

Creativity, Culture and Place

Simon Eden 1 June 2022

Creativity, Culture and Place: Background paper

Download a copy of the briefing paper [here](#).

The Southern Policy Centre has been commissioned by the Partnership for South Hampshire to explore the role the creative and cultural sector plays in the central South.

We'll be following a two-stage approach:

1. Seminar for senior policy-makers on 10th June to:

- understand the contribution cultural organisations and creative industries can make to realising the region's ambitions for its economy and communities
- explore our priorities in supporting the sector
- discuss the broad geography at which we might work and, from that
- shape a 'vision' for the role the sector can play in the central South.

2. A workshop on 15th July which will focus on delivery:

- what approach do we want to take to delivering change? That could be anything on the continuum between a loose joining of the dots linking organisations and initiatives to more formal partnership arrangements
- who are the key partners we need to bring together to help realise our ambitions?
- what financial support would be required?
- what is the plan for delivery?

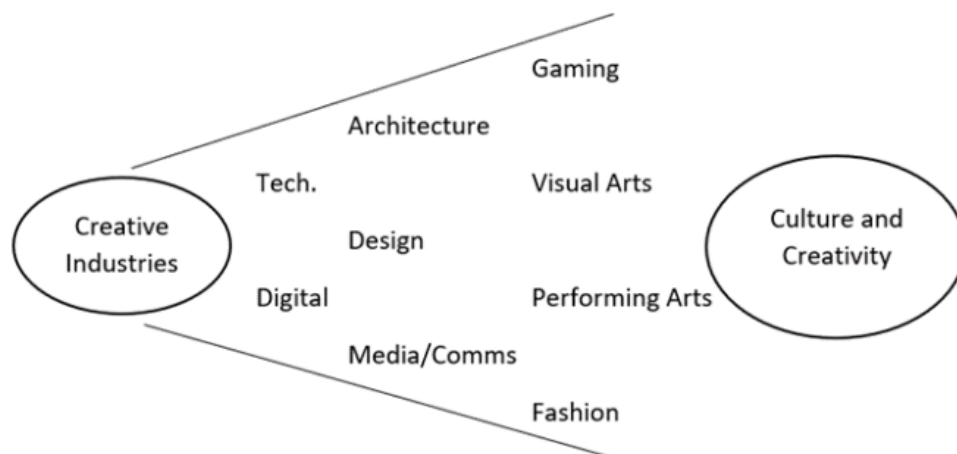
A brief history

The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire PUSH established the Quality Place Delivery Panel to lead one of its work strands when it achieved Growth Point Status in 2007. From the outset the Panel's work programme included projects related to Design in the Built Environment, Place and Identity, Tourism and the Visitor economy, Creative Industries, the Historic Environment and Cultural Infrastructure Planning. (Details of this work can be found on the [PUSH website](#)).

Since 2012 work to support creative industries has been led by [Creative Network South](#) (CNS), a business partnership facilitated by the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce.

The Panel has adopted a broad definition of the 'creative and cultural sector' including creative industries (as per the DCMS definition) as well as the performing and visual arts (see figure 1).

Fig.1 – elements of the cultural & creative sector



Experience to date

PfSH has learnt a number of lessons from the investment made in cultural and creative projects of the past 15 years. Key amongst these are:

1. The Creative and Digital Sector form the fastest growing sector in the Solent Economy. Nesta have identified both the Southampton and Portsmouth Travel to Work areas as being in the top 20 Clusters for Creative Jobs Growth.
2. The creative sector provides a wide range of opportunities for entrepreneurs and business start-ups.
3. The region's cultural offer – from theatres to events and festivals – is a major driver of the Visitor Economy in the Solent Area.
4. Our cultural offer, alongside our built and green heritage, contributes to a sense of place and sense of belonging which helps drive inward investment and attract talent.
5. Universities in the Solent area produce a significant number of graduates in creative and cultural disciplines. Often these graduates will start up creative businesses, which can be the foundation of that economic sector. However historically the Solent area has a low retention rate for creative graduates.
6. Projects and programmes within the cultural sector can provide people who have become distant from the Labour Market with opportunities to develop skills and find a pathway to employment. Engagement with the cultural sector can often help build transferable skills which increase employability.
7. A vibrant community cultural sector provides residents with opportunities to shape life in their neighbourhood. Cultural activities and events bring people together, helping new residents to integrate into the community. They can also engender a sense of inclusion that values diversity and helps build community capacity.

8. We know that taking part in cultural activities can improve both physical and mental health. It can also build personal resilience and reduce the risk of an individual engaging in antisocial or offending behaviour.

Why is a new approach needed?

A lot has changed since PfSH's Quality Places Delivery Panel came together, and when CNS was established. Funding regimes have altered, with targeted LEP funding replacing unhypothecated RDA contributions to the Partnership, and local councils facing significant financial pressures.

The Partnership and its aspirations have continued to evolve, and right now there is a major review of their spatial policies, which will help realise shared infrastructure aspirations. Economic planning has also changed, notably with the creation of LEPs by the Coalition Government which took power in 2010. The detailed regional economic analysis and planning LEPs have led has helped focus of sectors such as the creative industries.

The past few years have also seen a number of bodies established locally to support aspects of the creative and cultural sector, including:

- [Hampshire Cultural Trust](#)
- [Portsmouth Creates](#)
- [The Island Collection](#)
- [Southampton 2025](#)
- [Tech Solent](#)

Arts Council England have recently identified IOW, Portsmouth, Gosport, New Forest and Rushmoor to be among 11 priority areas in their Southwest Region.

Importantly, Southampton's bid to become the UK's City of Culture 2025 will have an impact on the region, notwithstanding it was not ultimately successful. The bid is based on strong regional partnership and collaboration which will, it is to be hoped, endure and thrive.

Looking beyond the central South, other regions have built a variety of approaches to supporting culture and creativity. Several have adopted the PfSH model whilst others have taken a different approach, all can offer us some lessons. Key bodies include:

- [Creative Estuary](#)
- [Stride South London](#)
- [Wired Sussex](#)
- [Silicon South](#)
- [Plymouth Culture](#)
- [Cornwall Creative Manifesto](#)

- [Somerset Arts Business Cultural Alliance](#)
- [West of England Combined Authority Cultural Compact](#)

These significant changes to the landscape suggest it is timely for us to take a fresh look at how we support these sectors.

Southern Policy Centre

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