UK Cities Culture Report 2015
**Foreword: boldly into the future**

UK cities are in a period of profound disruption and change. Outside London - which is almost a separate world - the agony of public sector funding cuts is slowly making way for the anticipated ecstasy of devolved powers. A new confidence is emerging. City leaders are excited by the prospect of increased control over their affairs. The next 2-3 years could be a defining period for UK cities, introducing new ways of working and new resources that go some way to compensate for reduced Exchequer funds, such as retention of business rate income.

BOP Consulting’s focus is culture and the creative economy. Over the last 20 years we’ve helped to embed these into policy and to deliver major projects in cities across the UK.

Perhaps we were tuning into the wrong channels in 2015, but we weren’t hearing enough about culture in the increasingly forwards-looking debate about cities. Rather the loudest voices in the cultural sector were those trying to push back funding cuts. This is a position we sympathise with, but feel is unlikely to work.

In response we created the *UK Cities Culture Report*. The report is built on interviews with 50 opinion leaders from the 12 most important cities outside London, plus a brief analysis of city data. The interviews took place over August to October 2015. At this point we found a quiet optimism about culture.

All cities report a commitment to culture and to harnessing culture to regeneration, investment and tourism agendas. Several cities see a fresh spirit of entrepreneurialism and collaboration in their cultural sector. Cultural organisations are responding to reduced resources by testing new models such as co-commissioning, crowd-funding, shared spaces and pop-ups. Sustained investment is needed to help these flowers to bloom.

So it seems there is collective understanding of WHY culture will be important in the next phase of city development, and WHAT agendas need attention within the cultural sector. What we now need is a series of breakthroughs in HOW we achieve this.

In BOP’s view, one breakthrough is designing city governance models that set city-wide priorities for culture and develop cultural activity from the bottom-up. This means recognising that cities are a network of organisations, not fiefdoms dominated by top-down provision. Local authorities need support to complete their evolution from providers to enablers. Their future role within city networks is to help articulate the vision for culture, to broker partnerships, and source investment.

Funding will need to be aligned with new governance models and new local authority roles. One idea is city investment funds that pool local authority funding with other local and national funding. Funding should be linked to measurable outcomes, while encouraging entrepreneurialism and innovation in delivery methods.

---

1 This means fashion, architecture, publishing, craft and design, film and TV, video games, museums, theatre, opera, dance, popular and classical music and visual arts. This report focuses on these subsectors.

2 Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast. All these cities except Belfast and Edinburgh are members of Core Cities UK.
BOP’s evaluation of Arts Council England’s Catalyst programme suggests that fundraising success is driven by skills and experience. Location is less important. This suggests another breakthrough: equipping organisations outside London to tap into private support.

Cities seem less focused on bricks and mortar at present. Perhaps the future shift for venues is a conceptual one: striving to ‘open out’ to engage the widest range of people, introduce diverse ancillary services, share functions and spaces with partners. There are many wins: new audiences, partnerships and income, and reduced costs.

Surprisingly, the cities didn’t mention digital much. It’s clear to BOP that culture has to be part of the ‘smart city’ movement that seeks to deliver services to citizens digitally.

There’s good crossover between the priorities above and those of the world cities BOP works with, via the World Cities Culture Forum.

We look forward to your response to the UK Cities Culture Report, and working with you to achieve these breakthroughs.

PS. It’s surprisingly hard to find data on culture in cities. We used three fairly unsatisfactory proxies in our quick first pass in section 9. The adage about you can’t change what you can’t measure probably holds true here. Might it make sense to improve national data collection, to assist local benchmarking and decisions?

Alex Homfray
Director, BOP Consulting
November 2015
1. Key Findings

- Cities are confident at this time of huge change: globalization, growth, new governance and funding arrangements.

- Many cities see population growth as a challenge but also an opportunity. They believe that pressure on public services will be balanced by an influx of talent and diversity.

- Cities are excited by the prospect of increased control over their own affairs. Devolution of power will give cities more control over priorities and budgets for culture, leveraging new resources, and stimulating alternative approaches to investment.

- Cities are determined to build pathways out of poverty, to raise aspirations and improve skills. There is a clear desire to create high value, highly productive jobs for everyone.

- Cities remain committed to using culture as a catalyst for regeneration. For some, culture is “an engine for skill enhancement”; for others, it will create a “sense of place” and can encourage companies to relocate. It will also enable a city to attract talent, and to “promote tolerance, equality and diversity”.

- Regeneration, tourism and inwards investment agendas are converging on the desire to create places with a strong quality of life, which make people want to stay as well as visit.

- Cities want to build partnerships with London in a way which establishes their separate identity and strong local cultural offer. Cities are starting to seek inspiration and partnerships overseas in cities such as Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

- The role of the local authority is expected to shift away from direct provision of culture and towards an enabling role – articulating a vision, brokering partnerships, and sourcing new funding.

- Many cities report a refreshing spirit of collaboration within their cultural sectors, partly in response to reduced resources. This promises to sustain a more dynamic and resilient cultural sector.

- A range of innovative models and interventions are already being tested and refined in the cities including:
  - New commercial revenue-generating activities e.g. managing workspace, commercialising content
  - Crowd-funding with friends and subscribers to finance smaller projects
  - Co-commissioning and joint projects and spaces
  - Making better use of dead spaces.

- Some cities want to become test-beds for a new range of smart services, and see culture as part of this experiment. But overall ‘digital’ received surprisingly little mention.

- There is collective understanding of WHY culture will be important in the next phase of city development, and indeed WHAT agendas need attention within the cultural sector. What is now needed is a series of breakthroughs in HOW we achieve this.

- The report ends by showcasing projects from across the cities, which the report contributors believe point the way into the future.
2. The future for UK cities

Cities are dynamic and exciting places to live and to work. And our city opinion-leaders are remarkably bullish about the future. Cities may well be suffering from social and economic inequalities but they are also drivers of economic growth. There is a housing shortage and a real pressure on essential public services such as education, but cities remain crucibles of ideas and talent. And as populations grow and diversify, there will be new opportunities to create more success for everyone.

The agglomeration effects of cities mean that they are the places that drive economies for nations – but also that they are the locations where solutions will be found for other defining issues of the age, such as social cohesion, migration, climate change and inequality.

Chris Murray, Core Cities Group

2.1 Embracing diversity and growth

For many, population growth is a major challenge – and a huge opportunity. This may result in increased pressure on public services – but it will be balanced by an influx of talent and diversity, which will help transform cities. Cardiff, for example, is the fastest growing capital city in Europe. Like other cities, it will also become a more diverse city, with a range of different communities and ethnic groups expanding in size.

Cardiff is one of the fastest growing cities in the UK, and the fastest growing capital city in Europe. Managing that growth will be vital from the point of view of infrastructure, housing, energy, transport etc. It is also a very young city, with tens of thousands of students coming to the city each year. Retaining and harnessing that talent will be key to our future success.

Neil Cocker, Cardiff

Though population growth might put extra pressure on housing and other public services, all cities share Cardiff’s enthusiasm for the talent and diversity of their citizens.

Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe. Finding ways to educate, nurture, employ and house these people as they enter the workforce is crucial to the city’s growth.

Craig Hamilton, Birmingham

The opportunities are significant for all aspects of the city – not least the cultural sector, which will benefit from a larger and more diverse pool of talent.

We need to develop talent from diverse communities, and to harness the full potential of our diverse talent base.

Dick Penny, Bristol
2.2 Securing inward investment

Tourism and the growth of the visitor economy have had a huge impact on cities such as Liverpool and Cardiff. Tourists come for short and long-breaks; cities are also attracting businesses for study visits and conferences. Thousands of new jobs have been created and several cities are attracting new foreign investment – including from mainland Europe and China.

Inward investment does not just come from overseas. Some cities, like Bristol, are attracting people and businesses from an over-heating London. Others are waking up to that opportunity too: placing a new focus on attracting and retaining talent from within the UK as well as overseas. They are all committed to creating people-friendly places with a strong quality of life – creating more vibrant, liveable, cities where people will want to stay, not just visit.

Setting out a new ten-year cities strategy, the opportunity here is to become a ‘liveable city’ as well as one that is economically prosperous as a post-industrial city that can attract investment interest from countries such as China, India and the Middle East.

Maria Balshaw, Manchester

2.3 Creating pathways out of poverty

Too many people in the city remain disconnected from jobs, wealth, opportunities while poverty co-exists alongside strong prosperity. The economic competitiveness and resilience of the City is seen as an essential ingredient for the future development of the city, but also to ensure that this economic performance plays a direct benefit in helping citizens achieve and realise their potential.

Nottingham City Council and partners

Cities across the UK are facing the same challenges of deprivation and inequality. All of them are struggling with the consequences of the economic downturn in 2007, exacerbated by the current round of cuts. The need to build inclusive cities, places where everyone has a good education, a fair chance of a job, good housing and access to health care is a need shared by everyone.

For many cities, the strategy for the next ten years is about balancing growth with equality; regenerating and creating opportunities for wealth while supporting vulnerable and excluded citizens.

The challenges for the city are to embrace growth and ambition but recognise the need to address some of the issues around social deprivation, skills and education.

Lara Ratnaraja, Birmingham

Cities are not down-beat, however. They are determined to build “pathways out of poverty”, to raise aspirations and improve skills. Alongside a commitment to invest in growth sectors, there is an ambition to create “high value, highly productive jobs” for all.
There is a common desire to support local, neighbourhood development – to foster a sense of aspiration, to improve the quality of life, and to help build more resilient communities.

2.4 Preparing for devolution

The government’s commitment to devolution is seen as a fantastic opportunity. The promise of greater control over pooled budgets is an exciting prospect. It is one which will enable more strategic use of resources and the opportunity to carve out an exciting vision for cities. It is already stimulating new strategies and new alliances. Cities, LEPs, businesses, universities and others are collaborating to shape new approaches to city-building.

All cities are excited by the prospect of more control over their own affairs – from Glasgow to Cardiff, Belfast to Bristol.

*If we get this right it will completely transform not only the governance of the city but the lives of the communities. This is a one-off opportunity and Manchester is in a unique national position to create its own agenda, and central government is looking to us for imaginative solutions.*

Michael Oglesby, Manchester
3. The positioning of culture

The commitment to culture as a means of helping cities deliver on their aspirations is palpable. For some, culture is “an engine for skill enhancement”; for others, it can help to create a “sense of place” and can encourage companies to relocate. It enables a city to attract and retain talent, and it can help “promote tolerance, equality and diversity”. Across all public services – education to health, inward investment to community development – cities are committed to culture as a catalyst for human and city regeneration and growth.

"The main opportunity is in harnessing creative talent within the city. As time moves on, new artists change the face of the city; the powers that be need to be receptive to this change."

Dan Green, Cardiff

3.1 Economic vitality, skills and talent

Culture is a vital component of economic growth across cities. The number of jobs in the creative and digital sector is well-rehearsed, and many cities are benefiting from a boom in these sectors – often strongly connected to the cultural sector. Culture helps to attract investment, creates jobs, and generates GVA for a city.

"Culture is an important well-spring of economic growth, fueling both the City’s visitor economy whilst supporting the creative industry and digital sector development"

Nottingham City Council and partners

"The city’s cultural offer, rather like its retail offer, is a significant pull in terms of attracting and growing new business, and in supporting both the day time and night time economies. The cultural offer also supports the two universities in their ambitions for student growth."

Tony Durcan, Newcastle

The importance of culture as a means of fostering and attracting talent is particularly marked. Culture is an important part of a high quality education experience and helps to attract university students. It can “help us attract and retain good people” and can inspire people, young and old. It stimulates curiosity and creativity among everyone.

"Culture supports talent and it is an engine for skill enhancement."

Cluny McPherson, Leeds

3.2 Community regeneration

Culture is seen as a vital tool in community regeneration projects. It brings communities together, attracts investment and helps to foster a strong sense of place. All opinion leaders seem...
to share a view best expressed by Adrian Mills at BBC North: “culture plays a significant role in bringing the disparate parts of the city together”.

Improving neighbourhoods builds social capital. It can improve health and education too. Enhancing the economic profile of an area can help ensure that these changes are sustainable.

Culture has the opportunity to support well-being and health issues in different communities, improve educational attainment and has an important role to play in the economic vibrancy of the city.

Laura Pye, Bristol City Council

There are a number of examples of how culture can transform places from no-go areas to thriving, vibrant centres: the Baltic Triangle in Liverpool and Stokes Croft in Bristol, to name just two.

3.3 Identity and profile

The sense that culture is the “backbone to all our lives” seems to be shared by very many cities, whose enthusiasm and commitment goes beyond a traditional view of culture as just a tool for regeneration. One opinion leader in Bristol believes that culture enables us to “see ourselves in new ways”; for another in Nottingham, culture “interconnects and underpins” the city; for another in Glasgow, culture is about “bonding, bridging and linking social capital”.

Emma Price in Cardiff put it best, reflecting on the dynamic nature of cities and the way in which they evolve over time:

Arts and culture strategies can help to reveal and enhance the underlying identity, the unique meaning, value, and character of the physical and social form of a City.

Emma M. Price, Cardiff

3.4 A way of life

There is a real opportunity for cultural organisations to increase the ‘liveability’ of a city, from providing entertainments and intellectual pursuits, to expertise on elements such as design of the public realm.

John Carey Williams, Cardiff

There is a powerful sense of culture as an integral way of doing things in cities – much more than just a set of services. There is a belief in culture as part of the core fabric of a city, of culture as a way of life.

Culture is central to create a city for people to live in and to want to spend time in.

Lord Shipley, Newcastle

As Rebecca Shatwell and Peter Merrington (Newcastle) put it: cities aspire to use culture “not just as a problem-solving tool” but to “allow the life of a city to flourish”.

4. Realising the benefits of culture

UK cities are well placed to realise the benefits of investing in culture. Sometimes the opinion leaders are short of ideas for practical implementation. But there is a track-record of investment in cultural assets and activities, and an emerging focus on talent and leadership, as an investment into the future.

*The combination of employment in the creative industries with the capacity of the cultural sector to boost the city’s international reputation, attract tourists and inward investment and to engage local people means that culture is at the heart of Glasgow’s future.*

Bridget McConnell, Glasgow

4.1 Infrastructure and assets

Past investment has helped create a strong cultural infrastructure in the UK’s cities, which is of national and international importance. There is a strength and diversity of cultural assets across cities in the form of museums, galleries, theatres, festivals. Cities like Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham and Glasgow have invested in their cultural heritage to boost the economy. Meanwhile, places such as Bristol, Manchester and Edinburgh have experienced economic transformation off the back of creative and media business development.

*Cardiff is more confident and outward-looking city today than perhaps at any time in its history. However it needs to understand better the way in which its culture can create real value for the city. To fully realise the benefits of the cultural economy the city needs to have the confidence and vision to do so.*

Roger Pride, Cardiff

Cities across the UK have a rich supply of cultural product, people, talent and skills.

4.2 Confidence and anxiety

Perhaps not surprisingly, there is anxiety about the future. To a certain extent, funding cuts appear to limit or diminish the ability of local partners to realise the opportunities for culture to address economic and social challenges. There is a noticeable absence of practical suggestions for putting visions into action.

*Local authorities and government are being faced with huge cuts with short-term solutions being put in place. Having the passion and backbone to invest in culture for the long term will be the biggest challenge.*

Gavin Johnson, Cardiff

But confidence is apparent. That confidence is often reflected in strong cross-sectoral partnerships, where civic leaders are collaborating to champion and support the cultural sector. In some cities, there is concern that these partnerships might begin to splinter if funding cuts continue.

*It is important that all parties – housing, health and education – understand the value of culture’s contribution*
to the city as a whole, but the recent contraction of the local authority means that there are fewer people to help.

Maria Balshaw, Manchester

In other cities, meanwhile, the pressures on budgets will make the need for collaboration across sectors all the more important. Indeed, there is a clear recognition of the importance of ensuring that a city’s commitment to culture is reflected in its strategies and investment in education, housing and health.

Culture is seen locally and regionally as key to regeneration. We need to realise the full benefits of our investment in infrastructure, and do our best to protect that investment, and secure a sustainable future for it.

Tony Durcan, Newcastle

4.3 Talent and engagement

In realising the potential for culture in the future, there is a marked emphasis on nurturing talent and skills. Some opinion leaders have identified the need for investment in civic leadership to help sustain commitment to culture. Others proposed to up-skill cultural leaders themselves.

The city itself will need to invest more in its own capacity to develop cultural programmes and strategies. Without a strong, senior, experienced and empowered team inside city government, it will be hard for the city to provide the leadership, as well as the plans, that we all need.

David Anderson, Cardiff

There is recognition of the need to broaden that skill-base and to harness the talent of young people, voluntary groups and small organisations. Communities need to be involved too; residents need to feel good about their cities and see the value of culture.

There is a surprisingly refreshing sense of collaboration across the city. Some projects will take off and flourish, some will crash and burn; but city leaders need to be prepared for that and learn what they can.

Adrian Mills, Manchester

4.4 Building on success

There are significant gaps in both wealth and health outcomes that need to be urgently addressed in this city—but there are also fine examples of communities working together to overcome these barriers using social enterprise and innovative thinking. They need support to ensure they succeed.

Paul Hassan, Bristol

In summary, cities have a fantastic track-record of support for culture and a strong set of assets and infrastructure. Against a backdrop of spending cuts, the mood is one of protecting existing “assets and value”, investing in people and talent, and perhaps finding new ways of doing things.
5. National and international partnerships

The sense of regional cities being dominated or overwhelmed by London is being replaced by a rising tide of self-confidence, reflected in a desire to build an independent international cultural profile.

"London’s global position is an advantage to the UK. But we need other centres of strength too. It’s only by having diversity can we develop the full range of talent and ideas on offer."

Dick Penny, Bristol

5.1 London-regions imbalance

Historically, cities’ relationship with London is often seen as a barrier to development, as well as a critical part of their own growth strategies.

Several respondents expressed concern at the scale of national government investment in London and a harsh sense of imbalance and inequality. Notwithstanding the clear recognition that London, as the cultural as well as political and economic capital of the UK, rightly attracts investment – many felt that it has been at the expense of their own ambitions and aspirations. Indeed, there is a sense that all cities are under-resourced.

"London is an international capital city and, as such, will always receive a disproportionate amount of cultural funding. There is, however, a strong case when one looks at the spend per head in London versus regional cities – and bearing in mind that this is tax-payers money – there ought to be acceptable levels of comparison. However, unless the regions produce world-class artistic programmes… then it is hard to make the case for further funds."

Michael Oglesby, Manchester

5.2 Connectivity and flow of talent

Ultimately, it is that desire to build a city’s own world-class programme that fosters an exciting and positive attitude towards the capital. Virtually everyone acknowledges that establishing a strong relationship with London’s cultural and creative asset base is an important part of a city’s own cultural strategy. The opportunity to be able to connect with London’s talent, to have world-class cultural organisations and exhibitions on tour, and to form part of an economic value chain of ideas and activities is vital to a city’s own economic and cultural well-being.

"Manchester is the necessary counterweight to London, offering something different and complementary. London needs Manchester to be as different and as strong as it is becoming."

Maria Balshaw, Manchester

5.3 Identity building

For several cities, it is important that this is not about being seen as a ‘receiving house’ for London companies. Cities want to be
able to build their own cultural and creative offerings in partnership with London as the capital city. They want to do so in a way which is about establishing a separate identity and strong local cultural infrastructure.

_London is not a threat, but it’s also not everything. There is a vibrant cultural offer from Northern Cities like Liverpool. The country can’t survive on just the London cultural offer._

Claire McColgan, Liverpool

There are some great examples of cities doing just that: investing in their own cultural product and building world-class, internationally-recognised organisations and events – from Manchester International Festival to Sheffield DocFest, from the Burrell Collection in Glasgow to Dr Who production in Cardiff.

_Birmingham offers a hugely diverse programme that encompasses a wide range of art forms, both mainstream and more critically engaged. I think what is unique about Birmingham is its cultural practice that reflects the diversity of the city and its industrial past – and that responds to its growth and future._

Lara Ratnaraja, Birmingham

5.4 Local, regional, international

For a significant number of people, the relationship between London and their own city is a red herring – a diversion which distracts from a more confident approach to cultural city-building.

_I hope devolution will take us to a place where we don’t define ourselves in relation to London._

Alan Fraser, Birmingham

For several cities, the strategy for addressing a perceived national/regional imbalance is about creating their own local and regional networks of activity. The concept of a Northern Powerhouse, for example, is not new to many cities which have been aspiring over a long period to improve their own supply chains and networks of collaboration on a regional or multi-region basis. Cities like Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Newcastle have been looking to collaborate over many years and are establishing exciting new cultural exchanges and partnerships.

_There is a heart and soul of the North West, and the values that come from here, that can be expressed and shared through culture._

Adrian Mills, Manchester

There is also a strong international dimension in the vision and strategies emerging from many cities. London is an important part of that strategy – with cities recognising London’s key role as an international as well as national cultural hub: a source for tourists travelling across the UK, an access route to international culture, and the route to new international markets.
London is a major source of our cultural tourists and raising our profile in London and getting coverage in the London media are key aims.

Bridget McConnell, Glasgow

Cities are seeking out comparators and collaborators among like-minded cities, particularly in mainland Europe. Cities such as Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen and Amsterdam provide inspiration for many cities but are also potential partners in new projects and collaborations.

That desire to connect internationally reflects a much more confident and independent perspective. London’s cultural strengths are an important part of the national and international cultural ecology – but cities are building new partnerships and collaborations.
6. New governance arrangements

The context for funding and support in cities is changing. There is a long tradition of municipal and civic support for culture, and local authorities have long been champions of the cultural sector. But the shape of cities is changing and a dynamic cultural sector is likely to benefit from a new network of support.

The biggest challenge will be to maintain/sustain and increase the cultural offer of Cardiff in the face of dwindling resources. More strategic joining of the dots is required to make the most of existing resources and to encourage new activity to develop and thrive.

Emma Geliot, Cardiff

6.1 Funding cuts

Cuts to local government funding pose real challenges for most cities with many cultural organisations already experiencing damaging reductions in funds. Many have shown real resilience over recent years, undergoing internal changes to adapt and respond to a challenging funding environment, while finding new channels of income from a range of sources.

There has been a major shift in the role and place of all institutions over the last four years. Austerity has led many to innovate and explore new ways of working… Increasing collaboration is the key, providing the opportunity to work across boundaries and outside of previous confines. This is challenging but liberating.

Nottingham City Council and partners

But as Lord Shipley, leader of Newcastle City Council puts it “cultural organisations will have to be more self-sustaining. They are good at generating income but this will have to continue for the foreseeable future.”

6.2 Business and private sector investment

The fact is that the public sector is the lifeblood for culture in most cities, which just don’t have a history of private sector support or investment. There are some great examples of local sponsorship and engagement – from major initiatives like the Sage in Gateshead to small local festivals. And while London continues to get the lion’s share of private sector funding, all opinion leaders are clear about the need for cities to build new partnerships with businesses and individual donors.

As Gareth Jones from Cardiff puts it: “we need to find a way to get more private money in order to enable those who are passionate about arts and culture to support it.”

Businesses have enjoyed the successes of city life but there is no real tradition of local sponsorship, particularly for the support of community level projects led by SMEs. The value of culture to the life of our cities needs to be advocated at the highest level so that support from new sources of funding becomes easier to realise. Therefore a frank conversation is needed with major retail chains,
breweries, hotels to communicate the benefits that they enjoy need to be invested in to be maintained.

Claire McCollgan, Liverpool

6.3 Enabling not providing

There is a clear recognition that local authorities must operate differently. There is an important leadership role for local authorities, facilitating a new partnership with the private sector and indeed with others.

I think government needs to be the enabler. It should provide the role of bringing the private sector and cultural organisations together where this doesn’t happen.

Roger Pride, Cardiff

Their job is as an “enabler” – articulating a vision, brokering partnerships, and bringing new money to the table for cultural organisations and activities. It will mean creating what one respondent described as a new “family” of support for culture – bringing together a range of partners and collaborators. It will entail “working across boundaries” and building common goals, connecting a fragmented array of support. Among the partners identified were universities, LEPs, corporate businesses, SMEs, individuals – and the cultural sector itself. It’s what Maria Balshaw in Manchester calls a “distributed leadership model”.

City government needs to become more adept at leading partnerships to create a shared vision for their cities.

Jim MacDonald, Architecture and Design Scotland

For some city authorities this won’t be a new role – Manchester, Glasgow and others have been building a cross-section of support for the arts and cultural sector in their cities over a number of decades. But the need to harness the resources of multiple partners is becoming more acute. And, although challenging, it could – as one respondent put it – be liberating.

6.4 Devolution

Devolution of power to a regional and local level could play the most significant role in fostering a new way of doing things – providing a greater degree of control over budgets, leveraging new resources, and stimulating alternative approaches to investment and development.

The public sector must provide the framework within which a strong, collegiate leadership can build a vision and plan for the next decade around a powerful and coherent vision and a re-articulation of a new phase in cultural-led regeneration.

Bridget McConnell, Glasgow

A shift away from an old way of working provides new opportunities. Cultural organisations need to be more entrepreneurial – but so too do cities themselves.
7. New ways of working

Cultural organisations have learned to be enterprising, seeking funding from a range of sources. Tough times call for new approaches. They have also had to try out different business models and forge new partnerships. Funders too are experimenting – testing alternative funding models to help people and organisations.

*Tax breaks, for example for culture bonds on the US model, incentives for banks, for example on the Catalan model, and flexibilities around tax retention (which exists in almost every model except the UK one). These are all examples that we should try to learn from.*

Chris Murray, Core Cities Group

7.1 Alternative funding options

In response to changing business models, funders are experimenting with new ways of working. Much lighter-touch funding schemes are being introduced with greater flexibility. Some councils are testing loans and small grant seed-funding to get projects off the ground; others are considering endowments and social investments. One funder has successfully introduced a ‘guarantee against loss’ for touring companies.

Funders need to stop asking for conventional business plans…. Invite different ways of presenting a strategy and accept that some enterprises will not be sustainable but may lead to further successful projects and ideas.

Annette Naudin, Birmingham

7.2 The networked city

Technology creates opportunities for new ways of working too. Digital technology has the potential to transform the delivery of a range of city services – from transport to road-repairs, waste management to culture. Working with major technology companies, some cities are positioning themselves to be test-beds for a new range of smart services. Cultural organisations could be part of this experiment, collaborating in the delivery of digital services. They can also play an important role in the production of new services or applications. Playable City in Bristol, for example, is stimulating a completely new approach to the smart city concept.

*The use of digital should be integral both in production, dissemination and engagement and as consumption of culture changes. This is an opportunity to break down the historic barriers to cultural engagement.*

Lara Ratnaraja, Birmingham
7.3 Boot-Strapping

The need for new funding models has emerged as cultural organisations themselves have become more enterprising, seeking new ways of running their companies. Companies such as Live Theatre in Newcastle have built a range of new revenue-generating activities, through commercial deals, running workspace or monetising their content in innovative ways.

New projects in particular can prove attractive to potential new investors. Crowd-funding has, for example, become an increasingly common way of raising small amounts of funds from friends and subscribers for small projects.

*Crowd-funding has played an important role in several projects I have worked on recently. The results have been very humbling; it’s a fantastic way to fund work as it makes the audience part of the project.*

Dan Green, Cardiff

Crowd-funding is one of many innovative ways of boot-strapping businesses. Increasingly, companies are finding new ways to get projects off the ground through self-generated resources or assistance. This might take the form of co-commissioning, joint projects and spaces, and smaller, collaborative projects.

7.4 Pop-up projects and spaces

Indeed, the development of pop-up cultural happenings and activities is part of this trend. Historically, of course, Councils have been able to make use of their Section 106 powers to leverage investment into and around new developments across a city.

But there is an enthusiasm for some of the new ways in which artists and creative people are making use of small, often apparently dead, spaces across a city. Examples of this include T13 in Belfast – in this case a huge space re-purposed for cultural activities - or Abacus in Cardiff making use of the old bus station offices.

City planners are recognising that cultural organisations can “spot opportunities” which have not been seen by public or private sector investors – creating space for activity and opening up new places for people and for potential investors.

*Glasgow has a number of unutilised empty buildings, legacy of its industrial past. Many of them are falling apart and could be given to artists and creative businesses that have capacity to find smart solutions to infrastructural issues.*

Angus Farquhar, Glasgow
7.5 Innovation and opportunity

Working with cultural organisations to help free-up spaces, such as empty shops, has been very successful in lots of cities. Alongside this, councils are offering shared office space, or providing small grants and loans.

The desire to make better use of dead spaces is typical of a wider trend of leveraging redundant assets and as one respondent put it: finding “locally-based approaches and solutions to local issues”.

"We are creating micro-economies, by running our own projects and events in our own venues and reinvesting all the funds back into the projects and people."

Doug Francisco, Bristol

A culture of enterprise is spreading across both cultural organisations and funding bodies. Many bemoan the cuts in public funding; and everyone would like to see more private sponsorship. But there is also a strong mood of self-help and collective enterprise, creating and sustaining a more dynamic and resilient cultural sector.
8. Inspirations and influences

Opinion leaders cited these projects as an inspiration for new forms of culture, and new ways of working in the future.

**People Make Glasgow**

https://peoplemakeglasgow.com/

Arts-led tourism and promotional initiative

The city’s mantra for the Games, 2015. Photo: RNZ

**Going Public Sheffield**

http://www.goingpublicsheffield.org/

A festival of international contemporary art. A collaboration between five city venues and four international art collectors.

Going Public, 2015. Photo: Going Public Sheffield.org
Empty Walls festival, Cardiff

http://www.emptywalls.co.uk/

A festival which transforms the streets of Cardiff into an open-air gallery of public murals inspired by themes of Welsh and British folk music.

Empty Walls Festival, 2015. Photo: Empty Walls.co.uk

Abacus project, Cardiff

http://www.promo-cymru.org/the-abacus-%E2%80%93-creative-space-in-cardiff#.VkDUTLfhDDc

A space for artists, thinkers and musicians. It hosts a gallery, project / workshop space and artist studios and aims to be a platform for the grassroots creative community of Cardiff.

The Abacus, 2015. Photo: promo-cymru.org
The Island

http://theislandbristol.com/

The Island is a self-funded multi use arts facility and creation centre based in the old Bridewell police station in the heart of Bristol's city centre.

Originally opened in partnership between Artspace Lifespace and The Invisible Circus as a temporary use project, The Island is still going strong some 8 years later.

The Island, 2015 Photo: Sidz Photography

Playable City

http://www.watershed.co.uk/playablecity/

Pioneered in Bristol and now taking place internationally, Playable City works with artists, city administrators and big tech companies - to put people and play at the heart of the future city.

Hello Lamp Post, 2013. Photo: Guardian
Nottingham’s Creative Quarter

http://www.creativequarter.com/

Nottingham’s flagship programme for arts and enterprise, connecting people and projects across the city

Desire Lines, Edinburgh

http://desirelines.scot/

An evolving project which aims to stimulate a conversation about all about what makes Edinburgh one of the most successful cultural cities in the world.

Nottingham’s Creative Quarter Map. Photo: Creative Quarter.com

Desire Lines. Photo: Desire Lines.scot
Duke Studios, Leeds

http://duke-studios.com/

Duke Studios is an open, collaborative, co-working space which provides a range of creative support services and facilities

T13, Belfast

http://t13.tv/

A shared pop-up events, sports and production space in the Titanic quarter in Belfast


T13, 2014. Photo: Flickr, T13
**Stick House**

http://www.raucous.org.uk/whats-next

Stick House – a production by theatre company Raucous, under the tunnels at Temple Meads, Bristol. The Stick House was a collaboration with Loco Klub, an Artspace Lifespace / Invisible Circus Project.

*Raucous, 2015. Photo: Raucous.org.uk*

---

**Big Little City**

http://biglittlecity.com/

**Big Little City** is a celebration of Cardiff and Cardiff’s creative talent for photography, art, film, writing, music and performance, animation, illustration, painting and graffiti.

BigLittleCity is about the city and the experience of its residents.

*Big Little City, 2015 Photo: Big Little City.com*
20 Stories High, Liverpool

http://www.20storieshigh.org.uk/

An innovative theatre company. Founded in 2006, 20 Stories High has established itself as one of the leading young people’s theatre companies nationally, and has won a series of prestigious awards and commissions.

Spike Island, Bristol

http://www.spikeisland.org.uk/

Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design. A vibrant hub for production, presentation and debate, it invites audiences to engage directly with creative practices through participation and discussion.
Artes Mundi, Cardiff

http://www.artesmundi.org/

Artes Mundi identifies, recognises and supports contemporary visual artists who engage with the human condition, social reality and lived experience and is best known for its biennial international Exhibition and Prize.

Artes Mundi, 2015. Photo: Artes Mundi.org

Liverpool Biennial

http://www.biennial.com/

The UK’s leading festival of contemporary visual art

Everybody Razzle Dazzle, 2015. Photo: Mark McNulty
Manchester International Festival

http://www.mif.co.uk/

Manchester International Festival is the world's first festival of original, new work and special events and takes place biennially, in Manchester, UK. The Festival launched in 2007 as an artist-led, commissioning Festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture.

Manchester International Festival, 2015. Photo: Mif.co.uk

Newbridge project, Newcastle

http://thenewbridgeproject.com/

Artist-led community studio.

Newbridge Project, 2013. Photo: The Newbridge Project.com
Live Theatre, Newcastle

Live has created a whole new business model for theatre – managing workspace, running a restaurant and franchising a wide range of its produced content.

It is now a model of alternative financing in the cultural sector.

http://www.live.org.uk/

BOM, Birmingham

Birmingham Open Media is a creative collaborative workspace for art, technology and science

http://www.bom.org.uk/
9. Culture in cities in numbers

BOP looked at four indicators of the health of the cultural and creative sector in each of the cities:

- Employment in the creative industries
- The 'location quotient' of the creative industries
- Local authority funding for arts, culture and heritage
- Lottery funding for arts, culture and heritage.

9.1 Employment

Extracting accurate figures for employment across the arts, cultural, creative and digital sectors is notoriously difficult. The figures presented here are estimates based on the latest available data from the Office of National Statistics, using the DCMS definition of creative industries³. On the basis of that methodology, we estimate that 303,000 people are employed in the creative industries across the 12 cities in the study. For comparison, this is fewer than the 368,000 employed in the 14 boroughs of Inner London.

9.2 Location quotient

Despite years of growth in the UK regions and nations, employment in the creative industries is still skewed to London and the South East. Rather than seek to use London as the sole comparator, therefore, we use a 'location quotient' to compare the relative density of creative industries employment in each city. Location quotient analysis measures the concentration of a particular industry in a region, compared to what would be expected on the basis of its overall size relative to a larger territory (in this case, the UK). A value greater than one means that the area has a higher employment concentration in a given industry, relative to the national level.

Figure 1: Creative industries location quotients (based on ONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total employment</th>
<th>Total employment in CCIs</th>
<th>LQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>481,000</td>
<td>13,940</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>862,900</td>
<td>29,240</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>559,500</td>
<td>30,245</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>638,600</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>485,100</td>
<td>23,605</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>834,300</td>
<td>28,120</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>1,420,100</td>
<td>48,280</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>661,400</td>
<td>15,440</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>1,248,800</td>
<td>49,780</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>880,500</td>
<td>19,770</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>302,500</td>
<td>8,905</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>840,700</td>
<td>18,540</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total employment in UK</td>
<td>31,300,000</td>
<td>1,808,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the concentration of creative employment in London, we are not surprised that none of the metropolitan areas in the study have an LQ of one – although Bristol (at 0.94) and Edinburgh (0.84) come close. However, if we look at employment in the city core, rather than the wider local enterprise partnership area or city region used as the basis of comparison here, we find evidence of strong clustering: for example in Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire, with an LQ of 1.13, and Birmingham and Solihull, with an LQ of 0.95.

LQ can signal places where trade between local businesses is creating a higher ‘multiplier effect’ within the local or regional economy, and holds out the potential to develop a competitive advantage for existing and new businesses in that location. Established creative clusters – e.g. Westminster in London – will have a higher LQ. So these ‘super clusters’ in the core of other UK cities may be an indicator that the creative economy in these places is at a tipping point, with critical mass of companies, skills and capabilities and strong supply chains to enable the sector in these places to act as a sustainable driver of growth and employment, less subject to the vicissitudes of national trends.

9.3 Local authority funding

Whilst the UK’s nations use different ways to measure public sector funding of culture, which prevents us from providing directly comparable data here, there is only one conclusion to be drawn from the evidence at hand: local authority funding has been falling, and is going to be cut further. Cities have already had to make some tough calls. The need to preserve statutory services needs to be balanced against the desire to enhance the culture of the city and its influence across the growth and development of wealth and opportunity for all its people. Our evidence suggests that the poorest inner city boroughs have borne a disproportionate burden in terms of percentage cuts. The resulting conflict between local government and the cultural sector, as played out very publicly in cities like Newcastle, can be damaging in fact and perception. Cities who succeed in rethinking of the role of local government will need to demonstrate their ability to develop strategies to manage the inevitable decline in direct funding, and to act as an enabler in its replacement with other kinds of support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural and related services</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>Percentage change 2013/14 - 2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£,000</td>
<td>£,000</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2,830,920</td>
<td>2,670,220</td>
<td>-5.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>29,328</td>
<td>28,343</td>
<td>-3.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>107,367</td>
<td>100,078</td>
<td>-6.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>116,175</td>
<td>103,517</td>
<td>-10.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>130,820</td>
<td>113,606</td>
<td>-13.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>132,641</td>
<td>113,558</td>
<td>-14.39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.4 Lottery funding

Whilst growth of the private sector is essential for the future wellbeing of UK cities, much of the cultural infrastructure and activity will continue to operate on a ‘mixed economy’ model – it will need continuing public funding as a social good to deliver benefits to all parts of the community. Again, we have used public data to provide a snapshot of funding for arts, culture, film and heritage in each of the cities.
There are no real surprises in these figures. Performance roughly reflects population, though Bristol seems to have done well and Birmingham relatively poorly in that regard. What these figures provide is a reality check on the aspirations of cities with plans for significant cultural infrastructure investments over the next few years. With further reductions in the level of central government grant on the way, cities will need to make effective, strategic use of public funds. We understand that DCMS is urging a wider role on BFI in support of new digital forms – the figures here confirm that there is some way to go in achieving that ambition across the UK’s core cities.

---

4 DCMS Lottery funding figures - [http://www.lottery.culture.gov.uk/SearchResults.aspx](http://www.lottery.culture.gov.uk/SearchResults.aspx)

5 Includes £4.5k from Sport Scotland
10. Acknowledgements

Contributors

The UK Cities Culture Report is built on interviews with around fifty ‘opinion leaders’ across all the featured cities. The opinion leaders are senior professionals in the fields of:

- Culture
- Business
- City government
- Regeneration and economic development
- Place marketing and inwards investment
- Local media
- Voluntary sector.

Additional interviews were sought from national bodies such as Arts Council England and Creative Scotland. BOP is highly appreciative of all contributions. We hope the report does justice to everyone’s insights, and provides a reward for their efforts.

BOP is also grateful to the Core Cities Group for encouraging input from city councils at Leader or Mayoral level; and to Arts Council England for encouraging engagement with the report.

The full list of contributors is:

- John Carey Williams, Theatre Iolo, Cardiff
- Ruth Cayford, City of Cardiff, Cardiff
- Neil Cocker, Ramp Commerce, Cardiff
- David Drake, Ffotogallery, Cardiff
- Tony Durcan, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle
- David Gaimster, University of Glasgow, Glasgow
- Emma Geliot, CCQ Magazine, Cardiff
- Dan Green, Dan Green Photography, Cardiff
- Craig Hamilton, Birmingham City University, Birmingham
- Paul Hassan, Ujima Radio, Bristol
- Angus Farquhar, NVA, Glasgow
- Doug Francisco, Artspace Lifespace Cic and The Invisible Circus, Bristol
- Alan Fraser, Birmingham YMCA, Birmingham
- Gavin Johnson, Ffilm Cymru, Cardiff
- Gareth Jones, Welsh ICE, Cardiff
- Rob Kennedy, Arcade, Cardiff
- Fergus Lineham, Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh
- Emma M. Price, Arts Council Wales
- Jim MacDonald, Architecture and Design Scotland
- Cluny MacPherson, Leeds City Council, Leeds
- Rebecca Maddox, Sheffield City Council, Sheffield
- Claire McColgan, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool
- Bridget McConnell, Glasgow Life, Glasgow
- Francis McKee, CCA Glasgow, Glasgow
- Peter Merrington, AV Festival, Newcastle
- Adrian Mills, BBC North, Manchester
- Chris Murray, Core Cities Group
- Annette Naudin, Birmingham School of Media, Birmingham
- Nottingham City Council and Partners, Nottingham
Dissemination partners

BOP thanks these partners for their assistance in encouraging opinion leaders to take part, and in launching the report:

- Core Cities UK
- Arts Council England
- Bristol Festival Of Ideas team
- Cardiff City Council.

Production team

The *UK Cities Culture Report* production team was led by BOP Director Alex Homfray and featured:

- Paul Owens, BOP Managing Director
- Graham Hitchen, BOP Associate
- Iain Bennett, BOP Associate
- Jonathan Todd, BOP Senior Economist
- Will Strong, BOP Project Manager
- Rossella Traverso, BOP Researcher
- Caterina Branzanti, BOP Researcher.

- Michael Oglesby, Oglesby Charitable Trust, Manchester
- Dick Penny, Watershed, Bristol
- Susan Picken, Queen’s Film Theatre, Belfast
- Roger Pride, Heavenly, Cardiff
- Laura Pye, Bristol City Council, Bristol
- Lara Ratnajara, University of Birmingham, Birmingham
- John Rostron, Welsh Music Prize, Cardiff
- Rebecca Shatwell, AV Festival, Newcastle
- Lord Shipley, Newcastle
- Paul Smith, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool
- Mike Stubbs, FACT, Liverpool
- Sally Tallant, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool
- Scott Taylor, Glasgow City Marketing, Glasgow
- Sallyann Tindall, Destination Glasgow, Glasgow
- Jo Wright, FACT, Liverpool
- Rebecca Wyn Kelly, Milgi’s, Cardiff
11. About BOP Consulting

BOP is an international consultancy with a 20-year track record of working in the cultural and creative economy.

We are trusted by our clients to deliver – among them government bodies, leading arts and cultural organisations, property developers and international agencies.

Since BOP’s formation we have worked on over one thousand assignments. We have played a central role in the UK in particular, promoting culture and creative industries within broader economic, social and educational agendas.

Some of our recent projects in UK cities include:

- Writing the Arts and Culture Strategy that is guiding the transformation of the London 2012 Olympic Park
- Leading the evaluation of the year-long, £13.2m Glasgow Commonwealth Games Cultural Programme
- Writing Thundering Hooves 2: the new 10-year strategy for the Edinburgh Festivals
- Evaluating the impact of BBC Wales on Cardiff’s economy and city centre regeneration programme
- Preparing the business case for a £60m restoration of the Burrell Collection museum in Glasgow
- Helping to plan a bold new £9m arts, heritage and research hub in the iconic Park Hill estate in Sheffield
- Evaluating how Bristol’s business rate relief scheme has enabled the city’s arts and creative sector to flourish
- Authoring the first ever film strategy for Birmingham
- Developing proposals for a new Film Centre for Belfast
- Preparing an economic impact assessment for each of the 12 Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums venues.

See www.bop.co.uk to learn more about us.

BOP also runs the World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF). This is a collaborative network of world cities seeking to promote culture as part of urban policy. Founded in 2012 by London, New York, Paris, Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney, Johannesburg and Istanbul, the WCCF now includes 30 member cities from around the world.

www.worldcitiescultureforum.com

Cover illustration: The Glasgow Commonwealth Games, Glasgow Green Opening Ceremony, Celebration Event, June 2014