

Welcome to the conversation

Your views are invited on how Arts and Culture can help Bedford Borough become a place where there are even more opportunities for people, communities, and business to get involved, grow and realise their potential.

Bedford Borough Council have secured investment from Arts Council England, for a team led by The Higgins to consult with local people at events, on social media and through an online survey.

Your ideas will help shape how we develop a Cultural Strategy for Bedford Borough and what the strategic priorities will be. There are three themes: A Thriving Place, Young People Realising Potential, and Inclusion.

The conversation will take place in meetings and online, in June 2017. As a quick and easy way to share views, you are invited to respond to this [short questionnaire](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ArtsCultureBedford) (<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ArtsCultureBedford>).

Our first event will be held at The Higgins on Tuesday 6th June at 5.30-7 pm. Another will follow at The Place theatre on 14th June at 1.30. Book a free place by [following this link](https://bedfordexchanges14june.eventbrite.co.uk) (<https://bedfordexchanges14june.eventbrite.co.uk>).

#BedfordExchanges

Read on for more

Bedford Borough Council have secured investment from Arts Council England to begin to develop a cultural strategy for the borough. This work is being facilitated by Bedford BC and led by a small working group which includes, The Higgins Bedford, Full House Theatre, BedPop and BCA, and is delivered by cultural consultants Emma Wilcox Associates.

This work will enable a range of cultural organisations and wider partners, to begin to explore and develop a cultural strategy for Bedford, setting out a clear and ambitious vision shaping the cultural future of the borough. In doing so we will grow the sector's capability to deliver programmes in partnership with our communities.

We are mindful of the work that has already been undertaken in Bedford recently, towards establishing a Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) and in the past through the Bedford Cultural Network and projects such as We are Bedford. Our work will build on the themes and priorities already emerging and give a structure and framework for future development.

The work will be delivered in two stages. This first stage is a scoping and research phase, and we are establishing a range of opportunities and platforms to ensure that as many individuals and organisations can help us to shape and inform this work. This will include a range of face to face conversations (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bedford-exchanges-tickets-34881199607>), briefings, open discussion and an online survey. (<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ArtsCultureBedford>)

We want to make Bedford Borough an even more vibrant and thriving cultural place. The identity and profile of Bedford will be celebrated and promoted and with more opportunities for more people to create, participate and enjoy cultural activity.



Q&A

Who is leading the work?

A small working group which includes The Higgins Bedford, BedPop, BCA. Full House Theatre have appointed Emma Wilcox Associates to develop Stage 1. Bedford Borough Council are the accountable body.

Who is it for?

The Cultural Strategy will be for residents, visitors, cultural organisations and individuals concerned with creating a vibrant, culturally exciting borough. It will enable funders, partners and investors to understand our ambition and vision.

What will it achieve?

The ultimate goal for the strategy is to create a clear, coherent, ambitious framework, that through helping organisations and individuals to work together will achieve greater impact for the Borough. It will create a clear way forward, strengthening partnership working against shared aims. During the first stage, we plan to agree on a set of priorities that the strategy will address.

How can I take part?

There is an online survey available (<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ArtsCultureBedford>), and there will be opportunities for discussions through a series of face to face events, and 1-1 meetings.

Our first event will be held at The Higgins on **Tuesday 6th June at 5:30pm**

Another will follow at The Place theatre on 14th June at 1.30. Here is the Eventbrite link (<https://bedfordexchanges14june.eventbrite.co.uk>) to book a place for 14th June.

Look out for #BedfordExchanges on Twitter and check the We Are Bedford (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Wearebedford/>) page on Facebook.

What is the timetable?

Stage 1 is due to be completed by late-June 2017

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