the audience agency

Build back creatively toolkit *(beta)*

Introducing the toolkit

As the UK emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and looks to the future, it's clear that Britain's genuinely world-beating creative industries can play a vital role both in rebuilding the country's economy and helping communities emerge from successive lockdowns.

For councils, structuring their rebuilding strategies around the creative industries will enable them to effectively address three important and interconnected goals:

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

Many of the creative industries have been hit especially hard by lockdown and the ill-effects will last longer than for other sectors of the economy. Before the pandemic, the creative industries were one of the fastest growing sectors, contributing £115.9 billion to the UK economy in 2019.

But, crucially, the creative economies can help breathe new life into our local communities, helping councils address the long-term decline of town and city centres which has been accelerated by the pandemic. The output of vibrant creative industries will also create a focus for people to rally around and rebuild the confidence of communities whose rhythm has been disrupted by multiple lockdowns.

A vibrant local creative economy is exactly the hotbed of creativity and innovation that can help councils to take on the challenges of a post-COVID-19 world, generating jobs and investment in local economies, and revitalising the confidence of their communities.

What the toolkit is trying to achieve

This toolkit is based in part on the Creative Places - Supporting Your Local Creative Economy guidance launched in August 2020 created by The Audience Agency's Innovation Unit for the Local Government Association. 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.

It's a beta – and we would be grateful for your feedback as you use it. Please email toolkitfeedback@theaudienceagency.org

Using this toolkit will help you:

1. Know what's happening in your area
2. Design a programme of support
3. Set goals
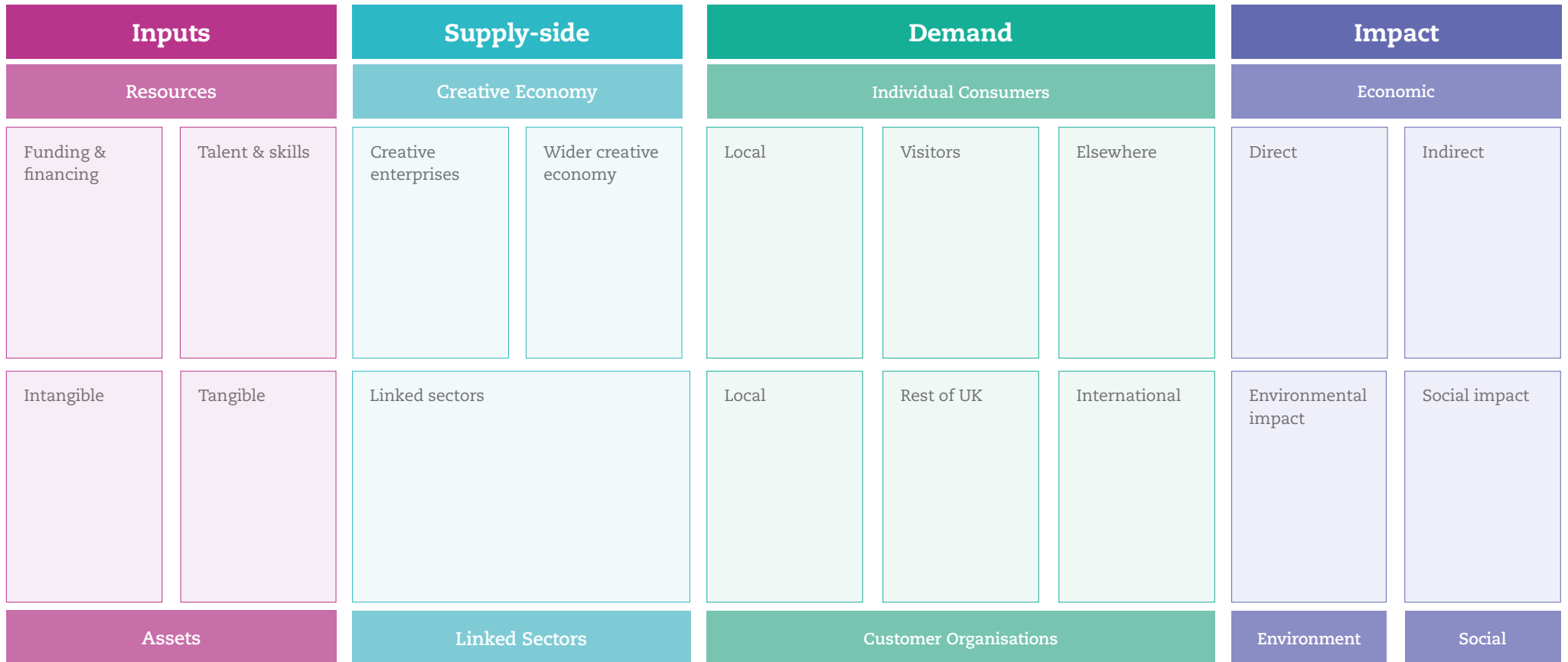4. Harness local levers for change

This toolkit provides a four-stage process to help you structure a programme of support for the creative economy in your area. You can use some or all of it as best meets your needs.

1. Know what's happening in your area

Every part of the UK is different, so the creative economy will take different forms in different places. If you are to work successfully with the creative industries in your area then you need to start by establishing what your area's strengths are so you can target your interventions in the right way. To do that, you need to map your local creative economy.

Fill in the framework below with your own examples, evidence and quantifications. Here are some examples of what you could include in the columns and boxes:

- **Inputs**: includes your **resources** which could be the strength of potential investment from a media producer and **assets** which might be unused heritage buildings.

- **Supply**: means companies within the local **Creative Economy** such as strong local games and immersive media companies while **Linked Sectors** might include a manufacturing sector which needs designers in order to add value.

- **Demand**: will be generated from lots of different sources. Individual consumers could be gamers across the world, or buying products made or distributed from your locality, or audiences or visitors for culture and heritage. Customer organisations could be businesses in the region buying in services from local designers, video makers or marketing agencies.

- **Impacts**: could include direct Gross Value-Added (GVA) growth and indirect tourism employment.

Inputs		Supply-side		Demand			Impact	
Resources		**Creative Economy**		**Individual Consumers**			**Economic**	
Funding & financing	Talent & skills	Creative enterprises	Wider creative economy	Local	Visitors	Elsewhere	Direct	Indirect
Intangible	Tangible	Linked sectors		Local	Rest of UK	International	Environmental impact	Social impact
Assets		**Linked Sectors**		**Customer Organisations**			**Environment**	**Social**

The next step in mapping your local creative economy is to flesh out the details in a table fleshing like the one below.
Populate it with all the information you have, even if there's not much or it's imprecise. You can caveat it or estimate it where necessary.

Subsector	Companies (numbers and examples)	Employees	Freelancers	Turnover
Advertising				
Architecture				
Arts & Culture				
Crafts				
Createch				
Design				
Fashion				
Games				
Music				
TV & film				

How can you do this?

- **Use existing data and other research** from sources including
  - Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre
  - Centre for Cultural Value
  - ONS
  - Sub-sector specific bodies such as Fashion Roundtable
- **Use local collective intelligence** to fill in missing information – reach out to your networks and their networks until you have a better picture.
- **Commission tailored research** to get more accurate and granular data. This needs to be specific to your locality, differentiating between various creative and cultural sub-sectors, including freelancers and micro-businesses, identifying linkages to other sectors. Ideally you will track change over time.
- **Develop future scenarios** for your local creative economy, the wider local societal, economic and policy context and the national and global creative economy. Do this together with leaders from local creative and cultural enterprises and organisations, broader businesses, communities and other relevant stakeholders – the more diverse the group(s) the better.

What about COVID?

There are a number of ways you can find out about the impact of the pandemic on your local creative economy:

- Sources of data - internal and external
  - Universal credit applications
  - Business grants - own or government
- Survey business organisations

2. Set overall goals

Having researched the makeup of your local creative economy and understood the needs of your local creative enterprises, the next stage is setting clear and specific goals and describing how you will achieve them.

To help you to set specific, complementary "goals" or targets for your strategy that will deliver across the board you will need to draw inspiration from a variety of sources.

This will help you to set specific, complementary "goals" or targets for your strategy that will deliver across the board.

- **Programme.** Pick out individual goals from local or regional plans, strategies or policies from local authority(ies), LEP(s), Destination Management Organisations, NHS trusts that your local creative economy can contribute to – these will help securing local political backing and support if not funding from local bodies

- **Local.** Set goals for your local creative economy 'programme' (or initiative or partnership or however you like to describe it) which would represent a significant change and which help with those local or regional priorities – this helps determine the shape and focus of your programme as well as the investment case for a range of funders

- **National.** See how your programme goals and local/regional priorities can combine to deliver to national priorities – as well as potentially persuaded local and regional bodies to support and perhaps fund you themselves, this can create opportunities for you to work with them to bid for central government funding together

A reminder to make your goals SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-limited. Even if other people's aren't.

3. Design a programme of support

Set a structure

To be effective, the support you offer your creative economy will need to be structured so that it fits the needs of your local creative enterprises. The following framework describes the whole project. It has two layers of 'underpinning', on top of this sit some 'pillars' all of which support the 'roof' - your programme goals.

Overarching

- The programme goals are what enables you to understand if you are making a change and delivering outcomes that you can use to demonstrate success to the people you represent.

Pillars

- To meet your programme goals you will need to design some work programmes or activity strands. You will need to design these so that they are relevant to your local area, the worked example below is there to provide an inspiration.

- One work stream that will be constant across all programmes is leadership, convening and governance. A council can provide a layer of strategic organisation that sets direction, connects disparate agendas, stakeholders and activities – and is responsible and accountable in the way this power is exercised.

Underpinning/foundational

- Programme and project management – a council is well placed to bring its organisational skills to the programme so that it can keep things on track, manage finance, partnerships and other resources, provide reporting, and support the leadership and governance function.

- Evidence and research – a council can also take the lead in gathering vital data such as evidence of demand, feedback from local suppliers, population data, benchmarks as well as commissioning new research as necessary, building the cases for investment and other interventions such as public consultation, advocacy for the sector and for residents as well as public evaluations of similar projects.

Programme Goals

1. Creative communities
2. Creative skills and talent
3. Creative enterprise
4. Creative infrastructure
5. Creative places and spaces
6. Creative leadership & governance

Programme & project management

Evidence and Research

Establishing your Pillars

A good plan will show clearly how activities will deliver your goals.
It will help you to plan and communicate if you group activities into
a manageable number of themes - or as we call them here 'pillars' –
relevant to your particular aims, assets and circumstances.

Throughout the Toolkit we use the six example pillars you see in the model.
Yours may well be different. When defining your themes, ask:

- What are the coherent areas of activity, knowledge or expertise we want
  to work with?
- Which goal/s are we trying to achieve through these activities?

Once you have some ideas, make sure your themes:

- Are specific, describable and will make sense to others
- Will likely attract a caucus of those able and willing to make things happen
- Can be 'owned' by a one or two individuals/organisations.

- **Creative communities** – participation and involvement, personal creativity, cultural democracy, identity and community cohesion, culture and creativity for wellness.

- **Creative skills & talent** – creative, technical, management and leadership skills – attracting, retaining and developing a skilled and diverse talent base.

- **Creative enterprise** – support and advice, access to finance and funding, incubation and acceleration of early-stage enterprises, innovation and knowledge transfer.

- **Creative places and spaces** – high streets, public realm, natural heritage and the environment, tourism and destination management including place branding.

- **Creative infrastructure** – workspaces, hubs and networks; digital and 'smart cities' infrastructure including broadband connectivity to creative businesses and cultural organisations.

- **Creative leadership & governance** – can take a number of forms including creative cultural compacts, partnerships or consortia, culture or leisure trusts, guilds, creative economy boards or working groups, memorandums of understanding, consultation and or other stakeholder engagement. Potential partners include cultural and creative organisations or their representative bodies, other councils, LEPs, education providers, the NHS bodies & community representatives or voluntary organisations.

For each of the core pillars or themes you have identified, you will need to map them to the priorities of the wider policy frameworks you are operating within and ensure they support the programme goals you set earlier

Pillars/themes	Your Programme goals	Local/regional priorities	National priorities
Creative communities	— — →	— — →	— — →
Creative skills & talent	— — →	— — →	— — →
Creative enterprise	— — →	— — →	— — →
Creative places and spaces	— — →	— — →	— — →
Creative infrastructure	— — →	— — →	— — →
Creative leadership & governance	— — →	— — →	— — →

Make sure your programme goals have a line that runs through the columns to the right so they connect to goals at a local/regional level and then at a national level. So, for example:

Creative skills & talent	[xx] people aged 18-25 from [locations] engage in work-based training in local creative businesses by 2024	Local creative businesses recruit [x%] of new talent from area Employment in area in higher value occupations [define] increases by [x]	Creative workforce is more inclusive and diverse [against current socio-economic or BAME baseline]

Who's involved

You will need to work out who needs to be involved in each of the pillars or themes.

The success of your programmes will be determined by the strength of commitment and level of involvement you create. It's all about involving the right people and enthusing them, so involve as many as you can, be clear about what role they can play and what difference they will make.

Pillars/themes	Lead body(ies)/people	Other decision makers	Delivery partners	Key participants, volunteers, beneficiaries
Creative communities				
Creative skills & talent				
Creative enterprise				
Creative places and spaces				
Creative infrastructure				
Creative leadership & governance				

Start with what you've got

Use the assets and resources available to you locally. Use the strength of your vision and communicate the difference you want to make clearly in terms of each of your pillars or themes.

An 'asset' can be both tangible such as buildings or digital infrastructure or intangible such as a brand, while a resource is a human asset, be it people or existing training courses.

Pillars/themes	Available		Need from others	
	Assets	Resources	Assets	Resources
Creative communities				
Creative skills & talent				
Creative enterprise				
Creative places and spaces				
Creative infrastructure				
Creative leadership & governance				

But also work with the end in mind. In other words, activity has to be directed towards the purposes you – and others – have set for it.

Describe the key activities in each pillar, define the outputs and deliverables that will be achieved, identify any additional capacity, assets or resources that will be required, finally ensure these follow through to delivering the goals you previously identified.

Pillars/themes	Activities	Outputs/deliverables	Additional capacity, assets or resources	Desired Goals
Creative communities				
Creative skills & talent				
Creative enterprise				
Creative places and spaces				
Creative infrastructure				
Creative leadership & governance				

Worked Example: This demonstrates how the activities you design will deliver outputs or deliverables. These identify the additional capacity, assets or resources that are required to deliver the desired goals.

The example also demonstrates how the may not flow in straight lines though – because you may see activities in different strands combining to contribute to a broader output:

Pillars/themes	Activities	Outputs/deliverables	Additional capacity, assets or resources	Resulting benefits
Creative communities	Careers advice socio-economically disadvantaged areas by creative entrepreneurs	More apprenticeships from those groups		
Creative skills & talent	Leadership development for young creatives	More business start-ups	Broader and more diverse set of creative leaders	
Creative enterprise	Access to finance support for start-ups	More start-ups financed	Greater connections between community, businesses & investors	More business start-ups by those underrepresented in local creative enterprise grow and thrive
Creative places and spaces				
Creative infrastructure	Fashion creative workspaces			
Creative leadership & governance				

4. Using your local powers to drive change

As with many policy areas, a council is not directly 'in charge' of its local creative economy but there are lots of things you can do to influence the direction of the sector.
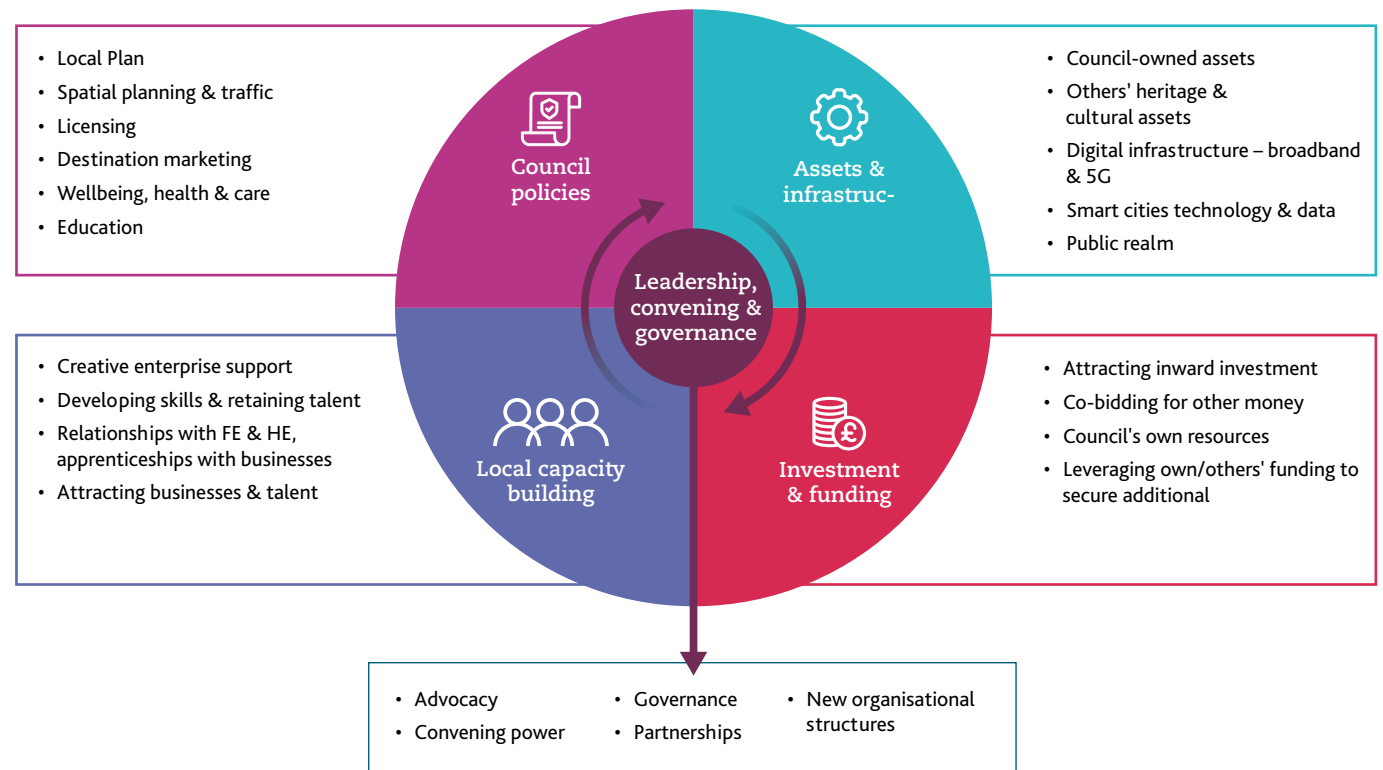
How to deploy council policies and assets to drive change

- Using council **key policies and strategies**, you can ensure the range of council services and funding can be attuned to support the creative sector.

- Local **assets and infrastructure** can be leveraged to create local environments conducive for attracting more creative enterprises.

- Councils are uniquely placed to accelerate **local capacity building**.

- There are also ways that councils can help **attract investment and funding** into the sector.

Your work across these four themes needs to be creatively managed and/or directed using all the methods available to you. These are grouped under leadership, convening and governance.

Mapping your local levers

Your policies and assets can be used as local levers for change

- Local Plan
- Spatial planning & traffic
- Licensing
- Destination marketing
- Wellbeing, health & care
- Education

Council policies

- Council-owned assets
- Others' heritage & cultural assets
- Digital infrastructure – broadband & 5G
- Smart cities technology & data
- Public realm

Assets & infrastruc-

Leadership, convening & governance

- Creative enterprise support
- Developing skills & retaining talent
- Relationships with FE & HE, apprenticeships with businesses
- Attracting businesses & talent

Local capacity building

- Attracting inward investment
- Co-bidding for other money
- Council's own resources
- Leveraging own/others' funding to secure additional

Investment & funding

- Advocacy
- Convening power
- Governance
- Partnerships
- New organisational structures

5. An overview of the policies, assets and approaches you can use

The model above gives a palette of approaches that can be used by councils to design the programme of support described in section two.

In the centre of the model is the council's role as a leader and enabler in its local economy, there are many different approaches the council can do to support that approach.

To meet your goals in supporting your local creative economy, there are a range of things drawn from both a council's statutory powers and its discretionary powers that can be used. How and what you do will depend on factors relevant to your council and your local economy.

We have grouped these into four main themes:

- Council policies
- Local capacity building
- Assets and infrastructure
- Investment and planning

You will need to work out which policies, assets and approaches will work best to create the interventions that will work best for you.

Council Policies

Your council will have policies and strategies covering lots of different areas. There are two ways of quickly and easily using these to support your local creative economy:

- Working out how your creative enterprises in your local area can help you deliver these policies and strategies
- Conversely establishing if these policies can be used to benefit local creative enterprises

These strategies could include

- **Local Industrial strategy** – derived from the UK Industrial Strategy, Combined Authorities and LEPs are required to set out how they can increase productivity and deliver inclusive growth. They should help identify local strengths and how to improve them.
- **Cultural strategy** - an effective cultural strategy, combined with strategic partnerships can deliver social and economic outcomes in your area. It helps secure funding, such as from Arts Council England because councils can demonstrate a strategic commitment to culture.
- **Planning & Licensing** – your planning policies can be used to support your local creative economy especially when considered alongside new approaches in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) such as the 'Agent of Change'. Similarly, imaginative uses of licensing legislation can be used to enable, manage and promote the creative economy rather than restricting it.
- **Public Health, Wellbeing and Social Care** – Your local creative industries can help councils delivers some of their objectives covered by public health, wellbeing and social care strategies. The arts make a powerful contribution to health and wellbeing and people who are exposed to creative projects live healthier lives and make fewer demands on health services.
- **Education** – While the national curriculum continues to prioritise STEM subjects, local councils have an important role in ensuring that schools, colleges and universities train young people with the necessary creative skills to ensure that your local creative economy thrives.
- **Regeneration and your local plan** – every council has to produce a Local Plan, which sets the long-term strategy for the development of the place the council represents. Councils should consider the sector's needs when drawing up or amending its local plan.

Local Capacity Building

Creative enterprises and freelancers struggle to ensure they have the capacity to grow their businesses. Councils can support their creative economy by creating programmes that help address these issues

Business Support – Creative people are usually highly skilled at their particular specialisation, but that doesn't mean that they have well-developed skills necessary to running a small business such as accounting, finance, or HR. Councils can help by creating business support programmes which are tailored to their needs – which will be different to schemes aimed at people in other sectors.

Developing skills & retaining talent – Because it is largely made up of SMEs and freelancers, the creative sector struggles to train existing staff and recruiting new suitably skilled workers this in turn means that the sector lacks diversity across a range of people with protected characteristics. Councils can help create training opportunities that address this problem.

Attracting businesses and talent – Councils can help create the physical and professional infrastructure that the creative economy needs, either by attracting a large organisation that will bring in other smaller organisations in its wake or by commissioning their own creative events or supporting community initiatives.

Assets & infrastructure

There is a lot that councils can do to support economic development and regeneration by using the creative and cultural properties they own or control. Thses are major strategic assets for councils. But the creative sector is often a victim of its own success as they contribute to the increased desirability of an area they often end up being priced out of it. There are lots of ways a council can help mitigate these issues.

Council assets – As well as museums, libraries, theatres, cinemas and studios, which are traditionally associated with culture and creativity, councils also need to consider emerging needs such as affordable and flexible co-working spaces for SMEs, sole traders and freelancers, approaches can involve flexible use of council buildings or structured programmes to help with rent or rates.

Others' assets – councils can use their relationships with local property developers, landlords and heritage bodies to ensure they consider the needs of the creative industries. Often the creative industries will help asset owners – either by making productive uses of 'meanwhile spaces' or by making business or housing developments more attractive.

Public realm – with their leading role in placemaking, creating places that are prosperous and welcoming to the benefit of both businesses and residents, councils have a significant role in creating an environment that supports their local creative economy and which improves the places where residents live.

Digital infrastructure & data – the creative industries thrive on good connectivity, and there are many ways that councils can work with digital infrastructure providers to speed up the rollout of fixed-line and mobile broadband.

Investment & funding

The creative industries deliver lots of different types of returns, both economic and social and therefore create compelling investment cases. But creative enterprises will often need help in bidding for investment and councils can help.

Using council budgets – despite the pressure on council budgets they remain the biggest funder of arts and culture in the England. However as well as funding creative of cultural organisations to get off the ground, or for one-off events, some will need ongoing funding.

Co-bidding for other money – Often the funding available to the creative sector is available via grants, loans or awards which are allocated on a competitive basis. As the turnaround time is tight and the bid process demanding councils may need to help enterprises and freelancers in their local creative economy with their bids.

New funding models – Many creative enterprises are not used to borrowing money so demand for repayable finance and the associated appetite for risk is limited. Councils could think about new types of loan-based investments such as Corporate Social Venture Funds (CSVs).

Inward investment – council teams that work on persuading industry to invest in their areas should recognise the demands of the local creative economy if they are to attract inward investment in the creative sector.

Leadership, convening & governance

Councils have the unique ability to provide local leadership and bring together key local stakeholders. Co-ordinating local approaches has multiple benefits for your local economy.

Advocacy – Councils can ensure that it enables the creative industries to both articulate its needs in all the relevant local forums, but also provide platforms to enable local communities communicate their needs, passions and demands.

Convening power – councils have an important role in creating forums for the creative industries to network and support each other and to work with other sectors.

Engagement & consultation – the creative industries may need help from the council in ensuring that they are able to engage with and consult on new schemes with local residents, conversely, the creative industries can help councils develop new and innovative approaches to consultation.

New organisational structures – there are lots of emerging models of councils setting up different types of bodies to develop and enhance their creative sector. Such bodies include creative compacts, cultural trusts or other forms of partnership.

Political leadership – as with everything else a council does, support for your local creative economy requires political support – from the leader, the executive and from backbench councillors.

Working with the council – councils can be notoriously impenetrable organisations and it may be hard for creative organisations to work out how to talk to. Make it easy for them!

6. Worked examples at a glance

Our guidance for the LGA included a series of case studies describing pioneering work carried by local councils in support of their local creative economies. We have taken three of them and used them as examples of high-level mapping of the local creative economy multiple benefits.

The examples illustrate:

- The 'inputs' used by these councils to intervene in support of their local creative economy expressed in terms of resources and assets.

- The 'supply-side' mix of businesses, organisations and freelancers that make up the foundations of a local creative economy strategy.

We have not modelled the 'demand' and 'impact' section of the framework as this will evolve over time. When you are carrying out the modelling it will help to have estimates up front as a baseline against which to measure change.

Example 1 – Cornwall

Inputs				Supply-side		
Resources		Assets		Creative economy		Linked sectors
Funding & financing	Talent & skills	Intangible	Tangible	Creative enterprises	Wider creative economy	
• EU ERDF and ESF • Cornwall Council • Arts Council England • National Lottery Heritage Fund	• Visual Arts & Makers • Falmouth University • Cornwall College	• Cornish Language (inc designation) • Customs & traditions – myths • Associated literature • AONBs • UNESCO World Heritage designation	• Mining land & buildings • Coasts & rivers • Visitor attractions • Science heritage (Goonhilly etc)	• Film & TV • Games • Createch • Design • Crafts • Arts & culture • Heritage	• Design and video communications for other sectors	• Tourism • Hospitality • Agriculture Education • Sport

Council powers used

Local Industrial Strategy

Public Health, Wellbeing & Social Care

Education

Regeneration & your Local Plan

Business Support

Developing Skills & Retaining Talent

Attracting Businesses and Talent

Co-Bidding for Grants

New Funding Models

Inward Investment

Convening Power

New Organisational Structures

Political Leadership

Digital - Infrastructure and Data

Example 2 – Sunderland

Inputs				Supply-side		
Resources		Assets		Creative economy		Linked sectors
Funding & financing	Talent & skills	Intangible	Tangible	Creative enterprises	Wider creative economy	
• £5m in grants raised from various sources	• Sunderland University • Business and sector-led training providers • Community training providers	• Culture of creativity and independence • Pioneering spirit • Local creatives – music & visual arts • UK City of Culture bid • Existing networks and business organisation	• Buildings, including city centre offices and retail and redundant churches • Former shipyards • Existing creative and cultural venues	• Crafts • Design (product, graphic, fashion) • IT, software and computer services • Museums, galleries and libraries • Music, performing and visual arts • Heritage	• Design and R&D in manufacturing and other sectors	• Higher education • Manufacturing • Tourism • Hospitality

Council powers used

Local Industrial Strategy

Public Health, Wellbeing & Social Care

Regeneration & your Local Plan

Business Support

Developing Skills & Retaining Talent

Attracting Businesses and Talent

Council Assets

Others' Assets

Public Realm

Inward Investment

Convening Power

New Organisational Structures

Political Leadership

Example 3 – Leamington Spa

Inputs				Supply-side		
Resources		Assets		Creative economy		Linked sectors
Funding & financing	Talent & skills	Intangible	Tangible	Creative enterprises	Wider creative economy	
• Some council funds • Attracted 'Future High Street' funds	• Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) • BID Leamington • Several cultural and creative organisations • University of Warwick	• Council plans for a 'Creative Quarter' • Masterplan – The Big Picture • Other council priorities	• Council buildings in the 'Old Town' • Buildings owned by other companies • Long-established cultural organisations	• 50 leading games companies employing 2,500 people	• Design and digital in other businesses such as Aston Martin, Jaguar Land Rover, Calor Gas, Aga Rangemaster	• Higher Education • Manufacturing • Tourism

Council powers used

Local Industrial Strategy

Planning

Regeneration & your Local Plan

Attracting Businesses and Talent

Council Assets

Others' Assets

Using Council Budgets

Inward Investment

Convening Power

Engagement and Consultation

New Organisational Structures

Public Realm

Conclusion

Your creative economy is a vital part of the ecosystem that make up the cultural, creative and economic life of your area. It has a vital role to play in economic regeneration, in general and from COVID-19. Councils are very well placed to guide and shape these efforts.

This toolkit gives an overview of how you might approach this. Further information is available in the Creative Places - Supporting Your Local Creative Economy published by the LGA.

The Audience Agency will shortly be publishing a further guide containing case studies of successful projects and run by councils which have had positive outcomes.

This toolkit is in beta – please email us at toolkitfeedback@theaudienceagency.org with your thoughts about how we can improve it. Do also let us know if it's been useful for you.

Want to know more?

People come to us with hard challenges. Sometimes we help our clients define the problem before we can help them start solving it! We can bring our long experience working with the creative industries and in local government to help you in many different ways:

How we can help

- Creative economy mapping and research
- Strategic partnership development
- Creative, digital and cultural strategies
- Funding proposals and business cases
- Multi-stakeholder project evaluation

Contact Details

Please get in touch so that we can work out how to help you:

Email places@theaudienceagency.org

Or check out what else we do at our website:
www.theaudienceagency.org/places