

Leeds City Region Culture and Creative Industries Proposition

West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board

February 2021



Summary

This proposition aims to maximise the potential of culture and creative industries in driving economic recovery in West Yorkshire. It recognises the vital role of creative industries in West Yorkshire to the national economy, and the contribution of culture to our ambitions for reducing inequalities and improving quality of life through our economic recovery plan. The proposition asks for £53m to support a range of interventions that build on our existing strengths, closely aligned to our other four distinct propositions on health innovation, entrepreneurship, digital technology and transition to net zero carbon¹.

Background and context

In February 2020, just prior to the first COVID-19 lockdown, the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership and West Yorkshire Combined Authority endorsed a culture vision². That vision recognised that the City Region's attractiveness as a place to live, visit and invest depends on a great quality of life, and that culture can play a key role in delivering a stronger economy and more inclusive communities. Enhancing quality of life was therefore placed at the heart of our culture framework³, and is now at the heart of our economic recovery. The following culture and creative industries proposition draws from engagement in each of our distinct district culture ecosystems, and aligns with collaborations with wider partners from across the public, private and third sector of culture.

Quality of life, almost a year into COVID-19 restrictions, has never felt a more critical measure of success, and the vitality and creativity of our culture sector has been essential throughout the past year, making a positive impact in response to the lockdowns. Its ability to: 'create' communications: 'create' content (both serious and fun): 'create' wellbeing: 'create' and shape public realm and place.....and above all, 'create' solutions!

The COVID-19 Impact on the Creative Sector

Whilst much innovation has happened in response to COVID-19, large parts of our West Yorkshire cultural offer and creative industries⁴ have been nonetheless hit hard by the impact of Covid-19 and lockdowns. An early West Yorkshire regional survey on the impact of Covid-19 on the sector found that 82% said they had suffered financially and 25% were fearful of whether they would survive beyond the next month.

¹ All West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan propositions are available here: <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-transparency/committees-and-meetings/economic-recovery-board/>

² <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14934/Item%2012%20-%20Appendix%202.pdf>

³ <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14933/Item%2012%20-%20Appendix%201.pdf>

⁴ The 'creative sector' included individuals and/or organisations which operate as creative businesses and/or deliver creative services. This included but is not limited to:

- * Advertising and marketing
- * Gaming and computer services
- * Architecture
- * Museums, galleries and libraries
- * Dance, Music, Theatre and cultural festivals
- * Literature, Poetry and Publishing
- * Design: product, graphic and fashion
- * Visual arts and crafts
- * Film, TV, video, radio and photography

The reliance of particular sections of the creative industries on in person attendance and footfall has been a critical factor, and partially explains why nationally almost half (47.2%) of arts, entertainment and recreation businesses reported that they were temporary closed or paused trading in January 2021. The sector also has the highest reported levels of workforce on furlough at almost 56% and are the least likely to report an increased turnover compared to normal expectations for the time of year (1.6%)⁵. Many creative small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and freelancers have seen their work dry up with few opportunities to begin the recovery process. Already at the beginning of the pandemic, The Creative industries Federation reported in April 2020 that more than 50% of creative organisations and professionals had already lost 100% of their income. A survey by creativehub in May 2020 also found that 56% of 'professional creatives' had no work booked in. The ongoing waves of restrictions and social distancing have seen this trend continue.

Whilst some of the central government support, recent emergency funds and the current £1.57 billion sector recovery schemes have been very welcome, they have provided much less support to large numbers of small community-based organisations and the very large freelance workforce. The sector is also minded that the emergency funding is only available to support organisations until March 2021 alongside an extended furlough scheme until the same date. Beyond this date, the real struggle may get worse.

We must re-stimulate the creative ecology; create the conditions to enable cultural and creative businesses to thrive; and maximise the impact of the cultural sector on our places. In the rescue phase, our immediate concerns are that creative businesses have the support to survive whilst working to regenerate sustainable operating models; but in re-imagining we must look further to ensure that our creative sector reflects and celebrates the strength of diversity and creativity in the region; that creativity can continue to enable, engage and empower our citizens enabling them to take full advantage of the region's rich cultural and creative offer and the opportunities this brings to enhance both life and work experiences.

The West Yorkshire Offer

A region rich in culture and creativity – a springboard for levelling up

Prior to COVID-19 West Yorkshire was placing culture at the centre of a vision for opportunities for the economy and people of our region. As well as looking to maximise the economic potential for job growth, visitors, skills and productivity (employment in creative and culture sectors increase by 30% between 2015 and 2018 in the region), culture was seen as imperative to place-based planning, in delivering key messages relating to climate change and improving resident's wellbeing. Our offer to Government is based on putting that plan back on track through economic recovery.

This will build on the solid foundations of a region rich in culture and creativity.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/businessservices/bulletins/businessinsightsandimpactontheeconomy/28january2021>

Assets

The cultural assets of West Yorkshire stand out from a rich heritage in textiles and world class sculpture to a more modern music, gaming and production chain of industries. We also boast heritage and modern cultural assets, both rural and urban, which have together contributed to a growing and confident economy with some recent landmark moments, including the arrival of Channel 4 and the opening (or revitalisation) of World class creative assets (such as the Piece Hall in Halifax). Our Education Institutions also provide national specialisms in creative skills and talent development, including the Leeds Conservatoire and Leeds Arts University, but also across the wider breadth of courses at colleges and universities in the region. The region is also preparing for landmark culture events over the coming years, including Leeds 2023 and the bid for Bradford to be UK City of Culture in 2025. And the region has strong track record of successful delivery, for example through the work of Creative Wakefield supported by £4.38m from the Cultural Development Fund managed by Arts Council England on behalf of DCMS.

But it is not just cultural assets that make the region's offer so strong. The region has the health ecosystem to trial bold interventions that link wellbeing and culture. Leeds City Region is at the heart of national leadership and spending power on health (c.£130bn in funding), and this features as a distinct offer across many of our proposals. Our linked proposition on Health Innovation will support the role that culture can play in this growing sector.

Our communities are the third element of cultural asset base, and the driving force for this proposition. West Yorkshire has one of the youngest and fastest growing labour markets in the UK. It is also highly diverse, meaning our cultural offer is enriched by experiences. Our proposition seeks to grow a sector that amplifies the diversity of communities and involves engagement at grass root level to unleash the talent and skills of diverse individuals which continue to go under the radar.

Scale

Our cultural assets and forward thinking has reaped economic benefits, with 2,200 businesses and 25,000 jobs across West Yorkshire within the arts, culture and entertainment sector directly. The sector generated economic output (gross value added / GVA) of £835m in 2018. More broadly, the creative & cultural sectors as defined by DCMS employs around 47,000 people across 7,000 businesses and has seen employment increase by 30% between 2015 and 2018.

Our linked proposition on Entrepreneurship will help to catalyse this further in economic recovery, supporting more entrepreneurs from our diverse communities to build careers in creative industries or to apply their creative skills to other sectors. We know that creative industries have high proportions of self-employment and 94% of companies are microbusinesses and we want to increase the exciting talent pool of nimble and free-thinking entrepreneurial behaviour, to generate economic investment and innovation. Further, research from Nesta found that only 15% of jobs in the creative sector are likely to be replaced by automation – offering great potential for adding resilience to jobs in the city region.

Place making

The strength in creativity and culture has also manifested itself in wider place making: the region boasts world class events and local production supporting growth but equally has a quirkiness that creative industries provide. Creative industries are being put at the heart of Towns Fund developments in West Yorkshire and Future High Street interventions. This is reflected in our proposals for transforming empty spaces within the recovery plan, recognising that creative industries have traditionally been 'early colonisers' of regeneration projects, particularly in quirky premises, so the opportunity to revitalise highstreets and empty spaces for creative hubs and workspaces is more obvious than ever. Levelling up will rely on culture to create places in West Yorkshire and the North that are seen as viable places to live, invest and grow a business.

Local commitment

Our offer to the UK Government is underpinned by commitments already made in West Yorkshire to support economic recovery through investment in culture. As part of working together across five local authority areas, we have committed £5m of our devolved funding to support:

- Distinctively Calderdale – An Economic and Cultural Recovery Programme
- Economic & Cultural Recovery Bradford
- Cultural Recovery Fund in Leeds
- Kirklees Local Economic Recovery Programme
- Recovery Support for Independent Sector and marketing to support Town and City Centres, Hospitality, Tourism Destinations and Stimulate Inward Investment in Wakefield

This foundation of local commitment to culture's role in economic recovery should provide clear reassurances on the ambition and ability of the region to deliver this proposition with Government.

West Yorkshire Cultural Framework

The beginning of 2020 saw the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership, along with the City Region's partners including DCMS Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs), affirm their strong commitment and vision for culture in the region through the support for a Cultural Framework. The substantial pre-pandemic work to develop the priorities of the framework has provided the guiding principles for our proposition for culture in economic recovery:

- Culture is embedded within all place-based work and place planning and is used to deliver higher quality, more connected and sustainable places. Culture is recognised and developed for its role in supporting the visitor economy.
- Cultural and creative businesses and their supply chains are developed and supported to maximise their potential.
- More people are actively engaged and take part in cultural activity and there is a growth in audiences and participants of all cultural activity.
- There is an increase in employment in culture, sport and arts roles across the Leeds City Region.
 - Cultural activity that promotes clean growth and sustainability is developed and promoted including active travel, walking and cycling alongside programmes that deliver key messages relating to climate change and sustainability.

Ask of Government

Our asks of Government focus on 3 of the central elements of our Cultural Framework:

- Maximising Creative Business Potential
- Employment and Skills
- Visitor and Citizen Experience

All asks are aligned to the two goals of our economic recovery plan, achieving inclusive growth through tackling inequalities and tackling the climate emergency through environmental sustainability. They also are constructed around the three phases of our recovery plan – rescue, re-imagining and resilience. In many cases the specific asks to support culture form part of wider integrated actions, whether that be for good jobs and resilient businesses, skills and training, or accelerating infrastructure, and references are made below to how these proposals align with other actions.

Connected Asks within the wider West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan

Programmes	Link to the Culture Proposition	Timescale	Funding request
Strategic business investment fund – flexible business investment for growth sectors in the region	Ensuring creative businesses can access funding for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early stages seed corn finance for starts ups and potential scale-ups, • to develop appropriate space for creative businesses – particularly existing empty spaces, • cluster development and product innovation 	5 years	£30 million
Entrepreneurship - a wide-ranging entrepreneurial revolution in West Yorkshire	Supporting the development of creative entrepreneurs, encouraging individuals from all our diverse communities to explore establishing their own enterprise, and providing the right opportunity and support if they decide to do so	5 years	£220m
Supporting 10,000 adults to be re-trained over lifetime of the plan	Providing skills and training routes for individuals to find good quality careers in creative industries	5 years	£30m
Social prescribing –a regional social prescribing pilot, building on a successful regional pilot in Calderdale	Explore enabling collaboration between culture as well as other non-clinical services with the NHS and regional primary care infrastructures to promote good health	3 years	£1 million
Extension of Towns Fund and vacant space pilot to support places undergoing rapid change	Supporting the opportunities of Towns Fund initiatives and high street regeneration to stimulate arts and cultural activity, or for cultural activity to be used as a means of transformation of space	3 years	£25m
Total			£306 million

The following section focusses on the specific cultural asks of this proposition, that recognise the unique opportunities of culture in West Yorkshire to deliver economic recovery.

Maximising Creative Business Potential

Outcome

Good jobs and resilient businesses is a priority of our West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan, and for the Creative industries sector, in particular, we want recovery to not only

rescue the existing strengths in the region, but use re-imagining to further establish the region as the best place to establish and grow a creative business.

Programmes	Timescale	Funding request
Network of sector specialist Growth Managers, one per local authority working collaboratively with each other and with the other Growth Managers in their localities, with connected research, data collection and evaluation support to ensure ongoing targeted delivery	5 years	£3 million
Mentoring and peer support programme linked to the Entrepreneurship proposition	5 years	£2 million
Total		£5 million

* The Strategic Business Investment Fund is a wider ask for key growth sectors, which includes creative industries

Rationale

The wider economic recovery plan for West Yorkshire provides a framework for working with strategic regional sectors to recover from COVID-19. Whether that be for getting operational again, sparking new entrepreneurial activity, employing those out of work, getting support to explore new markets or accessing investment to grow, we will make the measures in our recovery plan accessible to the creative sector, and work with the sector to encourage take up.

However, we also recognise that the sector does not often look to traditional business support models, and that experience tells us that some creative businesses find it difficult to see the applicability of more generic support.

Our ask therefore, is to support establishing a regional network of sector specific growth development managers to accelerate the sector's rescue, re-imagining and resilience. Plugged in to the wider business support ecosystem, this experienced team would ensure that the sector receives advice and support that speaks to their goals, challenges and opportunities, is evaluated regularly and responds to emerging needs, re-shaping it and adjusting as and when necessary. They would be charged with supporting links to programmes through our Entrepreneurship proposition. Growth managers would also seek to scale up successful models across the region, beginning with a mentoring and peer support programme which can draw from successful peer network pilots already running in the region.

Strong local presence is critical in this model. Whilst some generic support could be delivered on a wider, regional level (which itself could provide networking and business growth opportunities), local advocates/ambassadors would lead recruitment for their peer support networks in a similar model to a Community Associate in Creative England's Advance programme.

Employment and Skills

Outcome

A skilled creative workforce offering young people in particular a route in economic recovery into high quality jobs, whether that be directly in the creative industries or applying them to elsewhere in the economy. It is also vital that the creative sector is able to continue to grow and attract talent that will make it more resilient in the future.

Programmes	Timescale	Funding request
Sector Rescue & Re-imagining – re-skilling of the creative sector to develop more resilient business and delivery models and improve skills to produce and monetise digital culture, based on a clear mapping exercise of skills needs in the sector.	2 years	£2.1 million
Creative toolkit - equipping educators and careers advisers with tools to inspire young people and others from all backgrounds about the breadth of opportunities in our region and the wide range of skills needed in the creative industries plus deliver creative roadshows in communities***	3 years	£2.5 million
Beyond Brontës – extension of the programme to support young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and circumstances to overcome obstacles that may have prevented them from entering creative sector careers	5 years	£2 million
Cultural Passport – a collaboration with young people, cultural organisations and the gaming industry to research and develop a new creative app for young people (16-24 years) empowering them to design, curate and share their own creative and cultural experiences and engage with key cultural festivals in the region	3 years	£1 million
Young People's Volunteer and skills framework - develop a coherent regional volunteering framework, operating across culture and heritage, to engage young people in the planning and delivery of key cultural festivals	5 years	£1 million
Total		£8.6 million

***This forms part of a wider Economic Recovery Plan proposal on careers destinations

Rationale

Skills and training is a key priority of our West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan. In the rescue phase the focus must be on the support needed to help people access opportunities for employment, and to this end mapping the skills needs of the creative sector and ensuring the availability of training will be an important contribution to this.

Beyond this rescue phase, we must look to the transformative opportunities for the region's culture and creative industries to re-imagine sector growth achieve resilience through responding to the compelling potential to deliver wider social impacts. Our asks here are therefore focussed on particularly reaching and engaging young people, as well as those furthest from the labour market, through creativity and connecting citizens to opportunities to develop the skills required for future employment. This will be aligned to

our wider re-imagining work around skills and training. The ingredients in West Yorkshire are the right ones for Government to confidently invest:

1. **Leeds City Region has one of the youngest and fastest growing labour markets in the country.** The World Economic Forum tells us that creativity will be among the future 'most in-demand skills'. The cluster comprising 'Creativity, originality and initiative' is projected to rise from being in the top 5 soft skills required for future employment (2020) to the top 3 by 2022. We want to ensure that all children and young people across the region have access to culture and creative opportunities – as a social entitlement not a privilege – whilst, at the same time, we will strengthen our culture and creative industries and harness opportunities to deliver regional skills development toward future employment.
2. **We are making our region 'investment ready'** for new Government initiatives such as the Secondary School Arts Premium and Kickstart to develop young people's skills and supplement these opportunities with a greater depth and quality of experience led by our creative sector.
3. **We can capitalise on the burgeoning development of our region's broadcasting industry stimulated by the relocation of Channel 4 to the region.** Plus we want to bring our regional industries together, enabling new collaborations to find innovative solutions for local social challenges and respond to new opportunities.

Visitor and Citizen Experience

Outcome

Harnessing a vibrant West Yorkshire cultural offer to drive a confident COVID-19 recovery of our places- creating a strong regional identity promoted globally, regenerating our places and ensuring our citizens can access quality experiences which enhance their lives.

Programmes	Timescale	Funding request
Catalyst funding to support large scale festivals which engage citizens whilst also appealing to international visitors, connecting regionally where possible plus a small grants fund for small community led culture and heritage festivals to enable their growth	5 years	£20m
Extending the pilot Producers Hub to the rest of the region to strengthen the live cultural offer, encourage collaboration and local production of ideas	5 years	£5 million
Cultivate - a programme of co-produced cultural interventions in town centres and cities e.g. public art, creatives using empty shops and live experiences, linked to the transforming empty spaces ask in the Entrepreneurship proposition.	5 years	£10 million

Investment in regional Destination Marketing	5 years	£3 million
VA – programme to support community led cultural groups recover from Covid-19 and contribute to their communities	2 years	£1.3 million
Total		£39.3 million

Rationale

All places can claim that it is essential to invest in and support the visitor economy in economic recovery. Where West Yorkshire is distinct is to go further, creating an equitable offer for citizen experience across our region, building on our unique and diverse landscape from our rural offer to our cities, towns and high streets. We see culture as being at the heart of post COVID ready places, unleashing the potential of the creative and cultural ecology to drive regeneration and confidence to cultivate, uncover and propagate.

Working towards and delivering key ‘moments’ is essential to how we bounce back as a region and following lockdown restrictions that in some places in West Yorkshire have continued without respite since July, moments to look forward to and celebrate our region will help build confidence in the future. And for Government, our offer contains ‘moments’ that are ready to go. Both Leeds 2023 and Bradford 2025 are “oven-ready” opportunities for demonstrating the commitment to levelling-up the North through cultural festivals that can catalyse economic and social renaissance and also build confidence. For West Yorkshire, not only will they attract visitors and promote our brand nationally and internationally, they will connect and engage with local citizens producing a sense of community pride, changing perceptions and enabling us to celebrate diverse cultures.

Whilst part of our ask is to support delivery of these events, this should be supported by resources to invest in new and local product research, design and development from innovative live performances and effects in music to street theatre and light, gaming and more, to build a lasting legacy.

This legacy must also extend to the places where culture takes place. Despite many great efforts to reimagine the high streets, the reality is Covid-19 will have accelerated the high street demise and even more urgency is required on alternatives. Building on the recent vacant use regional work and the recognised examples, we seek to scale up, coordinate and support a wider range of uses and applications all of which will add to the vitality and distinctive feel of our place. It’s not just about vacant spaces though; it’s about the use of our creativity to enhance accessibility, shaping public realm through wayfinding, citizen experience and how we promote place through good design.

And finally, but most importantly, we must harness the positive benefits for inclusive growth. Engagement in cultural activities transforms the lives of individuals, communities and place. By improving physical and mental well-being, individual resilience, connectivity, capacity and skills development, we will create a transformational and sustainable future for all. To do that we must invest to diversify the range of opportunities that empowers more people to be actively engaged, take part in cultural activities, increase participation and support community cohesion across the region through a robust cultural and connected infrastructure. For this reason it is vital that we support community led culture groups in economic recovery.