

Bringing Worlds Together:
A Creative Business Support Ecosystem for North Devon



The Bridge

The Bridge is the gateway to knowledge exchange, research collaboration, and business innovation within the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Business at the University of Plymouth. By connecting people, ideas, and opportunities, The Bridge fosters transformative partnerships between academia, industry, and the wider community - driving cultural, economic, and social impact.

At the heart of The Bridge's mission is a commitment to creative placemaking, supporting businesses, policymakers, and practitioners to develop sustainable, resilient creative economies. Through strategic programmes, research-informed interventions, and cross-sector partnerships, The Bridge empowers individuals and organisations to thrive.

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Flourishing Barnstaple

A North Devon Council initiative, Flourishing Barnstaple is supported by the Cultural Development Fund, administered by Arts Council England on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. The programme revitalises Barnstaple by supporting, developing, and promoting cultural activity in the town.

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	Executive Summary	5
1.	Introduction	8
1.1	Aims & Objectives	10
1.2	Work Undertaken	10
1.3	Project Timeline	12
2.	North Devon’s Creative Economy	14
2.1	Emerging Trends & Inspirations	16
2.2	Key Sectors & Assets	16
2.3	Key Arts & Cultural Organisations	17
2.4	Heritage & Museums	17
2.5	Creative Industries & Employment	18
2.6	Nature & Environment	18
2.7	Challenges & Barriers	20
2.8	Education & Skills	20
2.9	Community & Wellbeing	22
2.10	Economic & Social Context	23
2.11	Funding & Investment	24
3.	SWOT	26
4.	Key Findings & Insights	28
4.1	Barriers & Opportunities	30
4.2	Business Support Priorities	32
5.	Strategic Recommendations	34
5.1	Coordination, Visibility & Accessibility of Support	36
5.2	The Training & Business Support Offer	38
5.3	Activating Creative Spaces	40
5.4	Creative Community - Networking & Peer Support	42
5.5	Strategic Positioning & Governance	44
5.6	Communications & Messaging	46
	Conclusions & Next Steps	48
	Annexes	
A.	Full SWOT	50
B.	Case Studies	52

The North Devon Cultural Development Fund (CDF3) programme is a catalyst for unlocking the region’s creative economy.

With new creative spaces launching, immediate strategic action is needed to maximise their impact and build a resilient, interconnected sector.

This report sets out a clear roadmap for sustainable growth, drawing on extensive stakeholder engagement, research, and analysis.

The Opportunity for North Devon’s Creative Economy

North Devon’s creative sector is thriving but constrained. Without urgent action to strengthen infrastructure and connectivity, many creative businesses will struggle to grow, limiting their contribution to the region’s economic resilience.

The timing is critical. Key investments in creative spaces are coming online, but without immediate activation strategies, their potential will be underutilised. While grassroots networks like Art Makers provide valuable peer support, the missing piece is structured, sector-wide coordination to link creatives with funding, business support, and decision-making.

Key Areas for Intervention

- 1. Creative business support is fragmented.** A lack of coordinated funding, training, and networking opportunities makes it difficult for creatives to access the support they need.
- 2. Financial resilience remains a challenge.** Many creative practitioners lack confidence in long-term financial planning, pricing, and funding strategies, leading to over-reliance on short-term grants.
- 3. Creative spaces are being invested in, but activation is urgent.** With several spaces set to launch imminently, ensuring their structured activation and integration with business support is essential for their long-term sustainability.
- 4. Networking and collaboration opportunities exist but lack coordination.** Grassroots models are working well, but broader sector-wide connectivity, mentoring, and peer-learning structures need strengthening.
- 5. Creative strategy and policy need stronger alignment.** The issue isn’t just embedding creativity into regional strategies, but ensuring direct and ongoing representation of the creative sector in economic planning and investment decisions.

Strategic Recommendations & Expected Impact

Challenge	Recommendation	Impact
1 Coordination, Visibility & Accessibility of Support	Develop a central resource hub and creative directory to consolidate business support, funding, and networking opportunities.	Improved visibility and coordination, making business support more accessible and actionable.
2 The Training & Business Support Offer	Deliver funding literacy workshops, structured mentoring, and introduce alternative finance models (e.g. match-funding, crowdfunding, cooperative investment).	Enhanced financial confidence and sustainability, reducing dependency on short-term grants.
3 Activating Creative Spaces	Implement immediate activation strategies to ensure new and existing creative spaces are fully utilised as business enablers. Link spaces with business support, affordable access models, and cross-sector collaboration.	Maximised investment impact, increased space utilisation, and stronger creative sector engagement.
4 Creative Community - Networking & Peer Support	Strengthen sector-wide networks while recognising the success of grassroots models. Establish a North Devon Creative Network with structured mentoring and knowledge exchange opportunities.	Strengthened peer learning, increased collaboration, and improved sector resilience.
5 Strategic Positioning & Governance	Embed creativity into regional economic strategy, but crucially, improve direct representation of the creative sector in policy and investment decisions.	Improved policy impact, increased funding opportunities, and better sector advocacy.
6 Communications & Messaging	Develop a central communications hub, strengthen messaging on the economic value of creativity, and support creatives in self-promotion and audience engagement.	Increased sector visibility, stronger advocacy, and higher engagement with business support.

A Framework for Action

The recommendations in this report provide a structured and phased approach to supporting North Devon's creative economy. By implementing these strategies, North Devon can:

- Improve sector coordination and visibility.
- Foster financial resilience and sustainable business models.
- Maximise the potential of creative spaces as economic and cultural drivers.
- Strengthen networks and peer-led learning opportunities.
- Ensure ongoing creative sector representation in policy and investment decisions.

By taking decisive action now, North Devon can position its creative industries as a national leader in innovation, resilience, and sustainable economic growth.

Introduction

The North Devon Cultural Development Fund (CDF3) is a game-changer for the area's creative sector. Designed to catalyse innovation, collaboration, and long-term growth, it provides targeted business support while strengthening the cultural industries that define North Devon's identity.

As a key delivery partner, The Bridge works closely with North Devon Council, the Barnstaple Town Team for Culture (TTFC), and other stakeholders to design and implement targeted business support and knowledge exchange. Drawing on national best-practice models, The Bridge ensures that interventions are locally responsive while being strategically aligned with long-term sector growth.

Drawing on expertise from large-scale innovation programmes - including iMayflower, Cultivator, and the South West Creative Technology Network (SWCTN) - this initiative ensures that interventions are based on proven strategies while being adapted to North Devon's unique creative landscape. The University also plays a crucial role in developing systems and processes for tracking and evidencing impact, ensuring that CDF3's legacy extends beyond its initial funding cycle. Throughout, the focus remains on **local ownership**, designing support mechanisms that align with the aspirations of North Devon's creative community.

1.1 Aims & Objectives

The University of Plymouth's work within the CDF3 programme is guided by three core objectives:

Co-design and deliver a tailored business support and knowledge exchange programme.

Working closely with TTFC and sector stakeholders, the University helps develop a programme that provides practical, responsive business support aligned with local industry needs.

Create a long-term roadmap for North Devon's creative economy.

Beyond immediate support, the programme lays the foundation for sustainable growth, ensuring that North Devon's creative sector remains resilient, well-connected, and strategically positioned.

Leverage expertise from national best-practice programmes.

Building on insights from iMayflower, Cultivator, and SWCTN, the initiative integrates proven business support models into North Devon's specific cultural and economic context.

1.2 Work Undertaken

As of February 2025, the project has progressed through two key phases: the Discovery Phase, which focused on research, stakeholder engagement, and mapping the sector's needs, and the Recommendations Phase, which translated findings into actionable strategies for long-term impact.

Discovery

Building on the Discovery Phase, this phase focused on defining practical business support interventions and long-term strategies to strengthen North Devon's creative economy:

- **Developing targeted business support initiatives**, tailored to the sector's specific needs.
- **Designing a knowledge exchange programme** to facilitate peer learning, mentoring, and cross-sector collaboration.
- **Setting out a long-term strategy** to ensure the sustainability and continued development of North Devon's creative sector beyond the CDF3 programme.

- The success of recommendations depends on strategic alignment, continued investment, and strong local partnerships.
- While some actions require additional funding, others can be implemented using existing resources more effectively.
- Policymakers and practitioners must be actively engaged to drive lasting impact.

Recommendations

This phase established a clear picture of North Devon's creative economy, identifying both opportunities and structural barriers to growth:

- **Engaged stakeholders** through workshops and consultation sessions, gathering first-hand insights from creative practitioners, businesses, and policymakers.
- **Conducted a sector-wide mapping** exercise to assess distribution, strengths, and gaps in creative business support.
- **Undertook a SWOT analysis**, identifying sector resilience, challenges, and opportunities for intervention.
- **Analysed case studies** from successful creative economies to apply best-practice models to North Devon's unique context.

- While engagement was strong, some creative sub-sectors remain underrepresented in available data.
- Future research should prioritise outreach to these groups for a more comprehensive sector-wide understanding.
- The diversity of experiences highlights the need for tailored, flexible support strategies that accommodate different business models and creative practices.

1.3 Project Timeline

From August 2024 to February 2025, the project followed a structured, phased approach, ensuring each stage built on real-time insights from stakeholders.

This process shaped targeted business support interventions and long-term strategic recommendations, designed for maximum impact.

August - September 2024

• **Discovery Phase:** Stakeholder engagement, research, and mapping of North Devon's creative economy. SWOT analysis conducted to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

October - November 2024

• **Research & Consultation:** Online survey launched to gather sector-wide insights. Interviews conducted with key stakeholders to deepen understanding of challenges and opportunities.

December - February 2025

• **Co-design & Sensemaking:** A workshop was held to test key insights and explore sector tensions, ensuring recommendations were grounded in real-world challenges. The design of the business support programme was finalised, including targeted interventions, workshops, and networking opportunities.

• **Final Recommendations & Legacy Planning:** Findings were synthesised into a final report. Long-term sustainability considerations were explored, including strategic alignment and funding mechanisms.

Throughout the project, the University of Plymouth has worked closely with North Devon Council and key sector stakeholders to ensure activities remain aligned with the programme's objectives. Regular feedback loops have ensured that insights from each phase directly inform the next, maximising the programme's impact and long-term viability.



North Devon's Creative Economy

A photograph of three people in a blacksmith shop. A woman on the left is smiling and holding a long metal rod. A woman in the center, wearing glasses and a black t-shirt, is also smiling and holding the rod. A man on the right, wearing safety glasses and a blue t-shirt, is looking down at the rod. They are standing in front of two large, bright fires in a furnace. The background shows various tools and equipment in a workshop setting.

The North Devon and Torridge Economic Strategy recognises the potential of the creative industries sector in the area. Highlighting it as one of 5 key clusters, that when supported to grow, will transform the North Devon and Torridge economies. Investing in a dynamic range of buildings and spaces that will provide better, more connected workspaces whilst bringing more visibility to creative industries in the heart of our towns and communities will be the key to the growth of our creative sectors.

North Devon's wider creative economy spans a diverse mix of sectors, venues, and cultural assets, contributing to employment, economic output, and community wellbeing. While underrepresented compared to Devon and national averages, the region's deep-rooted connection between arts, heritage, and environmental assets presents untapped potential for growth and development. Strengthening these connections can position North Devon as a hub for cultural and economic regeneration, leveraging creative industries as a driver for wider place-based development.

However, creative businesses and practitioners face challenges in sustaining viable careers, accessing funding, and securing long-term opportunities for growth. Many operate as sole traders or microbusinesses, often without the structured support that larger creative clusters benefit from. While the region has a strong grassroots creative scene, fragmentation across networks and support mechanisms means that many practitioners struggle to connect with the opportunities, investment, and infrastructure needed to thrive.

2.1 Emerging Trends & Inspirations

National and regional best-practice models show that strategic investment in creative industries fuels economic resilience and place-based transformation. Successful examples like Real Ideas (Plymouth), Onion Collective (Somerset), and LCB Depot (Leicester) demonstrate how integrated creative hubs, sector-led training, and digital innovation can drive sustainable growth. These models prove that when supported effectively, creative industries become major economic contributors and community anchors.

North Devon already has a strong creative base, with **41% of residents actively participating in cultural activities** - significantly above the national average of **34.67%**. However, underinvestment and fragmented support have limited sector growth. By adopting proven strategies - harnessing digital platforms, strengthening creative hubs, and expanding networks - North Devon can unlock its full creative and economic potential.

2.2 Key Sectors & Assets

North Devon's creative economy is shaped by a diverse mix of cultural assets, community-led hubs, and heritage sites, each playing a key role in the region's economic and cultural vibrancy.

Cultural Festivals

Events like the **Pilton Green Man Festival** and **Clovelly Herring Festival** blend tradition with contemporary arts, attracting visitors while preserving local heritage. These festivals feature craft workshops, live performances, and sustainability initiatives, reinforcing their role in cultural tourism.

Community Hubs

St Anne's Arts Centre and the **Barnstaple Pannier Market** provide essential space for artistic collaboration, local enterprise, and public engagement. These hubs support creative practitioners through accessible infrastructure and networking opportunities.

Cultural Revitalisation Projects

Historic spaces such as Barnstaple's **Pannier Market**, **Guildhall**, and **Butchers Row** are being reimaged as vibrant creative and commercial hubs, preserving architectural heritage while driving economic growth. CDF has enabled investment in **Boutport Street** and **Bridge Chambers**.

North Devon UNESCO Biosphere

This designation bridges environmental and creative industries, fostering projects such as public art installations along the Tarka Trail and sustainability-focused collaborations with **Beaford Arts**. These initiatives highlight the intersection of arts, environment, and community cohesion.

2.3 Key Arts & Cultural Organisations

North Devon's cultural sector is shaped by a network of organisations spanning visual arts, theatre, music, film, and community-led initiatives.

These organisations play a vital role in creative production, public engagement, and sector development. Though not an exhaustive list, some of the organisations researched as part of this study include:

Hubs, Networks & Studios	Visual & Performing Arts	Festivals & Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ArtMakers• Beaford Arts• The Appledore Crafts Company• Plough @ St Anne's• StudioKIND• Pannier Market• Libraries Unlimited	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi Story Theatre Company• Red Herring• North Devon Music Academy• Verri Media• Blackbeam Cinematic• Landmark Theatre• Queens Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Fringe Theatre Fest• Barnstaple Carnival• Pilton Green Man• Clovelly Herring Festival• Green Space Dark Skies

2.4 Heritage & Museums

North Devon's heritage assets are both cultural landmarks and economic drivers, attracting **96,415 annual visitors** and contributing **£1.45 million** directly to the local economy.

Key Museums

The Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon is an Arts Council National Portfolio organisation. Seven other community museums, including Ilfracombe Museum, safeguard and showcase the region's rich maritime and social history, drawing tourism and educational engagement.

Historic Landmarks

North Devon's **4,500+ listed buildings** and **300+ scheduled ancient monuments** reflect a deep heritage linked to trade, craftsmanship, and seafaring history. Notable sites include **Castle Mound**, the **Long Bridge**, and **Barnstaple's almshouses**.

Economic Impact

Heritage contributes an estimated **£96.6 million annually to North Devon's tourism economy**, underscoring its role as a key asset for cultural and economic regeneration. With strategic investment in heritage-driven creative projects, the region can further unlock **place-based economic growth** and enhance its national profile.

2.5 Creative Industries & Employment

North Devon's creative sector is a key economic driver, generating **£82 million in Gross Value Added (GVA)** across **345 businesses** and employing approximately **1,250 people** (1.81% of total employment).

With targeted investment, the sector's economic contribution could grow to **£115 million** - aligning North Devon's creative industry presence with the Devon sector average. The sector's productivity rate of **£54,910 per worker** highlights its growth potential, but further support is needed to scale business resilience and market reach.

Though not an exhaustive list, some of the organisations researched as part of this study include:

Creative Industry Organisations

- **Roots Creative**
- **OCR Architecture**
- **One Northern Devon**
- **The Maker Series**
- **Barkham Farm**
- **Sister Motion**
- **North Devon Moving Image**
- **Ilfracombe Art & Craft Society**
- **Node**
- **North Devon Arts**
- **Broomhill Estate & Sculpture Garden**
- **Sunrise Diversity Project**

2.6 Nature & Environment

North Devon's natural landscapes are deeply intertwined with its creative identity, providing inspiration for artists and serving as platforms for outdoor exhibitions, performances, and environmental engagement. The region's **coastal, rural, and protected landscapes** contribute to both cultural and ecological sustainability, with creative practitioners playing an increasing role in conservation efforts.

Collaborative initiatives such as those led by **Courage Copse Creatives** highlight the relationship between art, nature, and community, using creativity to explore themes of conservation and sustainability. Public art installations, exhibitions, and cultural events - such as those along the **Tarka Trail** and at **RHS Garden Rosemoor** - reflect North Devon's biodiversity and natural heritage, reinforcing its appeal as a destination for cultural and eco-tourism.

Environmental Culture

80% of visitors are drawn to North Devon for its natural landscape, contributing **£384 million annually to the local economy**. Creative projects linked to natural spaces help sustain this tourism economy.

Sustainable Initiatives

Programmes such as **361 Community Energy**, **North Devon Treescapes**, and **The Resurgence Trust** integrate cultural engagement with environmental action, promoting sustainability through creative interventions.

Creative Responses to Climate Change

Local artists and cultural organisations are engaging with **coastal conservation, biodiversity projects, and environmental education**, demonstrating how creativity supports climate-conscious initiatives.

Key Environmental and Cultural Organisations

North Devon Coast National Landscape

Promotes sustainable use of the region's natural and cultural assets.

North Devon UNESCO Biosphere

Protects the region's incredible landscapes, wildlife, and way of life. Recognised by the United Nations since 1976.

RHS Garden Rosemoor

Hosts environmental exhibitions and nature-inspired artistic programming.

North Devon World Surfing Reserve

Connects conservation, surfing heritage, and creative advocacy.

Quince Honey Farm

Blends biodiversity awareness with immersive cultural experiences.

Carbon Savvy

Encourages sustainable living through environmental campaigns and creative engagement.

Landmarks and Public Spaces with Creative Potential:

The Tarka Trail, River Taw, and Castle Mound

Serve as focal points for outdoor artistic experiences, including installations and storytelling events.

Pilton Park, Castle Green, Castle Quay, and The Strand

Provide spaces for community festivals, creative nature trails, and open-air exhibitions.

Hillsborough, Ilfracombe

Provides an open access area with footpaths and natural scenery for the enjoyment of visitors and is traversed by the South West Coast Path. Part of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve.

2.7 Challenges & Barriers

(Identified from Desk Based Research)

North Devon's creative economy has significant growth potential, but key challenges must be addressed to ensure inclusivity, sustainability, and sector resilience.

Talent Retention & Skills Development

Many young creatives leave the region due to limited career progression opportunities. Expanding mentorship programmes, apprenticeships, and digital skills training will be crucial in retaining local talent and supporting sustainable career pathways.

Digital Divide

Only 36% of artists currently use online sales platforms, limiting their market reach. Digital training, modelled on initiatives like Plymouth's Digital Boost, could help creatives better navigate e-commerce and digital distribution channels.

Access to Space & Infrastructure

A lack of affordable workspaces and exhibition venues restricts creative production and public engagement. Proposed pop-up galleries and flexible creative spaces could provide more opportunities for artists to showcase their work.

Barriers to Participation

Disparities in transport access and affordability create uneven access to cultural activities, particularly in rural and coastal areas. Regional collaboration is essential to breaking down these participation barriers and ensuring creative opportunities are available to all.

A 2024 Barnstaple Perception Survey revealed that **only 1% of visitors participate in cultural activities** during their time in Barnstaple. This highlights an urgent need for targeted interventions that encourage greater engagement, visibility, and integration of cultural activities into the region's wider tourism and economic strategies. Addressing these challenges requires not only investment in infrastructure but also a strong creative workforce equipped with the skills, networks, and entrepreneurial mindset to sustain the sector's growth.

2.8 Education & Skills

Education and skills development are critical to building a sustainable creative economy in North Devon. While institutions like **Petroc College** provide training in digital media, crafts, and performing arts, there is a clear gap in business skills, financial literacy, and industry-specific professional development for creative practitioners.

Some key indicators:

Workforce Readiness

Only **28.5% of North Devon residents hold Level 4+ qualifications**, highlighting a need for expanded higher education and vocational training options to equip the workforce for creative and digital industries.

Young Talent Pipeline

Developing entrepreneurial and creative enterprise skills will be critical to retaining emerging talent within the region and ensuring career sustainability in the creative sector.

With 24% of North Devon's population under 24, there is a significant opportunity to invest in youth-focused initiatives that bridge the gap between education and employment. Programmes like Amplify the Youth Voice are already supporting young people in cultural leadership and decision-making, but greater emphasis on creative enterprise, business sustainability, and commercial skills is needed to equip emerging talent for long-term careers. Priority actions should include:

- **Expanding mentorship schemes and apprenticeships** - providing structured career pathways beyond formal education.
- **Embedding business and financial skills within creative training programmes** - ensuring practitioners understand funding, pricing, and market development.
- **Strengthening digital and entrepreneurial skills development** - helping creatives leverage online platforms and tech-driven opportunities for business growth.

2.9 Community & Wellbeing

North Devon's creative sector plays a critical role in enhancing community cohesion, mental wellbeing, and overall quality of life. Participation in cultural activities generates an estimated £84.8 million in personal wellbeing value, with over 56,566 people engaging in creative activities at least three times a year.

Widening Access to Culture

At least 43 venues host regular arts and heritage events, ensuring that creative engagement remains accessible to residents and visitors alike.

Volunteering & Social Impact

Over 550 museum volunteers contribute £1.79 million in wellbeing value, demonstrating the essential role of cultural participation in social cohesion.

Creative Wellbeing Programmes

Expanding arts-for-health initiatives, intergenerational projects, and socially engaged arts can further embed creativity into North Devon's social fabric, strengthening both individual and collective wellbeing.

By ensuring that cultural participation is inclusive, accessible, and embedded in local communities, North Devon can fully harness the social and economic benefits of a thriving creative sector.



2.10 Economic & Social Context

North Devon's creative economy is a core contributor to regional growth, with **345 businesses employing 1,250 people - 1.81% of total employment**. The sector generates **£82 million in Gross Value Added (GVA)**, with a **productivity rate of £54,910 per worker**.

Growth Potential

If the **sector's employment share aligned with the Devon average (2.54%)**, its economic contribution could expand to £115 million in GVA. This highlights a major opportunity for strategic investment and policy alignment to enhance market reach, business sustainability, and job creation.

Economic Indicators

Median earnings stand at **£29,034**, with North Devon ranking **252 out of 379** in the UK Competitiveness Index.

Employment and Growth

Creative sector employment (1.81%) remains below both the Devon average (2.54%) and the national average (4.57%).

Cultural Identity

94% of residents identify strongly with 'North Devon', reflecting a deep-rooted sense of place and regional identity.

Tourism & Heritage Contribution

'Film tourism' and heritage sites have the potential to **boost the local economy by up to £2.7 million**. Examples include the **Tarka Trail**, which attracts visitors interested in the literary heritage of **Henry Williamson**, and the **Clovelly Herring Festival**, which celebrates regional history and drives tourism revenue.

North Devon's **place-based identity, rich cultural heritage, and unique environmental assets** offer significant opportunities to position the creative sector as a **driver of inclusive economic growth**.

2.11 Funding & Investment

Strategic investment is the catalyst for North Devon's creative sector growth. To sustain infrastructure, drive innovation, and unlock business potential, **a diversified funding approach is essential** - blending **public investment, private sponsorship, and earned revenue**.

- **Key Funding Sources:** Major opportunities exist through Arts Council England, National Lottery and Community & Heritage Funds. However, increased private sector engagement and innovative funding models (e.g. crowdfunding, match-funding, cooperative investment) could enhance long-term sustainability.

Investment Impact:

- **Every £1 invested** in the UK creative industries **generates up to £4 in economic return**.
- For arts charities, **every £1 invested returns £1.34 in additional income**.
- With a targeted funding strategy, North Devon's creative economy could leverage these multipliers, accelerating sector resilience and business sustainability.

Notable case studies:

- **Beaford Arts**, which has leveraged grant funding to expand community outreach programmes.
- **The Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon**, which has used investment to enhance exhibitions and increase visitor numbers.

By aligning investment with strategic sector needs - particularly in skills, infrastructure, and market access - North Devon can position itself as a leader in regional creative industry development.

North Devon's creative economy is vibrant and diverse but faces challenges in infrastructure, funding, and digital readiness. With targeted investment, sustainable funding mechanisms, and coordinated regional strategies, the sector can fully capitalise on its creative assets, strengthening cultural participation, economic output, and community wellbeing - positioning the region as a thriving hub for cultural and economic innovation.



3.0 SWOT Analysis

The business support and knowledge exchange (KE) programme developed for the North Devon CDF3 project was informed by a comprehensive SWOT analysis, developed collaboratively with key North Devon stakeholders including creative practitioners, education providers and members of the Barnstaple Town Team for Culture - Business, Training and Partnerships sub-group. This analysis enabled us to identify the key internal and external factors affecting the programme's design and delivery.

The summary below outlines the high-level themes identified in the SWOT analysis, which reflect both the opportunities and challenges faced by North Devon's creative economy.

A more detailed breakdown of the SWOT analysis can be found in the accompanying appendix.

By building on identified strengths, addressing weaknesses, capitalising on opportunities, and mitigating potential threats, the SWOT analysis has provided a strategic roadmap for the development and delivery of the business support and knowledge exchange (KE) programme. This framework guided our decisions and actions throughout the project and will continue to inform the future development and refinement of the programme, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful for North Devon's creative economy in the years to come.

Strengths

- Strong creative identity within the region, with a high concentration of creative practitioners and small businesses.
- Well-established grassroots and community-driven cultural initiatives, alongside emerging creative hubs and collaboration spaces.
- Integration of culture with natural landscapes, such as the UNESCO Biosphere.
- Strong connections with local educational institutions and recognition by Arts Council England.
- Ongoing development of supportive infrastructure, such as creative spaces and business hubs, to nurture small creative enterprises.

Weaknesses

- Fragmentation within the creative sector, limiting collaboration and collective identity.
- Despite connections with educational providers, there are insufficient higher education and training pathways for the creative industries, resulting in a talent drain.
- Negative perceptions around creative careers as viable pathways for employment.
- Low visibility of the creative sector both locally and regionally, with a lack of awareness of available support services.
- Geographical isolation and poor transport links impacting accessibility and collaboration.
- High cost and scarcity of accommodation, particularly for younger practitioners looking to return to the area.

Opportunities

- Potential to build a stronger unified creative identity for the region and increase visibility through digital platforms and broader promotion.
- Tailored business support to address the specific needs of creative businesses, including entrepreneurial skills.
- Opportunities for cross-sector collaborations (e.g. between creative and manufacturing sectors) to drive innovation.
- Developing pathways to retain young talent through education, apprenticeships, and work placements.
- Potential for global partnerships through the region's UNESCO Biosphere designation, attracting international funding and collaboration for cultural and sustainability projects.
- Using cultural initiatives for town regeneration and community development.
- Repurposing underutilised spaces, such as Green Lane shopping centre, into creative hubs and studios.
- Leveraging digital platforms to expand market reach for local creative products.
- Engaging the private sector through networks like Tech South West's angel investors to attract investment into the creative sector.
- Engaging wealthy local residents to support the creative sector through investment or patronage.

Threats

- Uncertainty around sustainable funding for creative initiatives and complexity of funding processes.
- Ongoing loss of young talent to larger urban centers due to better opportunities elsewhere.
- Over-commercialisation potentially damaging the character of the creative sector.
- Limited transport and infrastructure impeding growth and collaboration.
- Limited market access for high-value local products, with points of sale like Pannier Market attracting more browsers than buyers.
- Risk of fragmented efforts if public, private, and third-sector initiatives are not well-coordinated, limiting the programme's overall impact.
- Competition from better-established creative hubs in nearby cities.
- Broader economic and environmental changes, including climate change, threatening the region's reliance on tourism and overall development.

Key Findings & Insights

4.1 Barriers & Opportunities

Barriers to Growth

Limited awareness & navigation of business support

Many creatives struggle to find and access relevant business support, funding, and networking opportunities, often finding the landscape overwhelming and fragmented.

Geographical challenges & access barriers

Poor transport infrastructure in rural areas limits participation in in-person events. While digital options provide flexibility, they cannot fully replace face-to-face interactions.

Time & resource constraints

Creatives often juggle multiple roles, making it difficult to engage with business support or scale their work.

Perception & confidence gaps

Some creatives do not see themselves as businesspeople, limiting their engagement with support services. "Successful artists need to combine both skills, but it takes time and effort."

Business support needs better signposting & centralisation to improve accessibility.

Hybrid models should balance digital accessibility with in-person networking.

Support must be time-efficient, relevant, and engaging to encourage participation.

Training should reinforce both creative and entrepreneurial mindsets, ensuring that business development feels integrated, not separate, from creative practice.

Aspirations & Opportunities

Stronger demand for mentoring & peer-led support

Creatives prefer learning from their peers, highlighting the need for structured mentoring, collaboration, and knowledge exchange initiatives.

Creative spaces as sector enablers

Affordable, well-managed spaces can support experimentation, networking, and business development, but they must balance creative needs with commercial sustainability.

Sector-tailored business support

Training should be designed around creatives' specific challenges, including practical workshops, hybrid learning models, and accessible resources.

Creative industries as an economic driver

North Devon's creative sector has the potential to retain talent, drive economic diversification, and position itself as a regional creative hub.

Networks should be structured and sustainable to avoid fragmentation.

Creative spaces must balance affordability with long-term financial viability.

Support delivery must align with sector-specific needs and learning styles.

Stronger integration with regional economic strategies is needed to unlock investment and partnerships.

4.2 Business Support Priorities

• Preferred areas for support:

- Access to Funding
- Networking and Collaboration
- Marketing and Promotion

• These areas were consistently prioritised by creatives, reflecting a strong need for financial resilience, professional connections, and audience development.

• Support in these areas must be delivered in a way that is tailored to creative practitioners' needs, ensuring practical application and sector relevance.

• Less-preferred areas for support:

- Exporting / Internationalisation
- Digital Tools and Skills

• Exporting ranked lower in priority but remains a key enabler for long-term sustainability. Business support should focus on introducing exporting in ways that feel accessible and achievable rather than an overwhelming additional challenge.

• Digital skills were deprioritised in survey responses, but further discussions highlighted their importance for marketing, audience development, and creative business resilience. Ensuring these skills are framed as practical tools for business growth may encourage greater uptake.

• Structured collaborations between creatives and tech-savvy individuals can help to bridge digital literacy gaps and showcase practical applications of digital tools beyond just marketing.

• Preferred formats for support:

- Workshops
- Networking Events
- Mentoring

• Hands-on, interactive learning approaches are strongly preferred.

• Networking events are seen as valuable for building connections and exchanging knowledge.

• Structured mentoring can provide long-term sector resilience, fostering peer-to-peer learning and professional growth.

• Less-preferred formats for support:

- Webinars
- Professional Training Qualifications (CPD)

• Hybrid models must balance online accessibility with in-person engagement. Many creatives, particularly older practitioners, experience psychological barriers to digital adoption, so training should highlight how digital tools can free up time for creative practice rather than being an additional burden.

• While CPD-style professional training is useful for some, many creatives prefer practical, applied learning experiences over formal accreditation.

Strategic Recommendations

A photograph of a male musician with tattoos, wearing a red and white floral shirt and jeans, playing an acoustic guitar on a stage. He is positioned in front of a microphone stand. The background features stage lights and a large yellow circular graphic element on the right side of the frame. The overall image has a warm, yellowish tint.

Themes

1. Coordination, Visibility & Accessibility of Support

A thriving creative sector requires clear, accessible, and well-coordinated business support. However, creatives in North Devon often struggle to navigate funding landscapes, find relevant resources, and connect with their peers.

This section outlines practical steps to improve visibility of sector support, access to opportunities and resources, and effective coordination across the ecosystem; ensuring that creatives are better informed, connected, and empowered to grow.

“I wouldn’t know what business support was available without Flourishing Barnstaple. There needs to be clearer communication and visibility.”

- Chay, Creative Business Owner

Implications for Programme Design

• Navigability of Support

- Many creatives struggle to find and access relevant business support due to a lack of centralised information. A clear, structured support ecosystem is needed to improve visibility and usability.

• Geographical Barriers

- Limited transport infrastructure in rural areas makes in-person engagement difficult, highlighting the need for hybrid delivery models that balance digital accessibility with face-to-face networking.

• Coordination Challenges

- While strong networks and peer-driven initiatives exist, a lack of structured facilitation limits their impact. Greater capacity and coordination are needed to connect existing initiatives, improve signposting, and strengthen collaboration between creatives, organisations, and policymakers.

• Balancing Creative Practice & Business Development

- Many practitioners juggle multiple roles, making it difficult to engage with support. Business development opportunities must be efficient, flexible, and responsive to different career stages, ensuring accessibility without adding undue burden.

Short-Term Actions

Immediate, practical steps to improve access and coordination:

• CDF Priority Action: Develop a Central Creative Resource Hub

- A single digital platform to consolidate business support, funding opportunities, and networking directories.
- Ensure information is regularly updated via newsletters and targeted outreach.
- Could integrate existing platforms (e.g. Flourishing Barnstaple website) to avoid duplication.

• CDF Priority Action: Expand the North Devon Creative Directory

- Building on the foundation established on Barnstaple.co.uk
- Map existing businesses, freelancers, and creative networks.
- Consider sector-based tagging (e.g. visual arts, performing arts, digital media) to improve searchability.
- Ensure accessibility via the online database and potential physical version for community spaces.

• Pilot Regular Digital Updates

- Monthly email bulletins to keep creatives informed about new opportunities, with a focus on making existing platforms more visible rather than creating new ones. These updates should consolidate information from multiple sources into a single, easy-to-navigate resource, ensuring greater accessibility and reach.
- Develop a funding signposting tool to help creatives identify relevant funding opportunities.
- Use this in combination with the above actions to build a comprehensive distribution list.

• Leverage Existing Events & Networks

- Rather than focusing solely on the creation of new events, maximise existing networking and showcase opportunities through signposting and collaboration with local venues to embed business support in the programming and activation of these spaces.
- Current examples include: private view opportunities with Studio Kind, theatre and performance models which build on Hall for Cornwall’s creative networking initiatives.

Longer-Term Opportunities

Strategic ambitions for sustainable growth and sector transformation:

• Strengthening Coordination, Visibility & Sustainable Growth

- Align future funding applications to sustain, enhance, and scale coordination, visibility, and business support initiatives, ensuring that investment in resource hubs, creative directories, and sector-wide engagement efforts is embedded in a long-term, self-sustaining model. The Sea Change (Place Partnership) project presents a live opportunity to support this work, providing a strategic platform to secure investment and embed sustainable sector-wide infrastructure.

Themes

2. The Training & Business Support Offer

Supporting the growth of North Devon's creative economy requires overarching and sector-specific business development support that reflects the lived reality of creatives and meets them where they are.

While many creatives excel in their artistic practice, they often struggle with business fundamentals, financial sustainability, and long-term growth strategies. There is strong demand for practical, accessible, and relevant training that helps creatives build viable careers, develop entrepreneurial skills, and navigate funding landscapes effectively.

“Artists don’t identify as businesspeople... There is a need to put structures in place so they can access support more easily.”

“Digital support is essential but must be tailored - current provision is ineffective for many practitioners over 60.”

- Art Makers

Implications for Programme Design

• Tailoring Business Support to Creative Practitioners

- Both overarching business support and specialist interventions must be framed and structured to resonate with creatives, ensuring relevance and ownership. Training should balance real-world application with an understanding of the fluid, project-based, and freelance nature of creative work.

• Combining the Best of Online & In-Person Support

- Hybrid approaches should connect digital and in-person learning, using online resources as a learning repository while in-person sessions focus on application and peer exchange. Support must be flexible, engaging, and responsive to different learning styles.

• Financial Resilience as a Sector Priority

- Strengthening financial resilience is a top priority, helping creatives secure funding, diversify revenue, and develop repeatable income strategies. Training should also have a cascading impact, equipping individuals to share financial expertise and strengthen the wider creative community.

• Peer Learning & Mentoring

- Creatives prefer learning from peers with lived sector experience over generic business advisors. Mentoring and structured peer-learning can help embed sustainable knowledge exchange within the sector.

Short-Term Actions

Immediate, practical steps to improve training & business support:

• CDF Priority Action: Develop Sector-Specific Business Training

Content

- Deliver tailored workshops on access to funding, marketing, and promotion, aligned with research findings.
- Partner with training providers and facilitators to address key challenges such as exporting and internationalisation, digital skills (including AI), and entrepreneurial mindset development.
- Ensure sector relevance by using relatable role models, case studies, and real-world examples from both local and international contexts.
- Provide funding literacy training covering grants, crowdfunding, sponsorship, and alternative financing models, equipping creatives with long-term financial strategies.
- Establish clear business support pathways for different career stages (startup, early-career, high-growth), ensuring creatives receive appropriate guidance on scaling, managing demand, pricing models, and securing repeat work.

Format

Expand Hybrid Learning Models

- Combine in-person, digital, and interactive learning to improve accessibility and connect dispersed creative communities.
- Develop a blended approach, integrating live workshops, recorded sessions, and self-paced online content.
- Use regular online communication between sessions to reinforce learning and sustain engagement.

Introduce Peer Mentoring & Skill-Sharing Initiatives

- Launch structured mentoring schemes, pairing early-career creatives with experienced professionals.
- Establish peer-led learning groups, fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Integrate mentoring and peer-learning within hybrid models, ensuring structured opportunities for feedback, networking, and shared problem-solving.

Longer-Term Opportunities

Strategic ambitions for sector-wide skills development & business sustainability:

• Establish a Stable & Structured Creative Business Support Offer

- Embed core competency areas identified through sector engagement - including audience development, financial planning, and contract negotiation - as core pillars of ongoing business support.
- Ensure continuity of peer-driven learning, transitioning short-term mentoring and networking initiatives into a self-sustaining support network with structured opportunities for collaboration, shared learning, and industry-led guidance.
- Expand access to professional creative business advisors, exploring models such as the 'Entrepreneurs in Residence' approach at the University of Plymouth to provide specialist, ongoing support tailored to creative industry business models.
- Ensure long-term stability by embedding creative business support into regional strategies and future bids; securing dedicated funding and institutional backing to maintain consistency over time.

• Expand Alternative Finance & Investment Models

- Pilot new funding models, including match-funding initiatives, cooperative investment schemes, and creative micro-loans, enabling businesses to diversify income streams and reduce financial vulnerability.
- Strengthen links with private sector investors, improving access to angel investment, venture capital, and other commercial funding mechanisms, including North Devon Angels (TechSW).
- Advocate for long-term financial sustainability, ensuring creative industries benefit from regional investment funds and reducing reliance on short-term grant cycles.
- Leverage partnerships with Creative UK, Crowdfunder, and regional investment initiatives (e.g. Create Growth Devon) to align, coordinate, and scale up innovative funding models, ensuring North Devon's creative businesses can access the right finance at the right time.

5.3 Activating Creative Spaces

Themes

3. Activating Creative Spaces

Access to affordable, well-equipped, and multi-functional creative spaces is essential for the growth of North Devon's creative sector. Recent investment has expanded the availability of creative spaces, but ensuring they are effectively activated, accessible, and sustainable remains a priority.

Creative practitioners continue to face challenges in securing space to work, exhibit, perform, and collaborate, balancing affordability with the commercial realities of venue operation. To support a thriving creative economy, spaces must be more than just venues -they should foster connections, knowledge exchange, and sector-wide engagement. This requires dedicated time, space, and the right conditions for 'creative collisions' - the informal encounters and collaborations that drive innovation and growth.

“The way arts spaces are set up doesn’t always align with how creatives use them - some spaces feel like they were planned without fully considering the needs of performing arts practitioners.”

- Multistory Theatre

Implications for Programme Design

• Integrating Business Support & Space Activation

- Creative spaces should work in sync with business support, creating a responsive system that adapts to businesses as they scale, while ensuring support is embedded within the spaces themselves.

• Spaces as Hubs for Peer-Led Learning & Mentoring

- The offer for creatives using these spaces should go beyond tenancy, incorporating peer support, skills-sharing, and mentoring, strengthening the wider creative ecosystem.

• Collaboration & Cross-Sector Opportunities

- Multi-purpose hubs that encourage collaboration across disciplines can increase visibility, strengthen networks, and drive creative innovation.

• Balancing Commercial Viability & Sector Needs

- Creative spaces must operate as financially sustainable models while ensuring they remain accessible and relevant to the needs of the sector, playing an active role in its long-term growth.

Short-Term Actions

Immediate, practical steps to improve access to creative spaces:

• CDF Priority Action: Improve Visibility & Coordination of Creative Spaces

- Enhance visibility and navigability of creative spaces, ensuring that practitioners can easily identify and access relevant venues for work, rehearsal, collaboration, and showcasing.

- Strengthen coordination between key space operators and stakeholders, fostering more effective collaboration between venue managers, local authorities, and cultural organisations (e.g. Market Manager at the Pannier Market, North Devon Theatres Trust).

- Improve signposting and shared promotion of creative spaces (e.g. Boutport St, Bridge Chambers, Market Quarter, Green Lane, and others), ensuring that information is centralised, up-to-date, and easily accessible.

• CDF Priority Action: Strengthen Access & Utilisation of Creative, Public & Cultural Spaces

- Develop models that balance affordability with sector contribution, such as subsidised studio schemes where creatives exchange time, skills, or community engagement for reduced workspace costs.

- Expand collaboration with landowners and councils to unlock meanwhile-use spaces, repurposing underutilised buildings as temporary creative hubs while ensuring alignment with business growth pathways and long-term sector needs.

- Encourage museums, libraries, and theatres to offer flexible access for creative practitioners to use spaces for work, collaboration, or showcasing projects.

- Ensure that community spaces (e.g. town halls, empty retail units) are part of the wider creative infrastructure.

- Explore intermediated models to address common barriers such as business rates, insurance, and lease complexities, ensuring creative practitioners can more easily access and sustain workspace without prohibitive administrative burdens.

• Activate Hubs and Networks within Creative Spaces

- Support the development of grassroots creative hubs and networks within the new space developments, ensuring that emerging spaces support collaboration, experimentation, and sector-led activity.

- Encourage networks that connect creatives within and across these hubs, fostering cross-disciplinary engagement and shared opportunities.

- Provide micro-grants or facilitation support to enable creatives to self-organise and activate local spaces, drawing on models such as the Creative Kernow Associates mixers event series scheme.

Longer-Term Opportunities

Strategic ambitions for infrastructure development & sustainability:

• Ensure the Long-Term Sustainability of North Devon's Creative Hubs & Networks

- Embed financial and operational sustainability into hub and network activation, incorporating membership schemes, subsidised access for early-career creatives, and commercial partnerships to ensure ongoing viability.

- Develop cross-sector collaborations by engaging businesses and stakeholders from high-growth areas, such as Health & Wellbeing, Clean Maritime & Green Energy, the Green Economy, and the Visitor Economy, embedding creative hubs within broader economic development strategies.

- Encourage creative spaces to network nationally and internationally, learning from best practice models in other rural creative clusters and forming peer exchange opportunities that strengthen their long-term impact.

- Strengthen partnerships with arts organisations, educational institutions, and business hubs to ensure spaces are well-utilised, financially supported, and positioned within a diverse and resilient funding ecosystem.

5.4 Creative Community - Networking & Peer Support

Themes

4. Creative Community - Networking & Peer Support

North Devon's creative sector is rich in enthusiasm, expertise, and a strong willingness to collaborate, with practice-based networks like ArtMakers already operating effectively. However, there is a lack of coordination across networks, and no facilitated, overarching structure to bring different creative communities together. This makes it harder for practitioners to navigate opportunities, share knowledge across disciplines, and sustain long-term engagement.

The challenge is not about creating a sense of community from scratch, but rather about unlocking its full potential by strengthening coordination, bridging gaps between existing networks, and ensuring accessible, inclusive peer support models. A more structured and sustainable approach will help creatives build relationships, share resources, and develop a thriving, self-sustaining creative ecosystem.

“Festivals are often the only opportunity for independent creatives to connect. There’s no formal structure for ongoing networking.”

- Chay, Creative Business Owner

Implications for Programme Design

• Fragmentation of Networks

- While some informal networks exist, they are not widely known or easily accessible, making it difficult for creatives to connect, collaborate, and share opportunities.

• Need for Peer-Led & Cross

- Disciplinary Support - Many creatives prefer learning from other practitioners rather than traditional business advisors. Mentorship, peer-learning, and collaborative initiatives can strengthen sector-wide resilience.

• Balancing Local, Regional & National Networks

- Many creatives feel they lack visibility beyond North Devon, while others find local opportunities hard to access. A balanced approach is needed to support local connections while expanding reach.

• Lack of Coordination Across Networking Events

- Creatives often struggle to find and attend networking events, highlighting the need for better signposting and consolidation of existing opportunities.

Short-Term Actions

Immediate, practical steps to improve access to creative spaces:

• CDF Priority Action: Establish Structured Peer Networking Groups

- Work with existing networks, community leaders and creative spaces to facilitate regular, themed networking sessions to bring creatives together in informal, supportive environments.
- Pilot sector-specific and cross-sector networking events to encourage collaboration beyond traditional creative disciplines.

• CDF Priority Action: Develop a Digital Networking Space

- Create an online community or forum (building on the foundational work on the Barnstaple.co.uk website) where creatives can share opportunities, seek advice, and collaborate remotely.
- Note: this can require consistent facilitation to keep the space active and relevant. This can be delivered across a spectrum from low-investment activities such as 'cuppa culture zoom sessions' (Hall for Cornwall) through to high-investment activities such as the 'Net Zero Exchange' platform (Sustainable Earth Institute).

• CDF Priority Action: Improve Signposting of Existing Networks & Events

- Host and actively promote a curated networking events calendar (as part of the Central Resource Hub on Barnstaple.co.uk) to make it easier for creatives to find and participate in opportunities.
Identify and facilitate targeted opportunities to cross-pollinate and connect networking and events between sectors, and matchmaking of key individuals / capabilities e.g. encouraging creative games developers to attend relevant Offshore Renewable Energy innovation events.

• Introduce Mentoring Opportunities

- Recognise the role that cornerstone organisations and community leaders already play in providing in-kind mentoring, raising the profile and perceived value of this kind of support.
- Develop structured mentoring programmes, pairing emerging creatives with experienced practitioners.
- Offer group mentoring, peer-coaching circles, and action learning cohorts to increase accessibility and sector-wide knowledge-sharing to maximise impact.

Longer-Term Opportunities

Strategic ambitions for a sustainable, well-connected creative sector:

• Create a Formal North Devon Creative Network

- Establish a coordinated sector network with regular in-person and digital meetups, knowledge-sharing sessions, and peer-led training opportunities to strengthen professional connections.
- Develop structured networking formats, including cross-sector meetups, themed discussions, and professional matchmaking services, ensuring creatives can connect with clients, funders, and partners in a meaningful way.
- Ensure active management of the network, with dedicated coordination roles or a sector-led steering group, maintaining momentum and long-term sustainability.
- Leverage network engagement, data, and intelligence to strengthen future investment cases and funding bids, demonstrating the sector's growth and impact.

• Strengthen Regional & National Connectivity

- Build strategic alliances with South West-based creative clusters, fostering collaborations, joint funding applications, and industry-led training opportunities.
- Develop networking initiatives that bring national and international creatives to North Devon, improving the sector's visibility and strengthening its regional positioning.
- Ensure North Devon's creative sector is represented at a national level, engaging with advocacy bodies and policy groups to influence funding decisions and sector-wide strategies.

5.5 Strategic Positioning & Governance

Themes

5. Strategic Positioning & Governance

For North Devon’s creative sector to thrive in the long term, it must be strategically positioned as a key driver of economic growth, rather than seen as an isolated sector. Creativity fuels innovation, entrepreneurship, and place-making, offering significant opportunities to better connect the creative industries with other high-growth areas, such as Health & Wellbeing, Clean Maritime & Green Energy, the Green Economy, and the Visitor Economy.

Aligning the creative sector with North Devon’s vision for sustained, inclusive economic growth—underpinned by strong environmental principles and real benefits for local communities—will unlock its full potential as a catalyst for long-term regional development and resilience. A shift towards a creative economy mindset, embedding creativity across key industries rather than treating it as a standalone sector, will maximise its impact on North Devon’s long-term prosperity.

At the same time, many creative practitioners feel disconnected from policy-making and governance structures, struggling to engage with economic, cultural, and skills strategies that directly impact them. Bridging this perceived gap between creatives and policymakers is essential to ensuring the sector is not just recognised, but also meaningfully integrated into investment strategies, economic planning, and cross-sector partnerships.

“There is a real lack of a critical framework in North Devon- decisions about arts and culture often feel disconnected from those actually working in the sector.”

Implications for Programme Design

• Embedding the Creative Sector in Decision-Making

- Without stronger representation in governance structures, the creative sector risks being excluded from key policy and funding decisions.

• Cross-Sector Collaboration & Economic Integration

- The sector’s role in economic growth, tourism, wellbeing, and regeneration needs to be better articulated and leveraged. Stronger partnerships across industries (e.g., hospitality, heritage, and digital) will increase opportunities for creatives.

• Clarifying the Role of Councils & Sector Leadership

- While local government plays a key role in sector development, many creatives feel there is a lack of clarity around leadership, priorities, and investment strategies. Better coordination and transparency are needed.

• Advocating for Sector Recognition

- There is an opportunity to position North Devon as a creative hub, aligning with regional and national cultural strategies to secure long-term investment.

• Lack of Cohesive Sector Messaging

- There is no consistent, recognisable brand or identity for North Devon’s creative economy, making it harder to promote opportunities and advocate for investment.

Short-Term Actions

Immediate, practical steps to strengthen governance & sector positioning:

• CDF Priority Action: Establish a Creative Economy Advisory Group

- Review existing governance structures and advisory bodies to ensure the creative sector has a voice and is well integrated within local and regional decision-making.
- Reflect representation from creative businesses, freelancers, local authorities, and education partners.
- Identify viable and credible mechanisms through which to engage young people as key stakeholders and a critical voice within sector governance.

• Embed Business Support in Strategy Implementation

- Ensure continuous alignment between creative business support and the implementation of economic, tourism, and regeneration strategies, embedding business development efforts within the wider regional growth agenda.
- Use creative business support initiatives to raise the visibility, profile, and understanding of these strategies, fostering greater dialogue and engagement between the creative sector and policymakers.
- Co-design the implementation of these strategies with creatives, ensuring they balance local priorities with regional and national opportunities while remaining responsive to sector needs and emerging economic trends.

• Strengthen Cross-Sector Partnerships

- Develop collaborations between the creative industries and other sectors, such as health, education, digital innovation, and tourism.
- Showcase how the creative economy contributes to place-making, economic development, and community wellbeing.
- Strengthen connections with industry primes, alongside local businesses, to create new sponsorship, commissioning, and investment opportunities.

• Increase Visibility & Advocacy for the Creative Sector

- Develop a coordinated messaging and advocacy strategy to promote the economic, cultural, and social value of North Devon’s creative industries.
- Establish a clear, shared narrative that aligns with regional development priorities and can be used across funding bids and policy discussions.
- Strengthen relationships with local and regional decision-makers, using evidence-based storytelling to demonstrate the sector’s strategic importance.
- Ensure messaging is inclusive, engaging, and accessible, avoiding overly technical or institutional language to reach a broad audience.

Longer-Term Opportunities

Strategic ambitions for sustained sector influence & investment:

• Secure Long-Term Investment & Strategic Representation for the Creative Sector

- Position North Devon as a priority area for creative industry investment, ensuring the region benefits from national and regional funding initiatives and is embedded in wider economic policy and strategic growth plans.
- Advocate for multi-year funding models, ensuring stability for key creative initiatives, events, and sector-building programmes, reducing reliance on short-term grants.
- Strengthen engagement with funding bodies, policymakers, and private investors, developing a clear case for sustained investment in North Devon’s creative economy.

• Embed Creativity in Regional Economic Planning

- Ensure formal creative industry representation in local authority economic development committees, business support frameworks, and place-making strategies.
- Establish a cross-sector advisory group that provides ongoing policy recommendations, embedding culture and creativity into regional growth plans.
- Strengthen North Devon’s representation in national and regional creative networks, improving access to large-scale investment and strategic partnerships.

• Increase Visibility & Advocacy for the Creative Economy

- Develop a coordinated sector-wide visibility campaign, promoting North Devon’s creative economy as a driver of regional growth, tourism, and innovation.
- Use storytelling, case studies, and public showcases to highlight successful creative businesses and practitioners, reinforcing the sector’s value.
- Engage local and regional media to ensure consistent coverage of creative achievements, strengthening public and political support for the sector.

Themes

6. Communications & Messaging

Ensuring that business support for creative practitioners is visible, accessible, and effectively communicated is critical to increasing engagement and uptake. Many creatives struggle to find relevant support, often feeling that existing resources are fragmented, overly complex, or not clearly tailored to the sector’s needs.

A more strategic and user-focused approach to communication is needed to improve how business support is marketed, structured, and delivered. This includes better signposting, simplified messaging, and more intuitive access to information, ensuring that creative businesses can quickly identify and engage with relevant opportunities. The way support is framed is also key — positioning business development as a positive enabler of growth and creative sustainability, rather than a bureaucratic or technical necessity, will help increase confidence and participation.

“There is a built-in ceiling of around £300 for local art sales. Without access to higher-value markets, artists are forced to operate in the giftware sector rather than selling fine art.”

- Art Makers

Implications for Programme Design

• Difficulties Accessing Relevant Information

- Many creatives are unaware of business support, funding, and networking opportunities due to fragmented communication channels. A more structured and visible approach is needed.

• Perception Challenges & Value of Creative Work

- Some creatives struggle to position themselves as businesses, while wider audiences often undervalue the economic and social impact of the creative sector.

• Need for More Inclusive & Accessible Communication Approaches

- Some creatives feel disconnected from formalised business and funding language, making support feel intimidating or inaccessible.

Short-Term Actions

Immediate, practical steps to improve sector-wide communication & visibility:

• CDF Priority Action: Improve Signposting & Sector Communications

- Strengthen central communications, building on the foundational work on the Barnstaple.co.uk website and existing newsletters, to consolidate sector updates, funding opportunities, and information on networking events.
- Strengthen coordination between existing organisations and platforms to reduce duplication and improve visibility.

• CDF Priority Action: Support Creatives in Self-Promotion & Storytelling

- Provide training and resources on branding, marketing, and digital storytelling to help creatives promote their work effectively.
- Develop case studies and profiles showcasing North Devon creatives to raise awareness and attract new opportunities.

• Reframe Business Support Language to be More Engaging

- Avoid framing support as “help” or “funding dependency”, instead positioning it as opportunities for creative growth and empowerment.
- Test alternative language (e.g. “Creative Boost” rather than “Business Support”) to make opportunities feel more accessible.

• Expanding Market Access & Showcasing Opportunities

- Economic constraints limit the commercial viability of North Devon’s creative sector, forcing many practitioners into secondary income streams or low-value markets. Strategic investment in national and international showcasing opportunities - through structured gallery partnerships, theatre showcases, and subsidised participation in major art fairs - could significantly expand market potential.

Longer-Term Opportunities

Strategic ambitions for sustained communication & branding impact:

• Launch a North Devon Creative Identity Campaign

- Develop a sector-wide identity for North Devon’s creative industries, helping position the region as a hub for creative excellence.
- Work with regional tourism boards, business groups, and policymakers to align messaging with wider place-branding efforts, ensuring creativity is embedded in regional identity.
- Encourage community-led storytelling initiatives, ensuring that creatives shape their own narratives and promote their individual and collective impact.

• Amplify the Voice of Creative Ambassadors

- Train and empower creative sector representatives to act as ambassadors and spokespeople, ensuring the sector’s voice is heard in key decision-making spaces at local, regional, and national levels.
- Support creative ambassadors in advocating for the sector, equipping them with the tools, networks, and evidence needed to engage funders, policymakers, and business leaders effectively.
- Create structured opportunities for ambassadors to share insights and influence policy, through media engagement, public speaking, and participation in strategic forums.

6 Conclusions & Next Steps

This report outlines a practical, phased roadmap to support North Devon's creative economy. The strategic recommendations are designed to respond directly to the needs and ambitions of local creative practitioners, businesses, and organisations. They aim to strengthen the infrastructure, visibility, and sustainability of the sector while improving access to support, space, training, and opportunity.

In the remaining months of the Cultural Development Fund (CDF) programme, several of the priority actions outlined here will be taken forward by North Devon Council. These include the activation of creative spaces, the development of targeted training and mentoring offers, and improved coordination of existing support through digital platforms and networks.

But the long-term success of these recommendations depends on collective effort. Many of the opportunities identified can only be realised through continued collaboration - between local authorities, education providers, businesses, funders, grassroots networks, and the creative community itself.

We invite you to partner with us.

Whether you are a policymaker, a creative practitioner, a business owner, or a member of the wider community, there is a role for you to play in supporting North Devon's creative future. Help us strengthen the creative economy, nurture talent, and bring new ideas to life.

Together, we can ensure North Devon is not only a place where creativity thrives - but where it drives inclusive, sustainable growth for years to come.



Strengths

- **Strong Creative Identity:** North Devon has a rich cultural and creative history with links to prominent artists like Turner. The region's creative identity is bolstered by a high concentration of practitioners and small businesses, particularly in arts, crafts, and performing arts.
- **High Concentration of Makers and Creators:** The region boasts a significant number of micro-businesses and individual creative practitioners. This existing talent pool can be nurtured to drive further sector growth.
- **Grassroots and Community Initiatives:** North Devon's grassroots cultural scene, supported by events such as the Barnstaple Fringe, strengthens community engagement and cultural expression.
- **Emerging Creative Hubs:** New developments, such as Bauport Street and the repurposing of spaces like Green Lane shopping centre, offer potential for creative businesses to collaborate and grow.
- **Integration with Natural Landscapes:** The UNESCO Biosphere designation highlights the integration of North Devon's natural landscapes with its cultural output, creating opportunities for projects that blend culture and sustainability.
- **Supportive Infrastructure:** Infrastructure developments, including creative spaces and business hubs, are in progress, providing a foundation for nurturing small creative enterprises. This addresses workspace shortages noted in the Cultural Strategy.
- **Educational Engagement:** Local educational institutions, such as Petroc, offer creative sector work placements, while initiatives like the Landmark Theatre's school workshops aim to engage young people and introduce them to creative careers.
- **Arts Council England Recognition:** National recognition by Arts Council England strengthens the region's reputation and provides further opportunities for sector growth.

Opportunities

- **Develop a Distinctive Cultural Brand:** There is significant potential to create a "Made in Northern Devon" brand that promotes the region's unique creative output, enhancing both local pride and national visibility. Engaging the private sector through networks like Tech South West's angel investors to attract investment into the creative sector.
- **Tailored Business Support:** Developing sector-specific business support — particularly in areas like digital marketing, AI, and legal advice — would address the unique needs of Northern Devon's creative businesses.
- **Cross-Sector Collaborations:** Leveraging cross-sector partnerships with environmental organisations (e.g., the Biosphere Reserve) and between the creative sector and the Marine Energy sector, can drive innovative projects that blend culture with sustainability and attract international interest.
- **Cultural Placemaking and Town Regeneration:** Using culture as a tool for high-street regeneration and placemaking could significantly enhance the vibrancy of town centers like Barnstaple and Bideford, while also addressing wider regional development goals.
- **Young Talent Retention:** There is a clear opportunity to develop pathways for young people into the creative sector by enhancing educational programmes, apprenticeships, and local work placements. This could help to reverse the talent drain and encourage young creatives to stay in the region.
- **Repurposing of Spaces:** There are numerous underutilised spaces, such as Green Lane shopping centre, that can be repurposed into creative hubs, studios, and event spaces. These spaces could serve as incubators for creative enterprises, fostering collaboration and growth.
- **Leveraging Digital Tools:** By promoting digital platforms and technologies, Northern Devon's creative businesses can reach wider markets and audiences. This includes utilising digital marketing, e-commerce, and online networking to expand the reach of local creatives both nationally and internationally.
- **Global Partnerships:** The UNESCO Biosphere designation offers a unique opportunity to attract international partnerships, projects, and funding for cultural and environmental initiatives. These partnerships could significantly boost Northern Devon's profile on the global stage.

Weaknesses

- **Fragmentation of the Sector:** Despite the region's creative potential, the sector remains fragmented, with limited collaboration and networking opportunities, hindering the development of a cohesive identity.
- **Insufficient Training and Educational Pathways:** There are limited higher education opportunities for creative careers, and local institutions do not provide clear pathways for young people to enter the creative industries, contributing to the loss of young talent.
- **Low Visibility of Creative Industries:** The creative sector has low visibility both locally and regionally, with insufficient marketing and awareness of available support services, making it harder for businesses to access the resources they need.
- **Geographical Isolation and Poor Transport Links:** North Devon's rural and coastal geography limits access to resources and opportunities, and poor transport infrastructure further isolates the region's creative businesses from wider networks.
- **Aging Population and Talent Drain:** North Devon's creative workforce skews older, and young talent is increasingly leaving for larger urban areas due to the lack of educational and career opportunities in the region.
- **Accommodation Challenges:** High housing costs and limited availability make it difficult for younger practitioners and those returning to the region to settle, presenting a barrier to retaining talent.
- **Limited Entrepreneurial Skills Development:** There is a need for better entrepreneurial development in the creative sector, particularly in areas such as business acumen, digital skills, and marketing. A lack of paid job opportunities for young creatives also limits professional growth.
- **Resource Constraints:** Infrastructure development, such as creative hubs and shared workspaces, faces delays and financial challenges, limiting the immediate capacity for growth.

Threats

- **Lack of Sustainable Funding:** Without long-term funding and investment, many of the initiatives started under the CDF3 programme may not be sustainable. Creative enterprises, particularly micro-businesses, are highly vulnerable to economic fluctuations and funding gaps.
- **Outmigration of Young Talent:** The continued loss of younger generations to more urban areas with better educational and career opportunities poses a significant threat to the future of the creative sector in Northern Devon.
- **Over-commercialisation:** The push for growth could lead to over-commercialisation, which may threaten the character and authenticity of North Devon's creative scene if not carefully managed.
- **Poor Transport Infrastructure:** The region's geographical isolation and inadequate transport links make it difficult for businesses and individuals to access wider markets, reducing opportunities for growth and collaboration. This isolation also makes it harder to attract talent to the region.
- **Competition from Other Regions:** Northern Devon faces stiff competition from more established creative hubs like Exeter and Plymouth, which offer better infrastructure, visibility, and career opportunities. These regions may continue to draw away both talent and investment.
- **Climate Change and Economic Shifts:** As highlighted in the Economic Strategy, climate change poses a threat to the natural landscapes that are integral to Northern Devon's cultural identity. Moreover, broader economic shifts, including changing tourism patterns and the post-pandemic world, could adversely affect the region's reliance on tourism.
- **Fragmented Efforts Across Projects:** If the various initiatives and stakeholders within the CDF3 programme are not well-coordinated, there is a risk of fragmented efforts that do not maximise impact. Collaboration between public, private, and third-sector stakeholders is essential to ensure that efforts are aligned and effective.
- **Limited Access to Markets:** Artisans, such as potters, face challenges accessing affluent enough markets to sell high-value goods. Local points of sale like the Pannier Market attract more casual browsers than buyers, limiting sales potential.
- **Complexity of Funding Access:** Many creatives find the funding application process intimidating and overly complex, which discourages smaller businesses from seeking financial support and limits growth opportunities. The complexity of funding access disproportionately affects smaller creative enterprises, discouraging them from seeking financial support and limiting their growth potential.

Annexe B. Case Studies

The following case studies highlight programmes and organisations from across the UK that have successfully tackled challenges similar to those identified in North Devon. These examples offer practical inspiration for delivery models, partnership structures, and community engagement approaches that could inform future action locally.

Some may provide models that North Devon stakeholders could adopt or adapt - particularly where they address gaps in business support, space activation, or skills development. Others represent potential collaborators or strategic partners who could help deliver similar outcomes here.

By showcasing a range of scales, approaches, and impacts, the case studies aim to spark ideas, demonstrate what is possible, and support North Devon's ambition to build a resilient, inclusive, and future-focused creative ecosystem.

CASE STUDY

REAL IDEAS

Their five key 'business units' are:

Real Immersive

Specialises in immersive technologies, offering a 360-degree dome (Market Hall, Devonport) for content production, training, and fostering the creative tech community.

Real Art Make Print

A creative community based at Plymouth's Ocean Studios (Royal William Yard). This provides affordable studio spaces, exhibitions, and workshops for local artists and makers. (including print facilities, café, collaborative workspaces and studio spaces).

Real Pathways

Provides tailored support to individuals at different stages of their personal and professional journeys.

Badge Nation

Facilitates organisations in creating digital badges to promote positive change - (This can be used as a tool to measure soft outcomes).

Nature and Neighbourhoods

Focuses on regenerating communities and environments through consultancy and transformative projects. Real Ideas champions creativity, innovation, and social responsibility, working with a diverse team and collaborators to drive change for people and the planet.

Ethos

'We are passionate about finding solutions to social problems, creating and supporting real and lasting change for individuals, communities and organisations. We are innovators, change makers and risk takers. We believe that by providing our people with autonomy, space to grow and develop, and the freedom to create and innovate, we will deliver the best working environment for our team, who will in turn deliver the most engaging and effective work for the people and organisations we support.'

Summary

Real Ideas is a social enterprise which focusses on creating positive social impact through five key business units. Their collaborative approach makes use of their extensive local connections and delivery partners to identify potential community business opportunities and to tailor the support it provides businesses to suit their needs.

Training and Support

- Membership is free and offers access to a portal with news, resources, and templates, a regular newsletter with insights, offers, and discounts, high-speed Wi-Fi in their buildings, and invitations to virtual and in-person meet-ups. Additionally, members can book and use co-working spaces, meeting rooms, event venues, and specialist facilities.

- Community Skills and Training Real Pathways works with local organisations to help individuals and groups in the local area harness the power of language and communication to build life skills, advance careers, and strengthen communities. This support offers guidance and training in accessing employment, education, social activities, and enhancing digital skills. Examples include: Youth Engagement Programmes, digital skills programme and local workshops.

- Consultancy Real Ideas supports local businesses to develop and manage innovative services that are of benefit to both people and nature. Their expertise focusses on building development, the effective use of community, cultural, and heritage assets through business planning, funding strategies, and sustainability efforts. They also work on place based development by creating inclusive spaces to support community and economic growth.

*For further and more detailed information, please follow the link below to see 'Real Ideas catalyst profile' developed by Power to Change: [ptc_area_profile_plymouth_v3.pdf \(icstudies.org.uk\)](https://icstudies.org.uk/ptc_area_profile_plymouth_v3.pdf)



Ethos

'We are a group of friends who decided to see if we could make a little bit of difference in the world by initiating community and cultural projects and activity and by seeking to prioritise connection, compassion and curiosity in our work and the world we help to create. We believe a different kind of economy is possible and are working to demonstrate the future now through East Quay and our other projects.'

Summary

The Onion Collective is female-led collective based in Watchet, who are dedicated to regenerating communities through collaborative, grassroots-led projects. Their mission is to create positive social, environmental, and economic change by addressing the needs of the local area. They work across a variety of sectors, from arts and culture to environmental regeneration, providing tailored support that helps local people take charge of their own futures.

Their three key 'business units' are:

East Quay

A newly developed cultural hub facilitating creativity and community engagement. Easy Quay features two contemporary art galleries, 11 artist studios, a paper mill, a geology workshop, a print studio, a restaurant, an education space, and five accommodation pods arranged across the top of the building.

Understory

A project developed in collaboration with design studio 'Free Ice Cream' to explore how social capital enhances community resilience.

The Boat Museum Visitor Centre

A local community-led project, run in collaboration with Watchet Town Council and the Watchet Boat Museum run by the Friends of Flatner Association, this project facilitated the preservation of local maritime heritage while co-locating local services.

Their key focus areas include:

Community Spaces

Onion Collective develops community spaces that provide local people with the opportunity to gather, share, and grow. These include cultural centers, community hubs, and workspaces that encourage collaboration and enterprise. An example of this can be seen in 'East Quay' which boasts an "anti-classroom" educational space designed by local children through a series of local workshops, to allow local school children 'flexibility and fun whilst they imagine, design and create'.

Regeneration Projects:

Onion Collective drive innovative regeneration projects that transform underused or derelict spaces into community assets, including environmental and heritage projects that bring both social and economic benefits to the local area. 'East Quay', for example, was created on the site of a derelict former boatyard that was annexed from the town. This space now offers guest lodgings, café, and gallery and workshop spaces for the local community.

Business Support & Social Enterprise Development

They offer business development support to local enterprises and help foster social entrepreneurship, ensuring that new initiatives serve community needs and create sustainable employment. The re-development of the 'Boat Museum Visitor Centre', for example, has facilitated an increase in local tourism, provided space for cultural exhibitions, and developed new opportunities for community engagement, whilst preserving Watchet's maritime history.



CASE STUDY

onioncollective

Environmental Stewardship

Onion Collective places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability, working on projects that promote green technology and nature-based solutions. This includes consulting on environmental initiatives and developing eco-friendly infrastructure.

Training and Support

Onion Collective's membership offers individuals and groups access to valuable resources such as co-working spaces, workshops, and tailored business support services. They provide ongoing training in areas such as digital skills, leadership, and community development. Additionally, they partner with local councils and organisations to deliver projects that enhance community resilience, improve employability, and foster social enterprise.

Their skills programs focus on helping people and businesses adapt to the changing economic landscape. Key programmes include leadership training for community-led initiatives, workshops in sustainable development, and mentoring schemes for aspiring social entrepreneurs.

Consultancy

Onion Collective also offers consultancy services to support other communities in developing their own social and environmental regeneration projects. They specialise in providing strategic advice on community engagement, business planning, and securing investment for large-scale regeneration initiatives. By sharing their expertise in place-based development, they help other towns and regions apply similar community-driven models of growth. An example of this can be seen when looking at the 'Understory' project, which as well as providing benefits to Watchet, serves as an excellent model for other communities. Through research and consultancy, Onion Collective assists other regions to harness social capital to address local issues such as economic stagnation or social isolation.





CASE STUDY



(Leicester Creative Business Depot)

Ethos

‘Together we aim to support and promote entrepreneurship as well as champion our diverse city and its increasingly confident creative industries’.

Summary

Regenerated from the previous site of Leicester CityBus and now in the heart of Leicester’s Cultural Quarter, the LCB Depot is a dynamic hub for creative businesses, artists, and freelancers. It offers flexible workspaces, studios, and business support to empower the creative sector. The depot plays an essential role in the city’s cultural life through organising events, exhibitions, and community activities. It is also involved in projects that aim to regenerate the area and enhance Leicester’s profile as a thriving cultural city.

Their three key ‘business units’ are:

Flexible Workspace

The LCB Depot offers adaptable office spaces, artist studios, and co-working areas to accommodate both established businesses and freelancers. They currently offer a range of workspace options across three sites, LCB Depot, Phoenix Square and Makers’ Yard. They are currently taking enquiries for their new workspace, Pilot House, which is currently in development but due to open April 2025.

Networking and Events

LCB Depot regularly hosts creative networking events, workshops, and exhibitions. These events encourage collaboration and foster a strong creative community within Leicester. Some examples include the Creative Coffee meetups and Leicester Business Festival sessions, which bring together professionals from various creative disciplines to exchange ideas and collaborate.

Grays Café

A café and community space in the heart of the LCB Depot, the café regularly hosts exhibitions, live music events, and pop-up performances. As well as doubling as a venue for both networking and cultural activities, Grays café also provides catering for all LCB Depot meeting room bookings.

Their key focus areas include:

Community Spaces

LCB Depot offers creative professionals a variety of spaces to connect, collaborate, and showcase their work. In addition to regular co-working spaces, the depot has a dedicated gallery space, which hosts exhibitions by local artists and designers. Design Season, for example, is an annual event that showcases the work of Leicester’s designers and highlights the city’s design heritage. The LCB Depot’s community also participates in Cultural Quarter Lates, where galleries, cafes, and cultural spaces open late to provide an evening of arts and entertainment.

Regeneration Projects

LCB Depot plays a crucial role in the regeneration of Leicester’s Cultural Quarter, a previously underdeveloped area now transformed into a vibrant center for the arts and creative industries. By repurposing formerly industrial buildings into creative workspaces, the LCB Depot has helped reinvigorate the local economy. The Graffwerk initiative, a Leicester-based collective that celebrates street art, has been supported by the LCB Depot and contributes to the city’s regeneration by organising large-scale mural projects that engage the local community and attract tourism.

Business Support & Social Enterprise Development

LCB Depot provides a comprehensive support system for creative businesses. The depot has facilitated several high-profile projects such as:

- **Phoenix Cinema and Art Centre Collaboration:**

Working closely with Phoenix, Leicester's leading digital arts and independent cinema venue, LCB Depot provides a platform for media, film, and digital artists to develop and exhibit their work. This collaboration has resulted in several joint events that blend visual arts and digital media, helping creatives find new audiences.

- Leicester Digital Tech Partnership: This partnership connects local creative technology businesses with educational institutions and investors, offering mentoring and funding opportunities. The Digital monthly meet-up, for example, brings together tech entrepreneurs to discuss trends and showcase new projects.

- Make Leicester Makerspaces: LCB Depot supports creative manufacturing through its partnership with the Make Leicester initiative, providing access to specialist equipment and workshops for local artists and makers. This project encourages hands-on learning across multiple areas such as, 3D printing, textile design, and digital fabrication.

Environmental Stewardship

LCB Depot is also focused on promoting sustainable creative practices. The LCB Green initiative encourages tenants to adopt environmentally conscious approaches in their work, such as utilising eco-friendly materials or reducing carbon footprints. The depot has also hosted workshops on sustainable design, including projects like the Eco Fashion Week where local designers showcase clothing made from recycled materials.

Training and Support

Through a range of professional development programs, the LCB Depot offers creative businesses access to workshops and training that enhance their skills. For example:

- Start-Up Workshops: Aimed at budding entrepreneurs in the creative sector, these workshops cover topics like business planning, branding, and financial management.

- Mentoring Schemes: LCB Depot runs mentoring programs where experienced business leaders from creative industries provide guidance to young entrepreneurs, helping them navigate the challenges of starting and growing their businesses.

- Creative Digital Skills Training: Regularly held sessions focus on upskilling creative professionals in areas like digital marketing, e-commerce, and graphic design.

Consultancy

LCB Depot offers consultancy services that help creative organisations and enterprises develop their strategies and business models. The depot has supported projects like the Leicester Creative Industries Growth Plan, advising local councils and stakeholders on how to expand Leicester's creative economy. The City Festival's Cultural Development plan is another example where the LCB Depot has provided insight and strategic advice to help plan cultural festivals that drive both tourism and local business growth.



