

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 JULY 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	GREAT PLACE SCHEME: 'READING-ON-THAMES'		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Great Place Scheme ('the Scheme') is a new joint funding initiative by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Arts Council England (ACE) and Historic England (HE). Following submission of a full bid in January 2017 the Council was informed that its bid had been successful on the 13th April 2017, one of only 16 successful bids nationally. This report provides an overview of the rationale behind the bid in the context of existing activity; a summary of the key areas of work that will be supported by the grant award of £558,400, including who will lead on delivery of these over the eligible expenditure period that runs until December 2020; and a summary of the next steps required to ensure that proposals are progressed in accordance with grant conditions. The report seeks the Committee's endorsement of the proposals and support for their ongoing implementation

1.2 The core narrative of the successful bid to the Great Place Scheme is attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That Committee notes the content of the report and the key work-streams that will be supported by the Great Place Scheme Grant.

2.2 That Committee notes the link between the Great Place Scheme and delivery of the recommendations of the Cultural Services Peer Challenge (the subject of a separate report to this Committee).

2.3 That Committee endorses the work undertaken to date to secure the Great Place Scheme grant and supports the proposals for the Council and its partners to take forward implementation.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The ambition to raise Reading's cultural profile and reputation is about both the outcomes for Reading as a place and delivering better quality of life for residents. The delivery of culture and heritage contributes to achieving the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping the Town clean, safe green and active
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

3.2 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. The new Culture and Heritage Strategy clearly sets out an aspirational vision for culture and heritage to play a key role in the town's future, enhancing the quality of life for residents and increasing the attractiveness of the town for visitors and investors. The Strategy envisages Reading's profile and reputation as a cultural destination being transformed over the coming years, building from a strong base of arts and heritage organisations and assets and catalysed by a Year of Culture in 2016. The Great Place Scheme is strongly aligned with and directly contributes to achieving the strategic ambition of the Culture and Heritage Strategy.

3.3 The new Economic Development Plan led by Reading UK CIC, "Growing Opportunity" has the three key objectives of: raising Reading's profile; growing opportunities to strengthen the local economy; and employment for local people. The further development of arts, culture and digital economy to contribute to these objectives is at the heart of the plan.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

The Great Place Scheme is a new joint funding initiative by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Arts Council England (ACE) and Historic England (HE). The aim of the Scheme is:

'To put arts, culture and heritage at the heart of the local vision for 12 places across England, making a step change in the contribution of culture in those areas and embedding them in the places' plans for the future. Four of these places will be rural. It will fund projects in areas where there is already a strong local partnership approach and a commitment to embed arts, culture and heritage as a core part of local plans, policies and strategies - cementing partnerships across the public, private and voluntary sectors'.

The stated ambition of this pilot programme is to support local areas to:

- Inspire a vision of how culture can change your place;
- Connect culture with new partners to help change places for the better;
- Incorporate a vision for culture into ambitions for your place;
- Build and share learning.

The scheme will award each successful place funding of between £500,000 and £1.5m for three year programmes running to December 2020.

Unsurprisingly given the levels of funding available there was strong interest and competition for this new funding stream and a two-stage process was adopted.

Following a successful expression of interest the Council submitted a full application in January 2017 entitled 'Reading-on-Thames', reflecting the focus of the Scheme on place making and distinctiveness and learned that this bid had been successful in April 2017. This was one of 16 successful bids nationally (beyond the 12 originally specified) and the only successful bid for an urban area in the south-east region (the only other successful bid for the south-east was for East Kent which got through as one of the rural areas).

Referencing the emerging 'Place-shaping' 2050 Vision being led by Reading UK CIC, the University and local businesses and the Vision's strong thematic references to rivers, parks, festivals and culture, the proposals in Reading's bid were framed within the context of existing activities and building blocks, including:

- A new aspirational Culture and Heritage Strategy;
- The Abbey Revealed project funded by the Council and HLF. A nationally significant restoration of the Abbey ruins with a 5 year interpretation and engagement programme;
- HLF funded revamp of the Museum of English Rural Life and an associated engagement and development programme;
- The existing award of 'Ambition for Excellence' funding of £450,000 for Reading from ACE to a partnership led by Reading University for the 'Reading International' visual arts programme (that included £150k to support Artangel's 'Inside' programme at Reading Prison). The 'Ambition for Excellence' funding stream shares some of the objectives of the Great Places Scheme and so a focus on gaps / complementary opportunities was considered essential.
- Refurbishment of South Street arts centre as a vibrant hub;
- The success of the Year of Culture 2016 and a focus on developing a legacy programme, embedding culture and heritage as integral to economic success;
- Newly launched Cultural Education Partnership with an action plan to transform cultural opportunities for young people.

To build on this momentum the bid focused on complementary programmes that had the potential to further transform cultural opportunities for residents and visitors, broadening and deepening the reach and impact of cultural activities on outcomes for the town. The 5 key strands of activity proposed in the bid are set out more fully in Appendix 1 but in summary are:

1. A new Delivery Board - effectively a revamped Cultural Partnership providing strategic drive and creating effective sub-groups for delivery;
2. Research and Evaluation - identifying best practice, researching local needs and ongoing evaluation to inform the iterative development of new initiatives and interventions;
3. Cultural Outreach and Commissioning - linking to the research strand above, connecting cultural organisations and partners such as public health, adult social care and education to create a platform for mainstream commissioning of cultural activities to deliver on key social outcomes;

4. A new 'Reading-on-Thames' Festival - celebrating Reading's identity and providing a platform for cultural excellence, engagement of local cultural organisations and widely accessible for local people (N.B the Great Place Scheme will provide funding to support this new festival for 3 years from 2018 but it will be piloted in September 2017 with the support of a separate grant approval by ACE to Reading UK CIC);
5. Economic Development and Business Engagement - build from the strong support from the business community for the Year of Culture 2016 and embed culture and heritage in economic development and business strategies.

4.2 Options Proposed

The grant award letter was received by the Council in mid-April with the 'Approved Purposes', against which progress will be monitored, reflecting the 5 strands of activity as outlined above. Following approval there are a number of requirements that must be satisfied in order to receive approval from the funders to commence delivery - 'Permission to Start'. These include:

- Cost break down and cash flow;
- Confirmation of partnership funding;
- Timetable / activity programme (with more detail for year1);
- Project management and procurement arrangements;
- Job descriptions for any staff to be employed utilising grant funding;
- Service Level Agreements with key delivery partners.

Officers are currently working up the detail of these requirements, including liaison with key delivery partners, with a view to obtaining 'permission to start' by the end of July and for delivery to fully commence from September 2017. Some elements are being fast-tracked to ensure that impetus and progress can be maintained, including recruitment of a project development post by the Council and a facilitated workshop to re-configure the Cultural Partnership.

Whilst the whole programme is collaborative and will involve a range of partners and delivery organisations, the leads on the key strands of activity are as follows:

1. New Delivery Board - Reading Borough Council
2. Research and Evaluation - Reading University
3. Cultural Outreach and Commissioning - Reading Borough Council
4. Reading-on-Thames Festival - Reading UK CIC
5. Economic Development and Business Engagement - Reading UK CIC.

The required legal agreements with the University and Reading UK CIC as lead partners are also being progressed.

4.3 Other Options Considered

The award of grant is clearly tied to the 'Approved Purposes' and whilst there is a degree of flexibility to enable adjustments over the 3 year delivery period the grant can only be utilised in accordance with these 'Approved Purposes'.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The ambition to raise Reading's cultural profile and reputation is about both the outcomes for Reading as a place and delivering better quality of life for residents.

The delivery of culture and heritage contributes to achieving the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping the Town clean, safe green and active
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

5.2 A new Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030, developed under the auspices of the Cultural Partnership, was endorsed by the Council's Policy Committee in November 2015. This strategy has an over-arching ambition that:

'By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town.'

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 There are specific requirements and guidelines for publicity for Great Place Scheme Projects and in particular the funders are keen that the public know how they have contributed towards putting arts, culture and heritage at the heart of 16 places across the country by playing National Lottery games.

6.2 Community engagement and information is at the heart of plans for delivering Reading's Great Place Scheme proposals. In particular the research and commissioning strands of the programme will require extensive community involvement and incorporate community led research models. More broadly information, marketing and engagement are central to audience development across much of the cultural sector, including the many community based culture and heritage delivery organisations.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant with regard to the content of this report.

7.2 A particular focus of the proposals is to enable widespread access to cultural opportunities and to address the needs of more vulnerable groups through a programme of cultural commissioning.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council will be required to comply with the Great Place Scheme 'Standard Terms of Grant'. These mirror those of the HLF with which the Council is familiar through its management of other HLF funded projects. There are no additional conditions in respect of the project beyond these standard terms.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Great Place Scheme bidding guidelines stipulated that a minimum of 10% of direct project costs should be provided by cash contributions from delivery partners. The Council and Reading UK CIC have each committed to provide £30,000 over the life of the programme to meet this requirement. For the Council this amount can be

contained within existing budget allocations for Economic & Cultural Development Services.

9.2 It is anticipated that over the course of the Scheme's implementation additional match-funding will be generated through business sponsorship and commissioning activity.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 GREAT PLACE SCHEME: Reading-on-Thames - HLF grant award letter 13th April 2017.

So why 'Reading-on-Thames'?

Reading has an emergent 'Place-shaping' 2050 Vision developed by a strong business led partnership and Reading University. The Council has endorsed the direction of travel and engaged as a partner but has not driven this visioning process, itself indicative of a wide stakeholder base with a real grasp of how culture can be pivotal to the town's future success. Based on wide-ranging stakeholder engagement and 'hands-on' workshops the vision is that by 2050 Reading will be renowned as:

1. 'A city of Rivers and Parks'.... Recognising how water has shaped much of Reading. Not just the River Thames, but the River Kennet, the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Holy Brook that all weave their way through and under much of our city, defining and offering opportunity via their river banks and crossings. The City would celebrate Reading's waterways, opening them up to offer recreational spaces and animated parks.
2. 'A City of Festivals and Culture'.... Building on the success of the iconic Reading Festival to deliver arts and culture to people of all ages and ethnicities. We would look to facilitate community interaction and opportunity within Reading, weaving festivals back into and throughout the city, offering vibrant public gathering spaces and integrating and celebrating our city's heritage, bringing our city to life.
3. 'A Green Tech City'.... Evolving from the established technology focus of our city. It celebrates and encourages diversity through business incubation units, 'Ideas Factories' and a city centre University campus through which to exhibit and test cutting edge ideas, no matter what faculty they are emerging from.

This vision thus already embraces cultural excellence grounded in Reading's particular attributes as a place, its diverse multi-cultural demographic and its economic and business strengths. It is also fully aligned with the aspirational Culture and Heritage Strategy (developed through the Cultural Partnership) and both place culture firmly at the heart of the town's future, this being both continued economic success and delivering a better quality of life for all.

In this regard "culture" as referenced in this application is shorthand for the whole indivisible gamut of arts, culture and heritage, all intimately connected and related. For Reading this is grounded in the pivotal role of the medieval Reading Abbey and its patronage by Henry 1 in the development of the town and this growth being strongly associated with its waterways. The dissolution of the Abbey reminiscent of a complex history resonating through the ages with today's 'Abbey Quarter' a focus for the restoration of the Abbey Ruins and reconnecting the town with its illustrious past; bringing back Abbey Gate building (Grade 1 Listed) into use as an education centre, reflecting its one-time role in Jane Austen's schooling; the fully restored 'Green Flag' Forbury Gardens; and the exciting future possibilities of the adjacent vacant Listed Reading Prison, highlighting not only the strong Victorian heritage of the town and it's growth but also the infamous association with Oscar Wilde; all of this juxtaposed with the modernity of the iconic 'Blade' office building. These connections and inter-relationships have already figured strongly in Reading's 'Year of Culture 2016' with an acclaimed new play based on the life of Henry 1; the phenomenally successful 'Inside' exhibition by Artangel at Reading Prison; and a wide range of contemporary cultural events grounded in and celebrating Reading's personality and distinctiveness.

We are clearly not starting from a low base and context is vitally important to fully understand our Great Place proposals, how these complement, extend and deepen the impacts of current activities and why this is such a timely opportunity to really deliver “networked arts and heritage” in Reading.

Reading is a vibrant economically successful town at the heart of the Thames Valley and widely recognised as the sub-regional ‘capital’. The town has a resident population of approximately 161,000 within tightly drawn boundaries. This resident population is richly diverse, with diversity increasing in younger age cohorts. Despite the Borough’s small geographic size the town directly serves a wider catchment of approximately 400,000 people within a 20 minute drive time of the town centre who regularly come to the town centre for a range of activities. The population of the town continues to grow (9% in the last 10 years) and major housing developments in surrounding Boroughs will significantly increase the population in Reading’s catchment over the next decades. Whilst focused on activity within the town, our Great Place proposals will benefit this much wider catchment and extend it.

Despite these many attributes of a thriving and successful town: high levels of employment; prosperity; a skilled well-educated workforce; and a high quality of life enjoyed by many people within Reading, there are significant numbers of residents who are struggling. Reading has many of the attributes of a London Borough with affluence sitting cheek by jowl with areas of significant deprivation. Across the Borough nearly 20% of children, and their families, live in poverty and 30% of Reading pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. Whilst the Borough has a young population overall, the frail and elderly are increasing and Reading has a relatively high proportion of vulnerable elderly. Building from existing activities, such as the established Cultural Education Partnership (CEP), the Great Place Scheme offers great potential to address these issues of inequality and to improve outcomes for local people.

The building blocks to achieve this are varied and significant, Reading as a ‘cultural hub’ has made a significant step-change over recent years epitomised by the ‘**Reading Year of Culture 2016**’ and its role as a catalyst for a sustained programme to raise Reading’s reputation and profile, delivering a range of benefits to local people and further bolstering economic success:

- A new aspirational **Culture and Heritage Strategy** and its vision that: ‘By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town’;
- ‘**Reading International**’: an ambitious three year visual arts programme led by the University’s new Institute of Heritage & Creativity in partnership with Artangel, the Council and Reading UK CIC (the Council’s arms-length economic development company), with funding from ACE’s ‘Ambition for Excellence’ programme. The funding has supported **Artangel’s ‘Inside: Artists and Writers in Reading Prison**’ as the ‘front-end’ of this three year programme and it will culminate in a major exhibition in the re-opened Abbey Ruins in 2019. This offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform the visual arts in Reading, create a legacy for Reading Year of Culture 2016, deliver a high profile celebration for the reopening of Reading Abbey Ruins, and develop partnerships with local arts organisations, schools and communities. This in turn will generate a culture of artistic ambition, community involvement and audience development in the region to support a legacy biennial Reading International ‘festival’;

- **The 'Abbey Revealed'** project funded by the Council and HLF: Of national significance the project involves the essential conservation programme to the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Gateway (both Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed); associated branding, signage, interpretation; and a five year engagement programme of events and activities across the heritage site. Reading's Museum service is pivotal for the successful delivery of the project and a rejuvenated 'Abbey Quarter';
- HLF funded redevelopment of the University's **Museum of English Rural Life (MERL)**: The new museum aims to challenge perceptions about rural England by revealing the historical and contemporary relevance of country life to urban settlements and evolution over the ages. The new interactive galleries explore questions of identity, environment, technology, culture and health. As with the Abbey Revealed project there is an extensive engagement and activity programme extending into future years;
- A new **Institute of Heritage and Creativity** established by the University to focus on research, innovation, partnership engagement and Reading as a place. Pulling together expertise, capacity and commitment from across the University's many areas of relevant expertise to research and develop best practice, engage with other stakeholders, including local communities. Ultimately to bring the University 'off-campus' and impact more widely on Reading's future development and the well-being of its citizens;
- Ongoing **collaboration** across the Museum's sector and the potential, in particular, for the collaboration between Reading Museum, MERL and the Institute of Heritage and Creativity to become an exemplar for community engagement and interaction. The two Museums are currently jointly applying to ACE for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status.
- Refurbishment of **South Street Arts Centre**, a vibrant hub for original and eclectic work resonating across different generations and Reading's diverse communities. Extensive remodelling and refurbishment will consolidate the venue's national reputation for excellence, particularly for its contemporary theatre and music, and also enable an expanded outreach and educational programme. South Street is currently applying to ACE for NPO status;
- Developing a **Year of Culture legacy**, embedding culture and heritage as integral to the future success of the town and outcomes for its citizens. The Year of Culture has already delivered the engagement of national arts organisations in Reading; the development of new relationships between artists, arts groups, Reading businesses and stakeholders; the unlocking of new funding for the arts in Reading and new platforms and venues for artistic output in the town and an increase in the quantity and ambition of artistic output;
- **The Cultural Education Partnership (CEP)** with an agreed action plan to transform cultural opportunities for young people, especially those young people who otherwise might not have access to such opportunities. The CEP is acknowledged to be at the vanguard as an early adopter and has committed representation from key stakeholders, including Berkshire Maestros, the College, the University, schools and the Culture and Arts Network (CAN) of local delivery organisations.
- **The Cultural Partnership** has successfully overseen the development of the Culture and Heritage Strategy and the delivery of a Year of Culture, that itself emerged as a result of extensive consultation to develop this strategy. It is acknowledged that in the light of all the progress and developments referenced above, and not least the emergence of new key

strategic partners, the Partnership needs to grow and evolve. The Cultural Partnership is already in the process of reviewing its membership and terms of reference in order to ensure that it can drive and add value to delivery of the Culture & Heritage Strategy. Taking forward the legacy of the Year of Culture, key initiatives as outlined above, and facilitating further activity and collaboration will be key objectives and fully integrated with our Great Place Scheme.

We are determined to build on this momentum with carefully considered complementary programmes of exceptional quality to create a fully networked permanent legacy, transforming cultural opportunities both for residents and visitors. This is why context is so important, we need to ensure that scarce resources are adding value, carefully targeted to broaden the reach and impact of cultural activity on outcomes for the town. Key areas identified for the Great Places Scheme to achieve this on the back of already strongly developed partnerships and initiatives are:

1. A new delivery board which embeds culture at a strategic level and creating new sustainable sub-groups for culture, such as 'Ageing Well' and supporting new delivery partnerships such as the Cultural Education Partnership (CEP), Reading International and Junction Dance.
2. Using the momentum and success of 'Reading International' to build profile, reputation, partnerships and community engagement. This will include pulling together the research capability of the University, including the new Institute of Heritage and Creativity, in various fields to develop best practice geared to the needs of Reading and its people.
3. A community cultural outreach programme for targeted communities – connecting cultural organisations and partners such as public health, adult social care and education, creating a platform for mainstreaming cultural commissioning and helping to deliver key social outcomes.
4. Creating a new *Reading -on-Thames Festival* that will cement and celebrate Reading's unique identity and provide a platform for cultural excellence. The Festival will create a sustainable celebration of Reading's identity, enhancing a sense of place for residents and the attractiveness of Reading's cultural assets to visitors.
5. Build from the business engagement success of the Year of Culture to embed culture and heritage in economic development and business strategies.

Whilst it is difficult to fully convey or elucidate the complex and positive links between these strands of activity and existing initiatives, they are considered more fully below (with further detail in the Work Plan):

1. Strategic Partnership Building

The Cultural Partnership needs to evolve to reflect the many positive developments in Reading over recent years and to formalise delivery arrangements with a greater range of committed partners. Until recently key players such as the University, Reading UK CIC and their business stakeholders, the health and well-being sector (also reflected as a 'gap' in 3 below) and heritage focused organisations, including Reading Museum and MERL, have not been directly represented. In addition new partnerships and networks have developed, not least through the impetus provided by the Year of Culture and the rapid development and support for the CEP. There is a need to ensure that relationships and delivery plans are effectively networked across this expanded range of activities and that there are strategic

linkages that add value and drive progress and impact. The Cultural Partnership has already formally agreed to re-invent itself and our Great Place Scheme proposals include external support to assist in accelerating and embedding this process. It is currently envisaged that this new strategic 'Great Place Board' will provide overarching co-ordination and drive to deliver on the ambitions of the Culture & Heritage Strategy (and the Great Place Scheme itself) with a number of delivery focused 'sub-partnerships': CEP, Ageing-well, Skills & Economy, as well as separate implementation groups for key initiatives such as Reading International and the Abbey Quarter.

2. Research and Evaluation

The establishment of the Institute of Heritage and Creativity, with its strong existing links to Reading International, provides a real opportunity to focus on researching best practice, based on national experience and local needs, and ongoing evaluation to inform the iterative development of successful new initiatives and interventions. As well as the existing academic strengths across a range of faculties this will also involve the innovative 'Participation Lab' that utilises community representatives from Reading's more deprived communities to research local needs and to develop solutions to meet these. It is envisaged that this programme of research and evaluation will directly inform the development and delivery of strand 3 below over the course of the 'Scheme' and beyond.

3. Cultural Outreach and Commissioning

As outlined above, Reading has a challenging socio-economic demographic with complex patterns of inequality and deprivation. Reading has already engaged with the national 'Cultural Commissioning' initiative attending a number of workshops with senior officers, public health and commissioning leads attending. Whilst we have begun to broker conversations, for example with our social care and mental health services, cultural commissioning to deliver against key local priorities is weakly developed. In the context of the Great Place Scheme we believe that this is a key area to address, embedding cultural activities as a means of delivering against service priorities and improving outcomes for local people. The capacity of the research strand outlined above will be a key ingredient in facilitating this along with the already established willingness and goodwill of service providers to engage. Activities will also serve to embed other sectors and agencies in partnership and delivery structures.

4. Reading-on Thames Festival

We need to build on the ambition of the Year of Culture to continue to do new things and provide new opportunities for Reading's arts and cultural groups, supporting their increasingly ambitious plans and programmes. Our experience of the Year of Culture was that having a theme to respond to, however broadly and creatively, helped generate a focused and energetic response from across Reading's vibrant cultural sector, helping to build networks and collaboration, as well as raising artistic quality and ambition. There is also strong evidence that free to access activities played a significant role in broadening engagement, especially with more disadvantaged communities. Led by Reading UK CIC,

whose key role is to increase investment and grow the economy, the proposed Reading-on Thames Festival would meet multiple objectives and assist in the ongoing development of a relationship with the town's business community. N.B. Delivery of this Festival in 2017 is subject to a parallel application to ACE for Grants for Arts funding on the basis that any decision on the Great Place Scheme application will be too late to enable delivery. The two separate applications are complementary but not interdependent.

5. Economic Development and Business Engagement

As reflected in the key role envisaged for Reading UK CIC in strengthened cultural partnership delivery, the potential contribution of culture to the future economic success of Reading is both widely acknowledged and embraced. The Year of Culture elicited a positive response from the business community with significant cash and in-kind contributions. We believe that the Great Place Scheme can help embed this win-win relationship as Reading continues to grow and prosper, creating new and sustainable funding platforms as well as enhancing inward investment, quality of life and visitor numbers. The existing strength of business leadership with regard to the 2050 visioning process is indicative of potential here for Reading to become a national exemplar.

We believe that our Great Place Scheme proposals will wrap around and add value to existing initiatives and activities that have already resulted in a step-change in the contribution of culture to the life of the town, its status as a cultural hub and the resilience and ambition of local cultural organisations. With the pivotal role of culture already acknowledged in visions and strategies for the future, the strands of activity we are proposing will accelerate progress, strengthen and extend relationships and significantly increase impact, especially on addressing key social and economic outcomes, and provide even greater scope for the involvement and growth of the sector. Truly networked arts and heritage.