

Lessons from the Cultural Pathfinders

The projects

The Cultural Pathfinders

Twelve trailblazing projects explored ways in which cultural services can impact on the priority needs of local communities, delivering shared outcomes and driving service improvements.

Presented here are the Pathfinder projects, including some of their achievements (Greatest Hits), learning points (Top Tips) and contacts for further information.

The 12 projects

Leaps and Bounds, Birmingham

At the Heart and Taking Part, Canterbury

The Discovery Centre programme, Hampshire

Enabling Creative Industries, Herefordshire

It's Not OK, Liverpool

Culture for Keeps, Richmond upon Thames

Museums for Changing Lives, Manchester

Creative Futures, Sheffield

Somerset Creative Industries Development Agency, Somerset

The Sunbury Cross public art project, Spelthorne

Realising the Cultural and Heritage dividend, Suffolk

Cultural Regeneration through Coastal Partnership,
North and South Tyneside



Leaps and Bounds

Birmingham

Leaps and Bounds offered at-risk young people in the West Midlands a huge challenge, and a new chance in life, through ballet. The life-changing potential of culture was portrayed powerfully on Channel 4 TV as *Ballet Hoo! Ballet Changed My Life*.

“Groundbreaking... the project is all about overturning preconceptions... a testament to the transformative power of art.” *The Independent*, 10 September 2006

Greatest Hits

- 70 per cent of young people completed the life goals they set at the outset, one of which had to be a health related goal such as ceasing smoking.
- 38 young people achieved BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) accreditation through the programme.
- 50 per cent reported improvements to health and fitness. 42.5 per cent reported increased confidence and self-esteem. 72 per cent changed their way of thinking, were better focused and able to control their anger. 75 per cent would like continued involvement in the performing arts.

Top Tips

- Don't underestimate the requirements for support of young people from at risk backgrounds if they are to participate fully in activities. Staff phoned participants to check that they were out of bed, they had eaten, and they were in a taxi on their way to a workshop – basically providing the kind of support which families of other children would give. The support given to young people enabled them to continue to engage with the arts activity and will be built into future programmes.
- To respect others' professional expertise and not confuse youth workers with arts workers, teachers or carers. We have established a training programme for youth workers and artists to train together to develop better understanding of each others' roles.

For further details please contact:

Val Birchall

Birmingham County Council

T: 0121 303 2919

E: val_birchall@birmingham.gov.uk

At the Heart and Taking part Canterbury

At the Heart and Taking Part promoted the creative engagement of children and young people with their cultural heritage through the redevelopment of the Beaney Institute in the city centre.

Greatest Hits

- Effective ways of working with young people embedded in museum and gallery services.
- Better understanding gained of the needs, interests and motivations of children and young people.
- Improved ways to actively engage them developed.

Top Tips

- Listen and value – don't 'do and tell'.
- Don't underestimate young people's creativity and potential.
- Make projects flexible so they can develop formatively through ideas coming forward from participants.
- Don't underestimate the time it will take to gain trust, make connections, inspire and motivate young people.
- Involve creative facilitators.
- Creativity isn't just about art!

For further details please contact:

Krystyna Matyjaszkiewicz

Canterbury City Council

T: 01227 475 225

E: krystyna.m@canterbury.gov.uk



The Discovery Centre programme

Hampshire County Council

The Discovery Centre programme: regenerating libraries and transforming communities provided a model for an improved, more effective and more efficient way of delivering services by co-locating them in one building.

Greatest Hits

- Growth in the number of visits – up by 40 per cent.
- Alignment of visitor profile with the demographic profile of Gosport – attracting significantly more young people.
- Successful design in breaking down perceptual barriers to use for previous non-users – creating a social space.
- Political support from the Leader and Members – raising the profile of the contribution the cultural services can make to achieving Hampshire's local priorities.
- Investment in the Winchester Discovery Centre.
- Growing interest of potential partners in future developments eg Basingstoke and Deane.
- The rigorous evaluation and qualitative research has demonstrated real impact and provided data to encourage future support and the case for a stronger cultural element in Hampshire's next LAA and Community Strategy.

Top Tips

- Organisational/cultural change and 'buy in' is needed throughout the management and support structure – not just at point of delivery and at the top.
- Socialisation of the spaces is key to securing a place within the local community for the whole community – beyond traditional library use.
- Build in physical and organisational flexibility – customer needs will change over time and the 'product' offering (service, building, facilities) and staff must be able to respond to new opportunities.
- Plan and build in continual review and evaluation of the product – allow a realistic timeframe for evidencing change.
- Staff need time to shake down and adapt – changing skills are required for changed service delivery.
- Balance the PR message so as not to 'turn off' traditional users – more targeted marketing.
- Strong influential leadership able to drive forward change is key.
- Encourage innovation – innovative projects (such as Discovery Centres) play a significant role in advocacy with political leaders and partners. Raising awareness and learning about how the cultural services can contribute to the achievement of other policy objectives and outcomes.
- A joined-up approach with the integration and co-location of services is the future. This poses a challenge for the evaluation or measurement of traditional service elements as boundaries become merged.

For further details please contact:

Helen Wheeler

Hampshire County Council

E: helen.wheeler@hants.gov.uk



Enabling Creative Industries Herefordshire

Promoting the economic vitality of the county through Enabling Creative Industries.

Greatest Hits

- Helping an Art College student launch their career at New Designers 2006.
- Mentoring an emergent artist through to their first big, solo Show.
- Funding a student designer to start their own business.
- Creating a new town centre Craft Fair for developing artists.
- Establishing the Open Studio and Craft Fair as commercially viable events.
- Partnering with the local Art College and a neighbouring council to offer training to their clients.

Top Tips

- Be sure you can collect the data – you may aspire beyond your resources.
- Evaluation starts at the beginning – think about how and what to evaluate when you start planning an activity programme.

For further details please contact:

Andy Dawson

Herefordshire County Council

E: adawson@herefordshire.gov.uk



It's Not OK

Liverpool

It's Not OK is a young people's project aimed at changing attitudes towards violence. It included production of a learning resource 'Plastered: Life is about Choices' with a powerful film, to reduce alcohol-related violence and harm.

Greatest Hits

- When the complete 'Plastered' pack – film with guidance for teachers – was used to deliver a structured learning programme there was a clear, measurable impact on young people's attitude to alcohol.
- Qualitative evidence shows that young people enjoy the process of learning offered by 'Plastered'.
- The numbers of young people agreeing with the statements:
'Drinking at house parties is a laugh and a safe thing to do'.
'If I see my friends getting drunk I don't worry, they'll be OK'.
'Alcohol doesn't affect your ability to look after yourself'.
'People still make good decisions when they have been drinking alcohol'.
– all fell significantly as a result of the project.
- Fourteen Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions offered with 'Plastered' attended by a total of 230 teachers/youth workers demonstrates their dedication to the project.
- To date it is estimated the resource has been used by 20,000 young people across Merseyside. A national launch is planned.

Top Tips

- High quality production values for the films and the imaginative design of the learning pack.
- Young local people as actors gave authenticity and credibility for young audiences.
- Plan follow up sessions to discuss and enforce the messages for educational films to be effective.
- Provision of a learning pack and CPD briefing sessions to help overstretched teachers and youth workers to make full use of it.
- Consultation with teachers in the production of the learning pack, and with young people in the development of the film.
- The financial sustainability of the projects beyond 2008, when Liverpool is no longer European Capital of Culture, will present a challenge.
- To ensure sustainability, the excellent partnerships of agencies need to be more formalised through Local Service Agreements, with a streamlined Steering Group and a Project Manager to drive the work forward.

For further details please contact:

Liverpool County Council

Gaynor Wright

T: 0151 233 4125

E: gaynor.wright@liverpool.gov.uk

Paul Ainsworth

T: 0151 707 8211

E: paul@arieltrust.com



Culture for keeps

Richmond upon Thames

Culture for keeps – providing looked-after young people with new opportunities to produce tangible, high quality results.

Greatest Hits

- The engagement and relationships built with young people/foster families and arts services through this programme has proved that culture can work for any group – if the focus is upon their needs and aspirations.
- Aiming high: culture gave these children chances to aspire and achieve way beyond their expectations. The involvement of quality practitioners and quality projects enabled them to excel.
- Providing a forum to celebrate and share their successes during the project boosts self-esteem and self-confidence. This positively re-enforces the 'try it you might like it' message.
- Dynamically developing the shared concept of 'corporate parenting' across the authority, raising awareness of their needs and the value of their engagement in cultural activity: all council staff are 'corporate parents' for looked after children.
- Gaining clear evidence that exposure to cultural activities will have a positive impact on educational attainment, attendance and achievement and will improve the self-esteem, social skills and resilience.
- Developing the idea of 'cultural entitlement' for children and young people looked after by Richmond and allowing hidden or unknown talents and interests to blossom.
- The young man who said that he would be "gutted" if he didn't have Culture for Keeps; the young woman who said that if she didn't have it she would "be at home driving her parents crazy".

Top Tips

- Develop shared ownership with all partners at an early stage – this will help deal with any problem or potential barriers.
- Make sure everyone in the organisation is briefed well on the project – from managers to receptionists.
- Consulting with the young people and giving them an element of ownership to the project certainly improves the engagement of the young people.
- Understanding the client group is a must and takes time. But once this is established – watch the project flourish.
- Having a friendly face they will remember at each of the services will encourage continued participation. These young people have far too many people in and out of their lives and an element of stability always helps.
- Know your vision, invest time with your partners, agree the targets and enjoy the outcomes.
- See problems as challenges that are an opportunity to resolve jointly.
- Talk to young people, include them at all stages and listen to what they are saying even when what they are saying is difficult to hear or respond to. Look for the compromise, the way forward and act!
- Know your strengths and areas to develop. Share and enjoy the knowledge and expertise of others and integrate everybody's thinking into a realistic and achievable vision.
- Don't be frightened to make mistakes. Stay focused and communicate clearly.

For further details please contact:

Aileen Cahill

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

T: 020 8831 6116

E: a.cahill@richmond.gov.uk





Museums for changing lives

Manchester

Museums for changing lives: Working together to raise standards, through North West Museums' Hub funding a Primary Consultant within the Manchester Education Partnership, delivering the Museums and Galleries Project in Education (MAGPIE).

Greatest Hits

- Museums and galleries in Manchester used *Renaissance in the Regions* funding to create a senior post in the City Council's Children's Services Department. A former primary school head is leading (MAGPIE) collaborative work between five museums and over 100 schools.
- MAGPIE has been evaluated by the University of Warwick who have found that it has had a considerable impact on teachers' practice, confidence and satisfaction in the teaching of writing.
- The pupils involved in MAGPIE achieved, on average, an increase in attainment measured by National Curriculum writing levels that was 35 per cent greater than nationally set expectations for progress.

Top Tips

- Schools and museums have common learning objectives. A mediator between the education and museum sectors with sufficient seniority and experience can broker innovative partnerships between the two.
- Working with museums and galleries can inspire teachers to change their everyday practice in the classroom.
- Commitment to long-term co-working, rather than isolated projects, produces significant benefits for all parties. Museum and gallery staff have been able to keep up to date with new local and national educational initiatives.

For further details please contact:

Myna Trustram

Manchester City Council

T: 0161 235 8849

E: m.trustram@manchester.gov.uk



Creative Futures

Sheffield

Creative Futures: Southey Owlerton Area Regeneration is a community-led partnership with a Cultural Action Plan revitalising neighbourhoods in north Sheffield.

Greatest Hits

Local impact

- The creation of a locally based Cultural Strategy Steering Group made a significant contribution to the integration of culture into the area regeneration.
- Creative Futures projects have helped to change perceptions of the regeneration area and will be used in branding and information strategies for Housing Market Renewal areas.
- Funding for culture pages in a magazine distributed to every household 'normalised' culture along with housing, community safety etc.

City wide impact

- The effective use of the cultural planning approach has led to the integration of culture into the Housing Market Renewal areas across the City, in a programme jointly funded by Arts Council England and Sheffield City Council.
- There is a greater understanding at strategic level of the role of culture in neighbourhood regeneration. This is evidenced in attitudes of local elected members, inclusion of neighbourhoods in the City's Cultural Strategy and increased understanding in the LAA.
- City centre cultural institutions e.g. Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust (SGMT) have developed new relationships with neighbourhood organisations.

Top Tips

- Cultural champions at different levels in different organisations can have a major impact when working in partnership.
- Effective strategies often emerge from years of bottom up working.
- Strong leadership from key individuals can leave a lasting legacy when they move on.
- Cultural and non-cultural organisations working together in one area can maximize their offer.
- Cultural organisations can reach and engage with communities in ways that are difficult for local non cultural providers. Local non-cultural providers can provide resources and support to cultural projects which then provide target clients for their services.
- The partnership between Eventus, a local independent cultural agency and the City Council enabled the city to access added skills and experience in working with communities.
- Adults value cultural experiences as much as children and young people provided they are appropriate in content, form and approach.

For further details please contact:

Dr Ann Gosse

Sheffield City Council

E: ann.gosse@sheffield.gov.uk



Somerset Creative Industries Development Agency (CIDA)

Somerset

Somerset Creative Industries Development Agency (CIDA) was set up to support and grow the county's creative businesses.

Greatest Hits

- Significantly improved relationship between County and Districts and better inclusion of Somerset Arts Promoters (providers).
- A higher profile for culture.
- A more joined up approach particularly between culture and economic development.
- The work has set the foundations for reviewing the cultural strategy in a way that will make the service more strategically relevant for the County and Districts.
- This more strategic and joined-up approach has resulted in the partnership leveraging in additional funding to take the project to the next phase.

Top Tips

- Be prepared to give more time than you expect to developing relationships.
- External consultants can provide a real impetus for taking partners forward together if the scope for their work is jointly agreed and there is a preparedness to accept constructive criticism.
- Be determined to keep to a work plan with clear agendas and an agreed leader.
- Understand the strategic context and how culture can make a difference – be prepared to provide evidence of this and involve your providers in moving the service forward.

For further details please contact:

Kay Allen

Somerset County Council

E: KXAllen@somerset.gov.uk



Sunbury Cross public art project

Spelthorne

The Sunbury Cross public art project transformed a subway system which appeared dark, drab and dangerous into a lighter, brighter facility. Young people at risk of offending or re-offending used graffiti art to great effect.

Greatest Hits

- The development and continued communication with partners (youth development service, artists, highways, police, fire service etc).
- Five major aerosol murals and three large mosaic murals which are now left as public art in the space.
- The amount of funding through grants and sponsorship that has been raised to make the projects happen, although this took a lot of time.
- Life-changing experiences: case studies of young people back in education or employment, not committing crime and developing their skills within the youth service.
- The roll out of the work to other needy areas of the borough in order to make Spelthorne a better and safer place, as well as to engage more young people.
- Encouraging more aerosol art projects with vulnerable young people across the country. Spelthorne has created a 'how to manage an aerosol mural project' guide to aid this campaign.

Top Tips

- The evaluation enabled work towards getting culture valued and recognition of further worthwhile projects to better the Borough through culture.
- To maintain the area and the positive roll out projects will require much more partnership working – a challenge but also a great source of development.

For further details please contact:

Faye Munns

Spelthorne Borough Council

T: 01784 446306

E: f.munns@spelthorne.gov.uk

Liz Borthwick

Spelthorne Borough Council

E: l.borthwick@spelthorne.gov.uk



Realising the Cultural and Heritage dividend

Suffolk

Realising the Cultural and Heritage dividend, an aim of Suffolk's Community Strategy – to increase access to cultural opportunities and increase the impact of cultural investment.

Greatest Hits

- **Partnership** – public and private cultural sector working together to deliver real outcomes for local people and being able to demonstrate the value of culture to partners from cross agendas like health, community cohesion and crime and disorder.
- **Leadership** – the pathfinder programme helped to increase the profile of culture in Suffolk and subsequently there is a new Economic and Cultural Development portfolio for Suffolk County Council.
- **Enhanced two tier working** – the County Council and all the Borough and Districts Councils' co-ordinated delivery of the Pathfinder programme through the Cultural Officer Group for Suffolk (COGS). This is a fantastic example of how Suffolk is already working towards enhanced two tier working to deliver efficiency and quality benefits for local people in the cultural sector.
- **Profile** – culture and sport now features as a theme in the emerging Suffolk Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2028, which will inform round two of LAA.

Top Tips

- **Evaluation** – agree a robust and universal evaluation methodology for cultural projects so that the value of culture can be clearly evidenced.
- **People** – appoint people who can sell the benefits and have resilience, drive and vision to inspire and persuade others to invest in culture.

For further details please contact:

Sara Blake

Suffolk County Council

T: 01473 260761

E: sara.blake@acs.suffolkcc.gov.uk



Cultural Regeneration through Coastal Partnership

North and South Tyneside

With a focus on 'promoting the economic vitality of localities' the project has supported the development of jobs, the economy and cultural infrastructure of the coastal areas north and south of the mouth of the Tyne.

The Pathfinder involved two councils, with little history of working together, working in partnership to regenerate the area through culture and tourism. Close, collaborative working has generated confidence and secured funding for superb cultural facilities and events. Tourism now supports nearly 4,000 jobs in the area, and they have ambitious plans for the future.

Greatest Hits

- Mouth of the Tyne Festival.

Top Tips

- Think long-term.

For further details please contact:

Richard Barber

South Tyneside Council

E: richard.barber@southtyneside.gov.uk

Steve Bishop

North Tyneside Council

E: steve.bishop@northtyneside.gov.uk