

arts|generate^o

Creating Change Summary Report

Prepared by Cultural Intelligence Ltd March 2006



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Cover image: Storytelling with Kevin Graal,
Blows Down Festival
Photography: Linda Markham

Introduction

In the last ten years there has been an unprecedented increase in the understanding of how the arts can help breathe new life into run-down urban and rural communities. Understandably, such initiatives first emerged in areas of industrial decline where the need was thought to be greatest and the financial means most available.

Although the East of England includes substantial pockets of deprivation, it has not benefited from the level of regeneration funding enjoyed by many regions. This has meant that the region has lacked the specialist experience and the vital infrastructure needed to underpin successful arts-led regeneration.

It was against this background that Arts Council England, East and five local authority partners in the region conceived the first Arts Generate programme which ran from 2002 to 2005. An investment of £2.1 million by Arts Council East levered a further £2.6 million from local authority and other resources culminating in projects worth an estimated £4.7 million.

Changing lives Changing places

The aim of the three-year programme was to introduce the region to the unique contribution that the arts can make to social, economic and environmental regeneration. Each area presented distinct regeneration challenges for which bespoke arts-led solutions were created.

‘The key to successful transformation is not only what type of change is promoted, but how it is carried out...if it is delivered in a manner which is in tune with the soul of a place’

Culture, Creativity and Quality of Place, Demos 1993

Its objectives were to produce:

- Opportunities for people to enjoy high quality arts activities
- Thriving new arts businesses contributing to local economies

- Major arts events and attractions contributing to cultural tourism
- ‘New images’ for urban and coastal areas as vibrant, cultural centres
- New public works of art that enhance town centres, seafronts and communities
- Opportunities for career development and redeployment through creative businesses.

The range of people involved was considerable and included groups such as offenders making reparation, first generation immigrant communities, people with mental health issues, ‘at risk’ young people as well as people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

A total of 701 artists and creative practitioners were employed across the five local programmes, many of whom received business development opportunities and training.

‘Arts Generate is a really important example of how the arts can engage with and improve people’s lives...this is something that’s rooted in communities and that makes them sustainable’

**Sir Christopher Frayling,
Chair of Arts Council England**

More than 120 creative businesses were supported directly through increased access to the market place.

Total audience numbers for public performances and exhibitions, including public art, were 420,000, whilst the programme delivered a total of 1,186 creative practitioner sessions attracting a total of 5,850 active participants.

All the Arts Generate programmes produced permanent legacies and several programmes achieved a level of sustainability that is allowing them to plan through to 2007.

The legacy of this initiative is a continuing programme of sub-regional partnerships which will continue to deliver regeneration outcomes and benefits well into the future. Notable successes have been the:

- Rich variety of practical models demonstrating how the arts can successfully deliver regeneration aims and objectives
- Empowerment of communities and local leaders

- Raised personal aspirations
- Increased number of creative practitioners across the region with high levels of skills and experience in delivering regeneration outcomes
- 177 organisations brought together in local partnerships to collaborate in their design, resourcing, delivery and evaluation. Many of these new partnerships will form the basis for further work
- Achievement of key local authority targets, the formation of new local organisations and the strengthening of the local cultural sector
- Impact on the thinking of local authorities and other professional agencies about the value of arts-led regeneration.

‘It has been transformational... [and has had] a major impact on the way the town looks, the way the town is presented, and the way the town expresses its aspiration’

Andy Lewis, Assistant Director, Leisure, Culture and Amenity Services, Southend Borough Council

Downside Trailblazers in South Bedfordshire

The Downside estate, on the periphery of Dunstable town centre, is more like a small village consisting of 1,100 homes, schools, a church, a small shopping parade, family and community centres.

The estate is made up of a mixture of home owner and council tenanted property. It experiences many of the challenges associated with deprivation. For some time there had been a growing feeling that it was developing a poor image among residents living there and in surrounding areas and as a consequence was suffering from postcode blight.

South Bedfordshire District Council (SBDC) had undertaken previous consultation exercises on the estate in order to discover what residents felt were priorities for council action.

Unfortunately, by 2002, there was a general feeling in Downside of consultation fatigue and mistrust of the local authority where little had been done to meet residents' concerns.

It was into this environment that the SBDC Arts Generate programme, *Trailblazers*, was launched on the Downside Estate in 2002. To help SBDC design and implement the programme, the Council commissioned the arts-led regeneration charity Free Form Arts Trust.

A key feature of the Free Form approach to the *Trailblazers* programme was the formation of a multi-agency partnership that helped coordinate the services of three tiers of local government on the estate and which for the first time addressed environmental, social and cultural issues in a holistic manner.

The programme included four main strands of work.

Community planning

Consultation had established how disillusioned and cut off local residents felt from what was done to their estate. A turn around of these feelings was seen to be critical to the successful development of the *Trailblazers* programme.

An Estate Plan for Downside began in October 2003 with the visioning and planning exercise 'Downside On the Up' which engaged residents and agencies to discuss priorities for estate regeneration. The *Trailblazers* programme has been widely acknowledged as a success in its community planning aspirations and Free Form Arts Trust has been commissioned by the Local Strategic Partnership to take forward the Estate Plan for Downside to 2007/8.

One of the reasons for the success of the project is that art is a creative, organic process and therefore not constrained by set procedures. *Trailblazers* is about being open minded, really listening to people and supporting them to shape ideas. It is receptive, exciting and fires the imagination'

**John Dean, Strategic Director
(Community and Housing),
South Bedfordshire District Council**

Bedfordshire County Council's Traffic and Safety Section also used *Trailblazers* events to gather related information and link its Safer Routes to School programme to the wider estate regeneration.

Quality of life and environment

As well as addressing historic problems and working on major changes to the environment,



Downside Dog Day
Photography: Andrew Dwyers

residents were engaged in improving the 'liveability' of the estate. Initiatives included a youth theatre, a litter project, community bulb planting, summer and winter community celebrations, Downside Dog Day and Blows Down Festival. All of these activities are owned by the community, through the newly established Downside Action Group, and will become regular community events.

The events programme was designed to:

- Develop a common language and joint reference points between local people, agencies and artists
- Establish community participation in longer term neighbourhood planning and development decisions
- Create an engaging and inclusive forum that brings greater equality to discussions
- Build trust and aspirations
- Build up a 'memory bank' for the estate
- Demonstrate the potential of the physical spaces

- Improve community safety through bringing spaces into use, creating a 'safe' environment for generations living on the estate to get to know each other in a positive way
- Demonstrate good public ownership, understanding and use of a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Promoting Learning and Skills

The lack of local artists with the experience to undertake regeneration projects in the area is widely acknowledged. The *Trailblazers* programme recruited nine local artists to Free Form's award winning Cultural Enterprise Training programme (accredited NVQ level 3). Chosen artists established strong working links with the Downside community, worked on 'real' projects, for 'real' clients with experienced project managers from Free Form Arts Trust.

The Multi-Agency Partnership

A key success of the *Trailblazers* programme has been the role of an arts organisation in facilitating a multi-agency partnership (MAP) of community groups, voluntary and statutory agencies operating on the estate. MAP members attributed the success of Free Form's approach to their:

- Open-mindedness and flexibility
- Construction of safe and inclusive environments
- Support for creativity in thinking and in action
- Insistence that everyone had something to learn
- Ability to break down barriers between groups
- Conscious holding of a neutral but informed position
- Commitment to a 'can-do' spirit not bound by regulation.

'The Arts Generate legacy is being woven into the growth agenda. We have to take 26,000 new homes by 2021 under the Sustainable Communities Plan. The key recognition is how the local authority interacts with the community. The lessons learnt through the *Trailblazers* programme will be a major feature of that'

John Dean, Strategic Director (Community and Housing), South Bedfordshire District Council

Mayfield Road Railings
Photography: Andrew Dwyer



Key success – The Downside Estate Plan will be based on lessons learned through the Downside *Trailblazers* (Arts Generate) programme and be delivered through the Multi Agency Partnership which it created

Key success – A new estate-based community group, Downside Action Group has been formed and is dedicated to improving the public's perception of the estate and the quality of life of its residents

Key success – Accredited artist training is now being delivered in partnership with *Happen*, the new arts and regeneration partnership agency for Bedfordshire

Basic statistics

Total cash contribution from Arts Council England	£140,000
Total contribution from local authority arts/cultural funds	£6,000
Total cash contribution levered from other sources	£1,039,000*
Estimated total number of individual active participants	1,905
Total number of artists or creative practitioners employed	107
Total number of artists/creative practitioner sessions	360

* includes non-arts local authority budgets e.g. Housing, Environmental Services

Generating a sense of community in Great Yarmouth

'We found that there was a huge latent pride in the local area and once we tapped into that it very quickly underpinned the investment we were making'

Clr Barry Stone,
Great Yarmouth Borough Council

While Great Yarmouth is forever linked with the great British seaside holiday, it is also synonymous with the blight and decay that resort towns have suffered in recent years. The town's economic, social and physical decline is marked by:

- **Deprivation** – it is the fifth most deprived area in the country
- **Lack of work** – unemployment is twice the national average and nearly three times the average for Norfolk
- **Low pay** – average male earnings are £87 less a week than for Britain as a whole
- **Low skills** – lack of skilled workforce. Only 37.2% of the workforce have NVQ level three or above.

Great Yarmouth suffers from a number of additional challenges including seasonal extremes in unemployment caused by the heavy reliance on tourism, and the geographic position of the town which leads to problems of isolation, including low aspiration and peripherality. Furthermore, the historic layout of the town means that wards and



Dancers from the Phyllis Adams Dance School
in Great Yarmouth
Photography: SeaChange

neighbourhoods within the town can be both physically and socially fragmented.

Arts Generate in Great Yarmouth was managed by The SeaChange Trust. Established in 1997, SeaChange's mission has been to nurture the role played by the arts in the regeneration of Great Yarmouth. In 2001 Arts Generate provided the opportunity to step up this work through the development of a strategic and integrated programme to address two historic challenges:

- The sheer range of the social, economic and regeneration issues faced by the borough means that education, health and community development programmes all have an equally high priority. As a consequence, any programme of arts activity aimed at regeneration would only achieve success if it operated across a number of different sectors and works in partnership with other relevant agencies.
- The lack of cultural infrastructure in the town meant that large-scale arts projects had to

employ groups and individuals from outside the area. As a consequence, talent, knowledge and experience has not been rooted or retained in the area.

In response to these challenges, SeaChange developed a multi-stranded strategy which emphasised partnerships, capacity building and action research. The activities had four major themes:

Education

The arts were used to help inspire, inform and educate young people and in particular those left behind by education or at risk of being excluded. Initiatives ranged from a series of animation films about healthy eating, orchestral, DJ-ing and breakdance workshops.

Creative business

Creative industries in Great Yarmouth, including artists, designers and new media companies, have all suffered from a weak marketplace, the relatively small number of practitioners operating in the area and the traditional image of the borough as a seaside town.

SeaChange's approach to supporting creative practitioners had two key strategic aims. Firstly, it sought to develop and retain existing talent through mentoring, professional development and increased work opportunities. Secondly, it sought to encourage creative practitioners to move into the area by demonstrating what the town had to offer, such as affordable live/work spaces and an untapped market of 5.5 million visitors a year. This two-pronged approach aimed to break a vicious circle, since until an area gains a reputation for creativity it is hard to attract new talent.

'We benefited from the new perspective an artist was able to bring to what we do as a business. We work in a harsh environment so it was great to have an outsider's point of view'

Barbara Aldous, Operations Supervisor,
Asco PLC

Healthy people, healthy place

Arts Generate in Great Yarmouth used arts in health and community development to help tackle some of the most pressing issues in the town, such as fragmented communities, multiple levels of deprivation and low aspirations.

Projects ranged from a unique photographic collaboration between SureStart, (the national government initiative for young disadvantage families), a group of fathers and a professional artist exploring issues of fatherhood, to the production of a powerful and compelling film on domestic violence created by a group of local young women. These projects demonstrated how effective the arts can be in highlighting issues and boosting personal and community confidence.

Environment and creative place

Several projects used the arts to enhance the physical environment and to improve the Borough's image as a place to visit for more than just one day. Key to this were partnerships with other agencies such as the Tourist Board and InteGreat, a multi-agency initiative to improve Great Yarmouth's seafront area. Initiatives included the redevelopment of an area of derelict land into a community garden and public screenings on the seafront.

'Heritage and the arts are seen as new ways of increasing tourism in this seaside town. That's a mindset change that has taken place as a result of all this activity'

**Cllr Barry Stone,
Great Yarmouth Borough Council**



Steel sculpture created by Alison Atkins for Great Yarmouth Middlegate Gardens
Photography: SeaChange

Key success – Close and sustainable partnerships formed between SeaChange and local tourism sector

Key success – Local examples of arts-led regeneration have won hearts and minds. Arts and heritage now embedded in local regeneration strategy

Key success – New and sustainable support network developed for local creative professionals

Basic statistics

Total cash contribution from Arts Council England	£460,000
Total contribution from local authority arts/cultural funds	£114,000
Total cash contribution levered from other sources	£270,000
Estimated total number of individual active participants	578
Total number of artists or creative practitioners employed	156
Total number of artists/creative practitioner sessions	94

**Making culture count
in Southend-on-Sea**

'We decided to put culture at the heart of what we do to improve to the quality of life for the people in Southend'

**Andy Lewis, Assistant Director,
Leisure, Culture & Amenity Services,
Southend Borough Council**

The borough of Southend-on-Sea is a seaside town of approximately 160,400 inhabitants located on the Thames estuary close to London. Among its main challenges are the negative perceptions of the borough held by many outside it.

In April 2001, the Council approved a Cultural Strategy for the borough called 'Making Culture Count'. A principal objective underpinning the cultural strategy is to challenge negative external perceptions of Southend. The strategy takes an upbeat stance, stating its vision that by 2010 Southend will be established as the cultural capital in the East of England.

Three distinct but linked strands of work were developed, each making a particular contribution to Southend's regeneration. Project management for each of the three component strands was contracted out. This enabled the borough to benefit from technical advice and support from the East London Design Show and the regional agencies Commissions East and Momentum Arts. However, the leadership of a second tier manager from the Borough Council was vital

to successful co-ordination and management of sensitive issues and internal politics.

DesignFront

This contemporary design fair sought to re-position Southend as the venue for a major new event in the UK design calendar. It aimed to increase Southend's offer to its residents, to create a draw for cultural tourists, and to create a platform and market for contemporary crafts and design.

The communications campaign for *DesignFront04* reached 10 million readers, viewers and listeners. 'The press coverage was amazing' said one stand holder at *DesignFront04*. 'I sold work to people from Ormskirk, Ipswich and Wimbledon'.

Time Out, in a thoughtful analytical article, described Southend as 'an ideal destination for a summer day out', while The Times, just one of the national broadsheets to cover the fair, commented that Leigh-on-Sea 'is turning into something of an artists' enclave'.

DesignFront, Southend
Photography: Jane Tavener



Being Here

Being Here is an on-going arts-led social inclusion project. It works with local artists in partnership with a range of council and community agencies to support 600 vulnerable young people and improve their life skills and opportunities. The engagement of the young people and the noticeable increase in their self-esteem has surprised and impressed local adults. It has encouraged community cohesion and inspired the Residents' Association to build on the impact of the *Being Here* programme.

'He found something he was quite passionate about. It's the most he's ever concentrated on anything. The fact that he walked to the final sharing on his own was amazing. It shows how much the project meant to him. He really wants to continue drama and film'

Being Here workshop leader, talking about the 'Cross Borough' project for excluded young people.

Life Lines

With its accompanying public art strategy, *Life Lines*, a dynamic 54 metre-long sculpture created using cutting edge technology by international artists Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier, signalled Southend Borough Council's commitment to working with developers and major artists to enhance the town's physical and aesthetic environment. *Life Lines* provides a focal point for the multi-million pound transformation of Pier Hill, creating a space which links the seafront and the main shopping centre, a landmark for Southend's 160,400 residents and an attraction for its 6.1 million visitors.

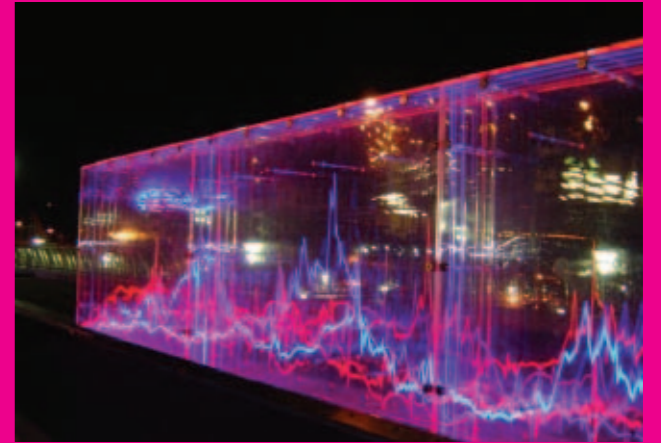
Council members and staff teams alike are well aware that re-branding Southend as a 'cultural capital' and 21st Century urban seaside resort cannot happen overnight. The successes achieved by the Arts Generate programme provided the all important first steps.

Through its partnership with Arts Council England, East, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has placed the Arts Generate programme strategically within the heart of the Authority and embedded it in the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and the Local Public Service Agreement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The significant sums invested by Arts Council East and the confidence its support engendered, enabled the local authority and its three partner agencies to lever the six figure budgets required – an effective mix of public sector finance.

'The success of Arts Generate can be measured by the significant legacy it has established: including sustainable partnerships, funding structures and continuation strategies critical to the Council's future success in achieving its ambition to become a 21st century urban seaside resort'

**Andy Lewis, Assistant Director,
Leisure, Culture and Amenity Services
Southend Borough Council**



Southend Life Lines created by international artists Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier
Photography: Vong Phaophanit

Key success – Southend-on-Sea is now a cultural hub of the Thames Gateway development

Key success – The *Being Here* project is close to releasing a reward grant for successfully meeting the Council's challenging PSA targets

Key success – culture is now a central tenet of Southend Borough Council policy and strategy and the Council has reorganised its Cultural Services department to prepare it for its new role

Basic statistics

Total cash contribution from Arts Council England	£726,460
Total contribution from local authority arts/cultural funds	£233,850
Total cash contribution levered from other sources	£444,210
Estimated total number of individual active participants	1,185
Total number of artists or creative practitioners employed	25
Total number of artists/creative practitioner sessions	243

Engaging Communities in Thurrock

Thurrock is a Thameside borough, adjacent to the Greater London area but distinctly separate from it. It is a small borough with approximately 143,000 residents, nearly a third of whom have moved into the area since 1991. These new residents are comparatively young and economically active.

Prior to the opening of the Thurrock's Lakeside shopping centre in 1991, unemployment was above the national average. However, this trend has been reversed and unemployment is now consistently below 2%. This apparent prosperity hides a growth in relatively low paid jobs and a persistently high level of unemployment amongst 16-24 year olds and the long-term unemployed.

Significant challenges need to be overcome in order for the borough to fully benefit from the Thames Gateway regeneration initiative. These include:

- **Low levels of educational achievement** – low level of pupils take up Higher Education places
- **Low skill base** – lack of skilled workforce. 26% of the workforce have NVQ level three or above
- **Low workforce aspiration** – 67% of the workforce are not interested in further training
- **High level of dissatisfaction with**

employment opportunities – 44% of young people are dissatisfied

- **Limited range of industry and commerce** – new businesses and associated jobs are in retail, distribution, construction and the public sector
- **Low community involvement** – 88% of residents are not involved in community groups, meetings or forums
- **Resistance to change** – a recent survey cited a fear of changes to the residents' community as one of their biggest fears
- **External perceptions of Thurrock** – the borough has an image largely gained from its docks, petrochemical plants and disused 'heavy industry'.

Whatever view is taken of Thurrock, a stable and relatively satisfied community or a 'backwater' lacking aspiration and drive, the fact is that the development of the Thames Gateway and associated changes to the borough's demographic will bring a wide range of social, economic and environmental changes that could bring greater prosperity but also the fragmentation of its local communities.

The local Arts Generate programme in Thurrock was conceived and developed within the council as part of a wider 'cultural access' programme that now includes a Youth Music Action Zone and a Creative Partnerships programme. Thurrock's Arts Generate addressed two over-arching aims:

- To support the key themes of the then Community Plan, namely; aspiration, inclusion and regeneration
- To support the aims of the initial Cultural Strategy Implementation Plan and its four themes, namely; support for lifelong learning,

economic and social regeneration, encouraging social inclusion and developing well-being.

Because of the lack of a strong cultural infrastructure in Thurrock, the Council decided to lead on the consultation, design and delivery of their local Arts Generate programme through the employment of project management staff within the Community Services Directorate. At the outset, two strategic decisions were made, firstly, to import artistic expertise and capacity; secondly, to secure local 'buy in' to the programme through partnership working and opportunities for communities to participate.

The Thurrock local Arts Generate programme was delivered through nine strands:

Hide and Seek

This strand produced a Public Arts Policy which is contributing to the wider cultural regeneration agenda of *Visionary Thurrock*. It also produced a series of temporary, high impact outdoor installations and artistic events introduced in unexpected places. The *Bata-Ville* project generated an award winning film *We are not afraid of the future about the local Bata building and Bata company*, which was screened at the Edinburgh Film Festival. The *Tilbury Mappamundi* project created an aerial film of Tilbury, screened over two weeks at Tilbury Cruise Terminal, and was featured in a conference at the terminal entitled *Changing Minds, Changing Places*. Another project, *When Stag Becomes Eagle* enabled 60 participants to look at specific locations on Aveley Marshes more closely and to interpret them through photography, sculpture, painting, music.



Artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie in the *Bata-ville* 'Travel Agency'
Photography: Chris Clunn

A Different Light

A photographer and five poets in residence explored a 'sense of place'. This project was designed to help reform the public image of Thurrock and help establish it as an interesting and vibrant place to be. The programme also engaged local people from disadvantaged and marginalised groups in creative writing work that explored their 'sense of place'. An exhibition and book of photographs and writing was produced and helped to address sometimes more fundamental barriers to engagement arising from age and ethnicity.

'I have got hold of a copy of 'A Different Light' and think it's really good. So good in fact that I would like to use some of the poems from it in the Council's new Performance Plan which we will publish next week'

Chris Stephenson, Corporate Performance Manager, Thurrock Council

Open Air

Open Air was designed to increase public awareness and enjoyment of Thurrock's natural environment and to promote healthy living. It comprised outdoor public events, including storytelling inside an inflatable whale and schools' residencies involving artists and designers from the local Ford car plant. Many of the *Open Air* sessions were spent working with artists and designers on making photographic images, kites, music, dance and stories, as well as siting sculptures. There was parental involvement in all four projects, either as participants or as audiences for final events, and this shared experience enabled parents and their children to learn together.

By Chance

This was a London Sinfonietta specially commissioned performance with a music, dance and film project involving Gateway Community College, Gable Hall School and the Thurrock Percussion Ensemble. Artists worked with students over six weeks to make a film, a dance piece and musical composition for public performance at Tilbury Baggage Hall in November 2004. The project produced noticeable improvements in the level of performance by school students and has continued to motivate students in their school programmes.

Don't Look Back

This was a site-specific, promenade performance at the State Cinema, an abandoned listed ex-cinema built in 1938. The building used to be a key entertainment hub for the town and over two days, several hundred people came to look inside. A performance of *Don't Look Back*, at the State Cinema, attracted an audience of around 350 and involved 33 volunteers, keen to be involved in the future of the State Cinema.

Community Play

Diving Through Time was a commission from playwright Brian Abbott, based on the history of Thurrock. It was performed in and around Tilbury Fort over five nights. It involved a cast of 50 local residents, five professional actors, a band, a horse and two articulated trucks. Every participant in *Diving Through Time* talked about their pride in discovering and communicating local stories. Participants of all ages said that they had not known about most aspects of the history they were describing.

'Last night I was privileged to attend the community play. It was indeed a fantastic experience, most uplifting, and as I left the performance I was talking to a local couple who said it had made them proud to live in Thurrock'

Open email to colleagues from David White, Managing Director, Thurrock Council

Thurrock Festival

This was a festival over four weeks involving events produced by Arts Generate and by amateur groups, culminating in five performances of the community play, *Diving Through Time*. It was Thurrock's first ever arts festival and attracted an estimated audience of 6,500 with 105 local performers/participants.

'Thurrock's first ever arts festival has proved to be a wonderful success. And the public support for many of the events has been especially encouraging. I look forward to the festival becoming a regular event'

CLlr Ben Maney, cabinet member for culture, quoted in the Enquirer

Cultural economy study

A study was commissioned from Tom Fleming and Brigid Howarth to identify potential artists' studios, an initiative that may be developed by the Council and the Urban Development Corporation in the future.

Thurrock Arts Generate website

The development of a specific website for Arts Generate provided a platform for promoting both Thurrock's Arts Generate projects and other borough-based art projects, as well as providing information and sign-posting for the public. The website was used as a training tool by those involved in IT training across the borough and contributed to Thurrock Council's lifelong learning agenda by linking with other projects that promoted basic IT skills through the People's Network.

The Arts Generate programme took place within a wider context of arts, cultural and regeneration activity. *Thurrock: A Visionary Brief in the Thames Gateway 2004* and will run for at least three years. Although Arts Generate is a time-limited initiative, it is worth noting that Thurrock Council has 'no time limit' on its investment in culture as a regeneration tool.

'Thurrock Council aims to put the borough on the map. We are committed to regeneration which creates places of beauty and inspiration for our growing communities. The Visioning Programme is a key step bringing together the many people influencing Thurrock to consider new, innovative and inspiring approaches to the future'

Council statement in *Thurrock: A Visionary Brief in the Thames Gateway*

Ship of Fools, Thurrock
Photography: Sally Carpenter



‘During its short time in existence the Arts Generate programme has contributed significantly to the strengthening of the cultural fabric of the borough’

Audit Commission Inspection Team, October 2004

Key success – Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation now recognises the creative industries as a growth area of the economy

Key success – Practical evidence to support *Thurrock: A Visionary Brief in the Thames Gateway* providing examples of arts-led projects that can act as a strong regenerative catalyst

Key success – The Sustainable Development Unit of Thurrock Council is convinced of the positive role the arts can play in increasing public awareness of environmental issues and of the built and natural heritage

Basic statistics

Total cash contribution from Arts Council England	£464,598
Total contribution from local authority arts/cultural funds	£0
Total cash contribution levered from other sources	£127,040
Estimated total number of individual active participants	1,475
Total number of artists or creative practitioners employed	395
Total number of artists/creative practitioner sessions	344

Luton Carnival Connections

Luton is a medium-size town 50 kilometres north of London and directly adjacent to the M1 motorway. Much of its post-war development was centred on the growth of car manufacturing and until recently the large Vauxhall plant dominated the town. The closure of this plant led to an immediate and substantial increase in local unemployment. The town’s population is characterised by a broad multi-cultural and multi-ethnic mix with a substantial population of residents from Asian family backgrounds.

The beginnings of Luton Carnival started in the 1960’s with members of the local West Indian community parading on the streets of Luton. The Borough Council took it over as the Hat Parade in the 1970s. Since then it has continued to grow, acquiring international status.

Luton celebrated the new millennium with a three day festival, with more than 140,000 spectators taking to the streets for the massive international event. In 2004 the Luton International Carnival saw over 1,500 people taking part in the parade attracting more than 150,000 people to Luton.

The Arts Generate programme in Luton was delivered by Luton Carnival Arts Development Trust (LCADT) with partners Arts Council England, East, Luton Borough Council (LBC) and the National Foundation for Youth Music (NFYM).

Carnival Connections sought to identify and address a range of regeneration issues on the Marsh Farm estate and the Lewsey Farm and Bury Park areas of the town. These included skills development, educational achievement, social exclusion, community cohesion and motivating young people at risk. These issues were identified in consultation with the local authority, local development trusts, community groups and organisations that work with young people.

The work carried out under the *Carnival Connections* local programme also sought to raise the level of involvement of the town’s diverse communities in the Luton International Carnival and raise the profile of both Carnival Arts and Luton.

Luton Youth Steel Orchestra
Photography: LCADT



'We estimate that the Lea Manor exchange visit to Trinidad involved over 120 people families, teachers, friends, support staff, group leaders; and that's not including those in Trinidad! Now the school plans to set up its own steel band, hitch a trailer to the school minibus and go on tour'

Carnival Connections Evaluation Report

The project worked through an extensive carnival arts educational programme in schools and communities, connecting this work to various local and borough wide events, such as the Luton International Carnival, Luton Mela, Black History Month, Marsh Farm Festival and an international trip to the Caribbean in 2005.

The artists involved ranged across the ethnic art forms of African Drum and Dance, Asian Drum and Dance, Carnival Costume design and making, Soca Dancing, Soca and Calypso music, Samba Drumming, Steel Pan playing and Digital Urban Music.

'I was amazed how enthusiastic and focused the children were...We have behavioural issues to deal with during every single lesson but none at all today'

Class Teacher, Wauluds School Workshop in Carnival Connections Evaluation Report

Creative Communities and the Skills Escalator

These activities focused on the cross-cultural possibilities of carnival and the teaching of a wide range of making and artistic skills on local estates and in local schools. The outcomes included direct creative skills acquisition,



Madhatters Circus at Luton International Carnival 2005
Photographer: LCADT

a greater self-confidence and pride in individuals and their communities, and a greater understanding and appreciation of the celebrational forms of other local ethnic groups.

Activities included an international carnival exchange, establishing Luton Steel Orchestra, digital music programme, costume making, dance workshops and live music workshops.

'I've never had the chance to do anything like this before...I'm scared, but really excited – the workshops are brilliant! All my family came to see me perform – they would never have gone to Mela otherwise'

Digital Academy student, Carnival Connections Evaluation Report

'Of the 1,200 young people and adults who participated in some aspect of the Carnival Connections project in 2004/05, 200 to 300 went on to take part in carnival. 75% of people return to take part next year. We think this 'opening doors' facilitation is one of the key features of the work of LCADT'

Carnival Connections Evaluation Report

Key success – Lea Manor school now has Performing Arts status

Key success – Luton Steel Orchestra has been established as a partnership between Luton Music Services and Luton Carnival Arts Development Trust

Key success – In 2005 Luton International Carnival attracted approximately 15,000 people and generated over £3 million of economic benefit

Basic statistics

Total cash contribution from Arts Council England	£100,000
Total contribution from local authority arts/cultural funds	£75,000
Total cash contribution levered from other sources	£80,000
Estimated total number of individual active participants	627
Total number of artists or creative practitioners employed	30
Total number of artists/creative practitioner sessions	145

The future

Looking forward, the legacy of the first phase of the Arts Generate programme is highly visible.

- In South Bedfordshire Free Form will lead the Multi-Agency Partnership in the implementation of the Estate Plan ensuring an arts and cultural component to new build and environmental programmes and providing models of working practice on local priority estates
- In Thurrock *The Space for Artists* report on accommodation for artist businesses has laid out the potential for new creative business to relocate to the Thames Gateway
- In Southend the legacy of *DesignFront* with new public works of arts and arts-based young peoples' projects are helping to rebrand the town
- Similar moves are planned in Great Yarmouth, with a continued focus on the buzz that public art can give to the town and on the development of clusters of artists' studios to boost the creative industries sector
- In Luton the new Steel Orchestra is in development and many of the relationships formed through *Carnival Connections* are being developed through Luton International Carnival 2006.



Landing stage at old Tilbury Docks from 'A Different Light'
Photography: Richard Heeps

Strategically the outcomes of the Arts Generate programme have directly informed the approach and the strategy of Arts Council England, East towards delivery of its Sustainable Communities Plan and the development of its partnership with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). It is planned that this work will generate shared objectives, identifying and brokering opportunities for joint investment in regeneration and sustainable communities programmes across the region.

Arts Council East is currently developing an engagement strategy for future partnerships with local government that will capitalise on the opportunities for strategic sub-regional joint planning through the Local Area Agreements (LAAs). In the East of England, Arts Council East is now consulted on all LAAs, and in key growth areas such as Thurrock there is Arts Council East representation on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Lessons learnt from Arts Generate have also informed the Regional Cultural Consortium's draft Cultural Strategy.

The next phase of Arts Generate is underway with six sub-regional partnerships that continue to develop arts-led regeneration and infrastructure. These are anticipated to be worth £5.4 million collectively and are supported by an innovative three-year regional advocacy plan.

Taken together with other regional arts, culture and regeneration initiatives such as Arts Council East's *Escalator* programme (to identify and promote new talent), the *Suffolk Cultural Pathfinder* (which brings national recognition for the place of culture at the core of local government policy) and Living East's cultural strategy for the region, the arts and culture now appear to have a firm foothold in regional economic, social and environmental development. This is a reflection of the success of the first phase of the Arts Generate programme.

The full report can be found on-line at www.artsgenerate.org.uk

Opposite image: Life Lines, Southend
Artists: Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier
Manufacturer: Neon Circus
Photography: Dougal Waters

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