



House of Commons

Digital, Culture, Media and  
Sport Committee

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# Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda

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**Third Report of Session 2022–23**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 25 October 2022*

**HC 155**

Published on 2 November 2022  
by authority of the House of Commons

## The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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## Summary

High streets and town centres are at the heart of our communities, yet they have been in long-term decline. The rise of online retail, changing work and social habits and the reduced capacity of local government, exacerbated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, are important factors, and this decline is symptomatic of the place-based inequalities facing the UK. The 2019 Conservative Party Manifesto committed several times to “level up every part of the United Kingdom”. The Government subsequently declared that “Levelling Up” would be its “defining mission” in order to “increase and spread prosperity and opportunity” across the country.

“Cultural placemaking”, which refers to the role of arts, culture and heritage in shaping the places where we live, is an important concept in the context of Levelling Up. Place-based approaches to culture can be locally-led and engaging, deliver direct and indirect benefits and support education, pride in place, health and wellbeing, and therefore support the Government deliver on the missions set out in its Levelling Up agenda.

However, our inquiry has found pervasive and persistent barriers to cultural placemaking. In terms of funding for cultural organisations and activity, there are concerns about the ongoing geographical disparities, as well as long-term sustainability and accessibility. We recommend that the Government and its arm’s-length bodies (ALBs) consider how they can better support arts and culture across the country and better incentivise private sector investment. We also recommend that the Government urgently outline support for at-risk organisations in the culture, media and sport sectors to offset the impact of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Cultural placemaking also necessitates taking a people-based approach to cultural policy. We have found concerning evidence of persistently poor levels of social mobility and inclusivity within the cultural sector, as well as the ongoing national skills shortage across the creative industries. These issues have been impacted by poor working conditions and detrimental changes to education policy. We urge the Government to bring forward tangible steps to improve the provision of education and address the national skills sector within the creative industries and unlock employment opportunities for people across the country.

We also examine the Government’s efforts to support local decision-making. We recommend a continuation of the Government and Arts Council England’s “cultural compacts” initiative, which aims to bring together local cross-sector stakeholders in pilot areas to enable better engagement and strategic planning.

Finally, we consider the provision of local public library services across England. We conclude that libraries remain an important part of communities’ cultural infrastructure, particularly in deprived areas, and call for further support to improve these services.

# 1 Introduction

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## Challenges facing our public spaces

1. High streets and town centres are at the heart of our communities. They are focal points for the places we live and work and are sites of local cultural, educational and democratic activity. Yet, despite their importance, these public spaces have been in long-term decline, and a great deal of thought and consideration has been devoted to understanding this phenomenon and how to address it.

2. This trend has several factors. The rise of online shopping and the decline of high street retail has presented a significant challenge. Indeed, this was the factor most often cited in our inquiry.<sup>1</sup> Retail has traditionally helped to structure public spaces, alongside other local institutions.<sup>2</sup> However, between 2007 and 2020, the proportion of online sales as a percentage of total UK retail sales increased significantly, from 3.4 percent to 27.9 percent.<sup>3</sup> Concurrently, between 2012 and 2017 the number of retail businesses fell by 2 percent<sup>4</sup> and, in 2018 alone, 70,000 jobs were lost in the retail sector.<sup>5</sup> This relates to a change in people's attitudes and behaviour in response to a range of stimuli, including less local employment and a greater demand for leisure and social activities.<sup>6</sup> Despite these shifting habits, previous regeneration efforts have often prioritised the return of retail.<sup>7</sup> The resulting closure of traditional high street staples has led to vacant and empty spaces, creating a barrier to local pride and leading to feelings of insecurity, vulnerability and exclusion.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the capacity of local authorities has been squeezed over this same period, posing further barriers to regeneration efforts such as public investment, business rates reform and so on.<sup>9</sup>

3. These factors have been further exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, the pandemic has had lasting impacts on and may (further) reduce the scope of recovery in areas beyond retail, including arts, culture, heritage and tourism,<sup>11</sup> as well as

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1 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#)), Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Mrs Geraldine Mathieson ([LEV0045](#)), The Art House ([LEV0046](#)), Institute of Historic Building Conservation ([LEV0049](#)), Bite Back 2030 ([LEV0058](#)), Bristol City Council ([LEV0082](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#)), University of Warwick ([LEV0126](#)), University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

2 Bristol City Council ([LEV0082](#)), Dance Consortia North West ([LEV0131](#)), University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

3 Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#))

4 Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#))

5 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2017–2019, *High streets and town centres in 2030*, HC 1010, para 2

6 Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Bristol City Council ([LEV0082](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#)), Faculty of Arts, University of Nottingham ([LEV0129](#))

7 Mrs Geraldine Mathieson ([LEV0045](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#)); see also Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2017–2019, *High streets and town centres in 2030*, HC 1010, para 106

8 University of Warwick ([LEV0126](#))

9 [Qq24, 168](#), Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#))

10 [Q24](#), Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Institute of Historic Building Conservation ([LEV0049](#)), Bite Back 2030 ([LEV0058](#)), Make It York, City of York Council ([LEV0079](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#)), University of Warwick ([LEV0126](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

11 [Q55](#), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#))

sport, local media and education.<sup>12</sup> Clare Reddington, chief executive of Bristol-based film, culture and digital media centre Watershed (celebrated in several written submissions<sup>13</sup>), told us that “lockdown took out about 48 percent of our income” and that Watershed was working towards initial targets of bringing back 80 percent of pre-Covid audiences.<sup>14</sup> Keith Merrin, director of the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, similarly described the post-pandemic squeeze on his organisation, both due to visitor numbers declining to 50 percent of pre-pandemic levels (with subsequent impact on the Museums’ trading company), while outreach and engagement work with schools had simultaneously doubled due to the demand for both existing in-person and new online services.<sup>15</sup> Notably, these impacts go beyond the financial. Salford’s Culture and Place Partnership, a “cultural compact” (discussed further in Paragraph 101), wrote that “recent research has found that the pandemic has worsened inequities in cultural access or engagement that existed prior to the pandemic”.<sup>16</sup> Sanaz Amidi, chief executive and trustee of visual arts and creative education hub Rosetta Arts, similarly described how ongoing effects of the pandemic have affected cultural participation, including due to the relatively low vaccine uptake and high proportion of shielding individuals in her local area and the need to cater for online, outdoor and blended services, which itself necessitated that providers learned how to deliver, and adapted to delivering, these services.<sup>17</sup>

## Current policy landscape

### *The Levelling Up agenda*

4. The issues facing public spaces are symptomatic of the place-based inequalities facing the UK. Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and others has found that the UK is one of the most regionally unequal countries in the entire developed world.<sup>18</sup> Polling of the British public, published by the Resolution Foundation, shows that over 60 percent say that “the gaps between areas are one of the most concerning types of inequality in the UK today”.<sup>19</sup>

5. For its part, the Government has been cognisant of these issues. The 2019 Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto, subtitled ‘Unleash Britain’s Potential’, committed several times to “level up every part of the United Kingdom”.<sup>20</sup> The Government asserted earlier this year that its “defining mission is to level up the UK” in order to “increase and spread prosperity and opportunity” across the country and “break the link between geography and destiny”.<sup>21</sup> On 2 February, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the *Levelling Up the United Kingdom* White Paper (the “Levelling Up White Paper”), which articulated a policy regime based on “five mutually reinforcing pillars”:

12 [Qq16–18](#)

13 Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#))

14 [Q82](#)

15 [Qq81](#), [86](#), [93](#)

16 Salford’s Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#))

17 [Qq85](#), [94](#)

18 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Levelling up: where and how?* (October 2020)

19 Resolution Foundation, *The Economy 2030 Inquiry: Income outcomes* (June 2022), pp 6–7

20 The Conservative Party, *Conservative Party Manifesto 2019* (November 2019), pp 2, 5, 25, 27, 36, 40

21 [“New Bill to level up the nation”](#), Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities press release, 11 May 2022

- twelve medium-term Levelling-Up missions;<sup>22</sup>
- a reorientation of decision-making;
- a new devolution framework;
- a new approach to data and evaluation; and
- a regime for reporting, external advice and external scrutiny.<sup>23</sup>

On 11 May, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Rt. Hon. Michael Gove, introduced the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill, which aims to enshrine the twelve Levelling-Up Missions in law, reform the planning system and provide local government with powers to regenerate high streets and develop infrastructure and services.<sup>24</sup> With respect to the Levelling-Up Missions specifically, the Government will be required to publish and lay before each House of Parliament a “Statement of Levelling-Up Missions”, which sets out the mission objectives, relevant mission period and “mission progress methodology and metrics”, with subsequent annual reporting on progress against the stated methodology and metrics throughout the mission period.<sup>25</sup>

6. Concurrently, the Government has also provided funding for a variety of initiatives, including:

- the £3.6 billion Towns Fund for 101 towns across England, and the £830 million Future High Streets Fund to 72 towns and high streets for recovery from the pandemic;
- the £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund to help cultural institutions survive through the effects of the pandemic;
- the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund for infrastructure investment; and
- the £150 million Community Ownership Fund, to allow local stakeholders to bring assets of local cultural importance back into community ownership.<sup>26</sup>

7. Arm’s-length bodies (ALBs)<sup>27</sup> of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have emphasised their role in delivering the Levelling Up agenda. Arts Council England (ACE), for example, has been delivering development programmes such as the Great Place Scheme (together with the Heritage Lottery Fund), the Creative Local Growth Fund, the Cultural Destinations Programme (along with Visit England, from National

22 These missions are: pay, employment and productivity; domestic public investment in research and development; local public transport; digital connectivity; education; skills; health; well-being; pride in place; housing; crime; and local leadership.

23 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, pp xvii-xix

24 “[New Bill to level up the nation](#)”, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities press release, 11 May 2022

25 [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill](#), Clauses 1–6 [Bill 6 (2022–23)]

26 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, pp xii-xiii

27 DCMS works with a variety of relevant ALBs, including: executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) like Arts Council England, British Film Institute, Historic England and several national arts and cultural institutions; advisory NDPBs like The Theatres Trust and The Advisory Council on National Records and Archives; public corporations and public service broadcasters like the BBC, Channel 4 and S4C; and regulators like the Gambling Commission, the Information Commissioner’s Office (which are technically executive NDPBs) and Ofcom.

Lottery funding), the Creative People and Places programme (also from National Lottery funding) and the Cultural Development Fund (on behalf of Government, which invested £18.5 million into five locations).<sup>28</sup> ACE also previously administered £1.14 billion through the aforementioned Cultural Recovery Fund and a further £160 million through its own Emergency Response Fund.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Historic England is currently administering £95 million in Government funding through its High Street Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ) programme (with a linked £7 million Cultural Programme jointly-administered by ACE and the National Lottery Heritage Fund), alongside its pre-existing Heritage Action Zones and Heritage Schools schemes.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, public service broadcasters (PSBs) accounted for 70 percent of external commissioning spend outside of London; these levels are buttressed by quotas for percentage of commissioning spend in the regions for all PSBs and for “Out of England” spend for the BBC and Channel 4 specifically.<sup>31</sup> Both the BBC and Channel 4 have also committed to increasing future spend in the Nations and Regions by £700 million and £2 billion respectively (though it should be noted that the latter’s commitment was presented as part of an alternative option to plans for privatisation).<sup>32</sup>

8. While the ambitions of the Levelling Up agenda have been welcomed, the accompanying policymaking has drawn several critiques.<sup>33</sup> Both media commentators<sup>34</sup> and academic evidence to our inquiry<sup>35</sup> noted that the Government has not been clear in precisely defining “Levelling Up”. Concurrently, many ALBs emphasised that they had been engaged in such activity prior to 2019.<sup>36</sup> The Institute for Government has similarly argued that “this is not the first government to have tried to reduce regional disparities, and previous [ ... ] research has shown how previous attempts to address these longstanding problems have been undermined by frequent changes to policies and delivery institutions”.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, two of the flagship aims of the Government’s March 2016 Culture White Paper were that “everyone should enjoy the opportunities culture offers, no matter where they start in life” and that “the riches of our culture should benefit communities across the country”.<sup>38</sup>

9. Finally, the delivery of Levelling Up funds, schemes and programmes have been criticised on several grounds. In November 2020, the Public Accounts Committee criticised the flagship Towns Fund on the basis that the “selection process was not impartial” and lacked transparency and that DLUHC was unclear about how much local engagement and intelligence gathering had been undertaken, how it would measure success and how the Fund would fit with other programmes with overlapping aims.<sup>39</sup> A comprehensive Report on high streets published by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee in December 2021 concluded that “the Government’s current approach to funding town

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28 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

29 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

30 Historic England ([LEV0139](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

31 Channel 4 ([LEV0152](#))

32 BBC ([LEV0149](#)), Channel 4 ([LEV0152](#))

33 Institute for Government, [‘The levelling up white paper: welcome ambition but underwhelming policies,’](#) 2 February 2022

34 [“‘Levelling up’ plan announced: Michael Gove says ‘landmark promises’ will improve the lives of those outside London and the South East”](#), Sky News, 2 February 2022

35 [Qq6, 65](#)

36 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)), BBC ([LEV0149](#))

37 Institute for Government, [‘Policy making: Levelling up’](#), accessed 11 August 2022

38 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *The Culture White Paper*, [Cm 9218](#), March 2016

39 Public Accounts Committee, Twenty-Fourth Report of Session 2019–21, [‘Selecting towns for the Towns Fund,’](#) HC 651

centre regeneration—in line with its approach to allocating funding to local government generally—is too complex, short-term, and fragmented”.<sup>40</sup> In June 2022, the Public Accounts Committee further concluded that it was unsatisfactory that “Ministers finalised principles for awarding the first round of the Levelling Up Fund only once they knew the identities and scores of shortlisted bidders” and that there was ongoing uncertainty as to how DLUHC would measure performance and for local authorities regarding funding, structures and responsibilities for local economic growth.<sup>41</sup> Some of these conclusions have been reflected in evidence to our inquiry.<sup>42</sup> The Centre for Cultural Value and Culture Commons, for example, specifically called on the Government to “develop a robust statutory framework for *understanding* and *improving*, not just *measuring* ‘Pride in Place’, and resource local authorities, arm’s-length bodies and cultural programmes appropriately to ensure they can meaningfully contribute to meeting levelling up targets [emphasis theirs]”.<sup>43</sup>

### Cultural placemaking

10. “Cultural placemaking” is an important concept in the context of Levelling Up and the wider long-term decline of town centres, high streets and public spaces across the country. Cultural placemaking, as described in a 2017 report from the Local Government Association (LGA) and Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CCLOA), refers to the role of arts, culture and heritage in shaping the places where we live.<sup>44</sup> Taking a place-based, locally-grounded conception of culture has benefits when it comes to cultural policymaking. Professor Dave O’Brien, Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries, Sheffield University Management School, speculated that “we might see changes in what counts as good theatre if it is more locally or regionally driven, for example”.<sup>45</sup> Professor Judith Mossman, Pro-Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Coventry University, similarly asserted that there is “so much activity going on already in different ways, from different communities” and 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”.<sup>46</sup> As such, place-based approaches to cultural policymaking can help move the debate beyond post-pandemic recovery towards one centred around the future of public spaces.

11. It should be recognised that in many ways, arts, culture and heritage already animate, and are continuing to reanimate, our public spaces, with the issue being one of acknowledgement and perceived value, particularly in national contexts.<sup>47</sup> The Institute of Place Management (IPM) at Manchester Metropolitan University, for example, has observed that “debates on reviving high streets mainly focus on retail activity” while “issues concerning cultural placemaking in relation to high street revitalisation remain

40 Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2021–22, [Supporting our high streets after COVID-19](#), HC 37, para 92

41 Public Accounts Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2022–23, [Local economic growth](#), HC 252

42 UK Music ([LEV0016](#)), The Museums Association ([LEV0043](#))

43 Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#))

44 Local Government Association and Chief Culture and Leisure Officers Association, [People, culture, place: The role of culture in placemaking](#) (February 2017), p 5

45 [Q6](#)

46 [Q9](#)

47 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#)), R Clayton; C Clayton; M Potter ([LEV0054](#))

neglected by comparison”.<sup>48</sup> Nor should cultural placemaking be perceived as separate to other activity that takes place in these spaces, or as only concerning public art and performance.<sup>49</sup>

12. We heard about a variety of benefits to people and places as a result of cultural placemaking:

- Place-based approaches can (and should) be locally-led, locally sensitive and embedded in local communities,<sup>50</sup> and reflect the distinctiveness of our towns and city centres.<sup>51</sup> Creatives themselves are often drawn from and/or networked into local communities in which they are based.<sup>52</sup> As Clare Reddington posited, “for us, levelling up means that we want to enable everyone to participate in the social, cultural and economic development of the city; we want to ensure that everyone’s voices are heard in inventing the future”.<sup>53</sup> We were told that locally-led and embraced projects identify local needs, have a more lasting impact, showcase and contextualise local history, reflect the experiences of young people in particular, and constitute a national cultural ecosystem.<sup>54</sup>
- Cultural placemaking can have direct and indirect economic impacts, both in terms of generating creative industries jobs and volunteering opportunities in the local area and by stimulating other local businesses such as food and beverage, retail, tourism and the night-time economy, encouraging private sector investment and creating attractive, long-term propositions for businesses as places of work.<sup>55</sup> IPM has found that “there is evidence of how investment in both culture and heritage has enabled some centres to recover more quickly”.<sup>56</sup> The Theatres Trust, for example, told us that the Chester Storyhouse art centre’s opening increased city centre footfall by 15 percent, while reopened theatres at the Bradford Odeon and Stockton Globe are estimated to bring in an additional £10–18 million in economic impact per year.<sup>57</sup> Culture Liverpool similarly asserts that since 2008, their cultural programme “has continued to support

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48 Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#))

49 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#))

50 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), Creative Scotland ([LEV0141](#))

51 [Qq98](#) [Keith Merrin], [104](#) [Councillor Brown]

52 Crafts Council ([LEV0009](#))

53 [Q72](#)

54 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), Dr Monica Degen ([LEV0051](#)), Bite Back 2030 ([LEV0058](#)), The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#)), University Of Hull - Energy and Environment Institute ([LEV0102](#))

55 Key Cities ([LEV0022](#)), Historic Houses ([LEV0027](#)), Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#)), Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#)), Professor Katy Shaw ([LEV0041](#)), Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), CHEAD Council for Higher Education in Art and Design ([LEV0057](#)), Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#)), VisitBritain/VisitEngland ([LEV0068](#)), Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), LIVE ([LEV0089](#)), British Library ([LEV0091](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), University of Cambridge Museums ([LEV0097](#)), University Alliance ([LEV0100](#)), Ebbsfleet Development Corporation ([LEV0104](#)), National Theatre ([LEV0107](#)), South East Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0108](#)), Culture Mile ([LEV0111](#)), Community Leisure UK ([LEV0112](#)), University of Warwick ([LEV0126](#)), Faculty of Arts, University of Nottingham ([LEV0129](#)), The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#)), Sunderland Culture ([LEV0137](#)), University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#)), LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#)), Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

56 Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#))

57 Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#))

retail, hospitality, visitor economy and leisure industries, that pay £270 million into the city's economy through business rates which in turn pays for essential services".<sup>58</sup>

- Culture plays an important part in education, learning and development,<sup>59</sup> supporting the fifth (Education) and sixth (Skills) Levelling-Up Missions.<sup>60</sup> Professor Simon Shepherd, Professor Emeritus of Theatre at Central School of Speech and Drama, emphasised that cultural education has broad applicability, such as developing creative skills and physical motor skills and learning to apply logic.<sup>61</sup> Successes include the Bradford Film Literacy programme, co-developed by Bradford UNESCO City of Film and the British Film Institute (BFI), where recent evaluation suggested that 70 percent of participating pupils showed improvements in attentiveness and attainment, particularly in literacy (of which boys showed the biggest rates of improvement).<sup>62</sup>
- Cultural placemaking can support other positive outcomes relating to the Levelling-Up Missions, including the seventh (Health), eighth (Wellbeing), ninth (Pride in Place) and twelfth (Local Leadership) missions, as acknowledged in DCMS's 2016 Culture White Paper.<sup>63</sup> Evidence argued that local cultural projects, infrastructure and activity can: evoke pride in place change perceptions of local areas and develop links between people and where they live; encourage civic participation, social cohesion and diversity and inclusion; improve public health (particularly mental health) and wellbeing; and tackle issues regarding isolation, loneliness and exclusion.<sup>64</sup>

13. However, the benefits of cultural placemaking can also be difficult to deliver. Emily Hopkins, a doctoral researcher at Royal Holloway University, argued for "the importance of expectation management within a policy which can be critiqued for overpromising

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58 Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#))

59 [Qq30](#) [Professor Shepherd], [80](#) [Keith Merrin], [86](#) [Keith Merrin], [87](#) [Sanaz Amidi], [94](#), [166](#), [191](#), Bradford UNESCO City of Film ([LEV0014](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), University Alliance ([LEV0100](#)), Five10Twelve Ltd ([LEV0114](#)), University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#)), Local Trust ([LEV0124](#)), LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

60 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, p xviii

61 [Q30](#) [Professor Shepherd]

62 Bradford UNESCO City of Film ([LEV0014](#))

63 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *The Culture White Paper*, [Cm 9218](#), March 2016; see also LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#))

64 [Qq7-8](#), [15](#) [Professor Mossman], [70](#), [72](#), [75](#), [94](#), [172](#), [176](#), Urban Vision Enterprise CIC ([LEV0006](#)), The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), West of England Combined Authority ([LEV0018](#)), Key Cities ([LEV0022](#)), Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#)), Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#)), Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#)), Royal Shakespeare Company ([LEV0040](#)), The Museums Association ([LEV0043](#)), Institute of Historic Building Conservation ([LEV0049](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), Manchester Museum ([LEV0059](#)), Dr Eleni Michopoulou (Associate Professor in Business Management at University of Derby); Dr Kathleen McIlvenna (Lecturer in History at University of Derby); Ms Claire Roe (Postgraduate Researcher at University of Derby); Dr Vladimir Antchak (Senior Lecturer in Event Management at University of Derby) ([LEV0060](#)), Esmée Fairbairn Foundation ([LEV0062](#)), Art Fund ([LEV0069](#)), Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), Creative Lives ([LEV0078](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#)), LIVE ([LEV0089](#)), University of Cambridge Museums ([LEV0097](#)), University Alliance ([LEV0100](#)), Ebbsfleet Development Corporation ([LEV0104](#)), London Higher ([LEV0106](#)), Community Leisure UK ([LEV0112](#)), Five10Twelve Ltd ([LEV0114](#)), Dr Rowan Bailey; Dr Claire Booth-Kurnpieks ([LEV0118](#)), Local Trust ([LEV0124](#)), Faculty of Arts, University of Nottingham ([LEV0129](#)), Historic England ([LEV0139](#)), LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#)), Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)), Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society ([LEV0148](#))

through its transformative claims”.<sup>65</sup> Both Professor O’Brien and Professor Shepherd cautioned against believing that culture would be a silver bullet in dealing with economic inequality and rejected ideas that taking one-size-fits-all approaches in leveraging the economic benefit of cultural offerings that have worked in places like Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle.<sup>66</sup> Performing City Resilience, a research-led consultancy, warned against instrumentalising arts and culture by articulating only its uses, rather than thinking carefully about the strategic place and function of existing practices.<sup>67</sup> For example, cultural placemaking may not be inherently bottom-up and diverse, and that projects that have been perceived as top-down, “vision led” or not addressing a community need were rejected or seen as self-indulgent or as failures by local people.<sup>68</sup> Professor Shepherd observed that locally-led cultural activity can concurrently be sudden and spontaneous, occurring outside of existing political structures or cultural institutions.<sup>69</sup> Culture also encompasses different, emergent artforms too (ranging from cooking or textiles to augmented or virtual reality<sup>70</sup>), which might go against traditional or narrow perceptions of “high culture”.<sup>71</sup> Several submissions also warned that place-based cultural policymaking needed to avoid gentrification (perceived or otherwise) by forming part of inclusive, long-term planning that focuses on making small-scale, aggregate improvements over time.<sup>72</sup>

14. As such, a policymaking approach that views culture simply as a means by which policymakers can deliver particular outcomes may be detrimental. On the one hand, aspects of the country’s physical and cultural heritage may become neglected due to the lack of economic benefit. Keith Merrin cited his organisation’s three sites at Hadrian’s Wall as an example of important social, cultural and historical heritage with intrinsic value that is difficult to monetise to illustrate the danger of over-emphasising the economic value of culture.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, a focus on economic outcomes may also lead to business practices that do not suit the idiosyncratic and esoteric nature of many cultural businesses. As Clare Reddington noted:

In our sector we quite often steal schemes that have been made for other sectors for business growth, and they don’t quite work. We often get asked to tick boxes and provide KPIs that don’t quite work either.<sup>74</sup>

Moreover, Mr Merrin questioned whether the emphasis on economic outcomes had ultimately been successful in generating investment:

There is an interesting thing between us as generators of wealth for the region but also not having the money necessarily to sustain what we do on

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65 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#))

66 [Qq8](#), [15](#), [25](#)

67 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#))

68 Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#)), Create Gloucestershire ([LEV0103](#)), Newhampton Arts Centre ([LEV0105](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Local Trust ([LEV0124](#))

69 [Q7](#)

70 We have explored the possibilities of emerging artforms in a recent visit to the Republic of Korea, and will continue to take an interest in their development and application through future inquiry work.

71 [Qq74–5](#)

72 Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#)), Professor Nicky Marsh; Dr Daniel Ashton; Dr Michael Howcroft ([LEV0037](#)), Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#)), Hope London ([LEV0067](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), Culture Mile ([LEV0111](#))

73 [Q76](#)

74 [Q77](#)

a day-to-day level. We have been making that argument for a long time, so I suppose my rhetorical question is: is making the economic benefit argument actually translating into investment in arts and culture? There is a question mark in my mind about that.<sup>75</sup>

**15. The long-term challenges continuing to face our high streets and town centres are well documented. Cultural placemaking can be (and in many places already is) one way that local communities, government and arm’s-length bodies respond to these challenges. It is evident that place-based cultural policymaking can help deliver on the missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, including improving pride in place but also local leadership, living standards, education, skills, health and wellbeing, so long as these are done in a locally-sensitive way. Our Report discusses the ways that national and local stakeholders can unlock these benefits through investment in local culture and creative people.**

*16. The Government should take steps to level up cultural opportunities and production across the country through its proposed statutory framework set out in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill currently working its way through Parliament. We recommend that the Government commits to explicitly incorporating support for local arts and culture into the Government’s first Statement for Levelling-Up Missions, including the methodology and metrics for mission progress, for missions such as pride in place, living standards, wellbeing, education and local leadership. In its Response to this Report, the Government should provide clarity on how prospective methodologies and metrics might also recognise the idiosyncratic and esoteric nature, and capture the social, cultural and economic value, of many creative businesses. Finally, the Government should ensure that there is countrywide support available to local cultural organisations and local government achieve this progress.*

## Our inquiry

17. We launched our inquiry in January 2022 to consider whether funding for cultural initiatives was reaching areas that might have historically missed out on such support, as well as how local creative talent and businesses could play a role in local decision-making, planning and revitalising our public spaces post-pandemic. In the process, we have also considered issues like social mobility and education and training provision in and for the creative industries. We heard from five panels of witnesses across three evidence sessions and received 150 pieces of written evidence from cultural practitioners, local authorities, academics and universities, cultural compacts and other local engagement and decision-making initiatives, public bodies and members of the public. We are also grateful to the faculty and young creatives at the Global Academy in Hayes, who hosted our first evidence session at their school and participated in an engagement event in Parliament discussing barriers to jobs in the arts, cultural and creative industries. We would like to thank everyone who engaged with and participated in our inquiry.

18. This Report is divided into two chapters. The first chapter discusses cultural policymaking in the context of the place-based aspects of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda. It examines both financial and non-financial barriers to cultural placemaking, including ongoing challenges caused by rising utility costs and the cost-of-living crisis. The

second chapter discusses the people-based aspects of cultural policymaking and Levelling Up, including participation, public engagement, employment and social mobility. It examines challenges regarding decision-making and planning and the provision of library services and education and training.

## 2 Cultural placemaking

19. The Levelling Up White Paper argues that the “drivers of spatial disparity” that the Levelling Up agenda aims to identify and act upon can be encapsulated in “six ‘capitals’”.<sup>76</sup> These capitals are listed and described in the White Paper as:

- physical (e.g., transport and digital infrastructure, machines and housing);
- human (the stock of knowledge, skills, competencies, health and experience of the workforce);
- intangible (formal and informal forms of investment, such as innovation, ideas, intellectual property, etc);
- financial (resources supporting the financing of companies);
- social (described as “the strength of communities, relationships and trust”); and
- institutional (local leadership, capacity and capability).<sup>77</sup>

This Chapter will focus on cultural placemaking with respect to physical and financial capital.

20. As noted in Chapter 1, taking a place-based approach to culture can facilitate policymaking that is led by local stakeholders, responds to local needs and wants, and builds on the cultural activity, heritage, institutions and infrastructure that already exist.<sup>78</sup> The popularity of place-based schemes has increased with the emphasis on levelling up within national government policymaking: most notably, the UK City of Culture scheme, but also with the Government’s Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund, ACE’s funding for its 54 “priority places” across the country, and Historic England’s Heritage Action Zones and High Street Heritage Action Zones programmes.<sup>79</sup> This Chapter considers the barriers to cultural placemaking and the likely impact of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis on place-based policymaking.

### Barriers to cultural placemaking

#### *Financial barriers to cultural activity*

21. The most cited barrier to cultural placemaking was funding for cultural activity. Data from ACE shows that 50 percent of the overall funding mix for culture came from earned income in the years before the pandemic.<sup>80</sup> Over the same period, public funding comprised

76 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, pp xv-xvi

77 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, pp 58–95

78 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#)), Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#))

79 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Historic England ([LEV0139](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#)); [Qq126–8, 130, 135–42](#)

80 Arts Council England, [Private Investment in Culture Survey Report 2022](#) (June 2022), p 10

approximately 30 percent of the overall funding mix for culture.<sup>81</sup> Local authorities are the biggest funders of arts and culture in the UK.<sup>82</sup> Councils in England collectively spend over £1 billion per year on culture alone, as well as a further £1 billion on related sectors like sport, tourism and parks and green spaces.<sup>83</sup> Some services that local authorities provide, such as the provision of public library services and conservation of ancient monuments, are set out in statute; other areas of cultural funding are discretionary. Alongside local government, ALBs like ACE invest central government and National Lottery funding through project grants, development funds and its National Portfolio (the collective list of organisations that hold multi-year funding agreements),<sup>84</sup> while further public funding comes from bodies like the BBC.<sup>85</sup> Many organisations receive public money from a mix of sources. Sanaz Amidi told us that Rosetta Arts' biggest source of funding is through commissions from local government while also being a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) since 2018;<sup>86</sup> Clare Reddington said that Watershed receives funding from the Arts Council, Bristol City Council and the BFI, as well as working with universities, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).<sup>87</sup>

22. Private investment accounts for a further £800 million in funding (20 percent of the overall mix) through individual giving and membership, corporate giving and membership and from trusts and foundations.<sup>88</sup> Arts Council data shows that the majority of private investment goes three artforms in particular, namely, in music (32 percent), theatre (25 percent) and visual arts (17 percent), though other disciplines that receive noteworthy amounts of private investment include combined arts (10 percent), museums and heritage (8 percent) and dance (6 percent).<sup>89</sup>

23. Despite this, funding for arts and culture has fallen for many years and remains precarious. In total, public spending on arts and culture (i.e., through arm's-length bodies, via the National Lottery and from local and national government) has fallen by 35 percent since 2008.<sup>90</sup> In fact, total UK government spend lags well behind other European countries (see Table 1). Real-terms local authority spending fell by £1.84 billion between 2009–10 and 2017–18, equating to a fall of 39 percent.<sup>91</sup> In other words, for every £1 spent on culture and heritage in 2009–10, 61p was spent in 2017–18.<sup>92</sup> By 2020–21, real-terms annual spending per person had fallen by almost 50 percent, from £118.93 in 2009–10 to £59.90.<sup>93</sup> As the National Trust notes, given the duties on authorities to provide services set out in statute (e.g., education, waste collection and mental health and social care services) and regulatory functions (e.g., in health and safety, licensing and consumer protection), the squeeze in local authority funding has meant that funding for non-statutory functions like broader cultural activity has a significant opportunity cost.<sup>94</sup>

81 Arts Council England, [Private Investment in Culture Survey Report 2022](#) (June 2022), pp 10–11

82 Professor Nicky Marsh; Dr Daniel Ashton; Dr Michael Howcroft ([LEV0037](#)) para 3.3, The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)) para 2.2, Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#))

83 The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)) para 2.2

84 Arts Council England, 'How We Invest Public Money,' accessed 22 June 2022

85 Arts Council England, [Private Investment in Culture Survey Report 2022](#) (June 2022), p 13

86 [Q85](#)

87 [Q72](#)

88 Arts Council England, [Private Investment in Culture Survey Report 2022](#) (June 2022), p 10

89 Arts Council England, [Private Investment in Culture Survey Report 2022](#) (June 2022), p 11

90 Equity ([LEV0077](#))

91 The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)) para 5.2

92 Ibid

93 Professor Nicky Marsh; Dr Daniel Ashton; Dr Michael Howcroft ([LEV0037](#)) para 3.3, Equity ([LEV0077](#)), Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#))

94 National Trust ([LEV0042](#))

24. Simultaneously, business sponsorship of arts and culture has also fallen by 39 percent since 2013, equating to tens of millions of pounds.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, looking at the different sources of the private investment mix shows that private investment remains potentially volatile. While private investment in culture has overall remained relatively stable over the last three years, funding from trusts and foundations and from corporate giving and memberships has fallen over this same period by 5 and 7 percent respectively, and was offset only by an increase of 6 percent in individual giving and memberships, driven by tailored fundraising campaigns and membership growth.<sup>96</sup> In this context, it is unsurprising that the disparity, accessibility and sustainability of funding and investment were concerns raised in both written and oral evidence.

**Table 1: Total government spend for culture as percentage of GDP**

Country	Spend as % of GDP	Country	Spend as % of GDP
Estonia	1.1	Austria	0.5
Hungary	1.1	Finland	0.5
Iceland	1.1	Sweden	0.5
Latvia	1	Bulgaria	0.4
France	0.7	Germany	0.4
Croatia	0.7	Spain	0.4
Lithuania	0.7	Netherlands	0.4
Malta	0.7	Romania	0.4
Poland	0.7	Switzerland	0.4
Norway	0.7	Italy	0.3
Czech Republic	0.6	Portugal	0.3
Denmark	0.6	Ireland	0.2
Slovenia	0.6	Cyprus	0.2
Slovakia	0.6	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Belgium	0.5	Greece	0.1
Luxembourg	0.5		

Source: Eurostat Statistics (2019), via Equity ([LEV0077](#))

### *Geographical and sectoral disparities*

25. Despite the nationwide decline in real-terms funding for arts and culture, it is likely that the effects have not been felt evenly across and within the regions. Many organisations made reference to the fact that investment in many areas, including conservation and regeneration of heritage assets, cultural infrastructure, TV and film production and provision of skills and training, lags behind in regions outside of London and South East England.<sup>97</sup> This was often expressed by way of comparisons in investment, participation and spend. Government estimates show that a third of creative industries workers are currently based in the capital.<sup>98</sup> On average, Greater London receives £21 per capita of ACE National Portfolio investment, compared to £6 per capita for the rest of the country.<sup>99</sup>

95 Equity ([LEV0077](#))

96 Arts Council England, *Private Investment in Culture Survey Report 2022* (June 2022), p 6

97 University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Institute of Historic Building Conservation ([LEV0049](#)), British Library ([LEV0091](#)), University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#))

98 Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#))

99 [Q245](#)

Indeed, while London has comparable numbers of NPOs in the current 2018–22 funding period to the whole of the North of England (253 to 225 respectively) and the rest of the South East has almost the same number of NPOs as the South West (101 to 103 respectively), the comparative totals of NPO funding between London and the North (£161.9 million to £100.8 million) and between the South East and South West (£40.1 million to £28.1 million) seem to demonstrate more concentrated funding in London and the South East on average. The capital also hosts 13 of the UK’s 35 film and TV studios and, despite the impacts of PSB relocations and commissioning quotas, attracts 53 percent of reported production budgets and 55 percent of primary commission revenue.<sup>100</sup>

26. These geographical disparities in investment and infrastructure likely explain geographical disparities in revenue from cultural production and tourism. In 2019, Greater London alone generated over £3.7 billion more in inbound tourist spend than the rest of Great Britain combined (£15.7 billion to just over £11.9 billion respectively).<sup>101</sup> In comparison with the Nations and Regions, Greater London also generated the third most domestic tourist spend (£3 billion), out-earned by only the South West (£4.1 billion) and Scotland (£3.2 billion).<sup>102</sup> In total, London receives over 30 percent of all the UK’s income from music tourism and accounts for almost a quarter of the resulting full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created.<sup>103</sup>

27. For their part, the Government and its ALBs have responded to this critique. DCMS, in written evidence, emphasised that it provides funds directly to 19 museums based outside London, including the Tate Liverpool and Bradford’s National Science and Media Museum, and that 55 of the 67 towns and cities identified for High Streets Heritage Action Zone programme funding are outside London and the South East.<sup>104</sup> ACE’s data shows that, in the current National Portfolio funding period, 60.3 percent of funding goes to NPOs outside of London, up from 55.8 percent and 53.8 percent in the last two periods (2015–18 and 2012–15) respectively.<sup>105</sup> ACE has also committed to moving £8 million of the third year of the current National Portfolio funding round and £16 million in each of the first two years of the next round from London to areas outside the capital.<sup>106</sup> ACE will also spend the entire 6 percent uplift provided in the most recent funding settlement (worth £43.5 million) outside London, a move supported by organisations such as Spirit of 2012, Equity, GuildHE and the Littoral Arts Trust.<sup>107</sup>

28. However, questions remain as to whether simply moving money from one place to another is sufficient to achieve the ambitions of the Levelling Up agenda. First, it may not address the mutually reinforcing factors that exacerbate the concentration of cultural production in many disciplines in London and the South East. For example, place-based disparities might be exacerbated because of agglomeration benefits, such as economies of scale, competition, the concentration of infrastructure and skilled labour and the potential for knowledge, skills and innovation exchange, which locks in the competitive advantage

100 Equity ([LEV0077](#)); see also Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), Pact (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television) ([LEV0113](#)), British Film Institute ([LEV0146](#)), BBC ([LEV0149](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

101 VisitBritain/VisitEngland ([LEV0068](#))

102 VisitBritain/VisitEngland ([LEV0068](#))

103 LIVE ([LEV0089](#))

104 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

105 Arts Council England, ‘Our National Portfolio in numbers, 2018–22’, accessed 28 July 2022

106 [Q148](#) [Dr Darren Henley], Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

107 [Q148](#) [Dr Darren Henley], Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#)), Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#)), GuildHE ([LEV0070](#)), Equity ([LEV0077](#)), Littoral Arts Trust/Creative Rural Sector ([LEV0133](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

of certain places and locks out others.<sup>108</sup> Many respondents noted that, likely for this reason, creative businesses, like those in the digital sector, tend to grow in clusters.<sup>109</sup> This can be seen in disciplines like film, TV, theatre and gaming production and museum-based conservation work.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, evidence from the Nesta-led Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, has found that the UK has almost 50 “creative clusters” (areas with a high concentration of creative organisations) and over 700 “micro-clusters” (areas with 50 or more creative organisations) across the country, which have formed to take advantage of these benefits, of which almost 250 are in towns or outside the large cities.<sup>111</sup>

29. Second, in a related point, commitments to redistribute funding more equitably across the country are potentially (still) focused on a metropolitan model, which may entrench or exacerbate inequalities between and among urban (inner city, suburban, towns) and rural/coastal areas.<sup>112</sup> Evidence from Cornwall Council and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership argues that it is difficult for filmmakers in rural areas to generate a sustainable stream of commissions and concurrent efforts to decentralise the industry, such as to Salford and Leeds, are even further from London for Cornish creatives.<sup>113</sup>

30. Third, though the Levelling Up White Paper has outlined the Government’s plans to increase the national impact of London-based NPOs through relocation or new or satellite venues and partnerships outside London<sup>114</sup> (and indeed we heard instances where NPOs have relocated to new places in beneficial ways),<sup>115</sup> there is also the potential that this may be misused. For example, we heard anecdotal reports, including from Rt. Hon. Nadine Dorries, the then-Secretary of State for DCMS, that some organisations may feel incentivised to register in postcodes to appear as if they meet the aims of the Levelling Up agenda.<sup>116</sup>

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108 Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), National Theatre ([LEV0107](#)), The Institute of Conservation ([LEV0135](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

109 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), West of England Combined Authority ([LEV0018](#)), Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#)), Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), CHEAD Council for Higher Education in Art and Design ([LEV0057](#)), GuildHE ([LEV0070](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), Salford’s Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), Creative Estuary ([LEV0095](#)), London Higher ([LEV0106](#)), Five10Twelve Ltd ([LEV0114](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Faculty of Arts, University of Nottingham ([LEV0129](#)), LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#)), Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ([LEV0142](#)), British Film Institute ([LEV0146](#)), BBC ([LEV0149](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

110 COBA (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services) ([LEV0019](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

111 Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)); see also Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

112 Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#)), Institute of Historic Building Conservation ([LEV0049](#)), The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#))

113 Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#))

114 WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#))

115 [Q151](#)

116 [Qq131–2](#), [Oral evidence](#) taken on 19 May 2022, HC (2022–23) 158, Qq126–8 [Ms Dorries]

31. Finally, it should be noted that our inquiry has heard many instances of successful cultural placemaking in places up and down the country outside the South East. Professor Dave O’Brien noted that Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle have all demonstrated track records of building strong, sustainable cultural economies, albeit predicated on long-term (thirty years plus) policy thinking, planning and building cultural infrastructure, huge cultural offers (music, heritage, sport, etc) and public sector capital investment (with Liverpool receiving £1 billion in Objective 1 money over ten years and Newcastle benefitting from central government capital spend and infrastructure building).<sup>117</sup> Bristol has benefitted from culture-led partnerships, investment, regeneration and tourism.<sup>118</sup> Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds and Salford have benefitted from decentralisation and investment from PSBs and commercial broadcasters.<sup>119</sup>

32. Concurrently, we also heard that the situation within London and the South East is more nuanced than discussions around Levelling Up and cultural placemaking may imply. The South East has the highest rates of homelessness,<sup>120</sup> congestion and land and property price inflation, and experiences ongoing pressure on existing infrastructure and from adverse environmental impacts.<sup>121</sup> London also has the highest rates of poverty in the UK and the lowest rates of cultural participation in England.<sup>122</sup> Five London boroughs are ACE “Priority Places” and many boroughs and London-based constituencies have either only one or no NPOs at all.<sup>123</sup> More broadly, half of London boroughs are ranked in the bottom-third of the country in terms of levels of deprivation, including Greenwich, which is home to many cultural institutions of national importance, including the O2 and the four Royal Museums Greenwich, and is home to the new Woolwich Works creative district.<sup>124</sup>

33. This picture is further complicated when ALB funding is considered in a more granular way. Of the £662 million grants-in-aid (GIA) and Lottery funding that went to London-based NPOs in the 2018–22 round, £310.7 million (almost 47 percent) went to just five organisations out of well over 200, namely: the Royal Opera House (£96.1 million); Southbank Centre (£73.4 million); National Theatre (£66.8 million); English National Opera (£49.5 million); and English National Ballet (£24.8 million).<sup>125</sup> These five organisations were also individually the biggest recipients in London by a significant margin (the next highest being the Crafts Council at £10 million) and were the first-, second-, third-, fifth- and ninth-highest recipient NPOs England-wide.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, the top ten highest recipient NPOs in England similarly received 25 percent of the total funding available.<sup>127</sup>

117 [Qq14–5, 25](#)

118 Bristol City Council ([LEV0082](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), University Alliance ([LEV0100](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#))

119 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), GuildHE ([LEV0070](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), BBC ([LEV0149](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#)), Channel 4 ([LEV0152](#))

120 Manchester Museum ([LEV0059](#))

121 Urban Vision Enterprise CIC ([LEV0006](#))

122 Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#))

123 [Q245](#); Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#))

124 Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#))

125 Arts Council England, ‘[National Portfolio Organisations 2018–22](#)’, accessed 29 July 2022; see also [Qq146–50, 186–8, 245–9](#)

126 *Ibid*

127 *Ibid*

34. When asked whether the support for the Royal Opera House was incongruous with the broader aim to level up culture, ACE Chief Executive Dr Darren Henley argued that:

I think there will always be a mix. We need a capital city that punches on the world stage but levelling up is about increasing everywhere else. Within quite straitened times we have more money from the Government, and we are investing it outside of London.<sup>128</sup>

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, Minister for Arts in DCMS, similarly emphasised the need for world-class national cultural infrastructure:

There is a levelling up story for prominent and successful world-class institutions like the Royal Opera House, the Royal National Theatre and others, to encourage playwrights, actors and audiences from all over the country to come and perform on that national stage and to enjoy what is being performed. I was pleased to see “The Pitmen Painters” by a North East playwright on the stage of the National Theatre. It brought it to a larger audience. It then toured around the country. It was taken to cinemas through NT Live. So we are asking the large organisations to do more in their outreach. They already do a great deal of it but if you are a national organisation based in the nation’s capital then it is right that you are expected, not just by the Government but by the taxpayer, to show that through national working.<sup>129</sup>

Several national cultural institutions themselves sought to emphasise their own contributions to levelling up through establishing satellite branches and/or new venues, partnership agreements with cultural organisations and asset loans.<sup>130</sup> Institutions contributing in this way include the British Library, British Museum, Barbican Centre, Natural History Museum and Science Museum Group.

35. However, while measures such as the establishment of satellite branches of national institutions, collaborative partnerships, asset loans and so on were welcomed by some respondents to our inquiry, such as Stoke-on-Trent City Council, others, like the West Midlands Combined Authority Cultural Leadership Board, expressed concerns that this could crowd-out existing cultural organisations, particularly those already classed as “at-risk”.<sup>131</sup> Keith Merrin also noted that asset loans in particular did not alleviate the financial constraints on existing institutions to putting on exhibitions either:

We are bringing the Lindisfarne Gospels to the North East this year, which will be brilliant, loads of people are enjoying them and they resonate very much with people in the North East because they were made in the North East, and we are very grateful to the British Library for loaning them to us, but that does not come with any money. We have to then go out and find significant amounts of money in the North East, which is the hardest bit of the country to raise money in, to then put on that exhibition. There is

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128 [Q149](#)

129 [Q246](#)

130 Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), British Library ([LEV0091](#)), Natural History Museum ([LEV0099](#)), National Theatre ([LEV0107](#)), Culture Mile ([LEV0111](#)), Science Museum Group ([LEV0125](#)), Sunderland Culture ([LEV0137](#))

131 Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#))

something not just about our business model generally being under stress but it is much harder to raise money more generally and, as we talked about before, we don't necessarily see the direct economic impact of what we do.

36. It should be noted that the Royal Opera House, Southbank Centre and National Theatre all saw a cash decrease of 3–4 percent each between the previous and current round,<sup>132</sup> broadly in line with the total National Portfolio funding for London falling by 4 percent since 2014–15.<sup>133</sup> However, irrespective, the largest recipients of funding have the potential to skew statistics at the expense of grassroots organisations in London, the South East and other places where the biggest recipients may be based. This is obscured further given that ACE classifies several NPOs, typically providing advocacy, support and/or ancillary services to organisations in the sector (called Sector Support Organisations), as “National” organisations regardless of their geographic location.<sup>134</sup>

37. Moreover, there is evidence that even people who live on the relative doorstep of London's venues are unable to access them: Making Music, the UK association for leisure-time music groups, told us that “in one example from our members, even in London which has a wealth of musical events and opportunities, bad transport links from Eltham in [South East] London mean young people are prevented from taking up world class opportunities just a few miles up the road from where they live”.<sup>135</sup> As Spirit of 2021, the London 2012 Olympic Games legacy funder founded with an endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund, noted:

A fair funding review needs to strike a balance between maintaining national institutions, many of which are based in London, and channelling a higher proportion of funding to northern England and to towns. In future, arts organisations that receive public funding should be obliged to show how they are addressing lower participation rates in more deprived communities.<sup>136</sup>

**38. Despite the potential for the creative industries to help drive the Government's Levelling Up agenda, funding and support for arts and culture emulates the broader geographic disparities that affect the UK economy and society as a whole. The Government and its arm's-length bodies have taken some welcome steps to redress this imbalance. However, we are concerned that outside London and the South East, there are areas still not receiving the necessary investment to support their own local and world-class institutions, while in London and the South East, grassroots organisations in deprived areas are experiencing serious financial risk due to a handful of organisations receiving significant proportions of public funding.**

**39. *We recommend that the Government and Arts Council England reconsider how they allocate funding by regions. We propose a model whereby world class, national cultural institutions, who often receive the most significant levels of public cash, are categorised and allocated funding separately from local and regional cultural institutions. This would allow for better comparisons between genuinely grassroots organisations and***

132 Arts Council England, 'National Portfolio Organisations 2018–22', accessed 29 July 2022; see also [Q150](#)

133 Arts Council England, 'Our National Portfolio in numbers, 2018–22', accessed 29 July 2022

134 Arts Council England, 'National Portfolio Organisations 2018–22', accessed 29 July 2022; see also Arts Council England, 'Our National Portfolio in numbers, 2018–22', accessed 29 July 2022

135 Making Music ([LEV0015](#))

136 Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#))

*ensure those organisations in regions where there is a high concentration of national cultural institutions aren't indirectly negatively impacted by well-meaning attempts to rebalance spending across the country.*

*40. We also recommend that these national cultural organisations should have differing expectations as a condition of public funding, including greater accessibility for audiences nationwide and support for grassroots organisations, in a similar way as to how the “crown jewels” of sport have differing broadcasting expectations. One overall ambition for Levelling Up through culture should be that every region can boast world class institutions alongside a local, accessible grassroots cultural ecosystem.*

### *Sustainability of funding*

41. The squeeze on council budgets and long-term fall in private investment has provoked ongoing concerns, shared by stakeholders across the sector, that funding and investment, employment and the growth of cultural infrastructure and organisations is neither long-term nor sustainable.<sup>137</sup>

42. A lack of long-term, sustainable funding can have a twofold impact. First, the ability of cultural and creative businesses to develop, grow, experiment and innovate, such as by taking risks on their cultural offer or embracing new technology, may be increasingly constrained. Second, free or accessibly priced offerings may come under pressure. As Watershed's Clare Reddington described:

They are tough and challenging when you are also thinking about hybrid services, about not just leaving behind all of the people that you reach with digital provision who cannot access cultural provision. Quite a lot of people have turned off that tap. We are committed to continuing access for people who cannot come to our venue. Digital transformation is costing a lot of money. The cost of everything has gone up: recycling, marketing, freelance; everything has gone up by about 25 percent I think. Our public funding is all on standstill or cuts and we cannot put ticket prices up because we will just, therefore, not be inclusive.

I think that there is a short to medium-term issue. I see our future as being a thriving, prospering cultural centre again that brings people together to

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137 Urban Vision Enterprise CIC ([LEV0006](#)), Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), The Stove Network ([LEV0010](#)), The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Chesterfield Philharmonic Choir ([LEV0013](#)), Bradford UNESCO City of Film ([LEV0014](#)), UK Music ([LEV0016](#)), COBA (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services) ([LEV0019](#)), Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#)), Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), Mrs Geraldine Mathieson ([LEV0045](#)), Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#)), GuildHE ([LEV0070](#)), Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues ([LEV0076](#)), Creative Lives ([LEV0078](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#)), National Centre for Creative Health, Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Lived Experience Network ([LEV0081](#)), Bristol City Council ([LEV0082](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Creative Estuary ([LEV0095](#)), Create Gloucestershire ([LEV0103](#)), Culture Mile ([LEV0111](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#)), Local Trust ([LEV0124](#)), London Legacy Development Corporation ([LEV0147](#))

think about imagination and possibility, but it will be tricky in the short term. There is a notion that we are returning to business as usual from our funders that is not true and it is not helpful.<sup>138</sup>

43. Many respondents to our call for evidence asserted that, if Levelling Up was to have tangible and measurable outcomes for local arts and culture, more funding needed to be given over longer-term periods with realistic deadlines and start/finish dates, rather than for one-off flagship, politically motivated or “vanity” projects.<sup>139</sup> As the Local Trust noted, cultural placemaking “requires both certainty of funding and support over periods significantly beyond current arts funding cycles” to be given the fullest chance to succeed, such as by developing local leadership and community-led civic organisations and institutions.<sup>140</sup> These concerns have been exacerbated in recent months by trade press reports that ACE might be abolished following an upcoming review of ALBs.<sup>141</sup> However, Rt. Hon. Nadine Dorries, the then-Secretary of State, was robust in her remarks that the future of ACE was not on the agenda, telling us that “I will [ ... ] fight very strongly for the distribution of arts funding and for maintaining levels of arts funding across the UK”.<sup>142</sup>

44. Subsequently, many respondents have argued that, the need for sustainable local funding should be reflected in the national funding settlement for local government.<sup>143</sup> The Theatres Trust, for example, called for central government to specifically fund and reward local authorities that invest in culture.<sup>144</sup> The Centre for Cultural Value and Culture Commons went further, arguing for a statutory requirement for investment in culture in recognition of local authorities’ track record in levelling up through culture.<sup>145</sup> UK Music similarly called for the BBC’s funding settlement to demonstrate its ability to continue or improve its role in providing a platform for musicians from a range of regional and socioeconomic backgrounds.<sup>146</sup> Several universities, councils and place-based cultural partnerships also discussed the need for sustainable legacies for local community assets and local-led initiatives to reclaim or bring into community ownership public spaces and disused or at-risk assets.<sup>147</sup> The Theatres Trust has similarly called for further support for

138 [Q82](#)

139 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Chesterfield Philharmonic Choir ([LEV0013](#)), Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#)), Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Royal Shakespeare Company ([LEV0040](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#)), NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues ([LEV0076](#)), Make It York, City of York Council ([LEV0079](#)), National Centre for Creative Health, Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Lived Experience Network ([LEV0081](#)), Salford’s Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), University Alliance ([LEV0100](#)), Community Leisure UK ([LEV0112](#)), Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#)), University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#)), Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#)), Channel 4 ([LEV0152](#))

140 Local Trust ([LEV0124](#))

141 [Qq133–4](#), [Oral evidence](#) taken on 19 May 2022, HC (2022–23) 158, Qq122–5 [Ms Dorries]

142 [Q134](#), [Oral evidence](#) taken on 19 May 2022, HC (2022–23) 158, Qq122–5 [Ms Dorries]

143 Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), Mrs Geraldine Mathieson ([LEV0045](#)), Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#)), Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#)), The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), Make It York, City of York Council ([LEV0079](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Incorporated Society of Musicians ([LEV0132](#)), The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#)), LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#)) Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#))

144 Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#))

145 Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#))

146 UK Music ([LEV0016](#))

147 University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#)), Salford’s Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#)), Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#)), Ebbsfleet Development Corporation ([LEV0104](#)), South East Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0108](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Local Trust ([LEV0124](#)), Sunderland Culture ([LEV0137](#)), Creative Scotland ([LEV0141](#))

community asset transfer.<sup>148</sup> As Tom Strickland, Theatres Adviser at the Theatres Trust, explained, the Government’s Community Ownership Fund was a potential model but needed to be reformed to deliver better outcomes for local areas:

We have some concerns about it in its current form because of the value limits, meaning that they might not be able to afford the theatre buildings. You can only buy a building up to £500,000, and we would like to see more development for the groups so that they can gain the level of governance training and the sorts of things that will ensure that once these buildings are transferred they can sustainably and successfully operate them. It would be a disaster if there was a movement of shifting these buildings into the community, but then the community operators fail and the buildings are left to the open market. There needs to be some training to support that.<sup>149</sup>

45. The tensions created by the lack of sustainability of funding for arts and culture is perhaps best illustrated by the UK City of Culture award, a countrywide, culture-led regeneration programme and festivities awarded every four years and administered by DCMS in collaboration with the devolved Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments. A significant number of written submissions emphasised various benefits of the City of Culture award, such as kickstarting or incentivising existing local cultural activity participation and a broader culture-led regeneration, encouraging strategic thinking, delivering focused programmes of work with tangible delivery parameters and providing a media spotlight on the area.<sup>150</sup> Professor Mossman, reflecting on Coventry’s experience as City of Culture, asserted that “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”.<sup>151</sup> Even submissions that were

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148 Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#))

149 [Q177](#)

150 Making Music ([LEV0015](#)), UK Music ([LEV0016](#)), Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#)), Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#)), Historic Houses ([LEV0027](#)), Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#)), Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), The Art House ([LEV0046](#)), Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#)), Dr Eleni Michopoulou (Associate Professor in Business Management at University of Derby); Dr Kathleen McIlvenna (Lecturer in History at University of Derby); Ms Claire Roe (Postgraduate Researcher at University of Derby); Dr Vladimir Antchak (Senior Lecturer in Event Management at University of Derby) ([LEV0060](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#)), Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues ([LEV0076](#)), Creative Lives ([LEV0078](#)), Compton Verney ([LEV0083](#)), Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#)), National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange (NCACE) ([LEV0087](#)), LIVE ([LEV0089](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), National Theatre ([LEV0107](#)), Culture Mile ([LEV0111](#)), Community Leisure UK ([LEV0112](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#)), University of Nottingham Institute for Policy and Engagement ([LEV0121](#)), Science Museum Group ([LEV0125](#)), University of Warwick ([LEV0126](#)), Coventry University ([LEV0128](#)), Dance Consortia North West ([LEV0131](#)), Incorporated Society of Musicians ([LEV0132](#)), Durham County Council ([LEV0136](#)), Sunderland Culture ([LEV0137](#)), Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ([LEV0142](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

151 [Q15](#)

critical of some aspects of the process and delivery of the award nonetheless affirmed and advocated for the City of Culture remaining part of a complementary, comprehensive, multilevel policy package and funding settlement for local arts and culture.<sup>152</sup>

46. However, many organisations, including the cultural compact for the 2017 winning city of Hull, felt that City of Culture funding needed to place a greater emphasis on legacy planning (including where the legacy may not be economic) and longer-term projects with benefits beyond designated time frames.<sup>153</sup> The Audience Agency, an ACE-supported charity providing consultancy and data insights services, argued that the “financial cliff edge at the end of the programme” was the biggest barrier to “greater demands in terms of requesting evaluation, including longitudinal evaluation, ongoing development and adjustment of a legacy strategy”.<sup>154</sup> The Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact and Orchestras Live, for example, argued that while the spotlight should rightly shift with each title, funding for each winning city should be sustained over a five- to ten-year period in order to maximise the impact of initial investment into the winning city.<sup>155</sup> Many respondents to our call for written evidence called for both financial and non-financial support for losing but high-quality bids in order to sustain a wider spread of benefits to local cultural projects and organisations.<sup>156</sup> Other respondents felt that a lack of public engagement, parachuting in external delivery teams and a lack of research and evaluation of impact also contributed to a lack of long-term legacy where it manifested.<sup>157</sup>

47. The legacy impact of the UK City of Culture was contrasted to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN),<sup>158</sup> an initiative that aims to promote international co-operation between (currently 246) accredited cities that have “identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development” in one of seven areas (literature, music, film, design, gastronomy, media arts and crafts and folkart).<sup>159</sup> The UK has thirteen Creative Cities across six categories,<sup>160</sup> including Bradford, the world’s first UNESCO City of Film, and Edinburgh, the world’s first City of Literature. Indeed, eight of the UK’s Creative Cities are in Scotland and the North of England. A submission from Bradford

152 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#)), The Museums Association ([LEV0043](#)), The Art House ([LEV0046](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), Make It York, City of York Council ([LEV0079](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), University of Cambridge Museums ([LEV0097](#)), National Theatre ([LEV0107](#)), Newcastle Creates Limited ([LEV0110](#)), University of Nottingham Institute for Policy and Engagement ([LEV0121](#)), Science Museum Group ([LEV0125](#)), University of Warwick ([LEV0126](#)), Coventry University ([LEV0128](#)), Dance Consortia North West ([LEV0131](#)), Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#))

153 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#)), Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#)), The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#)), Esmée Fairbairn Foundation ([LEV0062](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), University Alliance ([LEV0100](#))

154 The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#))

155 Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#))

156 Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#))

157 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Professor Nicky Marsh; Dr Daniel Ashton; Dr Michael Howcroft ([LEV0037](#))

158 Bradford UNESCO City of Film ([LEV0014](#)), Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#))

159 UNESCO, [Creative Cities Network](#), accessed 3 August 2022

160 These are: Belfast (music), Bradford (film), Bristol (film), Dundee (design), Edinburgh (literature), Exeter (literature), Glasgow (music), Liverpool (music), Manchester (literature), Norwich (literature), Nottingham (literature), Perth (crafts and folkart) and York (media arts).

UNESCO City of Film asserted that the city's designation had underpinned ongoing sustainable urban development, kickstarted the Bradford Film Literacy programme and other educational and research initiatives and provided an avenue to promote Bradford abroad.<sup>161</sup> The Guild of Media Arts, which supports York's designation as a UNESCO City of Media Arts, wrote that admission to the Creative Cities programme was based on "long term ambitions for cities, leading them to assemble supportive collaborations that stand a better chance of surviving the extremes of economic cycles" and that "their potential for positive contribution to the UK sustainable development goals is immense".<sup>162</sup> Evidence from DCMS concurred, stating that "UNESCO designations (including World Heritage sites and Creative Cities [ ... ]) add an estimated £150m in additional value to the UK economy annually, largely through visitors".<sup>163</sup> Despite this, both Bradford City Council and the Guild of Media Arts argued that there has been a lack of investment and Government recognition of the potential for Creative Cities.<sup>164</sup>

### *Accessibility of funding*

48. The decline in investment for arts and culture has also impacted the accessibility of funding, particularly for grassroots and local organisations, as organisations compete for less money overall. Evidence from the Association of Independent Museums highlighted findings from academic research that most cultural infrastructure and activity is not regularly accessing public funding.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that additional money that has been made available has simply followed existing artistic infrastructure, rather than building up places with less or less-recognised infrastructure.<sup>166</sup>

49. There are several policy explanations for this. First, Orchestras Live noted that many local cultural organisations do not have the structure, constitution, capacity, experience or skills to apply for public funding, particularly those that, by their nature and discipline, cannot also generate private investment.<sup>167</sup> Second, respondents noted that the size of centralised pots of funding often either preclude access by smaller or rural-based cultural organisations and local authorities, or are insufficiently available to meet the ambitions of and challenges faced by larger towns, cities and combined authorities.<sup>168</sup> Third, it was noted that centralised and remote decision-making often runs at odds with the need for local knowledge to overcome local challenges and deliver tailored business support and accessible seed funding to grassroots organisations.<sup>169</sup> This issue is compounded where areas for whatever reason lack strategic thinking, policymaking and/or capacity among relevant local authorities, institutions and partnership organisations.<sup>170</sup> Finally, the National Museum Directors' Council noted that public funding often comes with stringent, short-term time-scales for delivery and impact, which runs at odds with the long-term nature of both cultural placemaking and levelling up more broadly.<sup>171</sup>

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161 Bradford UNESCO City of Film ([LEV0014](#))

162 Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#))

163 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

164 Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#)), Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#))

165 Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#))

166 [Q65](#)

167 Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#))

168 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#))

169 Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#))

170 Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#))

171 National Museum Directors' Council ([LEV0066](#))

50. These issues were most explicitly observed in competitive bidding processes. Public bodies, in particular, have shifted to delivering capital funding as competition awards.<sup>172</sup> While competitive bids have utility both from an administrative perspective (incentivising high-quality bids and encouraging local policymaking and proposals that could be in part carried forward regardless) and in terms of impact (improving or increasing opportunities both for and within successful places),<sup>173</sup> there are also notable downsides, including:

- Increased funding pressures on local networks and already-overstretched resources elsewhere as organisations look to secure other forms of funding, crowding-out the “long-tail” of local, hyperlocal and grassroots cultural organisations;<sup>174</sup>
- Disadvantaging rural places and places with less developed infrastructure<sup>175</sup> and more strategically important but longer-term projects,<sup>176</sup> at the expense of metropolitan areas and shovel-ready projects; and
- Being resource-intensive for already-constrained bidders for no guarantee of reward, often due to the complexity and time-consuming nature of their processes creating an opportunity cost for bidding organisations.<sup>177</sup>

Councillor Abi Brown, Leader of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, reflected on the City of Culture application process in response to a question about funding models for culture:

In a way, that helped us to become a serious player but equally, when the latest round of City of Culture applications went through, everybody was saying, “Are you going to bid again?” Well, no. In a way, for us, the initial bidding was the bit that was helpful. I would never say “never again” but it is hugely exhausting, particularly when, as we have already said, you get to the end of the process and perhaps the goodies on offer are nowhere near adequate to even be able to sustain what you would hope to do having not won let alone having come in at second prize.<sup>178</sup>

51. Written submissions from a wide range of stakeholders presented potential policy solutions to issues of accessibility of funding. Many respondents called for accessible alternatives to competitive funding. For example, there was broad consensus among academics, local authorities and cultural partnerships that there should be greater flexibility to allow for collaborative bids between multiple local organisations and authorities to tackle issues of scale and incentivise local authorities and local-led organisations to work with

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172 Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#))

173 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), Key Cities ([LEV0022](#))

174 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#))

175 Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), Centre for Cultural Value, Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#)), Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#))

176 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#))

177 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#)), Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#)), Professor Katy Shaw ([LEV0041](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#))

178 [Q114](#)

like-minded counterparts to deliver mutually-beneficial cultural activity and outcomes.<sup>179</sup> Several submissions also called for decision-making for competitive funding to be more regionally-and locally-embedded and devolved where possible.<sup>180</sup> Bectu, the union for freelancers in the media and entertainment industries, cited ACE's "area councils", which make final funding application decisions under £800,000 but leave decisions over £800,000 to the national council, as one potential model.<sup>181</sup> The Fabian Society, however, posited that while area councils had had some benefit in strengthening the representation of places, further engagement with local authorities and the further devolution of National Lottery funding for arts and culture to local ALBs was needed.<sup>182</sup> Elsewhere, the Theatres Trust called for "staged funding schemes with development funding available to ensure the projects that are funded are those with the greatest impact and not just those that are ready to go at the moment that funding is announced" and for "funding at a grass roots level which does not require the forming of consortia or bureaucratic processes but allows existing arts infrastructure to be developed".<sup>183</sup>

52. Similar reflections were made regarding the UK City of Culture programme. While Spirit of 2012, Cornwall Council and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership and Compton Verney, for example, welcomed the Government's decision to open up the programme to regions and consortia of towns and thereby improve access to a broader range of places, the former questioned whether such areas would be able to replicate "the strong sense of identity" that underpinned the model for prior successful bidding cities.<sup>184</sup> Historic Houses argued that the name "City of Culture" was now misleading and called for other schemes that celebrated regional and rural local cultural activity with equal focus.<sup>185</sup> The Stove Network, who contributed to a Scotland-England Borderlands bid for the 2025 award, argued that the fact that the bid was unsuccessful precisely because "it did not follow the model of regeneration laid down by the scheme in previous years" felt "out of step with current practice and reality in post-covid communities".<sup>186</sup>

53. For its part, the Government has demonstrated that it has been willing to listen to recommendations to improve the delivery of the City of Culture award. In our Report on *Major cultural and sporting events*, we recommended that the Government "should guarantee successful hosts of UK City of Culture an appropriate amount of national funding from the outset, rather than require the host to wait for a decision, to enable organisers to focus their efforts on securing other sources of funding" to avoid unnecessary uncertainty for the host city and allow them to focus on sourcing additional sources of funding.<sup>187</sup> We are pleased to note that the Government accepted our recommendation and provided £275,000 in initial seed funding not only for Bradford, the winner of the 2025

179 University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Key Cities ([LEV0022](#)), Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#)), Professor Katy Shaw ([LEV0041](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), Salford's Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#)), Five10Twelve Ltd ([LEV0114](#))

180 Key Cities ([LEV0022](#)), Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#)), Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), National Museum Directors' Council ([LEV0066](#)), Make It York, City of York Council ([LEV0079](#)), Dance Consortia North West ([LEV0131](#)), Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ([LEV0142](#))

181 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

182 Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#))

183 Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#))

184 Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#)), Compton Verney ([LEV0083](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#))

185 Historic Houses ([LEV0027](#))

186 The Stove Network ([LEV0010](#))

187 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2020–21, *Major cultural and sporting events*, HC 259, para 18

City of Culture title, but also for the three runners-up (County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough) with £125,000 to take forward elements of their programme.<sup>188</sup> The Government's Response also stated that it had provided funding to the eight long-listed bidders (£40,000) as well, "to help level the playing field and strengthen places' long applications".<sup>189</sup>

54. Organisations representing the live music and heritage sectors have also called for support for the sector through fiscal reform, including through VAT reductions or exemptions, tax credits and business rate relief and reform.<sup>190</sup> The National Trust and the Heritage Alliance, for example, advocated for changes to VAT on house repair, maintenance and restoration (currently at 20 percent, compared to 0 percent for new construction) and the use of tax credits to enable funds and support to reach places in-need.<sup>191</sup> The Music Venue Trust similarly called on Government to return VAT on ticket sales to 5 percent (which was announced in 2020 and extended last year but tapered to end in April 2022) to recognise the high up-front operating costs borne by live music venues.<sup>192</sup>

55. Other submissions called for PSBs to play a greater role in providing opportunities to individuals and organisations. UK Music described the symbiotic relationship between UK music makers and the BBC, arguing that the BBC was reliant on musicians for content across its platforms while in return providing them with a national platform, and called for future funding to incentivise the BBC's role in promoting music to voices from a range of regional and socio-economic backgrounds.<sup>193</sup> The Royal Shakespeare Company similarly noted that broadcasters, streaming services and digital platforms could be better leveraged to showcase locally-organised and delivered cultural activity.<sup>194</sup>

56. Others cited the need to go beyond direct funding, calling for a greater focus on providing the skills needed to help empower organisations to access the funding available. Many submissions from the cultural organisations and institutions, academia, local government, local partnerships and sector support organisations articulated the need for the development of and investment in programmes that support capacity building (to help cultural organisations acquire the skills needed to think and work strategically, to market and communicate their work and navigate bidding, funding and engagement processes), organisational resilience and growth, mentoring, network building and collaboration and

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188 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, First Special Report of Session 2022–23, *Major cultural and sporting events: Government Response to Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2021–22*, HC 452; see also [Qq218, 221](#)

189 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, First Special Report of Session 2022–23, *Major cultural and sporting events: Government Response to Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2021–22*, HC 452

190 Music Venue Trust ([LEV0031](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), LIVE ([LEV0089](#)), The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#)), University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#)), BPI ([LEV0145](#))

191 National Trust ([LEV0042](#))

192 Music Venue Trust ([LEV0031](#))

193 UK Music ([LEV0016](#))

194 Royal Shakespeare Company ([LEV0040](#))

research and evaluation (both within academia and local government).<sup>195</sup> The National Trust, for example, argued that funding capacity-building for local authorities and local cultural organisations would enable funds and support to reach places in-need.<sup>196</sup> Many of these submissions noted that while the UK City of Culture programme and other set-piece projects have been successful in building local capacity and cross-sector partnerships, further support was needed that targeted people, organisations and authorities who have traditionally been written off as “not ready” to receive other sources of public funding, in order to unlock further capacity for organisational development and address short-term and existential thinking and ensure these skills did not dissipate after short-term funding ended.<sup>197</sup> DCMS noted that the Government has provided funding for capacity-building for many local authorities through its Levelling Up Fund and £220 million Community Renewal Fund,<sup>198</sup> but the breadth and weight of evidence suggests that further support is needed.

**57. Despite efforts to rebalance the geographic disparities in investment in arts and culture through flagship funds and competitive grants, we share concerns with the sector regarding the sustainability and accessibility of funding over the longer-term. We welcome that the Government has listened to our recommendations regarding guaranteed funding and the broadened scope for bidding areas aspiring to be the UK City of Culture as an important start. However, without further reconsideration as to how the sector can be supported beyond the current rounds of support, it is likely that many areas of the country will see their local cultural organisations continue to struggle.**

***58. We recommend that the Government should consider how it can support arts and culture through means other than one-off or flagship funds but, instead, generate sustainable public funding settlements and pump-prime private sector investment. Recent reforms to funding competitions like the UK City of Culture, such as guaranteed and expanded support for high quality bids, should also be applied across the sector. Alongside these plans, we recommend that DCMS and its arm’s-length bodies, in consultation with the sector, develop a comprehensive training programme that help build much needed skills- and capacity-building.***

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195 Miss Emily Hopkins ([LEV0007](#)), The Stove Network ([LEV0010](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), West of England Combined Authority ([LEV0018](#)), Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Professor Nicky Marsh; Dr Daniel Ashton; Dr Michael Howcroft ([LEV0037](#)), Professor Katy Shaw ([LEV0041](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#)), The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#)), Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#)), National Museum Directors’ Council ([LEV0066](#)), GuildHE ([LEV0070](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#)), Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#)), National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange (NCACE) ([LEV0087](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), Creative Estuary ([LEV0095](#)), Natural History Museum ([LEV0099](#)), University Of Hull - Energy and Environment Institute ([LEV0102](#)), National Theatre ([LEV0107](#)), South East Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0108](#)), Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#)), Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#)), Curious Minds ([LEV0127](#)), Dance Consortia North West ([LEV0131](#)), The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#)), Sunderland Culture ([LEV0137](#)), Historic England ([LEV0139](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

196 National Trust ([LEV0042](#))

197 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#)), Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#)), Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#)), Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#))

198 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

### ***Non-financial barriers to cultural placemaking***

59. Compounding the lack of sustainable and accessible funding is the myriad of other challenges to cultural placemaking. Some examples that were cited in written evidence include:

- **A lack of necessary cultural infrastructure:** several submissions emphasised a lack of suitable spaces to meet need, with musical, performing and broadcasting forms in particular, like local choirs, bands and orchestras, describing spaces as inappropriate or unfit to serve as music venues;<sup>199</sup>
- **Disparities in physical infrastructure:** unreliable and/or expensive transport links and digital connectivity were cited as a particular challenge for establishing cultural infrastructure in rural communities, resulting in city-centric strategies and planning for investment in culture;<sup>200</sup>
- **A lack of necessary partnerships with local government and anchor institutions:** Performing City Resilience, for example, argued that work in the cultural sector was often unrecognised by authorities beyond those immediately engaged in projects, meaning fewer opportunities to broker mutual engagement with decision-makers, while the Northern Cultural Network noted that partnerships with anchor institutions like universities were under strain due to a reduction in creative courses;<sup>201</sup>
- **The national shortage of necessary skills, education and diversity of talent:** we heard that this limited cultural organisations' capacity to deliver projects and facilitate creative output, and created barriers to opportunity and social mobility for disadvantaged socioeconomic groups, women, disabled people and ethnic minorities (discussed further in Chapter 3);<sup>202</sup>
- **Reliance on freelance and relocation to London and the South East:** this employment model has subsequently limited opportunities for both individual creatives, who are not able to meet the associated costs, and for places without large-scale cultural infrastructure;<sup>203</sup> and
- **Social factors:** this includes audience confidence in the cultural offer, changing habits and heritage dissonance/dis-inheritance (such as for places associated with the slave trade and so on).<sup>204</sup>

199 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#)), COBA (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services) ([LEV0019](#)), Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Make It York, City of York Council ([LEV0079](#)), Creative Estuary ([LEV0095](#)), National Theatre ([LEV0107](#)), Newcastle Creates Limited ([LEV0110](#))

200 Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#))

201 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#))

202 Dumfries and Galloway Youth Orchestra ([LEV0004](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), COBA (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services) ([LEV0019](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), Pact (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television) ([LEV0113](#)), University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#)), The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

203 University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues ([LEV0076](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#))

204 Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#)), Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#)), Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), University of Cambridge Museums ([LEV0097](#))

Many of these issues, such as the need for cultural infrastructure, transport links, digital connectivity and greater social mobility, persist despite being acknowledged in the Culture White Paper over six years ago. Other issues, such as employment conditions, heritage dissonance and climate change, are not referenced at all. The White Paper itself acknowledges that it was the first published in more than 50 years and only the second ever published; however, there have now been eight Secretaries of State in the Department since it was published in 2016.

**60. While our inquiry focused on the financial barriers to cultural placemaking, there are many factors that co-determine whether local places can develop and maintain sustainable cultural infrastructure. Our inquiry has heard potential policy recommendations from stakeholders across the sector and across the country; we hope that the Government continues to respond to the sector's concerns. While many of these issues were known when DCMS published its last White Paper for Culture in 2016 (only the second that the Government has published), the sector now faces additional challenges. Local authorities must be empowered to step up and take the lead on addressing these barriers.**

*61. Consistent with the ambitions of Levelling Up, we recommend that local communities and stakeholders are given a greater role in decision-making. This could be done by building on the Community Ownership Fund, reducing the bureaucracy in funding application processes, encouraging more localised decision-making (as with the Arts Council's area council, who could be appointed by and answerable to local government) and looking beyond just competitive bidding to incentivise collaborative, democratic, grassroots-oriented processes.*

## Impact of rising utility costs and the cost-of-living crisis

62. During our inquiry, we have explored the urgent and ongoing effects of the fall in disposable incomes, the rapid increase in energy costs, disruptions to global supply chains and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.<sup>205</sup> While the societal effects and broader, wide-reaching policy responses to the crisis are beyond our remit as a Committee, we are concerned with the impacts on the DCMS sectors and their ability to recover from the existential threat of Covid-19 pandemic. Rising utility costs impact DCMS organisations and institutions, including arts and culture, in three main ways:

- Increasing overhead costs, which both makes organisations in DCMS sectors less economically viable at a time of financial precarity due to Covid-19 but also makes projects and investments less cost effective, which might otherwise have generated medium- and long-term benefits;
- Affecting personal finances, meaning that consumers have less discretionary income to spend on leisure and activities like arts, culture, sport; and
- Impacting staff by putting pressure on wages and/or by reducing the time and ability of people to work freelance or volunteer their time.<sup>206</sup>

205 Institute for Government, '[Cost of living crisis](#),' accessed 23 June 2022

206 [Qq80](#), [88](#), [172](#), [179](#), [198–200](#)

63. When asked about the short- and long-term financial challenges to the sector, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums' director Keith Merrin discussed all three aspects of the cost-of-living crisis:

Right now we have a massive problem with our utility costs, which are crippling us. As Sanaz said, our Arts Council funding remains the same, our local authority funding—which I will come back to—this year remains the same, but our electricity and gas bills have doubled, so something has to give. [ ... ]

Coming back to other things happening, our communities have been disproportionately impacted by Covid and the cost-of-living crisis and, therefore, their ability to buy tickets for things. I think that this has severely impacted. Our business models are already under stress as a result of the last two years. We are hugely grateful to the Government for the cultural recovery fund but now the real problems start this year onwards.

We have a huge reliance on freelance workforce and, again, many people have left freelance working during this period in our sector and, therefore, costs go up and it is more difficult to find them.<sup>207</sup>

64. Some organisations will be more acutely affected by these issues. A letter from a coalition of leading bodies representing the physical activity and leisure sector, published on ukactive's website, to the then-Secretaries of State for DCMS and for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities argued that the majority of indoor leisure centres, gyms and swimming pools would have to reduce staffing levels, increase customer pricing, reduce services or cease operating altogether in the next six months due to energy costs.<sup>208</sup> Tom Strickland of the Theatres Trust similarly told us that the crisis was having a significant impact on theatres that already have not been recovering from Covid-19:

How theatres are affected by utility costs very much depends on where they are in their energy contracts. Some theatres I have spoken to have said that they are locked in for the next couple of years and they are fine, but others have said they are seeing potentially a tripling of their energy bills. One large theatre I spoke to was expecting additional costs of £200,000, which would be a 150 percent increase on what they are currently paying. That is a massive impact.<sup>209</sup>

Mr Strickland further noted that the risk of closures of theatres would depend on the extent of the crisis:

I do not think that we are at quite the situation we were with Covid and with closures. Theatres have been extremely resilient over the years, and they find ways, but there is a risk of closure if the costs remain untenable. Many more prudent theatres have started already putting money into reserve to

207 [Q80](#) [Keith Merrin]

208 ukactive, [Sector leaders call for urgent action from Government as energy costs put leisure facilities and pools at risk of closure within six months](#) (30 May 2022)

209 [Q179](#)

cover the volatility in energy, but over time that is not sustainable. They are cutting into their reserves to pay this, so there is a risk of closure if high prices of operating continue.<sup>210</sup>

Dr Darren Henley of ACE added that “anybody with a large building, so museums as well”, would face similar challenges.<sup>211</sup>

65. During our inquiry, we raised concerns that the response from Government and ALBs had been, until that point, limited. Both ACE and Historic England noted that funding recipients would need to work within the given means of allocations and programmes due to the impact of inflation on their own finances. Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of Historic England, for example, told us that:

We do look at requests for uplift, but our budget is limited. Our budget is not going up for specific schemes such as the high streets scheme that I mentioned earlier, so we must work within those means.<sup>212</sup>

Both Mr Wilson and Dr Henley noted that organisations would have to scale work differently or deliver projects at a reduced scope from allocated funding due to real-terms constraints.<sup>213</sup> When we put these points to the Government, Lord Parkinson acknowledged the difficulty facing households, businesses and organisations across the economy and argued that:

We are talking directly to organisations and representative bodies to monitor it. You can see the measures that the Treasury and colleagues from across Government are taking to help businesses and organisations in general, but we are marshalling the evidence to make sure that specific sector needs are taken into account as well.

[ ... ] In DCMS we are focusing on our sectors to make sure we are collecting that data and feeding them into the thought process across Government.<sup>214</sup>

66. By contrast, the letter from the leisure sector, which made the request for urgent discussions with Government, set out several options for offsetting financial pressures, including an increase to the local government settlement, a review of sector taxation with longer-term business tax reform, and support for a move to non-carbon intensive heating methods.<sup>215</sup> While the Minister did not clarify that some form of intervention would be possible in the future, he did point to the Government’s record of supporting cultural organisations through the pandemic:

I hope you and the sector can see we did exactly the same in the face of the pandemic. We marshalled the facts, and we built the Culture Recovery Fund, the largest ever investment in the arts that has given more than £1.5 billion to more than 5,000 organisations. Where we need to intervene to

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210 [Q182](#) [Tom Strickland]

211 [Q184](#) [Dr Darren Henley]

212 [Q183](#)

213 [Qq184–185](#)

214 [Qq198–200](#)

215 [ukactive, Sector leaders call for urgent action from Government as energy costs put leisure facilities and pools at risk of closure within six months](#) (30 May 2022), p 2

help, we have recently. The Chancellor has taken action to intervene to help household budgets and will continue to look at what needs to be done, while recognising this affects organisations right across the economy.<sup>216</sup>

67. On 21 September, Rt. Hon. Jacob Rees-Mogg, as Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), outlined plans to help business cut energy bills (in addition to the Energy Price Guarantee for households).<sup>217</sup> Under the plans, businesses, charities and public sector organisations in Great Britain will be eligible for an Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS), through which the Government will provide a discounted unit price; a parallel scheme based on the same criteria and comparable support will also be established in Northern Ireland.<sup>218</sup> Importantly, the Government's guidance and illustrative examples of the scheme in practice acknowledges that "the level of support for each organisation will vary depending on type and date of contract".<sup>219</sup> While Huw Edwards, CEO of ukactive, said that the announcement "provides further clarity", he also warned that "our data clearly shows that gyms, pools and leisure centres remain highly vulnerable to rising energy costs, given the sector's high dependency on energy usage—costs which impact facilities all year round" and called for further, bespoke support for the sector beyond the EBRS's conclusion in March 2023.<sup>220</sup>

**68. Alongside its impact on individuals and households, the cost-of-living crisis poses an existential threat to the cultural, sporting and media organisations and infrastructures that are at the centre of our communities at a time when they need certainty following the Covid-19 pandemic, even despite the Government's welcome announcement of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for businesses, charities and public sector organisations in September. *The Government needs to engage with these sectors as a matter of urgency and bring forward targeted support in response to the current crisis, such as through VAT or business rate relief, to prevent exacerbating long-term scarring on organisations already hit hard by Covid-19.***

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216 [Q199](#)

217 "[Government outlines plans to help cut energy bills for businesses](#)", Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office and 10 Downing Street press office, 21 September 2022

218 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, '[Energy Bill Relief Scheme: help for businesses and other non-domestic customers](#)', 21 September 2022

219 *ibid*

220 ukactive, [ukactive responds to Government's plans to help cut energy bills for businesses](#) (21 September 2022)

### 3 Participation and social mobility

69. As established in Chapter 2, place-based approaches to culture are interconnected with, and mutually-reinforced by, people-based approaches. Alongside the physical and financial capital (discussed in Paragraph 19), the Levelling Up White Paper also identifies the impact of human, institutional, intangible and social capital as “drivers of spatial inequality”. As such, this Chapter discusses social mobility within the creative economy, the ongoing national skills shortage, participation in local decision-making and access to library services.

#### Social mobility in the creative economy

70. In its discussion of geographical disparities in the UK, the Levelling Up White Paper specifically references the impact of geographic differences in opportunity and social mobility. The White Paper recognises that “low levels of social mobility across parts of the UK illustrate that family background matters” as “children from disadvantaged backgrounds have poorer future job and income prospects”.<sup>221</sup> It also establishes that the chances of children progressing can be exacerbated by geographic factors, stating that “for the most disadvantaged people living in the most disadvantaged places, these effects combine, in part reflecting the fact that people in poorly performing places tend to be the least geographically mobile”.<sup>222</sup> Moreover, the White Paper also recognises that “geography and ethnic background often overlap to compound poor outcomes”, noting specifically that “people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups are over three times as likely as white British people to live in the most income-deprived 10 percent of neighbourhoods”.<sup>223</sup> Similarly, it notes that “other interpersonal factors such as disability” have a significant bearing on pay and employment rates alongside factors like geography.<sup>224</sup>

#### Trends within the creative industries

71. Evidence indicates that the creative industries are particularly poor at providing opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Research by Professor Dave O’Brien for the AHRC’s Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) has found that social mobility across the creative industries is, statistically, among the worst across any set of occupations or industries: worse than the workforce as a whole and comparable to professions such as medicine and law.<sup>225</sup> Policymakers have similarly recognised these issues. The 2016 Culture White Paper, for example, stated that “employment in the creative economy disproportionately favours those who come from a more advantaged socio-economic background”.<sup>226</sup> Professor O’Brien noted that, while limited access to historical data makes tracking longitudinal trends difficult, census data suggests that “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”.<sup>227</sup> The situation does not appear

221 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, p 37

222 *Ibid*

223 *Ibid*

224 *Ibid*

225 [Q27](#)

226 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *The Culture White Paper*, [Cm 9218](#), March 2016, p 24

227 [Q28](#)

to have improved: the White Paper provided data that appeared to show that people from more-advantaged backgrounds within the creative economy were increasing both in absolute terms and as a proportional of the workforce at least between 2011 and 2014.<sup>228</sup>

72. We observed throughout our inquiry that people from disadvantaged backgrounds have and continue to experience both horizontal and vertical segregation in the creative workforce. In other words, the most disadvantaged people are less likely to make it to the top jobs of their disciplines, while also being filtered into support roles like accounting rather than creative roles themselves.<sup>229</sup> Several organisations, institutions and local authorities wrote to us noting that they worked, or were based, in social mobility “cold spots”, which were unsurprisingly primarily rural or coastal areas and areas with high levels of pre-existing inequality and deprivation or limited established cultural infrastructure.<sup>230</sup> Reflecting on whether the cultural sector was succeeding in its aim to attract a diverse and inclusive workforce, Sanaz Amidi told us that “even though [her organisation Rosetta Arts] are in one of the most diverse boroughs in the country we still also have that challenge”.

73. Indeed, many of these broader trends were raised at an engagement event organised with students at the Global Academy, a University Technical College (UTC) sponsored by the British media and entertainment group Global and the University of the Arts London (UAL) that provides industry-standard qualifications for students aspiring to employment in the creative industries. Students were prompted to discuss perceived barriers to employment within the industry. Two students felt that pursuing careers in the creative industries (including through educational pathways) was significantly geographic- and resource-dependent; one felt that networking was a key requirement to success and felt that nepotism within the industry was a problem.<sup>231</sup> Several students cited a lack of representation within the industry as indicative of a dearth of opportunity, particularly for disabled people and people from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds.<sup>232</sup> Several students argued that portrayals (or lack thereof) in advertising was a conspicuous issue, while one student observed a prevalence of narrative stereotypes and caricatures in mainstream media production.<sup>233</sup> Reflecting on employment figures published by Ofcom that their group had researched, two students told participants and staff:

We don't want to feel awkward, or uncomfortable, around people. We want to be able to show our true selves. We also want people to open up the doors for younger creatives so that when we're much older and on TV, young people will have people to look up to and that will bring more ethnicities into the media industry, and it will become more normal. And that's how our numbers will increase.<sup>234</sup>

74. That is not to say that the situation is uniformly bleak. The BPI, the UK trade association submitting on behalf of the recorded music sector, sought to emphasise that the

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228 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *The Culture White Paper*, [Cm 9218](#), March 2016, p 24

229 [Q28](#)

230 National Museum Directors' Council ([LEV0066](#)), Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), Compton Verney ([LEV0083](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), University of Cambridge Museums ([LEV0097](#))

231 Select Committee Engagement Team ([LEV0153](#))

232 *Ibid*

233 *Ibid*

234 *Ibid*

role of record companies in discovering, developing and promoting artists “is a vital tool for social mobility, offering opportunities to talented musicians based on merit” (though it did not reflect on opportunities within companies themselves).<sup>235</sup> Moreover, the BPI and music industry respectively jointly-administer and provide match funding (alongside DCMS and the Department for International Trade) for the successful, impactful Music Export Growth Scheme, which helps artists signed to UK-registered independent and SME record companies break into international markets,<sup>236</sup> which we have elsewhere recommended that the Government expand further.<sup>237</sup> However, the overall picture in the sector is one of limited success stories for specific demographics in certain disciplines, and particularly at intersections between identities of race, class, gender and disability.<sup>238</sup> Professor O’Brien noted that advertising, despite having problems with social mobility, “seems to do slightly better on other metrics”, while “in museums and galleries, we see women doing very well but working-class-origin people doing badly”.<sup>239</sup> Keith Merrin similarly noted that his organisations “probably have a good diverse workforce in terms of socioeconomic background, but perhaps not so much in terms of ethnic background and perhaps other protected characteristics”, arguing that “across the sector as a whole there is loads more we could be doing”.<sup>240</sup>

75. Professor O’Brien asserted that two conclusions could therefore be drawn from this picture:

- That there are specific problems within the cultural and creative industries that go beyond the broader social and economic inequities in British society, which is why creative industries rank among the worst of any sector; and
- Despite the range of policymaking, “nothing has really got to grips with this 40-year problem”, which is why the problem has persisted (and may have worsened in some areas).<sup>241</sup>

As Professor O’Brien has summarised in a recent article for the PEC, the creative industries “are neither diverse, nor equal, nor inclusive”.<sup>242</sup> Indeed, these statistics seem to run counter to the rhetoric of meritocracy that have been proffered to date.<sup>243</sup>

### **The national skills shortage**

76. One indicator of geographic disparities noted by the Levelling Up White Paper, alongside earnings, productivity and health, is the gap in skills between regions.<sup>244</sup> As such, it is widely recognised that education, training and the provision of skills can help

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235 BPI ([LEV0145](#))

236 BPI ([LEV0145](#))

237 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Second Report of Session 2020–21, [Economics of music streaming](#), HC 50, para 122

238 [Q28](#)

239 [Q28](#)

240 [Q97](#)

241 [Q28](#)

242 Policy & Evidence Centre, [What works to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Creative Industries?](#), 16 September 2021

243 [Q27](#)

244 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, p 37

alleviate low social mobility. The Levelling Up White Paper includes as part of its policy programme a focus on skills and training that aims to expand local infrastructure and training provision, reform existing education institutions and facilitate lifelong learning.<sup>245</sup>

77. Currently, the creative industries are experiencing a significant, ongoing national shortage in skilled labour.<sup>246</sup> This shortage cuts across the sector and has impacted both grassroots and commercial organisations. Music, for example, has suffered from a shortage of tutors, particularly for orchestral instruments, which has resulted in fewer young orchestral players coming through the school system.<sup>247</sup> The Government has also acknowledged that the heritage sector faces long-term shortages by adding archaeology to its Shortage Occupation List, while other professions within the discipline, such as construction and heritage craft skills, employ large numbers of EU nationals.<sup>248</sup> Bectu, drawing on evidence from industry stakeholders, wrote that staffing levels in backstage departments is down by 50 percent and over half of freelance live events professionals have not returned to work full time in the wake of the pandemic.<sup>249</sup> In total, 64 percent of freelancers from the live events sector have found work in other sectors in recent years, while 74 percent of companies lacked confidence in the availability of skilled workers.<sup>250</sup> COBA, the UK trade body for commercial broadcasters and on-demand services, argued that shortages in skilled labour, alongside a shortage in space due to increased demand, was one of the two biggest barriers to further growth in UK TV and film production.<sup>251</sup> These issues were also emphasised by PACT, the trade body for independent TV, cinema and animation companies, and researchers at the University of Exeter, who noted that the vast majority of skills in demand included camera operators, line producers and production co-ordinators.<sup>252</sup> The National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and Northern Ireland also noted that skills in particularly short supply include visual effects and 2- and 3D animation and affected the video game sector as well as TV and film production.<sup>253</sup>

**78. It is a matter of serious concern that despite the UK's status as home to successful, world-renowned creative industries, the sector is experiencing a significant and ongoing national skills shortage. This has compounded the issue of poor social mobility in the creative industries that successive governments have failed to address. Indeed, despite the Government's recognition of the need to provide greater opportunities for people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in the 2016 Culture White Paper, the creative industries remain among the worst for social mobility. We find it incredible that the UK cannot deliver on the provision of skills needed to meet the employment needs of the sector and equip our potential future creatives with the best possible opportunities to succeed. This shortage must be addressed if the UK is to maintain its status as a stalwart in arts and culture in future.**

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245 Ibid, pp 193–200

246 Dumfries and Galloway Youth Orchestra ([LEV0004](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), COBA (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services) ([LEV0019](#)), Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#)), Pact (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television) ([LEV0113](#)), University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#)), The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

247 Dumfries and Galloway Youth Orchestra ([LEV0004](#))

248 The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#)) para 21

249 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

250 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

251 COBA (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services) ([LEV0019](#)) para 13

252 Pact (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television) ([LEV0113](#)) para 1.2, University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#))

253 National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ([LEV0123](#))

## Creating opportunities in the creative industries

79. The skills shortage and low social mobility within arts and culture is being driven by two primary factors: poor working conditions, and a dearth of education and training opportunities.

### *Working conditions*

80. Poor working conditions and pay have made full-time employment in the creative industries financially unviable for those professionals trying to make a living and creates additional barriers for women, people with disabilities and people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and/or ethnic minorities.<sup>254</sup> Bectu, for example, argued that “much of the lack of diversity in the UK film and TV industries can be attributed to an unofficial entry qualification”, such as a requirement to be able to afford to live in London or access to a car (as discussed in Paragraph 59), as well as “long hours and a contingent employment model that discourages job-sharing”.<sup>255</sup> It provided the example of screen production as indicative of issues with working conditions within the creative sector:

The film and TV industry has a notoriously gruelling long hours working culture. The standard working day in drama generally lasts 12 hours with many departments working even longer. It is a set of norms that were sustainable for people working in short bursts, but not for those who are now finding themselves in demand for most of the year’s 52 weeks.<sup>256</sup>

81. Despite these entry requirements and work schedules, pay remains poor for the majority of the sector, with 56 percent of freelancers reporting earnings of less than £10,000.<sup>257</sup> There are also drastic disparities even across disciplines within the creative industries, with pay in film and TV being as much as 75 percent higher than in theatre, exacerbating social mobility issues in lower-paid disciplines.<sup>258</sup> A submission from the University of Exeter argued that the prevalence of unpaid or minimum-wage entry level roles meant that “a student who does not live within an affordable commute of London, Bristol or Leeds cannot realistically accept an entry level role to gain the experience and build the professional networks that are vital to progress in the creative industries”.<sup>259</sup> Moreover, it appears these practices have occurred due to a lack of robust employment regulation and because the regulations that do exist are poorly enforced within the creative industries. We heard, in oral evidence, that a “London gallery has been advertising for volunteer workers, effectively, which by my understanding is illegal, but they were still openly advertising for it”.<sup>260</sup> Professor O’Brien cited further workplace issues that have compounded these factors, including: periodic scandals around sexual harassment and institutionalised racism; a lack of action, both prior to and during the pandemic, from Government and industry on the provision of childcare, support for freelancers and irregular/insecure working patterns; and a lack of affordable, reliable bus and rail infrastructure in many parts of the country.<sup>261</sup>

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254 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

255 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

256 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

257 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

258 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

259 University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#))

260 [Qq56-7](#) [Professor O’Brien]

261 [Q56](#)

82. Several students from the Global Academy also posited that there was a lack of work experience opportunities available to creative industries aspirants, which limited further opportunities for employment later in life. As one said:

With work experience, there is not a lot of media work experience currently, or it's not shown, so I think if you could show it more, or if there are more opportunities, that would be so good. Because it's all about experience and as soon as you have that experience, before you're 17 or 18, it will help so much more with getting a job. So, I think that's really important, and one thing that we need to address.<sup>262</sup>

Others felt that industry needed to do more in creating these opportunities for young people to help them build a relevant CV.<sup>263</sup> However, another student pushed back on this and argued that it was also good to have a variety of experience on the CV so long as the skills were demonstrably relevant.<sup>264</sup>

83. Sanaz Amidi of Rosetta Arts also asserted that current events, such as the cost-of-living crisis, have also compounded these issues:

Everything we do is about people, whether they are delivering the work for us or benefiting from the work that we do. We have spoken about the talent drain in London. It started from Brexit, the pandemic, also the cost of living. The effect for us has been phenomenal.

During the Newham Unlocked Festival, I was calling everyone to find the talent that we required to do the work behind the scenes. We showcased over 300 artists—91 percent of which were from Newham—during the festival, but the people behind the scenes—the ones who get those big juicy contracts to deliver the work—were not there and they certainly were not from Newham.

The investment that we have to make in taking people on the journey to build the skills and the capacity to do that work is a big investment. It takes many, many years. When they drop off, the effect on us is phenomenal because we want people to be representative of the communities that we want to reach. If they cannot survive in the sector, let alone thrive, we really are at a disadvantage to be able to do our work effectively and meaningfully in the community.<sup>265</sup>

**84. Current working arrangements within the creative industries, such as the emphasis on freelancing and volunteer work, lack of work experience opportunities and need to relocate to London and the South East, are anathema to the aspirations of levelling up people's prospects across the UK. We are particularly concerned by reports of poor working conditions experienced by people working in the creative industries, and how they have contributed to the low levels of social mobility and inclusivity of the sector.**

**85. *We encourage arm's-length bodies, especially those responsible for administering funding on behalf of Government such as the Arts Council and Historic England, to***

262 Select Committee Engagement Team ([LEV0153](#))

263 Ibid

264 Ibid

265 [Q88](#)

*take further steps and ensure that organisations in the sector are working to improve working conditions across the creative industries as a key part of delivering on the ambitions of levelling up.*

### **Education and training**

86. We also heard about the impact of the diminishing availability and ongoing atrophy of the provision of training and education as a key factor underpinning the national skills shortage.

87. As noted in a submission from the University of Exeter research team, who are undertaking a UKRI-funded audit of vocational screen industry courses, the provision of skills training and development opportunities “widen access for local and emerging talent, reducing the inequality of opportunity and barriers that currently exist”.<sup>266</sup> However, Professor Judith Mossman emphasised several times that policymaking has been counterproductive in encouraging both the provision of arts and cultural education and incentives to explore the creative industries as a viable career choice, to the point where provision of such education may continue to contract and be increasingly hard to reverse.<sup>267</sup> As she argued:

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.<sup>268</sup>

Professor Mossman’s observations were supported by contributions from Global Academy students. As one student told us:

I got told by my Head of Sixth Form “don’t come running back to us when you fail” as a response when I told him that I was going to the Global Academy. I think that some things at state schools should be adjusted so that we don’t have to make ten Global Academies. We can change what we already have. I think that a lot of state schools have fixed mindsets and think about the conventional route, and there is a lot of shame and stigma attached to branching out and doing something that doesn’t require office-based skills. They can be non-inclusive of unconventional routes and have minimal understanding of creative jobs or going into different industries.<sup>269</sup>

Another student noted that this sentiment had been reflected by their parents, who were sceptical about the student’s desire to pursue a career in the creative industries on economic grounds.<sup>270</sup> Several students emphasised that they wished to see greater collaboration between schools like the Global Academy and other schools, including

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266 University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#))

267 [Qq30, 56](#)

268 [Q56](#)

269 Select Committee Engagement Team ([LEV0153](#))

270 Ibid

opening up education opportunities, mentoring and buddying, and sharing the Academy’s educational and industry-standard creative equipment, to expand learning opportunities to other schools and overcome practical barriers that might prevent other UTCs opening elsewhere in the country.<sup>271</sup>

88. A submission from Bectu also noted that research by the BFI observed a significant “free rider problem” in the provision of training, observing that most tended to come from public bodies and apprenticeship levies while arguing that employer-led education and training, based on market incentives, would be more sustainable in the long-term.<sup>272</sup> The submission from the University of Exeter recommends the establishment of “Screen Education and Employment Hubs, whose primary role is to unify local conversation and activity under one roof” alongside its own work to map “industry-facing training pathways that run from primary to post-doctoral level education”.<sup>273</sup>

89. As part of our inquiry, we took oral evidence at the Global Academy itself. Jonty Archibald, the school’s principal, described how the Academy contributes to the country’s talent pipeline:

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.<sup>274</sup>

The focus on the creative industries is also reflected in the Academy’s open days and entry requirements:

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.<sup>275</sup>

Mr Archibald told us that one unique aspect of the Academy’s offer to students is on preparing its students for a life in the creative industries:

Students leave at 5.30am or 6.00am 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.<sup>276</sup>

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271 Ibid

272 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))

273 University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#))

274 [Q37](#)

275 [Q40](#)

276 [Q34](#)

90. In terms of its contributions to the workforce, Mr Archibald told us that approximately half of students continue with education and half go into industry, apprenticeships or entry-level jobs, with 85 percent of the overall (including last year's cohort) undertaking either further/higher education or employment in the creative industries.<sup>277</sup> Indeed, this success perhaps underpins why several students undertake significant commutes (one cited a four-hour round trip) or relocate in order to attend the Academy.<sup>278</sup> As Clare Reddington told us, reflecting on Watershed's work with young people, the "tricky middle bit"—getting access to industry producers and professional services—is a significant barrier to young people setting up creative businesses or stabilising their work early in their careers.<sup>279</sup> The Global Academy also works in partnership with other local primary and secondary schools (for example, to offer a more creative-oriented curriculum to children at other schools or to support those schools by running media workshops and sharing specialist staffing expertise and industry-standard equipment).<sup>280</sup> The school is currently home to the Hillingdon Music Hub and works with other local cultural institutions; the UTC@MediaCityUK in Salford was similarly described as linked in with its own local creative hub.<sup>281</sup>

91. In response to our concerns about the national skills shortage, Lord Parkinson asserted, several times, that the Government would be bringing forward two strategies for cultural education, led by the Departments for Education (DfE) and DCMS, in due course.<sup>282</sup> In June, the Government published its National Plan for Music Education, which aims to:

- Build on the national network of Music Education Hubs (supported by ACE and DfE) by establishing four national Music Hub centres of excellence, encouraging Music Hubs to partner with lead schools, and ensuring Hubs appoint an inclusion lead and develop and publish an inclusion strategy by 2024;
- Ensure music is represented in every school's leadership structure and that every school has a comprehensive curricular and co-curricular Music Development Plan; and
- Pilot a Music Progression Fund, with four-year match-funding from government, delivered through schools and Music Hubs to support disadvantaged pupils.<sup>283</sup>

In the "Opportunity For All" Schools White Paper, published in March 2022, Government pledged to publish the second of these, a cultural/creative education plan, by 2023,<sup>284</sup> which the Minister told us would be developed in collaboration with ACE, Historic England, the BFI and other stakeholders.<sup>285</sup>

92. Despite the Minister's claims, there are some concerns that the Government's approach may impact on the success of industry-backed schools, and therefore to the

277 [Qq1, 37–9](#)

278 Select Committee Engagement Team ([LEV0153](#))

279 [Q96](#)

280 [Qq2, 36](#)

281 [Q47](#)

282 [Qq232, 236–9, 244](#)

283 Department for Education and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#), 25 June 2022

284 Department for Education, *Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child*, [CP 650](#), March 2022, p.29

285 [Q244](#)

country's pipeline of creative talent. Jonty Archibald asserted that the shift towards A- and T-Levels would impact the provision of vocational courses, included those offered by the Global Academy:

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.<sup>286</sup>

93. In oral evidence, the then-Secretary of State told us that her counterpart and officials in DfE were cognisant of the importance of the creative industries to the economy and the need to address the skills shortage,<sup>287</sup> but otherwise refused to answer several questions regarding concerns about the focus on STEM in T-Levels and the impact to the arts and culture talent pipeline on the basis that “that is Education, not DCMS”.<sup>288</sup> However, Lord Parkinson emphasised a different picture, citing a productive and joined-up working relationship between DCMS and DfE<sup>289</sup> and advocacy for arts and cultural education within Government.<sup>290</sup> When asked whether there was an excessive focus on core skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) at the expense of other skills, Lord Parkinson responded that:

Literacy and numeracy are so important in whatever profession, whatever vocation people are drawn into, and it is absolutely right that we took action over the last 12 years to drive up what was a lamentable state of affairs when we came to office. But it is important that we see and people hear the value of cultural education as well. That is what we are trying to reflect in the cultural education plan and the national plan for music education.<sup>291</sup>

**94. Arts and cultural education is important in its own right for the social benefits it brings, but it is also an important factor in addressing issues of poor social mobility and the national skills shortage. While we welcome the Government's efforts to introduce a National Plan for Music Education and Cultural Education Strategy, we have heard that education policy in the main can have a detrimental effect on the provision of education, training and skills development in this country. We remain concerned that cultural education is still seen as of lesser importance to the curriculum, which feeds negative perceptions of careers in the creative industries, discourages people with necessary skills from pursuing those careers and compounds issues of social mobility within the sector.**

**95. We recommend that the Government take tangible steps to address the national skills shortage and incentivise cultural activity in education, starting by ensuring the long-term viability for schools that provide vocational, industry-backed qualifications.**

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286 [Q41](#)

287 [Oral evidence](#) taken on 19 May 2022, HC (2022–23) 158, Q146 [Ms Dorries]

288 [Ibid](#), Qq147–8

289 [Q236](#)

290 [Q238](#)

291 [Q238](#)

*It should also expand the model of music education hubs outlined in the National Plan for Music Education to other disciplines with the cultural sector where the UK enjoys international renown and comparative economic success, such as TV, film and theatre.*

## Decision-making and planning

### *Local collaboration between creatives and councils*

96. One of the twelve core missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper is “empowering local leadership and communities”, under which the Government has committed to providing every part of England that wants one with “a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement”.<sup>292</sup> More broadly, the White Paper recognises that “achieving the UK Government’s Levelling-Up Missions will rely on local leaders being empowered to develop local solutions to local problems”.<sup>293</sup> The Government’s Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill, which was introduced on 11 May 2022, aims to achieve this by adding to existing legislation on matters such as: introducing new “combined county authorities” to extend devolution into more rural areas; allowing local communities to establish or amend combined authorities, local authority governance models and mayoral titles; and increasing the transparency and accountability of local leaders.<sup>294</sup> However, the Bill was critiqued at Second Reading by parliamentarians from all parties, who questioned whether the Bill meaningfully provided new powers to the proposed and existing local authorities and did not scale back powers from others.<sup>295</sup>

97. Within this context, our inquiry heard a range of examples as to how cultural practitioners and creatives are, and could be, engaged in local planning and decision-making. Other submissions emphasised the need for sustainable cross-sector partnerships, including between cultural organisations, local authorities, academia, third-party local businesses and other local and national decision-makers.<sup>296</sup> Several submissions emphasised that individuals and local organisations from the sector already have strong local knowledge, engage other members of the community and challenge the reliance on “usual suspects”, can help creatively reimagine and repurpose public spaces, and in most

292 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, pp 452–3

293 *Ibid*, p 452

294 [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill](#), Clauses 7–74 [Bill 6 (2022–23)]; see also Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, [Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information](#), 11 May 2022

295 HC Deb, 8 June 2022, [cols 822–4, 826, 840, 848–52, 856, 859, 860, 866, 872, 874, 877–8, 886–8](#)

296 DACS ([LEV0001](#)), Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#)), The Stove Network ([LEV0010](#)), Professor Nicky Marsh; Dr Daniel Ashton; Dr Michael Howcroft ([LEV0037](#)), Creative Lives ([LEV0078](#)), University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#))

cases are already embedded in or existentially linked to local authorities and business.<sup>297</sup> The Association of Independent Museums delineated the contributions of creatives into three broad aspects, namely:

- the strategic (e.g., embedding culture in social/economic development and placemaking through heritage and community knowledge);
- the institutional (e.g., working through anchor institutions, providing jobs and economic opportunities, providing civic spaces and other infrastructure); and
- the local (e.g., by helping create, retell and reaffirm local narratives and mythmaking, history and culture).<sup>298</sup>

However, Performing City Resilience made the important point that “the existing work of arts and culture organisations that strategically engages in understanding and reimagining the places where they are based is almost entirely unrecognized”.<sup>299</sup> It concludes that “too often, funding assumes an eventual artwork, whereas this agenda calls for rethinking performance of daily life as a project involving multiple stakeholders in a place” and further recommended that “work should focus on brokering connections between artists, culture workers and city officials, bring these strategic placemakers together to reveal how they are addressing the challenges and the practices of that place”.<sup>300</sup>

98. While it was noted that there should not be a “one-size-fits-all” approach to engagement, there were recurring elements of best practice highlighted throughout the written evidence we received, such as:

- Ensuring a local- and place-led, rather than centralised or centralising, approach, such as by creating local co-ordination and development structures, including those accessible to individuals and smaller organisations, and that similarly artists cannot be “parachuted into” communities;
- Proactively and creatively promoting opportunities to equitably engage with decision-making and communicate at all stages of delivery processes;
- Ensuring purposeful work plans, engagement and collaboration so as not to simply become “talking shops”, and that projects and initiatives are given time and resources to be successful;

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297 Crafts Council ([LEV0009](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#)), Making Music ([LEV0015](#)), West of England Combined Authority ([LEV0018](#)), Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#)), Newcastle University ([LEV0021](#)), Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#)), Professor Nicky Marsh; Dr Daniel Ashton; Dr Michael Howcroft ([LEV0037](#)), Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#)), Institute of Historic Building Conservation ([LEV0049](#)), Bite Back 2030 ([LEV0058](#)), Dr Eleni Michopoulou (Associate Professor in Business Management at University of Derby); Dr Kathleen McIlvenna (Lecturer in History at University of Derby); Ms Claire Roe (Postgraduate Researcher at University of Derby); Dr Vladimir Antchak (Senior Lecturer in Event Management at University of Derby) ([LEV0060](#)), Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#)), Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#)), National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange (NCACE) ([LEV0087](#)), Natural History Museum ([LEV0099](#)), South East Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0108](#)), Newcastle Creates Limited ([LEV0110](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Science Museum Group ([LEV0125](#)), Curious Minds ([LEV0127](#)), Coventry University ([LEV0128](#)), Incorporated Society of Musicians ([LEV0132](#)), Historic England ([LEV0139](#)), Creative Scotland ([LEV0141](#)), Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ([LEV0142](#)), Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

298 Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#))

299 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#))

300 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#))

- Bringing together diverse, cross-sector voices, including the public, private and voluntary sectors, such as local authorities, ALBs and public bodies, anchor institutions (such as education, health and transport), local businesses (including tourism and the night-time economy) and so on;
- Having shared objectives and robust research and evaluation frameworks, while ensuring that this data is accessible and shared as widely as possible.<sup>301</sup>

99. As such, it is unsurprising that many local cultural organisations and councils have sought to formalise and support partnerships, forums and collaborative working arrangements with other key stakeholders. Preston City Council, for example, established a “cultural framework board” several years ago, which brought together the local government (county and district level) and educational institutions, and introduced “cultural governor” roles to provide the perspective of practising artists.<sup>302</sup> Tim Joel, Preston’s Head of Culture, noted that Preston’s community of cultural practitioners was one of individual artists rather than key organisations but that the council nonetheless maintained regular dialogue with these independents through their sector-led organisation.<sup>303</sup> Stoke-on-Trent established a “cultural forum” that led to the formation of Stoke Creates, an independent group formed following the city’s bid for UK City of Culture, convening representatives from the local authority, universities, NPOs and smaller independent groups.<sup>304</sup> Stoke also convenes a “creative city partnership” between the local authority, Stoke Creates and ALBs including ACE, Historic England, Heritage Lottery and the Canal and Rivers Trust.<sup>305</sup> Councillor Abi Brown described the inception and purpose of the partnership:

What it does is bring together the big funding bodies nationally, who we know are interested and work in the city, along with the representative sector of the creative sector within the city. That has been meeting now for probably about 18 months and means that we are able to pull together those agendas because they cross-cut so much. They also provide the opportunity for the creative sector within the city, whether it is individual practitioners or those right the way up to being NPOs, to be able to be involved with the discussion, to help I think nurture those relationships as well. Arts Council England often have good relationships with them but where you are cross

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301 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), West of England Combined Authority ([LEV0018](#)), Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#)), Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#)), National Trust ([LEV0042](#)), Quality of Life Foundation ([LEV0044](#)), Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#)), Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#)), CHEAD Council for Higher Education in Art and Design ([LEV0057](#)); Dr Eleni Michopoulou (Associate Professor in Business Management at University of Derby); Dr Kathleen McIlvenna (Lecturer in History at University of Derby); Ms Claire Roe (Postgraduate Researcher at University of Derby); Dr Vladimir Antchak (Senior Lecturer in Event Management at University of Derby) ([LEV0060](#)), The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#)), Esmée Fairbairn Foundation ([LEV0062](#)), Culture Liverpool - Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#)), Make It York, City of York Council ([LEV0079](#)), Compton Verney ([LEV0083](#)), Salford’s Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#)), Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#)), British Library ([LEV0091](#)), Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#)), University Alliance ([LEV0100](#)), Create Gloucestershire ([LEV0103](#)), Nottingham Trent University ([LEV0109](#)), Community Leisure UK ([LEV0112](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Northern Heartlands CIO ([LEV0117](#)), Local Trust ([LEV0124](#)), Sunderland Culture ([LEV0137](#)), University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#)), Historic England ([LEV0139](#)), Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ([LEV0142](#)), London Legacy Development Corporation ([LEV0147](#))

302 [Q110](#) [Tim Joel]

303 [Q110](#)

304 [Q110](#) [Councillor Brown], Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#))

305 [Q110](#) [Councillor Brown]

cutting with Canal and Rivers Trust perhaps or Historic England, it is much more difficult for them to see. Why reinvent the wheel? Why not try to get people together? We feel that that has worked quite well.<sup>306</sup>

Similar to Stoke, Bradford convenes the Bradford Cultural Place Partnership, which brings together the council, University of Bradford, Bradford College, ACE, the National Lottery Heritage Board, UNESCO City of Film and the NHS Born in Bradford, and the Bradford Cultural Voice Forum, a council-funded initiative with an independent secretariat that brings together local artists and creatives.<sup>307</sup> Indeed, partnerships of creatives and anchor institutions can be found across the country and at all levels, from neighbourhoods up, ranging from Birmingham's Number 11 Arts (a city-wide network of neighbourhood arts forums), Sheffield Culture Consortium (a voluntary working group of cultural partners), Creative Estuary and the West Midlands Combined Authority's Cultural Leadership Board.<sup>308</sup>

**100. We have little faith that national government and arm's-length bodies are taking a joined-up approach with local government to Levelling Up cultural infrastructure. Though cultural policy is devolved, and indeed central government should continue to resist centralising impulses, DCMS has a greater role to play in convening and facilitating collaboration between local government, national and local cultural institutions, arm's-length bodies and other stakeholders between and across local and regional levels nationwide, enabling the sharing of research, data and best practice, and ensuring that local stakeholders have the skills and experience to demonstrate local leadership and effective decision-making.**

### **Cultural compacts**

101. ACE and DCMS have already undertaken some work in building capacity for decision-making and planning at the local level through its pilot of "cultural compacts". The formation of cultural compacts was recommended, in 2019, by the Core Cities Enquiry, chaired by Dame Jayne-Anne Gadhia, then-CEO of Virgin Money, to consider how culture could be more effectively resourced throughout the country.<sup>309</sup> The Enquiry's report considered that cultural compacts should bring together "business, universities, local authorities, the cultural sector and [Local Enterprise Partnerships]" and "must have a business plan, with clear and measurable aims, and publish a report on progress annually".<sup>310</sup> Subsequently, DCMS and ACE announced a pilot of 20 cultural compacts to enable cross-sector stakeholder engagement, create strategic capacity and potentially "develop into or oversee organisational structures which enable activity".<sup>311</sup> The 20 pilot compacts received between £20,000 and £30,000 in seed funding, with 11 compacts joint-funded by DCMS and ACE and a further 9 additionally funded by ACE, alongside at least 30 percent match funding from local partners.<sup>312</sup> Compacts have been established

306 [Q110](#)

307 [Bradford City Council \(LEV0086\)](#)

308 [The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association \(LEV0011\)](#), [The Local Government Association \(LEV0092\)](#), [Creative Estuary \(LEV0095\)](#), [WMCA Cultural Leadership Board \(LEV0116\)](#)

309 [Arts Council England \(LEV0144\)](#) para 1.13; see also [Core Cities UK, Cultural Cities Enquiry](#), accessed 9 August 2022

310 [Cultural Cities Enquiry, Cultural Cities Enquiry Report](#), February 2019, p 12

311 [Arts Council England \(LEV0144\)](#) paras 5.11–7

312 [BOP Consulting, Review of the Cultural Compacts Initiative: Final report](#), 30 October 2020, p 4; see also [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport \(LEV0150\)](#)

in a range of places, including: towns such as Tunbridge Wells and Slough; the London borough of Southwark; cities like Sunderland, Newcastle, Liverpool and Birmingham; areas like Medway and Cornwall; and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA).<sup>313</sup>

102. The response to the formation of cultural compacts has, overall, been positive. A review of the compacts initiative, undertaken by BOP Consulting and commissioned by ACE, found that compacts succeeded in co-ordinating cultural delivery, engaging with cross-sector, community and grassroots stakeholders and facilitating shared learning, though concluded that it was too early to say whether compacts could leverage human, financial and property resources to support cultural initiatives.<sup>314</sup> Many of those who wrote to us, including local authorities, advocacy groups and cultural compacts themselves, emphasised that compacts could set local strategic priorities, help engage communities in local decision-making and address pre-existing and long-standing issues.<sup>315</sup> DCMS's own submission highlighted the successes of WECA's compact in engaging with transport bodies on combined ticketing offers to decarbonise cultural activity and of Exeter's compact in urban development, wellbeing, economic growth, and education through its participation with the city's Partnership Board.<sup>316</sup>

103. Evidence from Salford's Culture and Place Partnership (SCPP), which was already working to bring together anchor institutions prior to the Cultural Cities Enquiry before being selected for the cultural compacts pilot, argued that compacts "*can* be essential tools to enable creatives to contribute to planning and action with people in their/our places [ ... ] but this is not a given".<sup>317</sup> It asserted that "in order to best enable creatives to contribute to local impact and develop their own agency, cultural compact governance models must be risk-ready, actively mindful of power and scale imbalances within a partnership, and committed to working with people in their places, rather than simply advocating for them".<sup>318</sup> Bradford City Council, in its description of the city's own aforementioned initiatives, described the cultural compact model as "interesting" but suggested that "in some places they are just 'talking shops'".<sup>319</sup> The BOP Consulting review also identified other challenges, including finding the right chair, a lack of focus on diversity and inclusion (with the exception of Sunderland and Newcastle) and investment, engaging the health/wellbeing and private sectors, and maintaining balanced cross-sectoral representation, though considered a strong chair, working independently and having realistic expectations were some examples of best practice given in response.<sup>320</sup> For its part, ACE has committed to that it will continue to support existing cultural compacts and help new places set them up, including from existing budgets if needed.<sup>321</sup> ACE's written submission went further, calling on the Government to "recognise that compacts have huge potential to help solve capacity challenges in place, and should encourage places to set them up, potentially with local authority and combined authority leadership".<sup>322</sup>

313 BOP Consulting, [Review of the Cultural Compacts Initiative: Final report](#), 30 October 2020, p 4

314 *Ibid*, pp 9–13

315 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), Key Cities ([LEV0022](#)), Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#)), Salford's Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), Creative Estuary ([LEV0095](#)), Newcastle Creates Limited ([LEV0110](#)), WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

316 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

317 Salford's Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#))

318 Salford's Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#))

319 Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#))

320 BOP Consulting, [Review of the Cultural Compacts Initiative: Final report](#), 30 October 2020, p 9–11

321 [Q152](#), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)) para 6.4

322 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)) para 6.4

104. The “cultural compacts” initiative appears to have had a positive impact in bringing together local stakeholders, driving strategic planning for culture and facilitating local engagement, contingent on examples of best practice. *The Government should continue to support the initiative by aiming to at least double the number of compacts, and explicitly target rural areas in this expansion to better understand and develop a blueprint as to how they can be established beyond urban centres. Consistent with the “fifth pillar” of Levelling Up (reporting, external advice and external scrutiny), the Government should also commit to reporting back on the success of the cultural compacts initiative by the end of this Parliament.*

105. *As part of this process, the Government should also undertake an audit of necessary skills in cultural placemaking and collaborative policymaking, and provide a roadmap as to how the provision of these skills and best practice can be delivered and shared to local authorities and partnerships that need and want them.*

### Access to library services

106. The Levelling Up White Paper acknowledges that public libraries, alongside civic institutions and assets like universities, good quality green spaces and local football clubs, contribute to the “social and physical fabric” that “gives areas their unique character and vibrancy, and makes residents proud to live there”.<sup>323</sup> DCMS has described libraries as “a vital part of the country’s social and cultural infrastructure” with “an essential role to play in their local areas”, such as “[helping] increase participation in and access to culture, regardless of background”.<sup>324</sup> The White Paper commits the Government to three relevant core missions (pride in place, housing, and crime) with the first of these delivered by investment in physical regeneration, community assets and human capital and culture, heritage and sport.<sup>325</sup>

107. There are over 2,900 public libraries spread across England.<sup>326</sup> Around 25 percent of libraries are located on high streets and a further 65 percent are close to one.<sup>327</sup> Public libraries support a broad range of people in our communities with necessary services. Our inquiry heard about the wide range of benefits of public library services, particularly in the context of the Levelling Up Agenda, including:

- Providing important services to people from a range of socioeconomic groups, including access to reading and learning materials and the internet, providing physical study space, and hosting community and cultural events and activities, which increases the public’s access to and participation in arts and culture;
- Contributing to quality of life, alongside other infrastructure like heritage, museums, local media and so on;

323 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, p 206; see also Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#))

324 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

325 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*, [CP 604](#), February 2022, pp 207–21

326 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

327 British Library ([LEV0091](#)); see also Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

- Creating reasons to visit high streets and town centres and contributing to wider economic activity of the local area, which the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society asserts can increase local business revenue by up to 10 percent; and
- Acting as engines for entrepreneurship, economic growth and job creation through the services they offer, such as through the British Library's Business and IP Centre (BPIC) Network, self-development opportunities and in support of the UK's "knowledge economy" and "knowledge-intensive businesses" such as research and development, advertising, market research and polling, consulting, accounting, auditing, and so on.<sup>328</sup>

108. Local authorities (be they unitary, county or metropolitan borough councils) have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 "to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" for all those who live, work or study in the area.<sup>329</sup> This includes encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service<sup>330</sup> and lending books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area.<sup>331</sup> As the British Library notes, of the more than 26,000 people supported between April 2020 and March 2021, 65 percent were women, 37 percent were described as BAME, 17 percent were unemployed, and 62 percent had not used any other available business support services.<sup>332</sup> ACE estimates that the fourteen libraries in the BPIC Network have supported the creation of over 12,000 businesses, almost 8,000 jobs and an economic "gross value added" (GVA) of £78 million.<sup>333</sup> Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, footfall in libraries was greater than all admissions to Premier League matches, cinemas and the top-10 tourist attractions combined.<sup>334</sup> Even during the pandemic, some library services experienced significant and/or additional demand. The LGA wrote that during the first national lockdown: some libraries saw a 600 percent increase in digital membership and fourfold increase in the number of e-books borrowed; libraries made an estimated 5 million additional digital loans and loaned 3.5 million more e-books than usual; loans of online e-books, e-magazines and audiobooks went up an average of 63 percent in March 2020 compared with March 2019; and 120,000 people joined libraries in the three weeks after lockdown began, a significant increase on previous years.<sup>335</sup> However, it should be noted that these are not necessarily universal trends. Councillor Abi Brown told us that "we have seen a reduction in library footfall since March 2020 but we have seen an increase in membership and also in digital usage", and that the council had built a library strategy based on that trend.<sup>336</sup> Tim Joel noted that "we still have a high number of library users from all the libraries across Lancashire" and that there had been an increase in digital access through BorrowBox, a smartphone app that allows users to borrow e-books and audiobooks from their library for free.<sup>337</sup>

328 [Q63](#), The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#)), University of Reading, Reading Borough Council, Reading UK ([LEV0012](#)), Making Music ([LEV0015](#)), Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#)), Quality of Life Foundation ([LEV0044](#)), British Library ([LEV0091](#)), The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), The Booksellers Association ([LEV0130](#)), Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)), Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society ([LEV0148](#)), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))

329 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, [section 7](#)

330 *Ibid*, [section 7\(2\)\(b\)](#)

331 *Ibid*, [section 8\(3\)](#)

332 British Library ([LEV0091](#))

333 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)), Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society ([LEV0148](#))

334 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))

335 The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)); see also Community Leisure UK ([LEV0112](#))

336 [Q115](#)

337 [Q118](#)

109. Public library services are funded and either run or commissioned by local government. However, as with wider cultural provision, the pressure on core council budgets and the increase in demand for other statutory services like social care has impacted the provision of library services.<sup>338</sup> Evidence to our inquiry posited that, for every £1 spent on library services in 2009–10, 58p was spent in 2017–18: an even sharper decline than spending on culture and heritage in the round (as discussed in Paragraphs 23–4).<sup>339</sup> Written evidence from Making Music argued that a further impact has been the reduction in or removal of the provision and inter-library loans of sheet music, reducing its availability for many communities.<sup>340</sup> However, statistics from the House of Commons Library, which go back further, show that this has been a much longer-term trend, with library net expenditure in Great Britain falling consistently year-on-year in real terms between 2004–05 and 2019–20.<sup>341</sup> The number of visits for library purposes across Great Britain similarly fell consistently year-on-year in this time, from 335 million in 2004–05 to 215 million in 2019–20.<sup>342</sup>

110. Concurrently, there were a number of library closures (though the exact figure has been consistently disputed). In 2016, in response to a parliamentary written question, DCMS desk research estimated that there had been a net closure of 33 libraries in England between January 2010 and January 2016.<sup>343</sup> This was challenged by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, pointing to figures from research by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), which claimed that there had been a reduction of 178 between 2009–10 and 2014–15.<sup>344</sup> However, the Government later disputed CIPFA’s figures in a 2018 report as having “significant flaws that undermine their ability to be used as a definitive and authoritative source of data”.<sup>345</sup>

111. Irrespectively, Professor Dave O’Brien did note in oral evidence that academic evidence suggests that making definitive judgements on the causality of library visits and provision can be difficult:

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.<sup>346</sup>

112. However, in a session on local government support for arts and culture, both Councillor Abi Brown of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Tim Joel of Preston City Council explained that they had not only both preserved all their library branches but were in the process of evolving their branches to make best use of the assets available to them.<sup>347</sup> Both argued respectively that public libraries were important to local authorities and would not advocate getting rid of them.<sup>348</sup> Councillor Brown told us, for example,

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338 [Qq23–4, 63](#)

339 The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)), para 5.2

340 Making Music ([LEV0015](#))

341 *Public libraries*, Standard Note [SN05875](#), House of Commons Library, 13 January 2021

342 *Ibid*

343 *Ibid*

344 *Ibid*

345 *Ibid*

346 [Q63](#)

347 [Qq115–20](#)

348 [Qq115–7](#)

that the city's newest library would be in a (reclaimed, previously mothballed) town hall, family hub and the gateway to one of the city's marketplaces in order to maximise the utility of the council's asset base, direct people to other services and "join people up to the library who had not maybe thought to go and do that before".<sup>349</sup> Tim Joel speculated that "there needs to be a bold approach, an innovative approach" to public library provision and that "libraries should be tailored to the communities that they serve" and "in consultation with communities", such as supporting people to access other provisions within close proximity to library services, but also asserted that it was important to ensure and maintain access for and within deprived communities and those with less mobility and access to public transport.<sup>350</sup>

113. Currently, DCMS is supporting twenty-five libraries through a £5 million Libraries Improvement Fund, administered by ACE, to upgrade buildings and digital infrastructure.<sup>351</sup> Significant beneficiaries of the Fund include Sandwell Library and Information Service (£495,000) and Sheffield Libraries (£340,000).<sup>352</sup> In May 2022, DCMS announced that £15.5 million would be on offer through the Fund,<sup>353</sup> with ACE to announce decisions for recipients of the 2022–23 Second Round next February.<sup>354</sup> While this is welcome, the LGA's submission to both our inquiry and to the 2021 Spending Review called for both a £30 million capital funding investment to develop a network of collaborative workspaces (called "makerspaces") and public access computers to tackle digital exclusion and promote innovation, and for the roll-out of eduroam (internet access developed for the education community) to all public libraries.<sup>355</sup> Evidence from ACE posited that it is developing the public library offer through the Libraries Taskforce,<sup>356</sup> which was convened in 2014 and includes representatives from ACE, the LGA, DCMS, the Reading Agency (a reading and literacy charity) and Libraries Connected (the sector support organisation for public libraries). However, it should be noted that the Taskforce was formally ended in March 2020 (publishing a closure report in June 2021),<sup>357</sup> which raises several questions.

**114. The services and spaces offered by public libraries remain an important part of a community's infrastructure for people who are digitally excluded or who live in deprived neighbourhoods. The Government should support the development of a network of hubs providing cultural spaces, workspaces and free, fast internet access in places most in need of levelling up in order to modernise library service provision.**

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349 [Q150](#)

350 [Qq120–4](#)

351 "[£48 million to safeguard nation's critical cultural heritage](#)", Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England press release, 12 March 2022; see also [Q152](#)

352 "[£48 million to safeguard nation's critical cultural heritage](#)", Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England press release, 12 March 2022

353 "[Cultural venues to receive £128 million to improve access to arts and culture](#)", Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport press release, 9 May 2022

354 Arts Council England, [Libraries Improvement Fund Round 2](#), accessed 8 August 2022

355 Government Association, [Spending Review 2021 departmental supplement: Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport \(DCMS\)](#), 5 October 2021; see also The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#)) para 6.3

356 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#)), para 3.24

357 Arts Council England, [The Libraries Taskforce Closure Report](#), 22 June 2021

# Conclusions and recommendations

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## Introduction

1. The long-term challenges continuing to face our high streets and town centres are well documented. Cultural placemaking can be (and in many places already is) one way that local communities, government and arm's-length bodies respond to these challenges. It is evident that place-based cultural policymaking can help deliver on the missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, including improving pride in place but also local leadership, living standards, education, skills, health and wellbeing, so long as these are done in a locally-sensitive way. Our Report discusses the ways that national and local stakeholders can unlock these benefits through investment in local culture and creative people. (Paragraph 15)
2. *The Government should take steps to level up cultural opportunities and production across the country through its proposed statutory framework set out in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill currently working its way through Parliament. We recommend that the Government commits to explicitly incorporating support for local arts and culture into the Government's first Statement for Levelling-Up Missions, including the methodology and metrics for mission progress, for missions such as pride in place, living standards, wellbeing, education and local leadership. In its Response to this Report, the Government should provide clarity on how prospective methodologies and metrics might also recognise the idiosyncratic and esoteric nature, and capture the social, cultural and economic value, of many creative businesses. Finally, the Government should ensure that there is countrywide support available to local cultural organisations and local government achieve this progress.* (Paragraph 16)

## Cultural placemaking

3. Despite the potential for the creative industries to help drive the Government's Levelling Up agenda, funding and support for arts and culture emulates the broader geographic disparities that affect the UK economy and society as a whole. The Government and its arm's-length bodies have taken some welcome steps to redress this imbalance. However, we are concerned that outside London and the South East, there are areas still not receiving the necessary investment to support their own local and world-class institutions, while in London and the South East, grassroots organisations in deprived areas are experiencing serious financial risk due to a handful of organisations receiving significant proportions of public funding. (Paragraph 38)
4. *We recommend that the Government and Arts Council England reconsider how they allocate funding by regions. We propose a model whereby world class, national cultural institutions, who often receive the most significant levels of public cash, are categorised and allocated funding separately from local and regional cultural institutions. This would allow for better comparisons between genuinely grassroots organisations and ensure those organisations in regions where there is a high concentration of national cultural institutions aren't indirectly negatively impacted by well-meaning attempts to rebalance spending across the country.* (Paragraph 39)

5. *We also recommend that these national cultural organisations should have differing expectations as a condition of public funding, including greater accessibility for audiences nationwide and support for grassroots organisations, in a similar way as to how the “crown jewels” of sport have differing broadcasting expectations. One overall ambition for Levelling Up through culture should be that every region can boast world class institutions alongside a local, accessible grassroots cultural ecosystem. (Paragraph 40)*
6. Despite efforts to rebalance the geographic disparities in investment in arts and culture through flagship funds and competitive grants, we share concerns with the sector regarding the sustainability and accessibility of funding over the longer-term. We welcome that the Government has listened to our recommendations regarding guaranteed funding and the broadened scope for bidding areas aspiring to be the UK City of Culture as an important start. However, without further reconsideration as to how the sector can be supported beyond the current rounds of support, it is likely that many areas of the country will see their local cultural organisations continue to struggle. (Paragraph 57)
7. *We recommend that the Government should consider how it can support arts and culture through means other than one-off or flagship funds but, instead, generate sustainable public funding settlements and pump-prime private sector investment. Recent reforms to funding competitions like the UK City of Culture, such as guaranteed and expanded support for high quality bids, should also be applied across the sector. Alongside these plans, we recommend that DCMS and its arm’s-length bodies, in consultation with the sector, develop a comprehensive training programme that help build much needed skills- and capacity-building. (Paragraph 58)*
8. While our inquiry focused on the financial barriers to cultural placemaking, there are many factors that co-determine whether local places can develop and maintain sustainable cultural infrastructure. Our inquiry has heard potential policy recommendations from stakeholders across the sector and across the country; we hope that the Government continues to respond to the sector’s concerns. While many of these issues were known when DCMS published its last White Paper for Culture in 2016 (only the second that the Government has published), the sector now faces additional challenges. Local authorities must be empowered to step up and take the lead on addressing these barriers. (Paragraph 60)
9. *Consistent with the ambitions of Levelling Up, we recommend that local communities and stakeholders are given a greater role in decision-making. This could be done by building on the Community Ownership Fund, reducing the bureaucracy in funding application processes, encouraging more localised decision-making (as with the Arts Council’s area council, who could be appointed by and answerable to local government) and looking beyond just competitive bidding to incentivise collaborative, democratic, grassroots-oriented processes. (Paragraph 61)*
10. Alongside its impact on individuals and households, the cost-of-living crisis poses an existential threat to the cultural, sporting and media organisations and infrastructures that are at the centre of our communities at a time when they need

certainty following the Covid-19 pandemic, even despite the Government's welcome announcement of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme for businesses, charities and public sector organisations in September. (Paragraph 68)

11. *The Government needs to engage with these sectors as a matter of urgency and bring forward targeted support in response to the current crisis, such as through VAT or business rate relief, to prevent exacerbating long-term scarring on organisations already hit hard by Covid-19.* (Paragraph 68)

### Participation and social mobility

12. It is a matter of serious concern that despite the UK's status as home to successful, world-renowned creative industries, the sector is experiencing a significant and ongoing national skills shortage. This has compounded the issue of poor social mobility in the creative industries that successive governments have failed to address. Indeed, despite the Government's recognition of the need to provide greater opportunities for people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in the 2016 Culture White Paper, the creative industries remain among the worst for social mobility. We find it incredible that the UK cannot deliver on the provision of skills needed to meet the employment needs of the sector and equip our potential future creatives with the best possible opportunities to succeed. This shortage must be addressed if the UK is to maintain its status as a stalwart in arts and culture in future. (Paragraph 78)
13. Current working arrangements within the creative industries, such as the emphasis on freelancing and volunteer work, lack of work experience opportunities and need to relocate to London and the South East, are anathema to the aspirations of levelling up people's prospects across the UK. We are particularly concerned by reports of poor working conditions experienced by people working in the creative industries, and how they have contributed to the low levels of social mobility and inclusivity of the sector. (Paragraph 84)
14. *We encourage arm's-length bodies, especially those responsible for administering funding on behalf of Government such as the Arts Council and Historic England, to take further steps and ensure that organisations in the sector are working to improve working conditions across the creative industries as a key part of delivering on the ambitions of levelling up.* (Paragraph 85)
15. Arts and cultural education is important in its own right for the social benefits it brings, but it is also an important factor in addressing issues of poor social mobility and the national skills shortage. While we welcome the Government's efforts to introduce a National Plan for Music Education and Cultural Education Strategy, we have heard that education policy in the main can have a detrimental effect on the provision of education, training and skills development in this country. We remain concerned that cultural education is still seen as of lesser importance to the curriculum, which feeds negative perceptions of careers in the creative industries, discourages people with necessary skills from pursuing those careers and compounds issues of social mobility within the sector. (Paragraph 94)

16. *We recommend that the Government take tangible steps to address the national skills shortage and incentivise cultural activity in education, starting by ensuring the long-term viability for schools that provide vocational, industry-backed qualifications. It should also expand the model of music education hubs outlined in the National Plan for Music Education to other disciplines with the cultural sector where the UK enjoys international renown and comparative economic success, such as TV, film and theatre. (Paragraph 95)*
17. *We have little faith that national government and arm's-length bodies are taking a joined-up approach with local government to Levelling Up cultural infrastructure. Though cultural policy is devolved, and indeed central government should continue to resist centralising impulses, DCMS has a greater role to play in convening and facilitating collaboration between local government, national and local cultural institutions, arm's-length bodies and other stakeholders between and across local and regional levels nationwide, enabling the sharing of research, data and best practice, and ensuring that local stakeholders have the skills and experience to demonstrate local leadership and effective decision-making. (Paragraph 100)*
18. *The "cultural compacts" initiative appears to have had a positive impact in bringing together local stakeholders, driving strategic planning for culture and facilitating local engagement, contingent on examples of best practice. (Paragraph 104)*
19. *The Government should continue to support the initiative by aiming to at least double the number of compacts, and explicitly target rural areas in this expansion to better understand and develop a blueprint as to how they can be established beyond urban centres. Consistent with the "fifth pillar" of Levelling Up (reporting, external advice and external scrutiny), the Government should also commit to reporting back on the success of the cultural compacts initiative by the end of this Parliament. (Paragraph 104)*
20. *As part of this process, the Government should also undertake an audit of necessary skills in cultural placemaking and collaborative policymaking, and provide a roadmap as to how the provision of these skills and best practice can be delivered and shared to local authorities and partnerships that need and want them. (Paragraph 105)*
21. *The services and spaces offered by public libraries remain an important part of a community's infrastructure for people who are digitally excluded or who live in deprived neighbourhoods. (Paragraph 114)*
22. *The Government should support the development of a network of hubs providing cultural spaces, workspaces and free, fast internet access in places most in need of levelling up in order to modernise library service provision. (Paragraph 114)*

# Formal minutes

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**Tuesday 25 October 2022**

Members present:

Julian Knight, in the Chair

Steve Brine

Clive Efford

Julie Elliott

Rt Hon Damian Green

Simon Jupp

Dr Rupa Huq

John Nicolson

Jane Stevenson

## ***Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda Draft Report***

*(Reimagining where we live: cultural placemaking and the levelling up agenda)*, proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 114 read and agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No.134.

## **Adjournment**

Adjourned till Tuesday 1 November 2022 at 9.30 am.

## Witnesses

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The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Tuesday 22 March 2022

**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; **Professor Simon Shepherd**, Professor Emeritus of Theatre, Central School of Speech and Drama

[Q1-69](#)

### Thursday 21 April 2022

**Sanaz Amidi**, Chief Executive, Rosetta Arts; **Keith Merrin**, Director, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums; **Clare Reddington**, Chief Executive, Watershed

[Q70-99](#)

**Councillor Abi Brown**, Council Leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council; **Tim Joel**, Head of Culture, Preston City Council

[Q100-124](#)

### Tuesday 14 June 2022

**Dr Darren Henley CBE**, Chief Executive, Arts Council England; **Tom Stickland**, Theatres Adviser, Theatres Trust; **Duncan Wilson OBE**, Chief Executive, Historic England

[Q125-197](#)

**The Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay**, Minister for Arts, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

[Q198-249](#)

## Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

LEV numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Art Fund ([LEV0069](#))
- 2 Arts Council England ([LEV0144](#))
- 3 Association of Independent Museums ([LEV0029](#))
- 4 Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society ([LEV0148](#))
- 5 Beaupoux, Christelle; Lindsay, Zsuzsi; and Lloyd-Evans, Dr Sally ([LEV0035](#))
- 6 Bailey, Dr Rowan; and Booth-Kurnpieks, Dr Claire ([LEV0118](#))
- 7 BBC ([LEV0149](#))
- 8 BPI ([LEV0145](#))
- 9 Bectu Union ([LEV0034](#))
- 10 Bennett Institute for Public Policy ([LEV0023](#))
- 11 Bite Back 2030 ([LEV0058](#))
- 12 Bradford City Council ([LEV0086](#))
- 13 Bradford UNESCO City of Film ([LEV0014](#))
- 14 Bristol City Council ([LEV0082](#))
- 15 British Film Institute ([LEV0146](#))
- 16 British Library ([LEV0091](#))
- 17 Buckinghamshire Council; and Buckinghamshire Culture ([LEV0028](#))
- 18 CHEAD (Council for Higher Education in Art and Design) ([LEV0057](#))
- 19 COBA (Association for Commercial Broadcasters and On-Demand Services) ([LEV0019](#))
- 20 Carrington, Cameron ([LEV0056](#))
- 21 Centre for Coastal Communities, University of Plymouth ([LEV0093](#))
- 22 Centre for Cultural Value; and Culture Commons ([LEV0075](#))
- 23 Channel 4 ([LEV0152](#))
- 24 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA); and Council for British Archaeology (CBA) ([LEV0064](#))
- 25 Cheshire West and Chester Council ([LEV0072](#))
- 26 Chesterfield Philharmonic Choir ([LEV0013](#))
- 27 Clayton, R; Clayton, C; and Potter, M ([LEV0054](#))
- 28 Community Leisure UK ([LEV0112](#))
- 29 Compton Verney ([LEV0083](#))
- 30 Contemporary Visual Arts Network England ([LEV0020](#))
- 31 Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0030](#))
- 32 Coventry University ([LEV0128](#))
- 33 Crafts Council ([LEV0009](#))

- 34 Create Gloucestershire ([LEV0103](#))
- 35 Creative Estuary ([LEV0095](#))
- 36 Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, led by Nesta ([LEV0088](#))
- 37 Creative Lives ([LEV0078](#))
- 38 Creative Scotland ([LEV0141](#))
- 39 Culture Liverpool – Liverpool City Council ([LEV0063](#))
- 40 Culture Mile ([LEV0111](#))
- 41 Curious Minds ([LEV0127](#))
- 42 DACS ([LEV0001](#))
- 43 Dance Consortia North West ([LEV0131](#))
- 44 Degen, Dr Monica ([LEV0051](#))
- 45 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([LEV0150](#))
- 46 Dumfries and Galloway Youth Orchestra ([LEV0004](#))
- 47 Durham County Council ([LEV0136](#))
- 48 Ebbsfleet Development Corporation ([LEV0104](#))
- 49 Equity ([LEV0077](#))
- 50 Esmée Fairbairn Foundation ([LEV0062](#))
- 51 Fabian Society ([LEV0026](#))
- 52 Faculty of Arts, University of Nottingham ([LEV0129](#))
- 53 Five10Twelve Ltd ([LEV0114](#))
- 54 Greater London Authority ([LEV0048](#))
- 55 Guild of Media Arts ([LEV0115](#))
- 56 GuildHE ([LEV0070](#))
- 57 Hamblyn, Mr Martyn ([LEV0033](#))
- 58 Historic England ([LEV0139](#))
- 59 Historic Houses ([LEV0027](#))
- 60 Hopkins, Miss Emily ([LEV0007](#))
- 61 Housing, Architecture & Urban Space Unit - Policy Exchange ([LEV0151](#))
- 62 Hull and East Yorkshire Cultural Compact ([LEV0025](#))
- 63 Incorporated Society of Musicians ([LEV0132](#))
- 64 Institute of Historic Building Conservation ([LEV0049](#))
- 65 Institute of Place Management ([LEV0119](#))
- 66 Key Cities ([LEV0022](#))
- 67 LEEDS 2023 ([LEV0140](#))
- 68 LIVE ([LEV0089](#))
- 69 Leeds City Council ([LEV0024](#))
- 70 Littoral Arts Trust/Creative Rural Sector ([LEV0133](#))
- 71 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ([LEV0142](#))

- 72 Local Trust ([LEV0124](#))
- 73 London Higher ([LEV0106](#))
- 74 London Legacy Development Corporation ([LEV0147](#))
- 75 London, Hope ([LEV0067](#))
- 76 Make It York; and City of York Council ([LEV0079](#))
- 77 Making Music ([LEV0015](#))
- 78 Manchester Museum ([LEV0059](#))
- 79 Marsh, Professor Nicky; Ashton, Dr Daniel; and Howcroft, Dr Michael ([LEV0037](#))
- 80 Mathieson, Mrs Geraldine ([LEV0045](#))
- 81 Michopoulou, Dr Eleni (Associate Professor in Business Management, University of Derby); McIlvenna, Dr Kathleen (Lecturer in History, University of Derby); Roe, Ms Claire (Postgraduate Researcher, University of Derby); and Antchak, Dr Vladimir (Senior Lecturer in Event Management, University of Derby) ([LEV0060](#))
- 82 Music Venue Trust ([LEV0031](#))
- 83 National Centre for Academic and Cultural Exchange (NCACE) ([LEV0087](#))
- 84 National Centre for Creative Health; Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance; and Lived Experience Network ([LEV0081](#))
- 85 National Museum Directors' Council ([LEV0066](#))
- 86 National Theatre ([LEV0107](#))
- 87 National Trust ([LEV0042](#))
- 88 National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ([LEV0123](#))
- 89 Natural History Museum ([LEV0099](#))
- 90 Newcastle Creates Limited ([LEV0110](#))
- 91 Newcastle University ([LEV0021](#))
- 92 NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues ([LEV0076](#))
- 93 Newhampton Arts Centre ([LEV0105](#))
- 94 Northern Cultural Network ([LEV0080](#))
- 95 Northern Culture APPG ([LEV0050](#))
- 96 Northern Heartlands CIO ([LEV0117](#))
- 97 Nottingham Trent University ([LEV0109](#))
- 98 Nutkhut ([LEV0098](#))
- 99 Orchestras Live ([LEV0047](#))
- 100 Pact (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television) ([LEV0113](#))
- 101 Performing City Resilience ([LEV0005](#))
- 102 Public Campaign for the Arts ([LEV0143](#))
- 103 Quality of Life Foundation ([LEV0044](#))
- 104 Royal Shakespeare Company ([LEV0040](#))
- 105 Salford's Culture and Place Partnership ([LEV0084](#))
- 106 Science Museum Group ([LEV0125](#))

- 107 Select Committee Engagement Team ([LEV0153](#))
- 108 Shaw, Professor Katy ([LEV0041](#))
- 109 Sky ([LEV0096](#))
- 110 South East Local Enterprise Partnership ([LEV0108](#))
- 111 Spirit of 2012 ([LEV0032](#))
- 112 Stoke-on-Trent City Council ([LEV0090](#))
- 113 Sunderland Culture ([LEV0137](#))
- 114 The Art House ([LEV0046](#))
- 115 The Audience Agency ([LEV0061](#))
- 116 The Booksellers Association ([LEV0130](#))
- 117 The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association ([LEV0011](#))
- 118 The Heritage Alliance ([LEV0134](#))
- 119 The Institute of Conservation ([LEV0135](#))
- 120 The Local Government Association ([LEV0092](#))
- 121 The Museums Association ([LEV0043](#))
- 122 The Stove Network ([LEV0010](#))
- 123 Theatres Trust ([LEV0038](#))
- 124 UK Music ([LEV0016](#))
- 125 University Alliance ([LEV0100](#))
- 126 University Of Hull – Energy and Environment Institute ([LEV0102](#))
- 127 University of Cambridge Museums ([LEV0097](#))
- 128 University of Exeter ([LEV0122](#))
- 129 University of Gloucestershire ([LEV0138](#))
- 130 University of Nottingham Institute for Policy and Engagement ([LEV0121](#))
- 131 University of Reading; Reading Borough Council; and Reading UK (CIC) ([LEV0012](#))
- 132 University of Warwick ([LEV0126](#))
- 133 Urban Vision Enterprise CIC ([LEV0006](#))
- 134 VisitBritain/VisitEngland ([LEV0068](#))
- 135 WMCA Cultural Leadership Board ([LEV0116](#))
- 136 West of England Combined Authority ([LEV0018](#))
- 137 World Heritage UK ([LEV0002](#))

## List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Amending the Online Safety Bill	HC 271
2nd	Promoting Britain abroad	HC 156
1st Special	Major cultural and sporting events: Government Response to Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 452
2nd Special	Influencer Culture: Lights, camera, inaction?: ASA System and CMA Responses to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 610
3rd Special	Influencer Culture: Lights, camera, inaction?: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 687
4th Special	Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP	HC 801

### Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The future of UK music festivals	HC 49
2nd	Economics of music streaming	HC 50
3rd	Concussion in sport	HC 46
4th	Sport in our communities	HC 45
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Information Commissioner	HC 260
6th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 261
7th	Racism in cricket	HC 1001
8th	The Draft Online Safety Bill and the legal but harmful debate	HC 1039
9th	Major cultural and sporting events	HC 259
10th	Another pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the Charity Commission	HC 1200
11th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of Ofcom	HC 48
12th	Influencer culture: Lights, camera, inaction?	HC 258
1st Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Government Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 273

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
2nd Special Report	Economics of music streaming: Government and Competition and Markets Authority Responses to Committee's Second Report	HC 719
3rd Special Report	Sport in our communities: Government Response to Committee's Fourth Report	HC 761
4th Special Report	The future of public service broadcasting: Ofcom Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 832
5th Special	The Draft Online Safety Bill and the legal but harmful debate: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth	HC 1039

### Session 2019–21

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1st	The Covid-19 crisis and charities	HC 281
2nd	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic	HC 234
3rd	Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report	HC 291
4th	Broadband and the road to 5G	HC 153
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the BBC	HC 1119
6th	The future of public service broadcasting	HC 156
1st Special Report	BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2018–19: TV licences for over 75s Government and the BBC's Responses to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 98
2nd Special Report	The Covid-19 crisis and charities: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019–21	HC 438
3rd Special Report	Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report: Government Response to Committee's Third Report of Session 2019–21	HC 885
4th Special Report	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 894