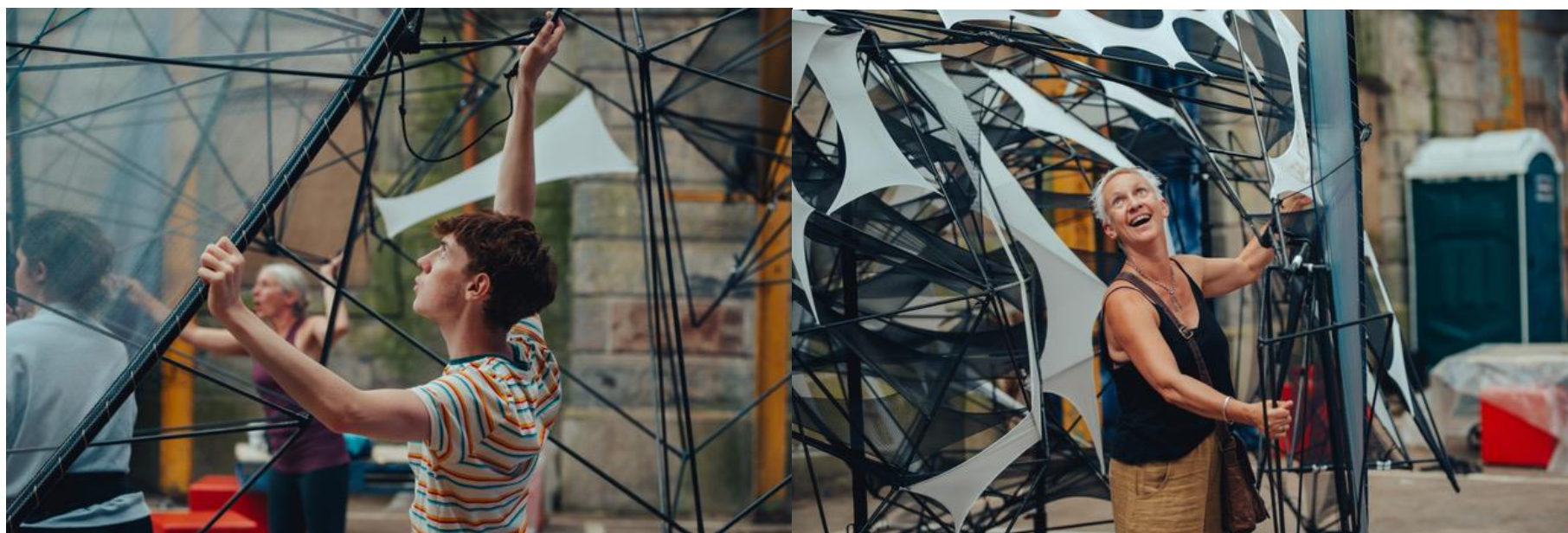


Creative Industries Support Plan

July 2021



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Executive Summary

Economic contribution of Creative Industries

This support plan has been developed in response to the impact of Covid-19 on the creative industries and to support local growth in the sector experienced prior to the pandemic.

Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 creative industries were the fastest growing part of the UK economy with growth calculated by the Creative Industries Council (CIC) as being 5 times faster than the UK industry average contributing Gross Value Added (GVA) of £111.7bn and £35.6bn of service exports.

In 2018, the UK creative economy was estimated at 3.12m jobs or 1 in 11 of all UK jobs¹. The South West experienced one of the greatest increases in creative occupations in the UK and was estimated to have the fourth largest number of people employed in the sector.

Regionally the value of the sector is well documented with the creative industries being described in the West of England Local Industrial Strategy as a 'globally significant, high-growth creative cluster' seeing 27% growth in digital and creative employment between 2015 and 2017, contributing an estimated £638m to the local economy generated by 6,093 businesses².

Creative industries therefore make a significant contribution to the West of England economy and North Somerset should build on appropriate opportunities that exist as part of the wider West of England region.

Effect on the sector of Covid-19

While work on this Support Plan was underway the pandemic struck having a significant impact on the sector. More than 50% of creative organisations and professionals lost 100% of their income³ and in some sub-sectors the impact has been compounded by the UK's exit from the EU making it difficult for enterprises to find the talent and skills they needed to grow.

¹ Comprising jobs in the creative industries and creative jobs in non-creative organisations

² Creative Nation – How the creative industries are powering the UK's nations and regions, Feb 2018

³ Creative Industries Federation, 27th April 2020

With creative industries comprising 13 different sub-sectors operating and generating income in different ways the impact of the pandemic has been greater for some enterprises than others. Theatres, museums, cinemas, music venues and craft fairs have not been able to operate whilst marketing agencies, in general, have still been able to provide a service.

The resilience of creative enterprises is also low with 95% of businesses employing less than 10 people, having vulnerable income streams and low levels of business skills.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the sector's workforce. Around 33% of the creative industries workforce (double that of the economy) are freelancers with many not being able to claim the Self Employment Income Support Scheme. The result has been that many freelancers have left the industry diminishing the pool of a resource to an industry that relies on individual creative talent.

Opportunities for Creative Industries in North Somerset

The value to the local economy of the sector prior to the pandemic illustrates its potential to lead economic recovery from Covid-19. However, it is also important to consider local factors in drawing up an action plan for North Somerset and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) has therefore informed the plan.

The analysis has found that North Somerset can build on the opportunities for inward investment from Bristol's 'over heating' residential and commercial property market giving rise to persistent demand from the sector for workspace including artisan/'messy' workspace. The requirement for space can also fulfil the Weston Placemaking Strategy's aims to regenerate the town centre where "demand-led support will be needed to support the inception, change and growth of business activity in the town" particularly through developing creative hubs.

It is also recognised that creative industries can also engage with local communities to help address inequalities of opportunities. There is also an opportunity to build on a strong further and higher education offer at Weston College linking more effectively with creative enterprises.

Development of Priorities

To develop a set of priorities for North Somerset in addition to a SWOT analysis two important documents have been reviewed: 'Creative Places – Supporting your local creative economy', LGA (August 2020) <https://www.local.gov.uk/creative-places-supporting-your-local-creative-economy> and 'Transition and Recovery Plan', Creative Industries Council (June 2020) <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/resources/strategy> . These reports have informed the North Somerset Council's priorities.

Priority 1 - Ongoing engagement with the sector to understand a rapidly changing landscape and its challenges

We will: Set up a forum of organisations and freelancers to inform council support activities, North Somerset sector responses to policies, promote opportunities to take part in initiatives and collaborations, share best practice, undertake and disseminate research and evaluation (including updating the SWOT analysis), contribute to the Arts Council delivery plan and raise the profile of the sector in North Somerset.

Priority 2 – Ensure creative enterprises and freelancers can access business support

We will: Research gaps in support provision informing lobbying and funding applications to fill those gaps, regularly disseminate details of business support and schemes available, specifically include freelancers in sector engagement and influence local policy and decisions.

Priority 3 – Develop North Somerset Council’s proposition to attract new creative enterprises

We will: Explore models for including creative industries in town centre placemaking, support the development of affordable workspace, work with partners to encourage inward investment especially for large purpose built workspace at Junction 21, work with Planning to identify workspace and opportunities for public art and ensure benefits are derived locally from the Cultural Compact and cultural activities.

Priority 4 – Support the Talent Pipeline

We will: Promote and encourage diversity and talent retention through referrals to local, regional and national initiatives related to career development, training, apprenticeships, work experience and industry placements through engagement with partners and creative and cultural organisations and linking businesses with Weston College/University Centre Weston.

Introduction

This Creative Industries Support Plan sets out how the council intends to work with creative industries across North Somerset to enable them to survive the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic and thrive as a core part of our region's economic future.

The support plan will provide the strategic context for why Creative Industries require a targeted approach, including the challenges and opportunities faced by the sector, the support the sector needs, what impact we hope it will achieve and the key actions that will be undertaken. This impact cannot be achieved by North Somerset Council (NSC) alone, we will need to work in partnership with and have support from regional bodies, such as the West of England Combined Authority, the Arts Council and local partners, such as Weston College, North Somerset Enterprise Agency and Culture Weston.



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Strategic context within North Somerset

Table 1: Related North Somerset strategies and plans

Strategy	Why is it relevant?
NSC Corporate Plan	<p>The Plan states an overall commitment to an Open, Fair and Green authority. The priorities and actions in this support plan will support the following corporate objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A great place for people to live, work and visit • An attractive and vibrant place for business investment and sustainable growth • A focus on tackling inequalities and improving outcomes • Partnerships which enhance skills, learning and employment opportunities
NSC Economic Plan	<p>Creative enterprises will be key components in supporting our Economic Renewal priorities. In addition to supporting sustainability and talent in creative industries this support plan underpins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre transformation • Employment and Skills Strategy • Enhanced business support programme • Support for the Visitor Economy
NSC Visitor Economy Action Plan	<p>Creative industries can contribute to the overall objective of increasing visitor spend and retention of this income within the economy to benefit local employment, businesses and communities. They can contribute to Priority 1 'Increase visibility of North Somerset as a destination'.</p>
NSC Employment and Skills Strategy	<p>The Employment and Skills Strategy and Creative Industries Support Plan will work together to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the skills needed to support the sector in both its survival and growth • Creating the environment which will enable businesses to attract and keep the talent they need • Supporting the talent pipeline
NSC Strategy for Heritage, Arts and Culture	<p>Implementation of this Creative Industries Support Plan will help deliver many of the priorities in the council's Strategy for Heritage, Arts and Culture.</p> <p>A dedicated support plan for the creative industries is needed because:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific sector research is required to inform support and investment in the sector to maximise economic outcomes • There are distinctive needs of creative enterprises that should inform business support and strategies for talent retention • The implications of Covid-19 have been significant for the sector
NSC Weston-super-Mare Placemaking Strategy	This Creative Industries Support Plan will contribute to the vision for Weston-super-Mare to have a thriving arts, culture and heritage sector to help drive footfall and contribute to a renewed and consolidated town centre.
NSC Climate Emergency Action Plan	In supporting creative industries this support plan will help enable businesses and entrepreneurs, for example, the Createch and fashion sectors, develop innovative products and services that contribute to decarbonisation. In addition provision of workspace could reduce emissions from out commuting.
NSC Local Plan	The Local Plan has a strong focus on employment growth and job creation through development; this support plan will support business growth, nurture talent, and encourage diversity in our town centres and local places by helping to make the case for creative workspace and public art across North Somerset.
Weston College Strategic Plan	<p>Weston College is a key partner nurturing talent and this support plan can help deliver the following priorities of the College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the needs of employers, the local economy and regional skills shortages through a curriculum offer that puts employability at its centre. • Develop partnerships, collaborations and models of learning that increase opportunity for different groups of learners within their immediate locality. • Enable learners to succeed, progress and meet future challenges by providing high quality teaching, learning and assessment
West of England Local Industrial Strategy	<p>This support plan will help deliver the following priorities of the Industrial Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting all residents to contribute to and benefit from economic success • Providing businesses with the space, networks and skills they need to boost productivity, grow and thrive
West of England Recovery Plan	<p>The Recovery Plan has identified the following aims which this plan will help deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain high value skills and sectors, building on our creative innovation assets and ensuring the region is well placed to respond to emerging opportunities • Safeguard cultural and creative assets, ensuring the region maintains its character and identity

	WECA has also been developing a regional Cultural Compact funded by the Arts Council which North Somerset will also contribute to.
UK Government Creative Industries Sector Deal	<p>This support plan will contribute to the delivery of the objectives of the government's Creative Industries Sector Deal which are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support creative centres to enable clusters • Openup research and development (R&D) funding • Tackle copyright infringement • Reduce barriers to accessing finance for growth • Build on strong export performance • Increase the supply and diversity of skills and talent in the creative industries



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Vision and priorities

Vision: To establish a vibrant, competitive and sustainable creative economy in North Somerset which ensures creative practitioners and businesses from all backgrounds can succeed.

Key priorities:

- 1) Ongoing engagement with the sector to understand a rapidly changing landscape and the challenges: carry out ongoing research with the sector to inform responsive and targeted support and investment.
- 2) Ensure creative enterprises can access business support: enable enterprises and freelancers to access targeted business support to enable sector growth and sustainability.
- 3) Develop North Somerset Council's proposition to attract new creative enterprises: encourage the market to develop sector appropriate workspace, promote our existing assets and ensure the placemaking potential of a thriving creative sector is understood.
- 4) Support the talent pipeline: enable enterprises to attract and retain talent and incorporate diversity.



Creative industries overview

What are creative industries?

This support plan recognises the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) definition of the creative industries as being 'based on individual creativity, skill and talent [...].also those that have the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property.' They are identified as the following 13 sub-sectors:

- Advertising & marketing
- Architecture
- Arts & culture
- Craft
- Createch/ interactive leisure software
- Design
- Fashion
- Gaming
- Music
- Performing arts
- Literature and publishing
- Film and video
- TV and radio

Characteristics of the Creative Sector

The creative industries typically have the following characteristics⁴ which can help us to shape our support response:

- Many have less than 10 employees
- High levels of self-employment and freelancing
- Small core teams are supplemented by freelancers and partners for larger, more complex projects leading to significant levels of collaboration across the sector
- Highly innovative sector with cross-sectoral innovation and flexibility being core skills.
- They are outward looking and likely to have global clients as well as local ones despite their size.
- Their ability to create, protect and exploit intellectual property (IP) underpins their commercial success.

⁴ LGA Creative Places – Supporting your local creative economy

- Prefer to grow steadily over time rather than rapidly increase turnover making it more difficult for them to access investment.
- They are also often subject to 'hit' or 'miss' with their products or services also making it difficult to secure investment.

The creative sector and culture sector are terms often used interchangeably, however, there is a distinction between the two. Creative industries comprise practitioners involved in creative work for private businesses or cultural projects whereas cultural organisations, which are often not-for-profit, may commission creative enterprises to deliver a variety of cultural projects.

Creative industries in numbers (pre-Covid)

Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 creative industries were the fastest growing part of the UK economy with growth calculated by the Creative Industries Council (CIC) as being 5 times faster than the UK industry average contributing Gross Value Added (GVA) of £111.7bn and £35.6bn of service exports.

In 2018, The UK creative economy was estimated at 3.12m jobs or 1 in 11 of all UK jobs⁵. The South West experienced one of the greatest increases in creative occupations in the UK and was estimated to have the fourth largest number of people employed in the sector.

Creative industries in the West of England

The West of England has been described in the Local Industrial Strategy as a 'globally significant, high-growth creative cluster' seeing 27% growth in digital and creative employment between 2015 and 2017, contributing an estimated £638m to the local economy generated by 6,093 businesses⁶. Data shows equally productive creative businesses across the West of England region. Universities have played a key role in the growth of this sector through investment in innovation and creating a significant West of England creative tech cluster. The region's film and TV sector is the 3rd most significant in the UK.

Creative industries therefore make a significant contribution to the West of England economy and North Somerset should build on appropriate opportunities that exist as part of the wider West of England region.

⁵ Comprising jobs in the creative industries and creative jobs in non-creative organisations

⁶ Creative Nation – How the creative industries are powering the UK's nations and regions, Feb 2018

Covid-19 impact and current challenges (SWOT analysis)

After WECA's research had been carried out the Covid-19 pandemic struck. The impact on the creative sector cannot be understated. More than 50% of creative organisations and professionals have lost 100% of their income.⁷ In addition the sector has highlighted concerns around the impact of the UK's exit from the EU in relation to their ability to find the talent and skills they need to grow.

This SWOT analysis builds on one developed by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) (pre-Covid). We have nuanced this for North Somerset and included the impact of the pandemic on the sector following research carried out by the Creative Industries Federation.

Strengths

- Community arts are strongly represented in North Somerset, particularly through the work of Artspace and Culture Weston
- Cultural offer is well integrated into the community at grass roots level and naturally feeds into the wellbeing agenda
- Festivals and events where there are a wide range in North Somerset from large to small community events
- Strong social heritage narrative based on pleasure and leisure eg seaside heritage
- High reported levels of quality of life linked to access to natural and cultural assets
- Commitment to inclusion from stakeholders
- Investment in the cultural sector by Arts Council England via establishment of Culture Weston

Weaknesses

- Pockets of socio-economic deprivation particularly in Weston-super-Mare
- High levels of isolation and rapidly ageing rural population not able to access cultural infrastructure
- Investment in physical place-making not always accompanied by resources into 'soft' place-making through animation and activities
- Freelancers more difficult to engage with and to count
- Seasonal and project-based work can often be overlooked in standard economic growth measurements
- Over-reliance on volunteers for much of cultural activity at all levels

⁷ Creative Industries Federation, 27th April 2020

- Inequality of access to opportunities
- Communication of cultural opportunities and offer is fragmented, unclear and lacks aspiration.
- High reliance on freelancers and individual creative talent; around one third of the total creative industries workforce, double that of the economy, are freelancers which has resulted in many with no income during the pandemic and consequently leaving the industry
- High number of SMEs; 95% of creative businesses are micro or small having 10 or fewer employees⁸ making them more vulnerable in times of reduced demand and falling revenues
- Flexible working models built around time-limited projects resulting in frequent gaps in income
- Sub-sectors reliant on visitor-based business models e.g. museums, galleries, cinemas, music venues, craft fairs

Opportunities

- Bristol's 'over heating' residential and industrial property market provides an opportunity for more feasible workspace in North Somerset where such property is cheaper than Bristol and Bath
- National policy and resources support distinctive strengths and opportunities in creative tech, placemaking, live music and inclusion
- New housing developments will create new communities and provide opportunities for economic growth in retail and leisure
- Strong further and higher education offer – potential to link more effectively to the creative sector
- An enterprising region with extensive and established business support infrastructure which could offer more tailored support
- Strong international links of communities and sector could be levered for export and growth
- Community arts and socially engaged artist networks could help reach deep into excluded communities helping with inclusive growth
- The social and healthcare sector in some localities is well networked into cultural partners enabling creative social prescribing opportunities
- There will be new patterns of work that creative enterprises and freelancers are very familiar with such as working digitally, from home and collaboratively which will be useful to other sectors who are having to adapt.
- The wider economy needs to innovate fast such as inventing new products and services, together with new ways to promote, deliver and monetise them.

⁸ Creative Industries Federation, 12th February 2019

- Creativity and culture have a huge role to play in social innovation, helping councils – and other parts of the community, voluntary, third and public sectors – co-create with communities a vision for the future of their local area.
- Voluntary and community groups are willing to get involved in cultural and creative activities providing a resource for initiatives in support of the sector.
- In 2020 North Somerset Council adopted a landmark Heritage, Arts and Culture strategy transforming the council's commitment to, and investment in, arts and culture. This provides a foundation for council support of specific creative sector support.
- Building on the Weston Place Agency branding could help raise the profile of Weston and North Somerset as a place for high quality cultural experiences and creative enterprises.
- Artspace and Culture Weston have a strong presence in Weston and successfully engage with diverse communities and freelancers to help them in the early stages of their career. They are also a valuable resource for cultural and artistic development in the town.
- North Somerset Arts enable engagement with professional artists and freelancers.
- Lockdown has prompted a huge interest in culture and creativity. From e-books, digital exhibitions and streamed theatre shows to crafts activities and community singing, the crisis has demonstrated how important culture can be in supporting mental wellbeing.
- Creative industries have traditionally been 'early colonisers' of regeneration projects, particularly in quirky premises. There is potential for them to revitalise newly empty high street properties into creative hubs.
- As the creative industries have been the fastest growing part of the UK economy in recent years with appropriate support, they have the potential to lead the way in the 'bounce back' from COVID-19.

Threats

- Continuing pressure on Local Authority budgets means limited potential for resources allocated to the sector
- Arts Council funding is often levered by Local Authority support which means a double-threat to core and activity funding
- Lack of consistent outcomes-based evaluation means the value-narrative of the sector can be confused and under-evidenced
- North Somerset's role in the delivery of the West of England's Cultural Strategy and Cultural Compact as yet undefined.
- Nearly a third (29%) of employers claimed that their EU staff had specialised skills that they had not found in British applicants.

- Brexit will mean the loss of EU funded programmes such as Creative Europe and the sector has expressed concerns about the ability of domestic funding to replicate the role of these in developing networks and cross-border collaboration.

Using the SWOT analysis above Table 2 outlines how the current issues impacting creative industries leads to the priorities we have identified for action.

Table 2: Priorities identified from SWOT analysis

ISSUE	SUPPORT PLAN PRIORITY
Data and reason for why we need Priority 1 summarised from SWOT	Priority 1
Impact on businesses of difficulties in supply chain or reliance on other sectors eg. visitor-based businesses (museums, cinemas, music venues, craft fairs).	Understand impact and state of the creative economy in North Somerset, use ongoing engagement and data to respond dynamically to challenges and opportunities – targeting actions to maximise benefits
Prior to the pandemic creative industries were the fastest growing sector of the economy, they therefore have potential to lead economic recovery from Covid-19.	
The wider economy needs to innovate fast such as inventing new products and services, together with new ways to promote, deliver and monetise them.	
Data and reason for why we need Priority 2 summarised from SWOT	Priority 2
Covid-19 loss of income and sector vulnerability: More than 50% of creative organisations and professionals have lost 100% with many freelancers leaving the industry and businesses furloughing staff.	Ensure creative enterprises can access general and sector specific business support to enable the development of sustainable enterprises.
Approx. 33% of creative industries workforce (double that of the economy) are freelancers. Engagement should be maximised to communicate business support available.	
95% of businesses are micro with vulnerable income streams and low levels of business skills. Ongoing engagement need to communicate business support available.	
Data and reason for why we need Priority 3 summarised from SWOT	Priority 3
Potential for creative industries to revitalise newly empty high street properties into creative hubs.	Support the development of affordable creative workspace to

Bristol's 'over heating' residential and industrial property market provides an opportunity for inward investment in workspace in North Somerset where such property is cheaper than Bristol and Bath.	satisfy demand and foster collaborative working.
Data and reason for why we need Priority 4 summarised from SWOT	Priority 4
Skills shortages: Nearly a third (29%) of employers claimed that their EU staff had specialised skills that they had not found in British applicants.	Ensure creative talent is available to and retained by local creative enterprises including talent from diverse backgrounds.
Industry relies heavily on individual creative talent.	
Potential for creative industries to engage deprived communities and help address inequality of opportunities in creative industries.	
Strong further and higher education offer at Weston College with the potential to link more effectively to the creative sector.	



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Support plan priorities

As a result of the pandemic several bodies representing the industry have carried out research to inform how the industry and the public sector can best support the recovery of the creative industries. The two reports most informative to this support plan are:

- Creative Places – Supporting your local creative economy, LGA (August 2020) <https://www.local.gov.uk/creative-places-supporting-your-local-creative-economy>
- Transition and Recovery Plan, Creative Industries Council (June 2020) <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/resources/strategy>

The Council has reviewed these reports and considered how the recommendations could be applied to North Somerset.

1) Ongoing engagement with the sector to understand a rapidly changing landscape and its challenges

Why should we do this?

The primary recommendation from the LGA's Creative Places report is to map existing creative workspaces, skills and talent, enterprise and business support. This information can then be used to identify what exists and where the gaps are and consequently inform North Somerset's ongoing actions. While this support plan has started to undertake this activity, due to Covid-19 the picture is fast moving so we have decided to take a dynamic approach to mapping. This means constantly working with partners and the sector to understand our area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the creative industries. The actions outlined in this support plan and the following priorities are the initial starting point for activity, however we expect this to develop as the full impact of the pandemic on the creative industries becomes clearer.

A dynamic understanding of the sector will also enable the Council to make informed applications for funding.

What's happening already?

WECA has carried out research to inform its cultural strategy, however, this does not include an in-depth mapping exercise of North Somerset's creative industries and the research took place well before the Covid-19 pandemic.

What's next?

Priorities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand impact and state of the creative economy in North Somerset, use ongoing engagement and data to respond dynamically to challenges and opportunities – targeting actions to maximise benefits	
Core Actions		Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up a forum of organisations and freelancers to inform council support activities, North Somerset sector responses to policies, promote opportunities to take part in initiatives and collaborations, share best practice, undertake and disseminate research and evaluation, contribute to the Arts Council delivery plan and raise the profile of the sector in North Somerset.• Undertake annual SWOT analysis of the sector, informed by up to date research, publicly available data, business engagement and regional insight to inform council priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual update of priorities for North Somerset Council decision making eg. investment in workspace, specialist business support, support for cultural programmes.

2) Ensure creative enterprises and freelancers can access business support

Why should we do this?

Following research into the impact of the pandemic the Creative Industries Council's Transition and Recovery Plan lists recommendations for central government. These are to:

- Protect jobs in all parts of the UK
- Re-establish and grow the UK's international competitiveness and status as a global hub for the creative industries
- Turbo charge innovation across the sector as a driver for future growth
- Ensure access to investment finance for creative businesses with potential to grow in the short to medium term

Business support and skills development are therefore vital to enable enterprises and freelancers to ensure their enterprises are sustainable, can weather economic changes and so they can take advantage of business opportunities as they arise. Support should be provided because:

- Gaps in business skills are common in the sector
- Collaborative working and peer support are important for creative businesses
- Significant impact on the sector from Covid-19 (including loss of all work for some sectors)
- A thriving creative sector can support the wider local economy
- Potential for sector to regain its former significant growth
- Skills needed to attract investment

What's happening already?

- Universal Business Support: start-up and later stage support provided by North Somerset Enterprise Agency
- Signposting, funding and support provided by the Growth Hub including intellectual property advice and a financial resilience scheme
- Innovation support provided by Digital Business Acceleration Hub programme delivered by University of Bath
- West of England's Creative Sector Growth Programme open to enterprises, including freelancers, in North Somerset
- Theatre Orchard professional development support for freelance creatives available through the NSC Cultural Programme
- Export advice and Trading Through Coronavirus offered by Business West
- Support available through national industry associations such as Creative Industries Federation/Creative England, British Film Institute and Screen Skills
- WECA has developed a support scheme for freelancers
- SPACEBAR – support for North Somerset SMEs with their online presence, whether that be a new website, a new feature, redesign or an update.

What's next?

Priorities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure creative enterprises can access general and sector specific business support to enable the development of sustainable enterprises. 	
Core Actions		Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop gap analysis of business support and funding for creative industries. • Establish a baseline of numbers of businesses requesting and accessing support and grants • Use gap analysis and baseline statistics to lobby partners for targeted sector specific support and/or generate specific council support eg grants, support programmes, guidance on tendering, exporting etc. • Disseminate business information to enterprises including information on best practice, grants, business support, collaboration opportunities, investment opportunities, R&D tax credits, exporting (eg. visa requirements for EU), tendering etc • Update funding pack annually • Signpost to relevant support organisations eg. Film Hub South West • Develop targeted support for freelancers including signposting, access to support, transparency of information, access to opportunities/projects, inclusion in sector engagement, raising the profile of freelancers and developing collaboration networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprises including freelancers report successful applications for funding and business support and increased opportunities for collaboration, tendering, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for funding to deliver grant and investment schemes locally and ensure they are accessible to creative businesses • Promote national and regional funded programmes eg Creative Sector Growth Programme, R&D challenge programmes, Creative Industries Clusters Programme, Audience of the Future • Signpost to key British Business Bank products – Angel Co-Investment Fund, Future Fund, and other schemes such as Start-Up and ‘Bounce Back’ loan schemes • Work with the sector to understand digital infrastructure needs and limitations to growth • Influence licensing policy where appropriate to support creative enterprises eg. night clubs and music venues • Support businesses with applications for funding and funded programmes 	
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3) Develop North Somerset Council’s proposition to attract new creative enterprises

Why should we do this?

- Creative industries have traditionally been ‘early colonisers’ of regeneration projects making them important in revitalising empty high street properties into creative hubs.
- Creativity and culture can make a huge contribution to the creation of a vision for the future of local areas.
- Creative industries have been the fastest growing part of the UK economy in recent years so with appropriate support they can lead the way in the ‘bounce back’ from COVID-19.
- The commercial property market in Bristol is overheating and there is an opportunity to attract creative and digital companies to North Somerset.

- Commercial land has been identified at Junction 21 Enterprise Area and this could be suitable for large purpose built workspace for creative and media companies.

What's happening already?

- The Stable in Weston-super-Mare provides workspace for creative enterprises
- £1.7m government funding awarded for creation of Weston General Stores for mixed business and community use in empty premises in town centre
- £55,000 awarded to Theatre Orchard to develop a programme of cultural events in North Somerset towns
- The Weston-super-Mare Placemaking Strategy has identified a vision for a thriving arts, culture and heritage sector to help drive footfall and contribute to a renewed and consolidated town centre.
- The North Somerset Visitor Economy Action Plan has identified an overall objective of increasing visitor spend and retention of this income within the economy to benefit local employment, businesses and communities including creative industries.
- WECA are developing their Cultural Strategy and will deliver this through their Cultural Compact..
- Working with Invest Bristol and Bath to generate inward investment from creative enterprises in North Somerset.

What's next?

Priorities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote North Somerset as a creative centre, support enterprises to locate in the county and work with partners to support the development of affordable creative workspace. 	
Core Actions		Measures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners and Planning to support the creation of affordable workspace. • Explore models of support to help creative industries embed in town centre placemaking programmes, including the possibility of peppercorn rents, cross-subsidised spaces, temporary use of space. • Consider premises that are not suitable for office working that would be suitable for workshop/'messy' use • Feed into the Local Plan to earmark potential space for creative workspace and opportunities for public art. • Work with Invest Bristol and Bath to generate inward investment from creative enterprises • Ensure enterprises locating in the county have access to business support • Ensure cultural events and activities provide opportunities for creative enterprises to exhibit their work, work collaboratively and access business support • Work with WECA to ensure North Somerset creative industries benefit from the Cultural Compact • Provide opportunities for cultural organisations to contribute to social prescribing • Continue to support creative opportunities for residents and freelancers in libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprises report successful take up of affordable artist studio/creation/making workspace in town centres including meanwhile use • Enterprises report successful contribution to activities such as local cultural events, public art and social prescribing • Creative businesses are given the opportunity to set up at J21
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4) Support the Talent Pipeline

In addition to business support the Creative Industries Council's Transition and Recovery Plan recognises the need to secure the pipeline of new talent and career opportunities in the creative industries while sustaining and improving diversity.

Why should we do this?

- The sector has a high reliance on individual creative talent
- Diversity needs to be sustained and improved to help foster creative content
- North Somerset should be a destination of choice for students in faculties related to the creative sector
- Local people have access to pathways through which they can find and develop their own talents
- Local creative enterprises can employ and retain local creative talent

What's happening already?

- Comprehensive post 16 provision including A-Levels, T-Levels and Apprenticeships provided by Weston College
- Qualifications in Art and Design, Film and Media, Contemporary Art etc provided by University Centre Weston
- West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Workforce for the Future provides a skills analysis and development programmes for SMEs
- West of England Careers Hub has been expanded to work with all secondary schools to progress against Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Big Bang Fair @Weston; a regional science and engineering fair for students and families aimed to inspire to learn about STEM/STEAM
- The Creative Careers Programme is delivered by the Creative Industries Federation to inform and inspire young people about careers and the skills and qualifications they need to work in creative industries.
- North Somerset Council has a Disability Confident Leader status. This enables us to draw from the widest possible pool of talent, and secure, retain and develop disabled staff who are skilled, loyal and hardworking. We also act as a champion within our local and business communities
- Thrive West Programme is a new support programme that will be offered to North Somerset businesses to help improve mental health and wellbeing for employees, and address some of the problems arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Artspace in Weston is a grassroots organisation that engages directly with harder to reach groups and those at the beginning of their creative career to build their networks, creative practice and confidence, including students from Weston College/UCW.

What's next?

Priorities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure creative talent, including talent from diverse backgrounds, is available to and retained by local creative enterprises and there are opportunities for showcasing students' talent, especially in the town centre 	
Core Actions		Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage diversity through regional and local initiatives related to training, apprenticeships, work experience and industry placements through engagement with partners and creative and cultural organisations • Encourage opportunities to showcase students' talent including performance and cultural events • Encourage apprenticeship and T-level take up through promotion to businesses and engagement with Weston College • Promote take up of the Kickstart Scheme to employers to create employment opportunities for young people • Encourage placements to adapt to freelance and project-based working patterns through promotion to businesses and Weston College • Encourage engagement between schools and businesses to develop STEAM approach to learning • Promote national, regional and local careers initiatives to Weston College, students, freelancers and employers including such organisations as Film Hub South West. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of database of employers keen to take forward talent related initiatives including, for example, STEAM, Kickstart, diversity, apprenticeships, T-Levels • Link above businesses with Weston College/University Centre Weston



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Appendix 1 – The Strategic Role of Creative Industries

Implementation of the creative industries priorities can help deliver the following strategic objectives for North Somerset Council and its partners:

North Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2019-2023

A thriving and sustainable place:

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- An attractive and vibrant place for business investment and sustainable growth

A council which empowers and cares about people:

- A focus on tackling inequalities and improving outcomes
- Partnerships which enhance skills, learning and employment opportunities

As an open and enabling organisation, we will:

- Engage with and empower our communities
- Manage our resources and invest wisely
- Embrace new and emerging technology
- Make the best use of our data and information
- Provide professional, efficient and effective services
- Collaborate with partners to deliver the best outcomes

North Somerset Economic Plan (revised 2020)

- **Town centre transformation:** Encourage our town centres to become thriving places to live, work and enjoy

- **Infrastructure for local working:** Provide the digital infrastructure and facilities for local working to benefit from flexible and distributed working trends
- **Employment and Skills Strategy:** Create work opportunities, training and upskilling support for those who have lost their jobs
- **Strategic employment sites:** Protect jobs and deliver sustainable economic activity to benefit local employment, businesses and communities
- **Creative industries action plan:** Deliver a plan which prioritises sustainability throughout the supply chain, makes the case for investment and nurtures talent.
- **Enhanced business support programme:** Commission a universal pre-start, early growth and business resilience service
- **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise economic impact:** Work to help promote the sector's economic benefits and make the case for increased investment

North Somerset Visitor Economy Action Plan

The Action Plan has identified three priorities for action:

1. Increase visibility of North Somerset as a destination and what it has to offer.

- Build partnerships with our Destination Management Organisations
- Support content generation projects
- Encourage and support our partners to create visitor orientated itineraries
- Explore partnership opportunities to sponsor signage
- Partner with Bristol Airport to raise the area's profile to international visitors

2. Increase the value of the visitor economy sector and sub-sectors in North Somerset.

- Understand the skills requirements to improve the quality of jobs
- Provide focussed support for accommodation providers to improve the quality of their offer
- Encourage inward investment by high-quality accommodation providers
- Host a Visitor Economy Summit

3. Increase the diversity of the current offer to better match visitor trends.

- Develop and promote an environmentally friendly tourism campaign
- Encourage businesses to adopt environmentally friendly practices
- Retarget our events strategy to respond to demand and economic challenge
- Create links between town centre transformation and visitor economy
- Work with the Communications department to raise profile of North Somerset

North Somerset Employment and Skills Strategy

The Strategy has identified the following priorities:

People:

1. Choose your Future: Empower young people to achieve their potential

- Retain and nurture talent
- Empower disadvantaged young people into education, employment and volunteering
- Expand HE/FE provision across North Somerset

2. Moving Up: Address under-employment and low pay, and facilitate progression pathways

- Tackle low pay and precarious employment
- Provide support for workers to overcome barriers to career progression
- Support residents affected by Covid-19 to explore and enter new careers through advice and training

3. Get In and Get On: Into work support for those with barriers to employment and reducing inequalities

- Support residents from locations with higher levels of deprivation
- Support people with barriers to employment
- Work within the council and with employers and other partners to break down barriers to inclusion and equality

Business:

4. Training and Skills Needs: Develop the workforce skills for jobs in emerging sectors and fill skills gaps

- Identify the skills requirements and future skills shortage for the emerging sectors adopting Industry 4.0 principles
- Increase awareness of jobs related to Industry 4.0 and green economy with young people and in schools
- Embrace new and emerging technology to upskill future workforce in emerging sectors
- Monitor likely impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit, and associated central government policy, on skills supply and demand, and respond to challenges locally

5. Recruiting and Retaining: Creating the conditions which enable businesses to attract and keep the talent they need

- Increase employer engagement with schools, colleges and other training providers as an element of wider business support
- Support businesses in reducing skills shortages
- Ensure North Somerset residents are well placed to access opportunities across the West of England and wider South West and South Wales region

North Somerset Council Strategy for Heritage, Arts and Culture

Promote participation and quality by encouraging an approach to heritage, arts & culture that is vibrant, diverse, participatory, sometimes challenging and socially engaged

- North Somerset has a diverse heritage, arts & culture offer which reflects local communities, their priorities, histories and partnerships

- Heritage, arts and culture are recognised as contributing towards building social and community cohesion, closing of social, health & economic inequalities and increasing employability

Support placemaking by strengthening the links between development of the cultural sector, the “leisure economy” and wider placemaking initiatives

- The cultural sector is recognised and invested in as a significant driver of economic growth and regeneration
- It is supported by, and supports, a wider network of successful creative industries and “creative clusters” across North Somerset
- That growth is supported by an enabling activity from NSC functions such as economic development and licensing & regulatory services
- We have a clear understanding of the economic impact and value of the sector

Foster and Retain Creative Talent by creating pathways for the development of cultural and creative talent and encourage its retention in North Somerset

- North Somerset is seen as a destination of choice for students in faculties related to the arts, cultural, heritage and creative sectors
- Local people have access to pathways through which they can find and develop their own talents
- Institutions offering high quality educational experiences have a presence and deliver programmes in North Somerset
- Local cultural and creative industries employ and retain local creative talent

Raise the regional, national and international profile of North Somerset by promoting it as a centre for innovative heritage, arts & culture

- North Somerset is recognised as: a destination with a reputation for award-winning innovative arts, cultural & heritage practice, the home for at least one nationally significant cultural organisation, the host for at least one nationally significant festival
- Organisations, businesses and residents across North Somerset cross- promote creative & cultural activity through networks, business to business activity, supply chains etc.

Build Capacity by creating the right conditions for the sustainable development of the cultural sector itself and supporting innovative delivery models

- The cultural and creative sector is financially sustainable and less fragmented
- It has the skills, knowledge, experience and resources required to thrive and grow
- It has the capacity for strategic planning and engagement
- Robust cultural development partnerships exist which can champion quality and ambition, strategic decision-making and lever investment
- New models of delivering heritage, arts & culture have been designed, tested and disseminated across North Somerset and beyond

North Somerset Weston-super-Mare Placemaking Strategy

The Strategy proposes seven thematic objectives:

- **Weston Wellbeing** • Supporting healthy lifestyles
- **Active Weston** • Supporting recreation and leisure
- **Green Weston** • Supporting carbon reduced transport and repurposing redundant buildings

- **Weston Experience** ▪ Supporting cultural activity and tourism
- **Learning Weston** ▪ Supporting education, skills and talent
- **Work Weston** ▪ Supporting infrastructure to work locally
- **Weston Living** ▪ Supporting housing and amenities

North Somerset Local Plan 2038

The Local Plan is currently being developed but the proposed strategic policies are:

- **Employment:** Employment land will be provided to attract investment, meet business needs to support the future economy and provide a range of job opportunities at accessible locations. Consideration of the role of the port and airport and employment in town centres.
- **Regeneration:** More effective and efficient use of land, conversions, new uses, housing estates and other areas.
- **Town centres and high streets:** Working with partners to bring forward brownfield sites, re-use vacant buildings and shops, increase people living and working in town centres, investment in the public realm.
- **Place-making, quality design and provision of community facilities:** Shaping attractive and healthy communities, green infrastructure, higher density at sustainable locations, raising design quality, creating character and identity, strategic gaps between or within settlements.

West of England Local Industrial Strategy

Supporting all residents to contribute to and benefit from economic success by:

- Tailoring employment and skills support so that businesses can find the talent they need.

Providing businesses with the space, networks and skills they need to boost productivity, grow and thrive by:

- Encouraging uptake of modern technology, management and leadership practices to lift employee wellbeing, productivity and exports.

Weston College Strategic Plan

- Meet the needs of employers, the local economy and regional skills shortages through a curriculum offer that puts employability at its centre
- Develop partnerships, collaborations and models of learning that increase opportunity for different groups of learners within their immediate locality.
- Enable learners to succeed, progress and meet future challenges by providing high quality teaching, learning and assessment

North Somerset Climate Emergency Action Plan

- Become a net zero carbon council

- An energy efficient built environment
- Renewable energy generation
- Repair, reuse, reduce and recycle
- Replenish our carbon stores
- Reduce emissions from transport
- Adapting to climate change

UK Government Creative Industries Sector Deal

The objectives of the government's Creative Industries Sector Deal are to:

- Support creative centres to enable clusters
- Open up Research and Development (R&D) funding
- Tackle copyright infringement
- Reduce barriers to accessing finance for growth
- Build on strong export performance
- Increase the supply and diversity of skills and talent in the creative industries



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