



Harnessing **Momentum**

A vision for a place where arts,
culture and creativity
brighten the lives and life
chances of everyone in Luton

Our strategy
for Arts, Culture
and Creative
Industries in
Luton 2017-2027

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A VISION FOR LUTON

A town transformed by vibrant arts, culture and creativity that brightens the lives and life chances of everyone in Luton.



OUR MISSION

To enable a diverse cultural offer that empowers people to dream and aspire, supports communities to grow strong and sustainable and develops a vibrant, inclusive creative economy that supports everyone in Luton to thrive.



Royal Opera House in Luton, Revoluton Arts (C) A Warchol

FOREWORD

Over the next seven years, Luton will experience a significant transformation. It will realise its potential as a gateway to and from London and the world and pursue a shared ambition of prosperity for all. It will be reimagined as a global town rich with cultural diversity and opportunity.

Arts, culture and creativity are central to this transformation. Participation in cultural activity develops social capital and enables local people to lead happy, healthy and prosperous lives. A local creative economy gives us access to the benefits of an industry that contributes £111.7bn annually to the UK economy and arts education supports children and young people to grow into free thinking, imaginative, fulfilled adults with a confident view of themselves and their place in the world. Here in Luton we have rich culture, heritage and creativity, and over the next seven years, we will harness this to brighten the lives and life chances of everyone in Luton.

In 2017, this strategy was endorsed and published by Luton Council. It contained bold ambitions, including the goal to be named UK City of Culture in 2025. Today, in March 2021, we are proud to publish this refreshed strategy. We are still bold, ambitious and have transformative plans for Luton. We have refocussed our big ambition away from the national title of UK City of Culture 2025 and towards the ambition to embed arts and culture at the centre of the sustainable transformation for our town. This document recognises the challenges that informed that decision and all that has happened in the three years since this strategy was first published.

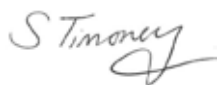
And a lot has happened. From 2017 – 2021, the arts brought in over £19.2 million of inward investment for Luton. The Culture Trust's Beacon, Luton's most famous public artwork, now proudly welcomes people to our town and proclaims that in Luton, if you dream it, you simply must do it. People Power Passion, Luton's pilot year of culture, trained 13 diverse young people, employed 84 artists, worked with 400 participants and engaged 138 volunteers in a modern and relevant programme exploring a key moment in Luton's

history, the 1919 Peace Day riots. Revoluton Arts has grown into a thriving, independent arts organisation and took Luton on a journey through the town with 24-foot puppets. The University of Bedfordshire supported 65 artists to generate over £800,000 of investment and develop their resilience and sustainability. Our flagship local arts organisations and events, including UK Centre for Carnival Arts, Tangled Feet, Next Generation Youth Theatre (NGYT), Departure Lounge, The Culture Trust, Luton, Luton Irish Forum, Kadam Theatre and Dance, Little Red Arts, Luton Mela, Diwali and EastFest have welcomed thousands of audiences, brought communities together and changed the way we look at our town and our world.

Now, in 2021, just three years into Luton's strategy for the arts, culture and creative industries, the sector is facing its toughest challenge in recent history. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the creative sector forever. It has closed organisations, put local people out of work and cancelled the events that bring us together to laugh, smile and celebrate Luton.

But it has brought us closer together. It has shown us the importance of arts and culture to our town and how even in the middle of a pandemic, art was in every neighbourhood and in every window. It activated communities and demonstrated the social capital that we have when we unite in a shared vision. However it also further widened the gap between those in permanent work and the freelancers that keep our industry alive. It highlighted the work that we still have to do to in improving the representation of our diverse community in local arts leadership, in providing access to the arts for children and young people and in supporting our artists to grow and be leaders in their fields. This strategy recognises the inequalities experienced by our black, Asian, ethnic-minority, working class and disabled artists and arts workers and the work we need to do to address this. We encourage local artists to respond to this strategy and engage in discussion about how we can continue to address these inequalities. You can read more about this later in the document.

We hope that within a year or two of this refreshed strategy being published, this foreword will be out of date. That we will have emerged from the pandemic and into a new world. We will still be mourning those we lost, but we hope that we have welcomed in a new era, one where arts and creativity are valued in every household, and where people, no matter their circumstances, have access to the enrichment that arts and culture bring.



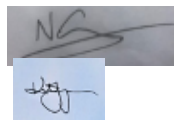
Cllr Sian Timoney
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The Children's Peace Party, People Power Passion, RARA with the Children of Whitefield and Chantry Primary Academies. (c) E Aizpurs



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OUR STRATEGY



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INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This strategy positions arts, culture and creativity at the centre of Luton's economic, social and educational future – a beating heart in its transformative journey. It will be embedded in how we design public space, how we encourage inward investment and job growth, how we foster pride and partnership amongst our communities, how we build a thriving town centre economy - both day and night, how we improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and how we support our children to grow and thrive. It aligns the work of arts, culture and creativity in Luton to three outcomes and four priorities which outline what we need to do to achieve our ambitions. It sets the scene for where we have come from and where we want to be and an accompanying delivery plan will outline how we will enable its achievement.

Our **four priorities**, outlined later in this document have been informed by key aspects of our rich heritage:

- Luton has a rich history of **artistic innovation**, creativity and design. For over 200 years we were the primary place for ladies' hat production in the UK, peaking in the 1930's when we produced over 70 million hats annually. From 1905 we have been home to Vauxhall, a leader in motor industry innovation and design. The successful establishment of the Vauxhall factory here was due in no small part to the existing technological and artistic skills of the local hat-making workforce. Artistry has been at the heart of our town's economy for over three centuries and we hold onto that with pride today. We are a place of making: making hats, making cars and now making computer systems, games, music and films.

- Our history of **people power, inclusion and democracy** is rich with passion and creativity. When disgruntled citizens burnt down the town hall in 1919 in response to crippling poverty and unemployment, rioters dragged out pianos and sang and danced illuminated by flames. In 1995, when riots in Marsh Farm threatened to escalate to unimaginable violence, it was dance music in the form of the Exodus Collective's impromptu rave that drew the crowds away. In 2019, People Power Passion's six-month arts programme celebrated this rich history of activism and today, climate activists and the Black Lives Matter movement use design and music to elevate their cause.
- Luton's super-diversity and history as a hub for immigration dates back to the early 20th century when the industrial boom brought Irish and Scottish people to the town. This was followed by African, Caribbean and Asian communities and most recently we have welcomed our Eastern European neighbours. The super-diversity of Luton brings vibrancy to our town and enables an **international outlook** that helps Lutonians develop into global citizens. Today, our diverse offer of cultural events bring people together, reducing discrimination by fostering greater cultural understanding.
- We are a town built on transport. From the early 20th century to today, our car manufacturing has been at the heart of our industry and economy. Today, London Luton Airport positions Luton as a gateway to and from Europe and the world and contributes £1.8bn to the economy annually. But this benefit brings with it a set of challenges. In January 2020, Luton Council declared a **climate emergency** and aims for Luton to be a carbon-neutral town by 2040, which will include achieving the ambition for Luton to be home to the UK's most sustainable airport.

The **three key outcomes** outlined in this strategy demonstrate our ambition to welcome a new era of creative engagement and prosperity to Luton. Our ambition is that by 2027 Luton will be:

- 1 A place with a prosperous creative economy** with an inclusive creative industry and an arts and cultural offer that transforms our town centre and brings investment, business, new residents and visitors to the town
- 2 A place enriched through diverse cultural activity** that supports residents and communities to be happy, healthy and to thrive and enables the development of social capital, cross-cultural understanding and intercultural collaboration
- 3 A place with a robust creative education offer** that supports social mobility, prepares children, young people and adults for the jobs of the future and enables children to grow into innovative, free thinking, imaginative adults.

These outcomes align with Luton 2020-2040, Luton's bold ambition that by 2040, no one in Luton will be living in poverty. The Inclusive Economy Strategy acknowledges the role that arts, culture and heritage play in securing a strong recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic as well as reframing our economy to ensure that everyone in Luton can benefit from economic growth and opportunity in the future. Aligned with this strategy, a new Heritage Strategy for Luton will increase the impact of our shared vision and ambitions.

Throughout this document the interconnecting outcomes and priorities will demonstrate our commitment to creativity in Luton. They will also ensure that at the heart of everything we do is a commitment to listening to residents and placing artists and communities at the centre of the town's transformation, empowering local people to lead, innovate and shape their own futures.



THE OUTCOMES

A society enriched by diverse cultural activity

Residents and communities are supported to be happy, healthy and to thrive



The Children's Peace Party (c) E Aizpurs

A prosperous creative economy

An inclusive arts, culture and creative offer that transforms our town



Justice 39 (c) A Warchol

A robust creative education offer

Children, young people and adults are supported to develop skills, access jobs and become fulfilled

OUR PRIORITIES

Artistic quality and innovation

We will inspire and enable artistic quality and innovation in everything we do. Quality artistic product will be achieved through quality artistic process and an ambition to develop new ideas and take risks.

Climate action

We aim to achieve carbon neutrality across all cultural events, venues and programmes and encourage artists to develop and consider innovative approaches that contribute to Luton 2040's ambition to be a climate-neutral town by 2040.

A global outlook

We will utilise our cultural assets to place Luton on the world's stage and promote Luton as a creative town. We will look outside of Luton for inspiration and aspiration and seek to harness the benefits of being an airport town to enable global connectivity and mobility.

Inclusivity and diversity

We strive for all cultural activity to be inclusive of everyone in Luton, no matter their background or needs. We commit to ensuring the diversity of Luton is represented in our spaces, stages, screens and galleries and to ensure that the lack of culturally diverse, working class and disabled voices in arts leadership is addressed as a matter of urgency.

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THE OUTCOMES



A PROSPEROUS CREATIVE ECONOMY

Luton will have an inclusive creative industry and an arts and cultural offer that transforms our town centre and brings investment, business, new residents and visitors to the town.

The creative industries contribute £111.7 billion GVA annually to the UK economy which is greater than the automotive, aerospace, life sciences and oil and gas industries combined. The local creative industries contributed £36 million to the Luton economy in 2018, and since 2017, leveraged an additional £19.2 million in inward investment into Luton. Pre-Covid-19, the creative industries were growing at five times the rate of the UK economy. This strategy supports the development of the creative industries in Luton and commits to harnessing this important industry to achieve economic growth in the town.

Luton is rich with built cultural assets that are in need of regeneration and celebration, and this strategy will help Luton cherish its history and look forward to a future where our town centre is bright and inviting. The Culture Trust, Luton is leading the way by growing the Hat District through repurposing old hat factories for creative use for local people as well as welcoming businesses from outside of Luton and support local entrepreneurs to grow. This strategy will support the promotion of Luton as a place of making: making ideas, making goods and making tech. It supports aspirational, flagship infrastructure developments such as the development of a music venue at the new football stadium; collaboration with the developers of the former ABC Cinema and creation of gallery and exhibition facilities. The intersection of food, beverage, arts activity and community services is supported, promoting a mixed-use approach to promoting the town centre as a place for gathering, community services and social activity.





Factory Reset, Tangled Feet with The Culture Trust, Luton (c) A Warchol

Delivery of this strategy will be supported by a new Heritage Strategy for Luton encompassing the town's super-diverse histories and including built, economic, natural, cultural and intangible heritages, building on the town's museums and collections held at Wardown House and Stockwood Discovery Centre led by the Culture Trust, Luton. Investment of £250,000 secured by the University Of Bedfordshire will support cultural practitioners engaged in community heritage to build capacity for activity that complements Luton's cultural ecology.

The town centre will be animated by arts activity and the Town Centre Masterplan will consider how to best design public space that encourages play and is suitable for outdoor arts use. It will include creative design and consider how the arts can be employed to help people gather and move through the town centre, taking inspiration from the different ways our diverse communities use public space. Our strong outdoor arts offer will be supported to respond to the change that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on how people use public space and cultural area designation status will be sought for The Hat District, protecting it from noise complaints and supporting the night time economy. New public art will enliven our spaces and help draw people into the town centre supported by eight new principles for public art that are outlined later in this document and build on *As You Change So Do I*. Revoluton will continue to offer a vibrant programme of activity that takes place outside the town centre, developing its base in Marsh House as a creative hub.

New cultural assets and arts activity in the town centre will create a welcoming and attractive environment and significantly contribute to the growth of our night time economy. This strategy supports a local licensing scheme to better enable mixed use and small bar activity, making live music and bar culture more viable. This work will build on Luton's success in attaining Purple Flag status in 2018.

Improving the night time economy by activating the town centre will draw new businesses into Luton as they recognise the value of being based in a town outside of London. It will also encourage new residents to relocate to Luton from the capital, building on the move to home working in 2020 and Luton's more affordable cost of living. In addition, the University of Bedfordshire's Faculty of Creative Arts, Technologies and Science will support local creatives to establish, commercialise and sustain their creative business ideas.

A SOCIETY ENRICHED BY DIVERSE CULTURAL ACTIVITY

Luton will be enriched by diverse cultural activity that supports residents and communities to be happy, healthy and to thrive and enables the development of social capital, cross-cultural understanding and intercultural collaboration.

The rich diversity of Luton makes our town a vibrant home for our residents. 55% of the population are from backgrounds other than white British and we have a higher than average proportion of children and young people. This unique profile produces a rich landscape of cultural activity that deserves to be celebrated and shared.

The arts build community spirit and belonging, improve community cohesion and reduce discrimination by developing cultural understanding. Two of Luton's National Portfolio Organisations: Tangled Feet and UK Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA) will support the ambition for Luton to be known as a place of festival and outdoor arts that promotes intercultural and intergenerational exchange. A cohesive events brand will support Luton's cultural events including: Luton International Carnival, Luton Mela, St Patrick's Day Festival, EastFest and Diwali Festival to develop and grow, increasing audiences and local impact. New festival concepts will be supported and the success of Imagine Luton and The Children's Peace Party will be built upon to encourage the development of the children and young persons' offer of existing cultural activity.

Cultural participation promotes prosocial behaviours such as volunteering and cooperating to help others. To better enable cultural participation, communities will be supported to produce their own neighbourhood events, including street parties that build on the hyper-local activity experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.





Riot Act, People Power Passion, Dark Olive and Yet Another Carnival (c) A Warchol

This includes the creativity of our Islamic communities and the togetherness that cultural activity stimulates in their homes, and the entrepreneurship of the African and Caribbean communities, particularly in the carnival, food, music and film sectors. This will build on the work of Revoluton Arts who will continue to create work that responds to the full diversity of Luton's community, working in a range of wards across the town and encouraging access to creativity for those who do not usually engage.

With a higher than average proportion of children and young people in Luton and 46% of those children living in poverty we need to ensure the arts sector delivers accessible arts participation opportunities that support our children to escape poverty and achieve social mobility. Aligning with the Luton 2020-2040 ambition to make Luton a child-friendly town, children and young people will be involved in shaping their creative and cultural opportunities and experiences. Future young creative leadership opportunities will support this work. The council will embed creative entitlement into the offer for looked-after children, ensuring they are able to access the enrichment that cultural participation brings.

There is a strong commitment to ensure venues and outdoor arts activity are accessible to everyone, including people with with special educational needs/ SEND, are d/Deaf or disabled, are neuro-diverse or experience unseen access barriers such as cost of participation (including transport), not feeling welcome, religious requirements and absence of a culturally and ethnically-representative delivery team. Opportunities for vulnerable and at-risk residents to create, make and participate will be improved by the strengthening of partnerships with local charities and the ambition to make Luton a disability-friendly town.

Through joined-up working across arts and physical activity, new and enhanced ways in which the arts can be employed to reduce social isolation and improve physical and mental health will be explored and artists will be supported to improve the ways they measure this. Artists will be included in the design of new pocket parks, embedding creative design and public art in encouraging physical activity and play.

A PLACE WITH A DIVERSE CREATIVE EDUCATION OFFER



Luton's creative education offer will support social mobility, prepare children, young people and adults for the jobs of the future and enable children to grow into innovative, free thinking, imaginative adults.

The growth of the local creative industries will improve our economy and create jobs. A key goal of this strategy is to ensure that the jobs and benefits of this growing economy are made available to local people and this will be achieved through education, skills and employability programmes that prepare our residents to be competitive members of the future creative workforce.

An education offer that embraces creativity in all its forms and where a wide range of cultural heritage is represented develops children's creativity, problem solving, independent thinking and team work skills. Exposing children and young people to experiences across the arts will enable them to explore their individuality, expand their horizons and become global citizens that think freely and express their individuality. Arts and cultural education is central to an excellent education for all, including SEND children and Luton Council will continue to support schools to achieve excellence in their creative education offer, supporting their achievement of good or outstanding OFSTED status.

The work of the Luton Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) will be supported through this strategy. With investment from Royal Opera House Bridge and led by the University of Bedfordshire, the LCEP aims to support a high quality creative education for all children and young people in Luton. This work is governed by the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group and a cross-sector LCEP Steering Group. The LCEP strategy will be published to align with this vision and additional participation projects will be designed to support schools, help train teachers, and enable increased curricular and extra-curricular emphasis on the arts.





The Children's Peace Party, People Power Passion, RARA with the Children of Whitefield and Chantry Primary Academies (c) E Aizpurs

There is an expectation that school improvement models and the council's education strategy align with this strategy and adopt initiatives that help achieve this creative education outcome. The work of local providers including UKCCA, Tangled Feet and NGYT will help achieve this and this strategy supports them to develop their offer and increase impact.

The Culture Trust Skills and Talent Pipeline will transform how people are supported outside of formal educational settings and given genuine opportunities to access new skills in the creative industries. The new Hat Works co-working space will provide studio and managed workspace for diverse, emerging cultural and creative industries organisations to encourage artist development and the relocation of artists, practitioners and creative industries to Luton. Tangled Feet's talent development programme will grow the capacity of local artists to develop innovative participatory outdoor work.

A new creative skills programme will be developed and will include training, mentoring and apprenticeships. Delivered by a range of partners this will be designed to prepare people for the jobs of the future, focussing on emerging technologies, createch and digital solutions. This offer will be accessible to adults including those that require retraining following redundancy. The University of Bedfordshire will continue to offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the Creative Arts and work closely with a partnership of schools to support creative practice in the classroom.

A partnership with Adult Community Learning will be explored, advocating for the inclusion of creative activity within their community learning programme. This will develop employability as well as provide a lifelong learning offer which will enrich lives outside of the goal of employability. Local providers will be supported to provide this learning offer.

Creative education is a UNESCO basic human right for children and this outcome aligns with the Luton 2020-2040 aim for Luton to be a child-friendly town.

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OUR PRIORITIES



ARTISTIC QUALITY AND INNOVATION



We will inspire and enable artistic quality and innovation in everything we do. Quality artistic product will be achieved through quality artistic process and an ambition to develop new ideas and take risks.

Luton artists and creative businesses share something very special: they are all socially-engaged. The commitment to improving Luton's people and places through creativity is inherent in the work of local cultural organisations and this strategy will support them to make greater impact and thrive as working artists.

Luton's history of innovation, design and manufacturing is something that should be celebrated and promoted. Our evolution over the past century, from the hat and motor industries to a home of world-leading gaming, creative media and music organisations is something we need to share and grow. Improving our capacity to innovate, growing our ambitions and developing the quality of what we create is supported through this strategy and is a priority that will benefit our vibrant local arts industry.

To achieve the outcomes of this strategy we must commit to continuous development of the quality of the work we produce. We recognise that quality is a controversial concept in the arts, and we encourage readers to develop their own definitions and engage in constructive debate. For the purposes of this strategy we have based our references to quality on our experience of what has been successful locally and on the Arts Council definition within the Let's Create strategy. In Luton, we believe that quality is found both in the process of creation and in the artistic product. We recognise higher impact is achieved when art balances quality artistic process (including community embeddedness, inclusivity and representation) with quality artistic output (innovation, bold visual and aural impact, attractiveness and talent).



Quality is also found when artists have ambition, a desire for continuous development, a global outlook and a commitment to the place in which they create. This strategy seeks to support the pursuit of quality in everything we do and to support local artists and producers to share this ambition and lead this vision for Luton.

The Creative Forum and the newly established Luton Creative Leaders programme will support the development of local artists. Artist and arts worker development will be an important focus with diversity a key aspiration. This strategy will support existing and new arts, cultural and creative industries organisations to grow and become more resilient.

We commit to supporting innovation across all diverse art forms, enabling the pursuit of quality within varied cultural activity and developing our understanding of quality. This includes supporting Islamic artists and African and Caribbean artists, specifically within the field of carnival arts, building on the presence of the national centre for Carnival Arts here in Luton.

We recognise that to achieve this vision we need to welcome artists from outside of Luton to our town to inspire us and drive ambition. We will strive to be a magnet town for national and international artists and commit to delivering skills-development activity including associate artist, trainee and workshop activity alongside programmes led by artists from outside of Luton.

There are many definitions of arts, culture and creativity. This strategy includes creativity, skill and talent such as design, music, publishing, film, media, craft, visual arts, literature and the performing arts. Street art, tattooing, henna art, carnival, spoken word and book clubs are included. The focus of this strategy is the arts including arts engagement with heritage, libraries and other sectors.



Mirror Sky, Tangled Feet with NGYT, Imagine Luton

CLIMATE ACTION

We aim to achieve carbon neutrality across all cultural events, venues and programmes and encourage artists to develop and consider innovative approaches that contribute to Luton's ambition to be a carbon-neutral town by 2040.

In January 2020, Luton Council declared a climate emergency in Luton and pledged to ensure that Luton is a carbon neutral town by 2040, ten years ahead of the government's own target. At the same time, Arts Council England published the Let's Create Strategy which identified Environmental Responsibility as a key priority over the next ten years.

This strategy asks Luton artists and creative organisations to consider how they contribute to the town's pledge and how we can use our unique skills and abilities to contribute to the climate conversation and enable critical dialogue.

This strategy supports innovative approaches to delivering climate neutral events. Events can be high on waste, require brought in power-sources and unintentionally encourage people to travel by car. Building on the success of The Children's Peace Party in 2019, we will support event producers to consider how they can reduce the carbon footprint of their events and place carbon neutrality as a central aim for delivery.

New physical cultural assets, will consider their impact on the climate and feature climate-friendly energy and waste systems.

Artists are uniquely placed to tell stories that influence how people think and feel about difficult subjects. This strategy supports artists that use their practice to explore climate justice, as well as the other priorities outlined in this strategy, including inclusivity and diversity.



A GLOBAL OUTLOOK

We will utilise our cultural assets to place Luton on the world's stage and promote Luton as a creative town. We will look outside of Luton for inspiration and aspiration and seek to harness the benefits of being an airport town to enable global connectivity and mobility.

Creativity is a passport to the wider world. It helps us reimagine ourselves and see the world differently. The two most identifiable assets of Luton are our super-diversity and our airport. This priority seeks to utilise the combined power of these assets to raise the profile of Luton, develop our economy and improve opportunity for Lutonians.

As a super-diverse town with an international airport, we have cultural and physical connections with almost every part of the world. This strategy encourages artists and creative and cultural organisations to harness these connections to find inspiration, develop audiences, reach new markets, expand networks and develop knowledge.

Working with cultures, artists and communities unlike our own can lead to exceptional creative outcomes and improve social mobility for ourselves and the communities in which we work. We will actively encourage and support artists to access international collaboration and development opportunities and seek to become a place of interest for international artists to work in. This strategy supports the ambition for Luton to welcome international collaborators. The work of Sinfonia Verdi in attracting international musicians and collaborators is supported by this document.

This strategy supports the use of digital technologies and the airport to improve international connectivity to increase audiences and markets for Luton-made arts activity and creative product.



INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY



We strive for all cultural activity to be inclusive of everyone in Luton, no matter their background or needs. We commit to ensuring the diversity of Luton is represented in our spaces, stages, screens and galleries and to ensure that the lack of culturally diverse, working class and disabled voices in arts leadership is addressed as a matter of urgency.

This strategy actively recognises the work we still have to do in ensuring the diversity of Luton is represented in the art we produce, the artists we support, the audiences we reach and in arts leadership. It encourages active anti-racism and recognises how the COVID-19 pandemic has widened the inequalities experienced in the creative industries and how the Black Lives Matter movement has further reinforced the need to address this urgently.

We recognise that in order to address any of these challenges, the first thing we must do is ensure representation at decision-making level from black, Asian and ethnically diverse, disadvantaged, LGBTIQ and disabled artists and producers. The new Luton Creative Leaders Group delivered by Luton Council and Revoluton Arts will actively enable this and develop the leadership, arts advocacy and strategic skills of Luton artists, improving their capacity to work as leaders in their field and supporting the diversification of arts leadership nationally. A sister group, the Young Creative Leaders group, will consider the need for young voices at decision-making level and actively work to ensure that the next generation of arts leadership is representative of Luton.

These projects openly align with the field of Cultural Democracy which describes a democratic approach to culture that commits to actively engaging everyone in deciding what counts as culture, where it happens and who is involved in creating culture. Cultural democracy also considers how resources such as funding can be better distributed to ensure fair access and encourages cultural institutions to introduce a democratic approach to distributing the resources they have.





The People's Launch, People Power Passion, Debra Knight, Amerah Saleh, Jeannefer Jean-Charles and the people of Luton (c) A Warchol

This strategy supports initiatives that improve access to creating and participating in culture, including the diversification of boards and leadership groups, transparent and representative decision-making processes and the improved accessibility of cultural opportunity. This strategy will actively support a shift in how funding is considered in Luton, encouraging artists to lead projects and access funding as individuals. Support to enable this shift, including but not limited to bid-support, will be offered in an accessible and constructive manner.

Artist-development programmes will challenge existing definitions of the arts and be open to people working in cultural activity that is not historically categorised as art. Programmes will seek to reach new creatives and delve deep into communities to recognise what creativity means to them and how we can support it to flourish.

This strategy supports the programming and commissioning of art that is representative of Luton, has local relevance and helps achieve its outcomes. The development of audiences that reflect the population of our town will be a key action of this strategy and we will support cultural events to reach new audiences and share those audiences across a cohesive year-long events programme.

This strategy recognises the work that existing organisations and projects have done to address this priority and supports the development of new organisations and initiatives that build on this and respond to what was learnt. We encourage influence from outside of Luton and commit to learning and sharing with partners across the country and internationally.

By empowering people to choose, create and take part in the art experiences where they live, we will improve the sense of belonging, community cohesion and social capital of Lutonians.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

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RESCUE RECOVERY REIMAGINE



RESCUE RECOVERY REIMAGINE

At the time of this strategy's publication the world is still determining how to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Internationally, the creative industries have been disproportionately affected by the economic impact of the pandemic. Here in Luton, the makeup of our cultural infrastructure has meant we need to consider how we will recover in our own unique way.

The Culture Trust's venues, including The Hat Factory, Stockwood Park Discovery Centre and Wardown House Museum and Gallery have been closed for many months and the artists and arts workers that make up their permanent and casual workforce have been unable to work. Our cultural events and outdoor arts that brighten our lives and activate our town centre have all been cancelled and plans for projects, both large and small have been put on hold whilst we wait for funding avenues to return.

The refreshment of this strategy cannot ignore the time of its writing. However it also needs to look forward with ambition and hope for the future. The outcomes and priorities outlined in this strategy acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on our creative industry and seeks to help Luton recover and reimagine. We want to learn from the past and build a new future, not simply rebuild our past and take us back to where we were before.

The outcomes and priorities within this strategy have been informed by this and will enable everyone in Luton to contribute to the future of arts, culture and creative industries in Luton. The work outlined in Priority Four, including the Creative Leaders and Young Leaders groups and the shift in funding capacity will help address some of the key inequalities that emerged throughout the pandemic. These include:

- The lack of diverse representation on the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group
- The fact that only the highest-paid arts leaders nationally worked through the pandemic, resulting in an imbalance of power
- The inability for working class artists to support themselves through the pandemic, further embedding the inequality already experienced in the sector, and erasing the progress made since 2017.

Positively, the pandemic reinforced the strength of the creative network in Luton and the peer-support and collaboration that exists amongst our local creative community. At the beginning of the pandemic in the UK, local arts leaders mobilised to support local artists to access funding, information and a peer-support network, resulting in a significantly higher-than-average success rate for Arts Council emergency funding and significant investment for Luton from the Culture Recovery Fund. Combined, local artists and organisations accessed £1.8 million of emergency and recovery funding. Our existing networks were strengthened by a shared goal and this strategy seeks to recognise the success in how the creative network responded. It is important to acknowledge success and we are proud of how members of the creative community supported each other throughout 2020. The structure of the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group, Creative Leaders, the Creative Forum and the Young Creative Leaders is applauded nationally and something that this strategy will continue to strengthen.

Art and creativity will be central to enabling a moment of shared grief for a pre-COVID world and this strategy will support artists to innovate, create and reach communities in need. The impact of the pandemic is expected to last for many years and we commit to supporting everyone within the creative community to recover and thrive. This includes coordinating activity to advocate for the return of artists to schools, exploring the best ways for our cultural events to return and continue to meet their aims and supporting local artists to feel confident in applying for funding and realigning their creative practice to a 'new normal' within a reimagined world.

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ACHIEVEMENTS 2017 – 2020



Wardown House Museum and Gallery re-opened in 2017 after a **£3 million redevelopment** to **93,000 visitors** in its first year

The Luton Investment Programme (LIP), an investment of **£1.5 million from Arts Council England** was successfully completed, and built ambition, shared purpose and coordination

LIP attracted new investment, galvanised cultural production, mobilised audiences and generated a new level of cultural capacity for Luton

Established a new, effective and inclusive **Creative Forum** for the Luton arts, culture and creative industries sector with **over 300 members**

Luton Council received **significant Arts Council investment** to support the appointment of a Cultural Enabler and the delivery of the **Creative Forum**

Established the **Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group** to drive the delivery of this strategy and support increased and focused investment in the sector



The Children's Peace Party, People Power Passion, RARA with the Children of Whitefield and Chantry Primary Academies (c) E Aizpurs



RISE, Revolution Arts, (C) A Warchol

Established the **Luton Arts Fund**, a local arts funding stream, supporting **23 local artists** to deliver projects that have enriched our town

In 2018, three organisations in Luton, **Tangled Feet, UKCCA and The Culture Trust, Luton** achieved NPO status, an improvement on the zero NPOs Luton had in 2017

The University of Bedfordshire's TestBeds programme engaged over **9000** creative practitioners, including **65 artists** who generated **£800,000** investment and developed over **500** new partnerships across **14** sectors

Denbigh Primary School was awarded **Platinum Arts Mark status**, one of the only schools in the Eastern region to achieve this

As You Change So Do I, The Culture Trust's public realm art project realised **127 art works**, by 253 artists (210 from or living in Luton), with **3148 participants** and engaged **87,000 people** per day

In 2018, Luton was awarded **Purple Flag status** for its safe and vibrant evening and night time economy

The Culture Trust secured a **new gallery space, The Storefront** in the Hat District, and continue to deliver a partnership programme with Departure Lounge

People Power Passion, Luton's pilot year of culture, trained 13 diverse young people, employed **84 artists**, worked with **400 participants** and engaged **138 volunteers** in a modern and relevant programme exploring the 1919 Peace Day riots

The Culture Trust raised **£7 million** for the redevelopment of three hat factories for creative and cultural industry use in The Hat District, completed a **£2 million refurbishment** of the Factory Arts Centre and the opened Hat House – a new creative workspace

The **Hat Factory** was reopened with an ambitious collaboration between **Tangled Feet, Revellers Steelband, Pirates of the Caribina, Lee Nelson and NGYT**

Tangled Feet secured **£150,000 in multi-year funding** from the Steel Charitable Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support their participatory arts and talent development offer in Luton

The Luton Cultural Education Partnership was awarded **£64,703 investment** from Royal Opera House Bridge to increase capacity, develop their work and publish a renewed strategy



Dominic in The People's Launch, People Power Passion, Debra Knight, Amerah Saleh, Jeannefer Jean Charles and the people of Luton (C) G Zabulyte



The Outdoor Spectacular, Luton Council, Sinfonia Verdi, Union Dance and the people of Luton

Revoluton Arts secured ongoing Creative People and Places funding to 2024 and successfully reached **88,000** people during the COVID-19 lockdown via their digital programme

Luton's Producers Hub, a partnership between Revoluton Arts and 1DegreeEast was launched and attracted **£165,000** of cultural investment from **2018-2020**

The creative sector has fed into the development of the new **Town Centre Masterplan** which includes plans for the development of a music venue within the relocated football club and the redevelopment of the old ABC Cinema site

The **Strategy for Arts, Culture and Creative Industries** has been reviewed and refreshed in line with evolving priorities in the town and the emerging challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic

A **Public Art Plan** has been developed and will help shape how Luton supports the development of high quality and impactful public art

Partners supported a number of local artists and organisations to access emergency funding from **Arts Council England and DCMS during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic**

2
.3

LUTON: A UK CITY OF CULTURE



LUTON: A UK CITY OF CULTURE

The ambition to be named UK City of Culture 2025 was announced in 2017 when this strategy was first published. It was a bold ambition, with a key set of milestones including a pilot year of culture in 2019 that would commemorate the 1919 Luton Peace Day riots and test the town's capacity and appetite for a bid for UK City of Culture. Over five months, People Power Passion's six events and sixteen performances showcased the talent Luton has to offer and commemorated one of Luton's most famous events: the burning down of the Town Hall during the 1919 riots. Through theatre, music, dance, spoken word, gaming and projections, we shone a light on this bold act of people power and looked back at other acts of people, power and passion in Luton and beyond, such as the Marsh Farm Riots, Black Lives Matter and the climate emergency.

The project engaged with a wide variety of people as artists, participants, volunteers and audiences. It made a significant impact on the people involved, developing skills, helping people gain employment and connecting people across generations and backgrounds. It brought people into the town centre, developed the leadership skills of children, generated inward investment and put 66% of the budget back into Luton people and businesses.

It also demonstrated the incredible human and financial resource required to run impactful programmes such as this. Programmes that are developed democratically and by local people, that invest time and money into developing the skills of local artists and producers, that truly represent the communities in which they are made, that produce aspirational, high quality artistic outcomes - that are contenders for UK City of Culture.

In a time of austerity the benefits of a potential bid were weighed up against the cost. The decision that Luton would not bid for UK City of Culture in 2025 was made by the council in January 2020. They will still consider a possible bid for 2029. This decision did not represent a failed programme or the abandonment of an ambition. It reflected the successes of the programme, and how it helped us identify what Luton needs and is good at.

It is clear that Luton benefits from arts activity however the council supports a more local approach that directly seeks to create jobs and empower communities. This approach includes two major council-led projects, and one partnership-led ambition, all of which are supported by this strategy:

- 1 Local diverse skills development:** a regional training programme focussing on diversifying the leadership of the creative industries and developing skills in emerging technologies, createch and digital solutions
- 2 Creativity in the town centre:** embedding creativity at the heart of Town Centre regeneration
- 3 Grow audiences and develop the capacity for the town's existing cultural assets:** a partnership-led ambition to grow our local cultural events and activities, developing audiences and local engagement with a varied programme of arts activity.

2.4

A PUBLIC ART PLAN FOR LUTON



A PUBLIC ART PLAN FOR LUTON

In 2018, as part of the Luton Investment Programme, The Culture Trust commissioned Create Associates to develop a Public Art Plan for Luton, which would provide a legacy for the work of the Trust's *As You Change So Do I* project which realised 127 art works by 253 artists (210 from or living in Luton) with 3,148 participants over three years. Create Associates conducted a programme of interviews and community engagements in order to inform the eight principles included in the plan.

As part of our commitment to delivering Harnessing Momentum, a public art plan will be published that outlines how public art will be resourced in the town. In the meantime, the following context, functions and principles will help shape local public art that is impactful and relevant to the local community.

2.4.1 PUBLIC ART IN LUTON

At the entrance to Luton, *The Beacon*, our most famous public artwork, proudly welcomes people to our town and proclaims that in Luton, if you dream it, you simply must do it. This extraordinary piece by Turner-prize nominee Mark Titchner commissioned by The Culture Trust is an example of the extraordinary impact that art can have on a place. By bringing art directly to our residents via our high streets, shopping malls, parks and local streets, we animate public space and celebrate the identity of our town.

Luton's high-housing density means our residents already make great use of public space: Wardown Park on a Sunday afternoon in summer becomes an extension of our residents' living rooms as food, games and music are shared amongst families. Our Mall defies national trends in footfall, with its open seating areas providing essential indoor gathering space to watch the world go by, and our homes are art spaces in their own right, with music, dance and crafts practiced when families come together.

Public art will help us achieve the outcomes of Harnessing Momentum: it will help **grow the local economy** by making Luton a more attractive place to live and work; will **support residents and communities to be happy, healthy and to thrive** by creating spaces for people to gather and celebrate and by promoting intercultural and intergenerational interaction; and will **enable a diverse education, supporting children and young people** by amplifying young voices and developing creative skills.

What is public art?

Create Associates worked with Luton's creative community in 2018 to define public art in Luton as: *'A site specific, permanent or temporary piece of work in a public space involving artists or crafts people'*



Lutopia, People Power Passion, Andy Abbott (c) E Aizpurs

2.4.2: FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC ART IN LUTON

Historically, the key functions of public art have been known as decorating public space or memorialising key figures. This is valid; murals and statues brighten public space and play an important role in animating places and celebrating our heritage. However, public art is much more than murals and statues. It includes visual art, participatory art, live art, green art, creative place-making, creative approaches to functional items such as lighting, street furniture and pedestrian crossings and anything that helps creatively shape and navigate public space. These functions and principles aim to expand the understanding of public art and inspire innovation and creativity.

The key functions of public art in Luton are:

1 To brighten public space, drive footfall and increase the attractiveness of new developments (economic development):

Public art will animate public space, creating central gathering spaces and changing how people navigate the town centre. It will be a pedestrian drawcard and drive footfall into the town centre, contributing to the development of our local economy and publicising the leisure offer. New developments, both residential and commercial, will be more attractive, increasing demand and improving how people feel about living and working in Luton. Spaces will be modernised and brightened and Luton will seem more vibrant and youthful; attracting developers, investors and users. This will support the implementation of the government's proposed changes to planning policy, which places an increased focus on beauty and design.

2 To encourage physical activity and play and increase civic pride (health and wellbeing):

Public art will be interactive and playful and encourage people to physically interact with it. By interacting with public art, residents and visitors may feel an improvement to their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Public art will brighten spaces and improve the look of the town centre, increasing residents' civic pride and improving how they feel about Luton. Art in local neighbourhoods will help define community spaces and enhance their identity, improving residents' sense of place.

3

To promote intercultural and intergenerational activity (social mobility): Public art will encourage people to interact and play with it. By promoting teamwork and creating shared moments of joy between strangers, understanding between cultures and generations will be improved and new relationships will be formed. By creating opportunities to interact with and learn about others, community cohesion will be improved and residents will be more likely to be socially mobile and proud of their town.



The Outdoor Spectacular, Luton Council, Sinfonia Verdi, Union Dance and the people of Luton (c) WK360

2.4.3: LUTON'S EIGHT PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC ART

These eight principles were developed through the work of Create Associates in consultation with local artists and communities. They are designed to enable the realisation of public art that is high quality, socially engaged and has legacy. They will enable new public art projects to align with the 2020-2040 vision for Luton to be a place where everyone can thrive and support us to achieve the vision of Harnessing Momentum.

Luton 2020-2040 - A place to thrive

By building an inclusive economy and enhancing the wellbeing of our population so that Luton is a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

The Inclusive **Economy strategy** will work to secure a strong economic recovery from COVID-19 and to reform our local economy so that everyone can benefit from future growth. It includes the priority to **transform Luton through arts, culture and heritage**.

The **Population Wellbeing strategy** will focus on improving quality of life for all our residents, as well as reducing the health and educational inequalities to enable everyone to reach their full potential.

There are three commitments at the heart of the vision:
A carbon neutral town, a town built on fairness and social justice and a child-friendly town.

By aligning to these principles, art in the public realm will be innovative, participatory, engaging and achieve its three key functions.

The eight principles:

1

Strategic fit: projects and ideas will align with and support the delivery of Luton 2020-2040, the Luton Town Centre Masterplan and Harnessing Momentum: Luton's strategy for arts, culture and creative industries (this document).

Luton Town Centre Masterplan

At the time of writing, Luton Council is developing a new masterplan for the Town Centre. As the masterplan is developed, this plan will be updated to align with its vision. The emerging vision is:

Taking its lead from the **diversity, resilience and entrepreneurial spirit** of Luton's communities, and celebrating its rich heritage.

The town centre will welcome all residents, visitors, businesses and investors into a clean and green environment that supports health and wellbeing.

Creativity and local young talent will be nurtured and given a platform to shape the character of the town centre.

2

Local relevance and heritage

Public art will be relevant to and engaging for the community in which it is placed. It will engage the community and communicate with the public. It will be participatory, connected with the heritage of the site and/or developed with input from the current users of a site. By engaging with the community, either before, during or after installation, artists and commissioners can enable community ownership, reducing vandalism and achieving a higher quality artwork. From 2022, public art should also align with the new Heritage Strategy for Luton.



Keep the Home Fires Burning, Scott King (2016), commissioned by The Culture Trust, Luton



The Promise, Mark Titchner and Johnathan Barnbrook (2019), commissioned by The Culture Trust, Luton

3

A culturally-democratic public art plan

The Luton Creative Leaders Group will feature a public art representative who will support the representation of the Luton community in discussions regarding new artwork in the public realm. They will aim to help developers, artists and commissioners of public art to consider these principles and the needs of the local community. Members of the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group will support developers to prepare public art strategies and ensure the work is locally relevant, of high quality and complements the town's vision.

4

Listen to young voices

This strategy supports the creation of opportunities for children and young people to contribute to the town's built and natural environment through their involvement with making, shaping and commissioning public art and public realm developments. This work will be supported and shaped by the broad range of activity collectively delivered through the Luton Cultural Education Partnership.



The Wellington Street Underpass, Jack Wates with Revoluton and young people in Luton (2019)



Any Dream Will Do, Polly Apfelbaum (2016), commissioned by The Culture Trust, Luton

5

Consider unexpected spaces and places

Public art will be seen and experienced in a range of spaces, both physical and virtual. Spaces beyond parks and town squares should be seen as opportunities to bring people together through public art.

Developers, the local authority and community organisations should engage with artists to encourage innovative thinking about the placement, purpose and use of public art in new and existing public space, considering how it encourages human interaction, enables foot flow and brings new approaches to the essential elements of public realm such as lighting, handrails and steps.

6

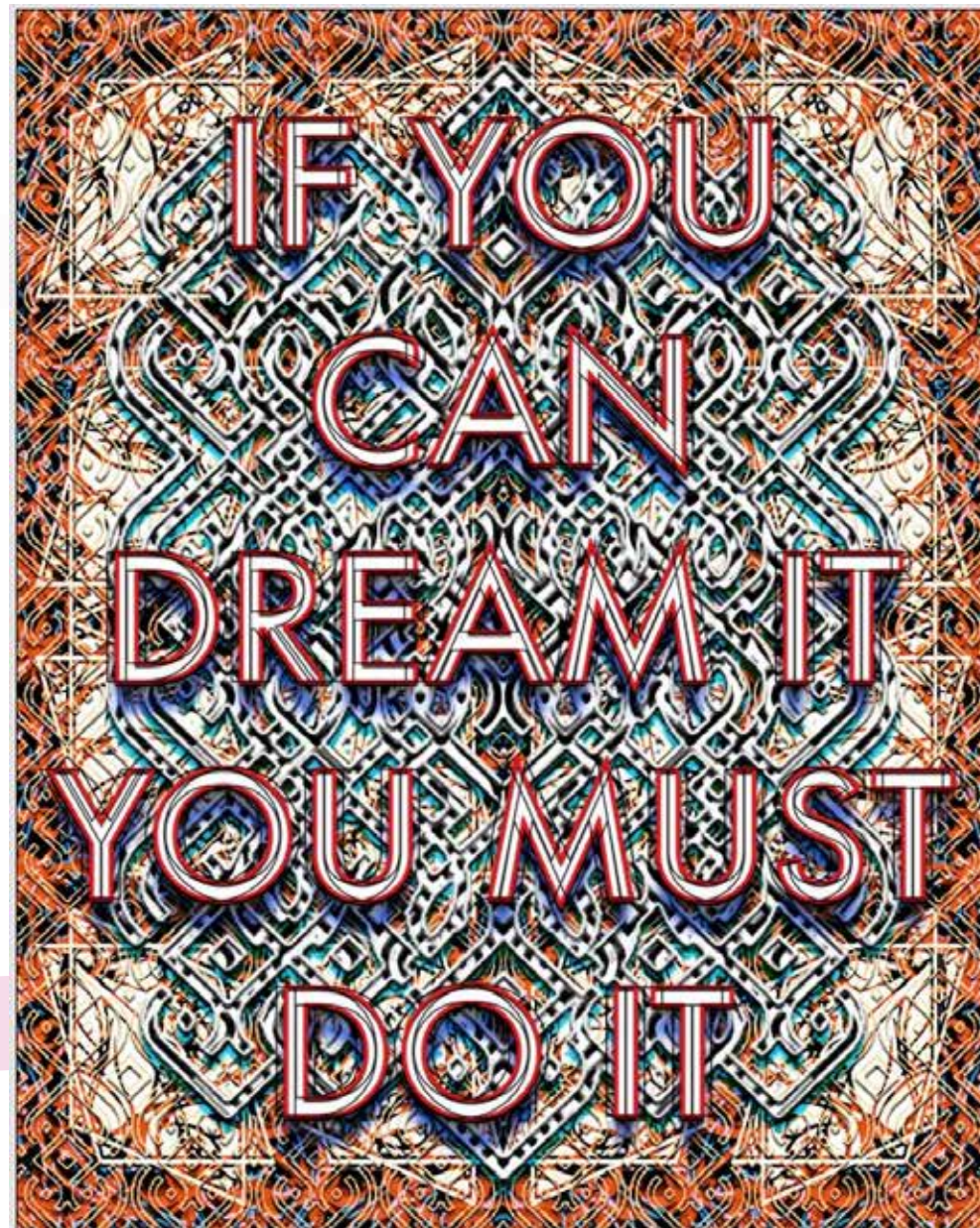
Community engagement and accessibility

Public art will seek to break down barriers between communities, cultures and places and be accessible physically, conceptually and economically to Luton's super-diverse, young population. It will enable interaction and participation with it, encouraging intercultural and/or intergenerational communication and play.

7

Grow local talent and skills

Commissioners and artists should invest in growing local talent and ensuring that the artists supported are representative of the Luton population. New public art commissions should include resource for developing the skills of the artist and/or local emerging artists and breaking down barriers to making and participating in public art.



The Beacon, Mark Titchner (2016), commissioned by The Culture Trust, Luton

8

A question of permanency

Public art can shift and develop over time. New public artworks should have a maintenance plan and budget and a consideration for how the artwork will evolve over time and respond to natural factors such as sunlight and rain. By investing in maintenance, the lifespan of an artwork is greatly increased, maintaining quality and providing longevity of investment.

Works that evolve over time should be supported and commissioners will consider the public engagement benefits of enabling artwork to unfold in situ. Works that are purposefully temporary will provide economical options to activating public space undergoing development.



Tributary, Abi Spendlove (2017) commissioned by The Culture Trust, Luton

3

ARTISTS, COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELIVERY



RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELIVERY

A strong arts strategy needs a strong arts community, and this strategy is designed to develop the capacity of local artists to drive its delivery. It has been written by Luton Council in collaboration with Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group partners. Its delivery will be led by the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group in partnership with the Creative Leaders, the Creative Forum, the Young Luton Creative Leaders and everyone with an interest in arts and culture in Luton. We actively invite and will enable local artists to develop a shared response to this strategy in the form of a manifesto, which asks artists to sign up to a range of self-authored commitments that outline how they will help deliver the strategy and shape their futures.

Luton Council is committed to the delivery of the strategy and gives leadership by resourcing and providing a base for the Cultural Partnerships Coordinator with responsibility for driving the strategy and by identifying an elected member as the Creative Industries Champion.

● The Cultural Partnerships Coordinator

In 2017 there was a consensus view that a new council-based arts officer post was critical to enabling the strategic vision to be fulfilled and with support from Luton Council and Arts Council England, this has been resourced since February 2018, with the ambition for this to be a permanent post within the council. The benefits and uniqueness of this post are that it is housed within the local authority but enables the achievement of this vision for all of Luton. The post is responsible for coordinating partnership activity and enabling other organisations, including grassroots organisations, to grow and take ownership of strategic projects. The uniqueness of this post has been demonstrated by the interest it has received from other local authorities who have considered the creation of similar roles.

The council will ensure that the strategic vision is effectively disseminated across its personnel to ensure knowledge and commitment to supporting its realisation, and helping find means, whenever possible, to remove barriers that might prevent innovative arts and culture initiatives that help achieve this vision. The Cultural Partnerships Coordinator will act as overarching coordinator to ensure that delivery of the strategic vision is kept on track and will lead on partnership investment opportunities.

● The Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group

The strategy's delivery plan will outline the key responsibilities for delivery of each member of the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group. Beyond that there is a combined responsibility for driving the strategy and working collaboratively to achieve it. All members have signed up to this strategy, played a part in its refreshment and commit to playing their part in achieving it.

● Artists and arts organisations

Artists and arts organisations play an integral role in the realisation of this strategy. It is they that will be commissioned through it, supported by it and enabled by it to advocate for their work and grow their practice.

We recognise that the ultimate responsibility for the strategy should lie with those that are resourced to deliver it: the local authority, the NPOs, large cultural organisations and strategic partners. By having staff and resources, partners are able to drive the achievement of this strategy. However, it is integral that artists and arts organisations are empowered and supported to develop and deliver their own projects that align with the vision and that partners are enablers, rather than gatekeepers. The Luton Creative Forum and Creative Leaders group will help enable this and support partners to listen to how we can best support artists to achieve our shared vision.

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE



Everybody in Luton can contribute to the delivery and achievement of this strategic vision.

Artists, cultural and creative organisations can contribute by:

- Contributing to the Creative Forum manifesto, which will be created by the Luton Creative Leaders, which will be a pledge for how artists will respond to the strategy
- Formally signing up to endorse the strategy, by pledging commitment to the manifesto, helping its delivery and advocating for its implementation
- Taking part in Creative Forum meetings to bring a range of voices and to encourage collaborative activity
- Embracing joined-up opportunities to seek additional resources and develop new projects that may involve connectivity between arts venues, museums, heritage sites, libraries, schools, community centres and open spaces
- Creating opportunities for children and young people and for skills development
- Committing to audience development to increase the diversity and range of audiences and participants
- Committing to engaging positively with partners, offering constructive feedback and contributing to the ongoing evolution of this vision
- Working collaboratively across art forms and sectors to effectively advocate for the role of all arts, culture and creativity in Luton
- Committing to radical generosity wherever possible: sharing knowledge, resources and time.

The community and voluntary sector can contribute by:

- Advocating for the strategy and becoming champions to build enthusiasm and support amongst all local communities
- Advocating for the role in the arts in addressing economic, social and educational challenges
- Seeking opportunities to make space and resources available to support implementation
- Actively promoting events and activities to users, members and participants
- Helping embed arts, culture and creativity in all aspects of life in Luton, supporting improvements to the environment, health and social care and lifelong learning
- Advocating for the employment of local artists, for high-quality artistic process and product and for transparent commissioning with local community groups developing arts projects.

The education sector can contribute by:

- Advocating for the strategic vision and becoming champions of the arts to build enthusiasm and support amongst educators and families
- Supporting the work of the Luton Cultural Education Partnership to ensure creative opportunities for all children and young people, maximising the numbers of ArtsMark status schools and individual accreditation through Arts Awards.

Businesses can contribute by:

- Recognising the role of the arts in building a thriving economy in the town and making Luton a desirable place to live and work
- Advocating for the strategic vision and encouraging involvement from employees and customers
- Seeking opportunities to make space and resources available to support implementation
- Sponsoring activity or providing philanthropic support, recognising the shared aims of the vision
- Actively promoting events and activities
- Advocating for the role of the arts offer in deciding to establish their business in Luton
- Establishing opportunities for creatives to be involved in project and organisation development from the perspective of cross-sector innovation and knowledge exchange

Families and individuals can contribute by:

- Promoting activities amongst families and friends (including visitors)
- Keeping aware of, actively seeking out information on and taking part in activity
- Becoming audiences for performances, arts installations, festivals and events
- Encouraging children and young people to engage with the arts and actively supporting creative careers as viable choices
- Taking advantage of the many low or no-cost events on offer and being open to trying new things.



Gayle Storey, TestBeds, University of Bedfordshire (c) R Cherry



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS VISION

This refreshment of the vision has been informed by:

- 1** Arts activity, sector development and inclusivity throughout 2017 – 2020 by the community, creative forum and Luton Arts Fund applicants
- 2** Review and reflection by all members of the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group
- 3** Desk research March 2020 - February 2021 ensuring this refreshment took into account the changed nature of the sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of the pandemic on the inequalities between arts leadership and freelance artists and the Black Lives Matter movement
- 4** The experience of the Cultural Partnerships Coordinator and partners in delivering the strategy from 2018 - 2020 and delivering activity that facilitated artist and community feedback including the Creative Forum and People Power Passion.

It is important to note that this is a refreshment of an existing strategy that was developed following extensive arts and community sector consultation carried out in 2016 by ArtReach. This consultation remains as the central influence of this strategy and included:

- Identifying key documents (local, regional and national strategies, policies and plans) that should inform strategic vision development
- Meeting with partners, stakeholders and artists including Luton Council, Arts Council England, The Culture Trust, University of Bedfordshire, Watford Palace Theatre, Luton Cultural Education Partnership, London Luton Airport Ltd, London Luton Airport Operations Limited, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, East London NHS Trust, SEMLEP, UKCCA, Luton BID, Active Luton, Revoluton and Sport England
- Meeting with wider cultural and arts partners including Jean Abreu Dance Company, Luton Mela, Youthscape, Sinfonia Verdi, Next Generation Youth Theatre, Luton Music Mix, Luton Irish Forum, Luton Choral Society, Love Luton, Khayaal Theatre, Kadam, Full House Theatre and Departure Lounge
- Attending area forum meetings, holding open meetings and leading practical workshops for the community, including for those from vulnerable and diverse groups
- Short survey activity and six open presentation sessions.



CONNECTIVITY WITH STRATEGIC DELIVERY PARTNERS



The Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group is the custodian of this strategy and its members lead its key initiatives. The delivery of this strategy is led by the Cultural Partnerships Coordinator employed by Luton Council.

LUTON 2020-2040 PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES

Harnessing Momentum is central to delivering on the shared vision for Luton 2020-2040, and has been aligned to each of the town's overarching partnership strategies:

Inclusive Economy Strategy

Luton's Inclusive Economy Strategy aims to deliver on the Luton 2020-2040 vision by securing a strong recovery from COVID-19 and ensuring that everybody in the town can benefit from future economic growth in Luton.

The key objectives of this strategy are:



Population Wellbeing Strategy

Luton's Population Wellbeing Strategy aims to improve the quality of life of all residents, while reducing health and education inequalities to enable everyone to reach their full potential.

The key objectives of this strategy are:



At the heart of the Luton 2020-2040 vision and both partnership strategies are three underlying commitments to make Luton:



Harnessing Momentum is aligned to the shared vision for Luton 2020-2040 and will be instrumental in delivering on the objectives of each of the partnership strategies.

KEY PARTNERS

The partnership organisations mentioned in this section are all members of the Arts and Culture Strategy Group. There are a number of other partnership organisations that will support its delivery, including artists and arts organisations, key commercial organisations and companies delivering strategic developments in Luton.

Luton Council

Luton Council's Corporate Plan for 2021-2023 is aligned to the overall vision and priorities for Luton 2020-2040. This includes a key role for arts, culture and creative industries as a shared priority for delivering on the vision and its strategies.

The Cultural Partnerships Coordinator and elected members will provide leadership to bring together key partners to deliver on this strategy.

Arts Council England: Let's Create

The Arts Council England strategy for 2020-2030 was launched in January 2020 with the following new vision:

By 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.

The strategy is built around three Outcomes and four Investment Principles. They are designed to work together to achieve the vision of a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.

Outcomes:

- **Creative people:** Everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life
- **Cultural communities:** Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture
- **A creative and cultural community:** England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

Investment principles:

- **Ambition and quality:** Cultural organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work
- **Dynamism:** Cultural organisations are dynamic and able to respond to the challenges of the next decade
- **Environmental Responsibility:** Cultural organisations lead the way in their approach to environmental responsibility
- **Inclusivity and relevance:** England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support and in the culture they produce.

Arts Council England's commitment to development of the arts in Luton is illustrated by the introduction of the Luton Investment Programme in 2016, which initiated *As You Change so do I*, *Imagine Luton*, Testbeds and the development of this strategic vision.

The Culture Trust, Luton

The Trust's mission is to connect communities through meaningful culture and creativity and does so through its six Business Plan priorities 2021-25:

- 1 Widen Community Participation:** We increase community participation by freely opening, animating and sharing culture across our venues including Wardown House Museum and Stockwood Discovery Centre
- 2 Develop young people's skills and talents:** We will engage young people in a programme of creative skills and talent development with clear cultural career progression routes
- 3 Present inspiring and diverse arts:** We will widen access to culture by presenting locally relevant and nationally important music, theatre, comedy, dance and visual arts at the Hat Factory Arts Centre, Library Theatre, Storefront Gallery and the Hat District in the heart of Luton
- 4 Grow Luton's Creative Industry Cluster:** We will grow the Hat District creative community, networks, creative industry events, outdoor activity and promote more engagement with Luton's Hat Heritage
- 5 Co-curate Museum collections:** We will curate and co-produce locally relevant and nationally important exhibitions, collections and projects
- 6 Boost the creative economy:** We will develop a sustainable, resilient and forward-looking Trust, maintain our entrepreneurial spirit, boost the local economy and advocate for the creative and cultural sector

Revoluton Arts

Revoluton Arts is a people-powered project on a mission to cultivate grassroots creativity in Luton and deliver high-quality creative events that delight our town's diverse audiences.

- We provide diverse communities with platforms for democratic decision making, inclusive participation, and support for the development of creative and cultural activities with, by and for communities
- We provide young people, particularly those from social and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, with creative skills and talent development opportunities, training, advice and support
- We discover and support a diversity of emerging creative innovators and practitioners, with development opportunities, resources, and support
- We enable the testing, [co]creation and sharing of new ideas and creative initiatives
- We uncover history and heritage of diverse communities and provide platforms for the sharing of stories.

Tangled Feet

Tangled Feet is a theatre ensemble and charity part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio.

We create original, visually stunning, transformative performances, sometimes inside theatres but often in other public spaces. We create atmospheres and experiences for the audience which are thrilling, surprising and memorable, which always feel 'live' and in the moment, where the unique reality of this audience, in this moment, right here is acknowledged and celebrated.

We love sharing the creative process with new people and younger artists as an integral part of our production process and in workshops, residencies and participation projects. All of the passion, fun, pain, anger and life experience of the people we meet makes our work deeper and richer. In return, we hope to offer people life-affirming, fun creative experiences and to inspire and support younger generations of artists.

- We believe that art has the power to transform lives
- We believe art succeeds most effectively when people are put before profit
- We believe art must be available and accessible to all
- We believe that collaborative creativity can achieve things that a single artist working alone cannot
- We believe in shared decision making, in equal creative stake, in fair and equal pay
- We believe in young people's potential to change the world and their right to be seen as a significant part of that world
- We believe that sharing stories and narratives in public spaces builds our empathetic connection with each other and brings us closer together
- We want to entertain, to challenge and to delight; to create lasting memories and to inspire other artistic journeys
- We are a dedicated ensemble and believe in long-term rehearsal and performance history. The company formed in 2003 as a group of like-minded artists and friends with a shared vision and commitment to a collaborative, physical working methodology.

UK Centre for Carnival Arts

The UK Centre for Carnival Arts' vision is to see Carnival universally valued as a leader in artistic excellence and inclusive cultural expression.

- We celebrate, promote, and sustain traditional Carnival arts and craft skills within the diverse cultural heritage of Luton. The process of making Carnival unites, supports, develops, and sustains the cultural and artistic offer of Luton
- We produce and deliver the annual Luton International Carnival
- As the UK National Centre for Carnival Arts, we nurture new artistic talent at our purpose-built National Carnival Centre, developing the Carnival sector's artistic quality and sustainability, running innovative learning programmes for young people and disengaged community groups, positioning UK Carnival arts as leading the world in quality and a more inclusive Carnival arts sector
- Luton Carnival is a mirror of our community. We enable each community to express and share their values and culture through the medium of carnival
- We support young emerging artists through an innovative school work experience programme, creating opportunities for their development through artistic commissions
- We inspire innovation in making excellent art. Igniting ambition within the creative process and making work which is spectacular for street performance.

University of Bedfordshire

The University of Bedfordshire is an internationally recognised and award-winning institution with a heritage of quality education going back over 100 years. We have a vibrant and cosmopolitan population of staff and over 20,000 students from 100+ countries. More than half of our UK students come from lower socio-economic backgrounds or from families with no history of participation in higher education. Over a third of our UK students are mature learners and around a quarter are from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds under-represented in higher education with Luton seeing almost 70% of its students deriving from this demographic (international and EU students included).

The University makes significant social and economic contributions to our local, regional and national economy. Through our teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities we support 5,100 gross FTE jobs and £370 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK, of which 2,000 jobs and £150 million in GVA are in the SEMLEP area.

The University's Luton campus features a £155 million portfolio of recent capital investment that, includes the STEM Building, a seven-storey Library and a Postgraduate and CPD Centre. This adds to an array of industry specific facilities, including the Media Arts Centre hosting broadcast television and digital radio studios, and extensive laboratories and workshops. Furthermore, the School of Art and Design is based within the Alexon Building - a former fashion house based in the heart of Luton's Hat District.

The University has four academic faculties: The Business School, Faculty of Education and Sport the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Creative Arts, Technologies and Science (CATS). CATS is home to three academic schools that deliver courses for the Creative Industries, a supporting research institute and the Arts and Culture Projects team. Our Projects team partner with many local, regional, and national cross-sector organisations to widen participation into the cultural and creative industries. This includes working across the University and the region on capacity building and cultural education projects that innovate and mobilise knowledge for the betterment and sustainable growth of the local cultural sector.

The Luton Cultural Education Partnership

The Luton Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) is a partnership that includes the University of Bedfordshire, Luton Council (education, creative and cultural representatives), local schools and colleges and local creative and cultural providers.

The LCEP vision is **'to support the recognition of Luton as an exciting town, where arts and cultural learning thrives – embedded in the daily lives of all children and young people who live, learn or work here'**.

The three goals of LCEP are:

- 1 Advocate for the value of creative and cultural learning and increase access for all.**
- 2 Ensure high quality opportunities and links between Luton's cultural providers, schools and other formal and informal education providers.**
- 3 Involve children and young people in shaping their creative and cultural learning.**

Active Luton

Active Luton is a community wellbeing trust and is committed to making a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Luton's community; inspiring, motivating and offering opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn and take action to improve their life chances.

We provide high quality programmes, activities and facilities enabling local residents to:

- participate in physical activity
- improve their health and wellbeing
- enhance their education and skills
- create career opportunities.

SEMLEP

SEMLEP's role as a Local Enterprise Partnership is to help economic growth thrive across the South East Midlands. Steered by a business-led Board, we work to build a strong economy by tackling barriers to sustainable growth and supporting job creation for the future prosperity of communities across the South East Midlands.

SEMLEP has three main roles in delivering sustainable economic growth.

- Setting the strategic priorities for the local economy. To do this, SEMLEP keeps abreast of economic trends and shocks, changes in government policy, political developments and technological advancements. Where required, we work with our partners to refine priority actions and monitor progress against key economic plans
- Direct intervention: securing and overseeing investment in infrastructure, coordinating and enhancing business support provision to improve productivity and increase local jobs, and improving workforce skills
- Facilitating and convening partners to realise the area's long-term growth opportunities

With responsibility for the Local Growth Fund capital investment programme and other regional growth monies, SEMLEP facilitates and manages a pipeline of investment opportunities and delivery of projects approved for funding under the programme.



At the time of writing, there are a number of existing council strategies that are in the process of being refreshed to align with Luton 2020-2040. The Arts and Culture Strategy Group will seek to align our work with the relevant strategies as they emerge. These will include:

- The **Flying Start Strategy 2014-2024**: Flying Start will make a positive and systematic change to the lives and life chances of our youngest children from pregnancy to 5 years of age.
- The **Luton Council Library Strategy 2020-2025**: The purpose of our library service is improve access to knowledge, information and public spaces through engagement with partners and communities to build an inclusive town. The service exists to ensure that quality resources, knowledge and technology are available and accessible to everyone
- The **Luton Local Plan 2011-2031** has the vision for Luton where our economic, social and environmental resources and assets will be used efficiently and sustainably to deliver economic prosperity and an improved quality of life, health and wellbeing for all the residents of the borough. Luton will strengthen and where appropriate transform the places that continue to make the borough unique. It will continue to be a place for diverse communities, building on its strategic importance as a sub-regional driver of economic growth. It contains a number of relevant priorities including:
 - Luton will protect and enhance its networks of parks, heritage, waterways and natural features which will continue to provide integral multi-functional open space, leisure opportunities and benefits to health and wellbeing in a densely populated Borough
 - Luton will prosper through a well-connected network of vibrant and regenerated locally distinct places centred on Luton Town Centre, District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres which have evolved from the borough's rich history. Luton Town Centre will be a sub-regional focus for inward investment for development including retail, the creative and cultural economy, new homes and town centre uses.

● **Luton's Strategic Vision for Sport and Physical Activity 2018-2022:**

A five-year strategy to increase levels of physical activity and maximise the wider benefits of participation in sport and physical activity in Luton.

The strategy has ten key ambitions including:

- Fewer inactive people
- Luton's sport and leisure offer plays a leading role in attracting people to live, visit or work in Luton
- Inclusive and easy access activity for all
- Focused investment to make the greatest impact in improvement of quality of life and reducing health inequalities through addressing the interdependency between physical and mental health
- Supporting young people's personal and skills development through sport and physical activity
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- More collaborative working between our physical activity and arts and culture providers.

Luton has strong potential to harness the power of activity that brings together the arts and sport. The Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group has representatives from both the council's Public Health team and Active Luton.

- **Many Voices, One Town - a strategy for building a stronger community in Luton 2019-2023** has the vision of a stronger community at the heart of Luton. They set out five priorities for achieving this, some of which are:

- Promote and enable equality, cohesion and inclusion
- Involve our residents and communities in shaping our future
- Develop local pride and an identity based on shared Luton values

- **The Luton Community Led Local Development Strategy 2016-2021**

- **Prosperity through procurement: a five year strategy 2019-2024**

- **The Education Strategy**

- **The Social Justice Strategy**

- **a new Employment and Skills Strategy**

- **The Town Centre Master Plan**

- **The Heritage Strategy**





LUTON CREATIVE FORUM



LUTON CREATIVE FORUM

The Luton Creative Forum was established as part of the consultation process for the first version of this strategic vision. It is constantly evolving and is governed by a set of terms of reference and a clear aim:

- To facilitate cultural democracy and inclusion through communication between artists, arts workers and the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group and to enable communication, peer-learning, collaboration and network development.

The forum is a collective term for artists and arts organisations in Luton who have agreed to be part of the network and align themselves, at least in part, with this vision. There is no joining fee or process. By joining the forum, artists widen their

networks, peer-learn and directly influence the achievement of this strategy and the decision-making of the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group. Artists do not have to agree with everything in this vision to be a part of the network, but they do agree to engaging in productive feedback and criticism, and to actively advocating for the role of arts and culture in brightening the lives and life chances of Lutonians.

The forum has over 300 members who meet every 2-3 months and network through the forum's **Facebook group**.

The Creative Forum will be further represented and enhanced through the Luton Creative Leaders Group.



The People's Launch, People Power Passion, Debra Knight, Amerah Saleh, Jeanefer Jean-Charles and the people of Luton (c) A Warchol



LUTON CREATIVE LEADERS GROUP



The Luton Creative Leaders group, established in April 2021 will better enable the presence of artist voices on the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group. The group is administered by Luton Council and Revoluton and evolved from the forum sub-group which was established in 2016 by ArtReach. The leaders group has two key aims:

1 To enable better artist representation in decision-making and strengthen the inclusion of people that are culturally or ethnically diverse, and people who are ethnically diverse, working class and disabled on the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group and within strategic creative project development in Luton

2 To develop the leadership, arts advocacy and applied arts skills of Luton artists, improving the capacity of Luton-based artists to work as leaders in their field and supporting the diversification of arts leadership nationally.

Eight paid members, selected through a competitive process, are elected to the group for one year. One member, democratically selected by the group, sits on the Arts and Culture Strategy group, responsible for representing artist voices.

The initial year of the programme is a pilot which will help shape future years and support future fundraising and legacy activity.



The Outdoor Spectacular, Luton Council, Sinfonia Verdi, Union Dance and the people of Luton (c) WK360

IMPROVING THE LOCAL SECTOR



In 2016, throughout the consultation for this vision, members of the local creative sector identified a number of areas that required improvement. The first draft of this strategy listed ten key actions (areas for improvement) and the activity that would be undertaken to address them. The following table builds on

that work and lists how we have addressed them to date, and the further actions that need to be undertaken for continued improvement (committed activity). The first column, 'area for improvement' remains untouched since publication in 2017 as we recognise that the issues raised in 2017 are still relevant today.

Area for improvement		Current outcomes and priorities aligned to this area	Completed and committed activity
1.	Joining-Up: establish effective, joined-up, collaborative working across the cultural sector	<p><u>Priority:</u> Artistic quality and innovation</p>	<p><u>Completed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully facilitated the Creative Forum since 2017, enabling improved communications and the development of networks and collaborative working • Facilitated a mutual support network via the creative forum, to provide integral support and advice during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic • Widened the membership and remit of the Luton Arts and Culture Strategy Group to enable better communication across the sector. <p><u>Committed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a member of the Luton Creative Leaders Group sit on the Arts and Culture Strategy Group from mid-2021 • To explore and implement improved ways for artists to engage in online communication and collaboration • To explore and implement improved ways to reach and develop audiences for the whole sector, working as one and not in competition • To ensure that joined up working against clear targets and deliverables across the cultural sector (arts, libraries, museums and heritage) becomes the norm, leading to many new collaborative initiatives and projects.
2.	Creating optimism: establish a positive and optimistic view of the Luton arts and culture offer	<p><u>Outcome:</u> A society enriched by diverse cultural activity</p> <p><u>Priorities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic quality and innovation • A global outlook • Inclusivity and diversity 	<p><u>Completed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented this strategy, enabling improved advocacy for arts and culture in Luton and facilitating better partnership working between arts and non-arts organisations, including with 2020 Developments, Capital and Regional and Luton BID • Delivered positive arts activity with improved evaluation processes, developing more localised impact data • Improved our capacity to engage with the press to increase the number of positive arts stories reaching residents. <p><u>Committed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver excellent arts activity developed by, with and for the people of Luton, that helps achieve the aims of this vision • Continue to advocate for the role of arts and culture in achieving Luton 2020-2040 • To encourage all artists and arts organisations in Luton to support each other, proactively disseminate positive messages and eradicate competition between creative sectors.

3.	Giving a Voice: change perceptions and empower the creative community so that artists, community producers, young people and black, Asian, non-white British, working class and disabled residents feel fully valued and want to engage	<u>Priority:</u> Inclusivity and diversity	<p><u>Completed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership of the creative forum has grown from just 20 arts professionals to over 300 and includes a wide range of artists, community members and cultural producers. Artists and communities are encouraged to take part in the forum and to take an active lead in developing activities, programmes and new initiatives Arts activity, including the work of Revoluton Arts and People Power Passion, engaged with a wide variety of people as artists, collaborators and participants, delivering creative activity that is by, with and for Luton communities Recognised that it is not solely the Arts and Culture Strategy group's role to 'give a voice' and that if written today, the aim would recognise the enablement role of the group including our role in enabling agency amongst less-represented communities and our need to improve access to engaging with the group and more broadly with the arts. <p><u>Committed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to increase and strengthen the diverse and young voices in the Creative Forum To have a member of the Luton Creative Leaders Group sit on the Arts and Culture Strategy Group by mid-2021 and explore the inclusion of a youth member through a Young Creative Leaders Group Improve access, across all visible and invisible barriers, to engaging in the arts, including with the establishment of a creative skills and leadership programme directly addressing the lack of diversity at decision making level in the arts in Luton and beyond.
4.	Advocating Cultural Value: ensure the next generation understand and support the value of culture	<u>Outcome:</u> A robust creative education offer	<p><u>Completed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership investment received for the Luton Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) and the leadership of the partnership transferred to the University of Bedfordshire, enabling the appointment of a Project Officer Children's activity as part of the pilot year of culture demonstrated the educational value of child-led activity and provided a model and evidence for future activity Continued to successfully deliver the Luton Music Education Hub, reaching and average of 780 out-of-school pupils and 7,500 in-school students per year Established a Creative Teachers Network, run by Hillborough Junior School, ROH Bridge and the University of Bedfordshire. <p><u>Committed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Creative Leaders will become young champions for arts and culture Updated LCEP strategy will be published Continue and enhance training programmes to develop local artists' process and technique for responding to the needs of curriculum and aligning artistic practice with educational outcomes Existing youth theatre and youth dance provision will be supported to further develop their education offers and an out-of-school visual arts offer will be developed The museum collections will be widely promoted and re-interpreted to widen engagement of children and young people through exhibition, collaborative projects and co-produced work through the Wardown House NPO programme The creative skills development offer will be enhanced through a creative skills and leadership programme, the pathways into the programme will be well-communicated, and educators will be supported to understand and promote creative careers and the pathways into them Partners' skills-development offers will be mapped through the development of the skills programme, enhancing collaboration and pathways, cementing their USPs and improving communication across the sector and for service-users and educators.

5.	Mobilising engagement: achieve widespread engagement, involvement and participation in arts and arts related activity	<p><u>Outcome:</u> A society enriched by diverse cultural activity</p> <p><u>Priorities:</u> Inclusivity and diversity</p>	<p><u>Completed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After six years of activity, Revoluton Arts successfully transitioned to an independent CIC and continues to work in hyper-local areas and with target groups • The pilot year of culture was led by the community, successfully engaged with 400 participants and had long-term impact on employability, skills and confidence • Appointed a Heritage Enabler to enable community engagement with heritage and heritage-related projects • All strategic partners have committed to contributing to Luton 2020-2040 and specifically commit to work that combats child poverty, including the creative skills and leadership programme and access improvement projects including free arts activities and through working with targeted partners including the NHS Foundation Trust and LCEP • NGYT's Up Our Street programme took a diverse programme of arts activity to neighbourhood settings. <p><u>Committed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Heritage Strategy will enable the development and delivery of programmes that build on existing strengths and increase community engagement the with heritage • Arts on Prescription activity including collaborative arts and sports initiatives, working with partners such as Active Luton and The Culture Trust. Activity will be reviewed to ensure there is full access for older people and those with disabilities • Luton's outdoor cultural events programme will be enhanced to widen appeal and access and a cohesive brand and communications strategy will develop audiences • Support community producers to deliver neighbourhood activity • Support community partners to develop and deliver Windrush activity.
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6.	Securing resources: bring substantial new resources to Luton and ensure Luton organisations can successfully fundraise	<u>Outcome:</u> A prosperous creative economy <u>Priority:</u> Artistic quality and innovation	<u>Completed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Bedfordshire's TestBeds Elevator supported five local artists and organisations to establish a step change in the scale and reach of their arts output, developing 42 new cross-sector partnerships and collectively securing £142,734 of funding from Arts Council England • The combined value of Arts Council England grants in Luton rose by between £100,000 and £1,000,000 per year from 2012-2020 • Partners supported a number of local artists and organisations to access emergency funding from Arts Council England, National Heritage Lottery Fund and DCMS during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Combined, this equalled an investment of £1,859,587.00 into Luton with a 84% success rate, significantly higher than the national rate of 71% • The Luton Arts Fund was established and awarded £130,000 to 23 individuals and organisations in Luton from 2017-2019 • Partners worked together to submit collaborative applications to the Cultural Development Fund and the Thriving Communities Fund, welcoming a new approach to securing investment through partnership working • Partners secured over £19.2 million for arts and culture projects between 2017-2021 • Welcomed representation from Arts Council England and SEMLEP on the Arts and Culture Strategy Group, enhancing the advocacy and investment capacity of Luton partnership organisations. <u>Committed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a partnership-led manner to apply for significant future funding, including any forthcoming rounds of the Cultural Development Fund • Continue the Luton Arts Fund and increase the investment into the fund from private organisations. Refresh the fund's terms to align with the refreshed strategy • Develop a clear and consistent approach to fundraising skills-development and bid-writing support activity, working across the University, Revoluton and the Creative Forum to support artists to understand and access support • Align future fundraising activity to this strategy, ensuring that cultural democracy and diversity are central to all new projects • The University of Bedfordshire will deliver the £250,000 Heritage Impact Accelerator and Heritage Enterprise Hub, supporting practitioners and organisations engaged in community heritage activity through capacity building and mentored support.
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7.	Building infrastructure: improve existing spaces and create new venues and locations for performing and visual arts and establish new making and delivery organisations	<p><u>Outcome:</u> A prosperous creative economy</p> <p><u>Priorities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artistic quality and innovation - Inclusivity and diversity 	<p><u>Completed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed a £2 million renovation of The Hat Factory, enhancing the venue’s accessibility, visibility and presence in The Hat District and relaunching with a collaboration between Tangled Feet, NGYT, Revellers Steelband, Lee Nelson and Pirates of the Caribina for an audience of 800 • Completed a £3 million renovation of Wardown House Museum and Gallery • Secured The Storefront as an exhibition and engagement venue for an additional five years • Secured £11 million for the redevelopment of three old hat factories in the Hat District, providing additional creative industries work spaces in the Town Centre • The University of Bedfordshire’s TestBeds project supported 9,000+ creatives through their Accelerator, Elevator and Artists’ Enterprise Zone to develop new cultural and creative enterprises • Little Red Creative Studios opened their venue on George Street, providing a community hub for arts and music • Revoluton continue to develop their out-of-town centre creative and digital hub with partners Marsh Farm Outreach, located in their base in Marsh House. <p><u>Committed activity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with 2020 Developments and URBAN:RE to develop the concepts for music and arts venues in the 2020 stadium and development of the ABC cinema site • Support an improved theatre offer in Luton and implement plans as guided by research • Development of enhanced museum provision at Stockwood Discovery Centre • Conduct a feasibility study into the need and capacity for a permanent gallery space in The Hat District, High Town or Town Centre, including pilot activity such as Artists in Empty Shops and shop window galleries and implement the findings of the study • Encourage the opening up of schools, community venues and outdoor space for arts activity, including Marjorie’s Café and the Wardown Park bandstand • Existing and new venues will be made accessible to people that are d/Deaf or disabled, are neuro-diverse or experience unseen access barriers • Continue working across TestBeds, Revoluton and the Creative Forum to support artists to establish new creative enterprises.
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8.	Developing opportunity: ensure wide knowledge of the available opportunities	<u>Priorities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artistic quality and innovation - Inclusivity and diversity 	<u>Completed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully delivered the Luton Creative Forum since 2016 enabling better communication between arts organisations and artists, ensuring local people are aware of upcoming commissions, contracts and jobs and are supported to be competitive applicants • Successfully delivered the pilot year of culture programme which targeted local artists with a host of employment opportunities. Two of the six projects were led by local artists and 13 associate and trainee roles, ring-fenced for local people, were advertised widely throughout the creative community and application processes made accessible • Established the Luton.events website to better enable event and opportunity promotion • Strengthened the digital presence of the Creative Forum to better enable cross-sector communication and support. <u>Committed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To listen to the local creative community and implement actions that improve the accessibility of local opportunities • To continue to ring-fence opportunities for local artists and when national and international artists are commissioned, commit to offering valuable paid skills-development, mentoring and associate opportunities • To continue to widen publicity channels, including through non-traditional methods, to ensure opportunities reach diverse communities • To support local cultural event producers to implement commitments on the ratio of local/national acts and to offer paid associate and trainee roles • To further to promote and enhance the Luton.events website to strengthen its purpose and reach • Include arts and cultural organisations, including cultural events, in the Luton 2020-2040 on line and social media presence that promotes partners, creating opportunities for both those delivering (including emerging talent) and those consuming • Re-establish the Delivery and Communications Group to better enable collaboration and communication between arts workers and communications staff • Develop a cohesive brand for arts and culture in the town, implementing it across key projects and cultural events.
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9.	Achieving quality: establish a benchmark for quality of delivery and deliver to that threshold	<u>Priorities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artistic quality and innovation 	<u>Completed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered world-leading examples of artistic product made by, with and for Luton communities, with embedded skills–development for local artists, ensuring that the projects had legacy in the community and enabled local artists to deliver future work or quality. This work was delivered through projects such as The Hat Factory Relaunch, People Power Passion, Imagine Luton and Rise Regular commissioning opportunities through Revoluton Arts Improved access to funding opportunities through Luton Arts Fund, Revoluton’s Kickstarter Commissions, support through the Luton Producers Hub and hosting regular funding advice workshops Work made in Luton has been showcased alongside work of national calibre. <u>Committed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit this improvement area with the Luton Creative Leaders Group, ensuring that any developed quality metric is built by artists with the quality needs of communities and artists at its heart Deliver training through the Creative Forum, TestBeds and Revoluton that improve understanding of quality and innovation and how to balance this with community relevance Schools will be encouraged and supported to gain Artsmark accreditation Tangled Feet will create three new productions made in and for Luton, supported by Steel Charitable Trust
10.	Delivering continuity: build a skilled creative workforce and a portfolio of successful local arts and cultural organisations	<u>Priorities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artistic quality and innovation 	<u>Completed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed the capacity and resilience of 68 artists through the University’s Artist Accelerator, Catalyst Co-Lab and Artist Elevator strands. The Artists’ Enterprise Zone strand supported a further 9000+ participants across the town Revoluton Arts transitioned to a CIC, securing their independence, improving their fundraising capacity and contributing to their sustainability. Continued to build the Luton Creative Forum network, supporting fundraising and project-development activity, including building a peer-support network for Arts Council England fundraising. <u>Committed activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the diversity of local artists, arts organisations and arts leaders through the Luton Creative Leaders, Young Creative Leaders and targeted skills-development programmes Develop, resource and deliver a skills-development programme that improves access to creative careers and enables a number of apprenticeship and paid training roles Listen to, respond and support local arts organisations to grow and develop their capacity Tangled Feet’s targeted talent development strand will offer 16 weeks a year of paid skills development and internships.

The next review of this strategy is due in 2023. A full review will be conducted in 2027 to appraise Luton’s position as a place where arts, culture and creativity brighten the lives and life chances of all Lutonians. A detailed review/evaluation of achievements from the Vision will be completed and a new 10 Year Strategic Vision to build on Harnessing Momentum and to align with progress on Luton 2020-2040 will be established.



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