

Combined authorities and the creative industries

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper outlines the details of a new report commissioned by the LGA with improvement funding to help combined authorities in their approach to the creative industries. Its purpose is to share best practice and build our understanding of the ways in which combined authorities can support growth in the creative economy and contribute to Levelling Up.

Recommendation/s

That Board Members note this paper and share reflections on the subject of this research project.

Action/s

Officers to reflect any feedback from the Board in progressing the project, as per the timeline indicated in this paper.

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Background

1. The Creative Industries are an engine for economic growth in towns, cities and rural communities right across the UK. Prior to COVID-19, they were one of the [fastest growing parts of the economy](#), growing at more than 4 times the rate of growth in the economy as a whole. Creative jobs have also shown themselves to be resistant to automation: [research](#) has shown that jobs asking for creativity are also much more likely to grow as a percentage of the workforce by the year 2030 - use of 'creativity' in a job description is consistently the most significant predictor for an occupation's chance of growing.
2. As well as having significant potential to lead our national economic recovery from COVID-19, the creative industries could play an important role in the 'Levelling Up' agenda. They are geographically spread, with [over 700 different creative micro clusters across the UK](#), many of which are highly localized and uniquely rooted in place.
3. Local authorities and Combined Authorities have an important role to play in supporting the growth of the creative industries. They set the context in which creative businesses operate and provide the publicly funded cultural infrastructure which provides a crucial part of the creative ecosystem. Some local and combined authorities have already had significant success in promoting growth in this space using tools including Creative Enterprise Zones, Creative Improvement Districts and targeted programmes of investment.
4. In 2020 the LGA published a report designed to support councils in this work: [Creative Places](#) set out some of the ways in which councils could support their local creative economy in a toolkit focused on place.
5. The LGA has now received improvement funding from DLUHC to fund a piece of work supporting combined authorities, and potentially other regional groupings, in their approach to the creative industries, with the purpose of sharing best practice and improving our understanding of its contribution to Levelling Up.
6. We have now tendered for this project and are in the process of finalizing a delivery partner.

Project outline

7. The outputs of this project will include a mixture of the following:
 - 7.1 Desk research and a literature review to establish current levels of employment in the creative industries in each of the ten combined authorities and potential for growth,

alongside analysis of strategic priority given to the creative industries in Strategic Economic Plans, Local Industrial Strategies and Recovery Plans.

- 7.2 A series of three policy roundtables with industry representatives, key players in the Levelling Up agenda and representatives of the creative industry/culture teams within combined authorities.
 - 7.3 Case studies from each of the ten combined authorities.
 - 7.4 A short report containing findings drawn from the research, including 'top tips' for combined and local authorities seeking to grow their creative industries.
8. The project will aim to address some of the following questions:
- 8.1 What role can the combined authority play in supporting the growth of the creative industries?
 - 8.2 What is the potential for this work to support the Levelling Up and economic recovery agenda?
 - 8.3 What are the critical success factors for projects operating at this level?
 - 8.4 How do national funding schemes contribute?
 - 8.5 How does the relationship between local, regional and national government function most effectively in relation to the creative industries?
 - 8.6 What are the barriers to success?
 - 8.7 What interventions, if any, would help to overcome these barriers?
9. The outcomes we are seeking are:
- 9.1 A more developed understanding of the models of support available to combined authorities and other partnerships operating at a regional level who wish to grow their creative industry sector.
 - 9.2 Evidence of what works, to be shared with the sector and in the LGA's wider improvement work.
 - 9.3 New connections between combined authorities and the creative industries.
 - 9.4 Better support and guidance for combined authorities developing work with the creative industries.
 - 9.5 Greater understanding of the barriers to development and how the LGA can support its members.

Timetable

10. This piece of work will take place between December 2021 and May 2022, with the report launch taking place in May 2022.

Implications for inclusion, diversity and equality

11. We specified in our tender documentation that suppliers must show a demonstrable regard and ideas for how equalities, diversity and inclusion can be included and addressed in the report. We are satisfied that our proposed delivery partners (subject to contract) have addressed this point in their proposal and will maintain this as a regular

item for discussion in our project management meetings, ensuring that EDI is considered in each phase of the research.

Implications for Wales

12. Welsh authorities are outside the scope of this project, which will be resourced by improvement funding.

Financial Implications

13. Existing resources.

Next steps

14. Officers to reflect Members views as this work progresses.