



HARNESSING MOMENTUM

Making Luton an inclusive, flagship UK Place of Culture

**A Strategic Vision for the Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries in
Luton 2017-2027**

Vision:

Elevator pitch: Think Luton, Think Cultural Destination

The Luton Investment Framework – an ambitious plan for major town-wide transformation – is on schedule to secure £1.5 billion investment to transform the town and create 18,500 quality jobs for local people; while driving improvements to health and wellbeing, creating opportunities for residents, raising aspirations and enhancing prosperity across the town.

Supporting the Luton Investment Framework, the cultural organisations, artists and people of Luton will transform the town's identity over the next ten years, building from current success and momentum to make a diverse creative environment that has status as an inclusive, flagship, destination Place of Culture.

Luton is a gateway to and from Europe and the world, and its people will develop an arts, cultural and creative offer that attracts visitors, complements business activity, supports economic growth, and provides exceptional opportunities for local communities and for people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, to grow, develop, learn and succeed.

How will we know the Vision is fulfilled?

- **Luton will seek status as UK City of Culture 2025**
- **By 2027 Luton will be an established and inclusive cultural destination, with a substantial cultural and heritage offer supported by a strong infrastructure and a cohesive, creative and prosperous community**
- The local population of Luton, from all cultural communities and of all ages, will engage with the arts on a regular basis and will be positive about the range of opportunities available
- There will be exciting, established, stable and resilient arts, cultural and creative industries organisations based in Luton that together cover the full spectrum of arts activity
- Luton will be attracting, supporting and retaining artists and practitioners who want to be based in the town
- A joined-up, collaborative approach from arts, cultural and creative industries organisations will support and encourage inclusive, intercultural participation and engagement across Luton communities, including diverse and marginalised communities and people with disabilities
- The arts will be contributing to initiatives to improve health and well-being
- Luton schools will have embedded programmes and activities to engage children, young people and school communities in arts activity and events
- All children and young people living in Luton will engage with the arts
- People in Luton, if they choose, will be able to progress a career in the arts, cultural and creative industries

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- Many more visitors will be coming to Luton for its arts and cultural offer
- International and national businesses with a base in Luton, or relocating to Luton, will be promoting the arts and cultural offer as a positive benefit to employees
- Businesses in the town will be pro-actively supporting the arts, cultural and creative industries
- Resources for the arts will be provided from a range of public, private and business sources
- Locally, nationally and internationally Luton will have a positive cultural image
- The physical infrastructure of venues and locations for arts activities and events will be high quality - appropriate to meet the needs of the town

This Strategic Vision for the Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries in Luton 2017-2027 explains how the ambitions identified will be delivered and why they are realistic and achievable. It builds on the strengths of the local cultural scene (including artistic practice, festivals, museums and community arts), its impetus and ambition, and the emerging growing shoots of cultural renaissance. The Vision has been developed through ground-up consultation.

There are different definitions of Cultural and Creative Industries. This Strategic Vision includes those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent such as design, music, publishing, film and video, media, crafts, visual arts, literature and the performing arts. Art forms such as graffiti art and tattooing are included. The focus of the Strategic Vision is the arts, including arts engagement with heritage and heritage projects, with library delivery, and arts engagement with other sectors.

An Evaluation Framework that forms part of this Strategic Vision shows how the anticipated achievements from the Vision will be measured, with a definition of Key Performance Indicators.

Commitment:

How do we know that this Vision reflects the aspirations of local people and of the arts cultural and creative industries sector?

Development of the Strategic Vision has been informed by extensive consultation involving:

1. Identifying key documents (local, regional and national strategies, policies and plans) that should inform Strategic Vision development
2. Meeting with strategic partners and stakeholders including Luton Borough Council, Arts Council England, Luton Culture, University of Bedfordshire, Luton Investment Programme partners, Luton Cultural Education Partnership, London Luton Airport Ltd, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, East London NHS Trust, SEMLEP, Luton BID, Active Luton, RevoLuton and Sport England

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3. Meeting with wider cultural and arts partners including Jean Abreu Dance Company, Luton Mela, Youthscape, UKCCA, Sinfonia Verdi, New generation Youth Theatre, Luton Music Mix, Luton Irish Forum, Luton Choral Society, Love Luton, Khayaal Theatre, Luton Airport Operating Company, Kadam, Full House Theatre and Departure Lounge
4. Attending all five Area Forum sessions in Luton during October and November 2016
5. Holding Open Meetings for the general public to contribute in each of the five Areas of the town
6. Leading ten practical arts sessions/workshops, with accompanying discussion sessions, targeting different community groups in different parts of Luton and including children, young people, adults, older people, people with disabilities and people from a range of diverse communities
7. Short survey activity to obtain information and feedback from individual Luton artists/practitioners, from community, voluntary and education organisations delivering arts activity at local level, and from a sample of local residents
8. Six presentation sessions (with full open invitation) to share an outline Strategic Vision and to obtain feedback as part of detailed Vision development

Organisations engaged with the Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries in Luton, whether professional, amateur or community in status, are invited to sign a commitment to support delivery of this Strategic Vision. As the Vision is implemented new contributions will be added to the developing Harnessing Momentum Action Plan.

Themes:

There are five important themes, recognised by many people in the town, which are integral to the Vision and which are embedded within the aspirations that we seek to achieve. The themes are:

- **Place-making – enhancing our environment and the identity of Luton, and celebrating our heritage**

This theme will be supported by Luton Culture's development of the *As You Change So Do I* project and by the High Town masterplan. The development of activities and Collections at Wardown House and Stockwood Discovery Centre (including achieving Designated Collection status) will link with the heritage development in the Cultural Quarter, creating a powerful corridor and heritage trail. A Luton Heritage Strategy, encompassing Collections, will be developed to support this Strategic Vision, acknowledging the importance of the hat industry in the town's history and development. A Public Art Plan/Framework will also be commissioned to align with this Strategic Vision, and communities will be engaged in local place-making through public art projects and cultural activities in public space. Activities will be developed in parks and local neighbourhoods

- **Improving cultural infrastructure (in both physical and organisational terms)**

This Vision supports aspirational, flagship infrastructure developments, such as - the development of a new music venue; potential creation of a new, fit-for-purpose theatre; possible restoration of the former ABC Cinema as arts space; and creation of gallery and exhibition facilities. Luton venues will be accessible to all, fully acknowledging the needs of people with disabilities. The Vision also supports enhancement of existing venues and spaces to maximise their fitness for intended purpose and impact. The accompanying Action Plan includes objectives providing opportunities to open a range of venues such as libraries, community centres, schools, parks and bandstands to a host of new arts activity.

Existing and new arts, cultural and creative industries organisations (including media organisations), based in Luton, will be supported to grow and to become more resilient. Artist and practitioner development will be an important focus with diversity a key aspiration. Communication within the arts and cultural sector and with the wider Luton community will be made excellent, supporting a joined-up working approach.

- **Development of inclusive, intercultural activity to build community participation, cohesion and understanding**

Engagement will be built through development of new, joined-up participation opportunities with a focus on - local neighbourhood activity; engagement of diverse communities; embedded arts within healthcare, fitness and sporting activity; and embedded arts within curriculum and extra curricula activity in schools (and for young people outside of school). Access to arts activity will be ensured for people with disabilities and for older people. New technology and new media will be exploited to support this work.

Support for local music, representative of all cultural backgrounds, and encouragement of collaborative, combined arts activity will feed the existing and ongoing Festivals programme, including Luton Mela, Luton Carnival, St Patrick's Day celebrations, the Polish Festival, and those such as *Imagine Luton* developed as part of the Arts Council's Luton Investment Programme, along with plans for new, accessible celebrations. The use of local venues will be developed and café culture incorporating live music and pop-up activity will be supported.

- **Increasing engagement of children and young people, including Early Years**

With a higher than average proportion of children and young people in Luton this theme is fundamental to delivery of the Strategic Vision. The developing work of Luton Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) will be supported through this Vision and its Action Plan, including the LCEP aim to involve young people in shaping and delivery cultural education. Schools and informal education providers will be supported to work more closely with the arts and cultural sector and arts and culture will be embedded in the curriculum of Early Years and Foundation Stage settings. The Feb Fest project will be developed and a large scale Children's Carnival will be introduced. Additional participation projects will be designed to support schools, help train teachers, and counteract reduced curriculum emphasis on the arts. This work will be supported by establishment of a new Cultural and Creative Education Service for Luton.

- **Skills development and lifelong learning to increase employability and quality of life, and to improve health and wellbeing**

This important theme will be supported by University of Bedfordshire Test Beds (Accelerator Artist, Catalyst Co-Lab and Artist Enterprise Zone programmes) and by other initiatives that focus on building a strong, diverse cultural workforce through training, mentoring, formal volunteering and apprenticeship opportunities. There will also be support for diverse, emerging cultural and creative industries organisations and initiatives including an increase in studio/managed work spaces. The work will encourage artist development and the relocation of artists, practitioners and creative industries to Luton.

Smaller organisations delivering arts activity will be supported to become effective at securing resources through external funding opportunities.

A commitment to joining-up activity e.g. sports and fitness with dance activity, and health/well-being initiatives with Arts on Prescription, will play a role in encouraging involvement from those who are experiencing, or are at risk of health issues, including older people and people with disabilities.

Provision of more free access and neighbourhood work will address barriers of price and transport. There will be a strong commitment to ensuring access and opportunities for people from marginalised communities and for those who are disabled, or have special needs.

There are also two cross-cutting themes that are embedded across this Strategic Vision:

- The need to maximise use of digital opportunities and new technology to enhance implementation of the Vision (this will contribute to effective communication, marketing, artist support and development of excellent, contemporary practice).
- . Ensuring legacy from all the initiatives and activity developed.

The Vision and the identified themes support key priorities within other strategies, policies and plans that align with Harnessing Momentum, and in particular goals within:

Luton Investment Framework

The strategic priorities and key areas of focus of the Luton Investment Framework are:

- building economic growth and prosperity
- enhancing skills and education
- improving health and wellbeing

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- developing quality homes and infrastructure
- supporting safe, strong and cohesive communities.

Luton Borough Council Corporate Plan

Luton Borough Council's new mission, summarising its purpose and aspiration is:

'Enabling Luton to be proud, vibrant, ambitious and innovative'.

This is supported by a refreshed vision statement which declares:

As a leader and shaper of Luton the Council will:

- deliver high quality services to improve the life opportunities for our people
- work with our partners to ensure Luton is dynamic, prosperous, safe and healthy
- celebrate our diversity and vibrancy and come together to build sustainable communities
- provide strong leadership and a voice for the town

Arts Council England Great Art and Culture for Everyone

- Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to 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 richness of the arts, museums and libraries

Arts Council England's commitment to development of the arts in Luton is illustrated by the introduction of the Luton Investment Programme in 2016, providing support for the new *As You Change so do I*, *Imagine Luton* and *Test Beds* projects, for the appointment of a Creative Producer to support development of the Hat Factory Arts Centre performance programme, and for the development of this Strategic Vision.

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Key Aims:

Ten Aims have been identified to underpin the Strategic Vision and to enable delivery to the five themes. The aims are defined beneath a series of key actions which describe ways of cultural working that Luton people have indicated need to be improved:

Action	Aim	Themes supported	Activity and Outcomes
1. Joining-Up	Establish effective, joined-up, collaborative working across the cultural sector	All five themes	Through the establishment of an open, valued and vibrant Creative Forum, serviced by Luton Borough Council, we will ensure that artistic ideas and opportunities are shared, that collaborations created through the Luton Investment Programme are maximised, that communications and marketing are effective and efficient, and that joined up working 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 cultural scene	All five themes	By implementing the Strategic Vision - providing a strong sense of goal, ambition and momentum, harnessing the involvement of key players such as Luton Culture, recruiting new cultural support (Cultural Enabler), and ensuring effective communication - we will transform the cultural image of Luton, creating optimism amongst those engaged in the cultural and creative industries as well as a broader “creative” optimism and pride in place amongst the wider public. This optimism in Luton as an inclusive, flagship Place of Culture will be cascaded to visitors and to those outside the town.
3. Giving a Voice	Change perceptions and empower the creative community so that artists, community and amateur arts organisations and young people feel fully valued and want to engage	Improving cultural infrastructure Development of inclusive, intercultural activity	Community and amateur arts and cultural organisations will be encouraged to take part in the Creative Forum and to contribute to developing activity and new initiatives such as <i>Imagine Luton</i> and pilot programmes to support Year of Culture development. A stronger commitment to listening, sharing and collaborating will be delivered through successful establishment of the new Forum and through improved artist networking and establishment of Cultural Champions, advisory groups for major projects, and targeted new initiatives such as Young Creative Leaders.

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Action	Aim	Themes supported	Activity and Outcomes
		<p>Increasing engagement of children/YP</p> <p>Skills development and life-long learning</p>	
4. Advocating Cultural Value	Ensure the next generation understand and support the value of culture	<p>Increasing engagement of children/YP</p> <p>Skills development and life-long learning</p>	The Luton arts, cultural and creative industries sector will collaborate with early years, primary, secondary, further and higher education to ensure that Luton Cultural Education Partnership’s goals to meet the Cultural Education Challenge are achieved, with creative opportunities and cultural entitlement ensured for every child in Luton aged 0-18. Youth theatre and youth dance provision will be developed to support this aim and support will be given to activity both inside and outside school. The Museum Collections will be widely promoted to widen engagement of children and young people.
5. Mobilising Engagement	Achieve widespread engagement, involvement and participation in arts and arts related activity	<p>Development of intercultural activity</p> <p>Increasing engagement of children/YP</p> <p>Skills development and life-long learning</p>	<p>The work delivered by RevoLuton (Creative People and Places) and its legacy will be maximised to maintain and build involvement in the arts, cultural and creative industries with a focus on marginalised communities and those living in targeted Luton Wards of disadvantage. Heritage Open days will be introduced to increase engagement with the significant heritage assets of the town. There will be an increasing programme of events at Stockwood Discovery Centre and volunteering opportunities will be promoted.</p> <p>Partnership working will be used to develop collaborative arts and health and arts/sports initiatives, working with partners such as Active Luton through new initiatives including Arts on Prescription. Activity will be reviewed to ensure there is full access for older people and those with disability and there will be an</p>

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Action	Aim	Themes supported	Activity and Outcomes
			improvement in Luton’s health and wellbeing as a direct result of more people taking part more often.
6. Securing Resources	Bring substantial new resources to Luton and ensure Luton organisations can successfully fundraise	All five themes	<p>Luton organisations will work together to successfully apply for large scale strategic funds (through European and UK sources) supporting delivery of the Strategic Vision ambitions.</p> <p>A new, focused, knowledgeable and joined-up approach will see substantial new inward investment to arts, cultural and creative industries from Lottery, private Trust and corporate sources. This will build resilience of Luton based organisations and enable the development of new initiatives. The process will be supported by establishment of a strategic Cultural Development Group harnessing a joined-up approach from potential funding partners and by the instigation of a special Local Arts Funding Stream to channel resources to smaller local arts organisations, ensuring benefits for individual artists and practitioners.</p>
7. Building Infrastructure	Improve existing spaces and create new venues and locations for performing and visual arts and establish new making and delivery organisations	Place-making Improving cultural infrastructure	Over the next ten years the infrastructure for arts, cultural and creative industries in Luton will be transformed with – enhancement of existing venues; development of the Cultural Quarter; developing use of Stockwood Discovery Centre and expansion of Collections; exploration of the potential for a new and high quality Library Theatre; development of a town centre music venue; establishment of new Gallery spaces in the Cultural Quarter and High Town; potential opening of the ABC Cinema as arts space (or alternative buildings); substantial development of creative industries and artist studio space through Luton Culture’s heritage initiatives; increased numbers of smaller venues such as The Bear and Marjorie’s Café delivering live arts activity; encouragement for the opening up of schools, community venues and outdoor space, including bandstands, for arts activity; and encouragement for the establishment and development (including relocation to Luton) of new arts organisations and creative industries start-ups.

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Action	Aim	Themes supported	Activity and Outcomes
8. Developing Opportunity	Ensure wide knowledge of the available opportunities and increase the profile of the cultural offer	Development of intercultural activity Increasing engagement of children/YP Skills development and life-long learning	Harnessing Momentum will become an integral part of the Luton Investment Framework with on line and social media presence that promotes the constituent partners (with hyperlinks) and a wide range of supporting events, activities and Festivals (including carnival, mela, Irish and Polish Festivals), creating opportunities for both those delivering (including emerging talent) and those consuming. A Marketing and Communications Strategy will be developed to support Strategic Vision delivery and to ensure there is an effective and joined-up approach to promoting all arts activity in the town. Data capture will be used e.g. through library services to build communications with audiences.
9. Achieving Quality	Establish a benchmark for quality of delivery and deliver to that threshold	All five themes	Luton Creative Forum will work with its members, and the appointed Cultural Enabler, to establish consistent quality standards, using tools such as the Arts Council England Quality Metrics and Quality Principles models. Luton Culture’s development of The Hat Factory Arts Centre programme will continue and its impact will be cascaded to other venues including Luton Libraries. The Test Beds initiative from the University of Bedfordshire, and its legacy programmes, will play a key role in supporting artist and practitioner development, providing focused CPD opportunities. An effective and thorough Evaluation Framework will be implemented to monitor quality of Strategic Vision delivery through both process and presentation.
10. Delivering Continuity	Build a skilled creative workforce and a portfolio of successful local arts and cultural organisations	All five themes	A Heritage Strategy and Public Art Plan/Framework will be developed aligned to this Strategic Vision. We will build the capacity and diversity of our creative workforce through the Test Beds initiative, by encouraging apprenticeships and paid intern positions across the sector, and by achieving the goals identified by Luton’s Cultural Education Partnership.

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Action	Aim	Themes supported	Activity and Outcomes
			<p>With more effective support given to nurture smaller organisations and emerging practitioners, the connectedness and resilience of our Luton based arts, cultural and creative industries economy will be enhanced and its ability to secure resources and drive new initiatives will be developed.</p>

The steps and milestones to enable us to achieve the Vision:

There are clear and identified steps and milestones to ensure that Luton fulfils a Strategic Vision that has emerged from wide consultation across the arts, cultural, education and community sectors, supported by dialogue with people of different ages and cultural backgrounds.

The Big Idea

The Vision is bold and imaginative and identifies as a key stepping stone the ambition for Luton to seek to achieve UK City of Culture status in 2025 (a town is eligible to achieve City of Culture status).

The attraction of City of Culture status is:

- National and international profile with a focus on the cultural offer
- Opportunity to bring significant visitor numbers to the town
- Requirement for connected working to enable an inclusive, cohesive and high quality programme
- Stimulus to engaging and involving the whole community in making the year-long programme a success
- Value in leveraging resources and funds to bring substantial inward investment
- Necessity to have in place a cultural infrastructure to deliver the programme
- Delivery will create legacy and future development opportunities
- Achieving the status would be a real measure of substantial progress in enhancing the cultural offer and engagement in Luton

All the evidence indicates that places seeking status as Capital or City of Culture achieve substantial benefits *irrespective* of the outcome of their application. The process is our Vision and the end goal will be the transformation we seek irrespective of the outcome of a City of Culture application for 2025.

In order to successfully reach that goal and seek to achieve the City of Culture status, Luton needs to build its credentials as an inclusive Place of Culture. Establishing a development structure and achieving a series of supporting milestones on route will ensure the ambition is on track as well as providing a vehicle for fulfilling the ten key aims. The long-term Vision will be achievable through delivery of a developing programme (comprising new initiatives, and joined up working between existing arts and cultural partners) to create an inclusive, flagship, destination Place of Culture using pilot Year of Culture programme milestones as a catalyst.

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There will be key milestones on route in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024 that focus and support our developing achievement -

In 2019 (following on from completion of the new initiatives implemented as part of the Arts Council's Luton Investment Programme) the town will implement and deliver a pilot programme towards its Year of Culture ambitions – a month of intensive, innovative and open access arts and cultural activity, designed to engage all parts of the community (and neighbourhoods) and to raise the town's cultural profile, status and pride.

By that year a group of Luton arts organisations will have established formal European partnership working to bring new funding and a new dimension to activity delivery, supporting the pilot "Year of Culture" delivery. A consortium of Luton organisations and practitioners will also have built working partnerships with artists and cultural organisations in the other key plural cities and towns in England. These partnerships will facilitate new intercultural programmes to animate the venues, the streets, the schools and the parks and open spaces of Luton as part of the special 2019 pilot Year of Culture programme.

During 2019 relationships with the selected UK city as European Capital of Culture 2023 will be developed and Luton arts and cultural organisations will also build working relationships with cultural bodies in former, current and planned European Capital of Culture cities, to learn from their experiences and to broker exchange opportunities. This will be an important step towards a new cultural status for the town and towards planning our own bid for City of Culture status.

In 2020 a bid team will be appointed to start preparing Luton's application for City of Culture status, anticipated to be submitted in early 2021.

Luton will formally apply to be UK City of Culture in January 2021 and during that year will reciprocate activity and projects with the selected 2021 recipient of City of Culture status. A decision on our application will be anticipated by December 2021.

By 2023, as it heads towards testing a longer and more intensive pilot Year of Culture (2024) programme, Luton will be in a position to offer reciprocal activity to support whichever UK city achieves Cultural Capital of Europe.

2024 will see the activity in Luton's pilot "Year of Culture" programme extended to a six week period, building the capacity and capability towards the ten year goal.

In 2025 Luton will be the UK City of Culture or presenting an equivalent planned programme that continues its momentum towards being an inclusive, flagship, destination Place of Culture.

The full list of supporting milestones (key steps) are summarised below. SMART Objectives associated with each of the identified Key Aims (enabling milestone delivery) are shared in detail in the accompanying Action Plan:

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2017

- Establishment of a new, effective and inclusive Creative Forum for the Luton arts, cultural and creative industries sector
- Appointment to a new Cultural Enabler post to drive the Strategic Vision delivery
- Promotion and widespread dissemination of the Strategic Vision 2017-2027
- Harnessing of support from Luton BID and the business community
- Establishment of a Cultural Development Group, involving key funding partners, to support increased and focused investment in Luton arts – establish a Local Arts Funding Stream
- Heritage Open Days launched
- Wardown House Museum and Art Gallery re-opens
- Preparation and submission of two major consortium funding applications and establishment of a Local Arts Funding Stream
- Completion of first Accelerator Artist and Catalyst Co-Lab programme through University of Bedfordshire TestBeds

2018

- A Marketing and Communications Strategy is in place to support implementation of the Strategic Vision
- Arts on Prescription and supporting Arts and Health initiatives have been introduced
- The Luton Investment Programme activity is successfully completed and evaluated and a legacy programme established with new public realm commissions from Luton Culture
- Artist Enterprise Zone programme delivered through TestBeds
- Continuation funding is secured for RevoLuton
- Plans have been developed and the funding sought and secured to enable delivery of the high profile 2019 initiative – a pilot programme towards Year of Culture
- An Artistic Director is appointed to lead plans for 2019
- Progress on delivery of the Strategic Vision is reviewed
- A redeveloped Hat Factory is launched
- A Public Art Framework has been developed for the Cultural Quarter
- Completion of second Accelerator Artist and Catalyst Co-Lab programme through University of Bedfordshire TestBeds

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2019

- Vibrant Cultural Quarter fully established
- Detailed plans are in place for development of a music venue within a relocated football club
- Feasibility work has been completed to explore viability of ABC Cinema restoration
- The Luton Year of Culture pilot initiative has been successfully delivered including a new Children’s Carnival and enhanced art on the street activity
- Arts and cultural organisations have raised significant additional sums from a range of sources to support initiatives contributing to the special Year of Culture pilot programme.
- Relationships have been established with the successful UK city identified as European Capital of Culture 2023, and with other former, current and planned European Capitals of Culture, to maximise opportunities for partnership and artistic exchange
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2020

- New gallery and/or pop-up gallery facilities are in place in the Cultural Quarter and High Town
- New Arts Festival at Stockwood introduced by Luton Culture
- Plans for improved theatre facilities have been explored
- A bid team has been appointed and plans being developed to inform a City of Culture application

2021

- Submission of an application for City of Culture status
- Completion of a detailed half way review/evaluation of progress in implementation of the Strategic Vision
- Terms of Reference of the Creative Forum have been reviewed and updated
- Launch of Luton Culture’s Creative Cluster
- Robust applications have been submitted from several Luton arts organisations to become ACE NPOs

2022

- Substantial new funding has been achieved to build from the platform of RevoLuton and 2019 activity
- An Artistic Director is appointed to lead plans for 2023 and 2024
- The Active Lives survey reveals Luton is in the top 50% of Local Authority areas for people taking part in arts and culture
- Key personnel appointed to lead City of Culture development for 2025

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2023

- Reciprocal events take place with the UK city acting as European Capital of Culture
- The number of arts organisations and practitioners based and working in Luton has doubled since 2017
- Luton's Cultural Quarter has a dynamic, vibrant arts scene with a national profile
- Further review of progress in implementing the Strategic Vision towards the end goal
- Full programme team appointed and detailed planning underway for the 2025 Year of Culture programme

2024

- A longer and more intensive pilot Year of Culture programme is successfully delivered
- Every person in Luton has some form of engagement with the pilot Year of Culture programme
- Completion of an economic impact assessment of Luton's cultural programme, focusing on achievements in attracting visitors to the town for the cultural offer
- Detailed plans finalised for the 2025 Year of Culture programme
- Marketing and press galvanised to promote 2025 plans, including locally to ensure full engagement of all Luton communities

2025

- Launch of City of Culture programme
- New arts venues/spaces have been completed to meet need
- Daily event throughout 2025
- PR opportunities maximised to promote Luton nationally and internationally and to maximise local engagement
- Legacy programme developed

2026

- Detailed evaluation of Year of Culture programme, impact and benefits
- Legacy programme initiated
- Partnerships maximised to source external investment for ongoing programme

2027

- Appraisal of Luton's position as a flagship, destination Place of Culture
- A detailed review/evaluation of achievements from the 10 Year Strategic Vision is completed

- Establishment of a new 10 Year Strategic Vision to build on Harnessing Momentum and to align with progress on Luton’s Investment Framework

How resources will be provided:

Ambitions need resourcing. This Strategic Vision for the Arts, Cultural and Creative Industries will need to be supported through the wide ranging activities delivered by existing arts and cultural providers. But, new and additional resources are also needed to enable the substance of delivery to match the expectation and ambition.

Alongside the development of this Vision is an established commitment to support significant fundraising activity through 2017. A detailed Fundraising Strategy and Plan is attached as an appendix to support this document.

There is agreement to establish a Local Arts Funding Stream that will provide a committed £50,000 per annum until 2019 to support new activity which contributes to Strategic Vision delivery over the first three years. Eligible applicants will be constituted local organisations (with a turnover of less than £250,000) seeking support for arts projects that will be delivered in the town.

In addition two important partnership projects are planned, both of which will potentially bring increased resources to help facilitate the Luton Year of Culture pilot programme in 2019.

- A consortium group of Luton organisations will work with ArtReach to build specific European partnerships leading to the development of a project that will provide flagship activity supporting the 2019 programme. This project will be the subject of a Creative Europe application, with local and European partners, and with a Luton organisation as Lead Partner.
- ArtReach will also work with a group of Luton arts organisations to build a partnership project with organisations in other plural towns and cities in England. This development work will result in a 2017 application to Arts Council England Ambition for Excellence, providing a clear continuity from the current Luton Investment Programme and building an exciting programme to contribute to the Luton Year of Culture pilot programme in 2019.

Other support will be sought through Lottery, including BIG Lottery and Heritage Lottery Fund, private Trusts and Foundations, through corporate sources (including the airline industry) and through Section 106 Agreements.

Key funding partners (e.g. ACE, HLF, BIG, LLAL and Bedfordshire Community Foundation) will be invited to create a Cultural Development Group for Luton from 2017, to facilitate a joined up approach to supporting resource allocation to support the Strategic Vision delivery.

Fundraising success is contagious and successful outcomes from 2017 applications will sow seeds to enable further substantial collaborative projects and fundraising beyond 2019.

Responsibility for delivery:

A strong vision also needs partnership working and effective leadership. This Strategic Vision belongs to the whole of Luton and the expectation is that all those signing up to support it will play a role in delivery.

It is intended that arts and cultural and creative industries organisations across the Borough (including community organisations, amateur arts groups and education establishments) will formally sign up to support the implementation of this Strategic Vision. Those that commit to the Vision will also benefit from the rewards and resources it brings (including access to the Local Arts Funding Stream and other fundraising support).

Luton Borough Council is committed to the Strategic Vision presented and to the route map identified. It will give leadership by appointing and providing a base for a new Cultural Enabler with responsibility for driving the Strategy and by identifying an Elected Member Lead as the Cultural Champion.

Luton Borough Council has committed resources towards the Local Arts Funding Stream and the salary for the Cultural Enabler. The Council will also 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 adventurous arts and cultural initiatives and development of the Night Time Economy. It will support the identification of Section 106 funds to help implementation of the Vision. The Cultural Enabler will act as overarching Coordinator to ensure that delivery of the Strategic Vision is kept on track. Resources sought through inward investment will also facilitate the appointment of artistic leadership to mastermind planning and delivery for each Year of Culture pilot programme.

An inclusive and diverse Creative Forum will be established, serviced by Luton Borough Council, to provide an open platform for organisations and artists committed to the Strategic Vision to meet, exchange ideas, and to contribute to planning and Action Plan delivery. This Forum will not replace existing networks, but will be focused on the successful delivery of Harnessing Momentum. The Forum will be established in 2017. University of Bedfordshire, through TestBeds will provide Artist Enterprise support through the Creative Forum.

All organisations involved in the Harnessing Momentum programme will also have responsibility for contributing to ingredients of the project. This contribution might be through delivering workshop activity, public art, installation work, performance creation and programming, creative industries development, or participatory projects. Resources achieved through large scale applications will provide leverage to enable individual groups to seek further sources of smaller scale funding that facilitate this engagement.

There are many existing activities and initiatives being delivered in Luton that can be included within the strategic delivery of this Plan, and that may benefit from being identified as part of Harnessing Momentum.

Evaluation Framework:

A focused Evaluation Framework is attached as appendix to this Strategic Vision.

Guidance will be developed to provide standardised evaluation tools for arts, cultural and creative industries organisations, so that evaluation data can be effectively collated and compared. Social Return on Investment criteria will be developed to further analyse the benefit of Strategic Vision implementation to Luton communities and people and independent support will be contracted to compile an annual review of progress from autumn 2017, reporting to the Luton Creative Forum.

Focused and intensive evaluations will be undertaken during each Luton Year of Culture pilot programme.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used to measure progress and achievement for the arts, cultural and creative industries at key milestones during implementation of the Ten Year Strategic Vision.

KPIs focus on:

- Numbers and diversity of cultural and creative industries organisations and artists/practitioners operating from Luton
- Membership of and engagement with the Creative Forum
- Quality of cultural infrastructure in Luton
- Range and intensity of arts and cultural programme, and extent of inclusive, collaborative activity
- Numbers and diversity of Luton audiences and cultural participants
- Number of cultural engagements each year for Luton's children and young people
- Achievement of Arts Awards and Artsmark status
- Numbers and diversity of people participating in Arts and Health/Arts on Prescription programmes
- Perceptions of local people towards Luton as place and Luton as a cultural centre as collected in the Council's twice-yearly perceptions survey
- Luton's status in the Active Lives survey
- Visitor numbers attending cultural events and activities in the town
- Engagement of the corporate sector in cultural development and delivery
- Sums achieved for inward investment to support arts, cultural and creative industries activity

How you can contribute:

Everybody in Luton can contribute to the delivery and achievement of this Strategic Vision. It is a Vision and Plan that aims to involve and benefit the whole community.

Arts, cultural and creative industries organisations can contribute by:

- Formally signing up to endorse the Strategic Vision, by pledging commitment to help delivery, and by advocating its implementation
- Taking part in Creative Forum meetings to bring a range of voices to planning and to encourage collaborative activity
- Identifying initiatives and activities they can develop and bring to the platform of Luton Year of Culture 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 to benefit all the people of Luton
- Committing to audience development to increase the diversity and range of audiences and participants

The community, voluntary and educational sector can contribute by:

- Advocating for the Strategic Vision and becoming Champions to build enthusiasm and support amongst all local communities
- 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, education and lifelong learning
- 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:

- 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
- Actively promoting events and activities

Families and individuals can contribute by:

- Promoting activities amongst families and friends (including visitors)
- Keeping aware of and taking part in activity
- Becoming audiences for performances, arts installations, festivals and events

Action Plan:

The Action Plan attached to this Strategic Vision comprises a series of SMART objectives, associated with the Key Aims, and identifying responsibility for delivery.

A detailed Fundraising Strategy and Plan is also attached as an appendix. This highlights specific opportunities (in addition to the large scale applications planned for 2017) and identifies where Luton organisations can be invited to play a partnership/applicant role.