

What is the overarching objective?

Our Place Partnership will elevate the role of arts & culture in Gravesham, acting as a catalyst for impactful outcomes around cultural and creative resilience, economy, placemaking, partnership working, community cohesion and the health and wellbeing of our residents and workers.

What problem are we trying to solve?

Our creative economy is large and diverse: Gravesham is home to over 400 creative businesses, many micro and many small but growing and enthusiastic about Gravesham (Gravesham Cultural Assets report – Paul Augarde. We have reflected on the key findings relevant to this application from the report (which are outlined at the end of this paper *) and believe that we have addressed them in the Place Partnership project - 21st Century Gravesham – It Happens Here

As existing businesses within the sector grow, and we attract new ones to the borough, GBC cannot support the sector by itself. We need a stronger, community-led approach that delivers wider reach across all creative sub-sectors and parts of the borough.

We also need to develop our brand proposition and offer, as both a place to enjoy arts and culture, and somewhere for creative businesses to call home. Work is underway to reposition Gravesend as a growing destination that aims to double its share of Kent visitor numbers, but there is a lack of funding and expertise to support an ongoing programme of campaign-based activity to establish Gravesham as a leading destination for arts and culture in Kent.

The sector also relies heavily on short-term grant funding, enthusiastic but poorly coordinated volunteers, and creatives without the support eco-system they need to start, sustain and grow as a business. We need to develop a sustainable model for creative programming and an ecosystem that supports volunteers and businesses.

What is different about the Place Partnership compared to what we are doing already?

- Led through a Cultural Compact: partnership driven, with GBC as convener and facilitator.
- We will empower the Cultural Compact to consult and lead on an enhanced events programme drawn from their wider experience and community reach. We are not intending to pre-empt the detailed programme, rather to support the consortium to develop an ambitious and far reaching programme with both residents and visitors at the centre of the activity.
- Brings in skills and experience GBC doesn't have in-house
- A tiered approach to partnership working will allow partners to leverage their relationships with individual businesses, creatives and harder to reach communities.
- Builds greater awareness of what's missing / what the needs are across the community, sectors and areas

- Increased funding over a sustained 3-5 year period allows for wider reach, greater levels of delivery and opportunity to capacity-build across the sector, leaving a legacy of self-sustainability and viability with reduced subsidy.
- Enables joined-up delivery with sectors/areas
- Introduce a co-commissioning programme for the cultural compact in years 3 and 4 to develop the sector with the direction of the Cultural Compact

What will Gravesham look like at the end of this project?

- A known and respected arts and culture destination with a consistent and recognisable offer at the forefront of people's minds
- Recognised as a place for creative businesses: affordable, accessible and attractive with a unique eco-system that enables creatives to develop their practices here.
- Participation in the arts among residents is demonstrably widened, with a measurable impact and link to improved health and wellbeing
- Our volunteer community and associated infrastructure is demonstrably improved, providing a mechanism to support delivery of events, venues and festivals.
- Arts and culture is recognised as a successful driver for economic success: a growing creative economy full of viable creative businesses and sustainable, viable places to enjoy the arts.
- Wider and stronger partnerships, consortiums, networks, with greater diversity across all protected characteristics

Who will form our Cultural compact?

'Board' Networks (not individual deliverers)

GAS, includes creatives, NPO etc

Gravesham Business Network / Federation of Small Businesses e.g. Clubbs Yard

Youth Sector e.g. The Gr@nd

Health Sector e.g. Kent Cultural Health & wellbeing Alliance

Voluntary, Community – e.g. CVS, Age UK

Faith Community – e.g. Churches Together & Gurdwara

Education Sector e.g. LCEP Cultural Education partnership

Rural network reps

GBC

- Arts & Culture
- Tourism & Heritage
- Economic Development
- Sport & Leisure
- Health & Wellbeing

What projects can the Place Partnership help deliver?

- Programming - a core programme of large events/festivals focusing on Gravesend Riverside and the 'Cultural Quayside', supported by a number of smaller community-level events across the borough. These events will be targeted at residents and visitors to the borough, with a much improved focus on a consistent and improved offer to audiences and participants across the South East and beyond.
- Capacity Building - led through a Creative Compact: a new network of partners across the borough working together to widen participation, improve the health and wellbeing of residents and increase the variability of creative businesses. Activities include coordination and nurturing the network, delivering support to businesses and volunteers, and working alongside capital programmes to ensure new and existing spaces are fit-for-purpose.
- Profile-raising – a campaign-led approach to raising awareness of Gravesham as a destination to enjoy the arts and to locate your creative business. Clear and consistent promotion of programming, venues and artists, as well as the investment opportunity presented by the borough, leveraging ongoing work to grow our employment sites through our emerging local plan, and deliver for arts and culture through a holistic regeneration strategy.

How will the Place partnership support ACE's Let's Create strategy and how does it align with their specific outcomes and investment principles?

Let's Create Outcomes

Creative People

Our festival and events programme along with our Cultural Strategy – A Creative Gravesham has committed to supporting located artists and creatives. The Place Partnership will enable us to develop that work and ensure that we are reaching further into our community through our cultural compact and engaging with other sectors.

Cultural Community

The events programme that will be supported through the place partnership and the more developed and sophisticated network will allow us to build on the foundations of our existing activity to reach more of our community, develop our destination ambitions and be more responsive to the changing needs of residents and visitors alike

Creative and Cultural Country

Our ambitions are to be recognised as a place where culture and creativity are highly valued and where artists and creatives will be supported to locate and grow their practise. The place partnership will support us to achieve those ambitions through partnership working.

Investment Principles

Ambition and quality – committed to improving quality of work

Our cultural strategy priorities remain committed to supporting artists to develop their work in the borough and to be innovative and ambitious in their practise. With the added investment allowing more partnership working we intend reinforcing that ambition and reaching out further with our networks and our programming

Flexibility

We recognise that there is a need to remain fleet of foot in terms of the changing circumstances for our residents, our partners, our artists and our organisation. We will be building flexibility and resilience into our partnership agreements to ensure that we can establish a resilient network and programme of activity.

Environmentally Friendly

We have committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. Our strategies and policies reflect and deliver on this commitment and it will be built in to any partnership agreements and contracts going forward.

Inclusive and relevant

Gravesham is a culturally and demographically diverse borough and we are keen to ensure that the full breadth of that diversity is reflected fully in our activities. The network approach to our programming and events is intended to ensure that we are keeping that diversity at the centre of our approach to future activities.

How much do we think this will cost: £450k

Year 1	Cultural Compact Set up		£20k
Years 2/3/4	Events programme over 3 years	100k pa	£300k
Years 3/4	Capacity Building Programme	15k pa	£30k
Years 3 /4	Co-commissioning for CC	30k pa	£60k
Years 1-4	Contingency annual	10k pa	£40k

*Key relevant findings from the Paul Augarde report – Gravesend town centre and St Andrew's Cultural Quayside

- The wealth of CCI currently in Gravesham, and the diversity of that offer, with musicians, artists, publishers and radio stations but dominated by the tech sector.
- The offers is also diverse in its makeup representing the special mix of people in the borough.
- Little of that diversity or demography is particularly visible in the town centre. The council is currently running most of the traditional cultural output and the heritage volunteer output is also evident.
- Many of the CCI are micro in scale and the sector is growing, engaged and optimistic about Gravesham.
- People are keen to see Gravesend Town Centre become an accessible, safe space, representative of the mix of the town, with an active day and night-time cultural scene – and a coherent, proud and ambition identity.