BRADFORD
A LEADING
CULTURAL CITY
2014-2024
Bradford: A Leading Cultural City
2014-2024

Introduction

This strategy sets out the ambition for Bradford to be a ‘leading cultural city’ by 2024, one that expresses its confidence through its cultural offer and one that enables a varied and sustainable creative and cultural economy.

Over the next 10 years Bradford as a district and a city will drive forward a step-change in its cultural position - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. It will re-imagine itself; creating a new narrative about belonging, pride and passion. As a district it will be confident, bold and inventive and proudly claim its position in the UK as a leading cultural destination.

Culture will be positioned as central to the economic and social future of the district – a vital heartbeat in its transformation. It will be considered in everything we aspire to do as a place; the services the Council and voluntary sector provide; decisions about public spaces; how communities participate and engage; its role in encouraging inward investment; providing education and skills opportunities in the creative and cultural industries and how we foster the well-being and quality of life of our residents.

This strategy is not about Bradford Council “doing Culture” to people, the council should instead become an enabler, encouraging cultural organisations to scale up their activities and upskilling them to successfully apply for funding from external sources.

Background

In 2003 a cultural strategy was launched setting out the role of culture as a complimentary tool for regeneration in Bradford’s 2020 Vision. The past ten years has seen investment in the cultural infrastructure across the District, with significant achievements creating a cultural wealth to be proud of. Some of our successes have included a £1.75 million refurbishment of Cartwright Hall Art Gallery; Bradford taking a lead on ‘Illuminate’ a Yorkshire-wide cultural festival across five cities; activities and skills development through investment by council and heritage funding in libraries in Keighley, Manningham, Bowling and the City Centre; capital developments for Mind the Gap and Kala Sangam through Arts Council England funding; investment in
Bradford Theatres; the launch of a new Internet Gallery in the National Media Museum alongside the creation of our multi-million-pound urban City Park.

Bradford Council, in partnership with key agencies, has led the review of the 2003 strategy - refreshing the vision, the mission and direction for the district’s cultural future to make it relevant and responsive to where we are now and where we want to be. The Council with its key partner agencies will continue to play a fundamental and strategic role in overseeing the delivery of this revised strategic plan - taking collective responsibility for enabling and facilitating impact on the ground.

The review process highlighted a belief that Bradford is punching below its weight – a city with enormous potential and opportunities going forward to claim its position as a ‘leading Cultural City’.

Bradford district’s cultural foundation is rich and diverse but more work needs to be done to create a vibrant cultural experience for all. Bradford will use culture as a key tourism driver to more effectively re-position itself as a leading city.

World accolades such as Bradford’s UNESCO City of Film and Saltaire - a UNESCO World Heritage site; museums of international and national significance such as the National Media Museum, Bronte Parsonage; as well as local and regional gems such as Cliffe Castle and Bradford Theatres, all blend together to provide a thriving cultural experience that is appealing to visitors as well as our residents.

‘Bradford – A Leading Cultural City’ outlines a refreshed vision, mission and five strategic priorities that set the agenda for the next 10 years:

• Priority 1: Investing in our people
• Priority 2: Building resilience and sustainability
• Priority 3: Responsible and active leadership
• Priority 4: A thriving cultural offer
• Priority 5: A cultural destination – telling and selling our story

Focusing on these core strategic priorities will ensure that Bradford district delivers positive outcomes for people and place.
Bradford District – A Cultural Future to be Proud of...

The district residents, local arts and cultural organisations, funding bodies and the private sector have shared their aspirations for the cultural future of Bradford.

Vision: A leading cultural city that people love and enjoy.
Mission: Every day we will celebrate, inspire and engage residents and visitors in a magnificent cultural experience.

Their desire was clear: A cultural offer and City which gives them civic pride, which appeals to residents, businesses and visitors far and wide.

The Bradford district cultural offer is about people, place and their experiences; it’s not just about investment physically in buildings and organisations. The Cultural strategy puts people at its heart and will strive to stimulate, support, and enable the district to develop a magnificent and thriving cultural experience for everyone. The strategy will inform actions that develop opportunities for connection, expression, exploration and entertainment and contribute to Bradford’s 2020 vision ‘to create a vibrant community and cultural life for all’.

The strategy is committed to generating outstanding cultural experiences for people living in and visiting the district. Its role in delivering on key outcomes for the district, has been taken into account by referring to other key plans and strategies for city regeneration (Appendix 1). Overall the ‘Producer City’ concept for the district provides the values and framework for transforming regeneration over the next ten years. ‘Bradford: A Leading Cultural City’ is the strategic cultural framework that responds to the Bradford district regeneration going forward.

Why Culture?

- Culture is more than its distinct visible assets. Its impact extends to the intrinsic value individuals gain from diverse cultural experiences balancing the local and international dimensions.
- It plays a key role in contributing to the regeneration of the district whilst supporting and enabling community empowerment.
- It provides a platform for communities to share experience and explore each other’s cultures.
• It creates employment pathways into the creative and cultural industries for future generations, providing an exciting ‘hotbed’ for new talent to come, flourish and contribute to the district regeneration.

• It inspires innovation and new ways of thinking.

• It unleashes creativity, imagination and exploration.

• It offers fun, entertainment and diversion.

• It stimulates, challenges and provokes.

• It strengthens our confidence as a district to the world.

• It contributes to the health and well-being of our residents.

• It attracts tourists (and their pound) to our City centre and our outlying cultural gems – to experience the urban and country offer in one visit, the historical and contemporary - the unexpected and surprising difference that makes the district unique.

• It creates a reason for people to stay and belong in the district.

This strategy positions culture as a key driving force in re-positioning Bradford district to the world as a great place to live, learn, work, play and visit. Culture will be integral to demonstrating the positive features of the City acting as a fuel to social, economic and urban renewal that captures people’s hearts, minds and imagination to create a transformation.

**What do we mean by culture?**

Having spoken with our communities it is clear that culture in a diverse city means different things to different people - from dancing to playing football; visiting a museum to practising a faith; eating food to attending a festival.

The common connector culture has is how it makes us feel. Culture is what makes us what we are today. It is how we live, learn, grow and play. It is what forms us – and transforms us, excites, touches, changes and brings meaning to our lives. Culture gives background and meaning to future generations. It creates a sense of belonging of people and place. It explains what we are and informs what we want to be.

This strategy does not set out to exclude anyone’s individual definition of culture but it does have a focus. It celebrates the breadth of places where we experience culture – theatres, galleries, film, libraries, festivals, museums, parks, urban and community spaces and built heritage. It embraces the role of culture in building relationships and a shared identity, memories and experiences. It’s about standards and beliefs and identifying what we consider
valuable to pass onto future generations.¹ It includes the role of the district’s makers and artists, professionals and amateurs, and their contribution to the cultural character of the place. Their creativity and input providing places and spaces for people to engage, participate and create.

A city of diversity

Balancing our differences and similarities is integral to our approach in developing culture over the next ten years. We will respond to changes in the make-up of our people and place, using culture as a unifying force in creating a magnificent cultural experience for all.

Bradford is diverse in relation to its people, place and experiences: a rich mix of nationalities, ethnicities, gender, ages, physical abilities, economic status and faiths.

Diversity will be explicit in everything we do, appreciating and respecting how diversity can be important and not important depending on a person or community perspective. The district’s cultural and faith communities are an important element of its uniqueness and the Cultural strategy delivery plan will seek to develop new ways in which our diverse communities genuinely connect and develop mutual appreciation and understanding.

There is a desire from our residents for the delivery plan to further develop an inclusive feeling of ‘civic pride’- one in which our different communities and localities feel they have a stake, whilst celebrating and sharing their common distinctiveness and heritage.

Placing diversity as implicit in the direction of this strategy will ensure that people have equal opportunity to engage in a cultural experience that feels desirable, relevant, inspiring and accessible. Creating the conditions for this equal access will be integral across all priorities. It is not about diverse work for diverse audiences but inspiring our communities to be adventurous and try something new or different.

Informing our cultural ambitions

The people of the district had some clear insights on the current and future role of culture in their locality and lives. There is a belief that a successful Cultural strategy has the potential to encourage new business start-ups, attract more tourists and make Bradford an attractive place to live, learn, work, play and visit.

There is strong agreement in the value of culture delivering a wide range of benefits from an enhanced quality of life (e.g. enrichment, creativity,

¹ DCMS Definition of Culture
happiness, well-being, confidence, passion) to a sense of belonging involving artistic development, communities and professionals developing skills, creating jobs, new businesses and volunteering opportunities.

People’s cultural experience embraces things they attend, participate, create and make; the passive and the active; the supplied and the community-generated.

These insights and suggestions from the people across the district have informed our cultural ambitions and strategic priorities. Residents want the revised Cultural Strategy to address:

- **Arts & Cultural Education** - There is a demand from residents to have more opportunities for engaging with culture through all stages of life (early years to life-long learning) using formal and informal mechanisms. A vital approach in developing new audiences and artists for the future whilst contributing to well-being, creativity and innovation.

- **Maintaining and Growing Bradford’s cultural sector** - The focus of growth and investment will seek to support local professional and non-professional artists, cultural groups and amateur performers to produce, create and present their work. By working with external cultural agencies to attract more investment in the production of culture it will enable the enhancement of the burgeoning ‘produced and created here’ movement.

- **Festival City** - There is an appetite for programming and promoting festivals across the district to make Bradford’s cultural provisions more open and visible to the public and bring people together to celebrate and showcase a vibrant cultural scene and attract visitors.

- **Developing grassroots cultural activity alongside a high quality programme** - There is a strong demand for enhanced provision for grassroots cultural activity. The opportunity to make, create, share, teach, exhibit, perform and participate in activities throughout the District is important alongside world class acts and experiences such as Bollywood Carmen and our UNESCO heritage accolades.

- **Thriving city and town centres** – There is a desire amongst residents and cultural venues and organisations to co-create and co-produce an ambitious annual cultural programme. This will complement the development of a thriving day and night-time economy; create a vibrant, visible cultural calendar, encourage visitors to the city and town centres and increase dwell time. In Bradford city centre residents want to see an improved retail offer with supporting bars and cafes and an enhanced public transport infrastructure addressed, to ensure a quality holistic cultural experience.
• **A ‘can-do’ attitude** - There needs to be a collective ownership and responsibility across cultural organisations, artists, businesses, residents and public bodies to realise the ambition. This will involve a change in leadership style:
  
  - from one of ‘can’t do’ to one of empowerment and ‘can-do’;
  - less of a focus on physical infrastructure and more on people;
  - increased capacity for artists, amateurs, communities and volunteers to realise their own ideas;
  - acknowledging the skills and talent that exists within Bradford and using them;
  - support for social enterprise and artisan investment;
  - encouraging people to create and participate, not just attend and visit;
  - securing and ring-fencing funds whilst at the same time encouraging local businesses to invest.

**Bradford’s cultural principles**

Underpinning the approach for the next ten years is a series of principles that will create the guiding direction for decisions and developments. These principles include a commitment to:

- Capacity building– for people who are makers and creators
- Excellence – in the quality of work and audience/community experience
- Diversity - relevance, resonance and meaningfulness
- Value for money – for individuals, communities, and the district
- Innovation – inspiring new thinking and fresh approaches
- Connectivity – embracing technology and connecting communities

As part of these principles there will be a balanced approach to our cultural planning – encouraging local production alongside world class acts and exhibitions touring to Bradford; different levels of engagement from consuming to participating; investing in makers at all levels – from the amateur to the professional; presenting challenging and experimental work alongside more popular entertainment; providing a magnificent experience for our residents as well as visitors.
Bradford District’s Cultural Priorities

The Cultural strategy is built on five strategic priorities that link to a range of recommended actions. The supporting delivery plan will not be a static document. Rather, it should be viewed as a starting point for district’s cultural future. It will be dynamic and continue to respond to the changing needs and opportunities that emerge throughout the lifespan of the Cultural Strategy.

Priority 1: Investing in our People - A District where people can freely access, enjoy, create, engage in and contribute to Bradford’s cultural offer.

Priority 2: Building a resilient and sustainable sector – Create an agile, enterprising, and entrepreneurial creative and cultural sector.

Priority 3: Responsible and active Leadership – A ‘can-do’ leadership position at all levels that engenders ownership, responsibility and ambition.

Priority 4: A thriving cultural offer – One that inspires our residents and visitors and delivers a magnificent cultural experience for all.

Priority 5: A cultural destination – telling and selling our story – Encouraging people to actively take part, watch, engage and experience Bradford as a leading cultural city locally, nationally and internationally.

The five priorities do not sit in isolation. There is an interdependency and connectivity between all of them. The success of the cultural vision for the district - to be a leading cultural city - will only be realised by ensuring the priorities inform, react and respond to each other and the changing landscape over the next ten years.
PRIORITY 1: INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

More than half a million people currently live in the Bradford district. Bradford district is one of the biggest cities in the UK (larger than Cardiff and Belfast).

Over the past 10 years the population has been growing steadily and it is expected to continue to do so. By 2033, the population is forecast to reach approximately 640,000, an increase of 28%. In England, only Leeds, Birmingham and Bristol are expected to see larger increases.

The District has a youthful population structure. Currently 22.6% of the population is under 16 years of age, the largest percentage of any city in Great Britain. By 2033 it is forecast that there will be 25% (29,300) more children than there are now and 50% (41,300) more old people. The very elderly will see the largest percentage increase, with the number of over 90 year olds expected to increase from 2,800 to 8,700, an increase of 200%.

This shifting demographic brings incredible opportunity as well as challenges to the district. Collectively we have to ensure that our cultural offer (people, infrastructure and capacity) is fit for purpose in this shifting context.

Priority 1 will facilitate and support our amateur arts and cultural sector, grassroots community organisations, emerging artists, creative and cultural organisations, volunteers and audiences to protect, sustain and stimulate growth of the creative and cultural industries going forward.

• Artists, Cultural Organisations and Creative Industries

Artists, amateur arts, grassroots communities, cultural and creative organisations create the cultural heartbeat and vibrancy across the district. They encourage expression and ambition. They provide creative and cultural opportunities for individuals to engage or try something new.

The mix of the professional and non-professional creative ecology is invaluable to Bradford. Harnessing the benefits of this offer and ensuring that people who want to create and make at all levels are supported and encouraged to be innovative, imaginative and entrepreneurial will be key.

Creative individuals in our digital, publishing, film and media industries provide another layer to the district’s offer. The shift in establishing creative and cultural career paths as a viable employment option is starting to happen. Bradford College’s creative industry courses such as film, animation and media are reporting the highest amount of registrations ever. Now it is essential to invest in and nurture our creative and cultural talent and organisations to ensure employment opportunities in the Bradford district are
available. This will ensure the renaissance of the Bradford district as a ‘leading producing cultural city’.

- **Audiences**

Ensuring that culture and creativity is visible, accessible and something our residents and visitors want to experience is crucial to increasing participation in the cultural life of the district. People as consumers inject a sense of purpose to our cultural activities.

Over the next ten years we will focus on encouraging cultural engagement at all life stages and drive up engagement levels across the District. We will nurture people who are currently interested and engaged in the district’s cultural scene and we will connect, inform and unlock an interest from people who are potentially less likely to attend and engage in arts and cultural activities.

Working in partnership with Arts Council England funded National Portfolio Organisations (NPO’s) and other locally based creative and cultural organisations that connect at a community level will help make culture relevant and accessible across all of our communities. Current evidence from the Taking Part Survey places Bradford arts engagement levels at 36.4%\(^2\) (this excludes museums and libraries) and provides a baseline to build on.

It will be essential to work closely with the educational providers within the district to support cultural opportunities for all - from early years to further education and lifelong learning. Our schools, colleges and the University of Bradford play a vital role in the cultural development of our audiences. The further education facilities strongly help to position our cultural and creative offer internationally drawing in students with world class facilities for arts and culture and a range of courses that strengthen our ambition to be ‘a leading cultural city’.

Engaging specific communities of interest will also be a key area of attention in ensuring that there is appropriate support for our explicit commitment to diversity and equality of access for all.

- **Volunteers**

Volunteers play an incredible role in delivering our cultural offer. They ensure that cultural events happen and run smoothly; they take tickets; they lead tours at museums; they ensure that arts and cultural festivals run smoothly. Increasing and improving the skills and opportunities for our volunteers will be essential. They are our advocates and ambassadors.

\(^2\) NI11 baseline from 2010
The Cultural strategy will take active steps to develop and invest in cultural ambassadors at a grassroots level as well as in professional settings like museums, theatres and businesses. We will also connect with national organisations such as the Voluntary Arts Network - the representative agency for the voluntary and amateur arts and crafts, to encourage skills development and recognition of our volunteers.

- **Customer Service and Hospitality Industry**

Bradford’s customer service and hospitality industry needs to be at the top of its game to secure a more prominent and powerful market position. Cultural tourism is not just about marketing the District to everyone but making sure the whole experience and visitor offer is the best in the UK. Investment now needs to be made in getting the whole experience right – from front of house to visitor information. Working in partnership with our cultural organisations, Visit Bradford, and our hospitality industry this strategy will ensure that we train, inform and support our people to help deliver the district cultural vision as a leading cultural City and destination in the UK to encourage a ‘go to’ effect.

### Priority 1 – Investing in our People

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<th><strong>Aim 1:</strong> Develop clear pathways within the cultural and creative industries for talent and skills development</th>
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PRIORITY 2: BUILDING A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE SECTOR

The model and case for investment in Bradford’s cultural offer needs to see a significant shift over the next ten years. Arts and culture is not a luxury - it is part of what makes our district great and our cultural organisations need to feel confident in their financial sustainability whilst being encouraged to take creative risk. The current economic environment presents many challenges to artists and cultural organisations. Diversifying cultural income will not be easy but a better balance between public and private investment will create a more resilient and independent sector.

Priority 2 will focus on stimulating growth and diversifying investment in our creative, digital and tourism industries.

Bradford contributes £7.5bn to the UK economy and this is expected to grow to more than £8bn by 2016\(^3\). However the statistics for the contribution of culture and creative industries to the economy in Bradford are not currently available in a way that provides an insight into the economic and social value of the cultural offer. The first year of the delivery plan will establish better monitoring and evaluating systems to capture data which effectively demonstrates the value of culture over the next 10 years.

**Diversifying Cultural investment**

Identifying new and increasing sources of income from national bodies, businesses, trusts, foundation and philanthropic investors will be critical to the sustainability and growth of arts and cultural organisations. The delivery plan will identify ways of brokering relationships and partnerships to develop a diverse investment base for cultural provision and support the cultural and creative industry in developing new business models.

As the commissioning landscape shifts the delivery plan will inform a stronger focus on building a more sustainable funding regime encouraging greater collaboration, shared services and smarter investment through procurement and commissioning.

**Making the Case for Investment**

In order to successfully make the case for cultural investment this strand will be underpinned by research that will provide a clear impact assessment on the sector’s role in the economic and social regeneration of the City.

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\(^3\) Bradford Council Economic Service
Improving the evidence base for culture will strengthen our ability to lever inward investment from national cultural agencies and other partners.

The plan will also focus on demonstrating the value and role of culture in delivering public services for example education, health and social care. Evidencing the impact will create increased opportunities for the cultural sector to showcase and apply their cultural solutions in a way that makes sense to decision makers and commissioners of public services.

Alongside diversifying the investment in culture and making the case for investment a focus on skills will be a priority area; essential to moving us up the rankings in relation to the contribution of creative industries and tourism to the district’s economy. Initiatives such as developing apprenticeship schemes for all ages into creative and cultural employment in partnership with the University, Colleges and the National Media Museum will be crucial.

**Trading on our cultural offer**

For the district to become a ‘producing city that ‘makes, creates and trades’ then the creative and cultural industries must play a role in this. Getting the plan right for what we import and export culturally across the district will contribute to a more diversified and prosperous economy.

Bradford district already has global links through its heritage and communities. The delivery plan will exploit the opportunities more effectively for the export of our cultural talent and import of complimentary cultural products.

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<td><strong>Aim 4:</strong> Identify opportunities to export and trade our cultural offer nationally and internationally</td>
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PRIORITY 3: RESPONSIBLE AND ACTIVE LEADERSHIP

Developing a ‘can-do’ culture was a consistent aspiration expressed throughout the discussions with residents and wider stakeholders. Leadership is crucial to achieving this.

Bradford Council in partnership with key agencies has taken the initiative to lead the review of the Cultural Strategy. The Council and its key partner agencies will continue to play a fundamental and strategic role in the delivery of this strategy, but they cannot do this alone.

**Priority 3** will facilitate leadership and invest in the expertise and talent that exists in Bradford. It’s about putting plans in place that will build the ‘can-do’ attitude in the Council and across Bradford and encourage the cultural sector to work collaboratively to achieve the Vision.

We will seek to bring together from within the district and beyond people to join a new Cultural Leadership Board. This group of people will be active people who are connected, have influence and can lead the way in changing the perception of Bradford and its cultural future; people who put ‘what is in it for the district’ first, individuals who will inspire, motivate and generate the change that needs to happen. A balanced make-up of the leadership representation in this group will be encouraged – age and leadership are not mutually exclusive. To encourage the future generation of creative and cultural leaders we will include representation from our young people and get them involved in contributing to the cultural direction and delivery of this strategy.

The Cultural Leadership Board will oversee the monitoring and evaluation process of implementing the Strategy.

Whilst the Cultural Leadership Board will be the driving force leading the delivery of the cultural vision there is a second layer of ownership that needs to be nurtured.

The cultural sector in the district needs to embrace the vision and take up the mantle as Ambassadors locally, regionally and nationally. This might be about physically developing cultural and creative work; promoting the offer through digital technologies such as social media; working with Council departments to create buy-in to the value of culture; taking their locally-made product on tour - every contribution will make a difference. Our cultural sector together will be responsible for making it happen – in our communities, schools, venues, libraries, museums and public spaces.
**Priority 3 - Responsible and Active Leadership**

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<th>Aim 1: Create a leadership style that promotes cultural innovation, advocacy and visibility</th>
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<td>Aim 2: Support and develop leadership and skills opportunities for artists and organisations</td>
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<td>Aim 3: Nurture ownership and build a collaborative ‘can-do’ approach</td>
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**PRIORITY 4: A THRIVING CULTURAL OFFER**

A thriving cultural offer is about ensuring that there is a wide range and choice in the cultural offer produced and received in the district; choice over what to see and do; choice over whether to observe or participate, choice of where to go. It is about creating an appetite for quality experiences.

**Priority 4** sets out the direction for making sure there is a rich mix of cultural choices available which makes seeing and doing easy, fun and something people want to repeat. We will champion a magnificent cultural experience supported by greater collaboration and synergy between organisations, artists, communities, programmes and projects.

Technology will play a significant role in making connections across our cultural offer. Through technology we will encourage people to be curators of their own cultural material online, as makers or viewers, and maximise the reach of where a magnificent cultural experience can happen.

**A Producing City**

Over the last ten years Bradford district has seen investment focused on building its cultural infrastructure - its cultural venues, parks and urban spaces. The next ten years will focus on providing opportunities for the district’s talent to create and produce more cultural products to animate these spaces.

Encouraging and investing in a ‘created here’ ethos will encourage an attractive business environment for production to flourish. It will fuel a host of cultural outputs from craft industries and theatre to film and music recording as well as unleash the creative skills of our residents.

The economic benefits derived by encouraging and investing in positioning Bradford as a ‘producing cultural city’ will be clear, creating conditions to stimulate and produce work that trades regionally, nationally and internationally whilst simultaneously developing new audiences for the district and attracting new visitors.

**Grassroots to professional**

The ‘hidden’ or currently under-utilised grassroots and community arts activity is incredibly important to the residents within the district. It is essential not to try and overly formalise the grassroots or fringe activity as that is what feeds district’s vibrancy. Building capacity across the spectrum of talent at a grassroots level will enhance the self-determination to create and present work. Connecting and sharing expertise from the professional sector will also
be another way to build the skills, knowledge and excellence of the grassroots offer.

The district is home to a number of professional cultural organizations. They create unique and special experiences across the district whilst at the same time being willing to push the boundaries to shape a first class offer. We will continue to develop our ambition to play on an international platform – bringing, where possible, world class acts to the Bradford district and with it outstanding cultural experiences for our citizens and visitors.

**A Festival City**

Our residents want to see an inspiring programme of events and festivals. Promoting the wealth of nationally renowned festivals we have such as Ilkley Literature Festival, Bradford Animation Festival, Bradford International Film Festival, the MELA, Saltaire Festival and World Curry Festival as part of an annual calendar will be a starting point to establishing the district’s festival offer.

Cultural Festivals co-created and co-produced by local communities and the creative sector will play a key role in sustaining a vibrant cultural scene at local level.

Developing a new approach to deliver an iconic festival that residents will be proud of and visitors will engage with as part of their cultural calendar will be part of the plan to bring festivals further into the heart of the offer.

Establishing a renowned festival will take time but it is more than just putting on an event. It is about connecting with our community, showcasing our cultural offer and placing festivals as ‘must-attend’ events.

**Getting the basics right**

Residents generally feel the cultural offer is strong but Bradford needs to address the ‘whole’ experience. Investing in parking and transport; bars and restaurants and shopping will create a better holistic experience during leisure time. These areas cannot be addressed in isolation by cultural services officers. All council departments and key agencies need to work collaboratively to tackle the current fragmentation in the experience. This will mean working closely with neighbourhood services, police, transport and highways for example.

These issues are not under the radar in the district. The Council and residents are all aware of the challenges the place has faced in these areas. But in order to be a leading cultural city action needs to be taken and changes made. Once these basics are improved people will start to feel confident to engage and be proud of Bradford district’s cultural offer. By seeing action it
will create a sense of possibility and the people of Bradford will want to get involved and shout about how great their place is to friends, family and visitors to the City.

**Priority 4 - A Thriving Cultural Offer**

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<th>Aim 1: A distinctive cultural programme that animates our people and places</th>
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<td>Aim 3: Shape a world class cultural offer that embraces the creativity and innovation from grassroots to professional</td>
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<td>Aim 4: Position Bradford as ‘A City of Festivals’ with an international reputation</td>
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<td>Aim 5: Use technology to maximise reach and engagement</td>
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<td>Aim 6: Place the ‘whole’ cultural experience as central to supporting a thriving cultural offer (getting the basics right)</td>
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PRIORITY 5: A CULTURAL DESTINATION – TELLING AND SELLING OUR STORY

Culture will be used as a distinctive vehicle for re-positioning Bradford as an appealing City in the minds of residents and visitors. Residents want to be proud of their identity and desire an improved cultural experience.

Priority 5 will drive forward the cultural and creative story of the district and lobby for support across the City to re-imagine the approach to its place-making story. Building the districts reputation as a cultural destination will encourage more and different types of people to experience the arts and culture in the area in a way that contributes to the growth of our local visitor economy.

Working in partnership with key agencies such as Visit England, Welcome to Yorkshire, Visit Bradford, the hospitality industry and the creative and cultural sector, the delivery plan will ensure that by 2024 Bradford District is positioned as a leading cultural city in the UK - a City that is front of mind as a cultural destination.

Confidence in Bradford

There is a sense that Bradford is embarking on a cultural renaissance. One which embraces its industrial heritage alongside its eclectic character, deriving ideas, style or taste from a broad and diverse range of sources. A district that makes, creates and trades; that takes pride in its shared identity, landscape and cultural offer.

Building confidence in Bradford cannot rely on the sole promotion of existing cultural assets. Strategic planning interventions and urban regeneration will be essential in creating a welcoming ‘atmosphere’ and experience of the district. The City Park is a start in transforming the city centre into a pleasant and inviting space to be.

However building the cultural brand needs to be more than just about place in isolation. It must be based on audience intelligence and an understanding of what residents and visitors want. It needs to be about the relationship between businesses, retail, public spaces, transport, housing, education, employment and entertainment. It will embrace the relationship between sports and culture and celebrate the links between the district’s sporting and creative offer and how they work together to create a quality of life that matters.

Culture will assist in connecting the link between economic regeneration (through creative industries and tourism sector employment and income) and social capital (cohesion, quality of life) as well as visually seen as the physical
indicator of regeneration through investment in our buildings, icons and public art.

**Marketing the cultural offer**

Whilst the quality of the offer and the cultural spaces available in the district is rich there is an opportunity to improve our marketing of place across the district. The council, cultural sector and communities all need to work together to build collaborative approaches to reaching and persuading audiences and visitors to engage, concentrating combined resources on the best opportunities to develop campaigns that are fully integrated and impactful. The delivery plan will prioritise ways to successfully promote the district’s cultural offer and associated experience to residents and visitors.

Part of the approach will involve building up our internationally recognised Cultural Ambassadors – people who can advocate for the Bradford District as well as local cultural ambassadors who can work on the ground within their communities to build pride and passion in the cultural offer of the district.

**Priority 5: A cultural destination – selling and telling our story**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim 1: Prioritise audience intelligence data to inform targeted cultural marketing</th>
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<td>Aim 2: Tell Bradford’s cultural story effectively and passionately</td>
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<td>Aim 3: Collaborate strategically to target and engage new audiences and visitors</td>
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MEASURING CULTURAL VALUE

Across all of the five priorities measuring the economic and social value of the district cultural portfolio will be critical to ensure that whoever is engaging with this strategy – elected members, senior management, public services, funders, arts organisations, businesses, residents and visitors – feel confident in the commitment and potential for cultural growth.

Highlighting the value of culture and creativity to the economy, community, health, well-being and educational attainment and ultimately to people’s quality of life is crucial. We recognise the importance of being able to measure this more effectively over the next ten years in order to be more confident in the case for cultural investment – public and private. In 2013 the Office for National Statistics added arts and culture as one of their measures of national well-being⁴ which endorses the national perception of the role of culture in this area. By gathering the cultural intelligence we will know where we are at and what will work moving forward. Only then can we adapt and make informed decisions that can steer investment.

**Why measure the value?**

Measuring the impact of the actions that arise out of this strategy is very important. We need to be better placed in understanding how well we are doing and the difference culture makes to Bradford. Going forward and taking into account where we are now will be a primary action in Year 1 - creating a baseline of data – both economic and social and then benchmarking it year-on-year.

National research in 2013⁵ tells us:

- arts and culture make up 0.4 per cent of *GDP – a significant return on the less than 0.1 per cent of government spending invested in the sector;
- arts and culture is a sector of significant scale with a turnover of £12.4 billion and a GVA** of £5.9 billion in 2011;
- arts and culture generate more per pound invested than the health, wholesale and retail, and professional and business services sectors;

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⁵ The contribution of the arts and culture to the national economy, an independent report commissioned by the Arts Council and conducted by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR). *GDP – Gross Domestic Product is defined as the economic value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period **GVA – Gross value added is a measure in economics of the economic value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy]
• at least £856 million per annum of spending by tourists visiting the UK can be attributed directly to arts and culture; and
• the economic contribution of the arts and cultural sector has grown since 2008, despite the UK economy as a whole remaining below its output level before the global financial crisis.

CASE data gives us a more local baseline understanding for Bradford’s culture and heritage profile in comparison with other local areas. Its data can be interrogated to understand the 2009/10 position in relation to economic performance, attendance and participation, quality and satisfaction, sites and assets and financial investment. However it is not clear how much longer this data profile will be collected so Bradford district needs to take control of its own insight and intelligence.

**Gathering, analysing and acting on information**

The delivery plan will prioritise the gathering and analysing of information so the district can make informed decisions about improvements and developments needed to meet this strategy vision.

In Year 1 a baseline report of current cultural intelligence about Bradford (drawing on resources such as CASE data and wider research) will be delivered. The report will also recommend and establish methodology for capturing economic and social impact in order to be able to review 10 years’ worth of data when setting the new strategic direction in 2024.

Out of this a biennial cultural summary report will be provided to the sector and key stakeholders to provide a timely review of impact and value – allowing the Plan to adapt to changes and developments.

**Why is this information valuable?**

The intrinsic value of arts and culture to our lives is clear. However in a time of increasing scrutiny about the return on investment from all funding agencies, private investors and public spend it is essential that Bradford develops an appropriate coherent mechanism to collect valuable evidence based data.

Evidence will provide tangible economic impact measures such as the contribution of cultural tourism income on City living or the employment contribution of our creative industries. In turn this will position culture as a serious contributor to the quality of life in the district, potentially opening up discussions around new avenues of income and ultimately measure how Bradford is becoming a place that people ‘love and enjoy’.
TAKING ACTION

This strategy is a call to action – to public and private bodies, artists, politicians, businesses, community groups and residents to make this happen. To create, to make, to challenge, to inspire and promote an offer that makes Bradford a leading cultural city.

This is a ten year strategic framework. The implementation process breaks down into four blocks of activity.

2014 - 2017 Laying the Foundations and creating action

2017 - 2019 Building cultural confidence

2019 - 2022 Living the vision

2022 - 2024 Re-define aspiration

Getting the investment right

Delivering the Cultural Vision cannot happen without financial investment. In the first three years the delivery plan will be ‘Laying the Foundations and Creating Action’. This is a crucial investment period where Bradford Council, key stakeholders, arts and cultural organisations and funding bodies need to work together to lever and consolidate investment and resources to make the most impact.

The strategy informs external cultural agencies, artists and cultural organisations of the aspirations sought for the City. It shapes an ambition which aligns with a focus to see a sustained increase in funding from key funding agencies over the next ten years as cultural confidence grows and outcomes develop.

Retaining investment in times of austerity whilst identifying how to broker and diversify the investment strands in the local cultural landscape will be crucial and a huge challenge. This will involve the Cultural Leadership Board, the council and the wider sector advocating and collaborating with funding and commissioning bodies, encouraging local multi-nationals and SME businesses to invest and supporting organisations to develop sustainable business models.

Who will help?

This plan has not been created in isolation and inter-links with lots of other strategies and priorities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Success requires the support, commitment and promotion of the cultural vision by the creative and cultural industries across the district, economic
development and planning, hospitality and tourism industries (such as Visit Bradford, Welcome to Yorkshire and Visit England), the University of Bradford, schools and colleges, funders including Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund, cultural icons, media and ultimately the residents.

How you can help?

As a resident:

- Attend a cultural venue you have never been to before.
- Try something new – craft, film production, book-club, amateur theatre, museum visit.
- Encourage your children to engage in arts / ask your child’s school what their cultural programme is.
- Become a volunteer.

As an artist or cultural organisation

- Invite your Elected Members to your event, workshop or exhibition – get your audiences to tell them about the impact.
- Prioritise the gathering and use of audience intelligence and how it informs the Bradford cultural picture.
- Develop cultural activity in your neighbourhood.
- Mentor an emerging arts and cultural organisation.
- Undertake joint ventures to lever inward investment.

As a local business

- Consider how you can incorporate arts and culture into your business environment.
- Encourage your staff to experience the cultural offer within the district.
- Invest in supporting a local artistic or cultural project.

As a funder, commissioner or agency

- Identify areas and ways that you can invest and support Bradford district cultural vision.
- Advocate regionally, nationally and internationally about the district cultural offer.
• Use Bradford’s refreshed approach as a good practice example of changing the cultural narrative of a city.

Appendix 1 – Strategies - Informing the Cultural Direction

A number of strategies have been referred to and consulted as part of developing this strategy.

• Bradford Community Strategy 2011-14
• Bradford District’s Employment and Skills
• Bradford District’s Economic Strategy
• Education Improvement Strategy
• A Place to call home – Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014 - 2024
• Producer City
• City Plan
• Bradford City of Film 2009/2011 Strategy
• Arts Council England (Greats Art for Everyone/ Culture, Knowledge and Understanding: Great Museums for Everyone
• Visit Britain: Delivering a Golden Legacy: A growth strategy for inbound tourism for 2012-2020
• Heritage Lottery Fund Strategic Framework 2013-2018: A lasting difference for heritage and people
• Welcome to Yorkshire: 5 years strategy for the Yorkshire brand
• Chamber of Commerce website