

# Buckinghamshire Cultural Strategy

Our communities; our heritage; our shared future

## 1. Introduction

### Buckinghamshire Culture

Culture plays a vital role for Buckinghamshire: contributing to distinctive communities and places, enhancing our quality of life and wellbeing, enhancing our tourism offer and contributing in many significant ways to our economy.

Buckinghamshire has an enormous depth of cultural offering: our heritage and history; our built and natural environments; and our contemporary cultural lives, activities and the amenities that support them. Unique elements which contribute to the cultural mix of Buckinghamshire include the Chiltern Hills, National Trust properties such as Waddesdon Manor, country parks such as Langley Park, as well as the County Museum and internationally renowned facilities such as the film studios at Pinewood and the motor racing circuit at Silverstone. We have a unique contribution to International culture as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement. Culture is a vital component of our creative industries: providing talent, ideas and innovation. Plus, we have many artists, crafts makers and creative businesses. The rich mix that Buckinghamshire has to offer to residents, visitors and investors is worth celebrating.

This Cultural Strategy is the culmination of a period of critical discussion which has provided a set of fresh perspectives on the role culture can play in shaping Buckinghamshire. Spearheaded by Buckinghamshire County Council, through a new Cultural Partnership which brings together the leading organisations and voices for culture in Buckinghamshire, it recognises the valuable contribution culture already makes to the county, alongside the potential for far wider engagement to deliver a better future for all. The Strategy aims to ensure that culture sits at the heart of approaches to economic development, new housing and communities, health and wellbeing, education and skills.

### Buckinghamshire – a County of Culture

We want to make Buckinghamshire an even more dynamic, distinctive and enjoyable place to be, using culture to enhance the everyday, and address the county's social and economic challenges, building from its real strengths.

For the purposes of this strategy we are defining culture in its widest sense, embracing: our lives, identities and communities; heritage; museums, galleries, cinemas, music, theatres, libraries, festivals and events; practice and industry.

### The Challenges We Face

Buckinghamshire has so many qualities for which culture plays a starring role: our built and natural heritage, rural arts and crafts, growing creative industries, and strong voluntary sector – to name just a few. However, we need to work much harder and more collaboratively if culture is to provide the transformative experiences for our residents that we know it can. Our attractions and places of historical and cultural interest are widely dispersed, therefore sustainable and accessible transport and accommodation options need to be explored. We need to build lasting partnerships which put culture at the heart of the economic development and growth agenda – to ensure we future-proof the economy and develop high-quality places through new housing-led growth. We need to maximise the positive influence of culture for health, wellbeing and social care. We need to do much more to reach and engage everyone across the county with the same degree of impact; being fully inclusive, reflecting the county's diversity of perspectives, ideas, skills

and aspirations; and securing sufficient levels of financial investment to attend to the inequality of opportunity that our residents face. The increasingly concerning climate change situation must be considered, we must look at reducing consumption and support sustainable lifestyles, as well as using creativity and culture to communicate and explore the need for change. We need to be innovative and bold, and build on good practice to be seen as an inclusive and sustainable cultural destination that is not overshadowed by London, and in doing so, build our sense of place and identity.

## The Opportunities We Can Embrace

Parts of Buckinghamshire are fast-changing – demographically, economically and culturally. Local plans across the county indicate that approximately 50,000 new homes will be built over the next 15-20 years. These developments – including Aylesbury Garden Town, the Oxford/Cambridge Arc and new transport infrastructure – need to be recognised as cultural opportunities. It is crucial that cultural opportunities are developed alongside the new communities to maintain a high quality of life for Buckinghamshire residents both now and in the future. We have an opportunity in Buckinghamshire to revitalise our historic town centres by enhancing their role as hubs for cultural activity as part of a wider and richer mix of uses. Our creative industries can be a catalyst for economic growth which in turn enhances the innovation capacity of our cultural sector. With the Government’s new Sector deal for the Creative Industries, Buckinghamshire can play a much more pronounced role, complementing London’s position as a global creative city. We need to work with partners across the region, county, and the world to deliver high quality and inspiring activities for the people of Buckinghamshire. Together we need to address the long-term under-funding of culture in Buckinghamshire, working with local and national funding bodies and partners to strategically address this gap and build our capacity and sustainability, and the number of Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations.

## Why Culture Matters

Culture improves the quality of life for Buckinghamshire people, offering participation in activities that go far beyond what traditionally might be recognised as ‘the arts’. It provides access to ideas, to community, to fun and to employment. It helps to bring confidence, cohesion, health and wellbeing.

Culture is a catalyst for economic diversification and growth; for talent attraction and retention; for inward investment and tourism; and for innovation and competitiveness.

*“Culture is integral to the identity of local areas up and down the country and has the potential to transform a place”* The Culture White Paper, DCMS, March 2016.

*“There is a need to fashion proactively investment strategies and interventions that are more responsive to local need and demand, to talent from across the country, and to natural organic growth in the creative vibrancy of our town and cities.”* Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value.

So, what do we mean by culture?

- **Culture is our lives, identities and communities:** it is the way we see ourselves and our place in the world. It is where we live, who we are and how we learn. It is how we express ourselves – from music to sport.
- **Culture is heritage:** it is our memories and stories and possessions and artefacts. It is the built and natural landscape.
- **Culture is industry:** it is the economic value generated by culture in terms of jobs and revenue. It is the added value – to innovation, productivity and brand. It is the creative and digital businesses and the design, production and trade of intellectual property. It is tourism and retail and the competitiveness of the wider economy.

- **Culture is museums, galleries, cinemas, music venues, theatres, libraries, festivals and events:** it is how we record, collect, curate and present our identities and how we understand others' identities. It is how we preserve and bring to life our stories.
- **Culture is practice:** it is the applied imagination of artists, writers and performers. It is the act of making – ideas, text, code, objects, paintings, sound and vision. It is performance and active participation.

## So, what is the purpose of this Cultural Strategy?

Partners in Buckinghamshire need to take every opportunity to ensure the county champions culture as a key way to improve quality of life, enhance wellbeing, and deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth. A joined-up cultural offer that has participation from across both the public and private sectors, with strong leadership and a clear 'ask', is essential.

To ensure culture is a headline agenda for Buckinghamshire, a new Cultural Partnership has been established. Buckinghamshire Culture, will use this outline Strategy and build on its aims and priorities. It will work closely with partners across the county to build on the County's strengths and attend to its challenges. It will be tasked with shaping a smarter, more coherent and innovative approach to culture, maximising potential investment and the returns this brings.

Senior-level participation from key strategic partners will be key – bringing together the county and district councils, universities, health, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), The Rothschild Foundation, and a sample of key cultural organisations.

Overall, this Cultural Partnership will activate the Strategy and make connections and seek new types of commitment to ensure Buckinghamshire builds from, rather than holds back from, its considerable cultural strengths. The Cultural Strategy has been developed:

- To articulate a shared ambition and priorities
- To provide a vehicle that drives collaboration
- To help cultural organisations and creative practitioners increase visibility, reach and engagement
- To help build capacity and enhance the sustainability of our cultural sector
- To increase inward investment, with culture increasing the attractiveness of the county
- To ensure culture enhances the quality of all our places – from reinvigorated town centres to major new housing developments; from our rural landscapes to our villages.

## 2. The Value Proposition for Culture

### Social, Health and Wellbeing

Participation in the arts can contribute to community cohesion, reduce social exclusion and isolation, and make communities feel safer and stronger (Arts Council England 2014)

“A quality cultural and creative education allows people to develop rich expressive lives, and it is essential to the flourishing of the UK’s cultural and creative identity and the Cultural and Creative Industries that this opportunity is not limited to the socially advantaged and the privately educated. This is a fairness, equity and economic imperative” (Warwick Commission 2015).

Seventy-six per cent of older people say art and culture is important in making them feel happy; 57 per cent say art and culture is important in helping them meet other people; and 60 per cent say it is important in encouraging them to get out and about (Arts Council England 2014)

Arts and cultural intervention can have a positive impact on specific health conditions such as dementia, Parkinson’s and depression (Arts Council England, 2014)

Engagement in structured art and culture improves the cognitive abilities of children and young people (Arts Council England, 2014)

People who had attended a cultural place or event in the previous 12 months were almost 60 per cent more likely to report good health compared to those who had not (Arts Council England 2014)

### Economic Growth and Prosperity

Nationally, the creative industries are the fastest growing sector of the economy. The sector has created jobs five times faster than the overall economy since 2010. (Arts Council England, 2015)

In 2016, there were around 284,000 Cultural and Creative Industries businesses in the UK - over one in ten of the total number of businesses in the country, generating £91.8 billion for the UK economy in GVA and supporting over 3 million jobs. The geographic distribution of such businesses is dominated by London, and the South East, with strong concentrations in the M4 and M40 corridors.

The Government estimates that by 2023 the sector will create 600,000 new jobs and that GVA will increase from £91.8 billion to £150 billion.

### 3. Strategic Context

Creativity and culture are integral to everything we do, whether it's the house we live in, the car we drive, or the films we enjoy – all of these things have involved huge numbers of designers, makers, artist, producers, directors etc. When it comes to leisure and the things we do to keep us happy and healthy, creativity and culture form the core of a great deal of these activities. And when we leave the house to go to work or school, creativity and cultural activities can help us to learn and develop skills, generate income and increase footfall, connect to a place and generate a sense of community and identity.

It is therefore, important to consider the strategic context for Buckinghamshire and to see how and where there are opportunities to collaborate, support or spearhead projects and activities that include and embed creativity and culture.

The Cultural Strategy directly supports [Bucks County Council's Strategic Plan 2017-2022](#) aim of 'ensuring Buckinghamshire is thriving and attractive' and delivers to these specific Council strategies:

- [Education and Skills Strategy 2018-2022](#), by working together, creativity and culture can support the vision of the Education and Skills Strategy that all children and young people 'can realise their potential whatever their starting point.'
- [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021](#), published by the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board. The Cultural Strategy is well placed to support its stated priorities:
  - Keep people healthier for longer and reduce the impact of long-term health conditions
  - Promote good mental health and wellbeing for everyone
  - Support communities to enable people to achieve their potential and ensure Buckinghamshire is a great place to live.
- The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) outlines current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local community and identifies a range of groups and communities that could benefit from creative and cultural engagement and participation and shows the need for the cultural sector to be as open and accessible as possible.

Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (BLEP) are key partners for the Cultural Strategy, with their focus on 'the creative and digital economy with Pinewood Studios at its core'. The Cultural Strategy supports BTVLEP's strategies in these respects:

- [Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy](#) 2019, the foreword of which quotes Roald Dahl, sets out plans to grow Buckinghamshire's £14.9bn economy by driving innovation. The Cultural Strategy will support the drive to:
  - Develop a 'creative and digital cluster' around High Wycombe, the National Film and Television School, and Pinewood Studios
  - Meet skills shortages in creative-tech careers
  - Enable inspiring work experience opportunities creative, space, digital health and high value manufacturing sectors
  - Make the towns in Buckinghamshire attractive to businesses and employees in the creative and digital sector
- [Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy 2017-2050](#) which will deliver 105,000 new homes over its lifetime, sets out a vision for a 'vibrant, balanced and resilient' Buckinghamshire through four objectives – two of which echo core areas for the Cultural Strategy to deliver to:
  - Skills and Talent
  - Town Centre Regeneration

- This guiding principle for action ‘stimulate sustainable, vibrant and liveable urban centres, that are appealing to knowledge workers and young professionals’, is a key area for collaboration with the Cultural Strategy.

The Buckinghamshire Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) is in development, and a Cultural Education strategy will soon be created. The CEP strategy will align to the Cultural Strategy, ensuring that children and young people are offered rich and engaging cultural education opportunities.

There are several areas of regeneration and growth across Buckinghamshire, these include the Oxford-Cambridge Arc (a focus of the Local Industrial Strategy), Aylesbury Garden Town and High Wycombe and Chesham regeneration plans. In each case, the Cultural Strategy has the capacity to support and embed creative and cultural projects that ensure new developments are vibrant places to live with flexible spaces for community and cultural activities, and cultural provision that improves quality of life, wellbeing and social cohesion.

## 4. Vision, Aims and Core Commitments

### Vision

**Our vision is to celebrate our identity and increase opportunity.**

**To use culture to make Buckinghamshire a creative and exciting place to live, study, visit and do business.**

**We aim to protect and promote our cultural and artistic heritage and help communities to grow.**

### Mission

**Working together to shape, build and celebrate a bright cultural future for Buckinghamshire.**

### Core Commitments

These core commitments run through the Strategy and Action Plan. They outline the ethos that underpins the Strategy and its delivery, and the foundation stones that partnerships and collaborations will be built on.

#### **Bold and Brave**

Spearheading innovative collaborations and projects that allow audiences, participants, staff and volunteers to take part in, and experience, culture in new ways – impacting perception and behaviour. Thinking big and creating inspiring, high-quality activities that involve and empower our citizens, harnessing the imaginative power of our creative industries and professionals to engage people in making, production and participation.

#### **Children and Young People**

Creating the landscape for co-production and high-quality cultural experiences for children and young people that broaden their horizons, enable them to develop new skills, support their mental and physical wellbeing and build pride in themselves and their achievements. Valuing the amazing things that happen when children and young people are free to work with artists and cultural practitioners as equals.

#### **Creative and Cultural Talent**

Driving ongoing development and networking opportunities for artists, makers, cultural professionals to build a resilient and innovative sector. Sharing and learning together through regular events and workshops, as well as case studies and sharing best practice from within, and beyond, Bucks. Building trust and developing partnerships to deliver the Strategy and Action Plan.

#### **Cross-sector Collaboration**

Shaping partnerships within, and beyond, the cultural sector that prove the value, and raise the profile of, the beneficial impacts of culture for groups and individuals. Influencing policy, increasing reach and developing sustainability through innovative and unusual partnerships that work across strategic agendas to transform lives through engagement and participation in creativity and culture.

#### **Equality and Inclusion**

Celebrating diversity and recognising that providing equality of opportunity and promoting a culture of inclusion are vital to success. Working towards cultural staff, volunteer and audiences being reflective of the diversity of the communities that Bucks cultural organisations serve and influence. Ensuring that equality and inclusion, are embedded in the delivery of the Cultural Strategy, its policies and decisions.

## 5. Building from our Cultural Strengths

In Bucks we have several key areas of strength that we can build from. Areas where we can work with a range of partners from the county, region, county and across the world to develop inspiring projects and activities. These include:

### Literary Heritage

Buckinghamshire has a rich history as a place of writing, reflection and imaginative story-telling. For example, John Milton finished *Paradise Lost* in his cottage (now a museum) in Chalfont St. Giles and world-famous children's author Roald Dahl lived in Great Missenden for many years and wrote many of his best-selling books from a 'writing hut' in his garden. Children's author Enid Blyton and fantasy writer Terry Pratchett are also both former Bucks residents. For many years, every summer in Aylesbury, a Roald Dahl Festival has been held, celebrating the work of this local author, including a giant puppet parade featuring local school children and artists, attracting thousands of visitors. Recently the festival has grown as WhizzFizzFest to become a wider celebration of children's literature, keeping the parade and fun activities but also celebrating other contemporary authors.

In Buckinghamshire, we can do more to celebrate our literary heritage and provide accessible itineraries for visitors. We can also inspire our young people to become brilliant story-tellers, enhancing literacy and confidence. Plus, we can support a new generation of writers, film-makers, games developers and other types of story-tellers to establish Buckinghamshire as a county of contemporary literature.

### Sports Heritage

Buckinghamshire is a county with a strong tradition of innovation and excellence in sports. It is the home of Silverstone, the purpose-built rowing lake at Dorney, and Wycombe Wanderers – a football club with a strong community tradition. Buckinghamshire is also widely recognised as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement. Sir Ludwig Guttman organised the first 'Stoke Mandeville Games'; the forerunner of today's Paralympic Games to coincide with the start of the London Olympics in 1948. The revolutionary treatments at Stoke Mandeville Hospital introduced sport as rehabilitation and an exciting movement was born. To coincide with London 2012, a Cultural Olympiad project was delivered by Bucks County Council celebrating our unique heritage. Buckinghamshire County Council is one of the founding partners of the National Paralympic Heritage Trust, a charitable trust which has been set up to protect and celebrate British Paralympic Heritage. Through an agreement with the International Paralympic Committee, this heritage is recognised at the start of each Summer and Winter Paralympics as the Paralympic Heritage Flame starts its relay at Stoke Mandeville Stadium with a celebratory festival televised by Channel 4 News.

In Buckinghamshire, we can build from this tradition of innovation and excellence. For example, inspired by the Paralympic Movement, we can become the UK's most accessible county for cultural participation. We can embrace digital technology and our cultural assets to increase the legibility of our cultural offer and grow a more immersive and interactive programme of cultural experiences.

### Our Places of Historical and Cultural Interest

Buckinghamshire has a huge variety of attractions and places of historical and cultural interest, and our proximity to London provides a major opportunity to build the audience for our culture. We have a significant number of National Trust properties with some of the finest country houses and formal gardens in this region: the sumptuous Rothschild chateau at Waddesdon, Prime Minister Disraeli's country retreat at Hughenden Manor, the most magnificent landscape garden in Britain at Stowe. We have a great County Museum in Aylesbury (now a National Portfolio Organisation for Arts Council England); the second longest-running visual arts open studios event in the country (Bucks Art Weeks); one of the UK's largest arts centres (Queens Park Arts Centre); excellent performances at Garsington Opera and outdoor activities available include climbing the high ropes or mountain biking in Wendover Woods and seeing the cherry blossom and

bluebells, mountain biking at Aston Hill, enjoying Burnwood Forest, kayaking on the Thames or competing on the Olympic rowing course at Dorney Lake. Nowhere is very far from a country pub with fresh, contemporary food, ales from a family brewery and wine from the county's award-winning vineyards. Bucks is Britain's most filmed county, and home to Pinewood Studios. Its villages have witnessed countless gruesome Midsomer Murders. Many of the larger towns throughout the county offer theatres, galleries and museums, with a range of arts, crafts and studios open to the public. There's a great range of summer festivals including Penn Fest music festival and a range of festivals at Waddesdon.

In Buckinghamshire, we have a wide-ranging and high-quality cultural offer, but we can do more to connect it. We can develop a more coherent programme of activities and map of attractions; we can work harder to share knowledge and jointly promote activities; and we need to make our cultural landscape more accessible and participatory. We can develop our accommodation offer to encourage more leisure overnight stays in the county.

## Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Buckinghamshire has some fine and varied countryside. The Chilterns are known for their rolling hills, wooded green valleys and chalk downland meadows. 324 square miles of superb scenery offer opportunities for walking, cycling, water sports and canals, wildlife-watching and camping. The Chilterns are quick to reach by train or by car, and easy to explore with boots, buggies, bikes or boats. The Chiltern Way is a circular walking route of around 125 miles km, and the Chilterns Cycleway is a 170-mile circular cycle route - both taking in some of the finest scenery in the country. A new walking festival has launched featuring a host of locations, landscapes and lifestyles with hikes, guided tours and special events taking place across the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty throughout Spring.

In Buckinghamshire, we can more effectively attract visitors to our beautiful countryside and we can do so by engaging them in innovative and sustainable cultural activities. This includes festivals, food and drink programming, and artistic commissions which raise awareness of ecology and sustainability issues. We can also make connections between the urban and rural areas, such as through active audience development activities which open up appetites for diverse communities to come to the countryside; or partnerships with universities to encourage activities which connect art, science and technology.

## Our Cultural and Creative Economy

Buckinghamshire has a high growth cultural and creative economy. This includes the globally significant Pinewood Studios, an anchor cluster for the UK film industry; and the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield, which plays a vital role in nurturing talent and ensuring the country continues to produce some of the best creative talent in the world. The south of the county is home to multiple high growth creative firms, with particular strengths in digital (e.g. TV, film, gaming and software); and music publishing. Across the county we have many micro creative firms, with specialism in visual arts, craft and design. They are often playing an active role in their communities and connecting to the wider cultural tourism offer (e.g. via the new Buckinghamshire Craft Guild). In High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire New University has a strong track record in nurturing creative talent, building on the town's furniture heritage to develop a pipeline of graduates in design and arts. To the north of the county, the University of Buckingham is investing significantly in its cultural infrastructure, paving the way to become a cultural and creative hub.

In Buckinghamshire, we have a strong tradition of creating and making – from furniture to film. However, we do not have a detailed overview of the current profile and dynamics of the cultural and creative industries. It is over a decade since the last sector mapping exercise was undertaken. It is also clear that we need to do more to support creative talent to develop and grow in the county – rather than lose talent to London and beyond. Our main towns, in particular High Wycombe and Aylesbury, can become important regional hubs for the cultural and creative industries – with a focus on high quality workspace and stronger sector networks; as well as establishing strategic links to major clusters in London (e.g. in design and crafts). We must also work much harder to provide opportunities for a diverse range of creative and cultural work –

ensuring we develop a rich cultural education offer, and develop effective skills programmes in partnership with industry. The LEP's Creative Skills sub-group can play a key convening role to support this area of development.

## 6. Strategic Priorities

In order to deliver the vision and aims outlined above, five priority areas of activity have been identified for the next five years:

1. Build 'Buckinghamshire Culture'
2. Shape accessible and inclusive culture
3. Bring Buckinghamshire culture to life
4. Inspire and empower children and young people
5. Energise our creative and cultural sector

The Cultural Strategy Action Plan outlines the actions/projects, partners and funding required to deliver these priorities and presents our short (2 years) and long-term (5 years) milestones.

## 7. Strategic Outcomes

In Buckinghamshire, we want to use culture to make the county a creative and exciting place to live, study, visit and do business. To achieve this, our Strategy Action Plan will deliver against four county-wide outcomes.

### Outcome One: A thriving economy and more high-quality jobs

#### **Ambition**

To establish Buckinghamshire a major hub for high value cultural creative and industries activity. This will require an active and imaginative approach to our town centres and to main areas of housing-led growth: encouraging the development of local hubs and clusters. It will also require a dynamic approach to sector networking: connecting Pinewood and the National Film and Television School to networks of micro firms across the county and building stronger business to business exchange. There is also an opportunity to increase the visibility of the local cultural and creative industries sector to other parts of the economy - to increase opportunities to 'buy local'.

To ensure that we are developing the skills and appetite for a thriving creative and cultural sector in the future. Developing creative careers events and initiatives and embedding skills development into projects and education of children and young people.

To establish Buckinghamshire as a recognised destination for leisure, heritage and arts through a cohesive tourism plan based on a shared narrative and stronger sector networks, which encourage knowledge exchange and shared approaches to programming and marketing. Specific strengths can be leveraged here - e.g. to promote Buckinghamshire's offer as a preferred centre for major sporting and cultural events and accessible tourism.

### Outcome Two: Equality of access to cultural activities and opportunities

#### **Ambition**

To support all residents, of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, to engage in culture at a local level through innovative programming, new models of delivery, securing external funding and working in partnership. Offering a range of ways to participate in culture, enabling everyone to experience how culture can enhance quality of life, self esteem and help you to feel connected to a place and community.

Celebrating diversity and recognising that providing equality of opportunity and promoting a culture of inclusion are vital to success. Working towards cultural staff, volunteer and audiences being reflective of the

diversity of the communities that Bucks cultural organisations serve and influence. Ensuring that equality and inclusion, are embedded in the delivery of the Cultural Strategy, its policies and decisions.

To establish Buckinghamshire as a centre of excellence in cultural participation and education: with partners working to establish cultural education as a right for every young person, by reaching out and expanding vital parts of the offer- e.g. the Music Service.

### Outcome Three: Improved health and wellbeing of the population

#### **Ambition**

To maximise the role of culture in promoting both individual health and wellbeing and a personal sense of achievement, as well as the benefits of participation and engagement in a wider community setting.

Supporting the prevention agenda, in respect of physical and mental health, through initiatives such as cultural commissioning, creative and cultural activities through social prescribing, bespoke and targeted projects where specific projects can transform life experiences for those involved, as well as creative problem solving and new ways of working for healthcare professionals and systems.

To establish Buckinghamshire as the most accessible county for cultural participation.

### Outcome Four: Re-vitalised heritage and transformed places

#### **Ambition**

To improve the sustainability of our cultural offer and exploit new opportunities.

To position our heritage offer as a resource for contemporary cultural practice - e.g. festivals, events, filming, creative workspace and reinvigorated town centres and rural hubs.

To put culture at the heart of town centres: establishing a dynamic and distinctive mix of retail, cultural production (e.g. crafts, design, visual arts and other types of 'maker spaces'), events and leisure activities.

### Action Plan, Evaluation and Monitoring

Buckinghamshire Culture's Partnership Board, led by the Co-Chairs, will oversee the Action Plan and will monitor progress at quarterly meetings. There will be an annual review of the Action Plan to monitor progress against the milestones we have set.

Robust evaluation and strong case studies will be essential to prove impact and will be used to advocate for the value of creativity and culture. Buckinghamshire Culture will have a key role to play in sharing the value and impact of the Cultural Strategy and its constituent projects for the community of Buckinghamshire.

## 8. Buckinghamshire Culture

Buckinghamshire Culture will be a brand-new entity formed in 2019 to shape and steer the cultural development of the county through implementation of the county-wide Cultural Strategy. Harnessing the power of working together, it will champion and support the role of culture in Buckinghamshire. The Partnership will bring together key partners working in culture across the county and will be supported by the Buckinghamshire Cultural Outreach Officer.

The Partnership will lead and drive the Cultural Strategy, and develop ways to collaboratively deliver the vision, aims and objectives, themes and priority actions. Through delivery of the Strategy vision, the Partnership will support the vibrancy, resilience and ambition of Buckinghamshire's cultural sector by spearheading new collaborations; sharing learning and improving communication; and ensuring culture sits at the heart of agendas in economic development, growth, place-making, health and wellbeing. The Partnership will harness the impact of culture on people's lives and use this to make the case for culture and creativity to be embedded across all areas of growth and development.

Key areas of responsibility will include:

- Sharing knowledge and connections to enhance the quality of partnerships across the county
- Playing an advocacy and fundraising role – to attract investment for culture and the creative industries in Buckinghamshire. Vital will be aligning the priorities of the LEP with those of the Cultural Partnership.
- Presenting a shared voice and access point for partners seeking to develop a strategic approach to culture - e.g. in planning, economic development, tourism, health and wellbeing.
- Setting up task and finish groups on priority areas – to fundraise and deliver on activities - e.g. baseline mapping of the creative industries; a Cultural Strategy for Aylesbury Garden Town etc.
- Working closely with strategic and funding partners for culture - e.g. Arts Council England.

### Structure and Governance

We are still exploring the appropriate structure and governance for Buckinghamshire Culture. The new Co-Chairs (working together since October 19) will consult with stakeholders and funders, and assess the appetite for various models, such as a charity, community interest company, social enterprise etc. This developmental phase will provide the space needed for those involved to explore what kind of body is needed to support culture and creativity in Buckinghamshire in the long term.

Buckinghamshire Cultural Partnership champions (from creative and cultural sector, economy, health, education and place-making) will continue to be invited to help shape delivery, receive the two-monthly Newsletter and invites to meetings, networking and activities, as well as attend sharing days and events. Membership will be open to all that share the Buckinghamshire Culture values and aims and feel that they make a distinctive contribution to creativity and culture in Buckinghamshire.