



# SOUTHEND CULTURE VISION

[southendculture.co.uk](http://southendculture.co.uk)

Working to make  
lives better  
[www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)



# Foreword.

**Southend is one of England's most popular coastal destinations, welcoming over seven million visitors a year.**

**Southend boasts a diverse cultural scene and is home to a wealth of natural and historic assets, creative organisations and artistic talent.**

**By working collectively, the local community, public sector and creative practitioners have come together to develop Southend Culture Vision, which builds on the strengths and enthusiasm of our cultural, creative and heritage sector.**

It recognises how culture and creativity helps to establish a vibrant sense of place and brings our community together, as well as attracting investment, talent and visitors to the borough.

This Vision has been developed through a series of workshops, surveys and discussions across the borough with our community and cultural networks. It builds upon our achievements to date and outlines areas where we still have room to grow, and how through

new levels of co-operation and joint working, we can maximise the amazing creative potential that exists across the borough.

Delivery of this Vision and its objectives is a purposeful and ambitious endeavour. We recognise that a thriving creative cultural place is an essential driver of social and economic development, and this Vision will need to be strategic and serious. But we also recognise to be successful it must be fun, true to our roots and quintessentially Southend.

We hope you share our excitement for the future. Implementing this Vision will help us to develop a place where creativity creates opportunity, as we continue to build upon the incredible spirit and creativity that already exists in Southend.

# Introduction

A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue turtleneck sweater, is standing in a workshop. She is holding a black hat with a red ribbon and appears to be adjusting it. The workshop is filled with various items, including a sewing machine, a lamp, and a white horse sculpture. There are also some plants and decorative items on the walls.

**This Vision sets out an aspirational plan to support the development and growth of our cultural and creative economies across the borough over the next ten years.**

**It aims to recognise and nurture the energy and creative vision of our local cultural, creative and heritage sector, encouraging new ideas and creative collaborations.**

It also aims to increase the opportunities for residents and visitors to experience and enjoy our heritage, the arts and renown cultural experiences.

To achieve this vision we have included a foundational action plan which captures activity over the coming years that will help us to implement the vision and deliver the key themes.

The Vision and action plan will be 'live' and subject to regular review to ensure it adapts to new ideas, technologies and opportunities that will undoubtedly emerge over the coming years.



# What is Culture?

## Culture can mean different things to different people.

It's often used to refer to food, religion and other forms of heritage, but here is used to broadly describe the outputs of museums, galleries, libraries, visual arts, film, music, theatre, craft, dance, literature, festivals and events.

We recognise that traditional boundaries between and around cultural activities are disappearing as new technologies and other societal changes alter how culture is made and shared.

## We also refer to Creativity and the Creative Industries:

**Creativity** describes the process through which people apply their knowledge, skill and intuition to imagine, conceive, express or make something that wasn't there before.

**The Creative Industries** include a very wide range of jobs, organisations, businesses and educational institutions. These include but are not limited to: Advertising and Marketing; Architecture; Craft; Design (product, graphic, fashion), Film & Broadcast (TV, video, animation, VFX/SFX, radio and photography), Creative Tech (IT, video games, software and computer services), Museums, galleries, library, heritage, Music, dance, performing and visual arts, Publishing.

# Why do we need a Culture Vision?

**A number of cities across the UK have recognised the role culture and creativity can play in place shaping and economic growth as well as improving health and wellbeing.**

Cities such as Newcastle, Hull, Liverpool, Leeds and Bristol have used culture as a regenerative force that has significantly changed the face and perceptions of these cities.

**The creative industries are the fastest growing sector in the UK economy.**

The Gross Value Added (GVA) of the UK creative industries was estimated at **£115.9bn in 2019.**

This is equivalent to approx. **£13.2m every hour.**

That's a greater economic contribution than the UK's automotive, aerospace, life sciences and oil and gas industries combined.

But more than this, the creative industries drive and unlock innovation, deliver significant social impact, and invest heavily in the regeneration of communities throughout the UK\*.

\*Source The Creative Industries Council



**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

**Arts Council England also state three keys facts to highlight why art and culture matters:**

- 1.** Art and culture contribute £10.6 billion to the UK economy, culture alone brings £850 million to UK, through tourism, each year.
- 2.** Arts and culture help tackle social injustice: theatres, museums, galleries and libraries are the beating heart of our towns and cities. Not only do they bring prosperity, but they also bring communities together.
- 3.** Our creative industries are a calling card worldwide and have important trading links across the globe. Last year Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations earned £57 million abroad.

# Five reasons to support our Vision



1

There is strong evidence that supports the wider benefits of culture, creativity and heritage to our community.

2

Our local cultural and creative sector is rapidly growing and makes a significant contribution to Southend's economy.

3

Southend is well-placed to take advantage of major cultural programmes, including Creative Estuary: part of the Government endorsed Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) Project.

4

Southend has a vibrant and diverse cultural scene and is home to a wealth of natural and historic assets, which require preserving for future generations.

5

We can utilise our cultural and creative sectors to tackle wider societal issues and to help our residents to live healthier and more fulfilling lives.

# Context.

**Southend Culture Vision** is a strategy and action plan that looks to support the borough's cultural and creative growth, activity and investment over the next 10 years.

It's been developed to reflect national and regional plans, along with local strategic priorities which include:



**The Government's Digital, Culture, Media & Sport 2019 Single Departmental Plan focuses on growing an economy that's creative, innovative and works for everyone by supporting creative industries.**

They have highlighted the creative industry as one of six sectors that are prioritised for growth.

Their aim is for the UK to become a world leader in this area.



**The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is one of 38 local enterprise partnerships established to provide the vision and leadership to drive sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation.**

set out a **portfolio of sector-led initiatives** to build a self-sustaining, creative and cultural infrastructure in the region.

The impact of these initiatives will enable the South East to become a globally significant location for the creative sector.

As part of the economic plan for the South East, SELEP



**Southend 2050 is the borough's shared future ambition of the sort of place residents and stakeholders want Southend to be.**

thought Southend should be like in 2050 and what steps are needed to achieve this.

It was developed following extensive conversations that asked people that live, work and visit here, what they

The ambition is grounded in the values of Southenders. It is bold and challenging and will need all elements of our community to work together to make it a reality.

# Southend today...

## Where are we now?



Creative, cultural, and digital industries are high growth sectors



One of the warmest and driest places in the UK



**£87bn** annual economic output of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

**4,200,000** population in the SELEP region, with a further 8.9m on the doorstep of Greater London.



**182,500** residents. 8.7% population increase predicted by 2020



**£3.1 bn** GVA



57 schools, 2 colleges and a university



**Over 7m** visitors per year.



**7 miles** of award winning beaches.

# Creative & Cultural Southend

## The Creative and Cultural sector is a significant economic growth area in Southend.

It also represents an incredibly diverse sector composed of arts organisations and Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS).

The creative and cultural industries have significant employment and wealth generating capacity, they also have the ability to create a step change in the economy, retaining and attracting new people to Southend. Creative industries are flourishing in Southend: there's a growing concentration of creative and cultural businesses, and the borough is also home to a number of rich and diverse cultural assets including:

- ▶ Three theatres attracting internationally acclaimed productions, musicians and comedians: Cliffs Pavilion, Palace Theatre and Clifftown Theatre.
- ▶ A live music scene that has produced a number of internationally recognised artists and bands continues to thrive.
- ▶ A number of cultural festivals throughout the year including the Leigh Folk Festival, Southend Carnival, Southend Film Festival and the Leigh Regatta.
- ▶ Internationally significant heritage collections. The Prittlewell Princely Burial at Southend Central Museum is the earliest archaeological evidence of a Christian burial from the Anglo-Saxon period.
- ▶ Two Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations (NPO's)
- ▶ Art galleries such as the Beecroft Gallery with its fine art collection and works from artists including Constable, to Focal Point Gallery with its contemporary arts focus and 'Radical Essex' project.
- ▶ Significant grade 1 listed Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including the 12th century Prittlewell Priory and the 14th century Southchurch Hall
- ▶ Southend Pier, a 19th century grade II listed building that is the longest pleasure pier in the world – Southenders most treasured asset with a celebrated and diverse history that includes an active role in both world wars.

# Our Vision | We want to see Southend as a place that...

Embraces and celebrates diversity, and is open and welcome to all.

Has distinct locations that celebrate and promote their individuality, encouraging flow between each.

Is recognised as a year-round destination with a variety of high quality art, culture and heritage experiences.

Invests in creative spaces and infrastructure, to help businesses and people flourish.

Proactively welcomes and encourages the discovery of new creative and cultural experiences.

Encourages partnerships and collaboration that support a connected creative community.

Promotes creative innovation, attracts and retains people in its workforce.

Recognises that culture and creativity are integral to our health and wellbeing.

Has meaningful conversations with our community to evaluate progress and influence change.

Showcases its location, history and appeal through its people, buildings, landscapes and experiences.

# Our Values

The underpinning values are a set of principles that guide and set out what we do:



## Accessibility, diversity & inclusion:

We encourage everyone to engage in quality experiences that showcase our incredible spirit and creativity.



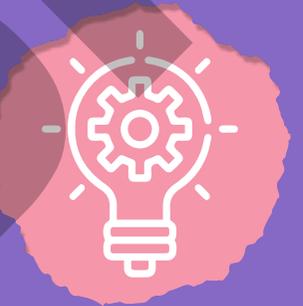
## Accountability & economic responsibility:

We use resources effectively to leverage opportunities that optimise value and create impact.



## Evaluation:

We regularly evaluate the social, economic and environmental impact of our strategy delivery.



## Innovation:

We support forward-thinking solutions that anticipate the future needs of our community.



## Partnerships & Collaboration:

We achieve more through meaningful relationships of mutual respect and understanding.



# Our Themes |

**1 Create the Conditions**

**2 Share Our Story**

**3 Places and Spaces**

**4 Make Life Better**

**5 Let's Work Together**

**Southend Culture Vision is structured with an overarching vision that is supported by five themes that we need to focus on to achieve our objectives:**

By supporting collaborative working environments, we will develop a stronger, more visible creative and cultural economy that maximise resources, supports innovation and attracts investment. Southend will be nationally recognised as a creative cluster where people, businesses and audiences flourish.

Celebrate and promote our activities, initiatives and successes to a national audience. Encourage broader participation in our cultural programming to develop deep and loyal relationships between audiences, practitioners, venues and organisations.

We will increase our reputation as a cultural and creative hub by maximising resources and reimagining our places and spaces. Our creative community will continue to strengthen and we will continue to be renowned nationally for our authentic, vibrant and diverse cultural experiences.

We want to remove barriers and ensure our community have a wide range of ways to participate in culture, enabling everyone to experience how culture can help to improve wellbeing and make us feel more connected to our place and community.

Southend has an engaged, collaborative, knowledgeable and connected creative community. Improved business-to-business collaboration and partnerships will increase innovation, excellence and sustainability across Southend's creative economy.

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