

Culture-Led Regeneration

A Strategy for Hastings

2016-2021

Vision

Our vision is for the renaissance of Hastings, with culture at the heart of its identity and regeneration, delivering long term economic and social benefits for all.

By 2021, Hastings will be a highly desirable place to live, work, visit and invest.

Live: A town where the opportunities to experience and enjoy our rich culture are embedded into the lifestyle and where cultural activities can be accessed by all – as both audience and participant.

Work: A place where creative and cultural businesses and practitioners thrive; where workspace is affordable, of high quality and fit for purpose; with opportunities to develop skills, network and access peer-to-peer support.

Visit: A highly desirable place that attracts UK and overseas tourists year-round to a high quality cultural offer, supported by high quality food and accommodation.

Invest: A place that has a reputation for innovative cultural activity, that attracts and welcomes cultural and social investment, and which supports the wider economy.

This strategy will cover the following six objectives:

1. Encourage community cohesion and social engagement through accessible and diverse cultural activity (*Live*)
2. Ensure high quality cultural opportunities within formal and informal education are available to all. (*Live / Work*)
3. Grow the creative economy, supporting creative and cultural businesses and practitioners to develop and become more sustainable, and attracting new investment (*Work / Invest*)
4. Develop and promote a refreshed identity for Hastings which brings contemporary culture and heritage together in a coherent and marketable brand (*Visit*)
5. Support and develop a high quality year round cultural programme, that links to regeneration and tourism strategies (*Live / Work / Visit*)
6. Support and enable the preservation, development and use of our cultural assets (*Live / Work / Visit / Invest*)

Executive Summary

Culture is playing an increasingly important role in the regeneration of Britain's seaside towns and has the potential to impact on the lives of our communities, our environment, our businesses and our economy.

Hastings has a rich and unique culture that engenders local pride and which is cited by many as a key reason to relocate to the town. From the heritage of 1066 and the fishing fleet, through traditional events like Jack in the Green and the Hastings Bonfire, to the contemporary offer of the Jerwood Gallery and a thriving local music scene – Hastings punches above its weight which is fulfilling the town's reputation as a cultural hot spot.

This is a regeneration strategy, placing culture at the heart of the town's development, recognising the contribution it has already made and maximising future potential. Hastings has seen significant investment in its cultural and wider infrastructure over the past 10 years, but many challenges remain with high levels of deprivation in some parts of the town and an increasing gap with those areas where regeneration is moving forward more rapidly. Further challenges are presented by continuing austerity measures and reductions in local authority and other sources of funding.

A strong strategic framework, underpinned by partnership working and shared responsibility, will be needed to ensure that Hastings' cultural sector not only survives but thrives over the next five years and that the regeneration benefits are realised. An Action Plan will be developed to support this strategy that will include specific priorities and targets against each objective and maximise the interconnections between them.

Objective 1: Encourage community cohesion and social engagement through accessible and diverse cultural activity.

People lie at the heart of successful regeneration. A regeneration process must engage with all sectors of the local population, especially those who are excluded or disadvantaged. Hastings has a strong track record of engagement through culture, strengthening the sense of community in the town, celebrating our cultural diversity and bringing people together.

If we meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities outlined,

The benefits of culture-led regeneration, both economic and social, will be felt by all areas and communities. Increased participation will improve social engagement and community cohesion.

Objective 2: Ensure high quality cultural opportunities within formal and informal education are available to all.

Education and learning are an essential foundation to successful regeneration. There is extensive evidence to show that high quality arts and cultural provision, within and outside of schools, can have far-reaching benefits on people's life chances and future careers.

If we meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities outlined,

All children and young people in Hastings will have access to high quality cultural opportunities regardless of circumstance with involvement from children across all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The creative and cultural industries will be seen as a viable career for young people with clear pathways into work.

Objective 3: Grow the creative economy, supporting creative and cultural businesses and practitioners to develop and become more sustainable, and attracting new investment.

There is strong evidence that a thriving local creative economy has a direct impact on generating employment and business growth in all sectors, helping to attract high quality investment and development to an area and transforming its profile and prospects.

If we meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities outlined,

Hastings creative businesses and cultural economy will become more robust and sustainable over the long term. There will be increased numbers of creative and cultural businesses based in the town and the ongoing provision of targeted business support and skills acquisition for local people.

Objective 4: Develop and promote a refreshed identity for Hastings which brings contemporary culture and heritage together in a coherent and marketable brand.

Hastings and its partners in 1066 Country have a distinctive history and heritage that generates local pride and draws visitors and tourists nationally and internationally. A strong contemporary cultural identity is also developing and attracting a new 'cultural tourist'.

If we meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities outlined,

Hastings and 1066 Country will have a more coherent relationship between the traditional heritage and the emerging contemporary arts sectors with an identity that celebrates both. There will be improved visibility and awareness for the area nationally and internationally attracting increased visitor numbers.

Objective 5: Support and develop a high quality year round cultural programme, that links to regeneration and tourism strategies.

It is programming that drives footfall and the success of any process of culture-led regeneration will depend on a consistently high quality and ambitious programme that will attract audiences all year round.

If we met the challenges and exploit the opportunities outlined,

Hastings will have a more sustainable year round cultural programme that is closely linked with the town's tourism strategy and which will attract and develop local and visiting audiences.

Objective 6: Support and enable the preservation, development and use of our cultural assets.

Historic sites and buildings, cultural venues, the built environment and outdoor spaces are the infrastructure on which culture-led regeneration is built and link to all the other objectives in this strategy.

If we met the challenges and exploit the opportunities outlined,

Hastings stock of cultural assets will be better maintained, interpreted and promoted. Public heritage sites will be better conserved and protected. There will be an improved understanding and knowledge of sites in the town that might be appropriate for public art and how well the existing infrastructure is performing. New developments will meet with the cultural needs of the local community and economy.

Introduction

In recent years, the regeneration of Britain's seaside towns has become a more positive story. Many towns are identifying and building on new potential rather than looking back to the past. At the centre of many of these stories is culture.

Culture has the potential to impact on the lives of our communities, our environment, our businesses and our economy. It impacts on health and well-being, education, employment and investment, and a belief in this potential underpins this strategy.

The definition of culture is always a subject for debate. This strategy aligns with definitions produced by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)¹ and used by the East Sussex Cultural Strategy 2013-23, defining culture as arts, libraries, museums, galleries, broadcasting, film and the music industry; architecture and the historic environment. We also use the DCMS definition of Creative Industries². In particular, culture in this context refers to both arts and heritage.

This is a regeneration strategy. At this time of great change for Hastings it is important to place culture at the heart of the town's development, recognising the contribution it has already made and maximising future potential. The term 'culture-led regeneration' sees cultural activity as a catalyst and engine of regeneration and that is the focus of this document.

While this is a strategy for Hastings, it recognises the wider context of the town, particularly its relationship with neighbouring Rother district and its local authority, its role within East Sussex and the wider South East region, its proximity to London and its connections to and shared ambitions with other seaside towns in the South East and beyond. This expanded view is important as some of the key drivers of regeneration that will be discussed, such as tourism, do not operate within local authority boundaries.

This strategy builds on the Hastings Cultural Regeneration Strategy 2010-15 and takes a lead from the Hastings and Rother Six Point Plan for long term regeneration and economic growth in the area. It will inform and guide policy and provide a framework for both Hastings Borough Council and its many partners, including other local authorities, cultural sector partners, third sector and community partners.

This is a headline document laying out objectives and ambitions. It will be supported by an Action Plan that will include specific priorities and targets against each objective and maximise the interconnections between them. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually and the action planning process will form part of an ongoing dialogue with partners, the cultural sector and the community.

¹ In May 2007 the DCMS publication: A Framework for Evaluating Cultural Policy Investment defined culture as: arts, libraries, museums, galleries, broadcasting, film and the music industry; architecture and the historic environment.

² The DCMS mapping document for the Creative Industries produced in 1996 defined the creative industries as: Advertising, Antiques, Architecture, Crafts, Design, Fashion, Film, Leisure software, Music, Performing Arts, Publishing, Software and TV and radio. This definition has been widely adopted since. It is currently under review but no new definition has yet been agreed upon.

Local Context

For many people who live and work here, it is the rich culture of Hastings that makes it a special place. Its independent spirit and 'just do it' attitude help define the town's identity and shape its cultural activity. Community initiated events and activities have made and continue to make a huge contribution to the development of the town, and are central to the ongoing process of culture-led regeneration in Hastings.

Over the past five years significant investment has fuelled regeneration and changed the physical and cultural landscape. Major projects include the Priory Quarter development on Havelock Road, new accommodation for business start-ups, new manufacturing business parks on Queensway and new campuses for the University of Brighton and Sussex Coast College. In the cultural sphere developments include the Jerwood Gallery, the Stade Open Space for events and performance, the development of the old White Rock Baths as an international BMX/skateboard centre and the flourishing of an independent cultural quarter in St Leonards. Projects on the horizon include the Hastings/Bexhill link road and the much anticipated reopening of Hastings Pier. There is also increased developer interest in the town with some significant proposals being discussed that would impact on the cultural sector and programme.

The community of Hastings has changed too. National and international migration has made the population more diverse than ever before, increasing the richness of our cultural mix. Economic factors are bringing people to Hastings from London and elsewhere, attracted by lower property prices, the quality of life by the sea and by the unique cultural offer. Student numbers will also continue to increase with the growth of the further and higher education offer.

Hastings' reputation as a cultural hot spot continues to gather momentum. Alongside the infrastructure developments mentioned above, the past five years have seen significant growth in the cultural programme. New festivals have joined the busy cultural calendar, new venues have opened and the Stade Saturdays outdoor arts programme draws audiences from June to October. As mentioned above, much of this activity is driven from the local community including the many artists who live in the town. This activity has brought in significant external funding, from both public and private sources. Philanthropy has also had an impact on the town at both a national level, through the opening of the Jerwood Gallery, and a local level, through support for the Hastings International Piano Concerto Competition.

The town's heritage remains a major asset. In a recent survey conducted by the Heritage Lottery Fund on behalf of the Royal Society of Arts³, Hastings was ranked third (out of 325 local authority areas) in England for the density of its heritage assets. The survey brought together over 100 indicators from listed buildings to industrial heritage to parks and open spaces and was a great endorsement of the hard work of many people and organisations over many years. The survey also highlighted the potential to make better use of our heritage assets through increased activity (Hastings was ranked 38th for heritage activity).

There is the beginning of a new vision for the visitor economy focused on the arts and a strong contemporary cultural offer alongside the established heritage sector. 2016 will see a major programme of cultural activity, supported by Hastings Borough Council and Arts Council England, to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings. The ROOT 1066 International Festival will explore contemporary perspectives on the history and legacy of 1066 from local, national and

³ The Heritage Index, 2015, www.thersa.org/heritage

international artists. This ambitious initiative will tie in with wider plans to reimagine the identity and story of the town, including the heritage and legacy of 1066, including the development of Hastings Castle as a major visitor attraction.

However many challenges remain. In the latest Government produced Indices of Deprivation⁴, Hastings remains the most deprived town in the South East and in the most deprived 10% nationally. Whilst overall the town's position has improved, the benefits are not evenly felt and there has been an increase in the percentage of neighbourhoods in the bottom 10% nationally. Culture has a role to play in addressing some of the issues underlying these statistics.

The role of local authorities is changing, funding for culture is being reduced around the country and austerity measures are affecting services across the public, health, voluntary and community sectors. It will require strong strategic leadership to ensure Hastings and its cultural sector does not just survive but thrive over the next five years, supporting the continued regeneration of the town.

The strategic lead from Hastings Borough Council will focus on supporting and enabling the development of the cultural sector as part of the regeneration agenda, and on working with local, regional, national and international partners to leverage external funding and open up new opportunities.

There is a strong policy framework for this ambition. Hastings Borough Council has culture-led regeneration embedded within a range of strategies including its Corporate Plan, the Hastings and Rother Task Force Six Point Plan and the Visit 1066 Country Marketing Plan.

As mentioned above, there is a huge wealth of cultural activity, organisations, business and practitioners in Hastings. They all contribute to the objectives of this strategy and while some are referenced in the following pages, it isn't possible to name them all.

⁴ The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 Statistical Release

OBJECTIVE 1

Support social engagement and community cohesion through accessible and diverse cultural activity.

Introduction

People lie at the heart of successful regeneration. A regeneration process must engage with all sectors of the local population, especially those who are excluded or disadvantaged.

Cultural activity has demonstrated time and again its ability to engage and be the glue that binds communities together. It is a powerful tool for giving people a voice and for promoting understanding and community cohesion⁵.

Local context

Hastings has a strong track record of engagement through culture. Traditional events such as Jack in the Green and the Bonfire Parade attract a wide range of people and play a key role in strengthening the sense of community in the town. Many events celebrate our increasing cultural diversity, such as the Afrikaba Festival, St Leonards Festival and Eat Global, and organisations such as Hastings Museum and the Hastings Interfaith Forum successfully use cultural activity to bring diverse communities together. There have also been many excellent outreach projects from cultural organisations that have supported artists working with communities.

Still, the high levels of social and economic deprivation, particularly in certain parts of the borough, often coincide with lower levels of cultural engagement, preventing communities from accessing the benefits of participation in the cultural life of the town. There is a need to work proactively with areas and communities of lower engagement, such as Hollington, Tressell, Baird and Ore, to better understand and address barriers to participation. These might be economic or social, linked to poor public transport or that the appropriate cultural offer is not being provided. Community partners such as Big Local North East Hastings and the St Leonards Town Team are taking the lead in some areas and should be supported. Key regeneration partners such as Amicus Horizon should also be encouraged to support cultural activity in the areas that they are active.

The increasing diversity of the local population must be represented in the cultural offer and opportunities for artists and communities from diverse backgrounds facilitated and signposted. Opportunities for people with disabilities such as through the Craftivists Network are making links to the creative economy. Flagship organisations that work with specific groups, such as Project Art Works with people with sensory impairments, can provide examples of good practice and inspiration to others.

There are many positive outcomes that stem from participation and engagement with cultural activities, including positive mental and physical health improvements. Again Hastings has a good record and the Arts in Healthcare programme at the Conquest Hospital is one of the largest in the country. With funding reducing there is an increasing need to show the impact of culture on outcomes such as health and wellbeing if organisations and projects are going to survive. For example, evidence is starting to be able to demonstrate the role of cultural activity in facilitating

⁵ A cohesive community is one with 'a sense of belonging and equality for all, where the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is understood and appreciated, and where everyone feels valued'. From the Community Cohesion Report to the Hastings Local Strategic Partnership, 2013

social connections and the impact that has on wellbeing for older people. The local sector needs to be able to respond to this and other opportunities.

Throughout, there need to be effective mechanisms for peoples' voices to be heard and for communities to input into and lead the development of plans and projects.

Key Challenges

- There are areas and communities in the borough with historically low levels of cultural engagement while other areas are experiencing rapid regeneration with high levels of engagement, leading to a widening gap between communities.
- There is no coherent data about which organisations are engaging with which excluded groups and where the gaps are.
- We have an aging population and more people experiencing social isolation.
- To secure funding from sources such as health and wellbeing budgets, the impact of projects must be better measured and evaluated.

Opportunities and Actions

- Build on our strengths and continue to support projects that contribute to community cohesion to be more sustainable and reach a wider audience.
- Utilise the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings to reach out to communities with lower engagement in cultural activity.
- Work with community led initiatives that are initiating cultural activity in their own communities.
- Build on existing relationships between cultural organisations and communities and encourage greater engagement.
- Look for opportunities to support projects that reach communities suffering social exclusion.
- Pursue external funding opportunities that can support the above actions.

Outcomes

The benefits of culture-led regeneration, both economic and social, will be felt by all areas and communities. Increased participation will improve social engagement and community cohesion.

OBJECTIVE 2

Ensure high quality cultural opportunities within formal and informal education are available to all.

Introduction

Education and learning are an essential foundation to successful regeneration. Experiences gained within formal and informal learning environments have a defining influence on people's life chances and future careers.

There is extensive evidence to show that high quality professional arts and cultural provision, within and outside of schools, can have far-reaching benefits across the whole academic subject range, as well as impacting on individual self-confidence, attendance, behaviour and social responsibility.⁶ This is particularly valuable in areas where there are high levels of deprivation and unemployment.

There have been significant changes in the formal education system in recent years, in particular the option for schools to opt out of the local authority education umbrella and become academies and the introduction of the English baccalaureate system, which has placed creative subjects at a disadvantage. The impact of this on cultural opportunities is only just starting to become apparent with a recent report from the National Society for Education in Art & Design indicating that 'significant erosion' has occurred in the last five years⁷. There have also been heavy cuts to adult education and to youth service provision which have had an impact on the cultural opportunities available to people.

This strategy acknowledges the different layers of education and learning provision that play a part in delivering high quality arts and cultural activities for children, young people and adults; from Early Years work to get children 'school ready' through to university and lifelong learning, after-school art clubs to youth theatres, organisations working with hard to reach young people, and education programmes from cultural organisations. It also acknowledges the strong track record of many of these providers in Hastings.

Local context

In Hastings, all secondary schools and an increasing number of primary schools are now academies, and part of two distinct academy chains. The process of transition has been difficult for some and while schools are gradually improving overall, there are still significant challenges.

There are some flagship cultural education projects – such as Room 13 at Silverdale Primary Academy and the residencies by Hofesh Shechter Dance Company at Helenswood Academy – but the pressure nationally on the arts within the curriculum is a huge barrier to developing a strong universal cultural education offer in the town.

Other key factors include the expansion of Sussex Coast College into its new town centre site and the growing presence of the University of Brighton. However at the time of writing, the University is

⁶ For example the 2010 report 'Impact of Creative Partnerships on Young People's Behaviour and Attainment' available at www.creativitycultureeducation.org/research-reports

⁷ NSEAD Survey Report 2015/16, 'In the last five years how has government policy impacted on art, craft and design education?'

undertaking a review of its presence in Hastings which could have serious repercussions for higher education provision in the town. The importance of higher education to regeneration cannot be overstated. The establishing of the University of Brighton was driven by the regeneration agenda and there is a strong desire to work in partnership to identify and make the right course offer that attracts students and plays to the strengths of the town. Cultural education should be part of that offer. The cultural life of the town can be a strong draw for students making Hastings somewhere students want to come for its own unique qualities.

The Hastings and Rother Arts Education Network (HRAEN) is key partner in this objective. It comprises representative local secondary and primary schools, Hastings and Rother local authorities, the De La Warr Pavilion and arts education consultants Culture Shift. HRAEN has been set up to enable young people to benefit from high quality arts engagement including undertaking Arts Awards, delivering high quality arts projects in schools and providing a Creative Café programme in which students can learn through having a real insight into successful creative and cultural industries.

Careers in the creative industries are an increasingly important part of our economy, with a high level of future proofing, and local provision must offer opportunities for young people to develop the relevant knowledge and skills. It is important that the ever-growing wealth of creative and cultural industry resources in the area is harnessed to provide examples of good professional practice and transferrable life and work skills to young people. This can be achieved through a joined up programme of work placements, apprenticeships, mentoring and training, with input from partners such as Artsworld Bridge⁸, Culture Shift, the Education Futures Trust, Creative & Cultural Skills, FE and HE providers and local schools.

Key Challenges

- The restructure of the education system has led to a downgrade in the value of cultural education, which has impacted both on provision and take up by students.
- Hastings has a higher than average proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) who can be harder to engage.
- The quality of informal learning is dependent on the quality and resources of the organisations providing it. Reduced funding has left many organisations vulnerable.
- Learning and outreach projects from cultural sector organisations often rely on short term project funding with further issues for sustainability.
- Many creative and cultural businesses don't have the resources or capacity to support apprenticeships and other work based learning.
- Career pathways in the creative and cultural industries are not well understood or accessed.

Opportunities and Actions

- Advocate for the provision of and access to high quality cultural education opportunities.
- Continue to support and develop the work of HRAEN.
- Support and promote flagship projects to inspire others and encourage skills sharing
- Encourage the educational potential of the historic environment and the links to resources offered by organisations such as Hastings Museum.

⁸ Bridge organisations are a network of ten organisations located across the country that help to connect schools, children and young people with arts and cultural activity, funded by Arts Council England. Artsworld is the Bridge organization for the South East.

- Extend work based learning opportunities within the creative and cultural sector, including through the Own Grown scheme.
- Identify possible external funding sources to support cultural opportunities in formal and informal education.
- Support the establishing of a Cultural Education Partnership⁹ in the area to support a more joined up approach, including working with the East Sussex Skills Board to develop the offer around creative industries.

Outcomes

All children and young people in Hastings will have access to high quality arts and cultural education opportunities regardless of circumstance with involvement from children across all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The creative and cultural industries will be seen as a viable career for young people with clear pathways into work.

⁹ Cultural Education Partnerships challenge sector leaders across the arts, education, local authorities, schools, higher education institutions and others to create new ways of working – sharing resources to create joined-up arts and cultural provisions locally, at a time when public funding remains under pressure. They will be initiated by the Bridge organisations.

OBJECTIVE 3

Build the creative economy, supporting creative and cultural businesses and practitioners to develop and become more sustainable, and attracting new investment.

Introduction

There is strong evidence that a thriving local creative economy has a direct impact on generating employment and business growth in all sectors, helping to attract high quality investment and development to an area and transforming its profile and prospects. The Creative Industries (CIs) are one of six sectors highlighted by the Government as a priority for growth. They have been similarly identified by the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP).

The Creative Economy in the South East¹⁰

The Creative Industries are one of the UK's greatest economic success stories. Taking into account creative professionals working across all sectors:

- The industry accounts for around one-tenth of the whole economy and provides jobs for more than 2.5 million people - more than in financial services, advanced manufacturing or construction
- In the SELEP area, CIs employ 30,000 people and generate £2.5 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) – the largest GVA contribution of any LEP outside of London
- Creative talent and innovation that originates in this sector has become indispensable to other areas such as health, IT and the service economy
- The talent pool in London, the world's leading centre for creative industries, continues to move eastward into the Thames Gateway and southwards towards the coast.

Local context

Taking Hastings and Rother together as an economic zone, the creative economy has seen significant growth over the past 10 years. This has been led by high profile developments such as the De La Warr Pavilion and Jerwood Gallery, but is also fed by a high level of local entrepreneurship and a growing number of creative professionals relocating from London, Brighton and elsewhere. This strategy recognises the importance of supporting creative and cultural practitioners and entrepreneurs in developing both creative and business skills. This is particularly relevant for emerging artists and organisations that might not see themselves as businesses.

Targeted schemes such as SUCCESS¹¹ have highlighted an unmet need for business support and access to finance within the area's CIs. A mentoring scheme for creative, cultural and visitor facing businesses has recently been funded by the Coastal Communities Fund but there is a need for more provision and better signposting to existing resources. Networking opportunities are key and grassroots networks such as Hastings Creatives and Hastings Arts Forum are a vital part of the infrastructure.

Affordable workspace that is fit-for-purpose is an increasing issue as the creative and cultural sector develops. Initiatives such as the Rock House development are trialling new models that could be replicated elsewhere.

¹⁰ South East Cultural Prospectus 2015

¹¹ South-East Urban Coast Creative Enterprise Support Scheme managed by Hastings Borough Council

We are in a climate where the barriers between sectors (public, private, voluntary, social) are becoming more permeable and markets are changing rapidly. This is likely to continue leading to a need for artists and organisations to broaden their skills base and to act and think more like businesses.¹² Looking forwards we need to equip our Creative Industries and cultural sector with the professional skills needed to operate effectively in this rapidly changing climate. For artists and arts organisations this will include the need to look at how they measure the impact of their work in order to secure funding or investment in the future.

Key Challenges

- Much of the creative and cultural sector consists of micro businesses with limited capacity to take up development opportunities.
- Much of the generic support for businesses does not take into account the particular needs of CIs and so the sector doesn't benefit as much as it could.
- There is no current mapping of the creative sector in Hastings and Rother.
- While rents are relatively affordable, there is a lack of fit for purpose workspace across the creative and cultural sector.
- There is a lack of the appropriately skilled graduates locally needed by some CIs
- The Hastings and Rother area has some infrastructural challenges, which may present barriers to new creative businesses relocating here, including inconsistent broadband speeds and transport issues.

Opportunities and Actions

- Identify and remove barriers to outside investment making Hastings and Rother an attractive place for existing and new creative enterprises to settle and thrive.
- Work with Sussex Coast College, University of Brighton and other organisations to develop courses that support employment in the creative industries equipping local people with professional skills.
- Work with partners to develop a comprehensive programme of creative industry business support that is linked to the new Growth Hubs and is locally responsive.
- Support and facilitate more effective networking and peer to peer support for the creative and cultural sector.
- Support the involvement of people from more deprived areas in the creative industries and as creative entrepreneurs.
- Understand the need for current and future workspace for CIs that is affordable and fit for purpose.
- Promote the achievements of the Hastings creative and cultural sector on regional and national platforms to raise profile and open up routes to markets.
- Identify the need for research and data that will help lever in additional funding and investment.

Outcomes

Hastings creative businesses and cultural economy will become more robust and sustainable over the long term.

There will be increased numbers of creative and cultural businesses based in the town and the ongoing provision of targeted business support and skills acquisition for local people.

¹² Esmee Fairbairn Foundation strategy

OBJECTIVE 4

Develop and promote a refreshed identity for Hastings and 1066 Country which brings contemporary culture and traditional heritage together in a coherent and marketable brand.

Introduction

Tourism has always been vital to the economies of seaside towns. The decline of traditional seaside tourism in the UK has meant the need for new ideas and strategies. History, heritage and landscape have been part of these strategies for some time and will always be a great draw for visitors, particularly from overseas.

More recently, contemporary arts and culture have proved to be equally strong draws, particularly for higher spending 'cultural tourists', which has led to a nationwide move by seaside towns looking to reinvent themselves through developing their contemporary cultural identity. This has been stimulated by a number of high profile capital projects, such as the Turner Contemporary in Margate, creating new world class cultural venues.

Local context

Hastings and its partners in 1066 Country have a strong and distinctive history and heritage that generates local pride and draws visitors and tourists nationally and internationally. The history of 1066 and the Battle of Hastings connects the area and provides a strong base for marketing and promotion, underpinned by a heritage sector that is well supported by local voluntary groups.

A contemporary cultural identity has also been developing. The re-furbished De La Pavilion in 2005 and the opening of the Jerwood Gallery in 2012 have become flagships for an eclectic arts scene fuelled by a thriving community of artists. Along with the Towner in Eastbourne, the three venues now form the 'Coastal Cultural Trail'¹³, which has proved a powerful tool for marketing the area. 2016 sees the opening of the Source Park, an international standard BMX and skateboard centre created out of a derelict Victorian baths on the seafront. The project, which had public investment from Hastings Borough Council and East Sussex County Council, brings a vibrant youth culture to the forefront. There are also an increasing number of venues, festivals and events fuelling Hastings' reputation as a destination for high quality contemporary arts and culture.

The growing strength of the sector encouraged Hastings & Bexhill to bid to become UK City of Culture in 2017. Although unsuccessful, the process stimulated a great deal of discussion about the potential of the contemporary arts to contribute to the regeneration of the town. Potential was identified to improve the marketing of the town and progress has already been made. Stimulated by the decision to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings with a contemporary arts festival, a refreshed identity for the main tourism platform, Visit 1066 Country, has been launched and a review will be taking place of how it promotes the area going forward.

This strategy aims to continue this development in how the town is marketed and promoted, drawing together its two great strengths - its unique heritage and burgeoning contemporary arts scene – to create a refreshed cultural identity that values both and raises Hastings' visibility regionally, nationally and internationally as a destination with a rich and integrated cultural offer.

¹³www.coastalculturaltrail.com

The 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings in 2016 will be a catalyst with the ROOT 1066 International Festival offering contemporary perspectives on the history and legacy of 1066, supported by a national press and social media marketing campaign. The importance of cultural tourism within regeneration can be seen across the South East and nationally and Hastings and 1066 Country need to make the most of this opportunity.

Key Challenges

- The heritage association with 1066 is very strong and associations to contemporary culture will take time to fully establish.
- There are a large number of people and organisations involved in delivering the area's rich programme. A successful and coherent marketing and promotional strategy will depend on coordination and buy-in across the arts, heritage and visitor sectors.
- Many organisations are under-resourced with limited capacity to get involved.
- There is a perceived distance between those involved in heritage and traditional festivals and those involved in contemporary arts that needs to be broken down.
- Culture and tourism sectors work to different time frames which can be a challenge to effective marketing.

Opportunities and Actions

- Support the in depth review of Visit 1066 Country marketing and ensure wide stakeholder engagement.
- Support opportunities for better communication and understanding between the arts, heritage and tourism sectors.
- Support both the arts and heritage sectors to develop their marketing capacity and skills, particularly their use of social media.
- Work with partners to explore how the 'cultural coast' experience captured by the Coastal Cultural Trail can expand to link to the wider cultural offer across East Sussex giving visitors multiple reasons to visit and stay.
- Explore external funding opportunities that can support the marketing and promotion of the town, including to international markets.
- Develop tourism infrastructure, including transport, accommodation and Wi-Fi provision, linking to wider regeneration strategies.

Outcome

Hastings and 1066 Country will have a more coherent relationship between the traditional heritage and the emerging contemporary arts sectors with an identity that celebrates both.

There will be improved visibility and awareness for the area nationally and internationally attracting increased visitor numbers.

OBJECTIVE 5

Develop and support a high quality year round cultural programme that links to regeneration and tourism strategies.

Introduction

It is programming that drives footfall and the success of any process of culture-led regeneration will depend on a consistently high quality and ambitious programme that will attract audiences, both local and visiting, all year round.

A mature and well developed cultural programme needs to work on all levels, with a strong local offer alongside national and international programming. A strong local offer is the bedrock. It gives a place a unique identity and also helps to promote that identity when home grown artists travel elsewhere. National and international work develops and ensures variety for audiences, provides hooks to catch the attention of the media and stimulates the local cultural community.

Local context

Hastings has a cultural programme that is the envy of many larger towns. It has a well-established reputation for popular traditional festivals that draw on the heritage of the area. These are now joined by a growing number of arts festivals and cultural events such as the Seafood & Wine Festival. See Appendix A for the 2016 cultural calendar which demonstrates this richness.

Responding to our seaside context, many events take place outdoors and this is a strong element of our cultural identity. As well as the seafront, Hastings' parks, countryside and other open spaces have untapped potential as sites for events. This is underpinned by a wealth of venue based activity including a strong visual arts sector, a thriving music scene and independent cinema offer. Sectors such as literature and theatre are historically less well established but are making themselves felt within the town.

The Jerwood Gallery opened in 2012 and welcomes approximately 50,000 visitors per year, many coming to Hastings specifically for the gallery. High profile exhibitions have brought widespread national media coverage and have raised the bar for the visual arts offer in the town. The Stade Open Space, developed by Hastings Council as a focal point for outdoor events and performance, opened the same year with a two-year Arts Council England (ACE) funded programme – Stade Saturdays – that provided free performances every Saturday night from June to October. Hastings Council continues to support the programme and Stade Saturdays attracts an average audience of 15,000 per season.

The town has a limited number of larger venues with the White Rock Theatre and St Mary in the Castle. The operation of St Mary in the Castle was taken over by an independent Trust in 2015 with ambitious plans for the future, and Hastings Pier will be developing a programme that makes best use of their flexible open space, including outdoor cinema.

The local music scene continues to be a great strength of the town, with many small venues and pubs showcasing both local and visiting bands. New venues have opened, such as the Kino Teatr in St Leonards, along with bars and cafes that regularly host events. Temporary use of buildings is also impacting on the cultural scene, particularly at the Observer Building.

The number of independent galleries has increased, particularly around the 'America Ground' in the town centre and in St Leonards, showcasing local and national artists. Hastings has been included in the South East Coast Art Map project as a key hot spot for visual arts.

Beyond Hastings the cultural offer is also growing, particularly around the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill and in Rye and Battle. Further afield there is the potential to develop international relationships with both artists and audiences in France and Europe.

This strategy aims to strengthen this rich programme, encouraging and supporting high quality activity, events and festivals. This needs to include opportunities for risk and experimentation, which are essential to creative development. Supporting and developing activity in the winter months as well as the tourist high season will help the town to be a visible and attractive cultural destination for residents, visitors and tourists year round.

Infrastructure development is key to enabling wider access to the cultural programme. Lobbying continues for better rail connections for Hastings including the extension of HS1. Within the town the aspiration for a seafront shuttle remains, with a feasibility study being undertaken as part of an EU funded programme.

Key Challenges

- Overall the cultural programme is still weighted towards the spring and summer months, which adds to economic and job instability in the service and tourist industries and in the cultural sector itself.
- There is a lack of detailed and comparable data about audiences and inconsistent evaluation of projects and their impact.
- Hastings has a low level of revenue funded arts organisations and many festivals and cultural activities run on fragile business models, both of which raise issues of leadership and sustainability for the sector.
- A number of festivals and events are run entirely by volunteers leaving organisations with a lack of professional resources to develop and promote events effectively.
- There is inconsistent communication with and between local authority departments that engage with the cultural sector.
- There is a need for better marketing and promotion of the full range of activity within a more coherent identity for the cultural programme

Opportunities and Actions

- Continue to support key events including Jack in the Green, Hastings Week and Bonfire Celebrations, Coastal Currents Arts Festival and St Leonards Festival, while looking for routes to make these events more sustainable.
- Build on the town's strengths in visual arts, music and outdoor events, and seek external funding to enable more ambitious programming.
- Raise the capacity of the local cultural sector by stimulating new partnerships and supporting skills development, including through the ROOT 1066 International Festival.
- Support cultural organisations and practitioners to better evaluate their work and evidence their impact
- Make council funding available where there is a strong argument that this will lever further external funding

- Support more efficient communication with local authority departments, particularly licencing, to assist the planning and delivery of activities and events
- Work with Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders to develop a strategic approach to supporting cultural activity and infrastructure in the area.

Outcomes

Hastings will have a more sustainable year round cultural programme that is closely linked with the town's tourism strategy and which will attract and develop new local and visiting audiences.

OBJECTIVE 6

Support and enable the preservation, development and use of the town's cultural assets

Introduction

Historic sites and buildings, cultural venues, the built environment and outdoor spaces all make up the physical cultural assets that give a place its character and enable its cultural identity to develop and thrive. They are the infrastructure on which culture-led regeneration is built and link to all the other objectives in this strategy.

Local context

Hastings has rich stock of cultural assets ranging from venues such as St Mary in the Castle and the Jerwood Gallery, to heritage assets such as Hastings Castle and the Pier, and areas of architectural importance such as the Old Town and Burtons' St Leonards. There is much historic interest in the town with 6 scheduled monuments, over 900 listed buildings, 18 conservation areas and 300 archaeological sites.

The many smaller venues that support our local cultural scene, as mentioned in the last section, must also be recognised.

The public realm is also an asset and a wonderful canvas for everything from outdoor performance to permanent public art installations, not least the seafront and promenade, and numerous parks and public spaces. There is a growing interest in developing public arts interventions, with pieces such as the Bottle Alley installation 'Point of Decay' from the 2015 Coastal Currents Festival, highlighting how public sites can be utilized in imaginative ways. This is supported by the Hastings Seafront Strategy which commits to identifying potential sites for public art along the seafront.

The collections in our museums and archives are an important part of our asset register, as are the high number of Blue Plaques that are a great draw for visitors. New layers of meaning are constantly being added to our assets, such as the Foyle's War legacy that brings many to explore the streets of the Old Town.

The town is exceptionally lucky to have such a rich range of historical and cultural assets, as highlighted by the RSA survey mentioned earlier. The responsibility to protect and develop these assets sits with a wide range of partners who will need to work together to maximise their potential. The long term maintenance, protection and use of the historic environment need a dedicated and more detailed plan that enhances and complements this overarching strategy.

This objective needs to have strong links to the Hastings Local Plan, which identifies four cultural quarters – Old Town and The Stade, White Rock and the America Ground, Academic Quarter, Central St Leonards - where the planning framework particularly supports development that will assist the further expansion of their role as centres for cultural and related activities. There is a commitment to work with new developments to ensure that the heritage of the town is protected and valued, that the town retains a coherent cultural identity.

The White Rock area in particular is now being looked at as a potential site for major development with a strong cultural element, including reviewing the use of the White Rock Theatre when the

current contract comes to an end in 2018. These projects demonstrate the continued ambition for the town and the importance of culture in plans for the ongoing regeneration of Hastings.

Hastings' cultural assets are further enhanced by the wealth of assets across 1066 Country and East Sussex. A joined up approach, particularly to marketing and promotion, and to potential external funding sources, will bring benefits to all.

Challenges

- There is insufficient understanding of the needs and potential of our heritage assets.
- Many of our existing built assets need significant capital development to bring them up to modern standards.
- There's a shortage of modern, flexible venues for music and other types of performance. This was mentioned as a failing in our City of Culture bid.
- Lack of resources restricts the potential of key heritage assets, such as Hastings Museum, and the development of the town's Blue Plaque trail.
- Public art and art in the public realm is relatively expensive to commission and install and is likely to suffer disproportionately from funding cuts.

Opportunities and Actions

- Deliver a dedicated Heritage Strategy to map our heritage assets and guide their conservation, development and use.
- Seek support for a detailed venues analysis to better understand current and future needs across the town, informing developments such as the White Rock Area plan.
- Explore long term relationships with key assets such as the Jerwood Gallery to maximise their value for the town.
- Work alongside the seafront strategy to identify sites for public art and ensure that there is an adequate infrastructure in place to support new works
- Continue to make best use of Section 106 policies and any successors to ensure public art is included in major developments in the town.
- Engage key business partners – Locate East Sussex, Sea Change, etc - in promoting the value of our cultural assets as part of a strong investment case for the area.
- Identify and access external funding in partnership with others.

Outcomes

Hastings stock of cultural assets will be better maintained, interpreted and promoted.

Public heritage sites will be better conserved and protected.

There will be an improved understanding and knowledge of sites in the town that might be appropriate for public art and how well the existing infrastructure is performing.

New developments will meet with the cultural needs of the local community and economy.

Partnership

Working in partnership will be the key to achieving these objectives, particularly in a time of reducing resources. We will work closely with partners at all levels in order to maximise our joint contribution to Hastings' culture and economy. We will build on existing networks to promote practical and effective joint working. To provide a strategic lead the Council will continue to facilitate the Cultural Leaders Group, which has representation from many of the partners below and which is connected to the Hastings & Rother Task Force.

Local partners are the foundation including artists and arts organisations, community organisations, local businesses, the Jerwood Foundation, Hastings Pier Charity, Sussex Coast College Hastings (SCCH), local schools and other educational organisations including the Hastings & Rother Arts Education Network.

Regional partners share many of our aims and extend our reach, including Rother District Council, East Sussex County Council, South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Team East Sussex, Visit 1066 Country and the University of Brighton.

National partners give us a strategic context and opportunities, including Arts Council England, Coastal Communities Alliance, English Heritage, Historic England and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

International partners widen our horizons and open new doors, including the Eurotowns network¹⁴ and cultural and tourism partners in Europe and beyond.

Relationship with other strategies

This strategy builds on the Hastings Cultural Regeneration Strategy 2010 – 2015. The 2010-2015 strategy set down a bold vision for culture in the town. The objectives were long-term and many remain relevant and are incorporated into this new strategy.

It also relates to the following key strategies:

- Hastings Borough Council Corporate Plan
- Hastings & Rother Six Point Plan
- Hastings Local Plan
- Hastings Planning Strategy 2011 - 2028
- Hastings Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Rother District Council Corporate Plan
- Bexhill Town Centre Strategy
- Rother Economic Regeneration Strategy 2010-2015
- East Sussex Cultural Strategy
- Hastings Seafront Strategy
- 1066 Country Marketing Plan
- East Sussex Growth Strategy
- South East Cultural Prospectus
- Arts Council England 'Great Art and Culture for Everyone'
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Funding Strategy 2015-19
- SE LEP 'Towards a National Prospectus for the Creative Economy in the South East'

¹⁴ Eurotowns is a network that aims to support medium sized cities in Europe to be attractive, inclusive, sustainable places that are well equipped to deliver EU 2020 goals.

Hastings Cultural Calendar 2016

(Accurate @ 12 Feb 2016)

Date	Event
December 28th - Jan 5th	Hastings International Chess congress
February 4th - 9th	Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras
February 20th - 28th	Rye Bay Scallop Week
February 25th - 5th March	International Piano Concerto Competition
March	Hastings Musical Festival
March	Eat Global
March 6th	Planet Hastings Crazy Golf Open
March 20th	Hastings Half Marathon
May 2nd	Jack in the Green
May 3rd - 8th May	Hastings Folk Music Festival
May 12th	Hastings Speaks Diary Day (ROOT 1066)
June - October	Hastings Museum & Art Gallery - History of Hastings in 66 objects
June - October	Stade Saturdays
June 4th - 5th	Town & Country Fair
June 5th	Winkle Club Jazz Fair
June 5th	Race for Life
June TBC	Midsummer Fish Fair
June 11th - 12th	1066 Cycling Festival
June 23rd - 25th	Hastings Fringe Festival
June 30th - 2nd July	Hastings Beer Festival
July - October	Marcus Harvey - Jerwood Gallery
July 8th - 10th	British Artist Blacksmith Association event (ROOT 1066)
July 9th	America Ground Celebrations
July 9th - 10th	St Leonards Festival
July 16th	Art Car Boot
July 17th	Pirate Day
July 23rd	Journeys Dance Festival
July 24th	Bandstand Concert - Alexandra Park
July 30th - 31st	Beach Concert
July 30th - August 7th	Old Town Week
August 6th	Old Town Carnival
August 14/21/28	Bandstand Concert - Alexandra Park
September	Trash Cannes Festival
September 9th - October 2nd	ROOT 1066 International Festival
September 17th - 18th	Seafood & Wine Festival
October 8th - 16th	Hastings Week
October 8th - 9th	Classic Car Show
October 15th	Hastings Bonfire
October 16th	Hastings Cartoon Festival
October 26th - 30th	Black Huts Literary and Film Festival
November	Hastings Herring Fair
November 8th - 14th	Hastings Storytelling Festival
November 26th	Frost Fair - St Leonards
December	Hastings Illustration Festival
Regular events returning in 2017	
Shanty Festival	
Hastings International Composers Festival	
Coastal Currents Arts Festival	