

A GOOD PLACE FOR MAKING PLANS

Creative Estuary A national cultural planning toolkit

Version 1.1, Published 27.11.23

Section 1: Overview

This toolkit has been commissioned by Creative Estuary in partnership with Kent County Council.

It has been created by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and Urban Roots Consulting as a resource for cultural planning in England.

The phrase **cultural planning** is used to describe a process that supports place making through considering what arts and cultural infrastructure can be secured through development, redevelopment and the land use planning process.

It should be noted that while the toolkit sets out the importance of local plan policies and good governance structures that will better enable the creation and support of thriving places, local authorities and development corporations will still need to work hard with stakeholders and applicants to implement the policies and their strategies.

1.1 Background: Place, culture and creativity

The creative and cultural industries contribute more than £100bn per year to the UK economy, helping to attract investment, catalyse innovation, and enhance distinctive places and communities. And research has shown that the Thames Estuary Production Corridor has the potential to create 50,000 jobs and generate £3.7bn per year for the UK economy.¹ Making and trading locally distinctive objects, or artists performing at events that are important for local communities, for example will help enable local investment, therefore contributing and strengthening the local circular economy.

There are also environmental benefits from regenerating places, retrofitting and re-purposing existing buildings and improving the vibrancy of local places, including high streets. There is also significant social value from improving cultural infrastructure and facilities, although this is harder to quantify.

Planning for culture and the creative industries is an integral part of supporting and creating great places. Through its projects, partnership and initiatives, Creative Estuary aims to transform the Thames Estuary into one of the most exciting cultural hubs in the world. Making this a reality requires an alignment of planning, governance, finance and delivery over the long-term.

1.2 Objective: What the toolkit offers

Developing cultural infrastructure requires a steady focused effort across long periods of time. The Cultural Planning Toolkit will help users navigate the deliverability of cultural infrastructure, and:

- Offer a road map to fund, occupy and manage buildings, housing and cultural facilities across both short term (meanwhile) and long-term time horizons.
- Enable local authorities, development corporations, developers and cultural organisations to take a different approach to assessing the financial feasibility of a particular site or location of development, and the process of engaging and co-designing with the local community.
- Provide a tool to navigate through the developer contributions process within local planning authorities.

The toolkit builds on the *Culture and sport planning toolkit* that the TCPA produced with Urban Roots Consulting for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2013², and crossover with more recent South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) work. This project does not seek to replicate existing resources but draws on them.

¹ Thames Estuary Production Corridor: the case for investment, Mayor of London and South East Local Enterprise Partnership, 2020. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/tepc_case_for_investment_2020.pdf

² Culture and Sport Planning Toolkit, DCMS, 2013. <https://cultureandsportplanningtoolkit.org.uk/>

1.3 Purpose: Who the toolkit is for

The users and audience for this work will be all those enabling the inclusion of the cultural and creative industries sector in regeneration schemes and built environment projects: local planning authorities, town planners, developers, property and asset managers, landowners, the creative sector, or agents working for any or all of them. This work will also be of use to investors, whether public, private, community ownership or joint ventures and will contribute to achieving the objectives of the levelling up agenda.

1.4 Content: What's in the toolkit

This document provides elements of guidance and information that together form a Cultural Planning Toolkit. The contents of this toolkit have been informed by a survey of local authorities and a wide range of interviews and comprehensive desk-based research. Further information about this is provided in a separate, accompanying, background report.

The toolkit includes model policies, along with sections on key issues of interest identified by the project steering group:

- Governance
- Access to land and investment
- Co-location
- Community engagement and co-design

There are also sections focused on the planning policy process and signposting examples of best practice within existing planning policies and strategies at the local level.

1.5 Good to know

A. Cultural infrastructure and the creative industries

What's the difference?

This toolkit considers planning for both cultural infrastructure and the creative industries, two related but distinct aspects of cultural planning. Supporting both these things is essential to plan for the 'cultural well-being' mentioned in national policy. They are:

- **Cultural infrastructure** can be defined as the buildings structures and places where culture is consumed or produced (see box 1 below).
- **Cultural industries** are those industries 'which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'³. The definition is evolving to take account of the 'creative

³ National Statistics on the Creative Industries. Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre, June 2022:
<https://pec.ac.uk/news/national-statistics-on-the-creative-industries>

intensity' of an industry (i.e. any industry where more than 30% of the workforce are doing what might be deemed 'creative occupations').

Box 1: What is cultural infrastructure?

The London Cultural Infrastructure Plan provides a useful definition⁴:

"When we talk about 'cultural infrastructure' we mean the buildings, structures and places where culture is:

Consumed: *Places where culture is experienced, participated in, showcased, exhibited or sold. For example, museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas, libraries, music venues and historic cultural sites; or*

Produced: *Places of creative production, where creative work is made, usually by artists, performers, makers, manufacturers or digital processes. For example, creative workspaces, performing arts rehearsal spaces, music recording studios, film and television studios and industrial and light industrial units used by creative and cultural businesses."*

B. National policy on cultural planning

Social and cultural wellbeing, as part of strong and vibrant communities, forms part of the three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development as identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) ⁵. These objectives are to be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the NPPF.

The NPPF outlines that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for a range of community facilities including cultural infrastructure (see page 9 of the NPPF). It states in paragraph 92 that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. This includes planning positively for community facilities, including open space and cultural buildings, and taking into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community. It also states that policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities; allow them to modernise and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)⁶ supports the NPPF and provides advice on how to deliver its policies.

⁴ Cultural Infrastructure Plan: A CALL TO ACTION. Greater London Authority, Mar 2019.

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cultural_infrastructure_plan_online.pdf

⁵ National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government, Jul. 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁶ National Planning Practice Guidance. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

The National Design Guide⁷ sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It states that well designed places are ‘responsive to local history, culture and heritage’ (page 10), and that culture is an important factor in shaping a sense of place and identity (page 12). It acknowledges that good design promotes social inclusion by ‘...using local resources such as ...cultural facilities as destinations in layouts to promote social interaction and integration and help combat loneliness’ (page 36).

⁷ The National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Jan 2021. At: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>