

Where Creativity Flows:
A Cultural Strategy for Calderdale
2022-2032

Mustard & - Community Interest Company

Summary

Calderdale Council, working with CalderdaleCreates - commissioned a Cultural Strategy for the borough. This strategy is an overarching framework to help the sector thrive and reach its potential, enabling all those in Calderdale, wherever they live, to have culture woven into their everyday lives - one of the vital components that makes life worth living.

Vision

Creativity flows through every part of Calderdale's diverse cultural landscape, inspiring and empowering us all to live rich and transformative lives.

The consultation draft was developed during August 2021. Its starting point was the collation and analysis of evidence and data, a sector audit to understand the breadth and reach of Calderdale's cultural assets, strategy analysis and horizon scanning. A conversation was opened up with the cultural sector and wider stakeholders including the Council, community representatives and funders. To date, over 1600 people have shared their views in conversations, webforms, at cultural events and focus groups, thereby informing the shaping of this strategy

To deliver this, 5 priorities have been identified:

A LARGER CREATIVE LIFE

Each and every person has culture and creativity woven into the fabric of their lives – whatever their age – to delight and inspire happier, healthier lives.

CREATIVE CITIZENS

Every community is empowered to grow and sustain its own cultural capacity – bringing to life the unique identity of each place and community.

A RESILIENT VALLEY

The cultural sector inspires creative and regenerative actions to rebuild a sustainable future.

DISTINCTLY CALDERDALE

Businesses and visitors are attracted by the vibrancy of the cultural offer, strong sense of identity and creative possibilities.

A THRIVING CULTURAL SCENE

The sector – its people and organisations – is invested in so that it flourishes and plays a unique, dynamic and effective role in wider society.

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What Is Culture?

Culture means different things to different people. Our conversations gave a broad and inclusive definition:

The activities we enjoy and places we visit - art, craft, dance, design, drama, film, heritage buildings, museums, singing, libraries, literature, performance, and much more. From everyday culture and creativity, it includes the food we cook, clothing we wear, stories we tell or music we listen to.

It celebrates our history and traditions across all our communities, from Brighthouse to Todmorden, Pace-Egging to Eid.

It can be experienced as a viewer, participant, or maker. We are open to individuals and communities describing what culture means to them.

This Strategy recognises that culture is cross cutting and contributes to the delivery of many different local priorities and that there are other strategies that address aspects of this work, for example the visitor economy, natural heritage and sport.

The Journey to Date

“Wild moors, beautiful woodland, side valleys, dramatic landscapes, people, stoicism, dark gallows humour, hardy to whatever is thrown at them.”

The Cultural Strategy will enable people to come together in shared action, shout louder and with greater impact about the positive difference culture makes to their everyday lives, while informing investment in culture.

It will be delivered by the Council, Calderdale- Creates, the sector and communities coming together – empowered to play their distinct and important parts. While funding is important, and securing investment will be essential to enable its delivery, this is also about finding new ways of working with and alongside our communities, using existing resources and capacity more imaginatively.

The consultation process identified themes of health and wellbeing, the climate emergency, culture and creativity in every community, distinctiveness of place and a thriving cultural scene as areas to prioritise action, responding to the immediate challenges of rebuilding after Covid-19.

The Strategy will only be brought to life by action – whether festivals, performance, everyday creativity or engaging with the rich heritage of the Calderdale – imagined and delivered together with sector and community partners. Some cultural organisations and freelancers have already started developing more collaborative and community-centred ways of working. Rolling this out in a meaningful way and embedding this practice will be the focus of the next two years as the Borough moves towards its celebration of culture in 2024.

The Year of Culture 2024 offers an exciting first step bringing together our communities to showcase creativity, the best in culture and its transformative potential in a dynamic, imaginative celebration of what it means to be alive and to be living in Calderdale today.

Strategy Into Action

The strategy needs a fully resourced delivery plan with actions agreed by the Council, communities, the cultural sector and wider partners to deliver the shared priorities. Implementation will require the cultural sector having more input on decision making and delivery, a joined-up infrastructure that makes provision accessible to all and facilitates collaboration at every level.

These immediate recommended actions reflect the proposed priorities and practical suggestions identified through conversation with the sector and community representatives.

Resourcing falls into four categories:

Direct funding: requiring Council investment

Leverage: using Council infrastructure to ensure existing funds are used to best effect in partnership with the cultural sector to deliver the best community and economic outcomes and also using direct funding to partner others' and secure additional investment.

Capacity: to identify and connect opportunities, organisations and communities, secure funding and evidence impact.

Energy and creativity: harnessing the sector and its existing activity in shared direction of travel, amplify the impact of existing activity through better visibility and sharing of practice.

There is a recognition that public funding can be challenging, but also that investment in culture delivers significant return and is needed to achieve the Council and its partners stated ambition in delivering culture-led regeneration, realising the potential of the visitor economy improving wellbeing and tackling inequalities.

This is only the start of a journey. There will be more opportunity to contribute more ideas, shape how activity is delivered, and bring the plans to life including during the annual planning.

Calderdale, its culture and creativity

The River Calder runs through the Yorkshire Pennines in Calderdale. It has been the constant force of the valley. It shaped the landscape and carved its geography, permitting settlements on the valley floor and climbing the steep valley sides. It fed the industry with the wool from the uplands farms, driving the making with its powerful force and transporting the Valley's produce when tamed into navigations. And, it gave the people a unique identity, forged through rugged terrain, hard work and self-reliance, immense creativity and a genuine and deep kindness.

Calderdale's culture and creativity

This landscape is brought to life by the vibrant culture and creativity made and experienced by those living, working in and visiting the Valley.

The culture sector in Calderdale is characterised by myriad independent and small-scale creative organisations and individuals. This results in a vibrant grass roots culture, with particular strengths in festivals, music and literature, delivered against a backdrop of significant built heritage. Whilst heritage buildings, parks and natural heritage can be found everywhere – from the mills, to the markets, along pathways and canals, in a dramatic landscape – and there is a network of community venues that are used as pop-up venues – the distribution of the cultural infrastructure is uneven across the borough.

This heritage – a distinctive part of Calderdale - has been the catalyst for culture-led regeneration and reinvention in the Borough, from Hebden Bridge in the 1970s, Dean Clough the 1980s, and to The Piece Hall's recent transformation.

This has attracted creative professionals, who having developed their careers elsewhere, have returned or chosen to settle in Calderdale, bringing the best in creative practice, whether drawn by ties of family, or the quality of community and landscape to an area with huge potential for culture to develop skills and employment opportunities. Today this is seen in the innovative research into culture, health and wellbeing and in new models of collaborative and community-centred delivery being developed.

Despite this vibrancy, culture is woven so tightly into the lives of the people across all communities, and is so embedded into the landscape, that it can be overlooked, and so the sector as a whole does not have the visibility or credit it deserves, both in Calderdale and beyond. Located almost halfway between Manchester and Leeds, and beyond the edge of Bradford, it occupies a liminal space where difference and creativity flourishes – this creativity at the margins (yet with international reach) contributes to the richness and distinctive character of Calderdale's cultural offer; but is also challenged by the hard practicalities of life and making a living.

Calderdale's communities

Calderdale is home to a rich range of different communities identified by their geography or people – whether town-based or rural, or Valley folk or 'offcumdens' from around the World coming together through shared interests or backgrounds.

Across the borough there are pockets of affluence and pockets of deprivation. This means that inequalities can be less visible, though no less real, and do not necessarily have the

Calderdale, its culture and creativity

critical mass to attract significant additional funding. Calderdale faces particular challenges, including achieving a good start in life, and supporting a population which, unlike its neighbouring authorities, is ageing and one not predicted to grow significantly in future years.

The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented in living memory, and we are still living with it and its financial, health and human consequences. It was not experienced equally with some communities and individuals – usually those already the least resilient bearing greater costs of the lockdowns. The impact will

Calderdale, its culture and creativity

be felt for many years to come. Calderdale Council has set out an Inclusive Economic Recovery Plan and envisages a clear role for culture in reimagining a confident future for the borough.

During the pandemic the value of culture to people's wellbeing was clearly seen, both in the activity that kept us occupied during lockdown and new appreciation of local areas, but also in the cultural activity that we missed – whether a trip to the cinema or discovering new bands in local gigs at the pub. These activities are now possible once more. However, until audience confidence fully returns, cultural organisations along with others in the visitor economy sector face an uncertain future.

COVID also accelerated changes in the high street. The Council has secured funding from the Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund and High Street Heritage Action Zones to reimagine and reinvent its town centres, with opportunities to embed cultural infrastructure and activity, to bring spaces to life and drive footfall. The Combined Authority has developed a Cultural Framework to maximise the potential of culture in driving economic recovery in West Yorkshire”.

Culture does not exist in isolation. During the consultation, the effectiveness of the transport infrastructure was often mentioned as a challenge to connectivity and access to cultural venues and activity. The dependence on the roads and rail that run along the valley floor is a challenge. You can sometimes get to places beyond Calderdale more easily than to other parts of the borough.

The urgency of the Climate Emergency cannot be overstated, although this is still not recognised by many in society. Across the world the impact of global warming is becoming clearer with wildfires, temperature extremes and rising in sea levels. The floods in Calderdale during 2015 & 2020 brought the crisis so dramatically into people's lives, and Calderdale Council was one of the first to declare a climate emergency.

The opportunity

Over the next ten years it is important that culture in Calderdale continues to thrive and grow for its own sake and there is further opportunity to demonstrate the wide-ranging impact a thriving and resilient cultural sector on reducing inequalities, promoting health and wellbeing, social cohesion, resilience and economic regeneration.

Culture has already been identified as central to Calderdale's post COVID-19 recovery plan, analysis of community needs and conversations with stakeholders identified the following areas of impact:

- the creation of a larger creative life for residents by supporting their Health and Wellbeing;
- the bringing to life of the unique identities of communities;
- a resilient Valley, particularly through the Climate Emergency;
- Ensuring a distinct cultural offer and sense of identity that attracts businesses and visitors;
- and the creative potential of every resident being realised, as the sector continues to innovate and lead in imagining creative solutions to shared challenges.

Calderdale is well positioned to innovate and take a lead across West Yorkshire, and the UK as a whole, in imagining cultural and creative solutions to these shared challenges.

Calderdale, its culture and creativity

COVID-19 offered the opportunity for many people to reimagine their work. Supporting these new ways of working and possibilities will enable a robust, relevant and sustainable recovery. An important part of this will be investing in the infrastructure to increase cultural possibilities across the breadth of Calderdale's communities, building new long-term relationships and new ways of collaborating and realising everyone's creative potential.

While culture can and does enable a vast range of other strategies and initiatives, it is essential that space is left for cultural and creative activity where outcomes cannot be as easily counted, recognising its essential role in the lives of Calderdale's individuals and communities.

The first milestone – a real marker of momentum and direction of travel, of commitment to new ways of working and making a difference in communities is the Year of Culture 2024 – a designated celebration of culture in all its forms and a demonstration of Calderdale's distinctiveness, kindness and resilience, talent and enterprise.

Vision and priorities

We see creativity flowing through every part of Calderdale's diverse cultural landscape, inspiring and empowering us all to live rich and transformative lives.

Our five priorities *are*:

A Larger Creative Life

Each and every person has culture and creativity woven into the fabric of their lives – whatever their age – the delight and inspire happier, healthier lives.

Creative Citizens

Every community is empowered to grow and sustain its own cultural capacity – bringing to life the unique identity of each place and community.

A Resilient Valley

The cultural sector inspires creative and regenerative actions to rebuild a sustainable future.

Distinctly Calderdale

Businesses and visitors are attracted by the vibrancy of the cultural offer, strong sense of identity and creative possibilities.

A Thriving Cultural Scene

The sector – its people and organisations – is invested in so that it flourishes and plays a unique, dynamic and effective role in wider society.

Living a Larger Life

Each and every person has culture and creativity woven into the fabric of their lives – whatever their age – to delight and inspire happier, healthier lives

Background context:

“Having the time and tools to develop personal creative potential can be profoundly fulfilling, while engaging in culture is often a route to inspiration and delight. Taken together, they can help us make sense of ourselves and of each other: they provoke and uplift us; they unite communities; and they bring us joy.” Let’s Create, Arts Council England (ACE)

Connecting with other people, being active (e.g. dancing; exploring a heritage trails), learning new skills (playing the guitar, cooking a new dish); give to others (e.g. volunteering) and mindfulness – all activities in abundance in the cultural sector - improves mental health and wellbeing and help you get the most out of life. NHS

"Loneliness can be as harmful for our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day"; The arts... provide a recognized way of reducing loneliness and social isolation, particularly among people living in rural or disadvantaged areas. Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance.

After engaging with the culture 82% people enjoyed greater wellbeing. Culture is cost effective. For every £1 invested in arts on prescription a social return on investment of between £4 and £11 has been calculated.

Calderdale’s 2019 Talkback Survey recorded that over 43% respondents participated in cultural activities for their mental wellbeing. The need to support wellbeing has increased during COVID-19 with Calderdale seeing an 18% increase in mental health referrals.

Where are we now

Bringing ‘a good start in life’ to the same level as other life stages is a focus for Calderdale Council.

Calderdale has a vibrant cultural sector which delivers all manner of activities to a diverse range of audiences. Many are volunteer or community based.

Barriers to access remain. Activities are not always fully inclusive and accessible facilities are not universally available.

Calderdale is committed to being seen as a leading innovator in culture and wellbeing – establishing excellence in the arts, culture and health sectors, and leading the way nationally to demonstrate their impact. Cultural organisations are demonstrating what works – for example, the Victoria Theatre’s dramatherapy, Artworks’ ‘Art for Wellbeing’ sessions and Square Chapel’s Gig Buddies scheme.

Funded projects are already leveraging in additional funding, but there is a need for the costs of delivery to be shared with health service providers.

Ad hoc project funding threatens the sustainability of this activity and the limited capacity in the sector can make it difficult for partners to keep up to date with the latest activities. There is an opportunity for greater coordination to make it easier for partners to engage.

By 2032

Everyone in Calderdale wherever they live, whatever their age is confident in accessing and experiencing their culture.

Calderdale is a national leader in evidence-based culture and wellbeing practice.

Health professionals are informed and confident in using and prescribing cultural activities and collaborate to fund the capacity to deliver and scale up activity, operate in a coordinated and consistent manner and increase reach and impact.

Cultural organisations actively engage with their communities, ensuring as many people as possible can get involved, thoughtfully minimising barriers.

Recommended Actions

Activities for Calderdale Council

- Support initiatives realise their potential by embedding culture across relevant strategies, brokering strategic and delivery partnerships, and securing representation on decision-making bodies.
- Set expectations for inclusion and increase inclusivity through a sector-wide Inclusion Charter; information, advice and guidance on best practice; and funding for inclusive visitor welcome and accessible facilities.

Activities for partners

- Continue to lead innovative culture and health research and delivery, sharing good practice and enabling the scaling up of cultural sector delivery.
- Develop sustainable funding model that retain development and delivery capacity, secures longer- term investment and pays for cultural activity.
- Recognise Calderdale's role in delivering the cultural ambitions of the WYCA.

Activities for Calderdale Creates

- Create resource-list of cultural activity delivering for specific needs / target audiences.
- Facilitate a forum for deliverers to come together to align work on strategic priorities.
- Adopt action research framework, collaborating across the sector to capture evidence and continue to innovate.

Creative Citizens

Every community is empowered to grow and sustain its own cultural activity – bringing to life the unique identity of each place and community.

Background context:

“Culture and the experiences it offers can have a deep and lasting effect on places and the people who live in them. Investment in cultural activities and in arts organisations, museums and libraries helps improve lives ...and bring people together” Let’s Create

Creative People & Places evidences when communities are involved in shaping their local cultural provision, a wider range of people participate in cultural activity. And when the cultural sector works closely with community partners, activity is richer and more relevant, resources go further, and greater benefits are delivered.

“COVID-19 has affected everyone but not everyone has been impacted equally. [It] has shone a light on underlying inequalities and intensified these. Working with our communities to ensure that our residents who have been most affected by the pandemic are supported into positive economic activity will be a priority for our Recovery Plan.”

In Calderdale’s Cultural & Heritage survey 86.6% had visited a cultural venue in the previous year.

Libraries are the most widespread and well-used cultural spaces. At the heart of communities, they often providing the first point of access to cultural activity. Calderdale’s libraries received over half a million visits in 2019-20 along with online services.

Where are we now:

Community partners and individuals commented on the role of libraries in their lives as a key resource.

There is unequal provision of cultural organisations across the Borough with concentrations in the upper valley and Halifax town centre. Yet there is heritage on almost every street corner.

A number of cultural organisations have been reviewing their practice, committing to closer working and co-creating with target communities.

There is no shared understanding across the wider cultural sector of co-creation techniques although there is interest in working with under-represented communities.

While COVID-19 has allowed some to pause and refocus on their communities, others have had to retreat from outreach activity to remain viable.

Calderdale has strong community infrastructure in places with low publicly-funded cultural provision. Many community partners are keen to work with the cultural sector – good practice in developing robust relationships.

People see Festivals as exciting & inclusive celebrations, bringing together different communities and cultures – whether through sharing food or exploring reuse of materials

using contemporary and traditional craft skills. A number mentioned the festival in People's Park.

Calderdale has expertise in community festivals and street performance.

Schools have a role in providing culture opportunities for the widest range of children & young people. In every community, they are also an effective means of reaching families.

By 2032

Calderdale will have a joined up cultural infrastructure with every community able to lead, grow and sustain its own cultural capacity – bringing to life its unique identity and creating hubs of creativity in each community.

The Festival of Calderdale will have emerged as a vibrant biannual themed celebration bringing together communities. 2024 will have catalysed this change – showcasing creative possibilities to spark the imagination and embed co-creation and inclusive practice.

Calderdale will be a centre of festival expertise and training – locally grown skills with global reach and recognition for infrastructure and creativity.

Creativity is embedded in the curriculum, and each child has access to formal and informal cultural opportunities that sparks possibility and inspires of future creativity in careers in cultural sector or elsewhere.

Actions

Actions for Calderdale Council

- Focus investment and secure additional investment for culture capacity building in priority communities.
- Use existing coordination infrastructure to create Calderdale-wide cultural volunteer-resource

Actions for partners

- Schools drive opportunities for creativity with LCEP.
- Develop festival 'How-to' toolkit & skills programme, drawing on sector expertise with the College.
- Community partnerships help mitigate impact of ad hoc project funding providing continuity of community relationships.

Actions for CalderdaleCreates

- Develop co-creation capacity and skills, introducing training and peer mentoring, building and sustaining relationships in targeted communities with a clear focus on developing trust. Identify funding streams.
- Secure funding for leadership, co-ordination and delivery of a year of community festivals and celebration. With communities agree a unifying theme and provide framework to enable local groups to participate on their own terms and bid for funds; underpinned by research framework.

- Re-establish the LCEP and place on a firm footing to support creativity in every school.

Actions for Culture sector

- Adopt and embed collaboration and co-creation approach, learning from Creative People & Places and the 'Of by for all' movement, identifying exit strategies or succession plans from the outset, e.g. choosing to work with existing community structures.
- Support cultural 'capacity building' in areas less- well served by current cultural provision

A Resilient Valley

The cultural sector inspires creative and regenerative actions to build a sustainable future.

Background context

“Over the last year the Climate Emergency become visible in ways that it never has been before. To prevent heating beyond 1.5°C, we need to reduce emissions by 7.6% every year from this year to 2030. Every fraction of additional warming above 1.5°C will bring worsening impacts, threatening lives, food sources, livelihoods and economies worldwide.” United Nations Environment Programme

Steep valley sides, navigations and rivers make Calderdale susceptible to flooding. Calderdale Council was one of the earliest Council's to declare a climate emergency.

What can creatives, artists and the cultural sector bring to the climate movement? “We're talking about people who innovate, who are creative, people with imagination, who can prompt us to think the unthinkable, think the unthinkable themselves, present us with different ways of thinking and doing, and that's exactly what we need.” Baroness Lola Young

“The climate emergency demands we prioritise our existing buildings making refurbishment and reuse of existing buildings worthwhile. The reuse and recycling of historic buildings can reduce other negative environmental impacts such as waste production, resource depletion, water pollution, land-take, erosion and health impacts...A truly sustainable future for our precious historic environment must take a balanced approach that considers their value of our historic environment society, the economy and to the environment.” Heritage Counts.

Where are we now

Across parts of the cultural and creative sector in Calderdale there is an interest in practicing a sustainable ethos in their work.

Projects such as the Iron People and the Landlines and Watermarks project undertaken after the 2015 floods – show where culture can play a part in storytelling and awareness raising.

There is a perception that COVID-19 has displaced the urgency of the climate emergency and some cultural practitioners don't yet understand what practical actions we can take to make a difference.

The potential increase in staycations make Calderdale well placed to move to a regenerative tourism model.

New models of procurement would enable investment in local talent development and career progression to build and retain skills locally – e.g. for festivals.

The sector needs to be playing its part as in a wider multi-sector partnership.

The lack of conservation areas, given the area's rich heritage, potentially places it at greater

threat from redevelopment where arguments of the environmental and societal benefits of refurbishment have yet to be won.

By 2032

Calderdale will have a joined up cultural infrastructure with every community able to lead, grow and sustain its own cultural capacity, bringing to life its unique identity and creating hubs of creativity in each community.

The Year of Culture 2024 will have emerged as a vibrant, biannual, themed celebration bringing together communities. 2024 will have catalysed this change, showcasing creative possibilities to spark the imagination and embed co-creation and inclusive practice.

Calderdale will be a centre of festival expertise and training, combining locally grown skills with global reach and recognition for infrastructure and creativity.

Creativity is embedded in the curriculum, and each child has access to formal and informal cultural opportunities that spark possibility and inspire future creativity in careers in the cultural sector and elsewhere.

Actions

Actions for Calderdale Council

- Identify and secure culture sector involvement in key networks and research programmes.
- Accessing cultural activity and tourism are integrated into transport planning.
- Broker access to green investment initiatives.
- Increase conservation areas; promote creative reuse of heritage buildings.

Actions for partners

- Developers and development projects should prioritise building reuse.
- Tourism plans must embed regenerative practices.
- Procurement models should enable commissioning of cultural activity that use local talent, building on existing provision.

Actions for Calderdale Creates

- Lead by example, identifying cross sector regional partnerships to join (or lead) alongside opportunities for sector to make a difference.
- Facilitate sector's understanding through, for example, a conference with leading environmental thinkers and practitioners showcasing 'what works' to help the sector develop and identify tangible actions.
- Collate Sector impact data and agree shared targets.

Actions for Cultural Sector

- Capture data on their own impact, using it to drive their reduction on the carbon footprint; transforming delivery, programming and engagement.
- Celebrate good practice to increase awareness of the sector's role in catalysing change and in influencing and inspiring action locally, nationally and internationally.

Distinctly Calderdale

Businesses and visitors are attracted by the vibrancy of the cultural offer, strong sense of identity and creative possibilities.

Background context

Cultural assets are at the heart of Calderdale's Visitor Economy Strategy. In 2019 £396.7 million was spent in the local area because of tourism – an increase of 14% from 2018.

Following the launch of Gentleman Jack, visits to Shibden Hall increased by almost 500%, attracting visitors from far and wide.

The Piece Hall has catalysed regeneration, transforming the perception of the town – nationally and internationally – and driving footfall.

Culture on our high streets increases footfall – libraries, theatres or museums can play a key role in hosting events and offering unique experiences that attract visitors to high streets, and also can animate the streets through cultural programming.

A distinct cultural identity supports community cohesion – cultural organisations can help build civic pride and create an increased sense of belonging in communities.

Where are we now

There is a strong identity for individual cultural assets – e.g. Piece Hall, Incredible edible, Dean Clough, Trades Hall.

Funding for town centre schemes are in place in Brighouse, Elland, Halifax, Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden – all with some element of cultural activity.

Cultural Destinations programme brought partners together in positive collaboration.

Screen Tourism continues to flourish and raise our profile internationally.

However, the opportunity arising from interest in Gentleman Jack has not yet been fully capitalised on – including necessary investment to develop the offer. Although it was delayed by the pandemic, another series is in train. Increased interest is also anticipated following the upcoming television adaption of the Gallows Pole.

There is a significant and extensive heritage offer with good geographic spread across area.

There is a Perception of tired infrastructure, e.g. Victoria Theatre, Bankfield Museum, Shibden Hall. A tourist destination needs to capitalise on its assets. Historic buildings should be seen as opportunities and not challenges.

There is a good filming support infrastructure and the opportunity to be known for and to grow local capacity and skills across cultural / Calderdale infrastructure.

By 2032

Calderdale celebrates its cultural assets; they are fully used and investment is maximised.

Culture is at the heart of a reinvented high street offer, showcasing the distinct identity of each town and driving footfall.

The visitor offer is integrated with emerging products, such as new TV series and additional investment secured to maximise the potential and ensure visitors want to return.

The physical, intangible and digital cultural infrastructure seamlessly blend creating new hybrid art and experiences.

Actions

Actions for Calderdale Council

- Promote practice sharing to inform town centre development plans, learning what works elsewhere e.g. through visits, to ensure solutions adopted build on current good practice.
- 'What's on' information clearly signposts activities across the sector in a timely manner – through both digital and local offline tools.
- Co-ordinate initiatives to ensure cultural offer is ready to take full advantage of opportunity following TV drama broadcasts.
- Develop an investment plan to make cultural assets fit for the needs and expectations of contemporary audience, including accessibility.
- Identify practical support for cultural venues undertaking capital projects, e.g. cash flow.

Actions for partners

- With CalderdaleCreates, develop procurement guidance for businesses; promote benefits of commissioning quality cultural activity from Calderdale-based creatives.
- Use Town Centre investment to increase visibility of cultural infrastructure and activity.

Actions for CalderdaleCreates

- Horizon scanning to identify hybrid digital programming, information and experiences.

Actions for cultural sector

- Proactively and regularly shares 'what's on' information with coordinators.

A Thriving Cultural Scene

The sector – its people and organisations – are invested in so that they flourish and play a unique and dynamic/effective role in society.

Background context

“Having a cultural strategy in place as well as strategic partnerships with combined authorities or other independent cultural institutions increases the likelihood of securing larger amounts of funding, such as from Arts Council England. This is because those councils are seen as demonstrating a strategic commitment to culture and the role it can play for society.” LGA

In 2020 the creative industries were the fastest growing part of the UK economy... The potential for future growth is clear.

The majority of creative enterprises employ fewer than 10 people, and over a third of the sector’s workforce are self-employed. NESTA

Commercial businesses, publicly-funded organisations, and freelancers work hand in hand across supply chains and internationally to produce the creative services and products. Recognising and enabling this partnership and collaboration is essential to creative and economic success.

Where are we now

A new cultural partnership that has been established by the sector. Cultural organisations have worked together to agree its Vision, Mission and Values and are ready to collaborate in developing & delivering a new cultural strategy. An inclusive membership will be crucial to effective and impactful delivery.

The role of culture is written into the Council’s key strategies – including the Visitor Economy Strategy; Inclusive Recovery Plan and Town Centres plans.

Culture currently sits within the Customer Services workstreams of the Council. At organisational level there are sustained and productive links to regional and national initiatives such as the National Academy for Social Prescribing.

However, the sector experiences a lack of operational connectivity and there is inconsistent visibility and understanding of the sector and its offer.

Sector organisations would welcome business support or advice, tailored to their structures – including fundraising, finance and HR.

There is a pool of qualified people living in Calderdale, but working elsewhere, including internationally. Poor pay and instability was noted.

Recovery from COVID-19 will take a number of years. The next 12 months-2 years will be most critical to organisations’ survival.

There is opportunity for a creative approach to routes into the sector and investment in progression, collaborating with the College and joining across art forms, to create critical mass and development opportunities that reflect tomorrow’s sector.

By 2032

Culture and the cultural sector in Calderdale is visible; championed by the community and decision-makers.

The sector regularly comes together to identify and deliver partnership solutions – whether advocacy, delivery of strategy priorities, or sector development.

The cultural partnership is thriving, connecting the sector and brokering new opportunities.

A new biannual festival celebrates Calderdale's culture and communities.

More and diverse people are inspired to pursue a creative career at whatever age, following clear and accessible routes and innovative creative development opportunities – adding to the vibrancy of Calderdale.

Actions

Activities for Calderdale Council

Increase visibility of culture and its impact across the Council, Councillors and strategic partners; & continue to secure recognition of its role in wider strategies.

Embed appropriate mechanisms to join up cultural activity and opportunities across the Council.

Enable the Cultural Partnership to move forward as a dynamic, ambitious & collaborative leadership & delivery force; evolving the Council's role as this develops.

Secure additional investment in the Strategy priorities, e.g. WYCA, NPO, and grants.

Broker access to existing business support; enable it to be adapted to the particular needs of the cultural sector.

Agree a minimum core set of data across the sector to support advocacy and inform delivery. e.g. visits / participation, motivation; workforce.

Actions for partners

Work with WYCA & Calderdale College to develop cross-sector apprenticeships and 'Ladders of Opportunities' for underrepresented groups, including skills in cultural delivery – from festival accounting to creative practice.

Actions for CalderdaleCreates

Systematically build advocacy & leadership capacity, investing in key relationships, securing representation on key decision-making bodies e.g. wellbeing, place, climate emergency, and building practices that enable connections to be made and knowledge shared.

Identify mentoring support to increase the sector's capacity and confidence to advocate and represent effectively. Establish peer learning groups.

Connectivity: Bring together the sector for networking; ensure structures enable all to participate with clear communication of opportunities, decision-making and sharing practice.

Actions continued

Increase the visibility of sector and its offer - e.g. introduce annual culture awards / celebration.

Secure funding to increase partnership capacity to lead and coordinate, co-creation skills development; relationship building; increase connectivity and put building blocks in place for future partnership work; including for Year of Culture 2024 delivery.

Develop partnerships with academic institutions. Build research and evaluation into each initiative. Working in the spirit of action research: trying things out, taking risks, learning from experience, and working iteratively.

Actions for Culture sector

Actively contribute to the work of the Partnership

Collect and submit agreed data and also use to inform own planning and prioritisation.

Conversations & Participants

Calderdale Creates Steering Group

Artworks The Everyday School of Art
Calderdale Council
Northern Broadsides
Pennine Guitar Centre
The Piece Hall
Victoria Theatre

Calderdale culture sector stakeholders

Annapurna Indian Dance
Annapurna Indian Dance
Art in Calderdale
Arts for Brighouse
Arvon Foundation
Birchcliffe Centre
Calder Youth Folk
Calderdale Creativity & Health Programme
Calderdale Industrial Museum
Calderdale Music Trust
Creative Minds, SWYFT
Culture Walks and Talks
Curious Motions
Dean Clough Artists
Dog House Music Promoters
Duke of Wellington's Regiment
Egg Power Productions
Eureka! The Children's Museum
Fire and Water
Flame Oz / Halo / Calvos
Flamingo Chicks
Halifax Antiquarian Society
Halifax Heritage Tours
Halifax in the Great War
Halifax Minster
Halifax Music Trail
Halifax Organ and Choral Academy
Halifax Thespians
Handmade Parade
Happy Valley Pride
Hebden Bridge Arts
Hebden Bridge Film Festival
Hebden Bridge Open Studios
Hebden Royd Town Council
Hope Chapel
IOU Theatre
JD Accoutrements
Leeds Arts University
Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP)
Meandering Bear
Mr Wilson's Second Liners
Northern Broadsides
Pennine Heritage
Plunge Boom
Square Chapel

The Cloud Gallery
The Grayston Unity
Thingamijig Theatre
This is Rupert
Todmorden Town Deal Board
Welland Health & Wellbeing Festival
What is Drum at Callis Mill
Working Part Arts
Yorkshire and Humber Visual Arts Network

Wider stakeholders

Arts Council England
Calderdale Citizens Advice Bureau
Calderdale College
Cath and Angus Music
Christ Church, Sowerby Bridge CMBC BAME Network
Community Foundation
Halifax BID
Halifax Opportunities Trust
Historic England
IVE
Memory Lane Café
National Lottery Heritage Fund
New Writing North
SW Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYFT)
Staying Well
Visits Unlimited
Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Alliance
Welcome to Yorkshire

Focus Groups

Calderdale Council – Employment Placement
Calderdale Scrutiny Place Committee
Himmat – BAME Community
Himmat – BAME Community