

# Creative\*Future

Birmingham's Strategy for Children,  
Young People and Culture

Your  
Pledge



# Introduction

## Creative Future I & II

**A Creative Future, Birmingham's strategy for children, young people and culture\***, reflects a shared vision for what cultural provision for children and young people in our city can and should be. It is a framework which was developed in close collaboration with a wide range of partners, agencies, young people, parents and carers from across the city and it embraces everything from pre-school experience of the arts and culture through to creative employment. The strategy considers the needs of young people of all backgrounds as well as recognising the enormous value and potential of their cultural contribution to the future of our city.

**A Creative Future** was first developed in response to the introduction of the Children's Act 2006, and articulated the vital role that the city's arts sector plays in supporting young people's enjoyment, wellbeing and success. It identified four roles that children and young people should have the right to occupy in their engagement with the arts and culture – audiences, participants, creators and leaders. The strategy also described a model for supporting young people's progression through cultural engagement from first experiences through to independent engagement.

The strategy was further developed in 2009 to extend the reach of the **Creative Future** model to the wider cultural sector, increasing the focus on 'cold spots' and filling gaps in provision.

As a model it has been widely embraced by the cultural sector and has been very effective in improving the quality of arts activity for, with and by young people, city-wide.

**\*For a Creative Future III culture means arts (including craft) museums, libraries, archives and heritage**

## Creative Future III

This third iteration of the strategy builds on the strengths and achievements to date and extends the age range to include young people up to the age of 25 years. This reflects an increased emphasis on supporting young people into training and employment as pledged in Birmingham's Youth Promise guarantee.\*

It considers the many significant changes that have taken place within culture and education, the public sector and technical innovation and seeks to deliver new ways of working to ensure that we address issues of fairness and that cultural engagement and development are central to the lives of all young people.

The third phase of strategic development began in 2013 with the hosting of Birmingham's first Youth Arts Summit, an opportunity for young people from across the city to let us know what they felt was good about the arts and culture in the city and what they felt was missing. This principle of supporting young people to have a voice in the cultural planning of the city is integral to the revised **Creative Future** model and through this strategy we will seek to find effective, new and sustainable ways of continuing this dialogue.

The **Creative Future** strategy also recognises the importance of safeguarding inclusion. It seeks to ensure that cultural provision reflects the diverse backgrounds of children and young people in Birmingham. Similarly it seeks to recognise, and where possible remove, barriers to access in order to ensure that all children, regardless of their circumstances, have access to high quality cultural provision. These principles apply across all areas of the strategy.

**\*Birmingham City Council's universal Birmingham's Youth Promise guarantees young people from 14 to 25 years an offer of employment education, training, apprenticeship or experience of work within four months of leaving education, employment or training.**

## **The Creative Future model of engagement and progression**

**A Creative Future** considers young people's cultural needs with respect to universal provision - accessible to all; targeted activity - providing opportunities for those with additional needs and specialist provision to support young people with identified talent\*

The strategy continues to promote the four key roles that children and young people should have the opportunity to experience, they are defined as follows:

**As an audience member a young person should have the opportunity to experience a range of high quality work, experience the work of their peers, develop critical skills and vocabulary and make informed choices**

**As a participant a young person should have the opportunity to work with skilled practitioners, take part with others and improve their cultural skills**

**As a creator a young person should have the opportunity to make original work and share work with a range of audiences**

**As a leader a young person should have the opportunity to organise, produce and manage their own work and the work of others**

**A Creative Future** promotes a path of progression from first experiences through a choice of organised activities to independent engagement and, where appropriate, vocational training and employment. The strategy will not only support this model of progression with effective signposting but also, with cross-sector support, communicate it, and the city's cultural resources and wider creative economy that underpins it, effectively to the young people of Birmingham. The strategic commitments recognise that progression in any area may not be linear and that young people will choose their own routes and timescales depending on motivation, opportunity and resources.

**\*In line with Birmingham's Youth Promise model of support**

**Delivering a Creative Future for the young people of Birmingham requires support from organisations, services and settings representative of the whole city ecology. Birmingham City Council can and will support the priorities outlined below through specific requirements built into its funding agreements with organisations both large and small. Where priorities cannot be met through these means we will commission targeted and specialist provision for young people. Beyond this we will help to facilitate a sharing of information and understanding of best practice with our partners across the city.**

**BCC is now actively asking for a commitment from all organisations and services, with a role in supporting young people's cultural participation, to sign up to the Creative Future pledge and help us to develop, deliver and communicate a whole city action plan.**

## **A Creative Future: Strategic Commitments**

**The Creative Future Pledge** involves signing up to six commitments and, within the business planning process, identifying short, medium and long-term goals that support these priorities and contribute to high quality cultural provision for all young people, including those with additional needs and/or identified talent.

- + All children and young people in Birmingham should have the opportunity to experience high quality arts and cultural provision as audience members, participants, creators and leaders**

In order to support this commitment we will work with our partners to develop, commission and/or promote:

- mapping of arts and cultural provision and take-up across Birmingham
- programmes which close gaps in provision and accessibility and ensure that young people have the opportunity to work with a range of arts and cultural specialists across a breadth of art forms and in local neighbourhoods

- targeted provision for NEET young people, those with additional needs, including learning and physical disabilities, and specialist provision for young people with identified talent\*
- increased access to high quality early years cultural provision
- increased access to high quality cultural provision for families
- opportunities for increased networking and training for professionals working with the arts and young people

**+ All children and young people should have access to high quality cultural education in schools and other educational settings**

In order to support this commitment we will work with our partners to develop, commission and/or promote:

- robust networks which enable meaningful dialogue and effective partnerships between schools and arts providers
- high quality arts and cultural opportunities for young people outside of mainstream education
- understanding of effective use of arts and culture in schools in support of the curriculum

**+ All children and young people should have access to and understanding of a clear progression pathway for broadening and deepening arts and cultural engagement from 0 – 25 years\***

In order to support this commitment we will work with our partners to develop, commission and/or promote:

- effective use of online communication resources and other innovations to support an integrated approach to information for young people and help young people to navigate through creative opportunities
- robust signposting for young people between arts organisations and to wider youth provision
- digital and physical spaces for young emerging artists to experiment and share their artistic practice with others

**+ All children and young people should have access to high quality creative careers advice, education and guidance and support for accessing employment opportunities within the creative industries\***

In order to support this commitment we will work with our partners to develop, commission and/or promote:

- support for programmes and initiatives which enable greater understanding among young people and teaching professionals of employment (including self-employment and entrepreneurialism) training and development opportunities within the cultural and creative industries, including more effective provision of high quality, impartial creative careers advice
- a co-ordinated approach to engaging higher education and creative businesses which supports young people's access to and understanding of placement, apprenticeship and sustainable employment opportunities within the cultural and creative sector

**+ All children and young people should have the opportunity to receive recognition and accreditation for their achievements within the arts\***

In order to support this commitment we will work with our partners to develop, commission and/or promote:

- programmes of arts activity that enable young people to work towards accreditation within the national framework of qualifications, including consistent, high quality, city-wide delivery of the young people's Arts Award
- programmes that celebrate young people's achievements within arts and culture and offer platforms to share success

**+ All children and young people should be able to have a meaningful voice in cultural planning and provision in Birmingham**

In order to support this commitment we will work with our partners to develop, commission and/or promote:

- opportunities for young people to occupy board positions on Birmingham Arts organisations
- new ways of involving young people in decision making and commissioning processes, on a local and city-wide level, including the establishment of a diverse and representative youth arts panel
- initiatives which increase understanding of best practice in youth-led approaches among the young people's workforce

# Footnote

The following were consulted in developing the draft strategy. In addition, the public were consulted using BeHeard.

- 120 young people aged 7 to 19 years from Birmingham's primary and secondary schools attending the Birmingham Youth Arts Summit 2013 and 90 young people participating in the programme of Birmingham Youth Arts Summit outreach consultation.
- 160 young people aged 16 to 25 years attending The Big Debate event as part of the Birmingham Youth Arts Summit 2013.
- 20 young people aged 16 – 25 years, who formed The Birmingham Youth Arts Summit Steering Group
- Arts Connect West Midlands
- Birmingham Arts Partnership
- West Midlands Creative Alliance
- Services for Education, Music Service
- Hillstone Primary School
- 4 in 5 Consortium (focused on the needs of Young People with learning disabilities)
- Mayfield Special School
- Birmingham University
- Birmingham City University
- Birmingham Park View Trust
- Young people attending Creative Future youth sub-group consultation sessions
- Young Carers engaged through Spurgeons
- Schools and other educational and arts organisations attending consultation sessions delivered through A Creative Future 3 steering sub-group process

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