

# Place Prospectus

# Foreword

The Audience Agency is all about bringing the benefits and pleasures of creativity and culture into people's lives – and making sure they are open to the many and not just the few.

We're here to help to drive change with our research and insight, as active supporters of an adaptive and agile creative and cultural sector. We champion and facilitate a people - and community-centred approach which gives people a voice in shaping a cultural offer that has meaning and purpose for them. It is also an approach which enables creatives and planners to connect with their communities in an informed and insightful way.

We pride ourselves at working at the grassroots, in the national policy arena and the myriad spaces in between, including local government, consortia, networks and flagship cultural organisations. That's important because we believe policy-making and planning should be informed by and supportive of the work, knowledge and relationships built on the ground. This principle runs through all our work: like our guide to supporting local creative economy (in partnership with Local Government Association), our landmark research during the pandemic which led to the 'Culture in Crisis' report for Parliament, and the roadmap commissioned by DCMS (Digital, Culture, Media & Sport) for building a better cultural economy across the UK.

## Transforming Places

This experience has shown us that culture is often at its most transformative where it joins people together in a place, a catalyst for celebrating, animating, and reimagining it. We provide tangible evidence of this transformative power. But better still, we focus on what works – on how to deliver workable, human-shaped creative initiatives that improve the quality of people's lives. Our newly crafted suite of services reflects a decade of support for evidenced and people-centred creative place-making. We can help you to:

- Access funding to achieve your goals
- Involve your community and stakeholders in meaningful decision-making
- Understand community assets and market demand
- Develop skills and diversify talent pools
- Deliver increased economic and social impact
- Build your cultural infrastructure

Our place offer recognises that each place is unique, with its own history and aspirations. To become economically and socially valuable destinations, places need to evolve their own distinctive creative signature. Culture is a powerful tool and driver for positive change, but only when it's relevant and authentically owned by its community.

## Foreword *(cont.)*

The Audience Agency's place and cultural intelligence is a key to unlocking this potential. Our data tools make accessible insights about the cultural habits and preferences of the UK's 26 million households. Our research mix of expert qualitative and quantitative methods is always designed individually for each place and project. Our experience as practitioners brings research and data alive to guarantee high-impact, locally relevant delivery.

### People-First

Place and culture matter profoundly because they are intertwined with identity, belonging, and aspiration. Both can shape and share the narrative of our communities, define our stories, and influence the way we see the world. Place is not just geography; it directly affects the way we feel. Culture is not just a performance; it reflects who we are. Together, culture and place provide the foundation upon which our lives, our communities, and our future are built. And we always begin our delivery with the people.

At The Audience Agency, we understand the intricate interplay between culture, community, business and infrastructure. We stand ready to support place-focused organisations in not only realising their business goals but also in fostering a stronger, more vibrant community through well-planned and sustainable infrastructure development. Our place-based services are designed to empower organisations to navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

In these pages, you will find a comprehensive overview of how we can work with you, using our experience and intelligence to enhance your work to align with your vision and values. We believe in the power of data-driven insights, user-centred design, and creative solutions to transform your place into a strategic asset.

We look forward to sharing this exciting journey of cultural exploration, community building, and positive change with you.

All the best,

Anne  
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CEO – The Audience Agency



# About The Audience Agency

The Audience Agency is a national non-profit organisation that delivers high quality, specialist research, audience development, strategic planning and place-based solutions across the UK and internationally.

We exist to support cultural, heritage and cross-sector organisations to develop more meaningful connections with the public and place.

Our long-term commitment to user-centred practice has been applied to creating resources, digital action, advisory roles, skills development, feasibility and mapping, consultation and providing evidence-based insights to help clients improve their offerings - ultimately driving growth through increased support, attendance, relevance and expanded creative and business opportunities.

Our national understanding coupled with local insight supports and informs our work.

Find out more at [theaudienceagency.org](https://theaudienceagency.org)

We use data on  
**20 million**  
households

to deliver bespoke  
market insight

We work with  
**100s**  
of organisations  
each year

We currently work with  
**74**  
Local Authorities

## Our Place Work

We bring experience of developing local creative and cultural strategic partnerships such as cultural compacts, supported by asset studies and consultation.

We have extensive experience of evaluation and practical delivery of place-based initiatives including Creative People and Places, Coventry UK City of Culture, Mayor of London's London Borough of Culture, High Street Heritage Action Zones, Birmingham 2022, and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Great Place Schemes. Local Government we have worked with on place-based projects include Westminster City Council, Tunbridge Wells, Wrexham County Borough Council, Barnet Council, Staffordshire County Council and Great Yarmouth District Council.

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The Audience Agency undertook the evaluation of our NLHF funded Philip Astley Project, which took place over a two-year period, reporting in early 2019. They were appointed following a competitive tender, based on their wealth of experience, the level of support they offered, the value for money and a clear passion for doing a good job. The team were with us every step of the way, offering advice and expertise – and patience – throughout the project.

We were impressed by the variety of techniques they used to collect meaningful data from a variety of different audiences. The final report was comprehensive, coherent, insightful and well written, providing us with ample evidence for future funding applications and has already been used to good effect for this purpose.

The Philip Astley project steering group has no hesitation in recommending the services of the Audience Agency to other organisations looking for high quality, professional evaluation of their projects.

*Trudi Barnard, Business Development Officer, Newcastle-under-Lyme Council*



## Our Place Work (cont.)

Alongside working on place-based initiatives, we work with communities, artists and with creative organisations and businesses. Take a look at some of our clients and case studies:

### Some of our Clients:



## CASE STUDY

# Build Back Creatively Tool Kit – Local Government Association



Build back  
creatively  
toolkit *(beta)*

The Audience Agency was commissioned by the Local Government Association to design a toolkit for councils, to help structure their rebuilding strategies around the creative industries post COVID-19. The toolkit was designed to enable them to effectively address three important and interconnected goals:

- Help rebuild damaged economies.
- Boost community wellbeing and enable communities to reconnect with each other.
- Revitalise their local creative industries, an important part of their wider local economies.

This toolkit is based in part on the Creative Places - Supporting Your Local Creative Economy guidance launched in August 2020 and created by The Audience Agency's Innovation Unit. We are grateful for their permission to reproduce portions of it.

It also brings in learnings from our other place-based work including that on local creative and cultural strategic partnerships such as 'cultural compacts' and evaluation of place-based initiatives including Creative People and Places and Great Places.

Get your copy of the toolkit

## CASE STUDY

# Action Planning – Falmouth University



Falmouth University commissioned The Audience Agency to provide timely and important information on the evidence and activities that Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (CIOS) should prioritise to recover from the current economic crisis and to maximise support for, and investment in, local creative industry and cultural sector businesses. Working across TAA's Place, Policy and Data Products team, we reviewed the LEP area's cultural and creative evidence base, to identify gaps across data and policy and worked to recalibrate Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's pathway to ensuring support for, and investment in, the creative and cultural sectors as a vital part of Cornwall's economic growth strategy.

The core outcome of the project was an action plan: a detailed plan of policy, funding schemes, sector support, regeneration interventions and data infrastructure development to underpin support for the creative and cultural industries via short- and medium-term actions.

Working directly with the CIoS Creative Sector body – alongside wider consultation – we sought to understand the needs and aspirations in the region, linking directly to inter/national comparators and current policy and funding opportunities.

The Action Plan provided the LEP with a delivery-ready menu of options, mapped onto their place-specific context and linked to quantifiable impact as aligned with their shared strategies.



## CASE STUDY

# Capital Project – University of Oxford Schwarzman Centre



The Audience Agency worked with a team of consultants to explore the marketplace including demand, ticket yield for programming and recommendations for marketing and pricing of a new building at Oxford University.

The building, made possible by gifts totalling £185 million from philanthropist and businessman Stephen A. Schwarzman, demonstrates the essential role of the humanities in helping society confront and answer fundamental questions of the 21st century. The Schwarzman Centre is a dynamic hub dedicated to the humanities. The building will include performing arts and exhibition venues designed to engage the Oxford community and the public at large.

Construction on the building is well underway and it will open in 2025. But the Centre has already come to life with a rich programme of research and events.

The work carried out by our team formed a significant part of the business plan.

## CASE STUDY

# Capital Project – The Museum of Two Halves



The Audience Agency carried out a Visitor Market Analysis for ‘The Museum of Two Halves’.

The ‘Museum of Two Halves’ is the shorthand name to describe the project that will see the development of the Football Museum for Wales and a new Wrexham Museum in the current museum building on Regent Street in Wrexham.

The new football museum will celebrate Welsh football, past and present, in all its diversity, from grassroots clubs to the national teams, as well as highlighting Wrexham’s historic achievements in the sport and celebrating the rich heritage of the County Borough.

New galleries will be created to display the Wrexham Museum collections, which means an enhanced experience for visitors and a first-class, modern venue for discovering the fascinating and eventful story of our region of North East Wales.

Working alongside the community, the museum will host a programme of activities and events to inspire all who visit to learn, be active and achieve their potential.

We reviewed current visitors, local population and cultural engagers, local visitor economy, competitors, transportation and visitor figures. The visitor figures will also be used as part of calculations for the wider business plan, including supporting financial forecasts and potential economic impact for the wider Wrexham area.

## CASE STUDY

# Audiences and Engagement – Edinburgh International Festival



Throughout the month of August the streets of Edinburgh are packed with people looking for their next cultural adventure. Our data tool [Audience Spectrum](#) helped the Edinburgh International Festival identify and communicate with their own audiences - both loyal and latest.

EIF began using their Audience Spectrum License to tag bookers and survey responders to properly profile and evaluate their audiences. This formed the cornerstone of campaign planning across all of the organisation's communications.

Some training in the fundamentals of Audience Spectrum was required to make the test exercise worthwhile, getting everyone internally speaking the same language when it comes to audiences:

Working closely with the Edinburgh International Festival team and their appointed evaluator, The Audience Agency ran team-wide online sessions, sharing expertise and take-away resource packs for reference.

Our team walked the EIF audience engagement specialists through understanding their existing ticketing audiences in more detail, using our bespoke data tool, Audience Answers.

Armed with the basics, the EIF team realised that still more granular analysis would give their campaigns the best chance of success. EIF then integrated an Audience Spectrum License within their Spektrix ticketing system, to gain precision analysis at a household level. Combine this with postcode-level tagging of their existing mailing lists and over 5,000 respondents to the EIF 2022 festival survey, and a detailed picture began to emerge.

They now plan to experiment with building marketing campaigns from the off through the filtered lens of the Audience Spectrum segments (and subsegments) and monitoring the results. A crucial component in EIF's ambitious journey towards becoming a data-led and fully audience-centred organisation.

## CASE STUDY

## Community Consultation - Create Church Street



The Audience Agency collaborated with Westminster City Council to evaluate a program of artistic projects aimed at engaging and unifying the culturally diverse community in the Church Street ward. Create Church Street supported residents in sharing their stories through creative projects by funding a wide range of initiatives, enriching the ward's cultural landscape and promoting arts engagement.

Our evaluation of focused on three key aspects:

- Assessing the impact of the Create Church Street Programme on residents, artists, and local organisations.
- Evaluating the application process from an experiential and accessibility perspective.
- Providing recommendations for future programs, potential funding avenues, and advocacy documents to support project continuation.

Two rounds of small grants applications and 29 projects later, the value of Create Church Street is clear. Participants gained confidence, skills and recognition as individuals. Their pride in their area increased because hearing their neighbours' stories, seeing their creativity and collaborating with them made them proud to live and work alongside each other.

Create Church Street was successful in demonstrating that creative projects bring people together and provide a space for conversation and communal endeavour. The project was a great success, although there is always a question as to whether it reached everyone in the ward who might want to contribute. To this end, we made recommendations for the legacy programmes.

## CASE STUDY

## Technology and Public Space - Furtherfield



This project saw us working with a London based art and technology centre and an immersive technology design studio to understand how community stakeholders can take ownership of how their public spaces evolve.

Golant Media Ventures, Furtherfield and Wolf in Motion worked together to win a grant from the Innovate UK Design Foundations programme for an R&D project using Finsbury Park as a test case to look at the potential for immersive media in envisioning the future(s) of public spaces. We brought our expertise in human-centred design; Wolf in Motion shared its own design thinking approaches; and Furtherfield brought its experience in using game-inspired practices and processes from socially engaged art to engage diverse people.

Despite our experience, we were surprised by the results. An intense cycle of prototyping and user testing led us not to Virtual Reality, as we were expecting, but to two very different prototyped solutions – a wooden map paired with ‘augmented reality’ audio, and an app allowing users to sketch their ideas directly onto aerial video footage of a place. Both of these prototypes allowed members of the public to engage creatively and develop their thinking in different ways than they might have done in (for example) a standard planning consultation.

## CASE STUDY

 Event Impact - Lighting Up Oxford Street


Each year, Oxford Street welcomes thousands of visitors to their Christmas Lights Switch-On event. In order to make sure that the event is as successful as possible, both for the public and stakeholders in and around Oxford Street, The Audience Agency was commissioned to carry out an on-street survey. The brief included experience, awareness, motivations, spend, geographic reach, demographics and testing the awareness and popularity of a new event format for 2018.

From a short brief, we designed a bespoke questionnaire, with reference to previous research for this client, and the time-proven Audience Finder question set. This ensured that the data would be both relevant for the client and comparable with external benchmarks and population data.

From previous research around London's West End, we were able to anticipate the response rates – i.e. how many interviews would be completed – and plan the research accordingly. We also honed the questions to make them as easy to understand as possible, especially important given the busy, international nature of the location. Our methods enabled us to capture the views of residents and a range of tourists.

## CASE STUDY

# Working with Diverse Audiences – Critical Mass, Birmingham Festival 2022



Critical Mass – The evaluation of a high-profile dance and movement mass participation project that engaged 300 young people from the West Midlands as part of Birmingham Festival 22 (Commonwealth Games).

We were commissioned by Birmingham 2022 to review their existing data and co-develop and deliver an evaluation and monitoring plan. The plan considered the accessibility needs and the creative skills of the project team and participants, of whom 45% self-identified as disabled, neurodiverse, or living with a long-term health condition.

Delivery included a reviewing of existing baseline data. The use of a range of data collection methods suitable for delivery in a dispersed model – supported by local support workers, facilitators, and community groups – including creative and accessible ways of collecting quantitative data. We also captured qualitative data collection through interviews and focus groups with the commissioners, choreographers, local dance facilitators, support workers, community groups and participants. The outcomes framework was designed based on the requirements and objectives of funders, wider games, and the specific project.

We also drew together learnings from the evaluation to develop a practical toolkit, the Critical Mass Playbook. The aim was to build on the evaluation of Critical Mass and make it into a practical and useful playbook on inclusivity at mega events. It involved delivering a series of workshops and interviews with key team members to draw out their critical reflections into key moments of challenge and change. These learnings were then turned into a user-friendly format and design to highlight key considerations for future event planners and policy makers.

## Our Team



### Penny Mills

*Director of Consultancy*

Penny works across projects, for places, local and national governmental agencies, and funders to facilitate effective measurement of social, cultural, and economic change and strategic development. Currently lead evaluator for LEEDS 2023, and previously for Galway 2020, European Capital of Culture, the programme evaluation of Great Place Scheme Nations for NLHF and lead on framework design for BC Australia/UK Season.

Working with local authorities delivering asset studies, consultation and facilitation for cultural strategies such as LB Barnet and Great Yarmouth; on strategic programmes such as the Mayor of London's London Borough of Culture programme; and Great Place Lakes and Dales to understand the dynamics of the creative industries in rural areas in relation to emerging creatives.



### Cara Pickering

*Head of Creative Places*

Cara works to design and deliver place-based strategy, development and projects. Prior to joining TAA, Cara worked as a multi-disciplinary creative producer for over 10 years, realising projects programmes, events and exhibitions across music, fashion, art, architecture and audience engagement. Cara has worked with artists and creatives from across the UK and further afield. Her approach pays particular attention to nurturing emerging talent and platforming voices seldom heard.

Through exploring the potential for collaboration and new ways of working, she has developed projects in galleries, the public realm and high street cultural programmes with internationally respected organisations such as ARUP, Tate, Historic England, British Museum, RIBA and British Council.



## Our Team (*cont.*)



### Sarie Mairs Slee

*Associate – Strategic Place Advisor*

Executive Director of Here for Culture & Place, Sarie holds extensive experience in higher education, strategy, policy and place-based partnerships.



### Dan Cowley

*Research Manager*

Dan works with a wide range of clients, specialising in quantitative research, bespoke analysis, and devising and managing large scale data collection projects.



### Richard Turpin

*Head of Research Services*

Richard specialises in audience segmentation, action research and innovative approaches such as visitor journey mapping and user-centred design. He led the team that produced Audience Spectrum, the unique cultural profiling and segmentation of the cultural attitudes and behaviour of the UK public.



### Fran Blythe

*Qualitative Research Manager*

Fran advises clients externally and staff internally on qualitative and evaluative methodologies. Working with clients across the arts, cultural and heritage sectors she designs and deploys approaches for a range of research needs covering summative and formative research, segmentation, new product testing, journey mapping, and brand performance testing.

# Our Services



## Feasibility & Planning

Elevate your place-based projects with our expertise in asset mapping, feasibility analysis, population profiling, schools engagement reporting, market research, and pre-capital planning.

We offer comprehensive support to ensure your initiatives are well-informed, culturally aligned, and strategically executed.



## Engagement

Achieve audience engagement excellence with our suite of services, public consultation, resident surveys, and stakeholder consultation.

We specialise in gathering valuable insights and feedback to inform your strategies and decision-making processes brought together with our experience of people-centred engagement practice. By actively involving your audience and stakeholders, we help you create initiatives that align with their needs and aspirations, ensuring a deeper connection and increased impact within your community.



## Activity & Engagement Design

We draw on user-centred insight to design programmes and activities with and for your communities – which through involvement increase their appreciation of their local cultural assets, and support you to ensure that your work is relevant and inclusive.

Whether you are looking to target specific groups, build skills or increase health and wellbeing, we can support you to work with communities to develop sustainable engagement activity.

## Our Services *(cont.)*



### Impact & Legacy

Our impact and evaluation services enable you to describe in context who you have engaged, tell stories of your success, learn, develop practice and/or demonstrate the impact of your work to your stakeholders – be they Boards, partners or participants or funders.

We provide the tools and insights you need to measure impact, make informed decisions for a sustainable future, and leave a lasting positive legacy within your place. With our support, your projects can thrive, delivering social, economic and cultural benefits.



### Leadership

Right across The Audience Agency, we provide toolkits, training, mentoring and talent development programs—all tailored to equip you with the essential knowledge, resources, and skills for success.

Whether you're looking for practical tools, expert guidance, or thought leadership, our solutions are designed to meet your unique needs.

## Data Tools



# audience spectrum<sup>®</sup>

### What is it?

Our bespoke segmentation tool, Audience Spectrum profiles the population at household and post-code levels and can be used for prospecting as well as profiling and mapping your audiences or visitors.

### How does it work?

Audience Spectrum segments the whole UK population by their attitudes towards culture, and by what they like to see and do. It is the most accurate tool the sector has ever had to help target audiences and engage a wider public. With 20 segments, its profiling power is precise and specific to your communities and catchment areas.

### What can I use it for?

Use Audience Spectrum to understand your current and potential residents, audiences and visitors. Find out more about:

- Who lives in your local catchment area
- What your current audiences are doing
- How to connect to new users

### Who is using it?

Over 1000 organisations (large, small, ticketed, and non-ticketed) use it practically and strategically. To find out how it can help you, **get in touch**.

 audience answers<sup>®</sup>**What is it?**

Our suite of tools for delivering audience monitoring and generating insights on who is engaging with your work, which supports ongoing evaluation of your impact.

**How does it work?**

Audience Answers provides flexible data services and report plans so you can pick and choose the products and price points to meet your needs.

At every plan level this suite of data services and reports:

- is powered by our Audience Spectrum segmentation tool
- comprises modular packages that can standalone or combine
- is developed based on user feedback, along with funder requirements
- enables continuity of reporting and insight for current users

**What can I use it for?**

Ongoing audience monitoring using ticketing or survey data, with data insights delivered in a user friendly dashboard which puts your audiences or visitors in context. Use it to understand:

- Who is engaged and not engaged from your local population
- Priority audience groups – current or new
- Different and changing audience behaviours

**Who is using it?**

Audience Answers provides a dataset of 20 million UK households engaged with culture as a unique resource for the sector, made up of data from 1,000+ contributing organisations.

# Contact

For more information or to find out how we can help with your place projects and initiatives, please get in touch:

[workwithus@theaudienceagency.org](mailto:workwithus@theaudienceagency.org)

[theaudienceagency.org](http://theaudienceagency.org)