



UK Theatre and SOLT's response to the Civil Society Strategy (DCMS) (please note we are only answering some of the questions in the consultation)

Civil Society

1. How can government help to increase the impact of civil society?

Theatres play an important role in civil society. They are trusted community hubs, providing the space for initiatives that encourage good citizenship, improve health and well-being and support education.

Theatres act as the living room for a place, drawing individuals and community organisations together. The work on stage can help explore issues of the day, and additional programmes act as conduits for change, for community cohesion and for partnerships to develop.

The work theatres and theatre organisations do can have wider societal benefits, from health and social care outcomes, to improving the health of communities and contributing to regeneration and regional growth.

People

2. Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how have disadvantaged and disengaged young people been successfully encouraged to get involved in social action* or delivering social impact?

Theatre is one of the ways in which a young community is given a voice. Many theatres and theatre organisations work with children and young people and those from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

Often working in partnership with specialist providers or producers, theatre provides an opportunity for young people to explore experiences and issues; from LGBTQ+, immigration, and political moments to policy shaping. For example, during recent elections Battersea Arts Centre held 'Pizza and Politics' events to engage young people in the political process.

Theatres deliver services which help local and national government support young people's needs and personal development. Some examples are:

- **The Roundhouse's** youth services work <http://www.roundhouse.org.uk/young-creatives/our-work-with-youth-services/>
- **The Barbican's** community work <https://www.barbican.org.uk/take-part/community/programmes>, their [schools and colleges](#) work and their [Young Creatives](#)
- **Theatre for a Change** <http://www.tfacafrica.com/>
- **Good Chance Theatre** – <https://www.goodchance.org.uk/theatres-what-we-do>
- **The Bunker's** Breathe – a partnership with Childline <https://www.bunkertheatre.com/whats-on/breathe/about>
- **Birmingham Hippodrome** - Aero Breaks <https://www.birminghamhippodrome.com/aerobreaks-break-dance-workshops/>



- **Contact Manchester and Battersea Arts Centre – Makers of Change**
https://www.bac.org.uk/content_category/3381/young_people/the_agency_1525

Partnerships

3. **Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how are partnerships across sectors improving outcomes or realising new potential?**

Strong and innovative partnerships enable theatres to develop. Whether commercial, voluntary or public; partnerships can result in more opportunities to develop new work, reach new audiences and communities, and improve business resilience.

Innovative partnership working includes:

- **Bolton Octagon's** work with its local **Housing** Association -
<https://octagonbolton.co.uk/get-involved/young-people/willows-youth-theatre/>
- **Royal and Derngate** working with **education** providers to be the first free school with a focus on arts and creativity <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-37720037>
- **The New Wolsey** is a member of the New Anglia **LEP** <https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Culture-Drives-Growth-FINAL-web-version.pdf>

Theatres are also part of partnership initiatives such as:

- **Hearts for the Arts**, which is delivered by UK Theatre. Nominations to the Awards highlight examples of initiatives by theatre companies. Those such as **Walk the Plank** <http://walktheplank.co.uk/about-us/> working with Manchester city council <http://forthearts.org.uk/manchester-city-council-manchester-day/>. This is one of the projects nominated in the category of Best Local Authority Arts Project Encouraging Community Cohesion.
- The Improving Places report 'highlights how partnerships between Culture and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have a major positive effect on the places in which we live, work and play.' <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/Cultural/-/Projects/BIDsProject.aspx>.

Norwich, Winchester, Better Bankside London, Liverpool, Southbank and Lancaster BIDs all include theatres.

- We have encouraged theatres to be part of the AHRC's **Creative Clusters** Programme <https://ahrc.ukri.org/newsevents/news/shortlist-announced-after-huge-demand-to-be-involved-in-creative-industries-clusters-programme/>
 - Boroughs of culture including the **London borough of Culture** and **Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture**
4. **Reflecting on your own experience, or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, what does an effective pool of funding and financing as well as income opportunities for the voluntary and community sector look like?**



Funding through public sources such as the Arts Councils or Local Government is at the heart of theatre and the performing arts, and their work with civil society and communities. Theatres across the country rely on a mixed economy model, using public funding to generate further earned or contributed income. Public funding is often the catalyst for further investment. It allows the sector to try new work, and to support educational and community projects.

As public funding is under such pressure theatre organisations are finding new and creative ways to respond to challenges. Many are supported by local businesses, or forming partnerships with Higher Education, or finding new investment models.

Arts Council England and The Creative Industries Federation's '*How public investment in arts contributes to growth in the creative industries*' report gives a number of good examples of how public funding pump primes successful productions and economic growth:

'Without two years of development by the Royal Shakespeare Company, there would have been no *Les Misérables* as a West End staple. The Arts Council gave small grants to organisations on a street in Hull that will now be at the heart of its year as UK City of Culture; private investment followed. Choreographer Matthew Bourne's company received £3 million in project grants in the last decade but returned £12 million to the Treasury.'

<https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/publications/how-public-investment-arts-contributes-growth-creative-industries>

5. Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how are new investment models unlocking new potential and partnerships?

The following are examples of how theatres have unlocked new investment models and partnerships:

- **The Bush** - has successfully used planning Section 106. In the case of the Bush, the Council decided that the s106 would involve investment in cultural infrastructure, providing the £1m to ensure that the Bush's redevelopment could be realised. A number of local developers also funded their project directly – including Westfield, Stanhope Plc and Mitsui Fudosan UK.
- **HOME** has events programmed throughout the year suited for University students 'from Introductions and Q&As to short courses and showcase opportunities' <https://homemcr.org/about/work/engagement/universities/>. They are also supported by non arts organisations such as Manchester Airport, One Manchester and First.

HOME are not alone in working with local Universities, another example is **Derby Theatre** and the University of Derby <https://www.derby.ac.uk/arts/learning-theatre/>

- **Wiltshire Creative** – has been created from three pre-existing arts organisations, Salisbury Arts Centre, Salisbury International Arts Festival and Salisbury Playhouse to form one called Wiltshire Creative to offer a refreshed and meaningful programme to the people of Salisbury and beyond. In addition, they have worked closely with the council to help them achieve their key objectives of promoting community inclusivity through: offering a Stage 65 Youth Theatre group at Exeter House School for children with special educational needs; volunteering opportunities at the theatre; Mind the Gap, their drama



group for older people; and through their work with young people both in and outside the building, including those who are vulnerable in some way.

- **Ovalhouse** are letting people use their space and facilities as a pop-up office for a small fee <http://www.ovalhouse.com/creative-workspace>
 - **Kent Country Council** have used procurement contracts to support arts and culture <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/public-services/cultural-commissioning-programme><http://neweconomics.org/2016/05/the-art-of-commissioning/>
6. **Where is there the greatest potential for the future development of investment models for civil society?**

In addition to those examples given above in 'partnerships' section, the following are strong examples of where theatres and arts organisations have suggested and in some cases launched new investment models:

- **Culture Central's** (Birmingham) Cultural Investment Enquiry <https://culturecentral.co.uk/index.php/actions/supercoolTools/downloadFile?id=681>
- **Waltham Forest Borough Council** - Discretionary Rate Relief Policy 2018 available particularly for those in the creative industries <https://walthamforest.gov.uk/content/discretionary-rate-relief-policy-2018>
- **Creative United** - <http://www.creativeunited.org.uk/> and their financial products
- **NESTA's** matched crowdfunding pilot <http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/arts-and-heritage-matched-crowdfunding-pilot>
- In the **Creative industries sector deal** Peter Bazalgette called for access to finance
- **The Creative Industries Federation** report *Routes to Finance* <http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/322389/creative-industries-routes-to-finance.pdf>

Place

7. **Reflecting on your own experience or examples in the UK or abroad, how have local people, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and decision makers worked together successfully to break down barriers in our communities and build a common sense of shared identity, belonging and purpose?**

Theatres encourage a strong sense of place, stimulating local growth and developing areas, offering employment, and through attracting visitors to areas. Businesses and infrastructure, including restaurants and transport develop around theatres - from the MAC Birmingham 'a living room to the city,' to Chester's Storyhouse which has been cleverly architecturally designed to bring people with a wide range of interests together.

There are many examples of how theatres and theatre work can help foster place making, bringing communities together and sharing stories and experiences:



- **Nottingham Playhouse's #Refugeeswelcome** - <https://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/whats-on/drama/refugeeswelcome/>
- Bristol's **ACTA Theatre** 'engages people without privilege, who are not connected to the cultural life of Bristol – isolated older people; migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; vulnerable young people; disabled people; people living outside the City Centre.' <https://www.acta-bristol.com/about-us/>
- Newcastle Under Lyme's **New Vic Theatre's** *Borderlines* 'is the award-winning initiative using theatre in social contexts. It works regionally, nationally and internationally, and is acknowledged as a national model for the ways theatre can be used to work within the community. It uses theatre to help people find new and positive ways to understand themselves, their communities and their responsibilities. It challenges destructive and anti-social behaviour, builds self-awareness and self-worth and develops positive attitudes.' <http://www.newvictheatre.org.uk/education-and-community/borderlines/>
- **Lyric Hammersmith** provides free theatre tickets to school children. This helps the theatre be part of the community and is one way in which children are introduced to their local theatre <https://lyric.co.uk/our-home/hammersmith-locals/free-schools-tickets/>
- **The Albany's** Board has members of its community on it. This helps the theatre integrate with the community and be close to issues <https://www.thealbany.org.uk/about/29/Board-of-Trustees>
- **Minack** – is a big tourist attraction in Cornwall so they 'work with St Levan Parish Council, the Porthcurno Valley Partnership and the Porthcurno Resident's Association to address local issues.' One of the things they work with them on is the Landscape and Infrastructure plan to address issues (including traffic related issues) and also a Passport to Porthcurno plan to try and better understand visitors' motivations and improve their experience <https://www.minack.com/extras/sustainability/>.
- **Northern Stage** – *The Last Ship* reflects and tells a story familiar to shipping communities, bringing them together and it is currently touring <https://www.thelastshipmusical.co.uk>
- **Manchester International Festival** – worked with artist Jeremy Deller on the opening of This is Manchester, using an elevated catwalk in the city's centre, walked only by 150 residents <https://inews.co.uk/essentials/jeremy-dellers-parade-manchester-emotional-tribute-city-people/>. In addition, *We need to talk* invites 'audiences to consider and debate today's hot-button topics' <http://mif.co.uk/previous-festivals/mif17/interdependence-we-need-to-talk/>.
- **Miracle Theatre's** play *Tin* is about a mining community – they used live to digital to take this important piece of work to other communities with a history of mining <https://miracletheatre.co.uk/shows/tin-movie/>