

# MAKING THE CREATIVE CITY

A cultural strategy for Stoke-on-Trent







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# 1. FOREWORD

## COUNCILLOR ANTHONY MUNDAY

Council member for Greener City, Development and Leisure

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### **Making the Creative City**

We have been through tough times: the collapse of coal and the contraction of the ceramics industry left our city reeling from the removal of old certainties. We are a working class city looking for a renewed purpose. Our roots are in clay and coal but we are finding new ways to channel our collective endeavour and forge a new purpose and identity. We are building on the foundations of our heritage to fashion a city that is a destination for makers, artists, designers: those who turn innovation and creativity into enterprise, who see the potential of a unique, post-industrial city re-imagining itself for a new era. This culture strategy takes a ten year view, looking beyond 2021 to envisage the long-term cultural renewal of Stoke-on-Trent.

This strategy describes the diverse ways in which culture matters to the city and its people and sets out an action plan to maximise the outcomes of investment in culture not only for the city's cultural life but also for its health, wealth and well-being. Cultural renewal has the potential to promote economic development, improve community cohesion, support education, and transform the city's identity and image.

### **OUR VISION is for Stoke-on-Trent to be known as a city:**

- **for artists and makers, where they are welcomed, supported and have diverse opportunities to thrive**
- **where all of our population have opportunities to engage with arts and culture**
- **recognised as a centre for the production and distribution of cultural excellence**
- **where culture is at the heart of regeneration and economic development**
- **where national and international artists are eager to perform**
- **with a positive, respected image, rooted in our heritage and our openness to innovation**
- **where cultural life has made a real impact on the health, wellbeing and aspirations of local people**



# STRONGER TOGETHER



The Stronger Together Strategic Plan 2016-20 sets out the vision and overarching priorities and objectives for the Council for the next four years. The diagram below shows how the Cultural Strategy will contribute to the achievement of that vision.



**Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well**

- Enable and support more people to live independently and safely
- Improve quality of life, independence and choice for vulnerable adults



**Support our residents to fulfil their potential**

- Support our schools to deliver a step change in educational attainment so that every young person has access to a school rated 'good' or better
- Continue to increase the number of 18-24 year olds who gain the skills necessary to secure a job of their choice
- Protect and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Increase the number of people moving into work
- Transform training and skills provision, supporting business growth and enabling local people to secure good quality work



**Work with residents to make our towns and communities great places to live**

- Preserve and enhance the unique heritage of our city
- Involve communities in making each town and neighbourhood a great, vibrant and healthy place to live and work



**A commercial council, well governed and fit for purpose, driving efficiency in everything we do**

- Deliver optimal efficiency in all our services adopting new delivery models that deliver maximum value for residents
- Optimise value from local public spending and increase the proportion of spending with local businesses
- Deliver a customer focussed approach to service delivery and transform accessibility of services



**Support our businesses to thrive, delivering investment in our towns and communities**

- Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship to support new and emerging local business growth
- Celebrate and promote our great city and increase the number of visitors
- Deliver a transformation in the number of apprenticeships in the city and in the council

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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**We are Stoke-on-Trent. We make things. We make art from dirt. What we make here reaches the four corners of the globe. There is nowhere else like us in the UK. The city is uniquely polycentric – six distinct towns, one city – a radical idea of place. We are the place where art, technology and commerce come together to create beauty through craftsmanship. Collective production, once of industry and now of culture, is our hallmark. Innovation is our watchword”.**

Stoke-on-Trent's bid to be UK City of Culture 2021

Stoke-on-Trent's bid to be UK City of Culture 2021 expressed the newfound confidence of the city in its cultural life and its future as a centre of art, craft and contemporary culture. The development of the bid brought the city's cultural organisations together to reflect on the remarkable cultural assets of the six towns and to define a cultural vision for the city for both the medium and long term.

This strategy builds on the work done to prepare the UK City of Culture bid. The energy, enthusiasm and optimism that informed the bid must be valued and sustained. Culture will always be integral to the city's identity and prospects.

This strategy is informed by the UK City of Culture bid and by the findings of the wide-ranging consultation that fed into it, which included workshops, an online survey, and face-to-face meetings with organisations and residents. The Cultural Forum that oversaw the development of the bid continues to play a central role in articulating, debating, and communicating the cultural strategy within the city.

**Culture is generally taken to include the following areas: arts (including visual arts, literature, music, theatre and dance), architecture, crafts, creative industries, design, heritage, historic environment, museums and galleries, libraries, archives, film, broadcasting and media.**

Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



### 3. WHERE WE ARE NOW

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We have a strong cultural base with outstanding collections, museums, theatres and creative spaces, all of which deserve a larger audience. In the RSA's (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) Heritage Index for England, Stoke-on-Trent is ranked 35 out of 325 for museums, archives and artefacts. Given the quality of our assets and the size of our catchment population, we can achieve much more. We are currently investing millions in improving these assets, reflecting our belief in the transformative power of culture.

#### Assets


The cultural assets of Stoke-on-Trent include its people, its story, its institutions and its geography. The warmth and creativity of its population are complemented by the many remarkable individuals who create and deliver the cultural life of the city including the leaders of institutions and a wide network of local artists and makers. Commitment to culture extends well beyond the arts sector to the private sector and the council, where there is high level commitment to cultural renewal. The Cultural Forum and the Cultural Education Partnership bring people together to shape the cultural renewal of the city.

Stoke-on-Trent enjoys a world-wide reputation in a recognised art form, ceramics, such that the city is still known as the World Capital of Ceramics. Although the industry has declined from its nineteenth century peak, hundreds of ceramics businesses are still based in the area including Emma Bridgewater, Wedgwood, Portmeirion, Moorcroft, Steelite and Burleigh. These are internationally renowned brands.

Ceramics remain central to the identity of a city that many still call 'The Potteries'. The story of the city's origins and growth are invaluable to the ongoing cultural development of the city, even as the mix of art, craft and design pursued within the city diversifies. Crucially, this story is widely shared as participation in making has always been embedded in the local population.

Both the history and current practice of ceramics are celebrated in the city's museums and events.

The Gladstone Pottery Museum tells the human story behind the ceramics industry and is preserved as the last complete Victorian pottery. It gives an insight into what the processes and working conditions were like for ordinary women and men at the heart of the industry. The fruits of their labours are displayed in The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, previously a winner of the Art Fund 'Museum of the Year', which has a world-class collection of Staffordshire ceramics as well as The Staffordshire Hoard, the largest collection of Anglo-Saxon gold objects ever found. The Gallery also contains works by Picasso, Durer and Degas, and hosts national touring exhibitions through its links with the V&A, the British Museum and the Tate. The combined visitor figure for both sites is 186,000 with an estimated economic impact of £3m per year. All of the collection holdings of both museums are Designated as outstanding by Arts Council England and are of pre-eminent importance. The World of Wedgwood, winner of the Art Fund prize in 2008, contains an exceptional collection of the maker's work and the Stoke-on-Trent Archive service contains the complete archives of both Spode and Minton. In addition, there are two specialist museums, the Etruria Industrial Museum and Ford Green Hall, run by the voluntary sector.



**The £9 million restoration and refurbishment of Middleport Pottery by United Kingdom Historic Buildings Preservation Trust (UKHBPT) has been an astonishing success, creating positive national TV coverage of the city and further investments in Stoke-on-Trent by its principal funders. By retaining commercial production alongside individual craft and artistic making, the project demonstrates how the past and future of the city can co-exist and how community confidence can be reinvigorated. Key outcomes include: 50 jobs have been safeguarded and 70 jobs created; 35 people have gained education and training awards; 1,070 school and university students have engaged in learning activities; 12 research and development projects have been undertaken; 45 volunteers regularly support the project; and 80% of the local community report 'increased pride'.**



The British Ceramics Biennial, which recently attained Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation status, programmes the best in contemporary ceramics and brings world class artists to the city, attracting local, national and international audiences. To date, the Biennial has recorded over 250,000 visits and produced economic activity in excess of £7.5m. It has also won national recognition for its local education work, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation with sponsorship from local industry partners. The Biennial has recently set out its own 10 year vision to 2027 with ambitious plans to be recognised as a world-class event and an important part of the nation's cultural calendar.

A broader perspective on visual art is provided by Airspace Gallery. This is a collaborative, artist-led project providing professional development opportunities, studio and exhibiting space and support for artists.

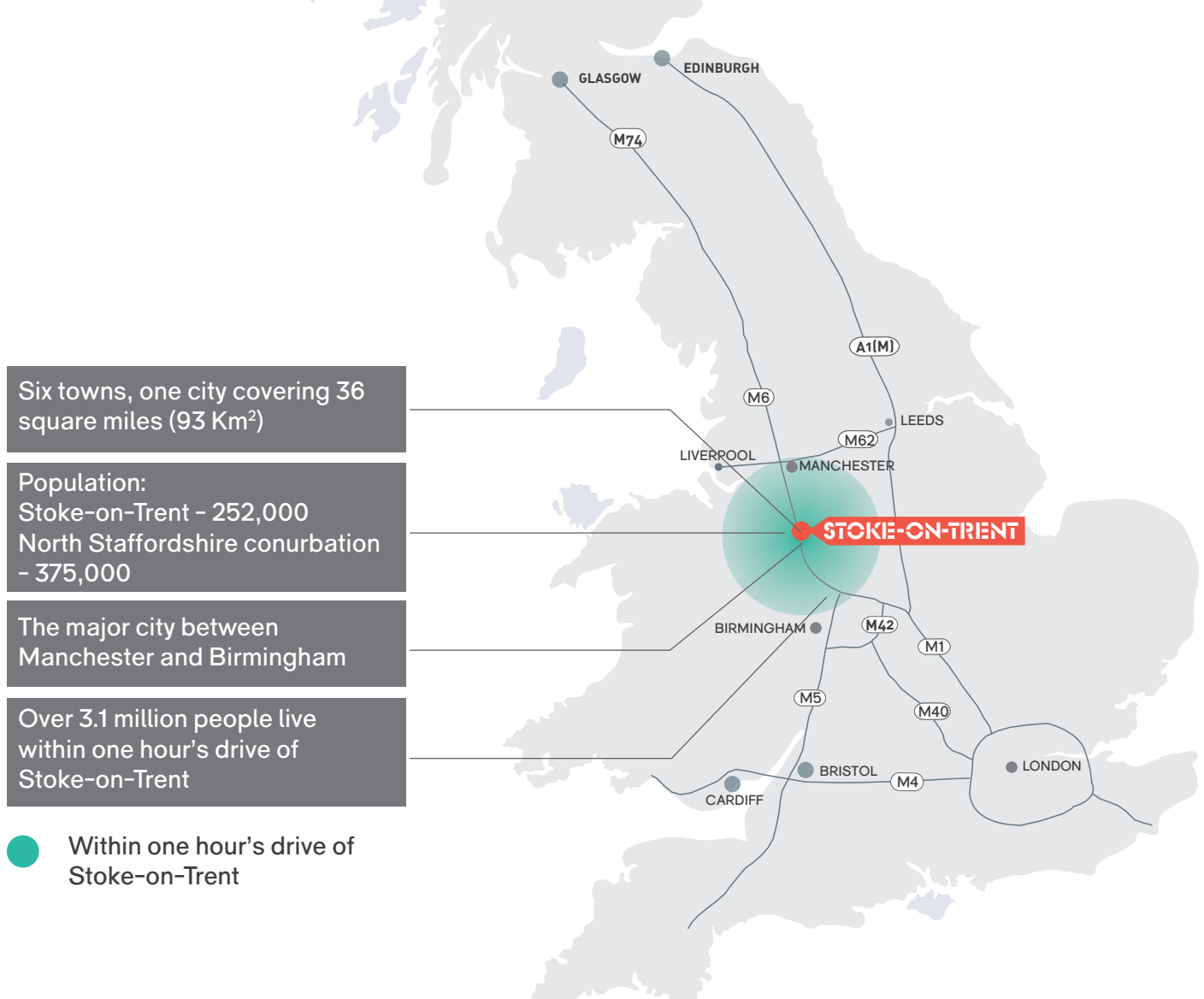
Stoke-on-Trent is home to a variety of extraordinary arts organisations whose work is open and participatory. These include B Arts (with National Portfolio Organisation status), Letting in the Light, Cultural Sisters, Restoke, Frontline Dance and Claybody Theatre. The city has a track record of ambitious programming in outdoor and non-traditional spaces, most recently through the Art City project. The City is also served by Appetite, a flagship Creative People and Places programme that takes high quality arts and culture to the heart of communities.

New Vic Theatre is one of the country's most successful producing theatres, a key part of the City's cultural life and a long-standing Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation. It engages 150,000 people each year, delivering a programme of international class work made with local audiences in mind, making an annual local economic impact of £12.8m. This is complemented by an award-winning community education programme which reaches around 25,000 people of all ages per year. The city is also home to the Regent Theatre and the Victoria Hall, which host visiting companies including English Touring Opera, Northern Broadsides, the National Theatre, major symphony orchestras and West End productions. The Stoke-on-Trent Repertory Theatre and the Mitchell Arts Centre provide excellent opportunities for the voluntary arts sector.

Popular culture thrives in Stoke-on-Trent: sport, music and dance all play a part in its cultural life. The city is the home of Robbie Williams, Lemmy and Slash (of Guns n' Roses fame). We have two strongly supported football teams (Stoke City and Port Vale) and we produced world darts champion Phil 'the power' Taylor and Britain's Strongest Man, Eddie Hall. The city has played a pivotal role in Northern Soul, rave and clubbing culture and rock music. The current music scene is thriving, driven by a do-it-yourself attitude and ambitious spirit. Live music can be heard in The Sugarmill, Pilgrims Pit and a host of bars and clubs across the six towns.



**Art City is a five-year arts programme that aims to make the city a more attractive place to live and work. The project runs events in unloved spaces including former collieries, ceramics factories, swimming pools and engineering works. Six cultural organisations deliver the programme: AirSpace Gallery, B Arts, Cultural Sisters, Letting In The Light, Partners in Creative Learning and Restoke. With Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire University, they have secured a five-year commitment from The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, who are investing £450,000, and an initial commitment from Arts Council England approaching £100,000. Artcity has worked with over 130 local artists and reached a live audience of 6,000 plus with 14 new products or commissions.**



The city has a growing calendar of festivals and events which including the British Ceramics Biennial, Six Towns One City, Stoke-on-Trent Festival, Hot Air Literary Festival, the Stoke-on-Trent Classical Music Festival, Appetite's Street Arts Festival, The Big Feast and the Christmas lights switch-on.

The City can call upon two world class education providers in Keele and Staffordshire universities. They deliver a range of creative courses as well as performance and exhibition spaces which are accessible to all. Creative education is also facilitated by the Cultural Education Partnership and by organisations such as Wavemaker, the YMCA and Unity.

Finally, the geography and fabric of the city offer real opportunities. Stoke-on-Trent has a population of just over a quarter of a million people and is the only major city between Manchester and Birmingham. There are 3.1 million people living within 60 minutes' drive of the city, which is at the intersection of north-south and east-west routes. The six towns make-up of the city is unique and is a model for simultaneously integrated and dispersed cultural life. The city boasts a legacy of high quality buildings and distinctive architecture and has an outstanding provision of parks and green spaces. Stoke-on-Trent also has Britain's biggest remaining colliery site, Chatterley Whitfield, which has a number of surviving buildings. The canal and river network offers further opportunities for sport, exercise and innovative cultural events.

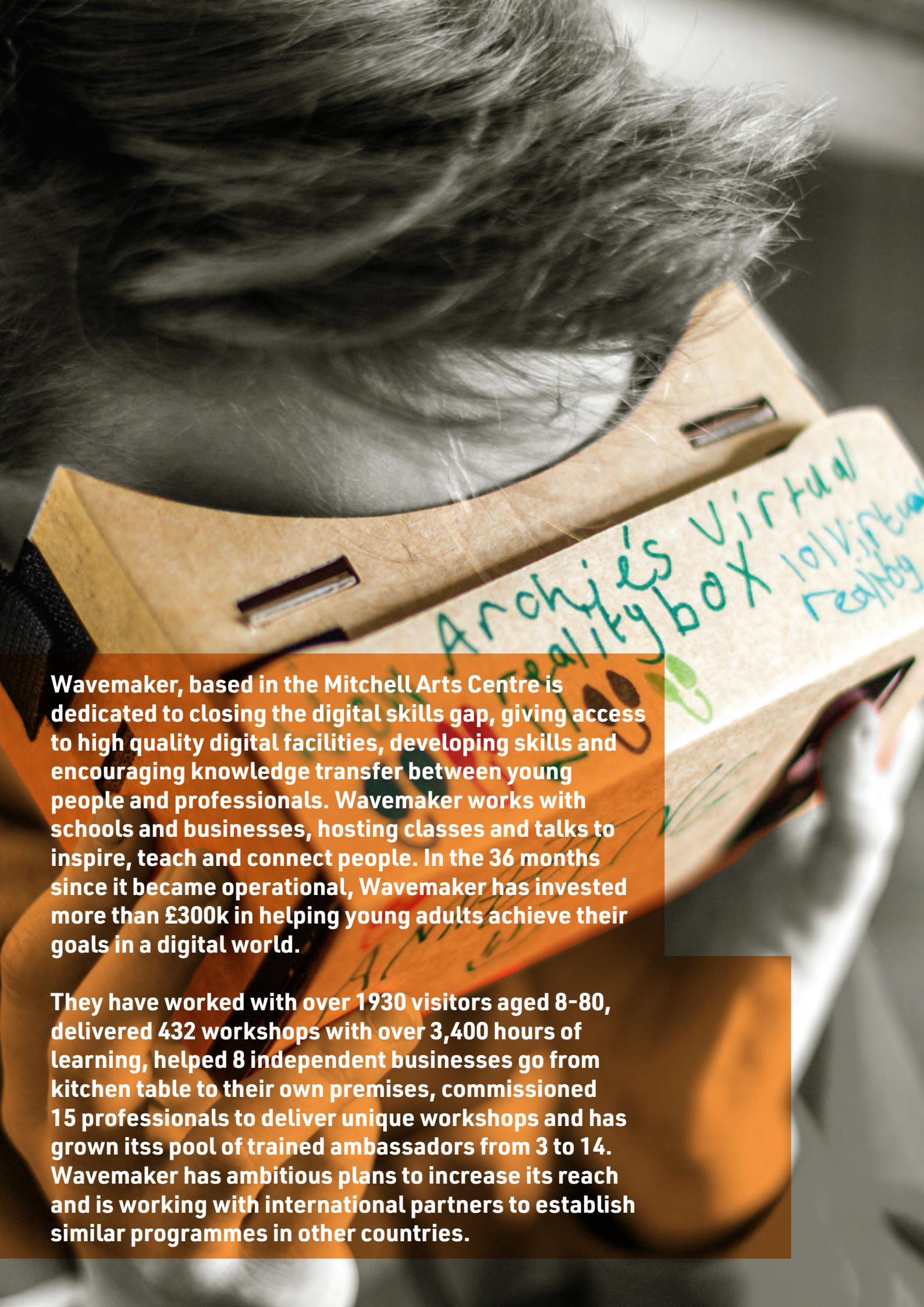
In October 2016, Staffordshire University opened a major investment to enhance its teaching in the moving image, music and gaming. This included the £8.7m Digital Kiln, which merges learning space with state-of-the-art technology to support all sorts of courses from Cyber Security to Games Design, and the brand new Cadman Studios, a £11.5m development including state-of-the-art TV and music technology studios. The building offers brand new studio spaces, an industry standard television studio, control rooms, and music studios. Games Design studios were also introduced, as well as a dedicated larger motion capture studio. The new spaces link to new and existing post-production suites, including music and film technologies.



A photograph of a person in a full-body space suit floating horizontally in the air. The person is positioned next to a tall, thin street lamp that has a single circular light fixture. The background is a sky filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. Below the floating figure, a crowd of people is visible, some looking up at the person in the suit. In the lower-left background, there is a building with a sign that reads "The Sentinel ON SALE HERE". The overall scene suggests a public art performance or a stunt in an urban environment.

**Appetite is driven by a consortium led by the New Vic Theatre. The programme has brought work of international standard to Stoke-on-Trent, delivering performances in new and unusual spaces and building a local audience for arts and culture that had previously not engaged with the sector. The three-year programme began in April 2013 with funding of £3m and has been renewed for a further three years with a sustainable business plan including enhanced commercial income. Appetite is viewed as an exemplar project for the Arts Council's Creative People & Places national programme having a total audience in its first three years of 236,000.**





**Wavemaker, based in the Mitchell Arts Centre is dedicated to closing the digital skills gap, giving access to high quality digital facilities, developing skills and encouraging knowledge transfer between young people and professionals. Wavemaker works with schools and businesses, hosting classes and talks to inspire, teach and connect people. In the 36 months since it became operational, Wavemaker has invested more than £300k in helping young adults achieve their goals in a digital world.**

**They have worked with over 1930 visitors aged 8-80, delivered 432 workshops with over 3,400 hours of learning, helped 8 independent businesses go from kitchen table to their own premises, commissioned 15 professionals to deliver unique workshops and has grown its pool of trained ambassadors from 3 to 14. Wavemaker has ambitious plans to increase its reach and is working with international partners to establish similar programmes in other countries.**



## Challenges

If we are to maximise the value of the city's considerable assets, we must identify and address the challenges which currently inhibit the development of cultural life in Stoke-on-Trent.

These include:

- an ever shrinking public purse;
- the need to continually seek funding which affects the ability to plan for the future in a confident and sustainable manner;
- a historic lack of embedded cooperation across artists and organisations in the city, and fragmentation due to the six towns geography;
- a lack of participation in the arts by some sectors of the local community;
- a reluctance to take risks;
- a poor but improving national image and local reticence to champion the city;
- limited supporting infrastructure, such as hotels and restaurants, and difficulties for visitors in navigating the city;
- limited exhibition space for visual arts;
- no 5,000+ capacity performance venue;
- low incomes and above average dependency on benefits in the population limiting disposable income.

## Context

### UK City of Culture 2021

Bidding to be UK City of Culture in 2021 provided a galvanising catalyst for our cultural ambitions, bringing people together for wide-ranging conversations about the role culture plays in the city.

### Department of Culture, Media and Sport White Paper

In 2016, DCMS published a White Paper setting our four key objectives for culture: to increase opportunity and access, to support communities in the places which they live in, to increase national standing and reputation through cultural diplomacy, and to ensure cultural resilience through investment and reform.

A full analysis of the relevance of this paper for this strategy is contained in Appendices D & E.

### Arts Council England 10 Year Strategy

Arts Council England is working to a ten year strategy to 2020 with the mission "Great Art and Culture for Everyone". This mission is underpinned by five goals which also drive regional strategy:

- Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries
- The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable
- The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled.
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the arts, museums and libraries

### Stoke-on-Trent City Council

The City Council's strategic plan 'Stronger Together' highlights five key delivery priorities:

- Support our residents to fulfil their potential
- Support our businesses to thrive, delivering investment in our towns and communities
- Work with residents to make our communities great places to live
- A commercial council, well governed and fit for purpose, driving efficiency in everything we do
- Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well

The value of culture is recognised in the introduction to the Growth and Prosperity Plan: 'Our aim is to secure the economic well-being of the city, creating wealth across the city for both residents and the city. Wealth in every sense of the word – income, quality of experience in the city and quality of life, education and culture'.

The Visitor Economy Strategy & Action Plan (2016) has identified that the city will lead with cultural tourism in the next five years.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark shirt and a brown workshop apron, stands in an industrial setting. She is holding a wooden pallet that has 'TAMT STUDIOS' painted on it in black. The background features a tall, dark brick chimney and a large, dark brick building. The ground is cobblestone. A semi-transparent teal box is overlaid on the image, containing white text.

**Here, creation goes hand-in-hand with production. We want to increase the opportunities for all our creative and producing industries. We want to attract not only audiences but investment, not only artists but entrepreneurs. We want Stoke-on-Trent to be a city where new creative industries thrive alongside our heritage industries. We want the population to find new confidence, new skills and a shared identity as a city that makes, creates and thrives.**



## 4. GOALS AND ACTIONS

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Four goals frame the action plan below:

1. Grow capacity, ambition and excellence across the sector
2. Maximise the value of culture in delivering social, economic and health outcomes
3. Change our story and image
4. Enable all our citizens to benefit from our investment in culture

These goals describe four areas of action: increasing cultural capacity, cultural capital, cultural identity and cultural connections.

### Cultural capacity (CCY)

Grow capacity, ambition and excellence across the sector

Reference	Action
CCY1	Develop a strategic partnership to enable and foster partnership working across the sector, building on our existing cultural forum
CCY2	Encourage and celebrate excellence across the sector, providing opportunities to communicate locally and showcase nationally
CCY3	Continue to bid for large scale work such as the 14-18 Now Ceramic Poppies 'Weeping Window'
CCY4	Identify funding opportunities to specifically support strategic and business development for our smaller organisations
CCY5	Support good governance and cultural leadership through mentoring and development programmes
CCY6	Come together to promote and market cultural activity, pooling resources to maximum impact
CCY7	Attract international and national arts organisations to work in the City, enabling our organisations and artists to learn from the best
CCY8	Place artists at the heart of our places and spaces through delivery of a cultural spaces strategy
CCY9	Work together to support graduate retention opportunities through continued delivery of such initiatives as Art City
CCY10	Position Stoke-on-Trent as a place for emerging artists, recognising our unique heritage and assembling existing business support, premises and partnership initiatives into a coherent 'inward investment' approach





**Stoke-on-Trent has a rich cultural legacy going back through the ages and that resonates around the world. Creativity is in the very DNA of its people, making art from the ground beneath our feet."**

Levison Wood, Bestselling Author, Explorer and Photographer (and fellow Stokie)



## Cultural capital (CCL)

Maximise the value of culture in delivering social, economic and health outcomes

Reference	Action
CCL1	Position culture and heritage as a key component of our regeneration and development plans
CCL2	Pursue representation of culture in the emerging place based industrial strategy and deliver its objectives
CCL3	Pursue a Heritage Investment Strategy to target and prioritise our most important buildings and monuments
CCL4	Develop our cultural tourism offer, especially through the Cultural Destinations programme
CCL5	Deliver the council's multi-million pound cultural capital investment programme including redevelopment of the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, refurbishment of Gladstone Museum and other heritage sites
CCL6	Explore the development of the Spode site as a cultural anchor and creative village, with space for artists and creative industries
CCL7	Support the development of creative businesses through the Factory programme and its successors such as Platform
CCL8	This will include the development of dedicated workspace for the cultural and creative industries
CCL9	Support initiatives to develop high level craft skills e.g. Clay College
CCL10	Develop and deliver a Cultural Apprenticeships programme
CCL11	Embed culture in education through the work of the Cultural Education Partnership and contribute to enhanced educational attainment throughout the city with enhanced employment prospect
CCL12	Develop strategic partnerships between cultural providers and public health commissioners



## Cultural identity (CI)

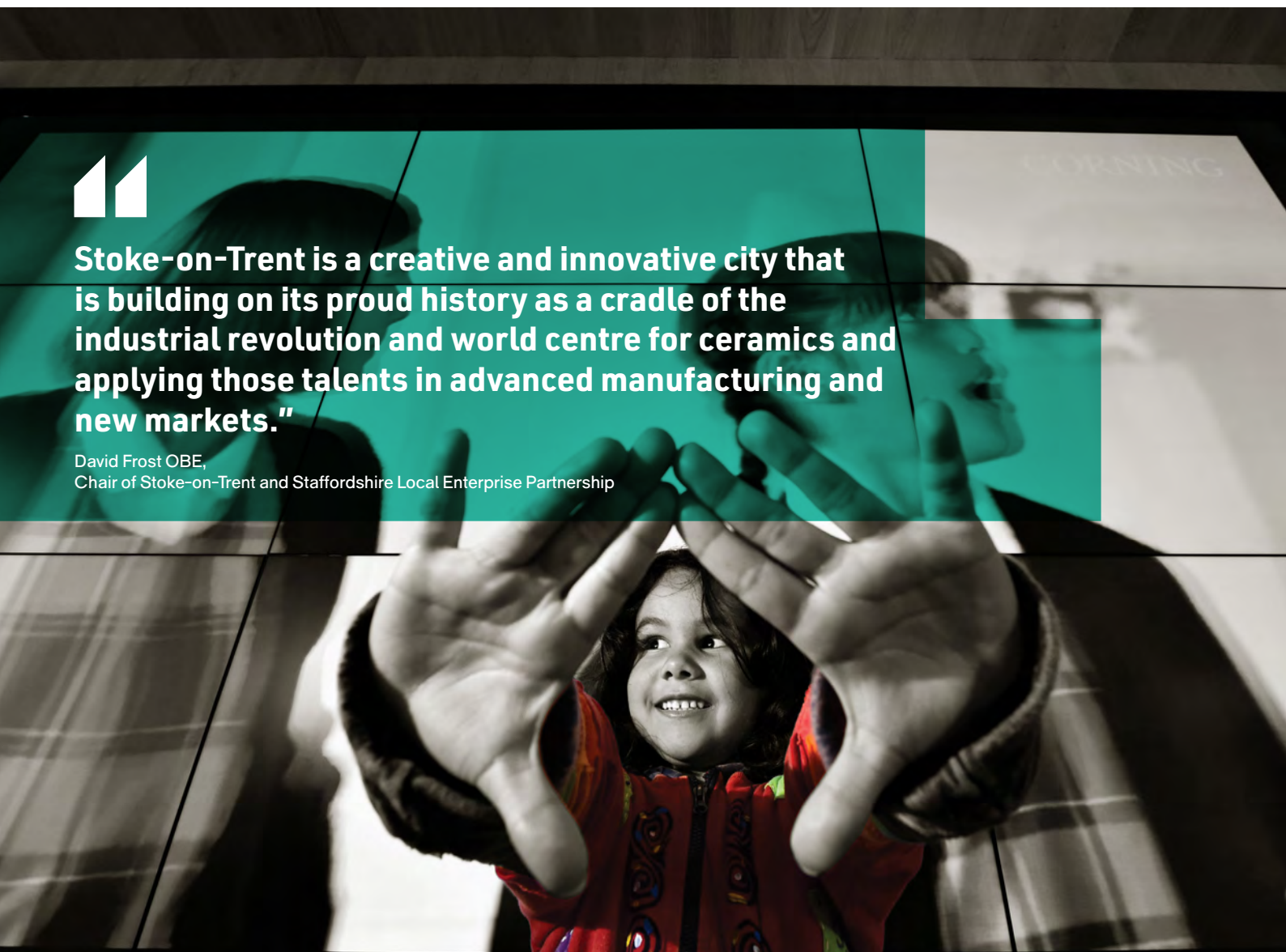
Change our story and image

Reference	Action
CI1	Use our UK City of Culture bid experience as an opportunity to have a different kind of conversation about who we are as a place, both with our citizens and with the nation
CI2	Use the adopted 'World Capital of Ceramics' title to the benefit of all cultural partners
CI3	Promote a consistent, cohesive and authentic cultural identity which is shared and owned by all stakeholders and partners and is recognisable to our residents
CI4	Seek opportunities to export our cultural product nationally and internationally
CI5	Exploit and build on Stoke-on-Trent's heritage as a place where science, art and business interact



**Stoke-on-Trent is a creative and innovative city that is building on its proud history as a cradle of the industrial revolution and world centre for ceramics and applying those talents in advanced manufacturing and new markets."**

David Frost OBE,  
Chair of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership









## Cultural connections (CCN)

Enable all our citizens to benefit from our investment in culture


Reference	Action
CCN1	Continue to consult with our communities as to what they want from our cultural offer
CCN2	Support communities in the delivery of cultural activity at a neighbourhood level – increasing their capacity and confidence
CCN3	We will use our unique six towns/one city status to increase cultural dispersal and overcome barriers to participation (familiarity and proximity)
CCN4	Share information and insight about our audiences to better know who is not currently being served by our cultural offer and to better inform our response to any gaps in provision. We will work together to fill these gaps
CCN5	Co-ordinate and connect the fantastic work that is being currently being delivered across the six towns. We will share and support the dissemination of information to increase the visibility of the existing cultural offer
CCN6	Further develop our Libraries as cultural gateways
CCN7	Respond positively to credible proposals from communities for the re-use of buildings and spaces for cultural purposes
CCN8	Build on our track record of delivering art and culture in non-traditional spaces
CCN9	Consider the specific needs of disabled and older audiences in terms of cultural provision
CCN10	Consider and support diversity of cultural representation within the annual cultural calendar
CCN11	Work with the Local Cultural Education Partnership to ensure consistent provision and visibility of a culture offer for children & young people
CCN12	Continue to develop strategic partnerships with Keele and Staffordshire Universities





## 5. TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD

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A black and white photograph of a person wearing a lion's head mask. The person is wearing a dark cape with a light-colored floral pattern over a white shirt. They are gesturing with their hands, one pointing forward and the other held out to the side. The background shows a stone wall and some foliage.

**Our city motto is 'United strength is stronger', a concise expression of a civic commitment to working together for the greater good. Today, many citizens of Stoke-on-Trent still identify with their town before the city. This tension provides a unique and powerful metaphor for the creative interactions that we seek in bringing people together from different communities, and with different interests, to pursue shared cultural activities.**



## Key partners

The principal partners in this strategy are the many organisations that make up the city's cultural sector, the city council and the city's two universities. For this strategy to succeed, the relationships between these partners must be strong and productive. Innovative delivery partnerships are also envisaged, with the development of a cultural places and spaces strategy and an ongoing programme to position Stoke-on-Trent as a place for artists to set up and thrive.

## The Cultural Forum

The Cultural Forum will be the central mechanism whereby stakeholders, organisations and individual artists can come together to develop a strong and unified partnership, building a new relationship with the city as a whole.

Membership will involve those organisations that support and enable cultural activity but the partnership itself will be independent of public bodies. It will assume responsibility for sharing best practice and insight, delivering a professional development programme for the city's artists and taking collective responsibility for the bidding for and commissioning of large scale and international works. The Cultural Education Partnership will be responsible for the development and delivery of children and young people's programme and working with the education sector.

The Cultural Forum will provide opportunities for organisations and individual artists to move from amateur to professional and will ensure that it is representative of the city as a whole. In providing a mechanism and platform for development and joint working it will become the first port of call for emerging and new artists in the city.



## Stoke-on-Trent City Council

The council's primary role in the delivery of the strategy will be as an enabler, facilitator and connector. It will develop the cultural assets it owns and manages, including the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery which will receive a substantial refurbishment within the strategy period, and the Spode site which will develop as a cultural anchor. The council will continue to manage a public events programme in partnership with the city's artists and arts organisations. In part, this will take the form of a festivals and events improvement programme which will be managed by the council's Culture Team.

In its wider role the council will look to embed arts and culture into its ongoing programmes. In particular, public health, economic development, tourism, employment and skills and community cohesion will benefit from an integrated approach to culture. The council will also encourage innovation and risk-taking in cultural activity through its investment and facilitation role.

## The two universities

Keele and Staffordshire Universities will be key partners in the delivery of this strategy. Staffordshire University is physically and historically connected to the city of Stoke-on-Trent and has recently reaffirmed this relationship with its positioning as the 'connected University' and a major investment in its Stoke-on-Trent campus. It has real strengths in creative and digital arts. A recent £40 million pound reimagined campus includes a new 'Digital Kiln' that merges learning and social space with state-of-the-art technology, and it is now home to Media, Music, Games Design and TV and other cultural and creative sector flagship courses. The University is the host organization for the Clay Foundation/BCB and is the driving force behind the proposed National Centre for Ceramics Education and Research.

Keele University, whilst located just over the border in Staffordshire, is committed to playing a role within the city and is already delivering arts and cultural activity in partnership with arts organisations such as the New Vic and businesses such as Emma Bridgewater. Driven through departments such as The Community Animation and Social Innovation Centre (CASIC), the Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences and with a stated aspiration to deliver a specifically cultural 'Keele Deal' which complements existing agreements with city partners, there are huge opportunities.



**Stoke is a unique home to exciting and innovative cultural makers, rooted in their communities and creating internationally excellent art. The Cultural Forum provides a forum of organisation and exchange for the cultural sector around excellence in professional development; a shared ethos of inclusion for reaching voices that are hard to hear; and a commitment to building our cultural connectedness, capacity, resilience and wellbeing through festivals, events and spectacles that engage and inspire. It is a great privilege to chair it..**

Professor David Amigoni, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Keele University



## Building on momentum

The delivery of this strategy will necessarily involve full engagement with the people and organisations described above. Cultural organisations in Stoke-on-Trent are already contributing to the strategy's goals and actions. The following examples of current projects illustrate the momentum for cultural renewal that has already been achieved in the city. It is vital that this momentum is sustained.

### **Cultural Destinations.**

This innovative consortium led by the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and incorporating Visit Stoke, The Trentham Estate, World of Wedgwood, Appetite Barts and the British Ceramics Biennial was awarded significant funding to develop the product, identity and profile of Stoke-on-Trent as a cultural destination in 2016. The three year programme contains elements of marketing, training, product development and research. Cultural Destinations will deliver a number of the identity and economic aspirations of this strategy.

### **Factory.**

During its first phase between 2012 and 2015, the Factory creative business support programme engaged with over 300 creative businesses, awarded over £40,000 of small capital grants to accelerate growth and overcome obstacles, showcased the work of 20 'designer-makers', provided over 60 businesses with bespoke personal plans for growth, provided over 30 workshops/seminars to provide information exchange of focused areas of work and delivered two regional conferences. The continuing programme will be a key contributor to the economic ambitions of this strategy. Since the inception of the Factory programme in 2012, the number of creative businesses registered at Companies House has doubled to a total of over 2,600.

### **SoTogether CAN (Community Advisory Network)**

is a group of people who live, work or study in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire who are interested in supporting the development of cultural activity and improving access to arts across the City. The network was formed as part of Stoke-on-Trent's City of Culture bidding process and are independent of the cultural sector in Stoke-on-Trent, although many members have a personal interest in arts and culture. This group will support the implementation of the Cultural Strategy through a range of roles and activities, including community advisors for the strategy and programmes, ambassadors

for cultural activities in the city, volunteers and community researchers. The group will ensure the Cultural Strategy reaches and maintains relevance and impact for a diverse range of communities across the city and support the cultural sector to understand its impact at a local level.

### **Local Cultural Education Partnership.**

The Cultural Education Partnership North Staffordshire brings together arts organisations, individuals and representatives from the Education sector, to ensure arts and culture continue to be a key part of a child's learning. The partnership is supported by Arts Connect West Midlands. The partnership believe passionately that every child should have the opportunity to create, dance, make music and be exposed to the learning that creative subjects can offer. The Cultural Education Partnership continues to grow with the support of innovative schools and a wide and expanding cultural sector. The group will continue to engage with partners and children and by working together, will aim to ensure every child has a positive learning journey, being inspired to think creatively and to develop their gifts and talents.

In the first year, since being set up the partnership has:

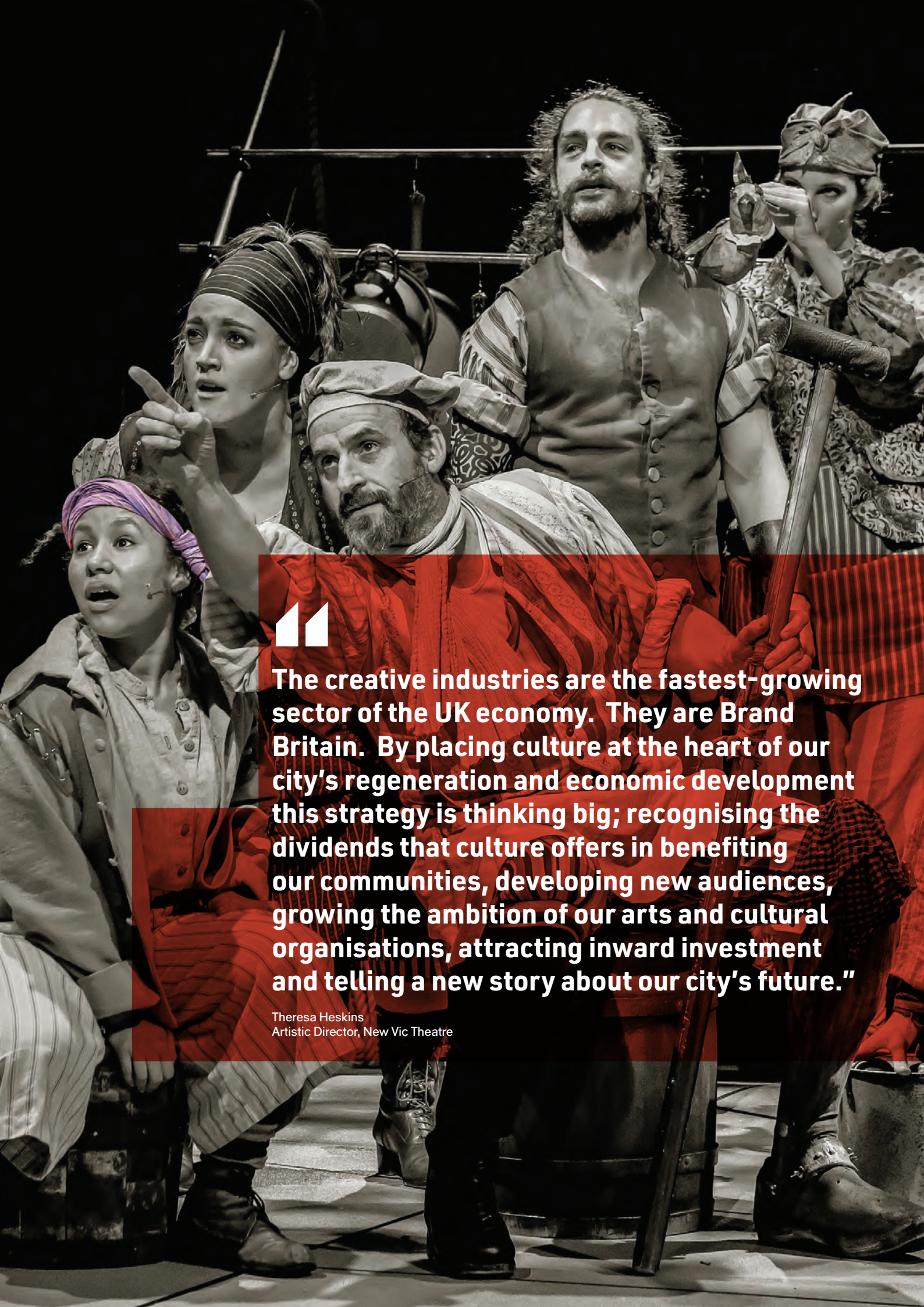
- Attracted over 160 members from across the education & cultural sectors
- Engaged over 15,000 children and young people through the City of Culture bid
- Engaged over 50% of Stoke-on-Trent schools

## Resourcing the strategy

The city council's capital investment programme has already been detailed. Long term agreements are being reached with cultural organisations, enabling them to plan to a more strategic timetable. These organisations themselves are becoming more adept at working within business models that rely on several funding sources. The total value of grants for the Arts Awards to the city from the Arts Council has doubled since 2014 and there have been significant amounts awarded from national foundations such as Paul Hamlyn and Esmée Fairbairn.

As well as these national foundations, the city is fortunate in benefitting from more locally focused charitable foundations who have already invested in arts and culture and can be relied upon to continue to do so.





**The creative industries are the fastest-growing sector of the UK economy. They are Brand Britain. By placing culture at the heart of our city's regeneration and economic development this strategy is thinking big; recognising the dividends that culture offers in benefiting our communities, developing new audiences, growing the ambition of our arts and cultural organisations, attracting inward investment and telling a new story about our city's future."**

Theresa Heskins  
Artistic Director, New Vic Theatre





**Middleport Pottery, the only working Victorian pottery in the country, hosted the 14-18 NOW touring installation *Poppies : Weeping Window* in Summer 2018 .**

**Poppies: Wave and Poppies : *Weeping Window* are from the installation *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* delivered in conjunction with Historic Royal Palaces, originally at the HM Tower of London 2014**

**The iconic *Poppies* installation by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper have now been seen by more than 3.5 million people across the UK. The tour concluded at the Imperial War Museum and the sculpture has now become part of the museum's permanent collection.**









City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**

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