HOUSE OF COMMONS

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda, HC 1040

Tuesday 22 March 2022, Global Academy, Hayes

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Watch the meeting

Members present: Julian Knight (Chair); Kevin Brennan; Steve Brine; Clive Efford; Julie Elliott; Dr Rupa Huq; Simon Jupp; Jane Stevenson; Giles Watling.

Questions 1 - 69

Witnesses

I: Jonty Archibald, Principal, Global Academy; Professor Judith Mossman, Pro-Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Coventry University; Professor Dave O'Brien, Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries, Sheffield University Management School; and Professor Simon Shepherd, Professor Emeritus of Theatre, Central School of Speech and Drama.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Jonty Archibald, Professor Judith Mossman, Professor Dave O'Brien and Professor Simon Shepherd.

Q1 **Chair:** This is the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee with our first hearing into the levelling up of culture. We are guests today of the Global Academy in Hayes. We want to put on record our thanks to the Global Academy for hosting us and we are looking forward to a tour later. It looks like a really interesting institution.

Before we begin with our questions and introduce our witnesses, we need to declare interests. I declare that I have received hospitality in the last 12 months from Global Radio.

Simon Jupp: I have also received hospitality from Global Radio in the last 12 months.

Chair: Our witnesses today, going from left to right, are Jonty Archibald, the Principal here at the Global Academy; Professor Judith Mossman, Pro-Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Coventry University; Professor Dave O'Brien, Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries, Sheffield University Management School; and Professor Simon Shepherd, Professor Emeritus of Theatre, Central School of Speech and Drama. Jonty, Judith, Dave and Simon, thank you very much for joining us today.

My first question is to Jonty. How do you think where we are today—the Global Academy—embodies levelling up, and what sort of lessons do you think we can learn from institutions such as this?

Jonty Archibald: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for coming to Global Academy today. I will start by telling you what Global Academy is, and giving you a little bit of background to what we are. We are a 14-to-19 school—we take students from year 10 to year 12—and we are a UTC, a university of technology college, which means that we have a specialism. There are about 43 of these schools in the country, each having a different specialism. Our specialism is the creative industries, creative broadcast, production, design and digital. We are a state-funded school, so students can apply. We have a very local catchment but also across London. We have a large amount of diversity, about 50% from ethnic minorities and 30% disadvantaged. We are very much a wide school in diversity and culture.

What we do particularly to level up here is that we are giving students the opportunity to enter a world that they may not have had an opportunity to enter before. We are giving them the opportunity to have insight into the media industry. Global Media is our industry sponsor, and our university sponsor is University of the Arts. That brings great opportunities for students to have work experience and visits to areas that they would not have had if they were in mainstream schools without a sponsor.

We also have a tailor-made curriculum. In year 10 we are very keen on the core subjects—maths, English, science—but on top of that the other core subject is UAL level 2 in creative digital production. That is worth about four GCSEs. They get opportunities to work on industry standard software and industry standard equipment. I know that you are going to have a tour later so you will see some of the facilities we have. It is about giving students from disadvantaged opportunities to enter into the media industries.

At key stage 5, so sixth form, we really ramp up that kind of work, because students have applied to come here. They do a UAL level 3, which is worth three A-levels. That will get them into university and the world of work. Currently about 50% go into university or HE or stay on at our year 14 course; and about 50% go straight into industry, apprenticeships or entry level jobs, and about 85% go into the creative industries from that. I feel that we are enhancing the curriculum and giving them very much a specialism.

Q2 **Chair:** How does that fit into levelling up?

Jonty Archibald: I think that we are giving students the opportunity to increase their economic prospects and to create their digital skills. We are very keen on developing numeracy and literacy; those are key. Those are the things that go through the curriculum at our school.

Q3 **Chair:** It is more than just curriculum, as such, and it is more than just getting a job at the end of it in your interactions with the local community. I presume that you are quite well rooted in your local community and therefore the levelling up is not just about the students themselves; it is about the area you are in.

Jonty Archibald: As you arrive, you see the development of this area of Hayes, which was desolate. I have been here four years and there has been the development of the area, with Crossrail coming through and the development of the creative industries here. A local cinema is going to open very close to us and that will bring jobs and economic revival to the area. We work very closely with other schools. Currently I am the head of the heads association in Hillingdon, so I am working very closely with other schools. This week we have some primary students coming in. Two weeks ago we had the Rise organisation and 90 primary schools. We are very much based within the community. We are a state school based within the community and I think that is our outward facing.

Q4 **Chair:** Do institutions like yours always need the infrastructure building around them? You mentioned that there has been huge growth and development over the last four years. I noticed a lot of apartments, and there is the Vinyl Factory. There are all sorts of interesting developments going on right here. Does an institution like yours need to be within an ecosystem like that or can you achieve what you achieve without that?

Jonty Archibald: I think for our specialism—when we think about Global, we think of broadcast and music—to be on the Old Vinyl Factory is

fantastic for us and gives an historical base. It is very good to be close to transport infrastructure. Of the students, 50% come from within about five miles of the school and 50% come from pan-London out to Norfolk, Northampton and south London. It is important that we have good structures for students to get here.

Q5 **Chair:** Thank you. This question is to Professor Dave O'Brien. Arts Council England's Let's Create strategy defines culture, for the purposes of its investments, as "collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre and the visual arts". Do you think this definition is adequate and sufficiently inclusive?

Professor O'Brien: That is a great question. For the purposes of investments, you have to draw boundaries somewhere. I think that we can give an anthropological definition of culture that sees it as the entirety of human life, but it is difficult to decide around financial and infrastructure investments unless you draw boundaries somewhere. I think it is worth saying in the context of Arts Council's current definition that this has changed over time. It is worth thinking about the journey Arts Council England has been on, from a more traditional or narrower version of what culture is—synonymous with just the arts, really—to a much more everyday cultural activity that we see with Let's Create now.

Q6 **Chair:** How do you think the levelling up agenda will influence the definition of what we see as art and culture?

Professor O'Brien: I am not entirely sure what levelling up is, and it has not really been clear from the Government. Obviously, there is a Government Department devoted to it. If we take levelling up as an approach to redistribution geographically around England in particular, but I guess the nation more generally, it is likely that we will see a broader definition of culture as we get more locally grounded cultural activities. We might not see, say, the definition of what theatre is change, but we might see changes in what counts as good theatre if it is more locally or regionally driven, for example.

Q7 **Chair:** Thank you. Professor Simon Shepherd, I saw you having a bit of a laugh there when it came to what levelling up actually is. Do you think that the Government and Arts Council England's definition of culture accounts properly for communities? How do you see levelling up, if you can define it, impacting that?

Professor Shepherd: Thank you. You probably need a short essay to answer that, but I will try to be brief. The Arts Council document seems to divide culture into creativity and culture, where culture is a set of made things. Culture actually is wider than that. Culture is a noun of process. It is to do with how you live. Let's think about three images. Imagine a block of flats with people on a few balconies singing. Imagine a street where people have come out of their houses at 8 o'clock in the evening and they are applauding. Imagine walking down your high road and there is a pop-up centre collecting for a Ukrainian charity. What we

have there are what I want to call everyday performance, improvised venues and spontaneous infrastructure. None of these is to do with making artworks. They are all to do with people doing some sort of local performance.

First, I think that we have to recognise that that is going on and to recognise that that is how people understand where they are, where they live. I think that is how planning officers understand where they live, and that is what we should hear them talking about. I think culture a is more subtle, broader word than we allow for and certainly than the documents seem to allow for. I will pause it at that point.

How it relates to levelling up is—I notice that one of the definitions is restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging and also empowering local leaders and communities. Well, some of this restoration of a sense of local pride and belonging can come precisely from suddenly discovering that all your neighbours who are out there in our street made these things, or our pop-up shop suddenly set up a whole network of people supplying goods for Ukrainian charities, we all started printing our own leaflets, then we organised a fundraising event and then we had a procession through the centre of the town. By the time this process has finished, people have got very much a sense of what they did and what they did together. Shall I pause there? I have been writing an essay.

Q8 **Chair:** No, it is really interesting as a wider definition of culture. There is an undercurrent that it is also about economics. That runs through the idea of levelling up; it also has to have an economic benefit. Do you think that is legitimate?

Professor Shepherd: I think it is potentially legitimate. Frankly, people will not be able to participate in cultural activity if they are dealing with sewage coming through into their kitchen from broken flats next door. People will not be able to participate in any form of cultural activity if they are just too poor to know how they will have the wherewithal to feed their kids. Art and culture will not solve that one—not, not, not. It will not be a substitute for anything. Economic activity can come into it, of course. If people start getting a sense of pride of place, they like to come into their town centre because they are getting a new identity for it and, therefore, things spin out from that. But I don't think that in any sense we should dream of art makers as social workers or artists coming in to fix things and suddenly a whole set of restaurants will develop, or anything of that sort. We have to be under no illusions that at some point or other we will bump into divisions in wealth.

Q9 **Chair:** Thank you. Professor Judith Mossman, you hail from our present City of Culture. Do you think that individual communities need to be given a greater independence and freedom to define culture and cultural policy according to their local experiences and the historical background of where they are from?

Professor Mossman: I think that there is a lot to that. Of late, I have echoed what Professor O'Brien said. I think the Arts Council approach has been bottom-up and quite regionally sensitive in lots of different ways, particularly during the pandemic. In fact, you will probably find what we found in Coventry—that there was so much activity going on already in different ways, from different communities, that one of the best ways of facilitating that is to allow people to hear about what other people in the community and other communities are doing. We will create some very positive synergies by allowing information to percolate. That has been one benefit to the City of Culture. People have heard about things that were happening already.

Q10 **Chair:** Thank you. I remember how vibrant things were in the run-up to the City of Culture. Are there any disadvantages to encouraging a local orientation to culture—a local understanding, a local section of culture—such as making national policymaking more difficult? I suppose I am asking whether we should be favouring localism, localism, localism over a national agenda.

Professor Mossman: I think that one ought to try to combine the two, because clearly there are some benefits in having a national strategy and some national centres of excellence. It would be wrong to move entirely away from that, but I think if a part of that national strategy can be localism that might lead to a happy medium.

Q11 **Chair:** What is your perception of the festival Unboxed? It was formerly the Festival of Brexit. What you said brought that to mind.

Professor Mossman: I can't say that I am an expert in it. We have been concentrating on the City of Culture. I am sure Martin Green will deliver things that are spectacular, as he did in Hull.

Chair: I am sure he will. The question is whether or not it makes any sense. Anyway, enough of that hobbyhorse.

Q12 **Dr Rupa Huq:** My questions are primarily for Dave O'Brien. I think we first met when you were at City University. I didn't think that was worth a declaration because it was 12 years ago, not 12 months ago. Since then, you have gone to Sheffield. How far do you think London and the south-east fits into this whole levelling up agenda? As a London MP, I feel we have a very anti-London Government. Zero pounds are going to any London theatres. I have the Questors Theatre in Ealing; it is not the National Theatre, or anything like that. Do you think we have gone a bit too far the other way with London and the south-east?

Professor O'Brien: That is a great question. I think that there are two perspectives on this. We are at a point politically now where understanding, say, regional inequalities around England is really on the political agenda, but we are still quite a way from understanding inequalities within regions. For example, London is an obvious place to start on this, where you have real pockets of affluence and institutions that are extremely well funded that have a claim to being national

institutions, but then you have pockets of extreme poverty and institutions in those areas doing precisely the kind of community-led levelling up activity that the Government's rhetoric is so invested in.

About a decade ago this Committee, in one of its previous incarnations, heard from Stark, Gordon and Powell about regional imbalances in Arts Council England funding. Things have obviously changed quite a lot, but I would argue that the overall structure of thinking about what is the purpose of a national theatre, where it should be and what kind of programmes and activities it should do has not really changed all that much. It is the same with things like the Royal Opera House. It would be good if the Government could take seriously the idea that just taking money out of one place and saying it has to go to other places will be ineffective to deliver policy aims unless it is within a quite different or rethought cultural policy more generally.

Q13 **Dr Rupa Huq:** London can mean a lot of things. It goes on for ever. We are in suburban London now, are we not? I get the sense that it is a very anti-London Government at the moment, punishing people for voting for that pesky Sadiq Khan, and that kind of thing.

Professor O'Brien: I can't really comment on that, politically. There are certainly flaws in just focusing on where money is going out of London rather than focusing on the infrastructure and strategy to deliver on cultural policy goals.

Q14 **Dr Rupa Huq:** Thanks. For anyone who wants to chuck in their two pennies' worth, do you think culture can help regenerate physical places long term? We saw between the station and here all the mythology about EMI in the names of the flats and things.

Professor Mossman: Yes.

Dr Rupa Huq: You wouldn't get a lot in your essay question for just saying "yes", would you?

Professor Mossman: I think it can make a huge difference. It has made a huge difference to Coventry. The amount of inward capital investment has transformed the landscape in the city centre. I think it has been used wisely and in collaboration with a lot of local groups, particularly the Historic Coventry Trust, to regenerate a lot of historic buildings and to cheer up a decaying city centre. I don't see any reason why any of that should stop when the circus of the City of Culture moves on. That will be a permanent change.

May I respond to your London question as well? Coventry University has a campus in Barking and Dagenham where we are working with the local council to help provide skills training for the new film studios. I certainly agree that there are many London boroughs that ought to be given the same consideration as towns outside central London. I don't disagree with that at all. I think that some of the same placemaking activities that work in places outside London can work for London boroughs as well.

Professor O'Brien: Can I reinforce that? Where culture has been successful in regeneration, it has come almost always as part of a bigger strategy. Where culture has been unsuccessful—this Committee has heard about several disastrous attempts to build arts institutions with a "if you build it, they will come" kind of approach. If we take a City of Culture that has a longer-term strategy, you can do Coventry and you can do Liverpool here as well in the European context. You can think about Newcastle's very long term—30-plus years—approach to building infrastructure as part of a broader transformation of local cultural governance between Newcastle and Gateshead.

All of this success is predicated on having serious long-term thinking. A cultural event that is not locally grounded and not part of a long-term strategy, and where no thought is given to pre and post-event build-up and legacy, may be a good party but will have little or no long-term impact.

Q15 **Dr Rupa Huq:** It is interesting that car building places, such as Coventry and Detroit, seem to produce a lot of music. Jon Cruddas does say that Dagenham is a bit of the red wall in greater London, and I totally agree with that.

How practical do you think it is to transpose best practice and lessons learned in areas that have developed cultural infrastructure to other places? Liverpool is Beatlemaniac city, and there are all the Beatles tours. Could you do the same with 2-tone? Is that pickable off the shelf? There is the question about legacy again: what will be after it? Is it just a temporary flash in the pan?

Professor Mossman: When I say "we", I mean the programme makers for the City of Culture Trust rather than Coventry University in this particular instance, although we have supported things all the way through. We have tried to be as bottom-up as possible. As a university, we have tried to fund projects that involve staff and students but also very much involve local communities. In Coventry we found that we had a huge local upswell of activity that we could harness. Coventry, even in very grim days, has never lacked for civic pride and has a very large number of local history societies, for example—people who had previously declared a passion for their city even before the capital investment came rolling in.

Under those circumstances, I think that one can try to make certain that the legacy is a permanent one. One can also—not only on the level of buildings, but also on the level of knowledge exchange and sharing—reinforce a placemaking agenda that was always lurking but needed to be brought out. I think it is absolutely right that if you dump an external event in somewhere and you do not harness something that is visible already, you will find that it will not necessarily grow, but it seems to me that most places in this country—inside London and outside London—have something to build on. Everywhere has an interest in its locality. I

think that one could generalise from the experience in Coventry, and to some extent in Hull, more widely.

Professor Shepherd: As a general rule, I would be cautious about the transferring of models from one place to another. I would try to get out of the mindset of sending in people to fix things, or bringing in a model that might work. I would get much more into the mindset of saying, "We start by listening, by feeling what is there and listening to it, and then we develop the model accordingly".

Professor O'Brien: To concur on that quickly, the evidence from Liverpool and its European Capital of Culture effectively underpinned the first rounds of the UK City of Culture, but Liverpool had £1 billion of European objective 1 funding over a 10-year period. In comparison, Newcastle was there at the right time for central government's capital spend and infrastructure building. As Professor Shepherd has said, we need to be really cautious. I think that the Coventry example is good on this, in the sense of not saying, "If we host a UK City of Culture it will solve all of our economic problems because it solved the economic problems of Liverpool, Newcastle or Manchester by doing very different things" but rather saying, "How can a place celebrate itself and celebrate its locality, and what kind of events and activities are appropriate for that place rather than importing from elsewhere?"

Q16 **Dr Rupa Huq:** To what extent do you think improving transport links and broadband capacity can be a motor for improving participation in social mobility and cultural industries? What other infrastructure things would help?

Professor O'Brien: We might talk about this, but so many of the problems, inequalities and barriers that we see in the realm of culture are really to do with how infrastructure works in Britain, whether it is workforce stuff around accessing childcare or the practicalities of getting somewhere. We were discussing getting to Stratford from Birmingham earlier, before we started. Something like taking bus services seriously—rhetorically, the Government are very interested in that, but I am not sure how much practical change is going on—is a big issue. In Manchester, we are about to see a live experiment in what happens when you have integrated transport that has cheapness and ease of use as the central aim of a mayoral system, and the impact that will have on access for outer boroughs into central Manchester's cultural infrastructure. It will be interesting to see how that changes things.

Jonty Archibald: Can I add something from the educational point of view? We have just come out of two years of lockdown, and we have seen the issues of not having connectivity and all students having access. Like so many other schools, we tried to hand out as many devices as we could, and quite a few big companies were giving us data to hand out to students so they could access lessons on their phones. There was a divide, and I think there is some research showing that the divide has widened because of lockdown. We are all doing catch-up, and I suppose

the levelling up for us is making sure that students who have lost time or are continuing to lose some time—because the effects of Covid will take some time to come out, and some students are still to re-engage. We are with the older students. My colleagues who work in primary schools are really struggling with the lack of learning. I think that there has to be some kind of plan of digital for all students, in all families. We saw multiple students in homes where they have one device.

Q17 **Dr Rupa Huq:** Did Gavin Williamson's fabled free laptops apply to your school? You have a slightly different funding arrangement from a normal local authority school. Did those ever appear?

Jonty Archibald: Yes, we got a limited number of free devices. The issue that we had with our devices here is that we work on some specific software. Basically, when we went into lockdown, we just raided the cupboards and handed out as many devices and data sticks as we could, and kept in touch, and we had some physical resources as well. My team were out and about delivering to students. The interesting thing is that the real lifeline for a lot of students was accessing on their phones. Forget about digital devices and laptops; phones were the device that students were accessing lessons on. We have continued to use that kind of technology within the school for students to use.

Q18 **Steve Brine:** Thanks for having us here. Could we delve into local authorities and mayors, pesky or otherwise, and what role they have in regenerating their areas and putting culture into the heart of that, or do they have other thoughts? Starting with Jonty, what is your relationship with the local authority here? This was obviously a commercial site before it was an educational site, but this area presumably has had a huge overhaul. It looked very different 20 years ago to what it looks like now. Talk to me about the local authority here and its role in this.

Jonty Archibald: We have a good relationship with the local authority. As I said, I am part of a group of head teachers and the reason why you have head teacher groups is to come together to work on area priorities. We discuss things like attendance and the effects of Covid, and then we work very closely with the local authority on those priorities. On levelling up and the mayor, we are in an area where there has been some significant crime, so we are working with the Hayes Town Partnership to make the area safe, and again working with the local authority. I think that it is something that the Mayor of London needs to tackle. Last year we had the most knife crimes in London, and I think that is a priority.

I was not here 20 years ago, so I don't know what the site was like. I started my teaching career in east London, in Stratford, where prior to the Olympics, London Challenge—I started my teaching career in the early 1990s and there was a huge investment in education. You can see the impact that has had in that area and bringing things like the Olympics to that area. I believe that where you increase the quality of education, you increase the quality of life chances for students and you increase the local area. It is really important.

Q19 **Steve Brine:** Does the local authority believe the same as you?

Jonty Archibald: I think it does. I suppose the capacity will be for local authorities. We are in Hillingdon. We are in outer London, which may have been left out of some of the London Challenge initiatives. I agree with what you said; you can be in the same borough in London and have completely different education and socioeconomic areas. I believe that the local authority listens to the primary and secondary head teachers, because we are on the ground, and it listens to what we are dealing with day to day and what our struggles are.

Q20 **Steve Brine:** Professor Mossman, can you give us some wider thoughts on local authorities' involvement in regenerating place, as has happened here? What strengths do they bring to the party and what are the constraints?

Professor Mossman: We have campuses in east London, as I say, and in Scarborough as well as in Coventry. In all three cases we have sought to have excellent relationships with the local councils, and I believe we have achieved that. We regard ourselves as an anchor institution in Coventry and the vice chancellor meets the head of the council very regularly. We have very good relations with them. We think that together we are able to have a very constructive effect on the way that things are handled in the city. We are doing the same in Scarborough, where we sit on the advisory council, and we are beginning to do the same in Barking and Dagenham. Again, we have a very good relationship there. I think it is terribly important.

The local council are, by definition, the people, in one sense, who know the place best, so you do not want to impose something on the local council. You want to work with them. Exactly as Professor Shepherd said earlier, you do not ride to the rescue in some really annoying way, coming in from outside and telling people what to do.

Q21 **Steve Brine:** They also have the democratic accountability, don't they?

Professor Mossman: Absolutely they do, and that is obviously key. But sometimes one can give advice that may come in handy, and in the case specifically of Coventry we are a very large employer in the city, so we bring in an awful lot of economic benefit. I think it is genuinely in the council's interest, on a lot of grounds, to work with us and we get on very well.

Q22 **Steve Brine:** It is in their interests, but they don't really have any choice, do they? At the end of the day, they have capacity challenges, and you then bring into their organisation capacity and specialism that they would not otherwise have.

Professor Mossman: I think that we do add something. I would not like to suggest that there was anything lacking and, of course, they bring huge strengths to the relationship as well, but it is important that higher

education institutions act as anchor institutions. I think that is a very positive trend.

Q23 **Steve Brine:** Professor O'Brien, when we make recommendations, which we will start to draw out of all the evidence sessions in this inquiry, what would be your advice to Government about upskilling local authorities to be even stronger partners in the sort of cultural regeneration that we are interested in?

Professor O'Brien: Over the last 10 years we have seen a real-time experiment on which local authorities "get" culture and are devoted to it and try to support it, and which ones have seen culture as less of a priority. There is no single model across the country. Almost every local authority has a different story to tell. Some started at the beginning of the decade with relatively high levels of cultural investment and have had to reduce them dramatically because of cuts from central government. Others started with relatively low levels of cultural investment, have protected those low levels and have done better in some ways but worse in others.

The problem of advising central government is twofold. One is that there is a longstanding issue in the British Government, irrespective of which party or coalition is in charge, of centralising decision-making away from local authorities to Whitehall. That really has to change, and you are going against the grain of what central government likes to do. The second thing is funding and money. While the levelling up agenda seems to be about putting money back into places, it does not seem to be about giving money directly to those bits of cultural infrastructure, planning departments within local authorities that have seen big cuts. For example, what are we going to do about major cuts to library services across most local authorities in England? Can central government mandate that money goes directly to libraries while at the same time trying to give more power and decision-making back to the local area? I think it is a major challenge.

Q24 **Steve Brine:** But if local authorities were sitting here—and we will talk to them throughout the course of this inquiry—they would say, "I have statutory obligations for education and safeguarding of children, and you are talking to me about libraries", which they don't have a statutory obligation for and people's habits have changed completely. We MPs would all say, "My goodness, we must have libraries" in the same way as we all stand around with bleeding hearts about bank branches being open, when the truth is that we all do online banking and so do very many of our constituents. I guess that the local authorities would say—one of you made a point earlier about what happens if there is sewage coming through the floor—"I have got to deal with category 1 stuff first before I can indulge myself with culture".

Professor O'Brien: I think "indulge" is perhaps a bit harsh.

Steve Brine: I am being provocative.

Professor O'Brien: I think there are definitely some local authorities that see culture as embedded in their economic, social and planning activity. There is a real chicken and egg question on libraries, and there is quite a good paper by my colleagues Peter Campbell and Bethany Rex about this. It is hard to know, if you are dramatically reducing a service and people stop using it, which has come first—whether it is a change in habits or a reduction in the service. Local authorities are under extreme pressure pre-Covid and post-Covid, but I think there are examples where local authorities, even where they have cut cultural spending, do not see culture as an add-in or an indulgence but see it as part of their core delivery task.

Q25 **Steve Brine:** Is there evidence to support the idea that those who have made the decision to see it as an economic builder have had the economic return from doing so? Is there something you could point us to?

Professor O'Brien: Again, this is complex, and you can make arguments that examples like Liverpool have a strong economic track record of building a cultural economy from the 1990s to the present. At the same time, as my comments to Dr Huq indicated, you have a fairly unique confluence of circumstances: objective 1 money, a huge cultural offer, not just the Beatles but two football clubs, and that kind of stuff. There are questions about whether relatively successful economic developments can be transferred elsewhere. Underneath that are questions about what kind of economic development it should be. Is it sufficient to have just a new cinema opened that has service sector employees, or do we want a new film studio? These are bigger, more complex questions.

Q26 **Steve Brine:** I lived in Liverpool through most of the 1990s so I know the scenario you are talking about. Professor Shepherd, what are your thoughts on local authorities? You have been nodding a bit.

Professor Shepherd: I don’t know if it is relevant, and it might be irrelevant, but I am interested in a model that is being developed by a couple of academics. They first started work in New Orleans but now they are doing some work in the post-pandemic circumstances with a trio of cities—Newcastle, Bristol and, I think, Glasgow. Their line is not to think about venues, not to think about provision of any services, but to begin by brokering conversations between city officials and anybody engaged in any form of cultural activity in the town. You don’t say to the officials, “What are you doing about libraries, cinemas or theatres?” You sit them down in room—these guys would call it a situation room—where you listen to all the different perceptions about the city together. The planners and the culture makers, the art workers, sit and listen together and then the officials begin to encounter the ways in which their particular locality is doing its cultural activity, doing stuff that people are engaged in and doing things that people want more of.

It is a perhaps less mechanical model than you might have had in your brain. It is much more one based on beginning by brokering the

conversation at a local level, and all you are flying in there are the people who will facilitate the conversation to begin with.

Q27 **Jane Stevenson:** I would like to go to Professor O'Brien and talk a little bit about social mobility in cultural institutions and in the industry. Where are we at the moment? How much does where you start in life influence whether you can consider a career in the creative industries?

Professor O'Brien: My colleagues and I did some recent work for the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Policy and Evidence Centre that suggested that creative industries as a whole are some of the worst for social mobility across any set of occupations or industries. They are worse than the general workforce as a whole, but also they look akin to things like medicine, law—some of the most elite and exclusive professions. That is profoundly depressing, because culture and creative occupations are supposed to be those that are open to anyone with talent, but we are pretty far away from that rhetoric when you look at the statistics.

Q28 **Jane Stevenson:** Do you think that problem is worse now than it was 10 or 20 years ago? My background was in classical music. Do you think that there are areas of the arts that are seen as a little bit more elite, or do you think the problem is even worse in those specific bits of the arts?

Professor O'Brien: Tracking changes over time is complex, particularly because access to historical data is limited. It is hard to say what has happened in the last 10 years. We might speculate that things have got worse since the last round of census data we have. The consistent problem of social mobility was striking when looking at census data from the early 1970s to 2011. The likelihood of making it into a cultural and creative occupation in the early 1980s, if you were from a working-class background, was just as bad as in 2011.

I think that this tells us two things. One is that in the problems we encounter in cultural and creative industries there are certain specific things to those industries and occupations that go beyond the broader social context in British society. The second thing is the extent to which we have seen a whole different range of policies from apprenticeships, New Deal for Musicians, direct funding from things like Arts Council and massive transformations in the education system, and nothing has really got to grips with this 40-year problem. It will be interesting to see towards the end of next year what the 2021 data looks like.

There is a problem of historic legacy that a lot of the action in social mobility has been within fractions of the middle class, and working-class-origin creatives have been persistently excluded for a very long time. On specific genres or art forms, we can drill down. This might sound a bit technical, but we tend to see vertical forms of segregation and horizontal forms as well. You have the basic fact of people not making it to the top in things like curation or being a classical musician, but also you have a filtering effect in, say, the film industry where, for example, working-class

women likely end up as accountants. They end up in the support professions rather than being high profile directors on major-budget films.

There are some pockets of good news. Advertising as an industry, although it has big social mobility problems, seems to do slightly better on other metrics. In museums and galleries, we see women doing very well but working-class-origin people doing badly. The intersections are important as well. When we think about the intersections of race, disability, social class and gender, you end up with negative outcomes for people who sit at the intersection of those demographics.

Q29 **Jane Stevenson:** Thank you. Jonty, where do you think schools and education could help address this? Does it have to start very early in life and do you think your school gets it slightly more right than many others?

Jonty Archibald: Yes, of course I think we get it more right than other schools. I think we have to go back to a bit of obsession with performance tables that the Government have at the moment. We have had two years without performance tables because of Covid but they want more performance tables. My colleagues in other schools will be with me on this and say the emphasis should not be on those hitting performance tables. It is more about a broad and balanced curriculum. When EBacc and Progress 8 came into the system, lots of schools cut down on their creative activities because it was not in bucket 1 or bucket 2 and was not making the most points. I was the previous head of a large secondary school and I personally was pushing the arts, because I come from an arts background. Were other colleagues doing that?

I think that some of the structures that we are working under—as a UTC we still have a performance table. Even though we have said it doesn't really count for us, it is still there. I feel that that is quite negative for a school like this, because we don't hit some of the performance tables that the Government have set, but we hit far more destinations and what we do with our students and where they go. I was looking at the levelling up document, and for primary they talk about how 90% will hit this numeracy and literacy target. Primary schools may struggle with what that means, and maybe the focus will go on that and they will not have art clubs. That sort of growth starts young.

A few years ago when Ofsted started mentioning cultural capital, there was a huge discussion about what that meant, and everyone had their own ideas. I go back to what Simon said. It is around community and how you get together. You will see this in schools. Through Covid, the activities that we have done, and that we have come together and created for the local community—that is culture and how we build our culture. If we could have less on the end result—key stage 2 results, performance tables—maybe schools would feel a little bit less pressure to hit those areas and promote the arts.

Q30 **Jane Stevenson:** Thank you. Finally to Professor Mossman and Professor Shepherd, where do you think the current funding model for culture could shift to help to address the social mobility issue we have?

Professor Mossman: First, it will make things worse in universities if fewer children in schools have the opportunity to choose the arts, and to confine artistic activity and musical activity almost entirely to the private sector will be very difficult indeed in widening participation. I think it is fair to say that we have a good record on widening participation in the creative industries. Even so, it is an uphill struggle, and measuring the graduate outcomes without allowing for self-employed and freelance people to be counted as having a graduate job will make life exceptionally difficult for us. Rhetoric around low value courses makes life incredibly difficult for us. The deprivation of high cost funding for creative industries is also making life difficult already. I suspect that you will see in the sector a reduction in the provision for the creative industries in higher education, and that will only make the task harder as time goes on. Changing the direction of travel, in a number of ways, is the only way I can see of preventing this from getting considerably worse.

Professor Shepherd: The training in arts subjects in schools is not just to do with the arts skills. It is also a training in the application of logic, in physical motor skills and all those other things that people need generally, whether they are going into the science subjects or for anything else. You can be hampering somebody's career and the range of opportunities they might have by not giving them the particular skills that they gain through an arts education.

Jane Stevenson: Thank you. You are at risk of getting me on to my bugbear, which is very young children learning old-school reading the dots in music, but I am going to leave it there.

Chair: Thank you, Jane. We can expand on that another time, I think.

Q31 **Clive Efford:** Professor Shepherd, you talked earlier about divisions in wealth. How do divisions in wealth impact on access and participation in cultural activities or the cultural industries?

Professor Shepherd: As I said to begin with, participating in anything can very difficult if you have so many problems in living a decent life where you are warm, fed and not coping with horrible conditions, as some people are. At the base level, you need to free up people from those material concerns so that they have something else to do with their time and their brain space and their imagination.

After that point, you might then say that divisions of wealth matter depending on what you conceive of as cultural activity. Sure, if you want to spend £100 on an opera ticket, you will have to be that sort of person. However, your notion of cultural activity may be, say, participating in something like what the company Slung Low, which is based in Holbeck in Leeds, does. It operates out of a pub, which I think used to be a

working men's club. It runs a food bank. It organises epic outdoor productions with the community. I think it now has a cultural college and it manages some green areas of woodland just outside the town. If any of that is part of your notion of cultural activity, perhaps on a lesser income you can participate, but you have to begin by knowing that there are those things to do and having those groups around.

Q32 **Clive Efford:** Professor O'Brien just talked about the fact that the cultural industries are populated invariably by people from higher social and income brackets. What are we doing wrong that it has stayed like that for so long?

Professor Shepherd: Notice there that I didn't talk about industries or permanent venues, or anything of that sort. I think what we are doing wrong is we have got our heads full of a set of recognisable products and buildings that we call culture. Chuck them out of your brain and start addressing the sorts of things that people are doing, start facilitating those and funding those, and you will have a much more diverse, fluid, flexible, buzzy culture that is available to people.

Q33 **Clive Efford:** Take me through that. How easy is that to do? You have just talked about the scheme in Leeds. That is clearly very embedded in the local community, so they have got their tendrils out into all of the community and can engage them. How do you get to that point?

Professor Shepherd: Again we have to be wary of saying there is one fixed model that will do everybody, but you begin with one or two people wanting to do it and establishing the route through, talking to others, determining what you can do with others. There is a company based in Gloucestershire, I think, who desperately want to build their community theatre. Their notion is that doing arts should be as accessible as doing sports. I don't think that they have got to their theatre yet, but they are doing it by working with people who are interested to develop events, fundraisers, put the word around in the community and so on. It is a very long way to describe a set of so many varied small, local processes. It is that on-the-ground work that starts with the conversations and being with others to start raising the money and going to places.

Q34 **Clive Efford:** Jonty, when you described where pupils come from, you mentioned that some come to your school from quite a long way away. They cannot possibly commute every day from some of those places, or do they?

Jonty Archibald: Yes, they are very committed. Students leave at 5.30 am or 6.00 am to come here. They are very committed to come here. What we talk about is that readiness for work. Our whole curriculum is around the work readiness industry, and you know that you do not normally live next to where you work in a lot of areas, so students are very committed. We have lots of flexibility. Especially with sixth form much of the work is online as well, so they access work, they can travel. You will see students looking like university students travelling with a

laptop or a device or working on the train and things like that. They are very committed to coming here. They are committed because they are getting a very specialist education.

Q35 **Clive Efford:** Does that impact on how you select pupils who come to your school? You start at year 10, so how do you sit in the local school framework? The secondary schools around you will all start at year 7, so how do you sit in there and how do you select your pupils?

Jonty Archibald: It is a little bit of an issue for schools that start at year 10, because obviously we are asking students to leave year 9. It comes down to—

Q36 **Clive Efford:** Do the other schools like that?

Jonty Archibald: As I say, I am working in partnership with my local schools because that is what I bring as a previous secondary head teacher working with the local authority. We work in partnership, because we are trying to explain that in schools there will be students who prefer a creative curriculum that they are not getting. I work in partnership, because they may have students who would thrive here rather than having to do EBacc subjects, which they get forced to choose in some schools very early, in year 8, and narrow the curriculum. I work very much in partnership.

We do not take huge numbers of students from each school; it is one or two from a variety, so we get students coming from different establishments. We try to share what we have here as well with the local schools, so we will run media workshops or specialist workshops and help other schools that do not have the specialist staffing and specialist equipment that we have, hence why we are working with a lot of primary schools.

I think people are quite forward-thinking in some schools and know that there is more to education than just exams and one route. We are trying to broaden the students' minds on education.

Q37 **Clive Efford:** I think you said that 50% go on to university from the school. Do they come back into the arts and cultural industries?

Jonty Archibald: Yes, most of them will go into the creative arts area, so marketing, design. Our university sponsor is UAL, so the London College of Communication, and a lot of students will be working with them. We work with the Insights project with them, making sure that any student whose family has not been to university gets guidance. Some people go off to marketing, business, fine arts as well and then the apprenticeships are very much students who want to go directly into the world of work.

Q38 **Clive Efford:** Do you have an overall figure for pupils who come through the school who end up in the culture industries?

Jonty Archibald: Last year 85% went off.

Q39 **Clive Efford:** Overall, that is, including those who went to university?

Jonty Archibald: Yes.

Q40 **Clive Efford:** On how you select your pupils, do you have a comprehensive intake? Do you have an entrance examination? How do you test that someone is suitable to come to your school?

Jonty Archibald: You might have realised my feelings about examinations but, no, we do not do entry examinations. At sixth form there are entry requirements, so we look for five 9 to 4 GCSEs from a range of subjects. We know that some students will not have had the media or creative in schools, so we are looking for potential. For example, when we meet with year 12s, they might bring a TikTok they have been creating and you will see that they have half a million views, or something like that. To me, that is culture. That is a creative activity, so they may bring TikTok or social content. Some students are already podcasting, so they may deliver the podcast.

Our entry into year 10 is different, because we have an admissions code, and we have meetings with students because they need to know that this is right for them. We are very honest: if you want to be a doctor, do not come here; if you want to be a lawyer, do not come here, because you will not get the broad range of the sciences. But you get maths, English, science, and you get options. Business is very popular here because we work within the entrepreneur area. We are very clear on open evening. We have an open evening tomorrow, and we make it very clear what we offer here.

Q41 **Clive Efford:** How do you ensure that you are contributing to social mobility and tackling the figures that Professor O'Brien referred to earlier in making sure that people from deprived communities get the opportunity to participate in culture?

Jonty Archibald: We are very clear that we are not selective. We are not creaming off students to come here. We have students from all kinds of backgrounds. We constantly look at what our cohort is, what the demographics of the cohort is, and 30% are from disadvantaged backgrounds, which is above national.

For the meeting, we make sure that if a student says, "I do not have a computer at home, I have not been able to produce this PowerPoint, I have not been able to do this" we talk to them around creativity aspirations. We do not put up a barrier because they have not produced a gleaming podcast. It is all about potential and passion. Passion is big for us, and people who are dedicated.

I think you alluded to the sense of where we are going forward with the A-levels and the T-levels, the push forward. We run a UAL level 3 qualification. It is fantastic. It is industry standard, and they get straight into university and get fantastic offers for university. These are the kinds of qualifications that are under threat, all the BTECs—fantastic courses.

We are looking at the T-levels and we think they will be quite troublesome. To just have A-levels and T-levels, those two qualifications, will impact on lots of the vocational qualifications, not just in the creatives. We are working with UAL on what would happen if things were defunded.

Chair: That may be one for Robert Halfon, rather than myself on this occasion, but we note your comments. Thank you very much.

Q42 **Giles Watling:** Thank you, everybody, for giving up your time today. I slightly take issue with you when you say, "If you want to be a doctor, do not come here." I would say that any engagement in culture, particularly the performing arts, helps with communication and any walk of life is enhanced, surely.

Jonty Archibald: Yes, but I was just being practical, because to get into medical school you must get A-levels. We do not run A-levels here. We run the UAL creative media course. In saying that, we do get students who halfway through say, "I want to do law" and then they go off and do a law degree.

Q43 **Giles Watling:** Professor Shepherd, you made very dramatic comments about how people cannot engage if they are living with sewage running through their flats, and so on. Surely, we can turn that on its head. Engagement in culture, particularly the performing arts, gets people lifting their eyes from the pavement and their trials and tribulations get left behind. It shows them what is possible and what can happen, surely.

Professor Shepherd: Yes, it can show them what is possible. I suspect the person who has sewage flowing into their kitchen wants initially to have a plumber to show them what is possible. You are right, it is not so much to do with lifting the eyes to the heavens; it is realising what you can do with others, how you can communicate with others, and how you can share your problems with others and come to community solutions to those problems—those sorts of things. Of course that can happen, but anybody in a state of crisis first must step down from that crisis before they can go there. Yes, you can say you can use cultural means to step them down from that crisis. You must forgive my dramatic interventions; I am a professor of theatre.

Giles Watling: Understood.

Professor Shepherd: The reason for putting it that way is to say, "Do not let us tell ourselves fairy stories about what culture can do and how enabling it can be. Let us begin with some material realities."

Q44 **Giles Watling:** Thank you. A point well made. I was involved in an event down at Chichester Festival with Alastair Sim back in the 1970s and we took people from council estates and so on, and they went to see the theatre and it changed lives. I know it did because here we are 40 years later, and it is a remarkable engagement. What I am saying is we must not push that to one side; we must engage culturally.

Professor Shepherd: I think there is probably not much sewage flowing around in Chichester, but there you go.

Q45 **Giles Watling:** Quite, but then performing arts can happen anywhere, can't they, surely?

Professor Shepherd: Of course they can, but, as I say, the engagement with those performing arts, what is being performed and how it is being performed will alter from place to place. There is a company called Cardboard Citizens that is doing work with homeless people to address their problems. They are using tried and true methods—it is called theatre of the oppressed—to work with homeless people to solve those problems. Yes, it goes on.

Q46 **Giles Watling:** You said that taking a model as a template and placing it elsewhere is not necessarily helpful. Did you mean by that that it should be more organic and grow according to geography and demography?

Professor Shepherd: Demography, perhaps, rather than geography, although geography could matter. All I am saying is that we have been in a world where templates are imposed from one place to another, with the whole notion that you fly somebody in who will be a fixer, and that sort of thing. It will and should vary from place to place because places are different. Chichester is not going to function as, say, Bolton functions. Therefore, literally different cultural languages are being spoken because they are leading different lives. You must begin by knowing and listening to that diversity.

Q47 **Giles Watling:** I will take this over to you, Jonty Archibald. Is what you are creating here specific to the area of Hayes? Do you engage with the Beck Theatre up the road? Do you do all of that?

Jonty Archibald: Yes, we are currently home to the Hillingdon Music Hub, so we engage with them. At the weekend the school will be full of orchestral music, and they want to widen the aspects. Music lessons are one thing but there is engagement in music tech, for example. We have the facilities here, so we are engaged in that with summer schools and projects like that.

We are Hayes, but we are wider. We send students all over the country. There are other UTC Media. There is a UTC Media at Salford, which will link in with that creative hub. Our admissions policy says we should take 50% from the local authority and 50% from outside, so we keep an eye on that, just to get back to your point, making sure that we are not purely transporting students in who are not local. It does not make sense either, as a school, to have students, especially when they are 14-year-olds, travelling miles and miles. More students, the younger students, are local.

Q48 **Giles Watling:** Could your modelling and your template here be useful elsewhere?

Jonty Archibald: Absolutely.

Q49 **Giles Watling:** I am taking in Professor Shepherd's comments on this, but are you liaising with other similar institutions elsewhere?

Jonty Archibald: Yes. The UTC movement comes under the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, and it is our licensee. We are not a multi-academy trust. We are a single trust. We have a very good network working across the UTCs on things like employer engagement, models and marketing. We work very closely with each other, despite having different specialisms. I am working with an engineering college. There is a UTC Heathrow that is very much around engineering. That is literally based in North Hillingdon, so we work very closely with Wayne there, as a Hillingdon head and as a UTC. There is a UTC in Reading that is very much computer and computer science. The model is around careers-focused education industry placements. That is the generic one.

Q50 **Giles Watling:** Professor Mossman, in a similar vein, in your work at the City of Culture, do you engage with different kinds of cultural expansion? In another incarnation this Committee visited Sunderland and we saw the new cultural quarter there. It is a place I am very familiar with and have been since the 1970s. I saw massive change, only this is on a much smaller scale and with a much more developed cultural quarter. As a result of that, there was economic development in the area. Do you engage in that way as well?

Professor Mossman: Yes, I would say that we do. We have certainly found that with the City of Culture, working with local professionals we can prompt start-up companies and various types of enterprise, and we have worked on that. We do it across our campuses and work with local institutions in Scarborough and Dagenham as well. For example, in Scarborough we have started an acting degree that is delivered in partnership with the Stephen Joseph Theatre, which is doing very well.

Giles Watling: Alan Ayckbourn, home of Alan.

Professor Mossman: Absolutely. We gave him an honorary degree a little time ago. He is brilliant, and he drops in and interacts with the students and that is very exciting for them.

Q51 **Giles Watling:** Is that engagement ongoing?

Professor Mossman: Ongoing, continuing, yes.

Giles Watling: That is really good to hear. Thank you.

Q52 **Simon Jupp:** I have a couple of questions first for Jonty. I have been looking through your prospectus information booklet. What you manage to do here in Hayes is impressive. You spoke earlier about why the Global Academy is based in Hayes in London. It has reasonable transport links and you have just spoken to my colleague Giles about how you work with other educational providers. Could you see other Global Academies in different parts of the country, different regions, to make it even more

accessible for people?

Jonty Archibald: I could definitely see it. There is a thirst for this kind of work.

Q53 **Simon Jupp:** There are colleges up and down the country that provide courses similar to the ones you are offering now. Do you ever think about sharing your expertise and sending some of your teachers further afield so you can spread the word about what you do here?

Jonty Archibald: If you work in schools, you must be careful that those teachers come back. We already do this. For example, Watford UTC was doing some media training, so we sent staff up there. We have also sent staff into the industry to teach some industry standard software work with a media company. It is really good for teachers. Last Friday we had a teacher training session. In traditional schools these are very much sitting in a hall being talked to, but we didn't do that. Our teachers all left and went off into industry, so some went to Global and some went to LCC. My head of maths worked with the head of statistics at Global. We try to keep that industry training going so that we can bring that back into our curriculum.

More locally, we will help with schools that need media training or media facilities, because they are working on very limited equipment sometimes.

Q54 **Simon Jupp:** When I went through education myself, too many years ago for me to think about now, there was no careers advice for me. I wanted to work in radio and I loved music, and before being elected I had a career in radio and loved it, but I never had the expertise or knowledge that you guys have here or the benefit of those courses. Professor Shepherd mentioned a material reality. The industry, particularly in media and culture, has shrunk in recent years across various aspects. There are other bits that have grown and developed. How confident are you that when you have routes like the content production route, the creative business and entrepreneurship route, you are creating courses and delivering courses that can realise into careers later?

Jonty Archibald: Very confident. We had our first cohort come in 2018. Some of those alumni are now working, they have had apprenticeships and are now working in the industry. The feedback that we have from when we do projects like branded content, working with advertising agencies, is that our students are very well prepared. The course that we are running, the industry standard, the ability to pitch, to talk, to promote, to work together, is industry standard and it stands them in good stead for the world of work.

If I take the Global apprenticeship, which is a ring-fenced apprenticeship working with Global, every year between eight and 10 students go out from our school. It is ring-fenced for us, so we know that our students are coming into the industry. The students who leave here come from a whole range of backgrounds into Global and they are prepared, and they

end up either getting a full-time job there or moving off into other jobs. They get well trained. I am very confident with the pathways that we are now developing because it is becoming very clear that there are lots of different developments. We are looking to run e-sports, which is a new qualification that is huge, and teaching that. We listen to industry and our partners in industry. We have an industry board who tell us what the next thing is that employers are looking for.

Q55 **Simon Jupp:** You make sure that you are not providing an educational course for a career that simply does not exist any more?

Jonty Archibald: Absolutely. One of the things that I will be talking about to parents tomorrow is that I know some of the creative industries have shrunk during Covid. That is bouncing back quite quickly, I feel, with the number of apprenticeships that are coming through the system. Talking about careers advice, we have focused careers advice from people in the industry, who will give advice about the industry rather than the careers advice that we had at school, which I think you alluded to and which was very generic.

Simon Jupp: Yes. The radio is something you listen to, not something you appear on.

Jonty Archibald: Yes. Also, last week we had a careers event here, and it was all media and creative industries that were here to talk to the students.

Q56 **Simon Jupp:** I will widen out my question to the rest of the panel. What do you think is the Government's role in helping to provide the skills and improve participation and social mobility in the cultural industry overall?

Professor Mossman: I think it is partly what I said before, which is that there have been some policy initiatives recently that have been inimical and not doing those would be a big help: not talking about Mickey Mouse courses in connection with this; not talking about graduate outcomes without including people who are successful freelancers and successful self-employed people; and not making the success of higher-level apprenticeships dependent on very large numbers. I think that has improved a bit recently, but it is still the case that there are disincentives to run apprenticeships for small numbers.

I think that people like art, music, film and an awful lot of the things that we are talking about. If they are not actively discouraged from doing them, they will want to engage in them, and some will be able to engage in them at a very high level. Not putting them off would be a big help; sorry.

Simon Jupp: That's all right. There is no need to apologise.

Professor O'Brien: I should probably apologise in advance as well. Essentially, on a workforce level, the Government could do much more on regulation. There is a range of existing workplace regulations that are not

very well enforced. We see this with periodic scandals in the creative industries around sexual harassment, institutionalised racism and stuff like that. Then you have the problem of unpaid internships. In some ways you can argue that Government regulation through Arts Council England—again, about 10 years ago when they were quite vocal about not funding unpaid positions—has been successful. But just this week a London gallery has been advertising for volunteer workers, effectively, which by my understanding is illegal, but they were still openly advertising for it. There are the work practice things that would enable social mobility because the playing field would be more level and it would be fairer.

Beyond that, there is the broader problem of Britain's social welfare system. Childcare costs are directly contributing to women, irrespective of their social background, leaving creative industries in their late 20s and early 30s. It is clear from Covid, with the patchy success of Government intervention, that the welfare state is not set up for freelance creative workers when a shock happens, nor is it particularly well set up—although the Government did do things with the tax system—for people who may have a series of quite intensive working periods with a lot of contracts and then a fallow period for a couple of months between jobs. This is particularly true with the theatre and film industries.

We have mentioned buses and stuff like that as well. The basic infrastructure, which unfortunately is not great in Britain, magnifies the problems of inequality in the creative industries and means that those in better-networked, more affluent, better-connected places and better-connected social positions are able to bear the risks of being a creative better than other social groups.

Q57 **Simon Jupp:** Isn't it the industry's job, though, to step up to some of those challenges, rather than the Government? It is not the Government's task or role to interfere in every part of society.

Professor O'Brien: I could not agree more, and again particular industries have patchy records in supporting people in scandalous situations, right the way through to making sure that cultures of unpaid work are not seen as the norm and are not taken as something you just have to live with. That said, I think the regulatory environment sends signals about what is and is not acceptable.

Simon Jupp: Understood. Thank you. That is very interesting.

Professor Shepherd: I do not have the level of detail of either Dave or Judith to answer this, apart from repeating the point about addressing some of the divisions in the whole state and its economics. Secondly, a general point is to straightforwardly listen, and learn to listen, particularly to hear things that do not want to be heard, and then deal with that and think. Look hard at the relationship between central government and

local authorities. It seems to me that local authorities are struggling to do so much at the moment, and are often being caned financially.

Q58 **Simon Jupp:** Going back to the local authorities point, there is a big drive at the moment—probably separate from this Committee's work—for devolution. Would that be helpful? Do you think more local decision-making would be helpful, with decisions being made by the regional mayors or new combined authorities?

Professor Shepherd: I am not a specialist in local government or any of that sort of information. My hunch is that it might well do, because the whole drift of my comments this morning has been about addressing localities, listening to localities and taking them seriously. All I can say is that if I follow that logic through, it should do, but it depends on how it is done.

Professor O'Brien: Quickly on that, absolutely yes, but it must come with financial responsibility and financial power, otherwise you push on to local authorities the responsibility for what will probably be more central government cuts, depending on what happens tomorrow and what happens in future financial statements. The last 10 years has shown us that there has been a lot of devolution of responsibility but not a lot of devolution of financial power.

Simon Jupp: That is precisely the point I was trying to make about the relationship with local authorities. Thank you very much.

Q59 **Kevin Brennan:** Good morning, everyone. Professor Shepherd, perhaps I should have declared an interest; my brother attended the Central School of Speech and Drama a long time ago, so I think it does not count as an interest any more. When the Secretary of State appeared before us recently, I pointed out that when my brother went there, from a working-class background, he did so with a discretionary grant from his local authority to take a place as a student back in those distant days. I suggested to the Secretary of State that I could get right on this levelling up thing with her if that was the sort of thing she was talking about—getting more working-class kids into careers in the creative industries, in the arts and so on. What is your reaction to where we are at in education and working-class children getting opportunities in the arts and creative industries?

Professor Shepherd: Again, I do not have current, up-to-date information about any of that.

Q60 **Kevin Brennan:** What about at Central, for example? What do you do there?

Professor Shepherd: I have to make it clear that I am no longer on the management team of Central, so my information about what Central did is now slightly old. I can go back there and tell you what Central was doing at that time, and I will summarise what I am saying by telling you about just one moment. When I was deputy principal there, we were

actively trying to build links into various further education colleges. My whole line was that Central may have been based in London, but it was not London-centric. I remember a visit to Stoke-on-Trent where we were having close conversations with a further education college about creating pathways for them to go from there to Central. On talking to the students, they said to me that by and large they would not want to do that, because they did not see themselves in London. They did not see themselves managing in London. It was a threatening place; it was just somewhere different. They would just lose touch with everything that made them feel who they were. That, for me, was an extraordinary moment and a slightly depressing moment.

I know that Central, once I left, no longer tried for that relationship with Stoke, but they are doing a lot of work in the East Midlands, working with schools, and trying to recruit from those schools into the programme. Without being close to the process, I do not know whether or not the same thing still holds—that you are not getting as many working-class students coming in as you perhaps would like to, partly because of what they have already learned they are, and that is stopping them.

Q61 **Kevin Brennan:** That is interesting. There have been quite a lot of criticisms, as you know, down the years of drama schools using audition fees and so on to shake people down a bit. I will not press on that at this point.

I want to come to Jonty. I know we are talking here about levelling up—whatever that means, as someone said earlier on—and placemaking. Isn't this agenda from the Government—which I think is an agenda I can instinctively be supportive of even though I am an Opposition Member of Parliament—meaningless if you look at things such as the impact of Government education policy in recent years? The number of students taking drama or music in schools declined by 22% in the last few years because of that active Government policy basically to discourage working-class kids, in particular, from doing those subjects, because they are not seen as essential in the same way as literacy and numeracy.

The ABRSM says that since 2014 there has been a 15% decline in children playing musical instruments and an 11% fall in children taking instrumental lessons. Whatever one thinks of exams, kids from better-off families are two and a half times more likely to take music exams than those from the poorest backgrounds, and 50% of privately educated pupils have sustained music tuition while 15% in state schools get sustained music tuition. We know that the numbers of teachers have been declining because of Government policy discouraging schools from teaching these subjects or children taking GCSEs in these subjects.

Am I wrong in thinking that this whole agenda around levelling up and cultural and creative industries will not work if you cut off the pipeline in the communities of children who are coming through into those careers?

Jonty Archibald: I absolutely agree. I think I have stated my passion for the arts and how I think that having a structure around performance

tables, EBacc and Progress 8 has absolutely had an effect. If the focus of the levelling up is putting in more targets at primary schools, you will see that primary schools may—I will not speak on behalf of primary schools—focus on those areas again.

If we go back to why Global was set up as a school, it was around giving students the opportunity to have work experience in large media organisations. As we all know, that has been normally based around who knows who, and someone knows someone else, and they are able to do some unpaid internship. Students cannot afford that—students from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot afford to have six months off—whereas we are giving those students opportunities to get a foot in the door, almost, and get that wider aspect.

Going back to an institution like Global Academy, that is what we are set up for, to get that pipeline into the industry. We do not say to students, "You must all go to university". We are giving them a very broad and balanced approach. I received a full grant when I went to university and free school meals, so it was fantastic. It was amazing. Having just sent my own children through university, it is very expensive. I think more must be done to make sure that students feel confident if they want to go to university, and that they are not put off by loans. This is what I hear from parents and students.

Q62 **Kevin Brennan:** Professor O'Brien, you were talking earlier about freelancers in the industry and the impact on equality. We are always thinking about what sorts of recommendations we can put in our report about these sorts of things. Do you think that a basic idea might be that we just give freelancers the same rights as other employed people, including things like shared maternity leave and the same rights if they adopt children to have time off work with support? Is that something that would have a positive impact on equality in the creative industries?

Professor O'Brien: Yes, and I think that there are two elements to that. One is getting a sense of how for some workers the freelance model is much more flexible and gives freedom but also at the same time exposes them to much more personalised risks, and how you can smooth out those risks. It should not just be about freelancers or the self-employed, but we should be thinking about this almost for every worker.

The second thing is having a better sense at Treasury level, and maybe in BEIS and possibly DCMS, of what freelancers are, what they do and how their employment practices work. Some of my colleagues and I have recommended some kind of "freelancers are" or something like that. The pandemic showed us that with the data and in thinking about policy responses, central government is not as well developed for this part of the workforce as it is for regular employment.

Kevin Brennan: Yes, the Treasury thinks that working as a freelancer is basically a tax dodge.

Professor O'Brien: I could not comment on that.

Q63 **Kevin Brennan:** You also mentioned libraries earlier. Of course, in reality the provision of a high quality library service is a statutory obligation for local authorities. They are cultural institutions, and perhaps more than any cultural institution they attract through their doors a range of citizens that is diverse in both social class and ethnicity. They are much less intimidating than a theatre—even the wonderful Stephen Joseph Theatre you mentioned earlier—or a museum, and they are incredibly valuable places where people can share culture. Is that something that, as part of this cultural placemaking, we should also focus on in our report?

Professor O'Brien: Yes, I think libraries are a good example of spaces where you can bring people together, rather than just the provision of a museum that may have an educational outreach department. Libraries have a different function and a different ethos. There are questions—thinking about Simon's comments about the kinds of careers that people need to be ready for—about the role of the librarian in the digital age, and at the same time how these spaces are central to some communities' understanding and use of culture, but also how they can be protected.

Q64 **Kevin Brennan:** Judith, finally, I have my Coventry City of Culture notebook here from the Committee's visit; we had a fascinating visit to look at the impact of this. Thinking about what recommendations we could make in our report—you know what we are reporting about—what lessons do you think we ought to include in our report as recommendations to the Government of how they could use culture as part of their levelling up agenda, if levelling up means giving more opportunity to people in places where not only are they economically deprived but there is a degree of cultural deprivation, perhaps, as Professor Shepherd has mentioned, that is related to economic deprivation?

Professor Mossman: It is a big question. I think that the competition model is quite a good model, because although clearly winning means you get more inward investment, by not winning you will still make a strategy for yourself and in some cases be able to carry out at least fairly large parts of it. The information-sharing exercise that I mentioned earlier will have taken place. Stoke-on-Trent, who lost to Coventry last time, acted on a very interesting and intelligent strategy and benefited from that, even though they did not get the prize.

It is very important to see it as not just a big party, but as something that upskills people. By upskilling people, particularly people who want to remain in the area, you will improve things for everyone. There is good research that suggests that by upskilling people you do not just help those people, but you help the community in which they live. It focuses people's minds on where they live and what needs to be made better, and that can be very productive. That is probably not a complete answer; it is about half an answer.

Kevin Brennan: That is very helpful.

Q65 **Julie Elliott:** Good afternoon, everyone. The Culture Recovery Fund has given out enormous amounts of money during the pandemic. Professor O'Brien, do you think enough money has been given to places outside of London and the south-east?

Professor O'Brien: That is an interesting question. Part of my answer is no, we should always give more money to cultural activities. They are good for us in a variety of ways. I think some analysis that my colleagues did suggested that one of the stories that we can tell about the Culture Recovery Fund is that a lot of it followed where existing infrastructure was, and rightly so, because the existing infrastructure was at extinction level, effectively, during 2020, particularly venue-based organisations. It does tell us something about the fact that if you are going to invest, even in an emergency, you will end up investing where there is already a strong infrastructure.

If we are going to take seriously whatever levelling up means, we might think about how you do infrastructure building with additional financial resource, rather than just saying, "Here is additional financial resource". Are the places that are already set up to get that money and to deal with that money likely to benefit disproportionately?

Q66 **Julie Elliott:** Do you think there is any evidence that people who had the ability to employ specialists to fill in forms received access to the money in the beginning?

Professor O'Brien: I don't know. I can't comment on that.

Q67 **Julie Elliott:** Professor Mossman, from your work with the Coventry City of Culture, do you think that the funding provided to the winning bidders is adequate to drive sustainable cultural development?

Professor Mossman: Wisely spent, the inward investment we have seen overall was adequate in our case, for the infrastructure and the capital investment, yes. It is tricky to run an arts festival for a whole year without additional funding from local businesses. The capital investment worked well for Coventry. Of course, it was running a major arts festival in the middle of a pandemic, and that is not something that anybody wants to try to do. I should say that I think that the people who were responsible for managing the programme under those incredibly difficult circumstances deserve an enormous amount of credit, because it was just impossible to predict what was going to happen. That had its own financial implications, of course, and continues to do so as people do not necessarily want to go out to indoor venues as much as they did.

The capital investment has made a huge difference to the city, and I congratulate Sunderland for getting on the shortlist for next time.

Q68 **Julie Elliott:** I had a vested interest, being on the steering group for the Sunderland bid, so I am sitting here asking you questions and thinking, "I

could answer that". However, that is not what I am here to do today. I am here to ask the questions. How much resource does it take to put together a successful bid, and was there any concern that this resource might be for nothing, or better used elsewhere, in case you were unsuccessful?

Professor Mossman: As a matter of fact, you might be a better person to answer this question than I am, because I moved to Coventry in September 2017 and I joined the trust as a trustee about a week before the announcement. I was not there for putting the bid together, although I saw it subsequently, but I cannot tell you today how much the bid cost overall. I know roughly how much it cost the university to be part of it, which was not excessive, in my view. I am afraid I do not know the figures for what the council put in and what was raised locally.

Q69 **Julie Elliott:** Thank you for being honest about when you came into the bidding process. Do you foresee any problems related to ongoing competition for cultural funding, such as how Government measures impact on success? You have already commented on the competition model, but do you see any problems going forward?

Professor Mossman: In a lot of cases the length of time over which success is measured needs to be a bit longer than it is. Not just one year or two years but, say, five years would give a much more complete picture of the effect. I think with these big events there is an afterglow, which you will not capture if you measure it after only one year. A longer assessment period would be fairer. It takes quite a long time sometimes for the effects of cultural events to become apparent.

Chair: Jonty Archibald, Professor Judith Mossman, Professor Dave O'Brien and Professor Simon Shepherd, thank you very much for your evidence today. It has been really illuminating.