

## Levelling Up Scrutiny Committee

### DEVELOPING A CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR BLACKPOOL REPORT

#### Blackpool Stakeholder Workshops - September 2023

#### Sample of Collated transcripts from in-person sessions

##### Exercise #1

##### Vision, values and themes – What’s working, what’s missing, new ideas and questions?

##### GOLD STAR

1. Talent retention
2. Authentic, credible championing and advocacy for culture
3. Authenticity and credibility
4. Authentic
5. Process
6. Collaboration
7. New connections
8. Investing in creative workforce
9. Championing
10. Championing each other
11. Highlighting local people
12. A changed narrative of the town
13. Opportunity to relate people and place through art
14. Can do and does do
15. Collaboration and ‘linking up’
16. Changing the narrative about the town
17. Keeping people in Blackpool (challenge is that Blackpool is not seen as a place to be, as an artist)
18. Education – promoting the awareness of the opportunities in the creative sector
19. Championing freelance work – and understanding its value
20. Blackpool has a ‘head start in its history’
21. Collaborative approach (‘that’s a first’) – having a plan we’re all involved in
22. “Culture can support solutions”
23. Collaborative approach – learning approach, taking risks
24. ‘...extraordinary, bold and bizarre’
25. YES! extraordinary, bold and bizarre
26. Big ideas that are multi-faceted – and can involve and benefit different organisations and communities
27. Scale of ambition is laudable
28. A culture that surprises us – Blackpool has always done the unexpected
29. Blackpool’s Northern-ness
30. ‘offer the unexpected’
31. ‘of all ages’
32. Blackpool is the place you can be who you want to be – freedom

33. All about the people – signposting and linking in
34. The welcome
35. Valuing local communities and co-design
36. ‘Artrepreneurial’
37. Three themes broad enough to be inclusive to address all key issues

*Recorded as positives:*

1. Blackpool has a ‘head start in its history’
2. The Grundy
3. NPO for Illuminations
4. Hidden gems – lots going on
5. Signature buildings – The Grand, Winter Gardens, Tower etc.
6. Home of / variety of entertainment, Illumination, LightPool...
7. National renown – dance
8. Diversity of culture, especially LGBT
9. Showtown coming; Tramtown too

IDEAS / MORE OF

1. Advancing the cultural offer – gaming!
2. Inter-generational opportunities
3. More trickle-down from large organisations to smaller ones
4. More cultural tourism encouraged through Blackpool packages to discover more of the town
5. More culture into the wards / out of the centre
6. More integrated transport linked to arts and culture – tickets and deals
7. More diverse voices in culture
8. We need it ALL!
9. Involvement of Civic Trust
10. Pink pound development – the ‘culture’ of Funny Girls
11. Historical walks – history of the town events (energised by arts)
12. Celebrate firsts – electric trams... what's next? Reveal ‘best kept secrets’ of Blackpool
13. Promote what you can get for the price of one show ticket in London
14. Variety of things to inspire young people
15. Value placed in using the arts for wellbeing
16. Making project available to all demographics – working people included
17. Blackpool is a well-known town – lots going on (need to work together more), more shared data, funding activity and skills development
18. Arena
19. Festivals
20. Ensure definition of culture is very broad – gaming, tech etc.
21. LBGTO+ arts and culture focus
22. Connect with heritage (of innovation)
23. Town-wide plans may help achieve sector collaboration, e.g. town wide comedy festival
24. We need one place we can go – it’s difficult to know what’s being delivered and who is partnering who

25. Set responsibility to organisation to share
26. Linking regeneration to the visitor economy may be too limiting – don't just put regen in this context – tourism only 25% of the economy. What about... influencing government metrics to value cultural impact in the cost benefit calculations opportunity here to be a national lead / influence this
27. Holistic approach to regen – design of housing etc., not just the visitor economy
28. Cultural sector development – working out ways to share the load to offer exciting training, skills development opportunities
29. "Creative clusters"
30. Most 16-18 year olds on creative courses in 2023-24 for a decade
31. Cultural quarter?
32. Student culture? Think UCLan's cultural impact on Preston. Can a new culture build around Multiversity?
33. The town motto is 'Progress'... can do, do do, will do!
34. Approach to decarbonisation and climate adaptation through art in the strategy in support of Blackpool's net zero commitments
35. Let's use the words 'pride' and 'proud' more – residents are proud!
36. Develop, illuminate, amplify
37. Ongoing sustainable development
38. Be brave – not just led by same people
39. Giving back ownership to local communities
40. Mapping of collective resources
41. Creative words / new words
42. High street becoming more about experiences than retail
43. Find a symbol that isn't the Tower
44. New ways to describe (Blackpool) culture
45. Beach education – skate, surf, school
46. Letting go is key – less (centralised) control
47. Residents being able to access resources about their history / culture – pride
48. Culture shouldn't be confined to the town centre
49. Communication between / across communities
50. Address the (media) negativity
51. Clean Blackpool – sponsorship of seafront spaces / retail parades
52. Photography biennial
53. Linking up inter-generational communities / skill-sharing
54. Embrace multi-culturalism
55. Celebrate working class culture
56. Nurturing local talent / training / opportunities... what about financial investment?
57. More than championing – needs infrastructure to support local artist development
58. Things being done with not to the town
59. Big stakeholder events – with mixed inputs (locals, artists, organisations)
60. Young people engagement
61. Mentoring – with successful people advising next gen
62. Celebrate our successes – encourage a positive view – show what's actually happening

63. Communications and sharing is key
64. Emphasise (value of, activity of) amateur practice for all – not everyone needs to be a professional artist
65. Look at French model – art school teachers, outreach with public, support arts practice... funding apprenticeships?
66. Build infrastructure to schedule open spaces
67. Talent / skills – challenge to re-attract. Used to UK leader / recognised – need to celebrate careers too / drive aspiration, focus on attainment
68. Find national partners to locate regional hubs / programmes here

#### QUESTIONS / WHAT ABOUT?

1. How to wrap culture around the whole town – transport, food and drink etc.?
2. Funding?
3. Funding?
4. Less red tape / barriers to 'doing'
5. How can we access vacant units?... to create... happiness
6. How does culture link to (or be) digital skills, opportunities and access?
7. Who is the strategy for? Business, artists, locals, all?
8. Blackpool children get free breakfasts – what's their cultural offer?
9. Where is our climate emergency action plan? How does it connect?
10. How can we make Blackpool safer and more hospitable?
11. Where is the connector between tourism, arts and culture (and heritage)?
12. Will the Council embrace the arts more?
13. Local projects: re-education of the value of arts, and involvement – how do we get people involved?
14. Visitor economy – big ask to make the shift to creative sector?
15. Outcomes – how will the priorities be measured... Detail? Accountability? Milestones?
16. What's the commitment to resourcing arts and culture? Who can commit to this?
17. How do we boost access for locals?
18. How do we make sure we all know about what's happening – cooperation, working together, supportive?
19. How do we find a solution to the culture of non-collaboration? Identify quick wins...like Capital of Dance plans for summer 2024 has lots of partners on board (looking for more)
20. Where do the talented go?
21. How do we support the cottage industries / SMEs and micro-businesses – tech, lighting, sound, designers etc.?
22. How do we build young people's aspirations?
23. How do we get more of RSC, V and A, Sadler's Wells, Royal Ballet type partnerships? Can ACE support / champion? How do we build partnerships on our terms? (what do we want?)
24. What about Margate, Brighton? Can we really aspire to be a coastal cultural capital?
25. How do we build up comms? E.g. Blackpool Social Club
26. People from different socio-economic backgrounds – important in prioritising creativity in our communities
27. How do we all know what's going on? Being planned? Not everyone can make network meetings – need mixed media. We need to take responsibility for getting the word out, exchange etc.

28. Don't forget 'quiet culture'
29. Does everything creative have to be fun
30. Ensure inclusion remains in focus – but not tokenistic
31. How do artists and makers access funding opportunities? Town projects should involve local artists
32. Spirit of collaboration? Huge talent pool but don't always work together
33. Have we thought about inclusion for the transient parts of our communities?
34. Communities – are these being targeted in different ways specific to them, e.g. young people's distinct socio-economic needs / backgrounds etc.
35. Financial sustainability?
36. Accessibility?
37. Climate concerns? Environmental impact
38. Share resources
39. Cultural heritage and entertainment
40. Do we need to address isolation of our elderly? Lots disabled, dementia, post-Covid etc. – can do more than bingo
41. Concerns around gentrification impacts on locals
42. Sector still in recovery – reality check, takes time, need to nurture / strengthen the base... how creative can you be with bills to pay?
43. Resilience Revolution has a good approach – secured good commitment, model to learn from
44. Make existing venues the hubs for creative culture – not just their programmes – for schools, colleges, Multiversity (town as campus?)
45. Embed cultural educational uses – help people learn, grow, reach potential.

#### GAPS, FOCUS AND CONCERNS

1. Barriers – such as ticket entry / cost
2. There is more to us
3. 'Bizarre' – is there a more positive alternative?
4. Safety for accessing events, e.g. attending evening events
5. Need space for quiet things, small things, complex and uncertain things
6. 'Fun'? Too much pressure to be fun!
7. Lot of 'hooray' words – not a lot of critical questioning and challenging
8. Values – hooray words again – more detail and seriousness
9. Challenge in the cost of accessing culture for people locally
10. 'Creative capital of fun' sounds a bit crap
11. 'Creative capital of fun' – some concerns; bit too dismissive of serious side of culture. Maybe switch to 'place of freedom' or 'opportunity to try a lot of things!' Element of freedom
12. Use the word 'culture' in the vision statement
13. Need shared ownership
14. Use of businesses out of season
15. Need a hub / central coordination
16. Wider perception of town (and its residents)
17. Need to capture impacts – tell those stories of impact to 'shareholders' we want to influence (can we tell it in a Blackpool way?)

18. Is the strategy too broad (know it's the topline) – we need to focus down into an action plan that is achievable
19. Local talent pool – not utilised enough in consultations
20. How are artists and makers supported?
21. Talking about community – who do we mean? How are you interacting with people – not just asking the same ten people every time?
22. The role of sea in local arts and culture
23. Are the ideas relevant to the community?
24. Large talent pool, but do we communicate, and is it coordinated?
25. Swimming metaphor – bit cringy and unauthentic
26. 'Fun' – childlike and diminishing – it's not always fun
27. Fun?
28. Community identity
29. Involve young people
30. Changing labels for Blackpool
31. Gap – Mixing of local and visitor economy
32. What is the 'collective sense of individuality' please (values)?
33. 'Collective sense of individuality' – meaning?
34. Mis-step – Collective sense of individuality – unclear?
35. Need to see more of working class nature of town in strategy
36. Resilience – it's an assumption, ACE-speak
37. More on outcomes (action plan?) Who inputs to this? Whose voices are we missing? (*role of action planning, comms, engagement, governance*)