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Creative Hubs: Understanding the New Economy

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Creative Hubs: Lighthouses for the new urban economy

A dynamic ecosystem of creative spaces and communities has developed over the last 10 years. They are guiding and supporting thousands of creative ventures, but are still largely misunderstood and often undervalued. The word 'hub' has become a universal but slippery term to label centres of creative enterprise, representing many different shapes, sizes and agendas.

This report has been commissioned to better understand their diverse value, processes and motivations and in doing so, analyse how best to support and stimulate the wider creative economy they are rooted in, particularly in times of political and financial uncertainty.

We were delighted to work with Prof. Andy Pratt, Prof. Jon Dovey and their teams at City University of London, University of West of England, REACT and Watershed, which represent dynamic thinking across practice and academia.

Their research reveals that hubs have become nests for freelancers and micro SME's to gather, connect and collaborate. They are lighthouses for forgotten areas of the city, gathering people in unused spaces and connecting previously invisible communities. Hubs not only form communities, they also develop a structured serendipity that enables people to connect in ways they hadn't before, inspiring new cross disciplinary collaborations, community engagements and modes of working.

The British Council has been working with hundreds of hubs across the globe over the last four years, co-developing support programmes with their convenors and members. We commissioned this research in response to requests for greater understanding of their value – from the hubs and their stakeholders. We hope it provides useful learning for city councils and other policymakers, as well as practical tools for hubs to identify and articulate their assets and impact. Although the report focuses on hubs in UK cities, we believe the principles, understanding the unique proposition of a hub and its relation to the local creative community, are relevant everywhere. We offer it as part of our ongoing contribution to insights and resources about the global creative economy.

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02 Not all creative hubs are the same. They are often embedded in particular cultural contexts, they support specialised creative practices and develop their own value systems.

03 Success is not defined in the same way by every hub. Understanding the unique proposition of a hub, and its relation to the local creative community, underpins a successful outcome.

04 The creative hub is more than the sum of its parts. It offers creative micro businesses the chance to aggregate with others in order to access crucial resources such as tools, specialist services, or inspiration to help develop projects and businesses. Hubs represent a collective approach to coping with uncertain social, cultural and economic environments and processes of creativity and innovation.

05 Our research shows that creative hubs can produce a wide range of impacts including start-up ventures, jobs, new products and services, future investment (public and commercial), talent development, regional talent retention, informal education and engagement, training, urban regeneration, research and development, new networks, innovative models of organisation, quality of life enhancements and resilience.

06 Successful creative hubs are embedded in local cultural and economic ecosystems and are sustained by the respect of participants and audiences.

07 The boundaries of a creative hub are porous. The activities a hub accommodates can range across the for and not-for-profit, the formal and the informal, and production and consumption. With the right support, hubs can represent the best type of open innovation and an example of the creative commons.

08 Singular and reductive evaluation of creative hubs is unhelpful. Evaluation must relate to the constitutional value systems of the creative hub. Simple quantitative metrics will always need to be balanced by a range of measures of quality and value. Hubs, and their funders and stakeholders, need to do more work to develop convincing evaluation methods that reflect the hub's own integrity. We stress that hubs should be evaluated both in terms of outputs and processes.

09 This report distances itself from a rigid template model, characterised as top-down, building-led development. We found that successful hub experiences relied more on the particular creative and governance contexts. Hubs are characterised best by the ways of doing and value systems that underpin them. Getting the soft infrastructure right can overcome a variety of hard infrastructure challenges.

10 The management and operation of a hub is primarily about the careful selection and compatibility of tenants and the 'animation' of the interaction between the actors and activities based on a clear understanding of the values of the hub.

Part 1: Introduction

1.1 **Introduction**

This report concerns the creative hub, an idea that is commonly associated with other terms such as the creative city and the creative economy. Our aim in this report is to sift the hyperbole and slippery usage of the term 'creative hub' (and similar but different terms such as creative quarter, creative district, etc.) and refocus those tasked with making hubs successful operations. We review the history and usage of the idea of the hub, and the particularity of the UK experience, and consider which aspects of this could be translated into other settings; and crucially, which should not. However, we caution against a one-size-fits-all approach to creative hubs, especially one that may seek to generalise from what are particular, albeit enlightening, UK experiences.

This report has a three-part structure. In the first section, we tackle the tricky question of definitions, meanings and functions of creative hubs. It is important to note that this is a contentious and divisive field, but an established foundation is a prerequisite for any discussion of hubs. We look at a brief history of creative hubs in which we place them in their economic and cultural context. We go on to provide a processual tool that assists hubs in defining their emergent identities by expressing the particular values and impacts that they produce.

In the second section, we look at the day-to-day practice of creative hubs by drawing on insights from a cross section of three contrasting hub case studies.

In Section Three of the report, we present pen portraits of hubs in 12 UK cities, and we have a collection of the various evaluation documents that hubs use for themselves. We offer this as the foundation of a learning resource that the network of hubs can use and add to, and which can be used with an extended network internationally. This material gives a sense of the diversity of the forms and experiences of hubs in the UK and shows how their particular experience and practices emerge from their local contexts.

Three important themes emerge from our study. They are specific to the nature of creative enterprises and to the wider creative economy, which alerts us to the differences between creative hubs and hi-tech, maker, new media, etc. hubs. The first is that the creative hub is more than a building and more than a network. Success depends on collaboration and exchange between its members. Second, that creative hubs are embedded in their communities and regions, their economic, cultural and social activities. Every hub is different and dependent on its local context. Third, that multi criteria evaluation of creative hubs should be used to articulate their success or failure. Identifying the things that are relevant to the hub, addressing their contradictions and finding measures for them is an important task.

1.2 **What are creative hubs?**

The 'hub', as a way of organising work, has sprung up in different sectors and various organisations in the last 10 years. The hub has become a ubiquitous idea connoting a dynamic bringing together of diverse talents, disciplines and skills to intensify innovation.

Creative hubs tend to mean all things to all people. This is not the result of a lack of clear thinking, rather a symptom of a fast changing and vibrant activity. Policymakers[1] have designated hubs 'a general term' where the precise make up differs from place to place. It is important to note that diversity is embedded in the DNA of creative hubs, and we do not seek here to establish a one-size-fits-all definition. Generally, hubs have been understood as places that provide a space for work, participation and consumption:

> " [m]ost will have a property element, but they will rarely be a single, isolated building. Within its neighbourhood, the hub may occupy one space, but its support activities will range across a variety of local institutions and networks. But importantly, they support communities of practice, not for profit and commercial, large and small, part-time and full-time activity – they are not just incubators for small businesses, but have a wider remit. Creative Hubs will form a network that will drive the growth of creative industries at the local and regional level, providing more jobs, more education and more opportunities…[2]

[1] London Development Agency (LDA) (2003). Creative London: Vision and plan. London: London Development Agency. Available at: https://creativeindustrieslondon.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/creative-london.pdf

[2] ibid., pp34

As an example of what these places for 'work, participation and consumption' might look like, the British Council[3] have proposed that, 'a creative hub is a place, either physical or virtual, which brings creative people together. It is a convenor, providing space and support for networking, business development and community engagement within the creative, cultural and tech sectors'. Common usage does not differentiate between incubators, accelerators, labs and hubs where they discuss the proliferation of these organisations[4]. This leads to confusion, particularly as the taxonomy is based on 'hubs', not on the type: creative, innovative, science, and so on; creative hubs are a singularity. The European Creative Hubs Forum[5], developed and curated by the British Council and ADDICT of Lisbon, defines creative hubs as 'an infrastructure or venue that uses a part of its leasable or available space for networking, organisational and business development within the cultural and creative industries sectors'. In the same vein, others[6] have identified six components that they state are usually involved in the creation of creative hubs. These are incubators, specialist cultural service providers for companies and artists, virtual platforms, development agencies, co-working facilities and clusters.

It is clear that the everyday definition of a creative hub, is one that is generic (the term 'creative' could be substituted by other terms such as 'high tech'), and is defined by its infrastructure form (the building). We are advocating a more nuanced and practice based understanding of hubs. The diversity of hubs enables practitioners to fit their process (creative activity) to a context (regional community). The British Council's Creative Hub Toolkit[7] offers a useful 'first cut' of six possible variants:

Studio

Small collective of individuals and/or small businesses in a co-working space.

Centre

Large-scale building which may have other assets such as a cafe, bar, cinema, maker space, shop, exhibition space.

Network

Dispersed group of individuals or businesses – tends to be sector or place specific.

Cluster

Co-located creative individuals and businesses in a geographic area.

Online Platform

Uses only online methods – website/social media to engage with a dispersed audience.

Alternative

Focused on experimentation with new communities, sectors and financial models.

The message we want to convey concerns the range of diversity and specialisation of creative hubs. We argue that policy and practice needs to begin with this perspective, not with a generic or idealised 'hub'. The immediate consequence is that any particular definition is likely to be a place holder that is filled by new cultural activities as hubs co-evolve with their contexts. As we will point out, much of what makes a creative hub 'work' – that is, how it operates – is hidden from view in an idealised version. However, our message is that this process is the key to unlocking the lessons that hubs have to offer. We point out that the concern with property provision is, in part, a historically specificity of post-industrial urban Britain and the nature of public funding organisations. The latter point simply concerns the division of capital and revenue funding streams.

Political and strategic mobilisation can generate a capital project within a political or administrative cycle. However, revenue funding for such projects commonly comes from a separate budget and has to weather the twists and turns of administrative favour throughout the life of a building. This is a major day to day operational headache. The everyday operation of the hubs entails a constant juggling of the various KPIs of stakeholders (that are multiple and changeable as a funding cycle changes). As the cultural sector, in particular the arts sector, has found to its cost, revenue funding fills and animates

[3] British Council (2015) Creative Hub Toolkit, http://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org/blog/15/06/28/creative-hubkit-made-hubs-emerging-hubs

[4] Pickford, J. (2013). Specialist hubs spring up around London. *Financial Times* March 24th, 2013. Available at: www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c95f8ff4-8b42-11e2-8fcf-00144feabdc0.html

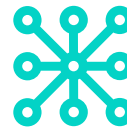[5] European Creative Hubs Forum, (2015) http://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org/projects/eur/

[6] Sedini, C.; Vignati, A.; Zurlo, F.(2013). Conceiving a (New) definition of hub for the development of a transnational network for creative companies. Available at: http://eujournal.org/files/journals/1/books/Cracow2013.pdf

[7] British Council (2015) Creative Hub Toolkit, http://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org/blog/15/06/28/creative-hubkit-made-hubs-em erging-hubs/

the buildings. It is literally the lifeblood of cultural projects. However, it is the capital funding that attracts headline attention. The risk is that these funding streams become dislocated. Achieving a balance – that fits the ethics of the hub – between soft and hard infrastructure and the funding streams is the critical issue faced by hub managers. As we will see, some of the surprising and seemingly unorthodox approaches to management of hubs are about finding solutions to these challenges.

1.3 Differentiating Hubs and Clusters

It is important to distinguish between creative hubs and creative clusters (this is not merely a semantic issue; it is about identifying processes)[8]. The idea of the cluster is an instrument of industrial policy – by co-locating businesses that are part of a similar value constellation, productivity is intensified. A sister form of the industrial district (or cluster), is the cultural or creative cluster. The networking and spatial elements fuse and overlap with the notion of the creative or cultural ecosystem. This is an interdependency of a diversity of cultural activities inside and outside the building, and between activities that run on different time cycles[9]. The critical element is the governance that sustains and feeds, and provides resilience and renewal, across the life and death of individual projects and activities.

Creative hubs have been unhelpfully conflated with other types of industrial agglomeration that are closely aligned to the cluster concept. For instance, they have been understood as synonymous with cultural quarters[10]; clusters of economic activity[11]; as clustered districts within the city[12]; creative zones and buildings made up of 'multiple creative and cultural industries'. The common approach to clustering and hubs focuses on their spatial characteristics, and how these affect their operational and organisational roles (whether formal or informal) within the creative economy in, primarily, cities or city regions. This way of understanding them also aligns closely with 'creative city' policy which is also primarily concerned with the physical environment of cities and the cultural milieu. These approaches seem to us to align with industrial policy cluster theory – co-location of similar

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[8] Virani, T. E.; Malem, W. (2015). Re-articulating the creative hub concept as a model for business support in the local creative economy: the case of Mare Street in Hackney. Creativeworks London Working Paper Series Number 12. Available at: https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/xmlui/handle/123456789/7251

[9] Markusen, A., et al., (2011). *California's Arts and Cultural Ecology*. San Francisco: James Irvine Foundation.

[10] Oakley, K. (2004). Not so cool Britannia the role of the creative industries in economic development. *International journal of cultural studies*, 7(1), 67-77.

[11] Evans, G. (2009). Creative cities, creative spaces and urban policy. *Urban studies*, 46(5-6), 1003-1040.

[12] Bagwell, S. (2008). Creative clusters and city growth. *Creative Industries Journal*, 1(1), 31-46.

business will increase productivity for cities and districts. By contrast we emphasise, not the location, but the nature and quality of the productive relationships that occur inside the hub itself.

Hubs do tend to be localised in their activities; but the 'local' is an urban cultural system that extends beyond a single building, or network of buildings. However, becoming a 'hub' of a network is an act of governance beyond the simple act of naming or designating a hub. Which networks are linked, and which forms of cultural production are supported and connected, becomes one of the defining characteristics of the hub and also self-defines its mission. We would stress that there is always a tension between externally defined mission or KPIs of multiple stakeholders and the day to day drivers of hub users. One needs to understand, in each case, how a hub navigates this complex field.

1.4 Why are hubs growing?

The UK has played a pioneering role in creative hub development. This is not due to any superiority of Britain; it is more closely linked to the particular circumstances of economic growth and decline. The industrial decline and restructuring of the last quarter of the 20th century hit traditional industrial centres of cities badly. Key industries and employment were lost, and the economic, and then social base, of cities was damaged. Many of the innovative urban regeneration programmes sought to respond to these challenges. It was notable that some innovative city authorities, mindful of youth unemployment and the needs to radically restructure economies and support communities, turned to consider the possibilities of the creative economy (or cultural industries as they were then termed). This period was one of considerable political tension in the UK between national economic policy and urban policy. The legacy was that creative industries and the cultural sector had its champions and its experimental policy labs at the city level, and was framed by urban regeneration. The Site Gallery case study below shows how this legacy of post-industrial urban redevelopment in a city like Sheffield has created a rich context for growth of the creative hub.

In the 2000s, New Labour's Creative Industries initiatives led to the growth of workspaces for culture and creative industries business. With public support, many old vacant factory buildings were redeveloped as studio spaces for creative professionals and businesses[13]. In the last decade there has been continual flowering of 'art factories' and 'cultural factories'[14]. These are, in part, driven by public authorities' desire to resume derelict industrial space, to regenerate and repopulate the inner city, to draw the population back, and renew tax revenues. Arguably, the culture space business has acquired its own dynamic, and provision is increasingly coming online, in the UK and in other major cities in the world, as a private property development model.

The momentum for space and business support in general has been growing, as has a parallel concern that something specific is needed for the cultural and creative industries. A number of reports published recently give us an overview of the three emerging factors.

First, shifts in labour markets led to a rising number of businesses in sole proprietorship with no employees. In 2015, there were around 3.3 million businesses in sole proprietorships[15]). The majority of business population growth has been among non-employing businesses (of all types). They accounted for 90 per cent of total growth since 2000.
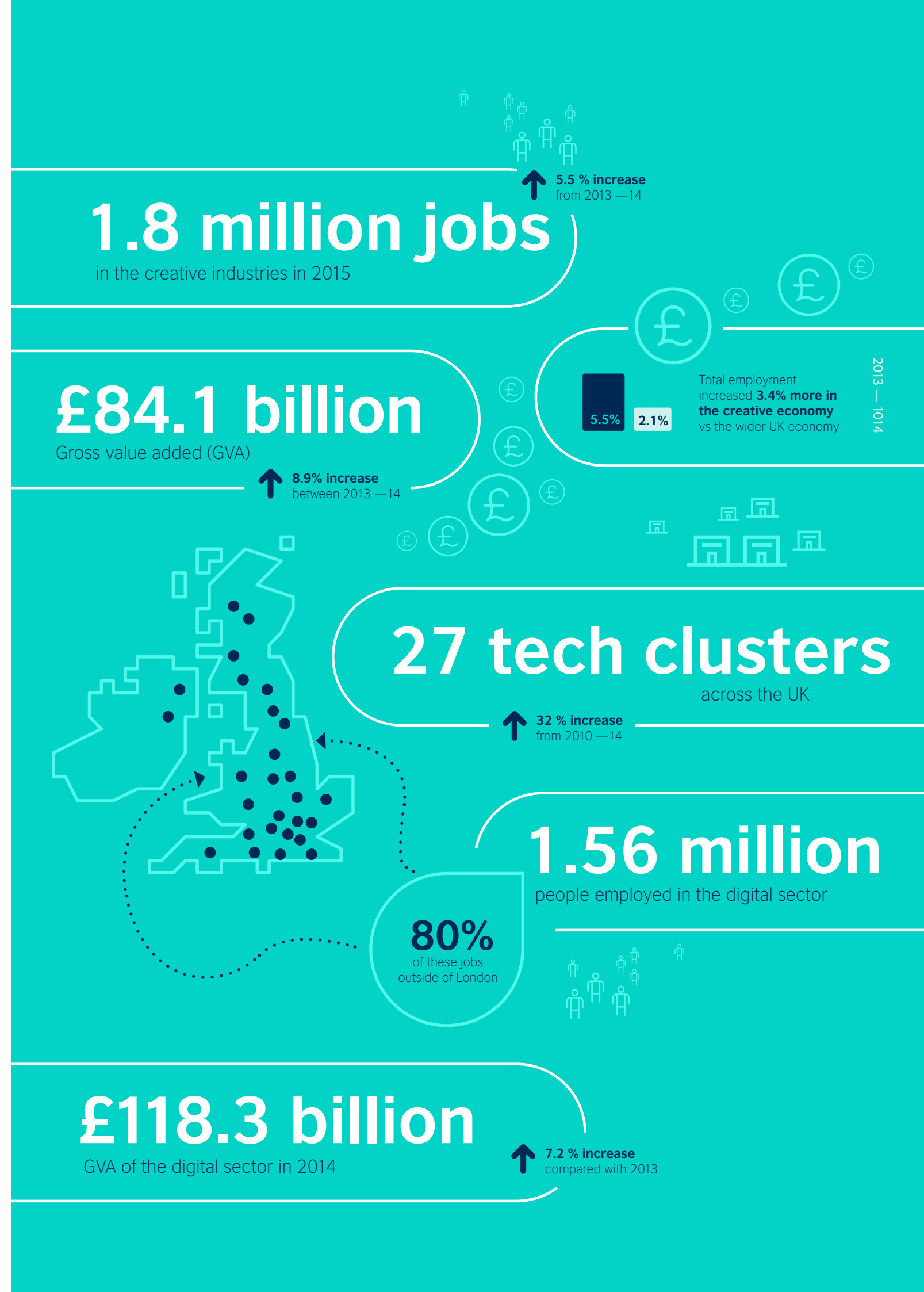
A second factor is the persistent growth of culture and creative industries as well as in creative employment outside of culture and creative industries[16]. In 2015, there were 1.8 million jobs in the creative industries, an increase of 5.5 per cent between 2013 and 2014. Total employment in the creative economy across the UK increased by five per cent between 2013 and 2014 (now at 2.8 million jobs), compared with a 2.1 per cent increase in the wider UK economy. The gross value added (GVA) for the creative industries was £84.1 billion in 2014 and accounted for 5.2 per cent of the UK economy. Creative industries GVA increased by 8.9 per cent between 2013 and 2014 (and were only outperformed by construction with 10.2 per cent), compared to 4.6 per cent for the whole of the UK.

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[13] Evans, G. (2009). Creative cities, creative spaces and urban policy. *Urban studies, 46* (5-6), 1003-1040.

[14] Moreton, S. (2013). The promise of the affordable artist's studio: governing creative spaces in London. Environment and Planning A, 45(2), 421- 437

[15] UK GOVERNMENT (2015). *Business population estimate for the UK and regions: 2015 statistical release* [Online]. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467443 /bpe_2015_statistical_release.pdf

[16] UK GOVERNMENT (2016). C*reative Industries Economic Estimates* [Online]. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/494927 /Creative_Industries_Economic_Estimates_-_January_2016.pdf

1.8 million jobs
in the creative industries in 2015

5.5 % increase
from 2013 —14

£84.1 billion
Gross value added (GVA)

8.9% increase
between 2013 —14

5.5%   2.1%

Total employment increased **3.4% more in the creative economy** vs the wider UK economy

2013 — 1014

27 tech clusters
across the UK

32 % increase
from 2010 —14

1.56 million
people employed in the digital sector

80%
of these jobs outside of London

£118.3 billion
GVA of the digital sector in 2014

7.2 % increase
compared with 2013

However, it is worth noting that hubs aligning themselves with the newer creative and digital innovation sector have less recourse to the well-established funding routes for cultural work and are therefore pioneering new forms of crowd sourced and commons based investment and constitutional models.

The importance of describing the scale, growth and history of the British creative hubs is to understand how they have been shaped by their histories and local conditions. Foundation stories are always important in understanding a particular hub. In other places and times, and in various legislative and administrative environments, hubs might respond in different ways. The takeaway lesson lies less in enumerating the various types or instances of creative hubs, but rather in understanding the types of processes and values that shape and govern their day to day activities. Hubs have each emerged from particular histories and circumstances. Hubs thus take on emergent properties, that is, they are forged in the experience of practice, not predetermined.

1.5 **What do creative hubs do?**

Recently, scholars have focused more on these activities and processes rather than the physical infrastructural make up of creative hubs[18]. For instance, work on knowledge hubs and knowledge clusters suggests that it is the hub's capabilities in the exchange, transfer and facilitation of knowledge that is their primary focus[19]. This work states that knowledge hubs fulfil three major functions: 'to generate knowledge, to transfer knowledge to sites of application, and to transmit knowledge to other people through education and training'[20]. They define knowledge hubs as 'local innovation systems, [that are also] nodes in networks of knowledge production and sharing'. They are predominantly characterised by high internal and external networking and knowledge sharing capabilities where they also act as meeting points of communities[21].

Similarly, other work states that creative hubs tend to be administered by 'borough (or municipal) level and publicly funded economic development agencies who work together

with a variety of private actors and whose primary focus is to offer services and facilities for cultural entrepreneurs'[22]. Thus activities within hubs are focused on primarily providing cultural entrepreneurs (usually in the form of micro businesses and SMEs) in the creative sector a number of tailored services that they may not have had access to if they were merely part of a cluster or on their own[23]. Similarly, the European Creative Hubs Forum (2015) has outlined a number of activities that they believe a creative hub should engage in such as business support, networking, research, communication and talent support[24].

A further type of hub is a hybrid form of co-operative and community development that resists easy classification as for, or not-for-profit activity. Roco in Sheffield is a co-operative set up to support the growth and development of the creative industries in the city. Constituted as a community benefit company, Roco is owned by its shareholder members and, as a social enterprise, all profits are put back into the business.

The differentiation of hubs above, points to a diversity of value systems, practices, funders and stakeholders, as well as experience and expectations of return on investment (in terms of time, or scale). In each case we can explore a unique balance of components that has been made to work, one which matches the local ethos of the hub and its community.

[18] Virani, T. E.; Malem, W. (2015). Re-articulating the creative hub concept as a model for business support in the local creative economy: the case of Mare Street in Hackney. Creativeworks London Working Paper Series Number 12. Available at: https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/xmlui/handle/123456789/7251

[19] Evers, H. D.; Nordin, R.; Nienkemper, P. (2010). Knowledge cluster formation in Peninsular Malaysia: The emergence of an epistemic landscape. *Social Science Research Network*. Available at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1691008

[20] Ibid

[21] Ibid

[22] Van Heur, B. (2009). The clustering of creative networks: between myth and reality. *Urban Studies,* 46(8), 1531-15

[23] Virani, T. E.; Malem, W. (2015). Re-articulating the creative hub concept as a model for business support in the local creative economy: the case of Mare Street in Hackney. Creativeworks London Working Paper Series Number 12. Available at: https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/xmlui/handle/123456789/7251

[24] European Creative Hubs Forum (2015). Available at: http://creativehubs.org/

Part 2: Diagnostics

2.1 What is the impact of a creative hub?

We are now in a better position to reflect upon the UK creative hub experience and the extent to which lessons may, or may not, be transferable to other situations. There are a number of important points to make at the outset. Namely, that the building is necessary, but itself does not constitute a creative hub[25]. Who owns and operates the hub may vary by place and time. However, resilient and sustainable creative hubs have a complex balance of what are, in effect, cross-subsidies that support their portfolio of activities. These hubs understand their businesses and artists, and they appreciate their developmental and immediate needs are subject to change and will vary by cultural sector. As noted below, any evaluation must take into account each hub's unique set of objectives and their interdependencies to fully appreciate their success and failure. The 'hidden work' of successful hubs is in the curation and animation of activities. These can range from social and cultural events, to bringing in ideas and provocations, to traditional business skills and development and access to specialist services (technical and financial). They also relate to the indefinable creation of artistic community. Although indefinable this involves a huge reliance on trust and reputation. Hubs earn their social capital, which is hard won, and easily lost.

2.2 A more meaningful evaluation

The novelty of its structure and organisation has shaped the idea of the creative hub as a compelling model for the support of creative production. However, this novelty does not always make it easy for potential funders, investors or policymakers to support the development of the hub in the most constructive way. Where investment (public or private) is involved, invariably the generation of a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) will be important. This brings us to the question of evaluation, which is closely related to that of output indicators such as KPIs. We can appreciate that the KPI approach, with its dependency on quantifiable outputs, can take priority in management and evaluation systems. A careful choice of KPIs determined by the hub itself is not always available. However, underpinning this, is the challenge that a sustainable and resilient creative hub is, by definition, about process in which many values are in play and many impacts at stake.

[25] Even virtual hubs need occasional meeting spaces; sometimes a virtual hub may be a precursor to a physical hub.

The policy and investment community can frequently understand the energy, agility and multi-disciplinarity of a hub environment but may have more difficulty understanding the precise nature of its productivity. It is clear that there is an exciting mix of inputs but what are the outputs? Our case studies have shown that the many kinds of value at work inside hubs produce a wide range of impacts:

- Start-up companies
- Jobs
- New products and services
- Future investment, both public and commercial
- Talent development
- Talent retention
- Informal education and engagement
- Training
- Regeneration
- Research and development
- New city, region and international networks for exchange and development
- Innovative models of organisation
- Quality of life enhancements
- Resilience

The problem for many hubs and their potential investors is how to articulate this range of impacts. Given that hubs are a relatively recent and autonomous mode of organisation with very low staff overhead in relation to overall levels of productivity, they have very little resource to devote to evaluation. We have found a lack of consistent data among hubs that show their outcomes. There are frequently records that stretch back a year or two in reports or investment prospectuses but the overall picture is of a milieu that concentrates its limited resource on getting its process right rather than evaluating its product. This is especially true for long term hub outcomes where there is almost no data beyond the anecdotal. However, the anecdotal stories were powerful even if they did not find their way into the annual accounts and reports to funders. It is ironic that these stories contain the passions of the hubs, the warp and weft of everyday hub life. Institutions value, and hubs produce, reports on the accounts. However, as far as the hubs are concerned, this is the basic, 'keeping the lights on' that creates the platform for their 'real work'. The artificial bottom line is merely a means to an end. A stimulating and successful creative hub needs

to be measured and judged in other dimensions.

There is a real need for the design of some common but flexible evaluative frameworks that would allow hubs to articulate their value in order to ensure their long term sustainability. We propose the active and situated resolution of these challenges by using a diagnostic tool (see below).

It is very clear from our case study evidence that the relationship between hubs and their beneficiaries is neither instrumental, nor transactional, but reciprocal. It is the mutuality of the relationships that creates the hub 'value proposition'. Any evaluative procedure must be based on a continuing commitment to this mutuality rather than data extraction. The model here is of a collectively owned brand supported by its alumni. The data and the stories that hub alumni can provide are actually the life blood of its future growth. The challenge is to bring these quantitative and qualitative modes into a closer correspondence.

As an initial check list, we can identify a number of headings that provide a focus for some, but not all hubs. In order to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach, and to generate trust while also capitalising on local skills, contacts and reputation, we propose a diagnostic exercise. This exercise needs to be repeated several times as the hub develops.

We propose that workshops be developed among hub members, or potential members, that interrogate what participants can offer, what they need, and what they lack in each of these areas. In short, that they have a 360 degree review of their situation. One solution does not fit all. Moreover, local adaptation (creativity and ingenuity) will be required to move an idea or concept from one context to another.

We suggest this outline of a curated discussion to help hubs identify a number of lessons about their day to day practices, and the consequences for future development. This is an iterative process that begins with the following:

01   Values

Establish the core values that create the internal coherence and identity of any given hub. Decide on the basis of those values and what key impacts you would like to evidence. What are the hub performance indicators that you would endorse?

02   Beneficiaries

Identify the key beneficiaries of your network. These may be individuals, networks of communities comprising residents, fellows, artists, trainees, interns, companies, or volunteers all of whom will constitute your alumni network. These are the sites of the real stories of change which can then be communicated to regional partners, investors and stakeholders.

03   Data collection

As part of the hub's investment in talent development, ask the network beneficiaries to agree to provide four lots of data for the hub over a period of three years - once on entry, then once annually for three years. Network members provide some baseline data when they enter the hub system. They then agree to produce an annual survey return that is run as a lightweight 20 minute online catch up once a year for three years as part of the hub alumni process. This catch up process could be combined with some kind of social event designed to share impacts back with the alumni and stakeholder community.

04   Content

Data to be collected would be largely dependent on the answers to point 1), but drawing on our list of impacts above, we would expect an annual survey to look at the following topics:

- New network connections made through the hub in terms of, for example, know-how, profile and reputation, producers, markets and audiences
- Company growth including jobs created, company turnover and incoming investment
- New product, service or artwork launches
- Artists and creative talent development evidenced by further commissions, employment and development flowing from the work undertaken in the hub

• Further training or education undertaken as a result
  of hub impact
• New publicly available research assets
• New cross-disciplinary collaborations
• Health and wellbeing impacts

This process will consolidate the hub network by maintaining a values driven conversation with its alumni that would contribute to network maintenance; and it will produce qualitative data that captures the downstream impacts of the creative hub.

Hubs will necessarily and understandably protest that this is more work than they have resources to conduct. In the short term, the development of this process will probably have to rely on a partnership between an external research and development agency (for example, the HEI sector or Innovate) and a network of hubs themselves. In the medium term, the benefits of such a system would lead to its uptake as an efficient part of hub core business that would underpin all the other evaluation, bidding and pitching processes that they undertake on a regular basis.

2.3 Beyond the UK: Embedding hubs in local communities and economies

UK creative hubs are varied. They bear the mark of the times and places of their initiation and the funding regimes that support them. They are marked by the challenge of urban regeneration and an old industrial landscape, coupled with a rapidly changing post-industrial, service and creative economy (or knowledge economy). Moreover, the time and place has been one of a burgeoning cultural economy with increased jobs, and markets, and audiences. Generally, this has been supported and encouraged by national government and concrete local policy support. Finally, this process has now been in motion for 50 years. A body of experience as to how to manage a creative hub, and the associated legal and financial solutions, has been established. Moreover, a group of hub managers have learned their trade and developed a modus operandi and a network of shared experience (often enabled by the movement of people between jobs). This is not to suggest that there is a singular experience, simply that a range of experiences have been tried, and the knowledge of them has been circulated.

All of these factors caution against simply exporting a 'UK model'[26]. The UK experience has to be forged in the experience of adversity and circumstances that were found. In a different setting the same objectives might have been approached in quite a different manner. Hubs have deployed their local tools and resources; these are as much an inheritance from a local community and/or previous industries.

One of the defining features of hubs has been their reuse of old and disused industrial buildings[27]. In other locations in the Global South, industrialisation is still in full swing, or has been by-passed at the urban level. The shrinking cities in the Global North, where space is available at low cost and cultural capital is abundant, are not echoed in the Global South. In those cities, any property that might equate to a prospective cultural hub is a pipe dream. In fact, it may need to be built from scratch.

The provision of basic infrastructure such as electricity and roads may be erratic or discontinuous. Moreover, the legitimacy of the cultural economy as an economic destination or a career may not exist. However, resources of making and labour market skills and an engaged audience may be present, but funding opportunities far less plentiful.

These challenges will need to be negotiated in situ. The principles and ways of doing and solving may be generic, but the precise details and processes will be different. Hence, the importance of using the expertise of local people to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, not by comparison with a hub in the UK, but in terms of what they want their hub to achieve for their cultural practitioners.

The problems faced can be fundamental ones of hard infrastructure, but they are just as likely to be of soft infrastructure, of training, expertise, management and community value systems. It could be that making a career in culture a sustainable option is difficult. A myriad of issues, way beyond hubs, such as higher education, training systems, a welfare state, a form of civil society, and availability of credit make an impact.

It follows that designing and evaluating a creative hub should be based on deep prior research and understanding of the local system, how it fits into a local regional system, and its international and national characteristics. In this design process, producers and managers would attend to the assets and values already in play among the beneficiaries

[26] Pratt, A. C. (2009). Policy transfer and the field of the cultural and creative industries: learning from Europe? In L. Kong & J. O'Connor (Eds.), *Creative Economies, Creative Cities: Asian-European Perspectives*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer.

[27] Baum, M and Christinanse, K (2012). City as Loft, GTA Verlag, Zurich; and Wang. W (Ed) Culture: City, Akademie der Kunste/Lars Muller, Berlin.

whom they seek to support. Specifically, the hub needs to be understood as both a physical space and resource as well as an integral part of various social and cultural networks that may not always have a fixed material footprint. Both aspects co-determine one another. Both need to be understood; the task of a hub manager or creative producer is often to provide governance of this relationship. The pen portraits in Section 3 illustrate the variety of examples that fall under the label 'hub' in the UK. A similar mapping would be useful for any nation carrying out such a hub support system. At the proposed establishment of a hub, we suggest a diagnostic exercise is initiated as a means of determining the character of the hub.

2.4 **Hub Life: A DIY guide**

The conclusion of this report is not in the form of a schematic or generalised model, but rather we outline a process that nascent hubs may engage with and iterate. The aim is for creative communities to interrogate local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The following diagnostic process requires hubs and communities to focus on the particular practices and value systems that unite them. Clearly, an outcome cannot be predicted in advance, or be prescribed. This process is not a rejection of organisation and planning; it seeks to develop an efficient and effective form of organisation and governance that fits practice, and not, as is sometimes the case, vice versa.

Based upon the ground clearing we have outlined above, which underlines the importance of identifying the unique process of creative hubs, we now offer three immersive episodes of hub life. These give the rich and complex flavour of how hubs see themselves. We developed a process for exploring these hubs, a process that gives us a 360 degree perspective, taking into account archival work, interviews and workshops. Appropriately, our approach was not to simply treat hubs as a 'research object', but rather to understand them as vibrant subjects; subjects that were themselves striving to articulate and understand their own evolving practice. We were pleased to discover that hubs valued our intervention. It gave them a reflecting space which contrasted with the continuous flow of the day to

day. Thus the research practice and analytical approach co-evolved as did the diagnostic. In this manner we developed both an external perspective on hubs and their operations, and an internal and meanings based interpretation of why processes worked the ways in which they did. The diagnostic tool that we co-produced is the basis for a diagnostic tool kit that might be used by other hubs. As with all learning processes, it is an interactive action, hence we began with our initial questions.

2.5 **A self-diagnostic: What type of creative hub are you?**

By answering the following questions, we can get a pretty good understanding of what any given creative hub actually does, its value and its impact. This framework produces an analysis of the cultural ecosystem constituted by any hub. It has the advantage that it is not prescriptive but diagnostic. It can take account of the necessarily wide variety of creative hub types.

Programmes

What work does the hub support? What doesn't it support? How does it support it? What criteria does the hub use for commissioning/ programming? Who else does/shows similar work?

Processes

What does the hub do on a day to day basis? For example: supervision, mentoring, making, exhibition or user engagement, events, workshops, education, research, time banks or similar, producer support, brainstorms, presentations, social media and other common working tools?

People

Who are the core team? Who are the users/audiences? Who does the hub depend on for its success? Where are those people? Who don't you reach?

Place

What public space do you have? What do people do in your building? What do they want from it? What do they bring to it? Where is the building? What is around it? What does the location offer / gain? How does your hub fit into the wider spaces of the city or region?

Partnerships

Who do you work with? How long have you worked together? What do you give them? What do they give you?

Value and values

What are the important motivators for the hub? What kinds of values does the hub seek to embody? What values are held in common by hub participants? For example: generosity, openness, sharing, care, discovery, trust, excitement, user-satisfaction, social change, business sustainability, education, training engagement?

Impact and assets

What changes as a result of the hub's operation? These impacts may be, for instance, creatives' confidence and profile, new connections, platform building, training, new inward investment, jobs, audience numbers or new networks. Each hub will have different stories of downstream impact, as in, the success of projects or users after they 'graduate' from the particular hub involvement. What kinds of assets does the hub have that could be used by other stakeholders or beneficiaries? These are often intangible - processes or networks, for example. These may be particular production or education processes that others could adapt. A hub might also be an asset for higher education partners looking for research collaborators or regional development authorities managing inward investment.

The themes outlined above should be explored in an iterative process with stakeholders, creatives and the related communities. They are a form of community building, a mode of knowledge transfer and an open channel to shared understanding. It is envisaged that a series of workshops will be developed, dictated by the emergent agenda. The development of a creative hub is an ongoing process, and it points to the need to continually review the relevance of the governance to practice and to the stakeholders if a resilient hub is to be sustained.
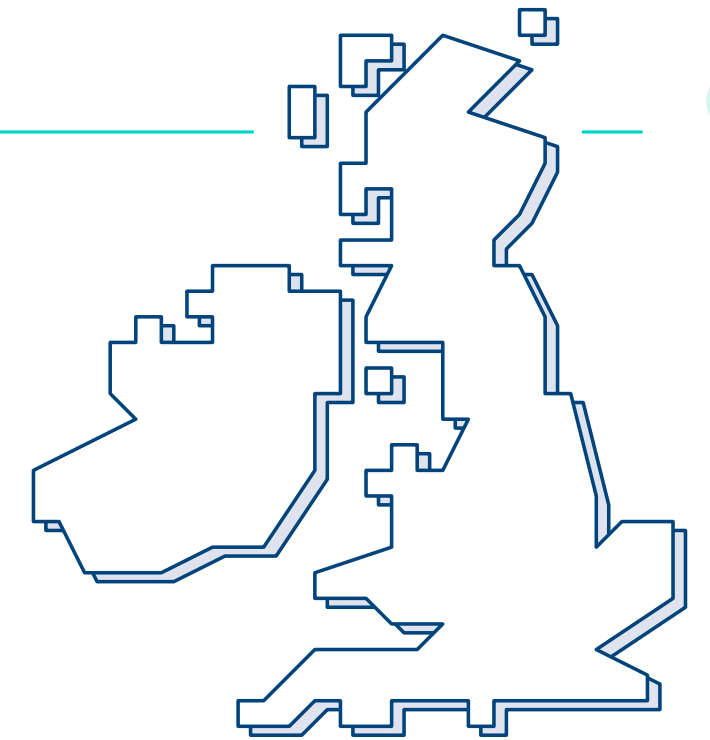
Section Two
Creative Hubs Case Studies

2.1 Introduction

As we have seen so far, the creative hub is a broadly defined, growing form for the organisation of creative productivity. Alongside our generic principles for understanding, advocating and evaluating creative hubs, we believe that demonstrating the individuality and variety of hub forms requires a case study approach. Case studies can offer readers a textured understanding of hubs from an operational point of view and are essential for producing a useful understanding of the messy relationships between generic description and day to day function.

2.2 Approach

We have adopted an approach that focuses on understanding the creative hub as a network. We believe this approach is a particularly useful way for cultural organisations and creative businesses to understand themselves. It entails concentrating on the rich mix of values, aspirations and skills that are mobilised in cultural and creative production. Different participants in a hub

network, for example, will be driven by different motivations and values – the desire for research, social impact, creative satisfaction, discovery, profit and so on. By recognising the significance of these different values, and by curating them together around shared aims, hub managers can support a wide range of contrasting and complementary activity. Diverse talents from different backgrounds and value systems come together to produce a high degree of connectivity among participants. This coming together is at the heart of creative innovation.

This approach highlights the ways that, rather than striving to control the system, hub producers have to work with the dynamics of the system. They work to support the people taking part in their hub - not only to deliver an individual project or programme. This suggests we also understand the organism of the hub holistically. It means concentrating on the quality of the relationships between the creative people that make a hub a success or a failure. Furthermore, understanding the people, values and activities of people in a network makes it possible to understand the many different outputs of hubs, from the social, to the cultural and the economic, beyond those of linear outputs from an event or singular piece of activity.

2.3 Method

We have looked at very different kinds of hub across the UK. We have conducted workshops and focus groups with key delivery team members as well as members of each hub's stakeholder network. We have also conducted telephone interviews and desk research on their city regions in order to be able to fully contextualise each hub.

We applied a systematic methodology based upon our diagnostic outlined in the previous section, which we iterated and refined in the process. An important principle that we adopted was drawn from participatory action research. We sought to research with the protagonists, rather than do research to them. We saw this as a key to collaboratively unlocking the value systems that – we found – defined hubs.

In order to make it easier for the reader, we have organised the case studies around a strict template structure which outlines for each hub its programme, operational process, the people involved, the importance of place, partnerships, its value and values, broader impacts and finally, transferable assets. To avoid duplication, all the contextual information for the wider city/region is in the relevant city sections in Section 3, the city pen portraits.

2.4
Site Gallery, Sheffield (and Roco, Sheffield)
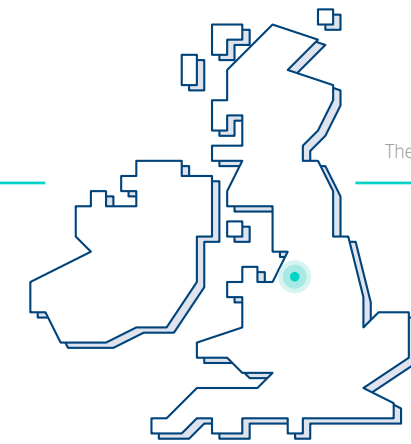
This case study includes two perspectives. The main one explores Site Gallery, an established hub; and the subsidiary study explores Roco, a new initiative based more strongly on a co-operative model.

Site Gallery is a modestly sized contemporary art gallery in Sheffield's well established Cultural Industries Quarter. It runs on a core staff of four and has a turnover of £450,000 a year. In 2014/15, just short of 30,000 people visited Site for gallery exhibitions, residencies and touring activity.

Site has a 35-year presence in Sheffield. Starting as a photography gallery, it has evolved through being a lens-based gallery, a media art gallery, a digital art gallery and now concerns itself with contemporary art practices. It champions emerging practices, aiming to stimulate innovative ideas through dialogue and a fast changing exhibition programme. It develops and champions new artists, commissions new work off-site and is heavily invested in working with young people. It has well-recognised expertise in artists working with new technologies and is committed to collaboration with a wide range of partners locally and internationally.

Site does not define itself as a part of the new movement of emerging creative hubs, but we wanted use Site as a case study because it demonstrates how conventional art operations can act as a creative hub. Site explicitly articulates and celebrates its role as a 'connector'. Site connects people to art, to ideas, experiences and conversations, to a social hub

It runs on a **core staff of four** and has a **turnover of £450,000** a year.

SITE GALLERY, SHEFFIELD
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for creative exchange and to new opportunities by engaging with audiences as participants.

Programme

Site Gallery exhibits and commissions moving image, new media, and performance based contemporary art. It aims to mount six major new shows every year. This core programme is amplified through openings, talks, events and participatory workshops. The Transmission series, for instance, hosts regular free artist's talks, co-curated with Sheffield Hallam University. Gallery openings constitute the core face to face networking opportunity for the extended Site community.

A great deal of the Site programme derives from a new talent development ethos. The main programme centres around emerging artists. Site understands itself as a 'runway' gallery that enhances the profile of new artists and leads to further impact. This ethos also underpins their Platform, Society of Explorers and outreach programmes.

Platform is Site's lead commissioning vehicle. It is designed as a collaborative process. Platform commissions artists to develop new work on-site in dialogue with publics of all kinds. In 2016, Platform resident Beatriz Olabarrieta worked on scripting a new play starring a cast of sculptures built on-site using locally-sourced materials. The performance aimed to give voices and personalities to inanimate objects. More recently, Laura Wilson's Platform residency combined choreography and bread making, working with Sheffield's Forge Bakehouse to explore the relationships between the body and the live materiality of dough through movement. Upcoming shows include a new collaboration with Sheffield Doc Fest that will see the main gallery transformed into a Virtual Reality Arcade exhibition.

Society of Explorers is a weekly creative workshop for 14 to 19 year olds that mounts small-scale shows and interventions

> Site Gallery exhibits and commissions **moving image**, **new media**, and **performance** based contemporary art.

in dialogue with the main programme. It has become a key structural part of the Site operation. Members of the Society of Explorers are a part of the commissioning process for Platform artists.

The outreach programme is developing strongly as cultural engagement becomes a key metric in Site's wider urban context. In 2014/15, Site collaborated with the University of Sheffield through the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Connected Communities fund, to produce 'Cutting Shapes', a show co-curated with teenagers from three different communities across the city. The young people worked with Leeds artist Harold Offeh to take control of the commissioning process. Site has a new minibus in their future investment plans in order to continue this strand of outreach work.

Site runs a small café bar as part of its operation and also rents workspaces to small creative businesses who frequently come out of or contribute to the programme. Volunteers are also a key part of the Site programme, supporting front of house and other activities.

> **Volunteers** are also a key part of the Site programme, supporting front of house and other activities.

Process

The operational processes of a public-facing hub such as a gallery are complex and layered. Front of house hosting, for artists and publics, has to be maintained on a day to day level for talks, workshops and openings.

Site also acts as a place for the network to connect with people and ideas informally. One of the business rental tenants observed:

I bump into the Director in the kitchen and I come out with new ideas... It's different to isolated people working in their pods, it becomes a catalyst for connecting difference. Within a mile of here there are so many artists and artists' communities that are supported from here.

Although the gallery community experiences this process as a form of happenstance or serendipity, the core team understand that curating happenstance is a key process for supporting talent development and instilling a sense of multi-disciplinary openness.

These processes are overseen by creative producers whose skillset allows them to operate across the different levels of complexity that underpin a hub. Their core work is in the development of the programme of support for a range of direct network beneficiaries. For Site, these beneficiaries might be commissioned artists, building tenants who are looking for new opportunities for work and ideas, the young people who constitute the Society of Explorers and the outreach programmes, and the volunteers.

The hub offers value to each of these groups. This is achieved through direct development work with the curators, but just as importantly, through the peer-to-peer development opportunities offered by other artists, publics and young people across the range of engagement opportunities offered by the programme.

The creative producers are also responsible for wider regional, national and international networking, recognising that connecting the local to the global is an increasingly important part of regional creative economies. Site is dedicated to exploring international connections. In 2014, Site gallery commissions travelled to 40 different cities in 20 countries.

The creative producers are also responsible, with the support of the board, for future planning. This extends from the next round of Arts Council investment, right through to Site's current plan for a major property expansion designed to double the gallery footprint by regenerating the empty property next door.

> All hubs build on the human capital of **previous generations,** cultural institutions and tastes.

People

Human capital is at the heart of hub value and at the heart of Site. Site identifies 156 key people. This group consists of the artists who deliver the annual programme and meet the public in a variety of settings, four Site Gallery staff, eight board members, four assistant producers (recruited annually) and 40 Site Gallery volunteers. Other network members that make Site's operation successful include 15 youth worker professionals, 15 festival staff from across the city and 20 members of the Sheffield Cultural Consortium and SNAP (Youth Arts) Network. Beyond the city, they estimate that 15 curators and young people's managers plus ten policymakers will be part of their extended network.

For Site, it is important to remember that while this human capital drives the productivity of a hub's operation, all hubs build on the human capital of previous generations, cultural institutions and tastes. This means that the cultural experiences and aspirations of the people at the centre of this network will determine the nature of many of its outputs, and bring experiences from other hubs and spaces. A risk here, as seen in many hubs, is that in organisations with a flat hierarchy, it is easy for certain individuals to become the memory and 'conscience' of the network; they can get in the way of change by holding on to outdated ideas but also be impossible to confront or challenge.

Place

Place is key to Site's history and identity. In the widest sense, Site proclaims 'Sheffield is our creative catalyst, informing our spirit and ethos' as part of their mission. We can begin to understand this geographical specificity in three ways:

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(AND ROCO, SHEFFIELD)

SITE GALLERY, SHEFFIELD
(AND ROCO, SHEFFIELD)

1 The cultural character of the place.

Sheffield has a reputation in the local creative community as a maker environment, derived from its history of small industrial workshops at the start of the steel industry, though to now, where respondents spoke of a strong 'hands-on' maker culture. This character is also described as having a very positive 'can-do' attitude. The Guardian in 2011 described Sheffield as having more artists' studios than any other city outside London. This informs a sense of the city as being made of many small creative units that need places like Site to offer connectivity. Hubs are always functions of wider interconnecting networks of creative agents in a place.

2 The specific place of the gallery itself, its affordances and situation.

Site is part of a cultural industries quarter that dates back 30 years to the implementation of one of the UK's first city-wide cultural industry policies. The regenerative impacts of culture have long been part of the city's policy approach to reinventing the city for the post-industrial era. Site bridges these historical approaches with contemporary emphasis on the knowledge economies of the smart city in a digital creative economy. Its rental to small businesses and start-ups is a direct link to this place based creative economy agenda, which also feeds into the new hubs in the city.

3 Publics.

Site understands that it has a relationship with the publics of the city. Our research revealed a strong sense of civic purpose. The programme aims, among other things, to create 'vivid experiences' that 'offer reflective moments of tangible and personal growth'. Audiences have told Site that its programme offers a chance to 'think and to breathe' in the busy city centre. For the team we met in our research, this function is tied to a sense of the civic value provided by allowing a city to

> Audiences have told Site that its programme offers a chance to **'think and to breathe'** in the busy city centre.

have an intelligent conversation with itself prompted by critical art interventions.

Partnerships

Site, as a hub, is supported by and adds support to, a web of relationships with other key nodes in the region. Site Director, Laura Sillars, took the lead in forming the Sheffield Culture Consortium that includes Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield Theatres Trust, Museums Sheffield, Site Gallery, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield City Council. The consortium plays a key role in coordinating and sharing information for the sector.

Art Sheffield is a key collaborative venture that shows work once a year for three weeks across 18 venues. Site has increasingly embedded relationships with the two universities in the city. The Transmissions lectures are curated with Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield University has written funding bids in partnership with Site for the AHRC's Connected Communities Programme as well as contributing research through its Play Research Unit. The universities also produce a steady flow of volunteer talent.

The Arts Council England and the City Council are lead partners who also invest in Site's activities.

Sheffield Doc Fest has recently transitioned from being a gallery rental client to a co-production partner in the upcoming Alternate Realities show in Site Gallery. The Children's Media Festival collaborates with Site on a regular basis. More recently, Site has been developing new relationships with youth groups and informal education units via its outreach programmes.

> Art Sheffield is a key collaborative venture that shows work once a year for three weeks across **18 venues**.

Value and values

Like most work operations, hubs depend upon a set of shared values. Where these may be made explicit in key performance indicators in the corporate or educational world, they are likely to be implicit in a creative hub, as a matter of practice, shared experience or intangible 'vibe'. However, these shared values are powerful motivators for the often precarious and risky lifestyle of the creative economy. They constitute a kind of moral economy or shared world view that binds the multidisciplinary trajectories as a common purpose. At Site we identified them as:

- producing art that creates vivid experiences
- collaboration
- care for talent manifested as supporting young artists at critical moments in their careers
- relaxed
- engagement
- quality of experience through presenting singular and powerful work that remains in the imagination
- flat hierarchy
- inter-disciplinarity
- happenstance and serendipity through co-location
- high expectations
- being a creative connector that diversifies social relations around Site
- experimenting with the tried and tested to create the new
- producing surprising social situations and debate
- civic collaboration, playing an important role in developing the Sheffield brand

Impact

> I have most definitely enjoyed my time with Cutting Shapes. Not only is it a project to [help you] feel relaxed and be yourself around the people you are with, but it is also a opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills, enhance your social skills and take part in a project, that is not only entertaining and wonderful, but can be also be a life-changing experience.
>
> **— Courtney, The Link Youth Group**
> attended photography workshops for Cutting Shapes

> 'Site in Sheffield is integral, supporting young artists to international success'
>
> **— The Independent, 2011**

In 2014, **40 artists** who had participated in Site shows exhibited in over **20 countries**.

Many of the impacts of a hub like Site exist in these narratives of change, where individuals experience transformational opportunities of different kinds. Site exerts a gravitational force for creative talents who get pulled into the orbit and spin out again on a different trajectory. In Site's case we can classify these transformations as:

Impacts on emergent artists. As a 'runway' gallery, Site can help artists take off. For instance, in 2014, 40 artists who had participated in Site shows exhibited in over 20 countries. In 2012-13, three of Site's recent alumni won the most prestigious awards in the art world; The Turner Prize, the Venice Silver Lion and the Frieze Emdash Award. Site commission and produce

excellent work and bring it to the attention of a range of curators, enhancing artist profiles and career prospects. As such, Site is a talent development and export operation. The collaborative nature of this enterprise also has the added value of being part of a talent retention regime whereby creative graduates from the two universities can see a potential lifestyle in the city.

Impacts on creative businesses.

Site houses creative businesses in its premises, it creates work for businesses and produces talent for creative businesses.

Impacts on gallery participants in workshops and informal education programmes.

The Society of Explorers and other outreach programmes together support a cohort of about 40 young people a year. Over ten years that produces 400 young people who have had transformative personal experiences working with art. In the long term this cohort has the potential to become the next generation of leaders for the civic arts and creative sector in the city. As well as being selectors and curators of content, young people have the opportunity to be producers of new work through photography, fashion, dance, music, signwriting and experimental performance workshops led by professional artists. Many of the young people have cited their integration into the whole organisation as benefiting their wider sense of relevance, influence, confidence and empowerment. Through this they gain valuable marketing, fundraising, financial management and technical skills which have the potential to be career paths for young people. Site explicitly aims to engage and enhance young people's outcomes by aiming for them to learn several new words and ideas, feel more confident talking about their ideas, feel more confident using new words and feel that they understand art better.

> Site explicitly aims to **engage and enhance young people's outcomes** by aiming for them to learn several new words and ideas.

Impacts on volunteers.

The volunteer programme constitutes an informal engagement and training programme. We heard many stories of volunteers recovering from illness or other forms of social disengagement being able to learn, in the Site setting, how to (re)connect and progress professionally and personally. This may be through skills and confidence building in a safe space, or it may be through participating in an unofficial talent development programme, as was the case for one young woman who volunteered who on a Platform commission and discovered her talent for singing. She now has paid employment singing with, and working alongside, a range of performance projects.

> We heard many stories of volunteers **recovering from illness** or other forms of social disengagement.

City impacts.

Site also contributes to the overall city quality of life which is an important motivation for attracting and retaining the knowledge workers who will support the city in its next phase of post-industrial development.

◆ Assets

Site offers two clear assets that the organisation could co-produce with other hubs or in other locations.

01 **The Site model for working with young people is distinctive, successful and reproducible.** It knits together a core programme (e.g. The Society for Explorers) alongside tailored, intensive outreach development work which takes place offsite. Site Gallery has become a leader of infrastructure change, both in Sheffield, and in a wider sense, leading the way for a new model of integrating young people in the arts.

02 **The Platform programme.** Three times a year, the gallery turns into an artist's studio, opening up the creative process of making new work to visitors. It enables audiences to interact with artists at the work-in-

progress stage. The artists enjoy a supportive intensive development programme. The Platform projects offer artists a writer, a curator, a filmmaker, an online presence and opportunities to work in public and with the public. All of them have spun off in new directions. Having thinking space is the key attribute. Hubs can offer 'redundant time and space' even though there has to be a final piece.

Roco

Co-founded by designer and CDI business specialist Andrea Burns and social and community property developer Chris Hill, the pair raised £1.2 million through community shares and social lending to develop seven Georgian listed town houses in the centre of the city to become home to 30 creative studios, co-working space, CDI-led bookshop, bottle shop, contemporary design store, cafe bar, galleries and maker space. Launched in 2012, Roco opened its doors in 2015. It has four full-time and ten part-time staff, 65 share owning members and 20 tenants.

The Roco model brings together the 'hub' approaches described above. It is based on the concept of collaborative clustering, where creatives, artists, designers and makers generate and consume cultural 'value' in the same place. This micro version of clustering retail space, creative studios, leisure and workspace offers opportunities for people from a variety of creative disciplines with different interests to mix with members of the public, visitors and customers. This in turn sets the scene for a vibrant and dynamic exchange of ideas and culture.

The Roco R&D programme is based on 'DoGoods'. It connects environmentally, socially and community aware consumers with designers, makers and creators who are developing innovative combinations of ecologically sound, problem solving, high impact products and services.

> Launched in 2012, Roco opened its doors in 2015. It has four full-time and ten part-time staff, **65 share owning** members and **20 tenants**.

The aim of DoGoods is to support creative people to use their skills and imaginations to design products and services that provide a positive social impact. The programme mobilises some of the city's excitement and interest around social and environmental innovation to think about the positive interventions, products and services we could make that will ultimately do society and the community some good.

The Roco strategy aims to make it easy for people to make positive choices about the kind of products and services they buy. This commitment is reflected in its retail operation, which supports local small makers and producers. Of the stock the shop carries, 50 per cent is BAFTS and Fairtrade approved. Roco has made links with organisations with shared values, many of them social enterprises or charities who work with community groups across the world to produce fantastic, well designed, ethical products.

Like other hubs, Roco also runs a gallery programme as a way to showcase work and engage with its publics. The Bl_Ank Space Gallery is a place where Roco can use creativity, art and technology to interrogate and investigate social issues and where people can use creative play to experiment with new and sometimes challenging ideas. The full gallery programme launches in 2017 with 'The Body Electric. The journey to SUPERHUMAN : Disability, body augmentation and the self-assembly movement.' This is in partnership with Sheffield Year of Making, Lighthouse Brighton, Sheffield School of Engineering and Robotics and Sheffield School of Medicine.

Business support and development within a social enterprise framework is at the core of Roco's social innovation approach. They provide a home for designers, artists and makers to base their businesses. Either in a studio or in co-working spaces, tenants mingle with like-minded people to collaborate and innovate. They also offer collectively owned capital in the form of the tools tenants need to make and manufacture in the Roco

> Like other hubs, Roco also runs a gallery programme as a way to **showcase work** and **engage with its publics**.

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(AND ROCO, SHEFFIELD)

SITE GALLERY, SHEFFIELD
(AND ROCO, SHEFFIELD)

Makerspace. This value constellation is further complemented by a route to market through the retail and gallery spaces.

Like all creative hubs, Roco is distinguished by a strong set of core values that are enacted to produce a community of practice, in this case:

- Being an ethical employer
- Supporting the growth of creative enterprise
- Championing creative practices that work to generate a positive social impact
- Practicing ecological awareness through, for example, the green roof, gardens and eco spaces designed into the refurbishment
- Fostering and generating opportunities for ideas exchange and collaboration
- Exploiting the democratisation of technology to enable small scale businesses to create and innovate effectively
- Adding value to sheffield as a creative city
- Providing a context for creative graduates to place themselves in the creative workplace

Roco is distinguished by a **strong set of core values**.

2.5
Birmingham Open Media, Birmingham
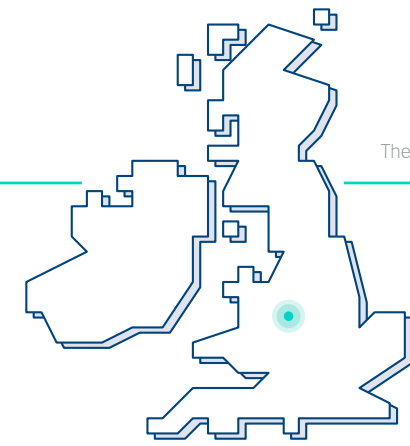
"BOM is a magnet for awesome. It's an art gallery with life, a university with open doors, an accessible and welcoming hacker space, an innovative community centre, a school brimming with fun, a focussed and productive meetup space, and a communal studio full of jobs, opportunities, thrilling projects, interesting people, and workshops that put you onto new paths... never mind the indoor forest serving incredible food...

It's a well curated operation running on the best of currencies - huge amounts of passion, vision and good will - and provides a platform for those with enthusiasm and courage to blossom. BOM is truly a modern hybrid with the wealth of the internet and the warmth of real people. It's a rich, self-regulating, organic, happy gut-full of goodness.

— **Ben Neal**

BOM (Birmingham Open Media) is forging a new model of practice at the intersection of art, technology and science with measurable social impact. By making sustained investment in a community of fellows and developing strategic partnerships,

SITE GALLERY, SHEFFIELD (AND ROCO, SHEFFIELD)

BIRMINGHAM OPEN MEDIA, BIRMINGHAM

BOM tests pioneering ideas that investigate the transformative value of the arts across education, health and society.

BOM was founded by curator Karen Newman in 2014. The building was opened after a £70,000 building refurbishment, financed by a mixture of private and public funding, transformed a previously derelict building into a dynamic new creative space. At its heart, BOM explores the intersection of art and science and supports diversity, social entrepreneurship and explorations into new forms of civic engagement and action.

> The building was opened after a **£70,000 building refurbishment**, financed by a mixture of private and public funding.

Programme

> " We are interested in supporting [not only] blue sky, ambitious creative thinking but also in asking important critical questions about the ways that technology and scientific developments are changing the way that we live
>
> **— Karen Newman, Director BOM**

BOM leads research into art, 'hacktivism' and open culture through live projects, commissions and research partnerships. BOM is dedicated to the free culture movement and to art that asks important questions about future technologies. BOM is driven by socially engaged practice at the intersection of art, technology and science. It advocates the importance of art in education at policy level, creating blended STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Art and Maths) programmes with disadvantaged schools, communities, and groups with special educational needs. BOM works with a range of research and technology partners to develop cutting edge new work. Their current areas of research include:

- Open source technologies
- Open data
- Open science / diy biology
- Ethical hacking
- Creative activism
- Disruptive media
- The internet of things
- Interactive and immersive technologies
- Media archaeology

Their programme reflects a desire to share, not only the outcomes of these explorations, but also their underlying process and the themes the work tackles.

Exhibitions

The public programme is centred on BOM's gallery and events space. These spaces are used to host free exhibitions and related events, including workshops. The content of these and their subject matter emerges from the creative collaborations and practice-based research with art, technology and science that is carried out by BOM's artist community.

The gallery welcomes approximately 10,000 visitors a year, with exhibitions open five days a week. The gallery is open approximately 45 weeks of the year.

> The gallery welcomes approximately **10,000 visitors a year**, with exhibitions open **five days a week**.

Example:

A recent exhibition, Ingenious and Fearless Companions, incorporates video-mapped archive films and sculpturally altered relics associated with a citizen science attempt to harvest bacteria from the upper atmosphere, such as weather balloons, environmental samples from the black rock desert and extremophile bacteria. Bio artist Anna Dumitriu and media artist Alex May are collaborating to produce a series of artworks

BIRMINGHAM OPEN MEDIA, BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM OPEN MEDIA, BIRMINGHAM

that relive the excitement of the original rocket launch in the Nevada Desert, the horror of a failed parachute and the despair of a crushed robot. As well as the exhibition, there are workshops, a Space BioHack weekend and a performance event.

Rather than external commissioning of artists, the exhibitions, workshops and events are driven by the local community working in the building. These artists forge collaborations across institutions (see partnerships) to explore new ideas and new ways of understanding the intersection between art and technology.

> Skills Labs engage around **100 practitioners** every year.

Workshops

Workshops at the hub include Skills Labs - sessions designed to support creative practitioners as they develop digital skills. Skills Labs engage around 100 practitioners every year with a programme that is run through (and with) the fellows.

BOM also offers workshops aimed at school children and young people. These engage over 120 children a year. They offer several programmes that combine science and art to help pupils develop technical skills, confidence and creativity. At the time of writing, BOM was running projects in two schools:

- A six-week, space-inspired electronics project for Baskerville Special Educational Needs School in Harborne.
- A six-week STEAM taster programme for Heartlands Academy in Duddeston which introduces students to new forms of art and science such as glitch art, sound art and pinhole cameras.

BOM offers bursary places on paid summer camps and Mini Maker Clubs. These engage around 300 children a year and offer support to people at risk of exclusion. Its in-school education programmes feature opportunities for economically

disadvantaged children and young people. BOM also engages other further education and higher education students through live projects, group visits and workshops, engaging around 300 young people a year.

Other organisations and groups contribute to the profile of the space too by holding meetups, events, workshops and talks there. These include:

- A weekly Maker Mondays workshop that aims to foster creativity with digital technology. Workshops focus on making and repurposing new technologies and run by Birmingham City University.
- Regular Open Code meetups offer opportunities to explore new platforms for open source programming.
- Regular Open Rights Group meetups, workshops and sessions explore how our data is used and how we can reclaim it.

Process

Practice without pressure of output.

> Fellows work with BOM for a minimum of 12 months. In that time they receive **mentoring** and **creative development support**.

The key process at BOM is the offer of free, flexible co-working, production and studio space to fellows and artists in residence. BOM fellows are a group of outstanding locally-based creative practitioners working across art, technology and science. The fellows all take a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to their practice.

Fellows work with BOM for a minimum of 12 months. In that time they receive mentoring and creative development support, access to space, networks, peers, legal, professional and business expertise and a whole heap of creative opportunities. Artists can be invited to join the BOM community via recommendation, but a common route is via

open calls to develop work over a short space of time as part of an R&D residency. BOM covers fellows' travel expenses and small costs for projects. There are currently 16 fellows.

On a day to day basis, BOM supports the community to share skills, develop new work and explore themes. This support comes from the core management team of BOM. The team provides artists with:

> On a day to day basis, BOM supports the community to **share skills**, **develop new work** and **explore themes**.

- A base for their practice
- A participatory experience
- Experience
- Profile
- Validation of practice from research
- Science experts

This process is based on a recognition that contemporary working practices are often fluid and require responsive support structures. BOM is motivated by a belief in the value of co-creation between residents, fellows and different publics. As such, its process is collaborative and based on co-production rather than commission.

Hub residents volunteer their time to staff the gallery, bring equipment, share resources, and advocacy. Fellows and artists in residence are offered free space in BOM's collaborative workspace, access to the gallery and access to other community resources in return, as well as professional development support from the BOM team. The team offers mentorship, paid opportunities, access to critique, funding opportunities and professional training.

This approach builds long-term relationships, with fellows and artists developing practice both during and after their time at BOM. This creates a strong network of expertise from which BOM and its community can draw.

👤👤 People

" The programme is the people.
— Karen Newman, Director BOM

At the core of BOM's activities are its community of fellows and the artists who take part in the organisation's R&D residencies. These creatives produce the work that appears in the galleries, they run the workshops, they help with elements of the day to day running of the space and they represent the core talent at the centre of BOM.

> Building BOM was about **creating a space around this community** of practitioners, rather than providing a 'container' for outside commissioning.

Building BOM was about creating a space around this community of practitioners, rather than providing a 'container' for outside commissioning. Residents assist in running elements of the space, such as staffing the gallery, responding to needs of people hiring spaces, and so on. The fellows described this as a co-investment on their part, recognising it as something that helps them feel a sense of ownership and provides them with a closer relationship to the space.

BOM houses a restaurant called Wilderness, which, as well as bringing inspiration and experimentation via collaborations between its staff and the residents, also brings a new audience to BOM in the form of high-end diners.

Hub beneficiaries consist of a range of communities whose participation and interaction is central to how BOM operates. This audience includes interested publics, members of the tech scene, creative

practitioners, and passers-by. Schools and young people are also an important component.

Place

BOM's location in Birmingham was a deliberate choice by Director Karen Newman. Its proximity to two local HEIs (Birmingham City University and the University of Birmingham) was important, as was the activist network of technologists and artists, and the pool of graduate and artistic talent that is present in the city. There was also a lack, identified by early research into Birmingham, of a space that supported the kinds of activities that comprise BOM's core mission.

BOM's proximity to Birmingham New Street train station – less than one minute's walk – is recognised as an asset by the BOM network. It connects fellows directly to local and national regions. It also promotes footfall from a different demographic of passers-by who can access the gallery and find out more about its the work.

BOM consists of a central gallery space, a communal area, co-working desks, a darkroom and smaller meeting rooms. Split over two floors, there is also a basement that is used as exhibition, storage and activity space. BOM leases out part of its building to Dollhouse Photography, a commercial photography studio specialising in portraits, which generates rent revenue. BOM also provides space for Dollhouse's clients to wait and other forms of access. On-site restaurant, Wilderness, began as a pop-up restaurant but is now an anchor tenant at BOM.

These two subleases cover the rent for the building, meaning BOM can offer space to fellows and residents for free. To meet programme and salary costs for the Director, Head of Programme and Gallery Assistant, extra income is raised through private events and fundraising.

> BOM consists of a central **gallery space**, a **communal area, co-working desks**, a **darkroom** and smaller **meeting rooms**.

Partnerships

BOM's partnerships are wide ranging. From a local special needs school to NASA, via the V&A, the NHS, University of Birmingham and homeless charity, Crisis, as a hub, BOM has a variety of partnerships in place across the city and region. These vary in formality and intensity and change over time. During the process of setting up the organisation, BOM's research and development was supported by Coventry University's Centre for Disruptive Media, the Library of Birmingham's GRAIN Photography Hub Network and creative consultant, Lara Ratnaraja.

BOM has a positive relationship with its landlord. A commercial developer, the landlord recognises the value in supporting a cultural organisation. BOM's building refurbishment was made possible through financial support from the Conygar Investment Company PLC, Arts Council England, Biffa Award, UnLtd and DLA Piper.

BOM is actively working with local universities and education initiatives to support lifelong learning in creative and digital skills. In particular, Birmingham City University is BOM's Creative Enterprise Partner, and University of Birmingham is BOM's Research Partner. At the University of Birmingham, research into science and engagement, as well as genomics and terrorism, offers a valuable route into understanding contemporary civic challenges. At Birmingham City University, they value access to talent and ideas, potential research strands and opportunities for collaborative knowledge exchange.

BOM has relationships with a range of social and third sector organisations including Youth Arts Network, homeless charity, Crisis, and local refugee support networks. BOM has important relationships with local schools too.

> BOM is actively working with local universities and education initiatives to support **lifelong learning** in creative and digital skills.

Via its work and that of its 16 fellows, BOM also has connections with:

- LGBT+ (Queerzone 3000)
- Local Maker Spaces (Fizzpop)
- 3D Printers (Backface)
- Open Code organisations
- Open Rights Foundation
- Birmingham Impact Hub
- New Economics Foundation
- Ars Electronica

Value and values

BOM is driven by a desire to effect social change through collaboration between the arts and science, and through supporting social enterprise, diversity and creative empowerment. The civic potential for new forms of engaged artistic works, education and social and cultural practice is explored in its programme and across its work.

BOM is rooted in a set of activist values and approaches. These explore new ways to produce a different civic society through exploring contemporary social challenges. It is also dedicated to exploring these themes as ways of addressing larger social issues, for example:

- Contemporary childhood
- Housing issues
- Inclusion
- Sexuality
- Citizenship – digital rights
- Enterprise
- Engagement

Diversity is a core value. BOM explores how to use the

> BOM is driven by a **desire to effect social change** through collaboration between the arts and science.

language of innovation and creativity to be accessible to a wide range of people, e.g. BAME, LGBT+, precarious communities like refugees. Rather than an 'engagement plan' this is understood as establishing open access spaces that enable communities to use resources and develop their own uses and communities around those services.

BOM is also committed to a STEAM agenda where the arts are recognised and combined with the sciences to create a holistic way of understanding and approaching the world. This is a key part of BOM's work.

> BOM hopes to offer **transformational change**, particularly for young people and children, across STEAM projects.

Impact

BOM hopes to offer transformational change, particularly for young people and children, across STEAM projects. It also hopes to generate impact for its resident artists by offering talent development and opportunities for the growth of their careers and critical creative practices. It also wishes to create an impact as a regional hub that supports the collaboration and connection of talented people and helps them realise their aims.

Indicative impacts:

Impact on the city's creative economy:

By drawing together a community of expertise, especially around activism and making, BOM has established and grown a new network. The network didn't exist before because potential participants were previously more widely distributed. BOM established this new network by providing a space for conversation, for making connections and for formal and informal experimentation.

Impact on the local economy:

BOM subleases space in the building to two commercial, creative start-ups; an experimental restaurant and a

photography studio. Between BOM (turnover £150,000), the photography studio (turnover £250,000) and the restaurant (turnover £400,000), the economic output of the building is £800,000 a year.

Impact on the artistic community:

BOM aggregates talent and helps collective critical inquiry to unfold. This has been achieved by supporting fellows and residencies that help independent practitioners find opportunities and resources to collaborate. This grouping together of voices and ideas provides leverage for groups looking to explore and investigate social challenges.

Impact on artistic practice:

- Inspiration

  At the very core of practice, the inspiration to keep making art is identified as an impact of artist involvement with BOM.

- Pathways to new work

  BOM fellows cite opportunities for paid work on BOM workshops, making new connections and involvement in successful projects (developed with support from BOM) as impacts on pathways to new work.

- Artistic funding

  BOM offers artists assistance with funding bids and has successfully helped early career artists in residence and fellows secure grants for their work.

BOM recognises that, since it is a young organisation, it is still very early to have long-term impact stories. The team outlines how, for creative hubs such as theirs, there are ongoing problems around knowing how best to track the impact they generate and how best to disseminate the methods and findings that come with capturing that impact. BOM is currently

> Between BOM (turnover £150,000), the photography studio **(turnover £250,000)** and the restaurant **(turnover £400,000)**, the economic output of the building is **£800,000** a year.

talking to Birmingham University about transformational change among young people learning STEAM subjects, including at a special needs school, to evaluate engagement and track that impact over a long period of time.

◈ Assets

Two key areas that other hubs could learn from:

- Residency and gallery programming / workshop delivery model

  A programming model led by the passions and skills of a residency group rather than by outside curation feeds into a model for developing and retaining talent, and strengthening the depth and longevity of creative networks.

- STEAM based education programme for schools

  A model for engaging directly with schools, including those supporting children and young people with special educational needs. Uses artists and members of the hub community to deliver STEAM based projects. Collaborative partnership evaluation programme being developed to match longitudinal impact.

2.6

The FuseBox, Brighton
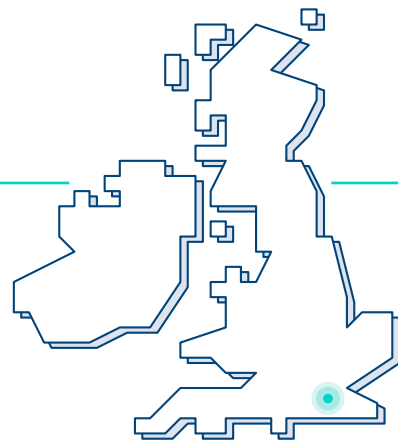
The FuseBox is a hub in Brighton established to support creative and digital innovators.

It was founded by Wired Sussex in 2013 and provides creative start-ups and existing businesses with access to resources and to knowledge and expertise from thought leaders and practitioners from the arts, technology, research and business communities.

Wired Sussex is an independent Brighton-based membership organisation for companies and freelancers operating in the digital, media and technology sector in Sussex, UK. They deliver a wide range of services, initiatives and networks designed to assist their members both individually and collectively. As such the FuseBox is typical of the most recent wave of hubs emerging from the creative digital sector.

The space was founded in 2013 and was inspired by the Brighton Fuse, a two-year research project (for which Wired Sussex was the industry lead) that analysed the growth of Brighton's successful creative, digital and information technology (CDIT) cluster. The research proved invaluable in empirically demonstrating the many ways in which the fusion of creative practice and technology was central to regional innovation and growth. With the goal of creating a physical manifestation of the Brighton Fuse research, Wired Sussex developed, designed and established The FuseBox.

Culture and activities

The FuseBox's ethos is driven by a set of approaches focused on collaborative cross-disciplinary tools and models, which

they believe create more effective business innovation in the post-industrial sectors of the economy. It leverages Wired Sussex's wide regional and national network to deliver a range of activities from the very informal (drop-ins, co-working) to the responsive (talks and workshops) to structured programmes (six month courses for start-ups).

The goal is to embed within the FuseBox clearly identifiable experiences and approaches which are played out through a wide range of events and activities. This FuseBox culture, with its focus on the primacy of collaborative approaches, learning through practical creative activity and on building personal resilience and growth (supporting innovators rather than innovations), provides a common and recurring set of themes that help the FuseBox to deliver a diverse programme of activity with coherence.

This 'culture first' approach enables the FuseBox to work in various partnerships and consider funding and revenue opportunities from a range of sources without losing its focus, its identity and its purpose. One such example of this is the Digital Catapult Centre Brighton.

Digital Catapult Centre Brighton

The Digital Catapult Centre Brighton is a collaborative R&D programme for digital innovation. It focuses specifically on projects that create innovation and value from real-time and location-based data – the 'Internet of Place' as they term it, exploring the social, cultural, creative and technological challenges that exist at the intersection of the Internet of Things, locative media, 5G connectivity, and virtual reality / augmented reality.

The Digital Catapult Centre Brighton is led by Coast to Capital LEP in collaboration with delivery partners including the University of Brighton, Wired Sussex, the University of Sussex, the 5G Innovation Centre, American Express and Gatwick Airport. It is tasked with delivering a range of projects,

> The goal is to embed within the FuseBox clearly **identifiable experiences and approaches** which are played out through a wide range of events and activities.

designed to be accessible to start-ups and SMEs to use and benefit from.

Much of its programme of activity occurs within the FuseBox. This gives Catapult the benefit of being located in a space which SMEs and HEIs know about and are comfortable with, and enables the FuseBox methodology to be utilised on the programme, applying expertise from the arts, humanities and social sciences to the opportunities and challenges of generating value from new technologies.

Hosting Catapult activity has provided the FuseBox with an opportunity to work with larger corporations as well as start-ups and SMEs, and to learn how to flex and develop its approach to make that work.

Process

The FuseBox is designed to maximise accessibility and minimise management overheads, encouraging users of the hub to self-manage as much as possible. There is, for instance, no receptionist or reception area. Engagement with the space and with the resources and opportunities it has to offer can happen in a variety of ways, but often begins informally and ad hoc before developing into something deeper and more consistent. To facilitate that process, co-working for creative entrepreneurs is supported through an open door policy with no formal programme or invite for co-working apart from introductory drop-ins. Users are not provided with set desks, to encourage a fluid environment where new connections are made through chance encounters.

For the events programme, and the FuseBox space as a whole, Wired Sussex act as producers and hosts, supporting users and looking after visitors. They look for interesting areas of need and produce activities relevant to its constituency. Recently this has included a programme of events based

> The FuseBox is designed to **maximise accessibility** and **minimise management overheads**, encouraging users of the hub to self-manage as much as possible.

around the development of connected digital technologies beyond the screen.

Wired Sussex mobilises their network of members and contacts to source speakers, workshop leaders and other expertise that they identify as valuable to the FuseBox community. They also actively look to engage and support existing groups by providing access to the FuseBox and its resources, delivering benefits to those groups and to the FuseBox community.

People

The Fusebox welcomes a range of residents and users, some temporary and some over longer time periods. These include:

- Wired Sussex – its staff are based in the co-working space, providing users with access to their knowledge and contacts
- Innovators - the Fusebox24 start-up programme curates and delivers a detailed and challenging 24 week entrepreneurship programme for 10 to 12 boundary-crossing entrepreneurs
- Audiences for talks and workshops - this often includes other creative tenants in New England House where the FuseBox is based
- Wired Sussex's network of over 2,000 businesses and freelancers
- Residencies for the Digital Catapult programme
- Regular technology meetups, including IoT, VR and Blockchain
- University researchers and post graduates
- Secondments from large corporations and the public sector

Place

The FuseBox is situated in a unit in New England House, a local authority owned building in central Brighton. Built in the 1960s to support small-scale manufacturers, the building organically shifted to a creative and tech tenant base as local small-scale

THE FUSEBOX, BRIGHTON

THE FUSEBOX, BRIGHTON

manufacturing disappeared. In exchange for low rents from the Brighton & Hove City Council, companies took over empty units and repurposed and renovated them. The FuseBox was part of that process, taking on a unit that had been empty for 12 years. With the creative and digital cluster's importance to the Brighton economy now widely understood, the Local Authority has recently formally recognised the strategic value of New England House, and tenancies are now only available for creative/digital/tech business use.

Values

The FuseBox was a response to the findings of the Brighton Fuse research. Two interim findings from the research were identified by the founders of the FuseBox as being significant. The first was that the success of creative economy in Brighton was being driven by businesses that deeply integrated ('fused') creativity and technology in their products and services, their innovation practices and their culture. The second was that in a post-industrial landscape, traditional industrial business support models won't work for these fused business.

Flexible and responsive

As an organisation, Wired Sussex looks to run the FuseBox in continuous start-up mode, adopting a lean start-up model that tests, learns and iterates programmes of activity on an ongoing basis. Although this is challenging, it adds a dynamism and responsiveness to their work which enables them to provide a service that meets the changing demands of their community.

Collaborative

The FuseBox is designed around the notion that collaboration can be a competitive advantage, particularly for early stage innovators. But a space isn't a condition for collaboration unless it's the right kind of space. The FuseBox is primarily

> The FuseBox is designed around the notion that **collaboration can be a competitive advantage**, particularly for early stage innovators.

open plan with a central kitchen area. It is flexible and can be reconfigured for a range of different uses and activities. Design is also about human activity and regular users are encouraged to visually display or articulate their activities, needs and offers via whiteboards, regular presentations, communal hub activities, etc.. Users are also encouraged to be participants by greeting visitors, helping with maintenance and – when they have left – acting as mentors to new users.

Resilient and empathetic

The FuseBox supports companies and individuals to become resilient, which they understand as being able to effectively respond to emergent opportunities, changes and setbacks in a changing social, economic and technological environment. For the organisation, enabling people to understand their own values is vital. At the FuseBox, they value the support of 'people over product' and take a longitudinal approach to support entrepreneurial activity.

Don't try and do stuff other people are doing already

The FuseBox is dedicated to making sure that what they do does not simply replicate services offered by other parts of the creative community in Brighton, for example co-working spaces like the Skiff, and instead tries to ensure their offer is complementary and additional to the city's creative ecosystem.

Impact

The FuseBox was described by a board member as 'a social super-collider', which brings diverse people and ideas together to act as a ladder of things that lead to collaboration; from

> The FuseBox was described by a board member as **'a social super-collider'**.

social cohesion to collaboration, you need social connections to build. In that sense collaboration and connection are understood as vital for impact.

Economic impact

The expertise that the FuseBox possesses in aggregating and supporting talent was directly implicated in a successful bid for £4.9 million of investment from central government into New England House. Hubs operating out of buildings like New England House also support building owners by paying for and managing the renovation of commercial and industrial units.

New businesses and products

The FuseBox residents and alumni of its innovation programmes have gone on to create new businesses and products, for example:

• Maker Club is made up of teachers and industry professionals that all passionately believe technology is the key to unlocking a wealth of talent in young people. It was established by FuseBox24 participant Simon Riley after completing the innovation programme. Maker Club supports children and young people from 6 to 16 to gain practical experience of a range of technologies, from arduino to 3D printing via a series of education programmes.

• 3Dify are a past FuseBox resident and start-up. Working with the community around the FuseBox, the team developed the necessary skills in tech, code, hardware and UX to produce a portable 3D scanner that allows users to print 3D models of themselves. 3Dify executive Kati Byrne describes the FuseBox as being invaluable to their development, from offering physical space to develop the prototype, to sourcing additional expertise required to develop the project, through to support with funding bids. The art installation turned touring product has a number of possible uses and has received extensive

A number of freelancers and businesses working with and around the FuseBox described the **transformative impact** of the space.

coverage in the media, hailed as one of Brighton's best tech start-ups.

• Wired Sussex is currently supporting a project with American Express and a number of tech and retail start-ups, looking at how new technologies may impact on the retail industry and the customer experience. This is part of their Digital Catapult Centre Brighton work. Most of the events and the support for start-ups has been hosted at the FuseBox.

Cross-sector collaboration

As a neutral third space, the FuseBox has actively enabled researchers between and within universities to connect across departments and disciplines, as well as connecting them up with businesses. This has led to a range of funding proposals.

Business support, expertise and opportunities

A number of freelancers and businesses working with and around the FuseBox described the transformative impact of the space. Benefits and aspects of value have included:

• New jobs and paid work

• Vital connections to other businesses in the city

• New opportunities for profile-raising collaboration

• Inspiration that feeds into the services and products they deliver

• Mutual support that provides confidence and improves their business offer

• Access to business development skills

• Unexpected encounters that have led to new innovations

◈ Assets

• The Brighton Fuse Report

Made an important contribution to creative economy policy research in the UK, especially with its emphasis on the success potential for the 'super-fused'

business of original tech with original content. The research has been followed by three other fuse-themed research projects looking at freelancers, start-ups and growth.
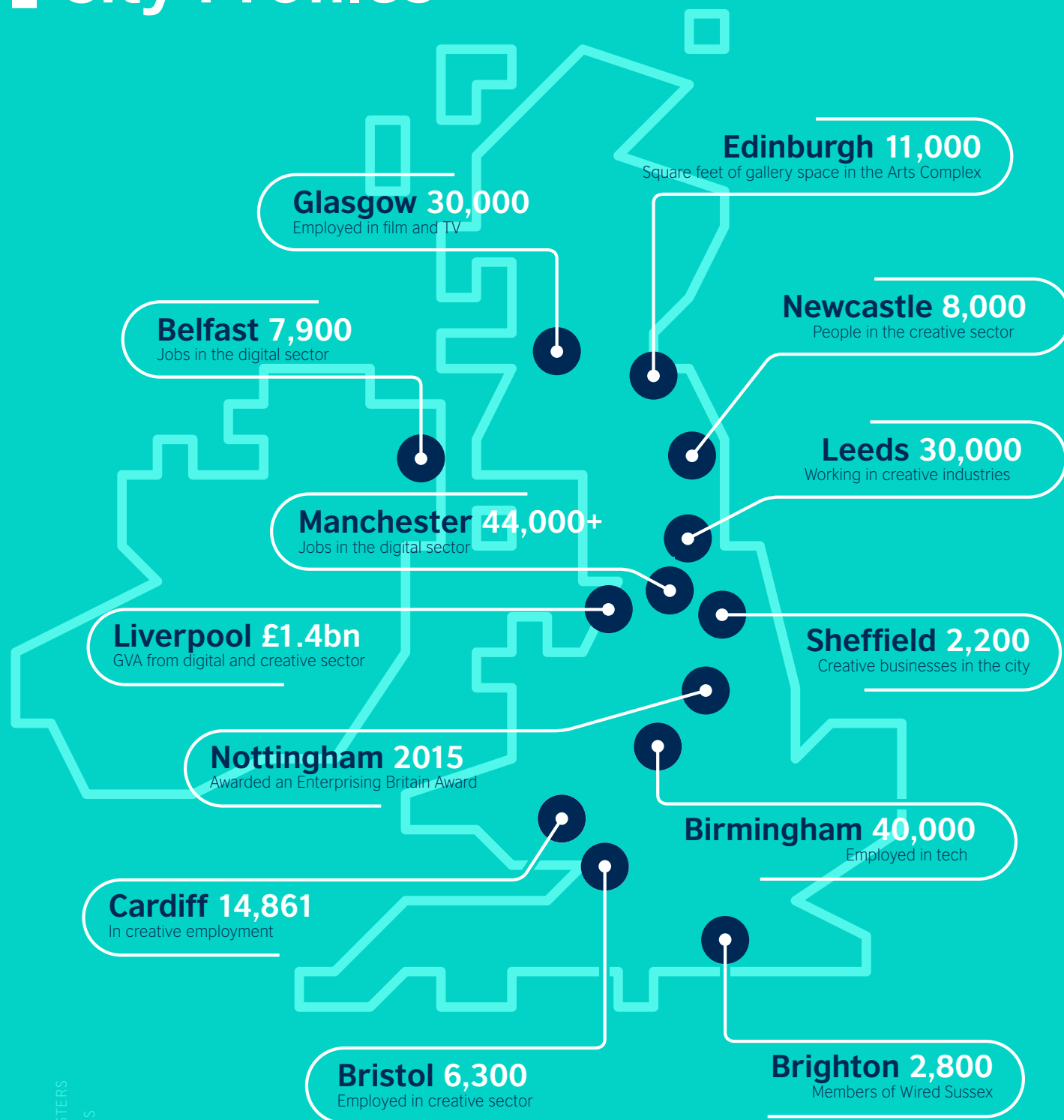
- Fusebox24:
The 24-week intensive course for innovators includes a detailed bible documenting its approach and methodologies, and a toolkit of different components developed for the programme. These are exportable assets.

- Flexible management model:
The 'always in start-up' mode that underpins Wired Sussex is another asset.

THE FUSEBOX, BRIGHTON

# Section Three

Creative Hubs
City Profiles

Edinburgh 11,000
Square feet of gallery space in the Arts Complex

Glasgow 30,000
Employed in film and TV

Belfast 7,900
Jobs in the digital sector

Newcastle 8,000
People in the creative sector

Leeds 30,000
Working in creative industries

Manchester 44,000+
Jobs in the digital sector

Liverpool £1.4bn
GVA from digital and creative sector

Sheffield 2,200
Creative businesses in the city

Nottingham 2015
Awarded an Enterprising Britain Award

Birmingham 40,000
Employed in tech

Cardiff 14,861
In creative employment

Bristol 6,300
Employed in creative sector

Brighton 2,800
Members of Wired Sussex

HUBS AND CLUSTERS
IN KEY UK CITIES

The objective of this annex is to provide an initial scoping of hubs and clusters in key UK cities.

It is provided as an illustrative backdrop to the main section of the report and the detailed case studies. Here we explore the parameters of hubs and cities to help refine our core study. As a scoping exercise it drew upon secondary research that was available in the public domain. We have sought to provide a general description of hubs and their recent empirical development. It is very clear that such an exercise cannot be critical or incisive; that is the objective and value of the detailed case studies where we delve into processes and values.

We note that the use of hub terminology can be at times flexible, and cover a range of art forms. All cities are working to different timescales and with various specific histories. It is clear that there is a challenge between securing workspace and managing networks. What is revealing is the different approaches that cities and hubs have to this problem; this is further explored in the detailed case studies. We have included links to a variety of reports that hubs have produced themselves on their activities. Again, these provide a useful overview of the range of approaches to evaluation, and the diversity of stakeholders.

It is of note that in most cases a tension between 'keeping the lights on' – that is, financing the infrastructure - and the social and cultural impacts and objectives of hubs. We found that stakeholder evaluation tends to look primarily at the former (understandably, as it's often public money), however, far more interesting and insightful outcomes were covered by the latter. Once again, this is a theme that we pick up in the detailed case studies.

It will be clear that we are not claiming this overview to be definitive or comprehensive; indeed, we would recommend that an iteration of this overview could be a collaborative project of hubs. Creative England also have an excellent overview of selected hubs in selected UK cities. However, we also recognise that hubs are in the promotional game. We offer here a once removed, descriptive approach which we judge to be of more value than simple 'boosterism'.
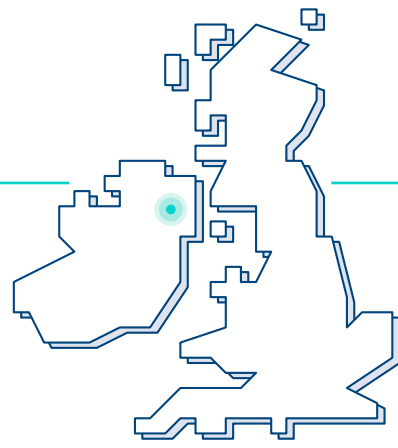
01
Belfast

The provision of art space and the support of the cultural and creative industries in Belfast is at an earlier stage of development than the other cities we surveyed.

Key agencies thus far have been the City Council (Creative Industries Team), and Blick Studios. Clearly the history of both the dock decline and the troubles has left a distinctive mark on the city. Nevertheless, there is a growing digital economy with more than 7,900 jobs in the sector (NESTA 2016) as well as culture and creative industries, especially the film sector (Ibid). As with other cities, the City Council have played a critical role in funding initial projects.

The key agency is Blick Studios, formed in 2007 by a group of creative entrepreneurs in Belfast. It provides fully serviced shared desk space and private office space to more than 60 creative and digital start-ups across four different locations within Belfast and Derry in Northern Ireland. A notable presence is in the Cathedral Quarter where the Metropolitan Arts Centre has also been located since 2012. Blick also provides virtual services, meeting room hire and event spaces and runs different events, workshops and courses to help build community and provide support for small and start-up creative and digital businesses. Blick is a non-profit social enterprise recycling profits generated from its workspace and business services to help build community and provide events and support for start-up

creative and digital businesses. Examples of this are events such as Blick Academy for creative start-ups, Share 6, Belfast Pitch Night and projects such as Another Belfast design map and Belfast Design Week.
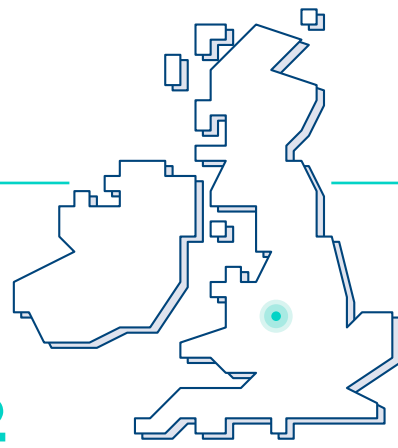
The huge upsurge of activity stimulated by the Derry-Londonderry City of Culture year has been important for arts and culture in the city. Although it is an hour from Belfast, the small scale and local network means that a regional scope is important. A recent development is Eighty81, which currently provides 40 jobs in 16 tenant companies. Plans for another 60 jobs on the site within 2015/16 has been established in Ebrington and is managed by Blick Studios. It is supported with £2.4 million from Ilex Urban Regeneration, the development agency of Derry-Londonderry. There are plans in place by the City Council to secure finance for another creative hub in the city. Back in Belfast, smaller scale studio space which is used as more traditional artist studios and rehearsal spaces are provided by King Street Arts and located in the Castle district of the city. There are other providers such as Oh Yeah Studios that provide rehearsal spaces.

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tourism-venues/culture/culture-about.aspx (accessed 10.07.2016) www.blickstudios.org

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BELFAST KEY FIGURES —

7,900
Jobs in the digital sector

60+
Digital start-ups housed by Blick Studios

£2.4m
Support for creative hub Eighty81 from Ilex Urban Regeneration

16
Tenant companies in Eighty81, providing 40 jobs. Plans for 60 new jobs in 2015/16

02
Birmingham

Birmingham is home to 6,000 tech firms employing nearly 40,000 people (Birmingham Post, June 2014).

BIRMINGHAM KEY FIGURES —

40,000

People employed in tech

6,000

Tech jobs in the city

1/5th

of the city's economy comes from Digital Tech

25%

of the UK's gaming workforce is based here

Digital tech firms make up almost one fifth of Birmingham's economy and 25 per cent of the UK's gaming workforce is based in Birmingham (NESTA 2016: 59). A great variety of creative hubs has developed in Birmingham from initiatives such as the Innovation Birmingham Campus, Impact Hub Birmingham, The Custard Factory, Fazeley Studios, Entrepreneurs for the Future (e4f) and Oxygen Accelerator with a strong concentration in Digbeth – now labelled as the 'Digital Quarter' – and the Jewellery Quarter, a designated conservation area with over 200 listed buildings and still more than 500 jewellery businesses. The Jewellery Quarter has long been a hub of manufacturing regeneration. The Space is a notable new development based on multiple and short term use of space for independent designers.

The City Council is involved in several creative hubs but there is no coordinated initiative; rather the support for creative hubs is divided between different departments on a case by case basis. CCI are considered a key area for economic development support in Birmingham's Strategy for Growth (2015) as the investment director of Business Birmingham acknowledges.

The need to nurture our tech and creative community is paramount. There are excellent home-grown initiatives such as Silicon Canal community, but these need to be supported if they are to continue to help shape the sector. The region should aim to develop an ever larger pool of talented coders to add further to what we already have (Wouter Schuitemaker 2014).

The Innovation Birmingham Campus with iCentrum, a new open plan office space, and incubator programs such as Entrepreneurs for the Future (e4f) support the growth of technology companies in Birmingham and the West Midlands. Another incubator program from Innovation Birmingham is The Serendip Incubator whereby tech or digital start-ups work directly with large corporate partners in the co-working spaces for six months. Start-ups can apply and get free office space for six months, mentoring from experienced entrepreneurs and access to specific start-up and innovation focused workshops. Innovation Birmingham Campus is the former Birmingham Science Park Aston which was founded in 1982 and is owned by Birmingham City Council.

There are also bottom-up initiatives such as Silicon Canal, a tech initiative by several CEOs of Birmingham's start-ups designed to support the local ecosystem, or Boxxed, a new incubator, or HUB Birmingham, a co-working space for social entrepreneurship modelled after the HUB Westminster. Moseley Exchange,

Birmingham's first community-led co-working space, has existed since 2013 and provides more than 50 freelancers and small businesses with office spaces and services. Moseley Exchange is run by the Moseley Community Development Trust. Birmingham Open Media is Birmingham's new fab lab and opened after a £70,000 building refurbishment financed by a mixture of private and public funding. With the Jewellery Quarter and the Custard Factory, Birmingham also has real-estate-developer-led hubs for arts, culture and creative industries.

Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:

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Birmingham City Council (2015): Delivering Growth, retrieved from http://centreofenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Strategy-for-Growth-copy.pdf (accessed 23.03.2016)

Birmingham Post (June 2014). Birmingham takes over Old Street Station as it targets London tech jobs. www.birminghampost.co.uk/business/creative/birmingham-takes-over-old-street-7275281 Bolton, Richard. (2015). Creative England. At a glance: Birmingham creative hubs. www.creativeengland.co.uk/story/at-a-glance-birmingham-creative-hubs

NESTA (2016). Tech Nation. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/publications/tech-nation-2016 (accessed 20.03.2016)

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30,000

Students attracted to Brighton's two universities

2,800

Members of Wired Sussex

150

Desks for freelancers at The Skiff, Brighton's biggest co-working space

£6.2m

EU funding for FuseBox studio space

03
Brighton

Brighton constitutes a fairly young but fast growing cluster of small and medium sized companies in the creative and digital sector in the south east of England.

There is a strong specialisation in the fields of advertising and marketing, software and games development, and publishing (Mateos–Garcia et al. 2014; NESTA 2016: 36).

Those businesses have created a 'critical mass' (see Hackett & Massey 2008) that now attracts more young business founders from other parts of the UK. The laid-back lifestyle of the city is often cited as a reason to move to Brighton (Brighton Fuse 2013: 39). Furthermore, Brighton's two universities (University of Brighton and University of Sussex) attract more than 30,000 students a year who make up 14 per cent of the local population and often stay after graduation.

The city is known for its well-established arts and culture scene, for instance hosting several festivals such as Artists Open Houses, CineCity, the Great Escape, Brighton Digital Festival and Brighton Festival, the second largest arts festival in the UK. This arts and cultural vibrancy is also reflected in the entrepreneurial scene. For example, almost half of Brighton's entrepreneurs have a background in arts, design, and humanities (Brighton Fuse 2013: 2). Nevertheless, Brighton's attractiveness drives up

house prices and results in a shortage of workspaces for creative and digital businesses (Hackett & Massey 2008). There are several public and private initiatives to tackle the challenge. The cluster is supported by organisations like Wired Sussex (with more than 2,800 companies and freelancers as members), freelance networks such as the Brighton Farm, and the Brighton & Hove Arts & Creative Industries Commission, an independent cultural commission for the city, who work closely with the City Council (and also with the previously existing South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)). Together they form a tightly knit support network for the development of creative industries in Brighton as well as for shared workspace provision.

Along with the growing numbers of freelancers and small businesses in the creative and digital industries, there is a rise in serviced creative hubs and co-working facilities for those freelancers and entrepreneurs. The Skiff, with desks for 150 freelancers, is Brighton's biggest co-working space. The Werks Group, a community interest company with more than 1,800 members, offers several shared workspaces in Brighton & Hove and attracts different publics to those spaces (e.g. Coachwerks is an arts-based hub for performers, writers, animators, musicians, photographers, printers and artists; Westwerks is designed for social enterprises and The Werks at Hove is frequented by IT freelancers). The

Brighton Game Collective is a specialised game development co-working space and community hub. Lighthouse is an arts and culture hub that connects new developments in art, technology and society. And, the FuseBox, is a studio and collaboration space for start-ups from the creative, digital and tech sector managed by Wired Sussex. In 2016, FuseBox became a center in the Digital Catapult program (Digital Catapult Centre Brighton 2016) which is part of Innovate UK, a funding initiative by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills to develop projects that encourage innovation.

Initially, FuseBox was supported through the 'ReCreate' project (2013-2015), and £6.2 million funding from the EU Interreg 4a cross-border collaborative programme between the south of England and north of France. The aim of the programme was to deliver new work and exhibition, studio and learning spaces for creative entrepreneurs from the arts, creative and digital industries. Part of the funding scheme was also a 'pop-up shop' initiative to fill empty retail spaces across the city with artists and creative industries to showcase their work. Furthermore, the public funding supported the development of the New England House as a hub for the creative, digital and technology sector in the New England Quarter, a new mixed-use development project next to Brighton Station.

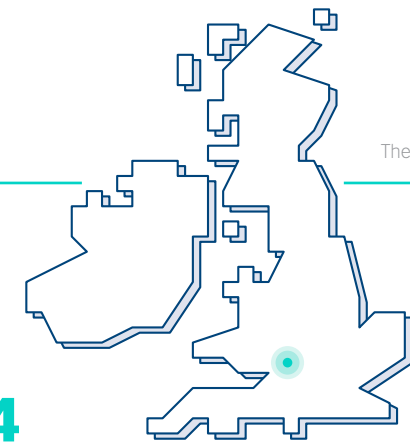**Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:**

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NESTA. (2016). Tech Nation. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/publications/tech-nation-2016 (accessed 20.03.2016)

BRISTOL KEY FIGURES —

6,300

People employed in creative sector

500

Members of creative network Bristol Media

40%

of the world's wildlife film making has links to Bristol

70

Low-cost artist studios in creative hub Spike Island

04
Bristol

Bristol is quickly becoming one of the UK's most important creative cities.

The creative sector provides employment for approximately 6,300 people (Bristol Business Guide, 2016) or 12.7 per cent of the city's business activity (Bristol City Council, 2015). According to Bristol City Council, Bristol is a leading centre in the creation and production of digital as well as commercial content and it ranks among the top ten creativity and innovation hotspots in the UK (Bristol Business Guide 2016; NESTA 2016). This is evidenced by the number of internationally-known creative organisations located in the city such as Aardman Animations (Wallace and Gromit, Chicken Run), the BBC, Endemol's Deal or No Deal, Tigress, McCann Erickson and Icon Films (Bristol Business Guide, 2016). The city is also home to Bristol Media who are an industry-led organisation. One of the biggest creative networks in the UK, Bristol Media has almost 500 members across the digital, TV, animation, design, marketing, PR, publishing, film and advertising sectors (Bristol Media, 2016). Interestingly, approximately 40 per cent of the world's wildlife film making has links to studios in Bristol (Bristol City Council, 2015). Bristol has a number of locations that act as creative hubs and they are home to a number of businesses. Many of these locations also include a variety of co-working spaces and serviced creative hubs. For example, the Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone represents

one of the UK's largest regeneration initiatives aimed at expanding and enhancing the creative sector in the city. Bristol Temple Meads is at its core, and according to the BTQEZ website, it is already home to 'rapidly growing clusters of small and start-up businesses in the creative, digital and hi-tech sectors' (Bristol Temple Quarter, 2016). The zone has a number of key sites and is a 25-year project that began in 2012. This is emblematic of how high on the agenda the provision of infrastructure for the creative sector is in local policy.

Another area is Bristol's Harbourside Mile which is a bustling tourist attraction but also area that houses a number of important cultural organisations. It is home to cultural organisations such as Watershed media and arts centre, the Arnolfini gallery, and the M-Shed museum. The Arnolfini

Contemporary Art Gallery is already part of an important cultural network of established artists, but new partnerships such as the one with the University of West England, might lead to more connections with emerging talent. The Watershed, with a huge reputation, is a social enterprise and leading film, culture and digital media centre. It was recently involved in the hugely successful REACT project which was funded by the AHRC to look at collaborations between universities and creative organisations in Bristol (Watershed, 2016). The Harbourside area is also home to Spike Island which is a creative hub for the

development of contemporary art and design (Spike Island, 2016). It currently has 70 artists in low cost studios, a co-working space for creative businesses and provides engagement events and opportunities.

According to Bristol City Council, other important clusters of creative and cultural activity include Park Street, West End, Whiteladies Road, Stokes Croft and South Bristol. These areas are home to cultural and creative organisations such as the BBC, Hamilton House, Games Hub, the Bottle Yard, Knowledge West Media Centre, the Tobacco Factory and Bath Road Studios (Bristol Business Guide, 2016).

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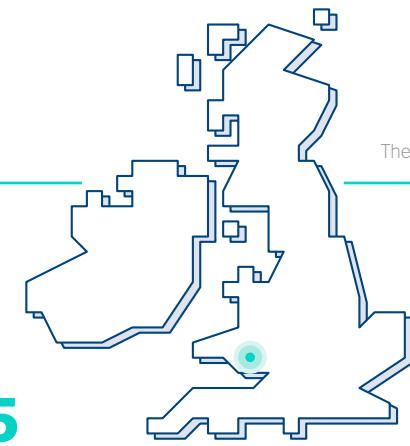
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CARDIFF KEY FIGURES —

14,861
People in creative employment in Cardiff

£350m
Contributed to the local economy from TV production

25
Managed workspaces provided by Indycube

150
People in Tec Marina Penarth, a tech hub for internet start-ups

05
Cardiff

Cardiff has the highest share of creative industries employment in Wales with roughly a third of all creative employment (14,861) in the city.

It is the UK's largest media centre outside of London with BBC Wales, S4C and ITV Wales all based there. There is also a strong independent TV production industry with over 600 firms contributing £350 million to the local economy. Cardiff developed a lively and dynamic creative hub scene with mostly self-organised bottom-up co-working spaces (there is no accelerator yet) in the last five years. So far, there are no initiatives to network those hubs nor is there a coordinated initiative or policy by Cardiff City Council to support these creative hubs. And, there is no documentation or evaluation on these hubs.

Yet, most hub owners know each other and exchange with each other via informal networking. Especially, Mark Hooper (Indycube), Gareth Jones (Welsh ICE) and Neil Cocker (Founder of Cardiff Start) are pointed out as the driving force behind Cardiff's hub scene. The biggest managed workspaces provider is Indycube with 25 spaces in Wales and five spaces in Cardiff alone, mostly populated by CCI freelancers. Since its beginning in 2010, Indycube was organised as a Community Interest Company (CIC). However, in 2016, the Indycube founder turned the company into a co-operative model, a Community Benefit

Society (CommBen) owned equally by the members. Indycube will soon house the new Fablab Cardiff. Cardiff Start is a self-organised network for freelancers and small businesses (Cardiff Collective) as well as a community hub for technology start-ups and aims to connect tech entrepreneurs in Cardiff. Tec Marina Penarth, a tech hub for internet start-ups with space for 150 people, opened in 2015. The hub is headed by innovation expert and author Chris Griffiths.

Some of these hubs have received public funding, yet mostly from the Welsh government and Creative Cardiff. For example, Porth Teigr is a new waterfront development in Cardiff and, as part of the initiative, a new Centre for the Creative Industries called Glo Works was opened by the First Minister on March 22 2016. Another co-working space supported by the Welsh government is Welsh ICE located in Caerphilly, outside of Cardiff. Because of its location in a convergence area, the space could obtain public funding and usually offers their members desk spaces free for one year. Chapter is the city's oldest managed workspace provider for arts and media companies and has provided several studios since the 1970s (Montgomery 2007: 610). Since 1994, Chapter Workshops is its biggest office and studio space which rents to creative companies. It sits next to the Chapter Arts Centre, Chapter's flagship project – a converted school

that houses a theatre, gallery, cinema and an extensive arts program. Cardiff City Council purchased and renovated the building, while Chapter organises the workspaces and the arts programming. Based in an old dance hall building, Warwick Hall Studios is a private studio space provider for non-commercial artists. It has provided 16 private spaces for around 20 to 25 artists since 2011. In 2012 the owners behind Warwick Hall, a group of Cardiff artists, initiated Cardiff Music Studios – a place for artists of all disciplines to get creative (but this has since closed).

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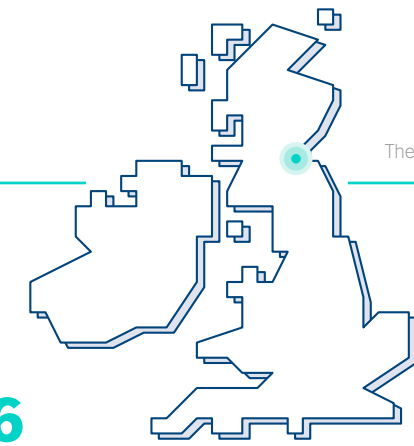
06
Edinburgh

Edinburgh has a well-established cultural and arts heritage infrastructure underpinned by its capital city status and seat of government position.

It is also UNESCO City of Literature and home to the International Festival. Edinburgh has a plethora of museum and art institutions that provide a robust foundation for its activities.

Edinburgh has developed a number of new initiatives. Creative Exchange Leith is a notable case. Based in the former Corn Exchange building since 2013, it has 80 workspaces that benefit from shared support services. A development with a longer history, since 2008, is the Arts Complex. Located next to Meadowbank Stadium, it offers affordable studio space and is able to accommodate over 200 artists, and boasts 11,000 square feet of gallery space. Edinburgh is also home to the UK's largest tech hub, CodeBase. CodeBase has over 80 companies, with over 500 people working between them. Smaller and more traditional provision of artist spaces are found at Summerhall, Gayfield and Out of the Blue (OOTB). Creative Edinburgh is an organisation that has played a significant role in networking and stimulating the creative community and mobilising resources for international networking and local capacity building. A notable collaboration between Creative Edinburgh and Creative Dundee was the

EDINBURGH KEY FIGURES —

80
Workspaces in Creative Exchange Leith

7
Creative Hubs

1000+
Creatives supported

1
Creative HubKit created

'Creative HubKit' produced for the British Council that outlines best practice and working examples of hubs drawn from an international review.

Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:

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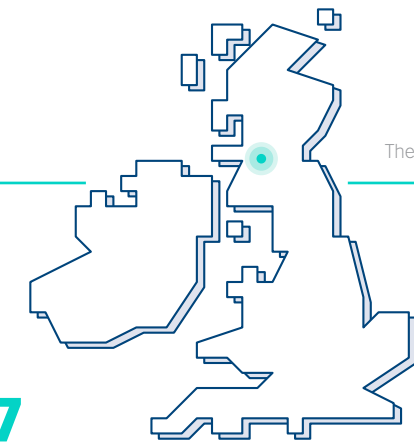
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GLASGOW KEY FIGURES —

£20m

Brought to the city's economy from film and TV

30,000

People employed in the film and tv sector

231

Productions shot during 2013

60

Members of affordable workspace MANY Studios

07
Glasgow

Glasgow's creative and cultural sectors, while traditionally strong, have enjoyed continuous momentum partly due to the city being named European Capital of Culture in 1990 (BBC, 2011).

It has also been UNESCO City of Music since 2009 and host to the MOBO Awards in 2011, 2013 and 2015 (Glasgow City Council, 2016). Glasgow is particularly strong in film and television where productions brought approximately £20 million to Glasgow's economy in 2013 (Ibid). The Glasgow Film Office received 343 location enquiries, resulting in 231 productions being shot during 2013 (Ibid). It is precisely due to facts and figures such as these that Glasgow City Council is implementing aggressive strategies for integrating creative industries into their overall economic plan – this and the fact that the sector employs close to 30,000 people in the city (Glasgow City Council, 2016).

Regarding large creative interventions, in 2011 the city launched 'Creative Clyde' – a centre for media, technology and creativity-oriented business ventures (Glasgow City Council, 2016). It has been realised through a partnership between large and influential cultural institutions, namely Scottish Enterprise, Glasgow City Council, Creative Scotland, BBC Scotland, STV, the University of Glasgow and the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (Glasgow

City Council, 2016). The goal is to create an environment for creative businesses to work, and it currently supports just over 200. Another large development is Pacific Quay (Ibid), which is predominantly a centre for media and broadcasting.

As well as large planned initiatives that support the sector, Glasgow has a number of interesting smaller creative and cultural hubs, many of which seem to develop as grass roots arts organisations (Glasgow City Marketing Bureau, 2016). For instance, the Barras Art and Design Centre is a creative hub situated in the Barras Market, and houses a mix of studios and retail spaces. The area is also home to MANY Studios which is a creative organisation providing affordable workspace to recent graduates and start-up creative businesses. They have 40 spaces and over 60 members. Speirs Locks is also emerging as an important locale in Glasgow's creative scene and includes a number of hubs such as: The Whisky Bond, TAKTAL, The Glue Factory and Grey Wolf. Based in Glasgow, WASPS Studios is one of the UK's largest non-profit studio providers, accommodating around 800 visual artists, craft makers, creative industries and cultural organisations in work spaces across Scotland. Their Glasgow hubs include: The Briggait, South Block, Hanson Street Studios and Dovehill Studios. The CCA: Centre for Contemporary Arts, has been running since 1975 (formerly The Third Eye Centre) offering space and

programming for artists and cultural organisations

Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:

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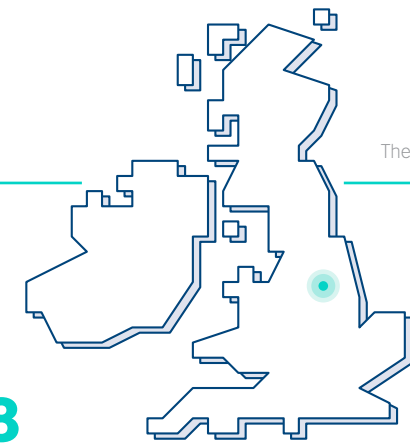
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LEEDS KEY FIGURES —

3,400

Creative businesses

30,000

People working the creative industries

£3.7m

In funding received for new incubator Future Labs

140+

Manufacturing workspaces in Inc. Workshop. Inc.

08
Leeds

Data from 2011 shows that there are nearly 3,400 creative businesses in Leeds, with up to 30,000 people working in creative industries across the city.

70 per cent of creative businesses are 'micro' and a further 21 per cent are 'small'. NESTA's Tech Nation Report (2016: 118) details 44,951 people in the digital sector in Leeds. Roughly half of the city's working population is employed in knowledge-intensive sectors. The city region has seen significant growth in software, computer games and electronic publishing and, more recently, in FinTech (financial innovation), big data related companies and health related start-ups. Leeds also has an active radio and TV sector, with clusters of TV and film production companies near ITV and the BBC's Yorkshire headquarters in Leeds. According to the Centre of Cities Outlook 2015, Leeds is among the ten cities in the UK experiencing the fastest private sector jobs growth (Centre for Cities, 2015).

There exists an unsung community of passionate and independent technology innovators in the Leeds city region. Examples include home-grown communities like Agile Yorkshire, Lean Startup and Leeds Hack. Along with an energetic freelance and self-employed community, these are people whose passion and expertise transform ideas into commercial success stories. Leeds also nurtured one of the first co-

working spaces in the country, which made it into the UK top 10. Co-working spaces in Leeds have since multiplied, proving there is a place for co-operative and progressive attitudes to the way people work and innovate together as small independent businesses (Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership).

Leeds Beckett University is strongly engaged in managed workspaces and runs several creative hubs, e.g. the Digital Hub, a business incubator in partnership with The Yorkshire Post, and the Old Broadcasting House, the oldest co-working space in Leeds. The Old Broadcasting House has existed since 2007 and, due to the financial support by the university, all the co-workers pay a fixed price no matter how much they use the space. Included in the rent are meeting rooms, projectors and help desk services (see Heikkilä, 2012: 47). A new incubator, Future Labs, received £3.7 million in government investment to renovate a derelict police headquarters in the heart of Leeds to create a 6-floor incubator. Similarly, Leeds' first FinTech accelerator Dotforge will also receive public funding. However, even though Leeds Economic Development emphasises a particular focus on CCI and digital businesses, it does not yet have a comprehensive policy in place to support those. There are also real-estate-developer-led hubs such as ClubRooms from The Office Group and
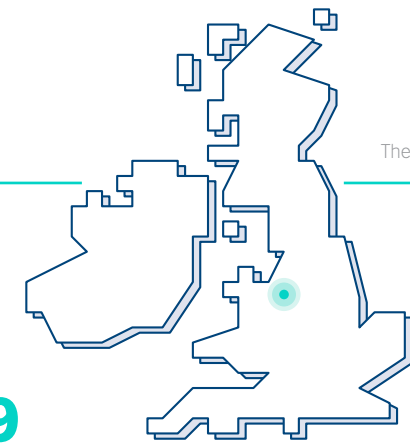
Inc. Workshop. Inc. is a manufacturing workspace for 140+ start-up businesses and self-employed individuals, providing a space to manufacture products and make prototypes, as well as facilitating social and collaborative creative practice. Inc. provides training and access to specialist equipment for screen printing, woodwork, jewellery, metalwork, picture framing, laser cutting, upholstery and sewing. The workshop was set up with the vision to support everyone from self-employed individuals, diverse community groups, hobbyists, designer-makers and artists, and is run by the non-for-profit Enterprise Foundation. Furthermore, Leeds currently bids for the European Capital of Culture 2023 and rewrites its cultural strategy for this.

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LIVERPOOL KEY FIGURES —

7,000

Creative and digital firms

48,000

People employed in creative and digital

£1.4bn

GVA contributed from digital and creative sector

450

Companies on site at creative workspace The Baltic Creative CIC

09
Liverpool

Liverpool has suffered from massive decline in its port activities and manufacturing industries. It has suffered from social unrest and a lack of investment.

In the last 25 years, the rise and rise of Manchester has left Liverpool in the shadows, and to an extent, struggling. However, the role of organisations such as FACT have provided strong roots, and the redevelopment of the docklands area, the arrival of Tate Modern, and the regeneration triggered by the European Capital of Culture has begun to develop momentum. The role of Invest Liverpool has been critical in mobilising the range of initiatives and networks. Clearly the history of Liverpool, associated with music, then the Garden Festival, and the European Capital of Culture, is one of continued efforts to position arts and culture at the core of urban regeneration. The branch of Tate Modern signals this clearly, as well as the established cultural infrastructure Liverpool has.

Liverpool has over 7,000 creative and digital firms, employing over 48,000 people and making up £1.4 billion GVA to the local economy. There is a big tech community and Liverpool is one of Europe's focal points for the games industry. Note though that the games industry is primarily self-contained and located outside the city. It could be seen to constitute a community in itself. The Baltic Triangle is an historic

area of the city that is enjoying a steady renaissance. It is becoming a magnet for creative people, entrepreneurs and their businesses and is pioneering new developments rooted in the creative hub / workspace experience. Of course, alongside this is Tate Liverpool, the extension of Tate Modern in London.

Another long established representative of the arts and cultural industries in Liverpool is FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology). It has an extensive programme of exhibitions, film and participant-led art projects. FACT uses the power of creative technology to inspire and enrich lives. The FACT building includes three galleries (showing four exhibitions a year), café, bar and four state of the art film screens. Based in the heart of the independent Ropewalks Quarter, FACT works in partnership with organisations and businesses to help drive regeneration in the city.

On a smaller scale and focused on the maker community is the Bluecoat. The Bluecoat accommodates 30 creative businesses including artists, graphic designers, small arts organisations, craftspeople and retailers. Many of these are situated in the areas of the building which are not open to the public. Set in Liverpool's oldest building, the longest standing occupier is Bluecoat Display Centre which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2009 and sells specialist UK craft products.

The Baltic Creative CIC was established in 2009 to provide space for the creative and digital sector. The development is now reaching a critical mass after eight years operation and has 450 companies on-site. The Baltic is a commercial property company that operates on market rents. However, it has also created tenancy agreements that allow multi-occupancy and sharable space. The Baltic offers a range of events, festivals and education activities that benefit the community. The Baltic Creative CIC work on a community interest model in that they invest profits back into the property business, the businesses, the events, and the wider sector. They use all of these activities and incomes to cross-subsidise and sustain all of their activities. The Creative Campus, shop front studios, multifunctional warehouses, workshops and managed workspaces are all designed, not only to support creativity, innovation and commercial success, but also to be flexible enough to meet the ever-changing needs of the sectors. Innovative and effective strategies include the provision of creative space and in taking a flexible approach to their contractual relationships with businesses. The CIC status ensures all surpluses are reinvested into supporting businesses, investing in the buildings and investing in the sector generally. Baltic Creative CIC owns and manages all of its buildings and so directly oversees this reinvestment. The scheme has already achieved recognition as a model of best practice for successful growth and collaboration.

Other smaller, niche providers offering key creative activities in this area include Elevator Studios, Camp and Furnace, North Liverpool Academy, The Studio and Life Sciences UTC. Kin2Kin is an online network and resource which aims to connect Liverpool's creatives by hosting events across all sorts of creative fields. There is also a Fashion and Fine Art Photographers group that offers networking and workshops to help its members.

Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:

www.campandfurnace.com/calendar

www.kin2kin.co.uk

www.meetup.com/fashion-and-fine-art-photographers-of-the-united-kingdom

www.kin2kin.co.uk/acme

www.meetup.com/creativeliverpool

http://elevatorstudios.com

www.baltic-creative.com

www.thebluecoat.org.uk

www.fact.co.uk/home.aspx

10

Manchester

There is conflicting data around the number of people employed in Manchester's Digital Sector.

From 61,000 jobs identified by Manchester City Council (2012: 9) to NESTA's Tech Nation which reports over 50,000 jobs in the digital sector (NESTA 2016: 73) and The Sharp, details 44,000 people across Greater Manchester employed in the creative and digital sector. This is equivalent to almost four per cent of all employment (Ekosgen 2016, p.4). Despite the inconsistent data, Manchester's creative industries and digital sector continue to grow and the city recently became home to Tech North, a new initiative for facilitating business support for the digital sector in northern England. Established in 2015, Tech North is delivered through Tech City UK, a publicly funded program from the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media & Sport. Tech City UK was initially set up for London's digital cluster in Shoreditch but has now started to deliver business support to other UK cities. The specific goal of Tech North is to accelerate the development of the North's digital economy through the promotion and support of digital entrepreneurship.

Manchester's development is supported through the city's comprehensive Digital Strategy that contains, among other elements, infrastructure provision. The strategy proposes a total of £60 million in investment for support of workspace infrastructure for Innovation Centres such as Manchester Living Lab,
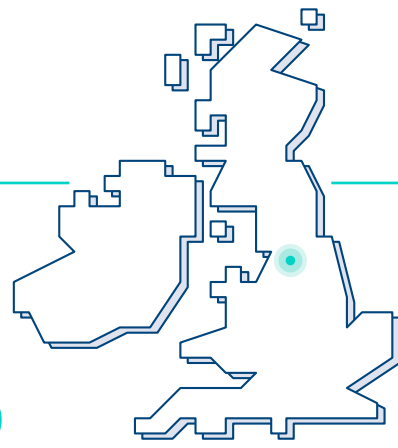
Mad Lab and Fab Lab, which are about digital technologies supporting products and services for the community. The two biggest publicly funded and supported developments are MediaCity in Salford and The Sharp Project in which the City Council took leadership in developing a rundown office building into a creative hub. The Sharp Project 'is Manchester City Council's flagship initiative to support the development of the city's digital sector. The building was completed in June 2011, having received £6.8 million of public funding between 2009 and 2011. The strategic aim of The Sharp Project is to develop and expand the creative and digital sector in Manchester through creating work and generating business.' (Ekosgen 2016, p. 2) After the success of that hub, the expansion to a second building is in the planning stages. Furthermore, Manchester City Council supports The Shed at Manchester Metropolitan University, a meeting and event space for digital innovation and, since 2007, has supported Innospace, Manchester Metropolitan University's business incubator for start-ups and new enterprises. To steer Manchester's digital development, the city has set up a leadership initiative called Manchester Digital with 450 members to form a Manchester digital networking group. Yet, there is no specific hub network. Besides the Digital Strategy and its infrastructure support, public funding for individual hubs is decided on a case by case basis and is splintered between different

departments (e.g. planning, culture, economic development, etc.).

Besides those more tech-oriented hub initiatives, Manchester has developed a dynamic creative hub scene through bottom-up initiatives and informal arrangements with hubs such as OpenSpace, Central Working and The Assembly. There are several managed workspaces for freelancers and small CCI businesses in the Northern Quarter – Manchester's informal CCI cluster where over 150 creative and digital companies are based. Additionally, many former textile manufacturing spaces are now filled with CCI businesses or are used as arts centres or run as managed workspaces. Here Manchester City Council and Manchester Cultural Partnership support workspaces for artists through the Talent City scheme.

Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:

Manchester City Council (2012). Digital Manchester. Retrieved from www.manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/21338/digital_manchester_update_2012.pdf (accessed 22.3.2016)

Ekosgen (2016). The Sharp Project Impact Assessment, February 2016. Retrieved from www.thesharpproject.co.uk/assets/The-Sharp-Project-GVA-Impact-Report-by-ekosgen-February-2016.pdf (accessed 23.03.2016)

NESTA (2016). Tech Nation. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/publications/tech-nation-2016 (accessed 20.03.2016)

MANCHESTER KEY FIGURES —

44,000+

Jobs in the digital sector

4%

of all employment is in the digital sector

£60m

Proposed in support of workspace infrastructure

450

Members of Manchester Digital

11
Newcastle

Newcastle has a successful creative sector (Bolton, 2015).

According to a report published by EKOS (2012: 10) 8,000 people work in the creative sector in Newcastle and Gateshead and the sector comprises 1,775 businesses with an annual turnover (in 2009) of over £800 million. As well as IT support and software development, games development has become a large sub-sector evidenced by the number of large game development companies in Newcastle such a Ubisoft, Reflections, Epic Games UK and CCP Games (Bolton, 2015). Consequently, Newcastle has a range of tech and creative hubs to support start-ups and creative SMEs. According to Newcastle City Council (2016), the city operates a number of Enterprise Centres that provide services to creative enterprises. They are located in various parts of the city, namely Byker, Quayside, Charlotte Square (City Centre) and Lynnwood (Newcastle City Council, 2016). These centres offer a range of services such as flexible rates and rental arrangements, free parking and business support packages (marketing support packages, for instance). The two main centres are the Toffee Factory and The Core. The Toffee Factory is located in Ouseburn, which has seen large investment transform the area. Ouseburn is the cultural and creative quarter of the city (Ouseburn Trust, 2016). The Toffee Factory offers flexible working space, including shared offices for start-ups and large individual offices ideal for bigger companies (Bolton,

2016). The Core building, located on Science Central is designed with new and growing knowledge-based businesses in mind. It has strong links with local universities.

Importantly, in 2013, Newcastle City Council published a report on workspace for the creative sector. It was a scoping study to determine what, in terms of resources, existed for what they saw as growing activity in the creative sector. The report suggested that, while there was a need for workspace like creative hubs in Newcastle, any 'new investment in workspaces needs to be strongly linked to existing clusters rather than standalone new initiatives' (Newcastle City Council, 2013: 2). They identified a number of different types of workspace predominantly in the area of Ouseburn. They found a number of already functioning artists' studios – which are essentially informal creative hubs. They also found that waiting lists for studio spaces were long. A number of artist studios were identified such as the Biscuit Factory, Mushroom Works, Lime Street, Brickworks, Kingsland Church Studios, The NewBridge Project, and Brighton Road Studios. The report is excellent and has a number of case studies on workspace feasibility in Newcastle as well as a snapshot of the health of Newcastle's artistic and creative community.

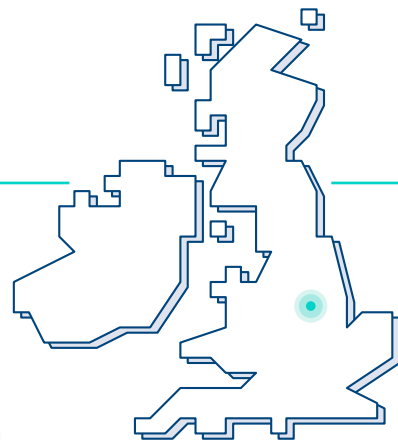**Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:**

Bolton, Richard. (2015). At a glance: Newcastle's creative hubs. Available at: www.creativeengland.co.uk/story/at-a-glance-newcastle-creative-hubs

EKOS. (2012). The Creative Sector in Newcastle and Gateshead. Available at: https://ouseburntrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/The-Creative-Sector-in-Newcastle-and-Gateshead-2012.pdf

Newcastle City Council. (2013). Research into Workspace for the Creative Sector: Newcastle and Gateshead. Available at: https://ouseburntrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Creative-Workspace.pdf

Newcastle City Council. (2016). Business premises and start-up accommodation. Available at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/business/business-support-and-advice/business-start-up-premises-and-enterprise-centres

Ouseburn Trust. (2016). Available at: www.ouseburn.co.uk/about-ouseburn

8,000

People in the creative sector

1,775

Businesses in the creative sector

£800m

Annual turnover from creative businesses

12
Nottingham

Nottingham is a second tier city located in an area that has suffered as a consequence of the economic decline of textile manufacturing and the mining industries.

The City Council has sought to coordinate the nascent creative economy. The historic core and the organic roots of the creative businesses lie in the Lace Market area, adjacent to the city centre. This location contains the Broadway arts centre and a range of (mainly niche retail) creative businesses. As the name suggests, this historic area was vacated by the lace industry. In the late 1990s the abandonment of hosiery mills adjacent to this site opened up new spaces for creative businesses. However, there was pressure to redevelop these prime sites for the service sector that Nottingham was also very keen to attract.

Creative businesses struggled to expand beyond this initial area and to stand out from retail and textile foundations (although businesses such as Paul Smith represent a traditional strength). However, a new wave of creative businesses in Nottingham has been developed hand in hand with extensive public-sector-led urban regeneration. The refurbished museum and the theatres provide a (renewed) traditional foundation for the arts, and the Broadway Cinema hosts 'NearNow' a technology and creative programme. New developments have been taking

place in three new locations bordering the city core: Hockley, Sneinton Market and Canning Circus. The City Council has sought to place culture at the centre of its urban regeneration strategy.

The challenge has been in both developing and relocating existing businesses in the transition. The Nottingham Creative Quarter seeks to link these spaces and various activities together. The Creative Quarter has been a flagship project of Nottingham's City Deal (2012), with a commitment made that the initiative would be run and managed through a private-sector-led company. The Creative Quarter Company provides leadership for the project. The foundation is property based, providing suitable local, low cost accommodation, either directly via the City Council or with its help, and using LEP and ERDF resources. Moreover, the new Canning Circus development is enabled by Scape Community Investment Partnership.
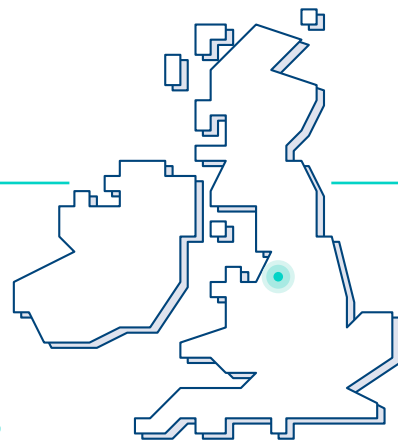
There is no meta-network of hubs and clusters in Nottingham. Participants suggest that it is too small for such a network. However the city is considered to be of a scale such that 'everybody knows everybody else'. This is perhaps reinforced by the legacy of Nottingham City Council projects that provide an infrastructural connection between businesses and public bodies. Views were expressed that Nottingham would be eager to network with other hubs in order to share their experiences and learn from others' experiences. They noted that participation in British Council Hub events (abroad) had been valuable in stimulating this type of reflection.

In 2014, the Creative Quarter developed its strategy for 2014; The Creative Quarter Toolkit. In November 2015, the Creative Quarter was awarded an Enterprising Britain Award for 'Improving the Business Environment' just two and a half years after it commenced operation. The governance of the Nottingham Creative Quarter is dominated by the basics of property acquisition and management, and coordination with the local authority. A number of successful lease management initiatives have made it possible for small start-ups to be sustained. The evaluation of their activities is similar in character, focusing on the economic regeneration, physical regeneration, business planning and reporting to local and central government. However, conversations with various representatives highlighted that such reports and evaluation under-represent the 'real work' and the most significant impacts of the Creative Quarter which tend to have more qualitative and social aspects. As such they claim that the real value added (for them, and local creatives) is in effect below the radar of traditional economic evaluation (see CQ documents for data on impact).

Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:

Nottingham CQ has produced a very good set documentation on their growth and development, and strategy and evaluation:

www.creativequarter.com/news/creative-hub

www.creativequarter.com/about/3yearreport

www.creativequarter.com/about/creative-toolkit-2014-2023

NOTTINGHAM KEY DATES —

1990s
Abandonment of mills opened up new spaces for creative businesses.

2012
The Creative Quarter becomes a flagship project of Nottingham's City deal

2014
The Creative Quarter develops their Toolkit

2015
The Creative Quarter is awarded an Enterprising Britain Award for 'Improving the Business Environment'

13
Sheffield

Sheffield is perhaps the progenitor of the cultural industries policymaking at an urban scale in the UK.

Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) is a 30 hectare area on the edge of the city centre, zoned in 1988 for businesses in cultural production. At the core is the Showroom and Workstation, but also includes organisations such as the Leadmill night club and Red Tape Central music studios among others. Regeneration efforts in the CIQ since then have achieved over £150 million of public and private sector investment. It comprises 250,000 square feet of managed workspace, all with waiting lists. 1,200 new jobs in 120 cultural businesses, 1,000 new student bed spaces, and 1,500 media training places per year have been created. The site is also home to the four-screen Showroom cinema, the National Centre for Popular Music (now a music venue), Site Digital Imaging Gallery, four night-clubs and a host of practitioner-based specialist business services. Its extensive events calendar includes the Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival and Lovebytes Digital Arts Festival. In 2001 the CIQ conservation area was created in recognition of the distinct style of urban landscape and buildings, such as the Little Mesters, in the area. In recent years there has been debate over the refurbishment and knocking down some of these older buildings.

In 2007, Creative Space Management was appointed by Sheffield City Council to manage a 12 year contract to operate The Hub Building at Sheffield Digital Campus. This building is now called Electric Works and opened in March 2009. This building is 5000 square meters and provides grow-on space for creative and digital enterprises from the Cultural Industries Quarter and the wider city region. Office spaces are let on a range of flexible licences and traditional leases. The building also includes conferencing facilities for up to 200 people. Despite opening at the beginning of the recession, the property is now 70 per cent let and has a community of some 275 people based there, including one of the fastest growth businesses in the north of England, WanDisco, who recently floated on AIM.

Sheffield has a number of different types of creative, cultural and socially engaged organisations across the city. For example, Site Gallery, S1 Artspace, Yorkshire Artspace and Bloc are all well established, successful projects. Plus, projects like Re-New Sheffield, CADS and Union Street Co-Working are doing great things for grassroots arts and social enterprise projects. There are over 2,200 creative businesses within the city, and some 20,000 people employed in the sector. A new development is The Roco, providing 30 studios for artists, designers and makers along with exhibition spaces, a café bar, deli and shop. The aim is to develop a space that will support and grow the city's independent, small creative and social businesses. The social enterprise has secured £1.1 million from The Key Fund, Co-op Community Finance and Big Issue Invest to realise the project's vision, while a community share offer has raised £80,000. From architects to silversmiths, members have provided nearly ten per cent of the total cost of the project. Roco still needs to hit its share target of £150,000 to pay for equipment and kit out key areas. It sees its role as building a platform for all creative industries in Sheffield (not just the technology based ones).

Those active in the Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter were keen to stress that while buildings have been critical in establishing the CIQ it is the people and the networks that are the vital element. Sheffield has a vibrant cultural community, in part fed by the two universities, but also by an art and cultural scene that is far enough from London to be self-standing.

Supporting documents, policies, websites and cited work:

Moss, L. (2002). Sheffield's cultural industries quarter 20 years on: what can be learned from a pioneering example? International Journal of Cultural Studies, 8(2), 211-219.

www.electric-works.net

http://sheffield.digital

www.showroomworkstation.org.uk

www.union-st.org

https://artspace.org.uk

www.s1artspace.org

www.theroco.org

www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/creative-clusters-sheffield-cultural-industries-quarter

www.integreatplus.com/sites/default/files/CIQ_action_plan.pdf

www.sitegallery.org

SHEFFIELD KEY FIGURES —

2,200
Creative businesses within the city

20,000
People employed in the sector

£150m
Invested in regenerating Sheffield's CIQ

250,000
Square feet of managed workspace in the CIQ

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 7,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policymakers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

Arts is a cornerstone of the British Council's mission to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. We find new ways of connecting with and understanding each other through the arts, to develop stronger creative sectors around the world that are better connected with the UK.

We believe arts and culture are vital to prosperous, secure societies, and that offering international cultural connections and experiences strengthens their resilience. We are uniquely able to make a difference thanks to our extensive and diverse networks in the UK and internationally, enabling us to respond to the individual context of each place within which we work.

Through our UK and worldwide network of experts, we support business to business connections, working in partnership to create programmes that responds to the needs of local markets. We foster collaboration; share arts work with the world; build resilience and creative responses to crisis; shape policy; and develop skills and livelihoods. Our programme of seasons and focus countries allows us to rapidly develop relationships between the UK, major trading partners and important emerging economies. These seasons build a modern, dynamic and creative image of the UK and develop new audiences for British culture around the world.

www.britishcouncil.org/creativeconomy
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