2024

THEMES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Theme 1: Networks

OPPORTUNITY

“I have been living in North Somerset for one year and have been blown away by the clear passion of volunteers to create a flourishing artistic scene, despite poor overall coordination, cohesiveness and funding”

AUDIT RESPONDENT, 20TH MARCH 2024

North Somerset would benefit from a culture network, and North Somerset Council, Town Councils and National Portfolio Organisations have a role to play as catalysts and convenors. Across the consultation sessions freelancers expressed feelings of isolation and a desire to build stronger connections in North Somerset. Recent funding from the West of England Combined Authority to promote the Create Growth Programme in North Somerset has been used by the North Somerset Economy Team to offer sector specific workshops - work which could align with the development of a culture network.

To be relevant and sustainable, the demand and vision for a network must come from the sector itself but given the current deficit of publicly funded organisations in North Somerset and the small size of most creative companies (see audit analysis), the sector itself is unlikely to have the capacity for network development. This is where the local authority can act as a catalyst, as it did for the examples listed below. As noted in

the introduction to this paper, a network is being developed as part of the West of England Citizens Assembly for Culture, and aligning the development of a North Somerset culture network to this project will give it a focus and additional support in its early stages. The network can be led by a rotating leadership group that takes on the role of advocacy, development and promoting the visibility of the sector.

North Somerset’s two National Portfolio Organisations Trigger, based in Blagdon, and Super Culture based in Weston, in addition to organisations such as The Curzon, Race Equality North Somerset, NSC Libraries team, Playhouse Theatre, South West Heritage Trust, Weston College, boomsatsuma and Mendip Hills AONB can support North Somerset Council with the development and leadership of a culture network.

“[There is a] diverse pool of creative organisations and independent artists all working from and living in North Somerset. Currently we aren’t yet connected and there is an opportunity to convene us to enable ambitious work in rural areas.”

AUDIT RESPONDENT, 12TH MARCH 2024

EXAMPLES

Create Gloucestershire

In 2011, faced with budget cuts, Gloucestershire County Council was looking for options to maintain the county's arts and culture offer while reducing its financial contribution. A group of local arts and culture leaders set up Create Gloucestershire (CG) and discussed options to oversee arts and cultural provision using start-up funding from the council (namely the arts development budget, which had previously been used to fund key arts providers and a small team, reduced by 30 per cent). Create Gloucestershire has more than 180 members and associate members, knitting the arts and cultural sector together to provide a more coherent offer for audiences, policy makers and funders. Working with a range of strategic partners it creates, researches, tests and shares ideas and projects in response to social, cultural and economic needs. Create Gloucestershire aims to ensure the right conditions are in place for arts and culture to thrive, using funding from sources including Arts Council England, charitable trusts and member contributions. Core funding supports a light touch central team, with the rest distributed to members and partners to deliver specific projects.

Bristol DIY Arts Network

Sector-led, established with an initial grant from Bristol City Council, the network has a rotating chair and is administered by a National Portfolio Organisation. It is free to join and meets bi-annually.

Creative Kernow

Creative Kernow is the creative and cultural sector support organisation for Cornwall. Part-funded by Arts Council England and Cornwall Council, Creative Kernow is now one of Cornwall's key creative industries organisations. Networks such as these can benefit government bodies by giving access to other bodies:

Creative Kernow delivers Cornwall 365, which is building a network of cultural players and tourism businesses to promote Cornwall as a leading destination for culture, the arts and heritage.

Creative Medway

Funded through an Arts Council England Cultural Compact.

| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|---|-----------|------|---|
| 1.1 | Establish a culture network for North Somerset, convening minimum 2 x per year. Consult with examples listed above to develop the format, allied to the Citizens Assembly for Culture 'Associates' network. | Short | NSC | Super Culture & other cultural organisations e.g. Curzon, Trigger, Front Room, RENS |
| 1.2 | Establish a leadership group with a rotating chair to catalyse and lead the culture network. | Short | NSC | Super Culture & other cultural organisations e.g. Curzon, Trigger, Front Room, RENS |
| 1.3 | Ensure effective communication of NSC's Explore events to creative and culture sectors. Research effectiveness of Cornwall 365 and best practice that can be replicated in North Somerset and continue to seek funding for sector specific workshops. | Short | NSC | |

Theme 2: Advocacy and Leadership

OPPORTUNITY

The sector's position in North Somerset would benefit from increased visibility and advocacy for the sector internally at North Somerset Council. Where previously there existed an 'arts and heritage officer delivery group' and internal advocacy for the sector at multiple levels, there is now a perceived gap around culture within North Somerset Council. North Somerset Council can address this gap by ensuring continued high level engagement with Arts Council England on a regular basis: continuing liaison meetings between North Somerset Council Chief Executive and Executive Member for Culture with Arts Council England South West Regional Lead twice per year, to review progress on shared Priority Place objectives and delivery of this Action Plan, with relevant delivery team members in attendance. Quarterly meetings with North Somerset Council sector leads with a cultural remit and Arts Council England, including health, heritage and libraries, to promote joined up approaches. Monthly meetings between North Somerset Council and Arts Council England officers to review progress on shared objectives.

RECOMMENDED ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR

| Timing | Attendance | Purpose |
|----------------|---|---|
| Every 6 months | NSC Chief Executive & Executive Member for Culture with ACE South West Regional Lead, with relevant delivery team members | To review progress on Priority Place shared objectives, major projects and delivery of this Action Plan |
| Every 6 months | Regional stakeholders group that may include NSC, National Trust, English Heritage, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, West of England Combined Authority and Arts Council England | Key area stakeholders to promote collaborative approaches, raise awareness of upcoming key projects/ dates and a shared approach to sector development across NSC |
| Every 3 months | Internal NSC sector leads with a cultural remit including health, museums, Children & Young People, heritage and libraries, town council representatives & relevant ACE relationship managers | To promote joined up approaches within ACE, NSC and town councils, to share information, opportunities and develop cross-sector projects & funding bids |
| Every month | NSC and ACE officer-level | Review progress on shared objectives, update on actions |

The sector must aim to develop the interest, knowledge and support from existing councillors by continuing to reach out to and engage them with their work. Seeing councillors as significant stakeholders and nurturing positive, collaborative relationships with them should form an important, long-term part of their wider development strategy.

On a practical level, organisations pointed to a lack of options for promoting their work to the wider community - no 'what's on' or obvious places to display information. However, Weston-super-Mare has a website which includes events, leisure and culture

activities, [Visit Weston](#), supported by Weston Town Council, as well as North Somerset Council's more recent investment in the '[Super Weston](#)' site, which is managed by the Weston Place Agency. There are serviceable websites for [Discover Clevedon](#), [Visit Portishead](#) and [Nailsea Town](#). Nevertheless, greater visibility and cohesion online could raise the profile of the cultural sector in North Somerset. A website for culture and events in North Somerset could be an outcome of the Culture Network attracting inward investment, such as the '[Creative Medway](#)' example above (Theme 1: Networks).

| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|---|-----------|--|--|
| 2.1 | Deliver recommended engagement calendar outlined above, with commitment from both NSC and ACE to ensure meetings are prioritised, including meeting at Manager, Assistant Director and Chief Executive level. | Short | NSC and ACE | Relevant stakeholders e.g. English Heritage, National Trust etc. |
| 2.2 | Develop stakeholder engagement plans that include engaging North Somerset Council and Town Councillors. | Medium | All Artists and cultural practitioners | |
| 2.3 | Consider a more cohesive approach to promoting the cultural events that take place across North Somerset, through a cultural-specific website managed by the North Somerset Culture Network. | Long | North Somerset Culture Network | |



Super Wonder Shrine, Super Weston with Morag Myerscough, Credit: Paul Blakemore

Theme 3: Sector Development

OPPORTUNITY

Local Authorities have in the past held the role of funder in relation to the cultural sector. Due to the budget pressures outlined above, this aspect of their role has significantly diminished over the last decade. Rather than withdraw from an active relationship with the sector, from whom the council is in a position to benefit both in terms of soft power and delivery of sustainable development goals, there is an opportunity to reframe the council's role with a focus on convening, enabling and offering strategic development opportunities in partnership with external funders and funded organisations. This reflects policy from the council's adopted Heritage, Arts and Cultural strategy which states:

"We believe that North Somerset Council has two important roles to play: 1. To nurture its own remaining "cultural services" including libraries, events, venue management and green spaces and 2. To act as an advocate, catalyst, broker and facilitator working with its partners to achieve change."

As part of Arts Council England's Delivery Plan 2021-2024 theme of "Strengthening our place-based approach and supporting levelling up" there is an action to 'support local government to build leadership and delivery capacity', which is being delivered through a series of free programmes for cultural portfolio holders in collaboration with the Local Government Association. The 2024 round of this fully funded programme can be accessed by North Somerset officials and executive members.

North Somerset's cultural sector is characterised by freelance and volunteer-led activity (see audit analysis below). The need to bring on, champion and develop a new generation of volunteers came up frequently in the audit. Second to this group were freelancers and sole traders who also mentioned the value of professional development opportunities. Developing fundraising skills for freelancers, volunteers and organisations alike was the primary request. Grouping together to 'bulk-buy' training such as first aid, or online safeguarding training for those working with young people, were also suggested. By acting as convenor, North Somerset Council can enable savings for organisations and individual practitioners purchasing vital training. This could be offered directly or in partnership with existing business development organisations such as the hive, as well as raising awareness of their existing offer including training around sustainable business practices and VAT.

This theme reflects North Somerset's Creative Industries Support Plan Priority 2: Ensure creative enterprises and freelancers can access business support.¹⁶ Recent professional development sessions have been offered by North Somerset Council's Economic Development team, in collaboration with Super Culture and the hive, funded by the West of England Create Growth Programme. These sessions have focused on business development support, advice on grant and funding applications and specific preparation for applying to the Create Growth Programme. Whilst that funding stream will come to an end, this work could be aligned with the development of a culture network (Theme 1: Networks), with a priority to seek further external funding to match North Somerset Council convening support to enable this work to continue.

16. Creative Industries Support Plan, North Somerset Council, <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/news/new-support-plan-creative-industries-north-somerset>

As part of Culture West, North Somerset Council is a lead partner along with Bath Spa University to deliver an Arts Membership Scheme across North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset through to March 2026. This project will pilot a membership offer for arts and culture in North Somerset, similar to a gym membership, linking up arts spaces and institutions to offer a more comprehensive network that supports more people to be creative and artists to access the tools, spaces, equipment and community needed to work in the arts. The Culture West investment will be used to provide more work for creative professionals across the West of England and increase access to creative spaces, give mentoring and business advice for freelancers, start-ups, and established sector organisations, commission new festivals, and provide industry-led skills training and advice.

The work of reframing North Somerset Council’s relationship with the cultural sector with a focus on convening power and increased collaboration, supporting a culture network and implementing focused skills development for the cultural sector would be most effectively delivered by an appointed individual with expertise in the cultural sector and experience in a development agency or sector support role. Elsewhere a fixed term role based within a Local Authority has been co-funded by Arts Council England to deliver a mutually agreed set of tasks, such as at Rushmoor Borough Council. Another example is currently being delivered locally by a freelance producer employed one day per week by Super Culture to offer fundraising advice and training to the wider sector, particularly those based outside Weston. Making a council-based appointment or an appointment hosted by a National Portfolio Organisation are both options to create a sector development role that drives forward the delivery of actions within this plan. External funding matching support from Arts Council England may enable contribution from councils and other local partners.

| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|--|-----------|--|---|
| 3.1 | Cultural Sector Capacity building appointment to lead the Culture Network jointly funded by ACE & NSC | Short | NSC | |
| 3.2 | Identify funding for industry specific training aimed at cultural freelancers and volunteers, particularly around fundraising, strategic planning and supporting public events. | Medium | NSC / Cultural Sector Capacity Builder | Possible partnerships with the hive, VANS & Super Culture |
| 3.3 | Introduction workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals for cultural and creative industries to create familiarity and embed Sustainable Development Goals language & thinking. | Medium | Emma Diakou, Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships, North Somerset Council | North Somerset Culture Network |
| 3.4 | Council Officers / Exec Members with culture portfolio to access Local Government Association’s “Leadership essentials culture event” (free in collaboration with Arts Council England). | Medium | NSC | ACE/LGA |
| 3.5 | Increase understanding of and connection to West of England Combined Authority’s Culture West programme strands such as the Arts Membership Pilot, the Creative Agency Hub and Citizens for Culture through the council. | Short | West of England Combined Authority | North Somerset Culture Network |
| 3.6 | NSC to build on the 2023 Capacity Building project funded by UKSPF for inclusion in future UKSPF opportunities. | Medium | NSC | |

Theme 4: Space

OPPORTUNITY

The variety of small scale venues, community centres, shops and cafes offering space and support to creatives was highlighted as a strength of the cultural sector in North Somerset, including The Front Room Weston, The Theatre Shop Clevedon, Race Equality North Somerset's space The Other Place, Weston, The Curzon Cinema, Clevedon Community Bookshop, Loves Cafe, Weston, Weston ArtSpace and The Playhouse. Spaces for wider community use, such as those run by Portishead Town Council including the Folk Hall and the volunteer-run Clevedon Community Centre including Princes Hall were also mentioned.

Work is being done by committed teams, often on a voluntary basis, to maintain the meanwhile use of spaces for creative activity in North Somerset and each of these organisations faces operational challenges including rising utility costs, poor condition of facilities, too few volunteers, inaccessible or unsafe spaces and insecure tenancies. The lack of dedicated, high quality, affordable and accessible space with security of tenancy for creatives was raised as a key discussion topic at four out of the five consultation sessions.

"No security of tenure restricts our funding and development options. We are also part of a town centre complex earmarked for redevelopment which limits our ability to undertake any significant forward planning... we are actively seeking a permanent home within the next five years." Fiona Trim, The Theatre Shop CIC, Audit Response, 20 February 2024



"[In order to thrive we need] support to make our accessibility aims achievable and support to find a permanent space to inhabit"

ADAM FULLER, CO-CREATIVE DIRECTOR, FRONT ROOM, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, AUDIT RESPONSE, 14 FEBRUARY 2024

Other audit responses noted lack of access to appropriate space as a barrier to their business thriving: "*Lack of affordable available space in which to grow*"; "*Uncertainty about and lack of cultural spaces*"; "*No security of venue*".

Much has already been done: Weston ArtSpace, through the Meanwhile Foundation, received five years of council-owned space at no rent, plus foregone business rates. However, support is often agreed on a short-term basis and at the last moment, reducing the organisation's capacity to plan and fundraise. A more strategic commitment could be made via an asset transfer, which would enable an organisation to fundraise for both revenue and capital grants. Whilst 'meanwhile use' has its place, it characterises too much of the cultural real estate in North Somerset. North Somerset Council holds circa 3,000 assets, of which 473 have been identified as "core" assets to be prioritised for decision making from 2021-2026, and raised just 3% of its revenue from 'other sources including rental income'. With this in mind, there is potential to review how North Somerset Council could use its assets to enable a more flourishing and secure cultural sector in a position to attract greater levels of inward investment.



"Property assets are a major Council resource and robust management processes and procedures need to be in place to ensure that they are well performing and serving their purpose in supporting service delivery, generating a return or supporting development and regeneration."¹⁷

In the North Somerset Strategic Asset Management Report "Shaping the Future Estate"¹⁸ a set of Asset Management Objectives are outlined including 'Key Theme 6: Community benefits: ensure socio-economics are considered', recommending that "Asset Management and regeneration should consider more than just finances, but also the wider socio-economic impact and community benefit they provide."¹⁹ In its general recommendations for sport & leisure facilities, under the theme 'Community Support / Community Asset Transfer' there is a recommendation to "work with clubs based at council owned sites, to establish long-term security use agreements, ensuring that clubs and participants have security of tenure and are able to grow and develop through grant funding wider investment."

Development of cultural space however is not a 'top down' job. **Vision and planning for this must come from the sector itself, most likely through a collaborative approach and with solid business and fundraising planning at its core.** A range of options can be explored to achieve sustainability, from a revenue generating business plan, local business investment, trusts and foundations, government funding and newer models of impact investment such as those being explored by The Future Towns Innovation Hub, The Good Economy and Hampshire and Surrey County Councils.²⁰ The development of East Quay in Watchet offers a good example and the development of the Culture Network (Action 1.1) is a stepping stone to enabling this work.

The Quarry (owned by North Somerset Council, to be leased to Weston Town Council), with its history as a space for cultural and creative activity, has potential to develop as a cultural hub. Weston

17. Quote from the Strategic Asset Management Plan February 2021 in Report to the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel, 30/11/2023, p.4

18. Strategic Asset Management Plan, Shaping the Future Estate, Inner Circle Consulting and Arcadis for North Somerset Council, February 2021

19. Strategic Asset Management Plan, Shaping the Future Estate, Inner Circle Consulting and Arcadis for North Somerset Council, February 2021, p.7

20. <https://futuretowns.soton.ac.uk/2024/01/16/impact-investing-aiming-for-better-economic-growth-across-the-region/>

21. Strategic Asset Management

Town Council has successfully applied to the Community Ownership Fund for refurbishment, with a vision for visual and performing arts ,crafts, culture, heritage, education and promotion of health & wellbeing with facilities for meeting, workspace, artist studios, storage, a café, retail, outreach and visitor facilities. The Blakehay Theatre, owned and operated by Weston Town Council, and The Playhouse Theatre, owned by North Somerset Council and leased to Parkwood Theatres, both have a regular offer of live performance including access for hires, community and school group use. Annually there are approximately 26 community-based productions hosted at the Playhouse, which is a widely supported asset in North Somerset with over 200 members raising funds for the theatre. However it is in need of significant investment to update the fabric of the building, and North Somerset Council are seeking options to secure its future. The Curzon in Clevedon, in addition to their programme of films and talks, has begun to offer space for community groups to meet, have training sessions and stage exhibitions.

It is also worth noting here the extent to which libraries have embedded cultural partnerships and support for local artists and arts organisations within their work including 94% providing or hiring out space for cultural activities and over 80% providing cultural activities at least monthly or quarterly, 81% having some form of cultural partnership in place with the arts, museums and galleries sector and over 80% offering programmes such as Celebrating Shakespeare or Fun Palaces. This makes libraries key assets in the cultural estate of North Somerset.²¹ Whilst libraries sit within the same directorate in North Somerset Council as the museums and the cultural portfolio, and have an Arts Council England Relationship Manager, it is easy for conversations across these areas to become siloed. The North Somerset Libraries team are directly connected to Arts Council England and have contracts with the South West Heritage Trust and North Somerset Museum Collection. In the creation of any culture network (Theme 1), libraries should play a key role.



Dizzy O'Dare, Credit: Paul Blakemore

Plan, Shaping the Future Estate, Inner Circle Consulting and Arcadis for North Somerset Council, February 2021, p.27

EXAMPLES

Chapter Arts, Cardiff

Chapter Arts is a centre for contemporary arts and culture established by three freelance artists in 1971 in a former secondary school building, transferred from the local authority to a charitable organisation led by the artists when the school building was no longer needed. Alongside a curated public programme, Chapter Arts is home to over 50 artists and creative companies based in their studios: award-winning animators and film production companies to artists, designers, photographers, bespoke art framers, print and recording studios. A wider variety of workshops and classes run by local businesses are available to the community daily including printmaking, Lindy Hop, Tae Kwando, ballet, tap, music for babies and youth orchestra.

Chapter Arts' business model is typical for cultural organisations: it relies on a combination of commercial income through ticketed events, workshops, spaces for hire and cafe bar income and fundraised income through Arts Council of Wales, National Lottery and trusts & foundations.

The Stove Network, Dumfries (population circa 31,000)

The Stove Network is an arts and community organisation based on Dumfries High Street, operating a café, meeting place and events venue with a diverse programme stretching across music, literature, visual and public art, film, theatre, to town planning, architecture and design.

The Stove Network uses arts and creativity to gather, learn and bring life back to Dumfries town centre, seeing the arts as not solely for an 'arts audience' but as a vital contribution to society on all fronts. As the only arts-led [development trust](#) in Scotland, The Stove Network works alongside the local authority, community organisations, local businesses and charities to create a vision for

the future of Dumfries High Street. They are aiming to create a place where culture, community and enterprise work hand-in-hand to support a new vision of the High Street. The Stove Network is a hub for the creative community of Dumfries.

East Quay, Watchet (population circa 4,000)

East Quay is run by a local community interest company, The Onion Collective. Delivered for £7 million, with £5 million from Coastal Communities Fund, £1.5 million loan from Somerset Council, £150,000 from Esme Fairbairn foundation, £120,000 from the Social Investment Business Group's community regeneration fund and £91,000 from Arts Council England. The revenue is supported in particular through the inclusion of self-catering holiday pods within the design of this harbour-front venue. East Quay is an independent, vibrant venue with diverse programmes and income streams delivered at relatively low cost.

| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|--|-----------|--|---------------------|
| 4.1 | To deliver the Arts Membership pilot scheme, which aims to increase access to workspace and equipment. | Medium | NSC | Bath Spa University |
| 4.2 | The current management contract for The Playhouse is due to end in 2027. Work with partners to secure the future of the theatre. | Medium | NSC | |
| 4.3 | To review North Somerset Council asset portfolio and consider options to offer an asset transfer to a consortium or lead cultural partner in a position to access additional capital and revenue investment. | Long | NSC Director of Place, NSC Head of Property and Place & NSC Senior Development and Asset Manager | |

Theme 5: Children & Young People

OPPORTUNITY

Increasing opportunities for children and young people to access cultural activities was raised at three of the five consultation sessions. People discussed a decreasing provision within schools, and that those who could afford it 'just go to Bristol' to take part in cultural activities with their children.

"Why is there still a perception that you have to leave Weston to find culture? We should be building Weston's cultural reputation... outsourcing culture harms Weston"

CONSULTATION SESSION NOTES, THE FRONT ROOM, WESTON, 20TH MARCH 2024.

National changes to the curriculum have made it more difficult for some schools to offer as much cultural education as they would like, and parents / carers said they would like it if schools were able to facilitate more cultural activities as part of the school day or in after school clubs. There is awareness that school budgets are stretched and that schools try hard to deliver as much as they can for children. Parents / carers asked if there could be somewhere affordable for their children to go after school to experience and learn different art forms, and parents / carers with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities said they are not always able to access cultural activities because the venues are not accessible and / or their needs are not taken into account, so they feel that they can miss out.



Super Culture Youth Theatre production of 'Laugh When You Think Of Me' as part of Good Grief Festival, Credit: Mark Gray Photography

Some providers mentioned wanting to increase provision for children and young people with special educational needs but appropriate, accessible space was a limiting factor (e.g. venues with safeguarding policies in place, with accessible ramps and parking, with adequate sound proofing). Some providers mentioned wanting to deliver activities in school settings, but said that once they have paid for the facilitators and hire of the school hall, the amount they can charge per child (circa £5) does not make it a sustainable endeavour.

Sustainability of the offer to young people, and their voice in the design of the offer, were foregrounded - long term, consistent provision is important, but funding cycles are often short. At the Other Place, a conversation was convened around art being



good for children's mental health, reducing isolation and bringing children from different backgrounds together.

There is quite a lot of cultural activity for children in Weston, delivered by Super Culture, the South Weston Activity Network and Boombox for example, and for those beyond Weston there is activity for those that can afford it. Super Culture's impactful Youth Theatre programme, reaching 90 children in Weston weekly, is offered on a 'Pay What You Decide' basis with completely subsidised spaces available to ensure there are no financial barriers to participation. This offer is currently at capacity for the organisation and is limited in delivery to Weston. There are a number of organisations and businesses offering youth theatre and dance training across North Somerset: Footlights (Nailsea), Tillie's (Clevedon), Story Cellar (Pill), Pauline Quirk Academy (Weston), Stage Coach, Rhubarb Drama and MultiStory (all in Portishead). Delivering classes to young people is the core business for each of these, so the fees charged to participants must cover the costs of operating and whilst many work hard to keep costs down, options to offer subsidised places are limited. It should not be assumed that cultural provision for young people can be adequately or fairly delivered by larger national franchises. For example the Pauline Quirk Academy in Weston charges £92 per month. For a child in Bristol to attend the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, the fee is £95 for a 10-week term, with the option to apply for bursaries. So if it were not for Super Culture's revenue funded Youth Theatre offer, children in Weston (who could afford it) would be paying 142% more to access a similar provision than children in Bristol.

Super Culture are currently re-convening the North Somerset Local Cultural Education Partnership, with a view to increasing collaboration across the sector and between the culture and education sectors. North Somerset Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient services to improve young people's wellbeing and access to cultural and leisure activities is an important part of that.²²

22. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-youth-provision/statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-services-to-improve-young-peoples-well-being>

North Somerset Council can play a convening role in this, using their existing relationships with the education sector to broker conversations between the LCEP and, for example, academy trusts across North Somerset. For those independent organisations (not part of a national franchise), such as Multi Story, Story Cellar, Rhubarb Drama and Tillie's, benefits could be found in greater collaboration - such as reducing the cost of training and recruitment, or working together, possibly as part of the LCEP, to fundraise in order to be in a position to offer more bursaries, and to consider delivery where there are gaps in North Somerset.

There is a new requirement for schools to deliver wraparound childcare, which could present an opportunity to schools and cultural activity providers to collaborate.²³ The national Holiday Activities and Food Programme could present an opportunity to identify and promote more affordable cultural activities.²⁴

Super Culture are also delivery partners alongside boomsatsuma of the Culture West 'Creative Agency', developing flexible pathways into the creative industries specifically for young people (16-30) from under-represented backgrounds. The offer includes training, mentoring, commission and paid placement opportunities. boomsatsuma, leaders in the delivery of job-focussed education in the creative industries, aim to open a delivery branch in Weston-super-Mare in 2024. They have partnered with North Somerset Council and Super Culture on a bid to the Cultural Development Fund. If successful, this will unlock revenue funding to support the delivery of training programmes alongside the development of The Tropicana including Further and Higher Education courses and in-work training programmes through apprenticeships or other accredited training pathways.

This theme supports North Somerset Council's Creative Industries Support Plan Priority 4: Support the Talent Pipeline.



23. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wraparound-childcare-guidance-for-schools>

24. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2024>

| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|---|-----------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 5.1 | Re-convening the North Somerset Cultural Education Partnership, including commercial youth performing arts providers to realise benefits from collaborating and address gaps in provision across North Somerset | Short | Super Culture | NSC |
| 5.2 | Brokering conversations between the LCEP and education sector in North Somerset | Medium | Super Culture | NSC |
| 5.3 | Investigate options for cultural delivery related to Holiday Activities and Food Programme and wraparound childcare. | Short | NSC | |
| 5.4 | Seek funding for sector training for disabled and special educational needs provision to enable better access | Medium | NSC | |
| 5.5 | Raise awareness of opportunities to collaborate on activities with twin towns including Hildesheim | Medium | NSC | North Somerset Culture Network |

Theme 6: Public Art

OPPORTUNITY

In recent years public art has contributed to Weston-super-Mare's emerging identity as a cultural destination through its flagship mural festival, Weston Wallz, delivered as a collaboration between Upfest, Weston-super-Mare Town Council, Super Culture and supported by Arts Council England. Along with community workshops and skills development for local artists, the event has helped to bring colour and vibrancy to the town centre, attracting visitors from across the country to experience the live-painting and see the 40+ mural trail. In addition to murals in Weston, Portishead is home to a public art trail throughout the Port Marine housing development. The project saw more than 20 artists from across the globe collaborate to create 30 different public artworks, all of which reflected the town's rich history and heritage. The project launched in 1999 and was funded by dock developers Crest Nicholson and Persimmon as part of Section 106 planning agreements for the development of the marina. The artworks form a walking and cycling trail.

The success of public art on the Portishead Marina site shows what can be achieved if agreements can be reached with developers. These agreements can offer significant support for cultural organisations already working within North Somerset, supporting their activity and providing opportunities to develop new work. A well-resourced and considered public art strategy can also foster cohesion between old and new. Public art programmes are an opportunity for developers to support existing and new



Trigger, The Hatchling, Credit: Dom Moore

communities before, during and after the development process, creating valuable opportunities to connect with the communities that are affected by developments. An example of this, in addition to the Portishead Public Art Programme above, is the [King's Gate Garden in Amesbury by artist Juliet Haysom](#) which fostered

conversations between old and new neighbours through creative activities and taking ownership of their public space.

25. Minutes to Council, November 22nd

Economic pressures on capital developments are significant. A recent report to North Somerset Council noted that "Progress on the Weston sites has been slow, as work was paused following the economic turmoil of autumn 2022. Economic instability and continued cost inflation have increased the financial challenges of the sites, which were already only marginally viable."²⁵ Nevertheless in planning for future developments, the council has agreed to seek developer contributions for Public Art where appropriate and is forming policy statements for this. Having an existing policy in place will provide a starting point to work collaboratively with developers to agree a proportionate budget, which can produce well considered, bold and place specific public art strategies, delivered and monitored as part of the planning process. The responsibility for producing, funding and delivering an art strategy lies with the developer. Some local authorities push for a 1% for art policy within major and super major developments – this provides a good starting point for negotiation to begin, but contributions are agreed on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the scale, location and function of the scheme.



| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|---|-----------|------|---------|
| 6.1 | NSC to include requirements within the local plan to encourage public art through new development. Includes encouragement of provision on major development proposals or a financial contribution to support provision on or close to the site. | Short | NSC | |

Theme 7: Events

OPPORTUNITY

With a long history of events and large scale installations supporting the community and increasing tourism in North Somerset, the Council recognises the importance of excellent events. GLOW Festival, eat:Festivals and art installations such as Dismaland and SEE MONSTER contribute to shaping the perception of the county as a high-quality place to live, work and visit and North Somerset Council clearly recognises their contribution to attracting investment, visitors and stimulating the local economy.

The council has several sites across North Somerset which it hires to external organisations to host public events. The event support service, which reaches across several departments plus external partners such as blue light services, is currently under review to improve efficiency and organisers' user experience. An assessment of the types of events North Somerset Council will encourage to take place on council owned sites in the future is also underway, taking into consideration significant changes to the events industry and consumer patterns post-COVID 19, the cost-of-living crisis, climate change and increasing pressures on council resources. North Somerset Council intends for the cultural events programme to minimise negative environmental impacts and maximise the short and long-term benefits to the community and economy.



Without Walls and Super Culture, Whirligig Festival of Outdoor Arts, Credit: Paul Blakemore

North Somerset Council will aim to attract cultural events which:

- deliver high levels of satisfaction to attendees;
- retain existing audiences as well as attracting new audiences;
- are engaging, sustainable and accessible to all;
- reflect the diverse population and interests of North Somerset;
- minimise negative impacts on the environment such as reducing single use plastics, encouraging sustainable travel, protecting the physical environment or using sustainable resources;
- satisfy the Weston Placemaking Strategy themes and objectives.

These objectives will be met through reviewing the council’s site hire fee structure to incentivise events run by charities, community events, cultural events, non-motorised sporting events and regular markets whilst slightly increasing fees for commercial events in line with other comparable local authorities. The council will work with partners to promote its event sites and provide training, advice and guidance to event organisers to ensure safety and sound event planning and management.

| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|---|-----------|------|--|
| 7.1 | Adopt recommendations from the council’s Events Review of site fees, NSC processes, and communication with the aim of attracting more events meeting the criteria outlined above. | Short | NSC | Emergency services and other Safety Advisory Group members and event organisers. |
| 7.2 | Raise awareness of events opportunities on council-owned sites in diverse communities to encourage greater cultural diversity of events | Medium | NSC | Race Equality North Somerset |



Loves Sea Folk, Rachel Dadd and Kitty MacFarlane. Credit: Adam Leppard

Theme 8: Arts and Health

OPPORTUNITY

'I struggled a lot after COVID - didn't want to leave the house, felt really low, struggled to make friends again but drama is different. The leaders love all your ideas and give you so much confidence - nothing you say is stupid. At the beginning it was the only thing I looked forward to in my week and the thing I left the house for'

SUPER CULTURE YOUTH THEATRE MEMBER

There is now a robust evidence base demonstrating the value of arts in promoting health and wellbeing. In December 2023 the National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH) and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing published a major report, the *Creative Health Review: How Policy Can Embrace Creative Health*.²⁶ This report demonstrates that arts and creativity can help prevent ill-health and support the management of long-term conditions, offering patients effective, non-clinical approaches that reduce reliance on healthcare services and result in cost savings, as well as improving quality of life. Creative health – defined as creative approaches which have benefits for our health and wellbeing – can also help reduce inequalities through prevention and initiatives to encourage health-promoting behaviours, reduce stigma or build agency, self-efficacy, and peer support. The report concludes that creative health should form an integral part of a 21st-century health and social care system to

reduce health inequalities, increase life expectancy and build social capital. To achieve this aim, a joined-up, whole system approach is needed, incorporating health systems, local authorities, schools and the cultural and VCSE sector.

Creative health interventions are often delivered 'upstream' or as an effective alternative to resource intensive statutory services. Examples of this include offering welcoming spaces and group activities for people experiencing loneliness and mental health challenges such as library spaces, choirs and craft workshops; giving children supportive and imaginative ways to develop social skills, express themselves and cope with mental health challenges. Focusing on the opportunities creative health can offer aligns with the principles and approach of North Somerset's Physical Activity Strategy 2023-2028 and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2024, in particular 'partnerships and collaboration', focusing on the wider determinants of health (such as strong social connections) and 'enabling and empowering people in communities to use their skills, resources, knowledge and networks to promote and improve health and wellbeing locally'.²⁷ It supports the strategy's focus on prevention, early intervention and thriving communities as routes to reducing resource-intensive health interventions.

26. <https://ncch.org.uk/why>

27. North Somerset Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2024, p.3 https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%20Summary_web-acc-updated.pdf

CASE STUDY

The Gloucestershire Integrated Care System identified that 50% of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) patients do not attend pulmonary rehab because it is exercise based. They looked at whether some of these people would benefit from a 12 week Singing on Prescription 'Breathe In Sing Out' choir instead, so they worked with local charity [Mindsong](#) to deliver this. In their 2014-15 social prescribing pilot they saw a statistically significant increase in reported mental wellbeing scores, a 23% decline in A&E admissions and a 21% decline in GP appointments in the six months after referral compared with the six months before. Independent evaluation suggested an estimated return on investment of £1.69 (health £0.43; social £1.26).²⁸

“Many learners with profound and complex needs struggle to find meaningful and engaging activities to access. However, the work with Super Culture has left them feeling positive, valued and fulfilled. This venture could support the sustained wellbeing and positive mental health for all involved as well as supporting communication, social skills and imagination.”

ABI RICHARDS, SEND ADVANCED PRACTITIONER, WESTON COLLEGE

Much creative health is being delivered locally. The NHS is delivering the Healthier with Nature project across North Somerset and Super Culture is a strategic partner in Mendip National Landscape's Nature Calling project. Super Culture has been working in the area for many years in collaboration with University Hospitals Bristol and

Weston NHS Foundation Trust, implementing a wide programme of creative health activities. There is also an active relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board, Public Health and Super Culture which is leading to the development of more formalised communication and planning networks around creative health, with input into the refreshed Health and Wellbeing strategy.

A new three-year national research project, Coastal Communities & Creative Health (2024-2027), brings together diverse partners in Weston, Blackpool and Hastings, including Super Culture, North Somerset Council and the Integrated Care Board, led by the Universities of Bristol and Liverpool. With £2.4 million funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, this project will begin to evidence the availability and benefit of creative health and wider community assets in three focus areas (young people's mental health, substance misuse, and serious illness and bereavement) and identify gaps in provision and barriers to access. Initial collaborative work funded by AHRC resulted in the delivery of the Good Grief Festival produced by Super Culture in May 2023, one of the case studies in the Creative Health Review. There is an opportunity for North Somerset Council to do more in promoting health and wellbeing through cultural activity, capitalising on this collaboration, research and Super Culture's established community links.

North Somerset Council is engaged with West of England's Culture West 'NHS Social Prescribing Project', with a focus on sustaining the cultural workforce by increasing their reach into the health system as a long-term source of funded work, demonstrating the mutual gains to be made in both sectors. Applications to a free 9-month training programme with *creativeShift* were also open to North Somerset creatives through the Culture West programme (starting September 2024), aimed at developing a new cohort of commission-ready practitioners to partner with experienced artists and local partner organisations to deliver creative health activities in the area.²⁹ This highlights the importance of upskilling

28. <https://ncch.org.uk/case-studies/gloucestershire-integrated-care-system-ics>

29. <https://www.creativeshift.org.uk/Emerge>

the creative workforce to deliver this work safely and effectively, and it is likely this will remain a focus of the Culture West programme in future years.

In their strategy, the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care System 'Healthier Together' has identified ten ways they can think and act for better impact, including under 'Enhancing productivity and value for money' a 'focus on the whole person – not just the disease'. This outlines how, alongside a focus on proactive care, they will review how they can support people to solve multiple issues at once and work around their needs:

“For example, this approach to ‘clustered’ problems might be achieved through integrated care teams, like those piloted in Weston-super-Mare for mental health and wellbeing, and social prescribing.”³⁰

There is an opportunity for the council to recognise the quality of the work being delivered, the benefits in terms of cost savings and relieving pressure on statutory services, and to do more to promote health and wellbeing through cultural activity through the establishment of a Creative Health Hub for North Somerset, working in partnership with cultural and health organisations such as Super Culture, CreativeShift, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire ICS 'Healthier Together'³¹, the Integrated Care Board, Sirona Care & Health, Alliance Homes and Pier Health. North Somerset Council can consider drawing on the Coastal Communities & Creative Health project findings and the NCCH's Creative Health Toolkit (2024) to develop a strategy to better embed creative health locally and to ensure the local system can deliver against the forthcoming NHS England Maturity Matrix for Social Prescribing. For example, by supporting referral processes

via the creation of an online creative health hub, signposting to assets in the community. In the future, North Somerset Council could establish a cross-sector creative health partnership to connect partners together, understand what is already in place, and provide knowledge exchange opportunities to help build a creative health eco-system and ensure there is a flow of information, shared understanding and language.

30. Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System Strategy, P.32, [https://bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ICS-Strategy-300623 .pdf](https://bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ICS-Strategy-300623.pdf)

31. <https://bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk>

| | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----|--|-----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 8.1 | Explore funding for capacity building for cultural organisations to deliver creative health activities, similar to the training delivered by creativeShift through Culture West. Funding could include a Creative Health appointment to deliver further fundraising, networking and training. | Short | NSC PHRS | ICB, Super Culture |
| 8.2 | Establish a cross-sector creative health partnership to build connections between healthcare providers and cultural organisations, providing knowledge exchange opportunities to help build a creative health eco-system and ensure there is a flow of information, shared understanding and language, identify opportunities for shared initiatives and jointly develop a pilot programme of action research initiatives. | Short | NSC PHRS | ICB, Super Culture |
| 8.3 | Draw on the Coastal Communities & Creative Health project findings and the NCCH's Creative Health Toolkit (2024) to develop a framework/strategy to better embed creative health locally and to ensure the local system can deliver against the forthcoming NHS England Maturity Matrix for Social Prescribing. | Long | NSC PHRS | ICB, Super Culture |
| 8.4 | Create an online creative health hub, signposting to assets in the community. | Long | NSC | Super Culture |

Summary Table of Recommended Actions

| Theme | | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-----------------------|-----|---|-----------|--|---|
| Networks | 1.1 | Establish a culture network for North Somerset, convening minimum 2 x per year. Consult with examples listed above to develop the format, allied to the Citizens Assembly for Culture 'Associates' network. | Short | NSC | Super Culture & other cultural organisations e.g. Curzon, Trigger, Front Room, RENS |
| | 1.2 | Establish a leadership group with a rotating chair to catalyse and lead the culture network. | Short | NSC | Super Culture & other cultural organisations e.g. Curzon, Trigger, Front Room, RENS |
| | 1.3 | Ensure effective communication of NSC's Explore events to creative and culture sectors. Research effectiveness of Cornwall 365 and best practice that can be replicated in North Somerset and continue to seek funding for sector specific workshops. | Short | NSC | |
| Advocacy & Leadership | 2.1 | Deliver recommended engagement calendar outlined above, with commitment from both NSC and ACE to ensure meetings are prioritised, including meeting at Manager, Assistant Director and Chief Executive level. | Short | NSC and ACE | Relevant stakeholders e.g. English Heritage, National Trust etc. |
| | 2.2 | Develop stakeholder engagement plans that include engaging North Somerset Council and Town Councillors. | Medium | All Artists and cultural practitioners | |
| | 2.3 | Consider a more cohesive approach to promoting the cultural events that take place across North Somerset, through a cultural-specific website managed by the North Somerset Culture Network. | Long | North Somerset Culture Network | |

| Theme | | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|--------------------|-----|--|-----------|--|---|
| Sector Development | 3.1 | Cultural Sector Capacity building appointment to lead the Culture Network jointly funded by ACE & NSC | Short | NSC | |
| | 3.2 | Identify funding for industry specific training aimed at cultural freelancers and volunteers, particularly around fundraising, strategic planning and supporting public events. | Medium | NSC / Cultural Sector Capacity Builder | Possible partnerships with the hive, VANS & Super Culture |
| | 3.3 | Introduction workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals for cultural and creative industries to create familiarity and embed Sustainable Development Goals language & thinking. | Medium | Emma Diakou, Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships, North Somerset Council | North Somerset Culture Network |
| | 3.4 | Council Officers / Exec Members with culture portfolio to access Local Government Association's "Leadership essentials culture event" (free in collaboration with Arts Council England). | Medium | NSC | ACE/LGA |
| | 3.5 | Increase understanding of and connection to West of England Combined Authority's Culture West programme strands such as the Arts Membership Pilot, the Creative Agency Hub and Citizens for Culture through the council. | Short | West of England Combined Authority | North Somerset Culture Network |
| | 3.6 | NSC to build on the 2023 Capacity Building project funded by UKSPF for inclusion in future UKSPF opportunities. | Medium | NSC | |
| Space | 4.1 | To deliver the Arts Membership pilot scheme, which aims to increase access to workspace and equipment. | Medium | NSC | Bath Spa University |
| | 4.2 | The current management contract for The Playhouse is due to end in 2027. Work with partners to secure the future of the theatre. | Medium | NSC | |
| | 4.3 | To review North Somerset Council asset portfolio and consider options to offer an asset transfer to a consortium or lead cultural partner in a position to access additional capital and revenue investment. | Long | NSC Director of Place, NSC Head of Property and Place & NSC Senior Development and Asset Manager | |

| Theme | | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|-------------------------|-----|---|-----------|---------------|--|
| Children & Young People | 5.1 | Re-convening the North Somerset Cultural Education Partnership, including commercial youth performing arts providers to realise benefits from collaborating and address gaps in provision across North Somerset | Short | Super Culture | NSC |
| | 5.2 | Brokering conversations between the LCEP and education sector in North Somerset | Medium | Super Culture | NSC |
| | 5.3 | Investigate options for cultural delivery related to Holiday Activities and Food Programme and wraparound childcare. | Short | NSC | |
| | 5.4 | Seek funding for sector training for disabled and special educational needs provision to enable better access | Medium | NSC | |
| | 5.5 | Raise awareness of opportunities to collaborate on activities with twin towns including Hildesheim | Medium | NSC | North Somerset Culture Network |
| Public Art | 6.1 | NSC to include requirements within the local plan to encourage public art through new development. Includes encouragement of provision on major development proposals or a financial contribution to support provision on or close to the site. | Short | NSC | |
| Events | 7.1 | Adopt recommendations from the council's Events Review of site fees, NSC processes, and communication with the aim of attracting more events meeting the criteria outlined above. | Short | NSC | Emergency services and other Safety Advisory Group members and event organisers. |
| | 7.2 | Raise awareness of events opportunities on council-owned sites in diverse communities to encourage greater cultural diversity of events | Medium | NSC | Race Equality North Somerset |

| Theme | | Recommended Actions | Timescale | Lead | Partner |
|--------------------|-----|---|-----------|----------|--------------------|
| Health & Wellbeing | 8.1 | Explore funding for capacity building for cultural organisations to deliver creative health activities, similar to the training delivered by creativeShift through Culture West. Funding could include a Creative Health appointment to deliver further fundraising, networking and training. | Short | NSC PHRS | ICB, Super Culture |
| | 8.2 | Build connections between healthcare providers and cultural organisations to identify opportunities for shared initiatives that can address local pressures in the healthcare system and jointly develop a pilot programme of action research initiatives. | Short | NSC PHRS | ICB, Super Culture |
| | 8.3 | Draw on the Coastal Communities & Creative Health project findings and the NCCH's Creative Health Toolkit (2024) to develop a framework/strategy to better embed creative health locally and to ensure the local system can deliver against the forthcoming NHS England Maturity Matrix for Social Prescribing. | Long | NSC PHRS | ICB, Super Culture |
| | 8.4 | Create an online creative health hub, signposting to assets in the community. | Long | NSC | Super Culture |

ANALYSIS OF THE AUDIT

A Note on Sample Size

In total, 97 individuals participated in the audit by attending a 1-2-1 or public consultation session. 72 submissions were made through the online audit questionnaire and a further 95 organisations were added manually. For drawing qualitative conclusions about the sector, the consultations offer a good sample of the interests, concerns and aspirations of the sector. Based on employment SOC codes 3411-3417, with a total number of 1065 in North Somerset³², a robust sample size from which to draw quantitative conclusions would be 280-300 responses to reach a confidence level of 95% with a 5% margin for error. With 72 responses, the confidence level drops to 90% with a 10% margin for error. The relatively low response rate received is likely due to a number of factors:

- The short timeline over which this piece of work was conducted in relation to the size of budget apportioned to marketing. To reach a higher number of people within that relatively short window, a larger proportion of the budget should have been spent on raising the profile of the online survey.
- The lack of established networks through which to push the survey link, or existing meetings and groups to reach out to. This was attempted, and key organisations shared the link to the survey through their mailing lists (e.g. Super Culture, Weston Arts Space and the hive), but it perhaps is a reflection of the somewhat dispersed / isolated nature of the sector in North Somerset that in general these did not show much penetration.
- Data fatigue. People get asked for their data a lot, and therefore need a relatively strong motivation to respond to a call out.

- A lack of 'why' for individuals and organisations to take the time to fill in the questionnaire. It could have been constructed in a way to offer greater motivation or payoffs for completing or referring the link to others, such as high street vouchers. Given the perceived lack of investment in the cultural sector in North Somerset, there may also be a sense of it not being necessary or beneficial to respond to this type of data gathering exercise.

Nevertheless, as this is the first time this kind of information has been gathered in North Somerset, the insights remain valuable. North Somerset Council can choose to retain the link to the questionnaire and continue to request responses until a more robust sample size of circa 280-300 responses is achieved.

³². Officer for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey/Labour Force Survey, 2021

Geographic Spread

As part of the audit a map has been produced, displaying organisations by location and sector³³

[North Somerset Cultural Sector Map](#)

The map demonstrates a good spread of activity across North Somerset: 41% of respondents are based in Weston-super-Mare; 12.5% are based in Portishead and Clevedon respectively. 7% are based in Bristol but listed North Somerset locations for their work and 3% in Nailsea. The remaining respondents listed out of county towns (e.g. Taunton and Bridgwater) and rural locations including Congresbury, Lower Langford and Yatton. Cultural activity is spread across North Somerset, with interesting pockets in rural areas including one National Portfolio Organisation, Trigger, based in Blagdon. With nearly half of respondents based in Weston, it makes sense to see this as the natural gathering place for the cultural sector in North Somerset. However, considering the connectivity and empowerment of rural cultural organisations is critical to the overall success of culture in the region.



33. To protect privacy, some organisations and individual's postcodes have been amended to a generic, town centre postcode.

Diversity

The population of North Somerset is less ethnically diverse than England and Wales with 97% of people classifying themselves as belonging to a white ethnic group. The diversity of North Somerset varies by up to 7% of the Unitary area, with the majority of areas around 96-97% White, whilst Weston Town, in particular Weston Central Ward, is 90% White. It is interesting to look at trends in the changing population. Whilst North Somerset is behind the national average for diversity within the population, this shifted significantly between the 2011 and 2021 census. The White population grew by just over 5% in this period, similar to the statistics for the South West overall, and above the national average of 1% - demonstrating the growing popularity of the region. However the Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African population grew by over 80%, compared to 40% growth in the South West and 29% growth nationally. Mixed or multiple ethnic group population size also increased significantly, up 79% in North Somerset compared to 59% in the South West and 40% nationally. These make up relatively small numbers (such as the Asian or Asian British population increasing by 36% equates to an increase of 1602 people), nevertheless it marks North Somerset out as an area of growth and changing demographics. In rapidly changing communities, well delivered events, festivals and public art projects can offer opportunities for diverse cultural expression and celebration, playing an important role in bringing diverse communities together in positive ways.

3% of respondents to the cultural audit identified as Black, Asian or Ethnically Diverse. This is significantly lower than the levels of ethnic diversity seen in response to Arts Council England's national surveys of the workforce of funded organisations (14% in 2020-21) but matches the population for North Somerset. One public consultation session,

hosted by Race Equality North Somerset at The Other Place in Weston, showed a significantly higher proportion of participants from Global Majority backgrounds, including members of the Asian and British Asian community. It was suggested that their forms of cultural activity and celebration which often combine music, food, dance and ceremony do not coincide with recognised 'art forms' making it more challenging to access funding and support. These self-funded activities are taking place through community networks, with little input from the Local Authority or Arts Council England. Action can be taken by Arts Council England and North Somerset Council to work with these groups to ensure they understand the funding opportunities available to them, and share examples from similar funded work in other parts of the country.

17% of respondents identified as LGBTQ+, making this a much larger group than the national average of 3.2% (ONS 2021), and larger than Arts Council England's cultural workforce survey of 10% (2020-21). Therefore considering this group's interests, specific networks and support needs is important.

Over 22% of respondents identified as D/deaf, disabled, neuro-divergent or having a long-term limiting illness. This comes close to matching the national average of 23%, and is far higher than Arts Council's workforce survey returns at 7%. This presents a significant opportunity to ACE and North Somerset Council to explore inclusive ways of working with the creative community to retain this level of diversity in the years to come. It is perhaps credit to organisations such as Weston ArtSpace and Super Culture and the accessible, embedded work they do in the community that the audit showed such a high return from individuals with this protected characteristic.

Business Models

By far the largest respondent group was freelancers and sole traders (41.7%). Although freelancers make up 15% of the workforce nationally, they represent about 32% of the creative industries, rising to 70% for the visual arts and 70% for theatre, while 80% of musicians are freelancers.³⁴ The next largest group is made up of volunteer-led or membership organisations with no employees (25%). This came through very strongly in the consultation sessions - the extent to which the sector relies on volunteer time to continue, and the lack of support, training and funds available to those volunteers to continue their work in a meaningful and sustainable way. People cited issues such as lack of experience in fundraising, asking volunteers to do inappropriate jobs (such as elderly volunteers moving heavy staging equipment), losing income due to untrained volunteers delivering key roles (such as fundraising and bar work), individuals very stretched and wanting to share or hand over jobs but not feeling able to given a lack of younger volunteers coming through to take over. When asked separately to what extent they or their organisation rely on volunteers to deliver their work, 37.5% responded that they are either run solely by volunteers or they have some paid employees but the majority of their work is delivered by volunteers.

Given 67% of respondents are either freelancers or volunteers and 37.5% of respondents said they rely wholly or mostly on volunteers, Arts Council and North Somerset Council should consider these groups in particular when developing support for the sector, and how messaging can reach them. The development of a culture

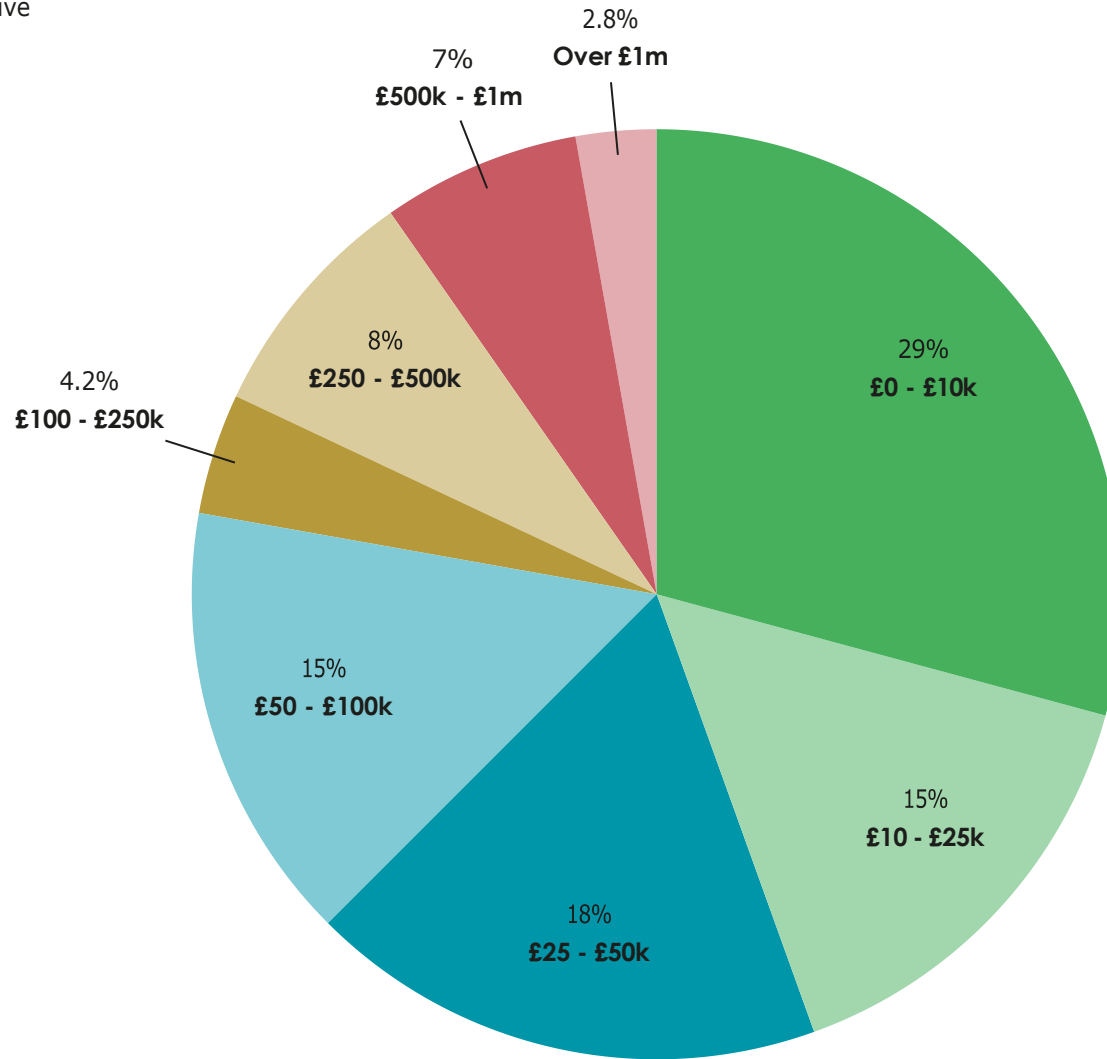
network (Theme 1: Networks) and a more joined up approach to capacity building (Theme 3: Sector Development) will be important for these groups.

An analysis of the finances indicate a high proportion of respondents with a turnover below £50,000 per year (62%). Nearly half of all respondents' primary source of income was from trading including tickets, products, design services etc. (45.7%), followed by public funding (31.4%) and a further 18.6% have a primary source of income unrelated to their creative work. Only 4.3% listed private investments (individual giving, trusts and foundations) as their primary source of income. When it came to secondary sources of income this distribution stayed roughly the same, with trading income highest at 49% followed by public funding and then income from unrelated work.

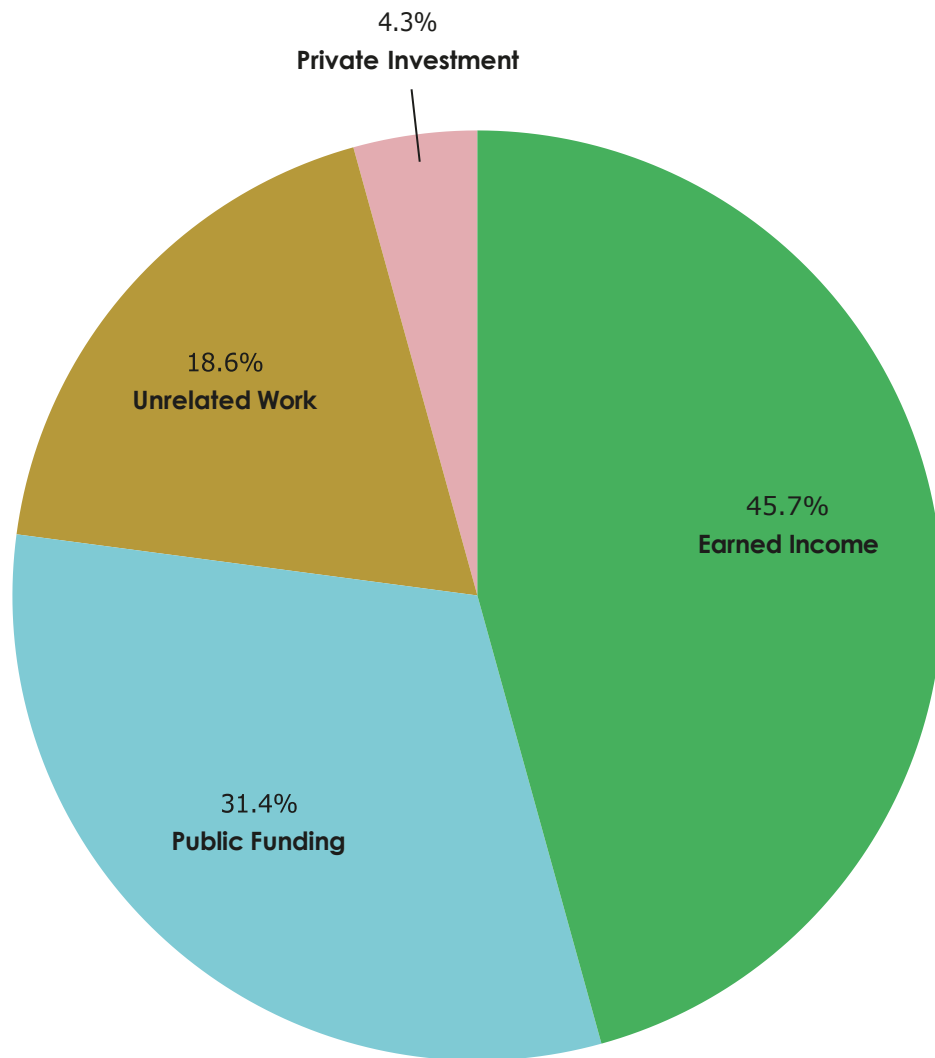
34. Arts and Creative Industries: Freelancers and Self-employed Workers, Hansard Volume 830: debated on Thursday 15 June 2023, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2023-06-15/debates/DD5833AC-AFFF-443D-AA32-A365628E62BD/ArtsAndCreativeIndustriesFreelancersAndSelf-EmployedWorkers>

TURNOVER

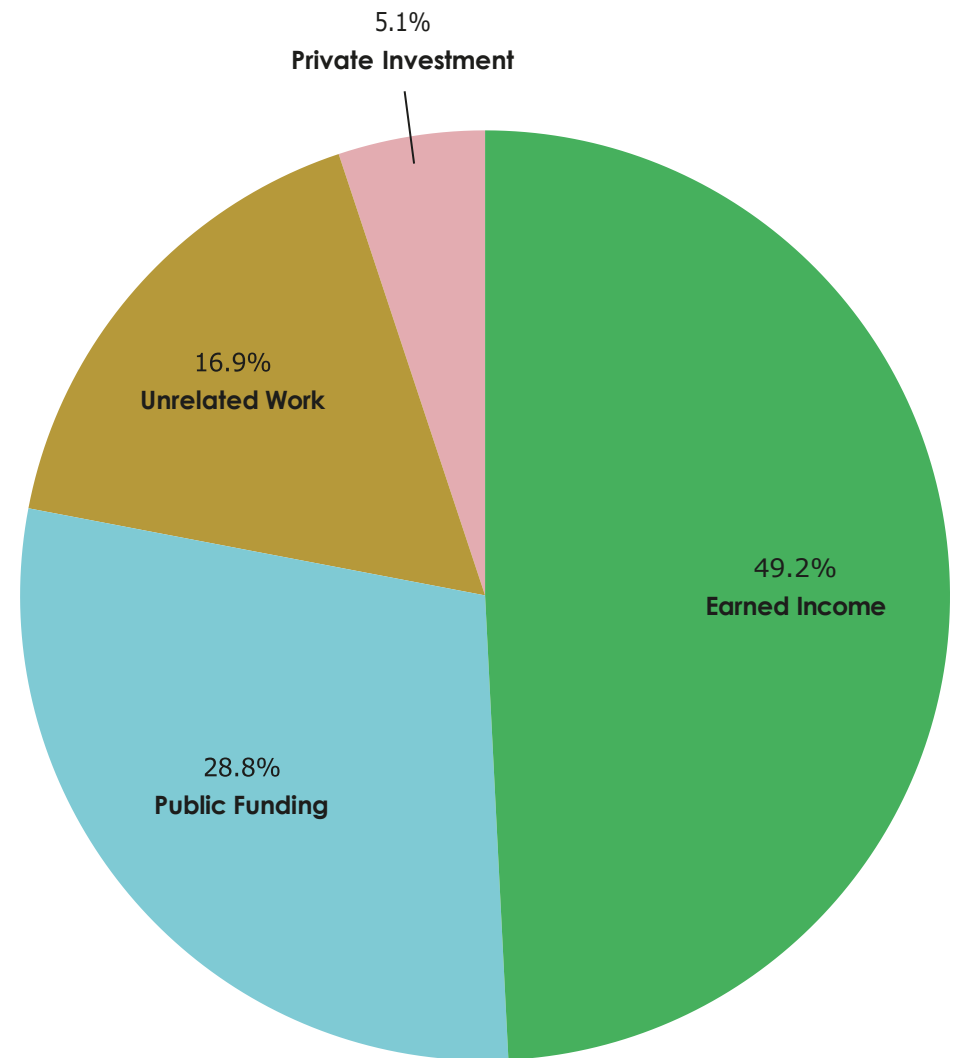
North Somerset Cultural & Creative Industries by annual turnover



PRIMARY INCOME SOURCE



SECONDARY INCOME SOURCE



APPENDIX

Appendix A

[Consultation session minutes](#) (internal access only)

Appendix B

[Audit questionnaire responses](#) (internal access only)

Appendix C: Inclusion Strategy

North Somerset Council & Arts Council England
Cultural Audit and Action Plan
Created 08.01.2024

1. INTRODUCTION

- This project will produce an audit of the cultural sector in North Somerset and, working in consultation with the sector, create an action plan for its development.
- There is a long history of individuals and communities with protected characteristics and from lower socio-economic backgrounds being under or misrepresented in sector-wide surveys. Actions that exclude individuals and communities often stem from a combination of lack of insight, lack of resources (including time) and self-interest. This results in information that is inaccurate and limited in value. It is therefore my intention to implement the actions below to ensure this project benefits from an inclusive approach.

2. LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- This project is led by a single freelance individual, with small portions of work subcontracted to other freelancers. Therefore the approach to inclusion taken by the lead contractor (Allegra Galvin) is critical to the overall success of the project.
- The lead contractor acknowledges that their perspective is limited due to their experience of the world as a white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, non-disabled, middle class woman. They also acknowledge that their experience as a woman, as

a multi-national and as a carer gives them perspectives others might not have. It is important that they seek the advice and experience of those perspectives they are lacking, to ensure that the structures implemented within this audit are as inclusive as possible.

- Through implementing this strategy the lead consultant will aim to account for their own limitations and biases in the desk research, in person events and stakeholder meetings that will form the basis for the audit and action plan.
- Responsibility for the implementation of this strategy sits with the lead consultant, Allegra Galvin.

3. RECRUITMENT

- Recruitment on this project is limited to two freelance individuals with specific expertise including inclusive web and graphic design and locally-based producing support within North Somerset.
- Nevertheless, diversity will be considered when offering these freelance opportunities to ensure the project benefits from a range of perspectives where possible.

4. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The lead consultant will undertake to refresh their equity, diversity and inclusion training.
- Should any particular inclusion questions arise during the project, the lead consultant will undertake to access additional training on that issue.

5. FLEXIBLE WORK PRACTICES

- Flexible meeting arrangements will accommodate diverse needs, such as caregiving responsibilities, or personal preferences.
- Project timelines and milestones account for potential challenges related to diverse working arrangements.

6. INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

- The lead consultant will promote open and transparent communication throughout the project, in particular with the two lead contacts at North Somerset Council and Arts Council England.
- Respectful and inclusive language will be used throughout the project, at in-person events and in the final report.
- At in-person events, guidelines will be established at the outset of each event to ensure respectful and inclusive communication, including respectful listening and valuing diverse perspectives.
- Information will be drafted and distributed with inclusivity in mind, with the goal of accessing people from diverse backgrounds to contribute to the audit and action plan either online or in person.
- The project will communicate using a diverse range of channels including a website, email, phone conversations, in person and online events. Advice will be sought on the importance of setting up temporary social media accounts and whether this or any other specific communication channels are likely to increase the diversity of participants.

7. INCLUSIVE RESEARCH

- Existing material will be reviewed including relevant North Somerset and Arts Council England strategies such as NSC's health and wellbeing and economic development strategies, geographic and sector-specific publications.
- Whilst reviewing existing material special attention will be paid to information which affects the inclusivity of the cultural sector in North Somerset. Where this information is lacking, this will also be noted. The lead consultant will aim to see both what is there, but also what should be there, on the basis of the population data, but is perhaps missing.

8. INCLUSIVE EVENTS AND MEETINGS

- In-person events will be hosted in accessible spaces. Any limitations on this will be made clear well in advance.
- Events will be documented and the notes will be shared on the project micro-site so those unable to attend can review the event.
- An additional event will be hosted online to gather contributions from those for whom in-person attendance is a barrier.
- Adjustments will be made where possible within time and budget constraints e.g. supporting access to the online event, arranging travel to in-person events.
- Budget will be assigned to enable access to events.

9. CELEBRATING SUCCESS

- At the end of the project, the lead consultant will aim to acknowledge and celebrate achievements related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- If there are lessons learnt or valuable insights for future freelance consultancy projects within the cultural sector, the lead consultant will summarise these in a separate report.

10. MEASURABLE GOALS

- Responses to the audit reflect the diversity data of North Somerset Council in three areas: disability, ethnicity, income.
- Attendance at the three hosted events reflect the diversity data of North Somerset Council in three areas: disability, ethnicity, income.
- The team of three freelancers reflect a diversity of background and experience.
- Minimum 90-minute online refresher training completed at project outset by lead consultant.
- The project micro-site, questionnaire and final project PDF meet accessibility standards.

12. RELEVANT STATISTICS

- Percentage of people who reported having a limiting long-term illness or disability: 19.1%
- Ethnicity: 95.7% white, 4.3% other of which the largest group is 1.7% mixed or multiple ethnic groups.
- Children in low income families (relative): 13.8%

By implementing this inclusion strategy, I, Allegra Galvin, aim to create an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their best to the project's success.

Appendix D: Bibliography

| Recommended Actions | Author / Owner | Type | Link |
|--|---|----------------------------|---|
| Arts in the UK: Seeing the Big Picture | McKinsey & Company | National Strategic Context | https://www.mckinsey.com/uk/our-insights/the-arts-in-the-uk-seeing-the-big-picture |
| Clevedon Placemaking Strategy | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4076/6.1%20Two%20Town%20Strategy%20Doc_Clevedon_SCREEN.pdf |
| Cornerstones of Culture | Local Government Association | National Strategic Context | https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport/cornerstones-culture |
| Creative radar: Mapping the UK's creative industries | Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre | National Strategic Context | https://pec.ac.uk/research_report_entr/creative-radar-mapping-the-uks-creative-industries/ |
| Culture Commons Devolution Briefing | Culture Commons | National Strategic Context | https://www.culturecommons.uk/post/extended-briefing-a-devolution-revolution |
| Culture Communities: The Crisis in Local funding for Arts and Culture | Fabian Society | National Strategic Context | https://fabians.org.uk/publication/cultured-communities/ |
| Greater Manchester Creative Health Strategy | Culture Commons | National Strategic Context | https://www.culturecommons.uk/projects-1/greater-manchester-creative-health-strategy |
| How can rural creative firms be better supported to contribute to Levelling Up? | National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise | National Strategic Context | https://nicre.co.uk/blog/2022/may/how-can-rural-creative-firms-be-better-supported-to-contribute-to-levelling-up/ |
| Let's Create 10 Year Strategy | Arts Council England | National Strategic Context | https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create |
| Mapping and examining the determinants of England's rural creative microclusters | National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise | National Strategic Context | https://pec.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/NICRE-Research-Report-No-7-with-Creative-PEC-May-2022-Mapping-and-examining-the-determinants-of-Englands-rural-creative-microclusters-1.pdf |

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Masterplan for Central Portishead | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4078/6.3%20Wyndham%20Way%20Development%20Framework.pdf |
| North Somerset Corporate Plan Actions (DRAFT) | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | TBC Publication date |
| Nailsea Placemaking Strategy | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4077/6.2%20Two%20Towns_Strategy%20Doc_Nailsea_SCREEN.pdf |
| North Somerset Arts Heritage and Culture Strategy 2020-2030 | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/HAC%20Strategy%202020%20to%202030.pdf |
| North Somerset Climate Emergency Action Plan | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/31208%20Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan%20ACC.pdf |
| North Somerset Corporate Plan 2024-28 (DRAFT) | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.inconsult.uk/qf2.ti/-/1569250/187070085.1/PDF/-/Corporate%20Plan%202020-2024%20DRAFT.pdf |
| North Somerset Creative Industries Support Plan | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.gov.uk/news/new-support-plan-creative-industries-north-somerset |
| North Somerset Heritage, Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-20230 | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/HAC%20Strategy%202020%20to%202030.pdf |
| North Somerset Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%20Summary_web-acc-updated.pdf |
| North Somerset Rural Culture Research | George Densley for Super Culture | Unpublished resource | |
| North Somerset Rural Strategy | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | TBC publication date |
| North Somerset Online Directory | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://nsod.n-somerset.gov.uk/kb5/northsomerset/directory/home.page |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Portishead Neighbourhood Plan | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-09/Portishead%20Neighbourhood%20Plan%20-September%202023%20update.pdf |
| Private Investment in Culture Survey | Arts Council England | National Strategic Context | https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Private%20Investment%20in%20Culture%20Survey%202019.pdf |
| Report to NSC Executive on Heritage & Culture Strategy 2020-2030 for adoption | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://n-somerset.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Executive/202001071000/Agenda/15%20Framework%20for%20Heritage%20Arts%20and%20Culture%20Development.pdf |
| Super Weston | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://superweston.net/ |
| The Future of Local Cultural Decision Making (open policy development programme) | Culture Commons | National Strategic Context | https://www.culturecommons.uk/futureoflcdm |
| The Missing Pillar – Culture's Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals | British Council | National Strategic Context | https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/our-stories/the-missing-pillar-sdgs |
| West of England Combined Authority Cultural Plan | West of England Combined Authority | Regional Strategic Context | https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/West-of-England-Cultural-Plan.pdf |
| West of England Combined Authority Full Business Case Culture West | West of England Combined Authority | Regional Strategic Context | https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Full-Business-Case-Culture-West-V1-FINAL.pdf |
| West of England Cultural Sector Economic Survey | West of England Combined Authority | Regional Strategic Context | https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/West-of-England-Cultural-Sector-Economic-Summary-February-2022.pdf |
| West of England Placemaking Charter | Local Government Association | National Strategic Context | https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/West-of-England-Placemaking-Charter-Action-Plan.pdf |
| Weston-Super-Mare Placemaking Strategy | North Somerset Council | Local Strategic Context | https://superweston.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Prospectus_weston_super_mare.pdf |



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



**North
Somerset
Council**