

Subject:	Creative Coast – the Greater Brighton cultural and creative economy		
Date of Meeting:	17 July 2018		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
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LAs affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This paper outlines how a new joined-up programme across Greater Brighton of investment and support in culture, creative and digital industries, will bring economic and social benefits to the whole region, boosting jobs, inward investment, innovation and productivity and quality of life.
- 1.2 It describes a concept with the working title of “Creative Coast”, intended to build on Brighton’s existing status as a recognised Creative District¹ and one of the leading creative clusters in the UK, to ensure that Greater Brighton is recognised and supported as the leading testbed for innovation and creativity in the South East.
- 1.3 The proposition is focused on the development of a strategic programme to embed creativity as a key strength of the region as a whole – connecting up locations via a common thread and providing a legible and coherent brand story, whilst leaving space for place-based differences in approach and specialisation.
- 1.4 It is intended to provide a new narrative for inward investment by connecting the value chains of creative industries, culture and the visitor economy and showing how the cultural and creative sector could be a driver of productivity and innovation, generating spill-overs across the economy. The Creative Coast is a concept that can be owned by the Greater Brighton area and used to lever investment opportunities linked to improving growth and competitiveness.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Greater Brighton Economic Board supports the development of Creative Coast as a place-based strategic programme for culture and the creative economy through cultural led economic growth and productivity.
- 2.2 That the Board notes the four proposed areas of focus for the programme (People, Business, Places and Spaces, Reputation) set out at 3.10-3.13 below) and tasks

¹ <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/the-geography-of-creativity-in-the-uk/>

officers to develop these into a portfolio of projects.

- 2.3 That the Board agrees to support an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Cultural Development Fund², based on the principles of Creative Coast set out at 4.2 below, with a more detailed proposal to be considered at a future meeting if the initial EOI is successful at the first stage.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 Brighton and its surrounding area are internationally recognised as a creative centre. Over the last decade, the 'Travel To Work Area' (TTWA) has seen one of the largest increases in businesses and employment in the creative industries of anywhere in the UK³. There are 2,956 creative businesses, which represents 16.2% of total businesses. This is the highest density of any TTWA in the UK – employing 7,654 people, 11% of total employment and 10.1% of the area's total GVA. Brighton also boasts one of the largest populations of freelancers and homeworkers in the UK.
- 3.2 Furthermore, Brighton's creativity is especially well connected to technology, as seen in the proliferation of 'fusion' companies (melding creativity with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)). It is at the forefront of advances in artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR) and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and has a well-developed screen (film, media and television) sector which is also seeing increasing convergence of content with other cultural and creative disciplines. It has the highest intensity of 'creative embedded' companies in its TTWA of any cluster in the UK. These are companies which have high levels of IT, design, advertising etc capability and which offer some of the highest potential for growth and innovation⁴.
- 3.3 This success is driven by complex and interacting factors including location, the presence of Higher and Further Education, lifestyle factors including the dynamic cultural life, and reputation for openness and inclusion.
- 3.4 The region's cultural sector is a powerhouse of production with over 60 festivals a year and the largest annual arts festival in the UK. Collaboration is already developing between the region's cultural institutions, such as Brighton Festival, Chichester Festival Theatre and Glyndebourne. Artists are being drawn to live and work in the area and 11 million domestic and international visitors are attracted to visit each year. The city has one of the highest densities of independent retail and food, makers and craftspeople in the UK, as well as being home to 35,000 students. It is an ecosystem which engenders resilience and is capable of supporting economic growth and increased productivity.

² <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding-finder/cultural-development-fund>

³ <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/the-geography-of-creativity-in-the-uk/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-the-creative-industries>

- 3.5 However, there are a number of obstacles to progress. Businesses report concerns over availability and cost of workspace. Finding, recruiting and retaining skilled workers is also increasingly difficult. Access to venture finance and capital is not as developed as it is in other clusters such as Cambridge. Productivity is still lower than the average for the South East, caused in part by the proliferation of tourism related employment.
- 3.6 Competition is increasing from other towns and cities across the South East that are increasing their cultural capital and investing in their creative infrastructure, to boost their visibility and attractiveness at a time when foreign investment has plummeted. Too often the creative capacity of Brighton is not properly tapped to strengthen other parts of Greater Brighton and opportunities to connect and grow the specialisms and strengths of distinct centres across the geography of the region are missed.
- 3.7 Most importantly, the region currently lacks a credible and coherent offer to potential inward investors and businesses. It is universally recognised at home and abroad for its distinctiveness, but that is not translated into a framework that enables its collective potential. With the appropriate interventions, Greater Brighton should be recognised and understood as *the* leading testbed for innovation and creativity in the South East, where businesses from across the wider economy throughout the region benefit from its unique strengths and from the diversity of its creative, digital and culture-led activity, to produce economic growth over the next decade and beyond.
- 3.8 From the inward investment and visitor economy perspectives, there is no unifying narrative. An area with the hard and soft assets of Greater Brighton, 25 miles from the UK's second busiest airport and 55 minutes by train from one of the world's global creative cities and the key economic driver of the UK's economy, should be a beacon and leader for the sustainable, high-skilled, highly productive, innovative economy of the future. Creative Coast will amplify the key strengths of the region in a way that speaks to different audiences.

CREATIVE COAST

- 3.9 In discussion with the sector, four themes have been developed behind Creative Coast which describe where future investment will overcome barriers to growth and ensure that one of the UK's leading creative clusters delivers more spill-over benefits for the whole region.

3.10 People

Support for a diversity of creative education and training (including informal, formal and work-based programmes) with a clearer focus on linking further and higher education to the needs of local employers, will help to support the growth of the talent pool, and ensure the workforce has the skills necessary for the developing fusion economy. At the same time, "growing our own" will create a more diverse workforce, and extend opportunities across communities and locations to enhance social mobility and spread the benefits of growth. There will be soon be more self-employed people in the UK than there are employees in the public sector, and the region has one of the highest densities of creative self-employment in the country (alongside high start-up rates) making it the UK's best place to be self-employed.

Programmes which directly reflect the needs of existing micro and self-employed businesses will help them develop and grow the employment base, while investment in building leadership across the sector will help companies to build international trade.

3.11 Business

Research shows that networking and knowledge exchange are key to the growth of the creative clusters. There is clear evidence that increasing the amount and types of exchange in the economy – the flow of people, ideas, money and skills – is a key factor in the success of cities and areas in driving growth. One of the unique things about our cluster is that it is already spread across a TTWA. Through further cross-sector networking the area could become a super-connected cluster with highly skilled cross-sector innovation capability. When connected to Access to Finance schemes and venture capital, a programme of market insight, and resources to support research and development at different scales, this would drive development and manufacture of new products and support scaling up of SMEs.

3.12 Places and Spaces

Developing and encouraging creative spill-overs to the wider economy and society will be vital if the benefits of the cluster are to be more fully realised. Availability, accessibility and affordability of space is considered to be a major constraint in Brighton and working across the TTWA provides opportunities to create fit-for-purpose spaces across the footprint and connect them physically, digitally and virtually. This could include developing large-scale production spaces, facilities where the creative and STEM sectors could collaborate (e.g. Birmingham’s STEAMHouse, or the fab-lab model) and increasing numbers of creative hubs and affordable co-working spaces. Partnerships with developers, through Enterprise Zone style initiatives or shared risk could unlock key sites.

3.13 Reputation

A consistent message for the culture and the creative economy across the Greater Brighton region creates a clear proposition combining creative innovation with quality of life. It signals a place that is “investment-ready”; a serious contender for inward investment, a place to build a career or a business in culture and the creative industries, to raise a family and to visit. Vital to creating the narrative is a sense that it is the combined forces of the area which together offer a compelling argument; leaving room for sub-sector specialisation, distinct identities of place and a variety of investment options across the geography while connecting an ecosystem which makes the sum of the parts greater than the whole.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 If the Board supports the concept of Creative Coast, the next step would be to establish a task group to develop the work and seek funding for initiatives across the four themes.

4.2 In the first instance, the Cultural Development Fund (CDF) which was announced last month by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is an opportunity to establish an initial programme. This fund aims to allow cities to invest in creative, cultural and heritage initiatives that lead to culture-led economic growth and productivity. The CDF will provide investment in events, leadership training, capital, skills development and cultural programmes of between £3m and £7m in a maximum of six area-based partnerships in England (excluding London), linked to growing productivity. Through these culture-led strategies, the Cultural Development Fund aims to support places to:

- use culture and creative activity to unlock economic growth and productivity;
- use culture and creative activity to make places attractive to live in, work and visit;
- strengthen local leadership in culture and/or the creative industries; and
- enhance creative skills.

4.3 The fund will support a range of activities, including but not limited to: resource investment in programmes, events and activities for culture and the creative industries; resource investment in upskilling local cultural and creative industries leaders; capital investment in physical space for culture, heritage, and the creative industries; and capital and resource investment in new creative skills development programmes and materials. A partnership contribution of 20% partnership/match funding is required. The initial deadline to express interest is 1 August 2018. If successful, a full application is needed by 19 October 2018. Initial discussions with Arts Council England, which will manage the fund, in relation to a potential bid for Creative Cost have been positive.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 A coherent, collaborative and co-ordinated programme of activities across Greater Brighton has the potential to optimise its existing strengths as a creative district, to fuel growth across the City Region. It would create a strong identity for the area and a compelling narrative for future investment.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

6.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report, however the Greater Brighton Board will submit a bid to DCMS for the Cultural Development Fund for the middle of August and any costs associated with preparing the bid will be met from the GBEB existing budget.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen, Principal Accountant
Date: 26 June 2018*

Legal Implications:

6.2 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report. If external support is required in submitting a bid to the DCMS or writing the strategy then it will be

necessary to comply with the procurement rules of the authority entering into those contracts.

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland, Head of Commercial Law
Date: 26 June 2018

Equalities Implications:

6.3 None directly related to this report.

6.4 Sustainability Implications:

None directly related to this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Background Documents

1. None