

## Cultural Governance – Stakeholder Perspectives

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## About Impacts 18

Impacts 18 is a research programme about the long-term effects on the city of Liverpool of hosting the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) title in 2008. The research builds on the data baseline and methodological framework established by the Impacts 08 research programme – the original evaluation of the ECoC, which concluded in 2010.

Impacts 18 has benefited from seed funding from the AHRC Cultural Engagement Fund as well as funding from Culture Liverpool, the University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University and the ICC Endowment Fund.

You can find out more about the Impacts 18 programme on the Institute of Cultural Capital's website ([iccliverpool.ac.uk](http://iccliverpool.ac.uk)), where you will also find our Impacts 18 final report: a synthesis of findings from this and other research projects conducted as part of the programme.

## Executive summary

This report outlines the findings of the *Cultural Governance: Stakeholder Perspectives* part of the *Impacts 18* Research programme.

The research asked:

- 1) What are the views on the current culture related governance ecosystem and how is culture used within and beyond city and city region related strategies?
- 2) How has the legacy of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) impacted on cultural networks, strategies and wider policy?

To assess these themes of change, development and strategy, three approaches were drawn upon: stakeholder mapping workshops, content analysis of relevant official strategy documents, and the analysis of selected interviews conducted with key stakeholders for the *Impacts 18* research programme.

The report findings highlight three main areas:

- 1. NARRATIVES AND VISIBILITY OF CULTURE:** Since the Liverpool ECoC in 2008, the notion of culture has become a constantly reproduced narrative and is perceived by several governance stakeholders as a core strength within the city and city region. References to and claims for the potential of culture are embedded within official documents, strategies and 'brand' identities, some more tangible than others. The spill over of this narrative of culture into other sectors are more visible across both related and unrelated policy documents.
- 2. IMPLEMENTATION, REPRESENTATION AND SCALE:** Although there are more strategies, manifestos and plans referencing culture and cultural activities in Liverpool, several stakeholders believed that these are not always implemented or measured, and they are not always specific or distinctive enough. Whilst there has been a positive shift in the visibility, role and importance of culture and of cultural activities on the city and city region agenda, several participants and organisations discussed a gap between the marketed image and top down narrative of the city and the grass roots reality. More recently, devolution and the city region agenda represent opportunities and have kick started potentially more diverse and widely encompassing cultural initiatives and area specific strategies. However, devolution was seen as also highlighting tensions and lack of clarity on roles and outputs.
- 3. FUNDING AND FUTURES FOR CULTURE:** Whilst some groups and networks related to cultural governance have continued since the ECoC year, many have been scaled back or been lost. Activities, physical spaces and grass roots organisations have been affected by cuts to and shifts within the focus of international, national and regional funding streams. Festival and events expertise and delivery has strengthened, and official narratives refer to the importance of the legacy -and international profile- of ECoC, with continuing focus on large scale events and visitor economies. However, ongoing and upcoming cuts to the city's budget and the realignment of funding streams hold uncertainties for the sustainability and further development of creative and cultural organisations, practitioners and participation and access.

## Contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Introduction: Context and Rationale .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Context: Impacts 08.....	5
<b>2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Mapping Workshops and the Cultural Governance Ecosystem.....	7
2.2. Document Analysis and Interviews .....	9
<b>3. Findings: Views across a Decade of Culture .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 Cross sector findings and concerns .....	11
3.1.2 Arts and Cultural Sector Specific Workshops and Interviews.....	12
3.2 Cultural strategies and ‘the cultural’ as strategy .....	13
3.2.1 <i>Culture as Economic Asset</i> .....	
3.2.2 Devolution and the Liverpool City Region .....	17
3.3 Perception and Representation .....	19
3.4. Funding and Cuts .....	21
<b>4. Limitations .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>5. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>6. Appendices .....</b>	<b>25</b>

# 1. Introduction: Context and Rationale

## *Understanding perspectives, mapping shifts*

The aim of this project was to interrogate the evolution of cultural governance in Liverpool over the last decade: that is, the usage and role of culture within the Liverpool city and city region—in order to highlight any shifts since the hosting of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2008 and with this to examine any correlation and explore any lasting benefit or indeed challenge specifically related to the development and use of culture within the city and regional strategies and implementation.

There is therefore a different remit and approach than was the case within the *Impacts 08* ‘Governance and Delivery’ reports—these were necessarily focused on the delivery of ECoC, with the emphasis on sponsorship and funding, and on stakeholder views on future legacies and sustainability of the ECoC. This project also departs from a focus on organisational cultural governance (i.e. the extent to which cultural organisations or culture itself is delivered) to an exploration of how culture is drawn upon across governance (i.e. how it is used in strategies or drawn upon by different sectors or stakeholders). Cultural Governance is understood here as a term for and means of defining, describing and analysing processes and frameworks in relation to specific subjects, policy fields, and actors in a specific sector. Within this definition, governance encompasses the relationships across sectors and networks of actors within the governance process.

### **Context: *Impacts 08***

By the time of the final *Impacts 08* reports in 2010, the Liverpool ECoC had been successfully delivered and the exploration of developments across the bid year, award and hosting had emerged. From the baseline reports through to the initial post 2008 findings, positive shifts in cultural strategy and infrastructure were at their most apparent. The city went from no discernible cultural strategy to a successful ECoC bid and production of cultural strategies and plans for the next decade.

Since then shifts have taken place in terms of regional and national governance, austerity and funding cuts to city councils. Bid and hosting of the ECoC coincided with vast cultural and entertainment infrastructural regeneration such as the opening of the Liverpool One shopping centre and the Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre (2008). The ECoC bidding and hosting process also led to the establishment of several networks, some of which are still vibrant today, some now defunct. Other organisations, pre-dating or running concurrently with the bidding process, have shifted in name or merged in function—for example, Arts, Culture and Media Enterprise (ACME), The Mersey Partnership (TMP) and the North West Regional Development Agency (NWRDA) no longer exist, merging instead into organisations such as Liverpool Vision, or replaced by new structures such as the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Whilst several key organisations or initiatives have changed, some organisations and networks that were identified within the *Impacts 08* reports as significant in terms of their contribution to the ECoC bid and/or hosting do demonstrate a continuity, for example, LARC (Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium), COol (Creative Organisations of Liverpool, developed from SMAC, Small and Medium Arts Collective), and the Liverpool City Council Culture Liverpool (from the Liverpool Culture Company).

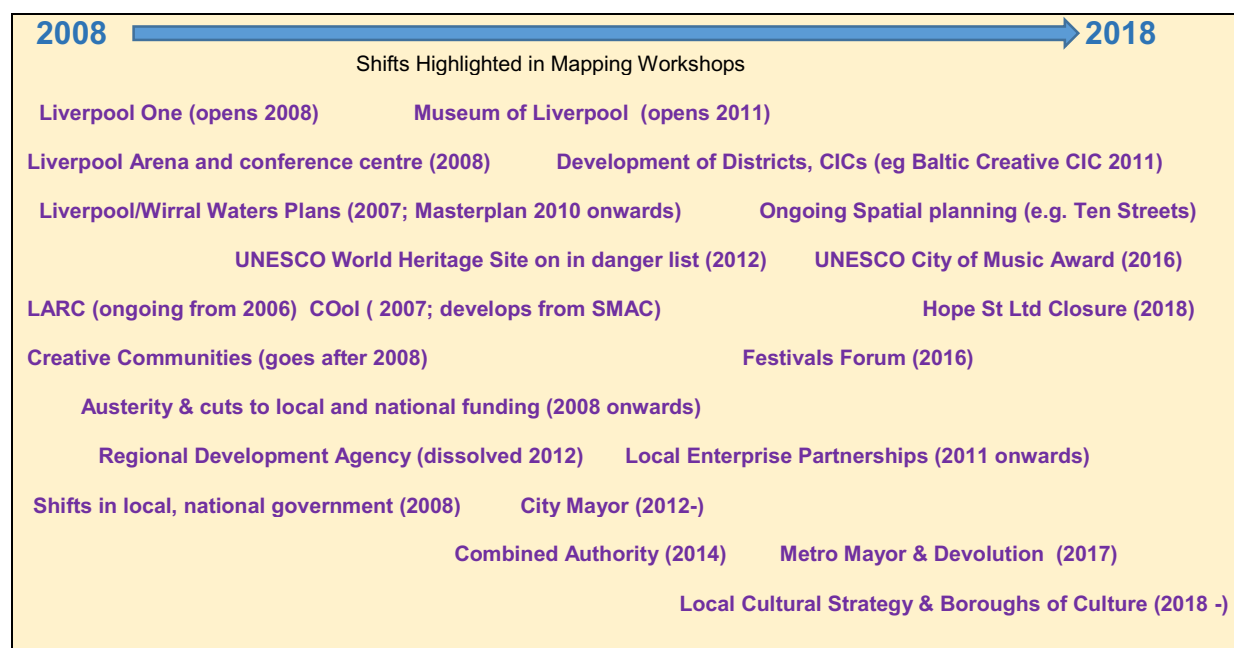


Figure 1 Shifts highlighted during mapping workshops

The *Impacts 08* final report – *Creating an Impact* (Garcia et al., 2010) section on Governance and Delivery was focused on income and expenditure, environmental impact, and partnerships in a way that cannot be replicated for this report. The associated *Impacts 08* Governance themed report – *Liverpool on the Map Again* (O’Brien 2010) analysed interviews with local developers and those involved in regenerating the city, as well some not for profit groups. The report discussed a perceived success of ECoC delivery based on the views of the stakeholders consulted. It also highlighted a difference in narratives in terms of the role and importance of ECoC in the city’s regeneration, with some stakeholders suggesting that the ECoC directly influenced regeneration, and others being of the opinion that the ECoC formed a complementary part only, and that other efforts were already underway and independent of the award. Interviewees at the time picked up on the notion of the city having a greater confidence as a result of ECoC, the notion of a Liverpool ‘brand’, and associated change in perceptions, internally and externally (statements which are mirrored in the this report). The report also found that some interviewees questioned the impact and legacy of the ECoC beyond the city centre, and this remains the case within the more recent research, and has continuing relevance in relation to who benefits from regeneration that is linked to large scale events, and indeed, if and where any benefit tangibly occurs. A further stakeholder narrative in the 2010 report was the emergent idea that, in order to benefit from an ECoC legacy going forward, the city needed a strong large-events strategy, an issue this report will also discuss further.

## 2. Methodology

The aim of this project was to explore shifts in how culture has developed – firstly, its role and presence within the city and associated cultural strategies and governance in the decade following ECoC and secondly the way in which the meaning and usage of culture and the cultural has evolved across wider strategies, policies and discourse within the region. This approach and our participants were to a great extent defined by previous *Impacts 08* work and by the wider longitudinal framing of the project– for example, interviews were conducted with participants who had been involved in or had experience and knowledge of the Liverpool ECoC and were in the same or similar roles ten years on, or with organisations who had been consulted at the time or who were – even if under a different name- present in 2008. However, as the purpose of this particular theme was also to understand the current landscape and governance ecosystem, new participants were necessarily included, sectors or stakeholders who were not consulted at the time or who were not a part of the ECoC events. Furthermore, as our cultural ecosystem included sectors and stakeholders which other *Impacts 18* projects assessed with in more depth<sup>1</sup> this sectoral exploration is not duplicated here. Socio economic contexts are included within other *Impacts 18* reporting, including census data, and economic data in relation to tourism.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, this report does not encompass economic data – however, some contextual local government spend data is included in section 3.5 on funding and cuts.

This project built on three main methods, mapping workshops, document analysis, and analysis of wider *Impacts 18* interviews. Each of these are explored in more detail below

### 2.1 Mapping Workshops and the Cultural Governance Ecosystem

#### *Ecosystem*

To define and adequately map cultural governance it is necessary to take into account embedded processes, contexts, actors and actions, connections across scale, and motivation. This constitutes the wider operating landscape, or ecosystem. The city's cultural governance ecosystem is here defined as constituent of Business and Economy; Government (Policy); University and Research; Arts and Cultural Organisation, and Civil Society/Community Groups. These categories often bled into each other, and were not exhaustive of the different actors and organisations – however, they were used as a broad guide to choosing participants,

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<sup>1</sup> I.e. grass roots and community organisations are explored as part of our 'Cultural Vibrancy' theme, local area data are consulted as part of and the 'Neighbourhood and Participation' reports

investigating relationships and querying any changes in the landscape since the hosting of the ECoC in 2008.

### **Maps**

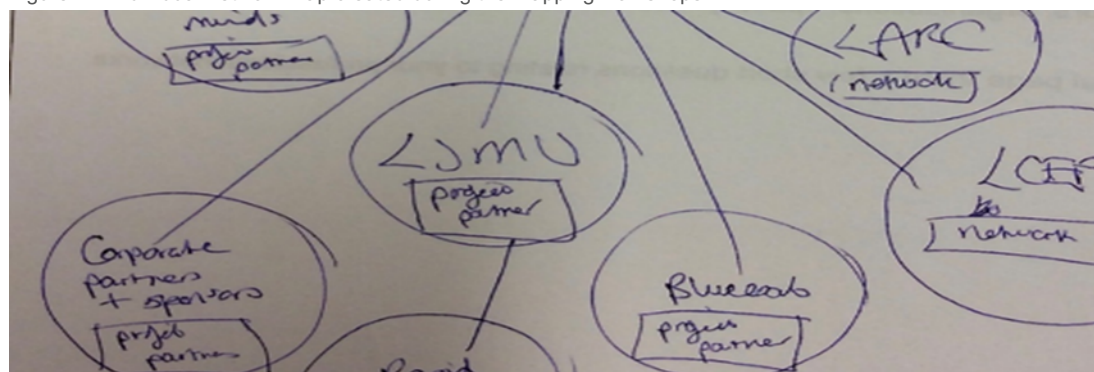
Initial Governance Mapping visuals were created for workshop participants with the aim of visualising a snapshot of the key actors/relationships spatially and longitudinally in order to stimulate discussion around presence/ absence of any stakeholders and to develop debate around networks and activities. For these we drew upon previous ECoC documentation (i.e. recurrent mentions of specific actors/sectors in the original 08 research, in subsequent strategy and other official documentation, and in *Impacts 18* interviews). National and international organisations that has been referred to indirectly (i.e. via funding or awards) were also added. Three working ‘snapshot’ map visualisations were created for the workshops – 2008, 2013, 2017/18. These were not intended as a complete illustration, rather they served to initiate debate around what or who might be missing. The maps were an initial provocation within the workshops to further explore via group discussion and individual written responses the following questions:

- What needs to be added more clearly (i.e. is an economic actor missing, a cultural org etc.) and add or query its position and role
- Have the groupings (economic, cultural, government etc.) changed or bled into one another over time – what are the key factors (strategies inked to funding streams, initiatives etc.) and how does this affect their function/actions
- How have wider structures affected things – e.g. city mayor, devolution and city region mayor, UNESCO status
- How do these relate (or not) to participants individual experiences, networks and perceptions

In addition to group discussions, participants were asked to use ‘post its’ to add any individual thoughts to the working maps, and then asked to draw their own network maps noting any key shifts in or concerns about strategies specific to them/ their sector. Whilst most interactions and responses within the workshops and mapping one to one’s were positive, it should be noted that relevant criticism were voiced. For example, the point that when looking back at maps and stakeholders from 08 and 13, retrospective is complex. One participant noted that many people were there who ‘shouldn’t be’, and another noting that it is neither nor useful to concentrate on what may or may not be present in mapping. Within the discussions and the personal map, the focus was, however, on shared or individually perceived shifts, connections and wider policy and practice since ECoC hosting. Participant maps (see figure 2), notes (see fig 3 and 4 as examples) and group discussion highlighted both sector specific concerns, inclusions and omissions in relation to key organisations, initiatives and, most interestingly in terms of the ecosystem, several cross sector convergences and shared concerns.



Figure 2 – Individual network map created during the mapping workshops



### **Mapping Workshops and Participant Sample:**

In total, 8 mapping workshops were undertaken, with a total of 44 participants. Three workshops took place at the University of Liverpool and were multi stakeholder. Two workshops took place within meetings of networks – i.e. one workshop was undertaken with the LARC group (Venue Liverpool Everyman Theatre) during their scheduled meeting, another was undertaken within a COoL network meeting (venue: Hope St Ltd). Three individual workshops were set up to ensure that some of the stakeholders who could not attend the UoL workshops could still be part of the exercise- these workshops took place at the stakeholders site and were at National Museums Liverpool, Liverpool City Council, and Liverpool Vision. The dynamics within these individual workshops were, as would be expected, significantly different from those within the multi stakeholder workshops, and this is reiterated in the Limitations section of this report.

Cultural Governance Mapping participants were chosen with the aim of ensuring contributions from across the key sectors and stakeholders identified during our own mapping exercise (broadly defined: cultural, economic, research/education, policy/government, and community organisations). Equally, a gender balance was sought across the workshops. A complete balance and mix of sectors was not always achieved due to last minute cancellations and due to the fact that some sectors and representative rejected or did not respond to invites. A full breakdown of participants is contained within the Appendix.

## **2.2. Document Analysis and Interviews**

### **Document Analysis**

Key strategy documents included Liverpool City Council (LCC), Combined Authority/ Liverpool City Region (LCR), and marketing and economic agency strategies in the areas of culture, planning and development. Within these the identification of key phrases, changes in strategies or consolidation of strategy, overlaps between and across the local, national and

European policy landscape; and intersections across policy/sectors were explored. For this report, documents across the decade since hosting the ECoC in 2008 to 2018 were prioritised, although earlier documents, dating back to the bidding stage in 2003, were explored for context (See Appendix).

### **Interviews/ Focus Groups**

This report draws upon some semi structured qualitative interviews and focus groups. These interviews were undertaken between 2016-18 and covered cross – cutting themes and overlaps to other Impacts 18 research areas. For this report, a 9 person focus group and eight interviews were drawn upon. These were selected in order to complement data from the mapping workshops and to ensure a cross section of narratives representative of all relevant sectors. For example, to complement and expand the mapping workshops which were multi stakeholder in composition, data from the Culture Liverpool focus group was included, as were interviews with Culture Liverpool, LCC, LCR, and some arts and business representatives.

Data from the workshops was combined with interview and document analysis applied to the research questions around the use and role of culture. The next section sets out these thematic findings.

### 3. Findings: Views across a Decade of Culture

This section investigates the role and visibility of culture and cultural governance since 2008. It explores the role and impact of specific organisations, the effects of regional and national events, and also less visible connections and disconnections across the city and region in terms of networks and activities. As set out in the methodology overview, the workshops enabled the interrogation of perceived shifts within governance and within the development, usage and implementation of cultural and related strategies. This section presents the key findings from both sector specific and cross sectoral concerns.

#### 3.1 Cross sector findings and concerns

Within the cross sectoral workshops and one to one mapping activities, key shared concerns emerged. These are summarised below, with the emergent cross cutting key themes explored in the topic specific findings sections that follow.

- There has been a continuation of existing cross organisational networks (LARC, COoL – see the ‘Cultural Vibrancy’ report for further details on these organisations) as beneficial knowledge sharing networks; there are new cross sector networks e.g. Tate Exchange that several participants felt were excellent ways to begin conversations with potential partners; there is a continuing strengthening of University/Research collaborations, especially in relation to funding applications, with several participants suggesting these collaborations had their roots in the ECoC bid and delivery process
- Despite these networks, there has been a loss of internal as well as external funding for cultural activities and detrimental impact on relationships (e.g. delivery of arts programmes for the health sector, impact on community outreach work, support for arts and cultural spaces)
- There is a perceived lack of joined up thinking, with several participants highlighting areas of duplication and lack of awareness of other initiatives. Strategies within the cultural and creative were seen as ‘manifestos’ rather than operational documents, so they were criticised as not being fully implementable.
- Lack of sociodemographic diversity in city and regional level governance was highlighted
- Infrastructure was universally seen as vastly improved across the city but there was a need for further development (e.g. in relation to planning initiatives, also in relation to disability and access);
- Issues of regional governance as impacting on cultural policy and governance : LCR/LCC and devolution were clearly perceived as an opportunity but also as a potential site of conflict or tension. There was perceived to be a need for more collaboration at scale
- Event led focus of official cultural strategies in city: since ECoC the city has developed a large events strategy and strong knowledge. These are highly visible and externally impactful, but not necessarily seen as supportive of grass roots initiatives.

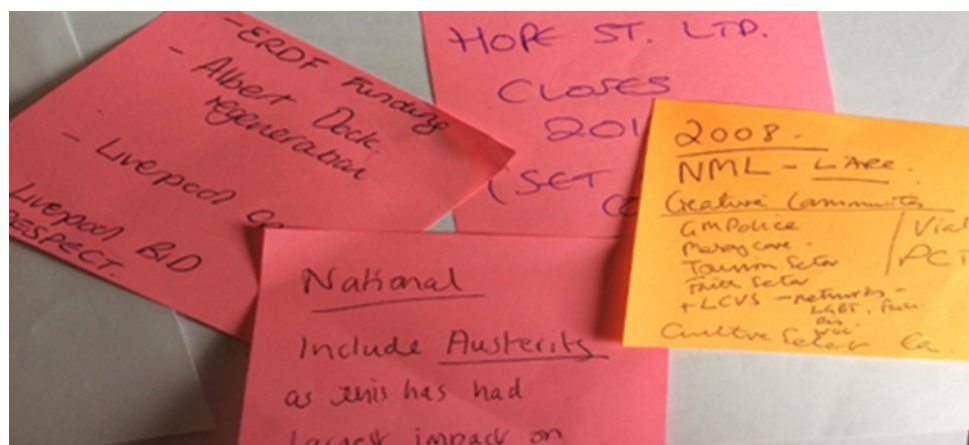


Figure 3 – A selection of issues and key events raised across the mapping workshops by participants

### 3.1.2 Arts and Cultural Sector Specific Workshops and Interviews

#### Large Cultural Organisations and Institutions (LARC)

Workshops with the city's Larger arts organisations (LARC members, also organisation specific workshops and interviews) emphasised the following:

- Key networks for the sector were seen as education, performing arts and schools, and links that traverse the regional and the national. In line with how the organisations are funded, the Arts Council England (ACE) was also seen as a key stakeholder. Heritage Lottery Funding and EU initiatives were highlighted, as were uncertainties over future EU funding streams
- Changes within the 'look' and offer of the city were seen as important i.e. since bid year and hosting of ECoC more bars and restaurants.
- Several participants queried the ECoC 'Creative Communities' initiative – highlighting that this had been a distinctive feature of the ECoC bid, but had not been sustained
- The role and development of National Museums Liverpool (NML) within LARC, the City Council and City Region was also highlighted: NML's status as nationally funded organisation, community centred remit (especially at a time when community arts funding and networks are cut), and status as largest cultural institution in the city, sets them apart. This was picked up across the workshops and one to ones. NML is a key aspect of the city's cultural offer and activities but has often been omitted from cultural strategy documents and discussions.

#### Smaller Organisations/ Independents (COoL members):

- Smaller organisations are more geographically diverse and engaged, linked to peripheral areas and communities more directly, and have a stronger focus on regional arts and community initiatives. Communities are key stakeholders, networks and co-creators.
- Discussion and maps were framed by lack of funding (e.g. ACE (key venue of COoL, Hope St Ltd, was closing; also LCC and Arts Council funding changes) and emphasis

was on related precarities (see fig 4 for an illustration of these issues captured on post it notes during the exercise)

- Schools and outreach work is important, and several networks rested on this. However, is an increasing need to 'package up' offer to schools to demonstrate fit to curriculum.
- The lack of local and national funding was also framed by the expectation e.g. from arts council of artists and small organizations needing a more business-like approach/offer
- More collaboration with universities such as Liverpool John Moores. This was linked to ECoC established networks, as well as a funding driven need to collaborate.

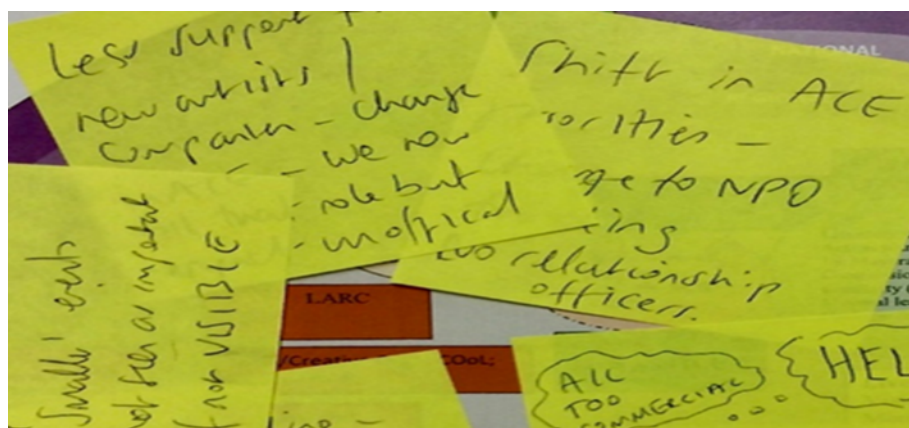


Figure 4 – Mapping Exercise

The next sections discuss in more depth the specific key themes that emerge from all of the workshops, consulted interviews and wider document analysis.

### 3.2 Cultural strategies and ‘the cultural’ as strategy

Within the theme of cultural strategies, and the use of culture within wider policies and planning, there were four emergent themes. Firstly, these were the opinion across the majority of non LCC stakeholders that the cultural strategy within the city, and to some extent city region, was not yet fully developed. Secondly, intertwined with this, was the perception that the official cultural strategy was heavily large events focused. Thirdly, there was the usage, within LCC and LCR strategy documents and statements of the notion of culture as a marketable asset, and as a perceived catalyst for development. A fourth theme was the opportunities, and challenges afforded by devolution.

Workshop and interview data were not wholly positive in terms of stakeholder perspectives on city and region cultural strategies. There is a clear emphasis on the importance of culture within the city’s official narratives – visible, for example, across LCC strategy documents, and as a clear point across all LCC, LCR and Culture Liverpool interviews and workshops:

Our whole strategy – culture is one of the key strategies for the city” (LCC stakeholder, one to one mapping workshop)

However, representatives from several key cultural organisations commented that, in their opinion, the city and city region still lack a cohesive and distinctive cultural strategy:

“I don’t think the city, even with the inclusive growth plan, has a cultural strategy. [But] It’s maybe a little bit closer”

(Cultural stakeholder, Mapping workshop)

“In some ways using 2008 and delivering a successful event year has disguised that fact but we’re all still living at the moment with a lack of any clear strategic direction”

(Cultural Stakeholder, Mapping Workshop)

Comments such as these were prevalent across discussions across the mapping workshops. Lack of funding or uncertainties around future funding was given as a reason behind the lack of focus and insufficiently wide reaching cultural strategies, and the need for more collaboration between organisations and across sectors was emphasised across all workshops:

“The cultural endeavour in the city is on account of what the individual agencies do rather than it being coordinated and I would argue that it’s really not well coordinated. And that’s partly because the city councils never had any money” (Higher education stakeholder, Mapping Workshop).

A key issue was the role of large events within the city’s cultural offer and strategy development and an associated perceived lack of support for grass roots organisations.

In some ways, for LCC and Culture Liverpool representatives, the focus on large events is seen as a positive. There is more confidence in bidding for and hosting large scale events or awards, in several cases building on ECoC experience and networks. There is an almost continuous use of the word ‘confidence’ or ‘greater confidence’ across interviews with LCC and LCR stakeholders, drawing upon capacity and expertise in the production and delivery of large events.

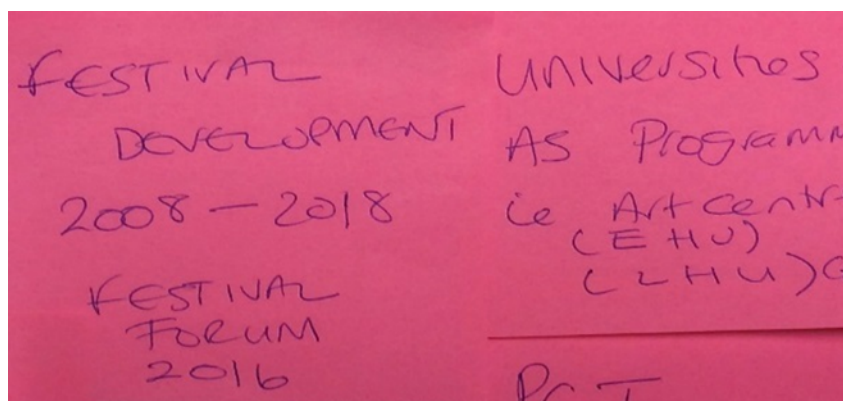


Figure 5 – Participant Post it notes from the Mapping workshops picking up on the importance of Festival Development in the decade since ECoC

During previous reporting (O’Brien, 2010), LCC stakeholders already mentioned the need to capitalise on ECoC hosting and build on a large events strategy, perceived as a key strength and area of expertise for the city. This remained a key focus between 2010 and 2018 within the City Council and Culture Liverpool.

The city’s top –down event-led focus is perceived by stakeholders across sectors as partially masking inadequacies at a cultural strategy level. Referring to this approach as “events as strategy”, several stakeholders – from across cultural and economic organisations- criticised the emphasis on sourcing external companies to provide large scale events such as the ‘Giants’ spectacle instead of feeding those funds into more local or potentially more lasting initiatives or sites:

“It’s at the risk of becoming an event led city but that’s a substitute for a strategy because there is no strategy (...) I think there’s been quite a lot of event development, but it mustn’t be mistaken for a strategy for the city” (Higher education stakeholder, mapping workshop)

This is not to say that events development is wholly top down in the city, or to suggest that Culture Liverpool are the sole producers of large events. Indeed, the contribution and impact of grass roots produced events from local arts and community group is evidenced by several high profile, high impact collaborative events such as the Biennial DaDa Fest International<sup>3</sup> Homotopia<sup>4</sup>, Open Culture’s Light Night<sup>5</sup> and the Liverpool Irish Festival<sup>6</sup>. Supporting cross-organisational networks have been established in order to support this, for example the COoL networks Festivals Forum (see Figure 5) set up to offer guidance and share experience.

It should also be noted that several workshop participants drew upon the development of place as key to the cultural offer of the city, i.e. distinct quarters, the development of CICs, and also

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dadafest.co.uk/what-we-do/festivals-and-events/dadafest-international/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.homotopia.net/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://lightnightliverpool.co.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/about/>

perceived creative hubs. Developments such as the Baltic Quarter, and the more recent Fabric Quarter development are seen as key sites for the development of the city's cultural offer. However, arts sector stakeholders within the interviews were critical in relation to the effects of certain spatial strategies, listing a shift towards property led regeneration as problematic in terms of driving building use away from culture/artists and practitioner space. This was also linked to a perceived a lack of support for individuals outside of the dominant cultural system.

### **3.2.1 Culture as Economic Asset**

Across LCC documents, and within LCC official statements, there is also consistent and increased alignment of culture with economic growth. Initially this was linked to regeneration—and this was a key component of documents during ECoC bid and delivery – and continues to be:

“culture is the city's USP and has made Liverpool globally famous.  
It's the rocket fuel for regeneration” (Inclusive Growth Strategy, 2018)

Whilst culture (and heritage) is still linked with regeneration and growth, is it also entwined further with employment, competition and investment. Here culture, in its tangible and intangible form, is seen as driving forward inward investment, large-scale redevelopment and economic development. With this, there is some understanding of need for measurability in terms of cultural strategies but still a vagueness in tangible outcomes - how this be achieved and measured, especially in terms of support and delivery. As one business stakeholder comments:

“It's that view, isn't it, that culture is the rocket fuel of regeneration, so we keep getting told, which is great and we have big events but actually the grass roots in the city and the cultural organisations where's the leadership for them and where's the support for them”  
(Business Stakeholder, Mapping Workshop)

Discussions with local government actors highlighted the fact that ‘the cultural’ is seen as informing strategies beyond arts and culture, and is perceived to be a marketable asset that leverages external investment and tourism (echoing the strategy documents discussed above). Here the promise is of “economic growth through culture and creativity”, which are seen as “central drivers for the regional economy” (LCR Culture and Creativity Strategy and Framework Draft for Consultation <sup>7</sup>(2018)). This was reinforced in an interview with a key LCR stakeholder, where culture is perceived as a catalyst for economic development, and support

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/DRAFT\\_LCR\\_Culture\\_Creativity\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/DRAFT_LCR_Culture_Creativity_Strategy.pdf)



for this is demonstrated by the fact that the region was the first area in the country to declare a pledge to support (see below and the “1% for Culture” initiative).

The LCR Culture and Creativity Strategy was drafted in 2018, after open consultations across each of the regions boroughs. In some ways, the document borrows much in style and content from broader UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) publications (see for example, the DCMS Culture White Paper<sup>8</sup>). The LCR strategy refers to culture as “catalyst for urban change”. Within this, the emphasis is on headline figures on culture and the creative industries. Cross cutting strands speak of “cultural and creative assets”, innovation and global changes; employments and economic growth, national and international markets, with the visitor economy being a “supply chain for talent”. Culture and creativity are seen as “central drivers for the regional economy”. Culture is furthermore seen as connecting and potentially delivering the combined authority’s priorities across housing, economic and health thematic areas, and arguably, this reinforces narratives that were begun during the ECoC bid process and delivery, wherein the potential social value(s) of culture were extolled.

### 3.2.2 Devolution and the Liverpool City Region

“do we embrace that or do we revert back to the local politics, individuals and agendas. I think that will do no good in the long term. There’s a bit of a moment in time now with the combined authority. One thing we can’t do is still keep the structures in place and just keep going as we are” (Economic Stakeholder, mapping workshop,)

Devolution has moved the strategies for culture, and the cultural in strategies, towards a regional and national context. Operating with the context of devolved power, the ‘Northern Powerhouse’, and a desire to balance power towards the regions, the focus remains on Liverpool as the ‘capital’ of the region, but engages across not only the cities peripheries, but towards individual and distinctive boroughs. There has been a 1% for Culture initiative<sup>9</sup> wherein the Combined Authority pledged 1% of the annual £30 million devolution funding to support cultural activities, including £200k for the Borough of Culture programme. A Culture and Creativity Strategy (discussed in section further below) was published in 2018, however, several workshop participants queried the individuality and measurability of the document, also asking why the LCC and LCR cultural strategies did not more fully align:

“LCR cultural strategy and LCC part 6 (*Mayoral Growth Plan*) about a place where people want to visit - they’re not dissimilar, but why aren’t they exactly the same? I don’t think the city, even with the

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<sup>8</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/510798/DCMS\\_The\\_Culture\\_White\\_Paper\\_\\_3\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510798/DCMS_The_Culture_White_Paper__3_.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/news/liverpool-city-region-introduces-1-for-culture-programme-to-support-cultural-activities>

inclusive growth plan, have a cultural strategy. It's maybe a little bit closer. And the same with LCR actually. Although you could say they have written what they are calling a strategy. How they are going to move that forward is another thing. With the resources they've got, I guess. They're not moving against the city but they're not moving with the city. I think they'll end up in the same place but it's just putting it all together." (Cultural organisation, mapping workshop)

Across the mapping workshops, several participants discussed devolution, mostly in reference to cultural strategy, funding and leadership. This formed less of a focus point within the one to one interviews consulted, though this is arguably more to do with the timeframes in which they were conducted (the workshops being the most recent research intervention in June 2018, whilst interviews ran from 2016). Within the cross sector mapping workshops devolution was seen as bringing with it huge possibilities to 'do things differently', but also a certain lack of clarity around roles and leadership. It was seen as presenting some conflicts in terms of power play, lack of 'new' or diverse representation, and a perceived lack of collaboration at scale:

"You've got city region politics – it's become power/control not about who empowers. Is it the city, the city region? Rather than working at scale you're starting to become insular." (Economic Stakeholder, mapping workshop)

The new political dynamics we have, fitted into a dysfunctional space (...) You have to start from the space from 08 to 13. Has our governance improved? I think that our confidence has improved. Our offer has improved. I think our potential has improved. I think our challenges have definitely increased in many ways alongside that. The vision leadership haven't moved at the same pace (Economic stakeholder, Mapping Workshop)

### 3.3 Perception and Representation

Several participants, across the workshops and the consulted interviews, picked up on a perceived dichotomy between a marketed representation of a diverse city world city and a ground level reality. Across several documents from 2008 through to 2018 there is a consistent use of the notion of a 'global' or 'world city', at times as a preferred or binary option i.e. the city sees opportunities and its role as more international than national. Keywords replicate those made in strategies and publications from bid to hosting year, and include repetitions of "*global city*" "*international*" "*world city*" "*ambitious in focus*" and "*Liverpool as destination*". From documents, statements and presentations already immediately after ECoC, for example during the LCC Cultural Legacy Scrutiny Panel (9/09/2008, committee meeting) there is an emphasis on how the city must become more outward looking international city rather than concentrating on local issues and place more emphasis on international relationships, because the city is seen to resonate more powerfully internationally than nationally. This continues throughout all culture, branding and regeneration documents, right through to the current 2018 Mayoral Growth Plan – however, here it is measured against the challenges of decreasing funding. There is a more recent shift with devolution, the metro mayor and focus on a place based agenda and thereby increasing links with for example, neighbouring and core cities, and the Northern Powerhouse dialogue.

These statements complement the interview data from Culture Liverpool and Liverpool City Region stakeholders. In reference to the contemporary landscape, a key LCR figure stresses that "we're a global brand; an international player" and that there is a need to "set ourselves against what's happening in Rome, Barcelona- not down the road". This echoes interviews undertaken with LCC and Culture Liverpool representatives, who comment that "Liverpool is its own thing" and that the city is internationally known and there is no need for comparison with other UK cities. The idea here is that "everyone knows where Liverpool is" (Culture Liverpool, interview).

There remains – from the original run up to the ECoC bid ('A World in One City') through to the continuing marketing of an international city – a lack of recognition of the difference between a touristic offer (i.e. the city as destination) and the everyday cultural activities, employment, funding, participation and diversity within the city and its periphery when set against core city or national averages. The Impacts 18 *Cultural Vibrancy* report (2019) has economic data on funding and employment within the city in relation to creative industries, whilst the *Neighbourhood and Participation* report (2019, [link](#)) has more detailed census and survey data in relation to (city centre) areas.

Stakeholders also note that there is a need to address socio economic challenges, lack of diverse representation and visibility in terms of both representation and leadership in local and regional government and cultural engagement across different communities:

“We haven’t got the leadership. Where are the leaders who are from younger, ethnic, diversity backgrounds? We talk about we’re an international city – but then you look at the leadership and no, we’re not” (Economic Stakeholder, mapping workshop)

The same stakeholder also notes a perceived lack of diversity, and widening socio economic gap in terms of participation, presence and representation in the decade since ECoC:

“The balance between the social and economic since [20]08 – a lot of these organisations, are economic outward facing organizations yet actually ECoC was about creating more opportunities for the 3rd party social sector that I think was probably closer in 08 and now is wider. Now, that’s not necessarily a fault of the city. It’s a fault of how the agenda has moved to a ‘them/us’ society. If 08 was all about these organisations (...) you would hope that by 2013 those parts of the city that were more disaffected before 08 would have become more integrated/empowered within that space but they’ve probably become less empowered/less relevant in that space” (Economic stakeholder, mapping workshop)

Views on the ‘narrative’ of Liverpool contained in the Impacts 08 *Liverpool on the Map again* Governance report (2010) are echoed in the interviews undertaken between 2016-2018 with LCC, Culture Liverpool and LCR representatives. LCR representatives stress, as do Culture Liverpool, how the EcoC saw a renewed civic pride and confidence in how people saw themselves and their city. Culture Liverpool viewed the tenth anniversary of the ECoC as a focal point and a need to keep telling the story of ‘Liverpool 08’. There is then a sense of 2018 being a chance to capitalise on the benefits and profile of the ECoC, and to showcase the city as a destination. However, as our LCR interviewee also comments, specifically in relation to domestic tourism and internal (city region wide) perception, “I’m not sure we’ve got the public narrative”. Within this there is also a retrospective recognition that the ‘Liverpool 08’ narrative was not wholly representative. In the interview, the LCR stakeholder commented that ECoC was not without difficulties and whilst “it was “a demonstration of our cultural mix, a catalyst for visitor economy increases”, a few miles out of the city centre “it was not all rosy”

### 3.4 Funding and Cuts

“The money’s drying up to support a lot of these organisations. What’s the ultimate replacements and that’s leading again to ‘follow the money’ ” (Business Stakeholder, mapping workshop)

Funding and cuts featured as an issue across all workshops and in several of the interviews. Discussions focused on impacts on the delivery of services or activities and on concerns over more cuts to local government spend and the impact of this on any future strategies. LCC stakeholders did however also highlight the importance of culture within and across wider strategies and the continuing provisions made to enable this:

“It (*culture*) is now very much community led. We get very few complaints on what we spend on culture. (...) We have something to sell, we have valuable assets – putting value on what we do” (LCC, one to one workshop)

This embeddedness of culture is commented as being traceable to the bidding for and hosting of the Liverpool ECoC. However, it was also recognised that not only are budgets in 2018 much smaller than in 2008, so is human capital. Whereas at the time of the ECoC there was one dedicated staff member for each sector within the Culture Company, a decade later, within Culture Liverpool, one single staff member must undertake different roles and responsibilities.

Whilst cuts to local authority funding and shifts in funding programmes were highlighted across all of the workshops as a key challenge to cultural strategy development and implementation, it was also made clear that these cuts have also affected networks and cultural activities within the community:

“One of big things about austerity was that lots of community networks lost their funding and this was quite pivotal in 2008. They were on the Creative Communities and that led us into different communities (...) A lot of community stuff is being taken away. It’s been a sustained attack across the years”. (Arts stakeholder, mapping workshop)

“Well, we haven’t got the money, we haven’t got the funding and because it’s always been internally funded we have lost networks in the few years” (Health Sector stakeholder, Mapping Workshop)

Capital spend on arts and culture within the LCC has been the lowest across the UK core cities comparator throughout the post ECoC period (see *Appendix for detailed local*

*government spend graphs*, undertaken as part of the Cultural Vibrancy research theme). Indeed, public spending on archives, arts development and support, theatre and public entertainment are all lower in 2016/17 than in 2009/10. Of course, other UK cities have also had to reduce their expenditure on culture related services. Liverpool, on a more positive note, has continued to spend more on culture-related services from revenue funds in *per capita* terms than most comparator cities. However, cuts to funding across services are outlined within the LCC Inclusive Growth Plan (see also the LCC Budget Book 2018/19) with an inclusion of challenges faced by LCC, in particular, cuts to funding:

“between 2010 and 2020 the council will have lost £444 million in government funding – two thirds of our budget” (LCC, Inclusive Growth Strategy 2018p.4)

Projected spends for culture, have therefore been significantly reduced. Whilst this may be set against the LCR 1% for culture pledge, as one stakeholder asks in relation to devolution, cultural strategies and implementation:

“that’s the elephant in the room. How is this relationship going to be crystalized? Where’s the money coming from?” (Business stakeholder, mapping workshop)

## 4. Limitations

A key limitation for this report, and indeed for the Governance theme as a whole, was the absence of a clear and distinctly reproducible longitudinal method. Not all of the Impacts 08 Governance and Leadership research were published, and those available Impacts 08 published reports concentrated on delivery and sponsorship of ECoC, on stakeholder opinions on regeneration, and on cultural leadership. It is the qualitative exploration of cross sectoral stakeholder experiences and opinions that this report has concentrated on and where possible, it has sought to engage with the same people or organisations that were present in, or referred to, in the Impacts 08 programme. However, several economic, social and creative organisations and indeed regional government structures have shifted since the original study, and this had to be taken into account when assessing the current landscape. Sampling issues were already discussed within the methodology section. The workshops were to some extent limited by the number of respondents and by last minute cancellations. The cross sector workshops yielded the most varied discussions. However, the sector specific (LARC and COol) workshops, although much shorter, provided us with a snapshot of sector specific concerns. Whilst a more in depth exploration of these concerns would have yielded strong data and insights, it was not the remit of this particular report to concentrate on any one sector or concern. Similarly, key stakeholders were approached for interviews, and the report is limited by the fact that despite several attempts, some key stakeholders declined to contribute. Conversely, some were arguably over consulted, and some workshops contained within them people who discussed issues more vocally or were more protective of- or against- a perceived legacy. The associated mapping and post it exercises sought to ensure that all opinions and perceptions were captured. The Impacts 18 interviews that this study in a small part drew upon were incomplete. Of the 22 participants included over half were culture Liverpool and LCC (a x9 person focus group and x 3 individual interviews). Moreover, whilst some interviews were in note form, this report could only access x7 of the fully recorded and transcribed interviews and x 1 focus group to enable full analysis. In terms of document analysis, this report limited its remit to official LCC, LCR or Marketing/ Tourism (e.g. LEP, Liverpool Vision, or Visitor Economy publications). This was to explore official narratives, and to track the usage and role of culture across a specific timeline (the decade since hosting ECoC) to compliment and expand data from the mapping workshops, which also explored this timeline. Pre 08 documents were accessed as context, again, these were limited to key top down organisations.

National or international data, in terms of participation in mapping workshops, interviews and also the review of associated policy documents, was not present within this report. Whilst several stakeholders had national networks and/or roles, the focus was on a geographically specific sample. Participants were asked to consider the contextual impacts of national and international shifts over the decade, however, this does not constitute a key concern of the methodology or indeed the data collected and analysed.

## 5. Conclusion

Within the *Impacts 08* Governance themed report referred to at the very start of this report, LCC stakeholders suggested a new confidence and pride in the city, whilst other stakeholders highlighted some disparities between narratives and bold claims. Similar points have been raised, ten years on, by stakeholders consulted for this project. Culture is still prized in official rhetoric as being a key to regeneration. A perceived sense of confidence linked to the ECoC is cited by LCC stakeholders, and perceived as being evidenced through a focus on bidding for large-scale events and awards. However, non LCC stakeholders from across the various sectors consulted argue that these approaches are not yet fully developed or collaborative enough, and overly centred on external visitor offer or, increasingly, property-led regeneration that harness the notion of culture and heritage as economic assets. There were several criticisms of the emphasis on large scale events, as opposed to, for example, better support for grass roots organisations or internal offer. In addition to this, there were concerns about diversity of leadership and support for smaller, more representative local organisations and initiatives. Funding concerns were also central to discussions and evidenced across relevant documents, with ongoing and future cuts presenting uncertainty.

Official cultural strategies –and the use of the notion of culture as asset - within strategies such as planning, marketing and investment were interpreted by the majority of non LCC stakeholders as not distinctive or measurable enough, with a need for more focus on implementation and collaboration. Moves towards a city regional cultural strategy that encompasses embedded and distinctive practices is acknowledged as positive, but faces, in common with other devolved City Regions around the UK, challenges of funding and collaboration.

Overall, this study concludes that diverse notions of the value(s) of culture are a pervasive narrative and embedded within policies and strategies across the city and city region. The claims and expectations for culture's potential are grand, and can be seen to build upon those made during the ECoC bid and delivery in relation to culture as a driver for regeneration. However, challenges of funding, diversity, and grass roots representation remain, as do challenges around collaboration and inclusivity. These, combined with deeply rooted health, participation and deprivation issues, need to be acknowledged and addressed in order to develop further any understandings of the values, and indeed limitations, of culture across the economic and the social spheres since the hosting of ECoC.



## 6. Appendices

### 6.1. Data Sources

#### Mapping workshops:

1. LARC hosted workshop

11 participants, representing Liverpool Learning Partnership/Curious Minds, Everyman and Playhouse, FACT, Dadafest, Culture Liverpool, Bluecoat, National Museums Liverpool, Merseyside Dance Initiative, Liverpool Philharmonic, Unity Theatre)

2. COol hosted workshop:

18 participants, representing arts organisations across Liverpool and Merseyside, plus one representative from Culture Liverpool

3. University of Liverpool hosted workshops and 3x small/one to one sessions:

15 participants, representing: University of Liverpool; Liverpool John Moores University; Liverpool Hope University; Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership; Liverpool Bid Company; Baltic Creative; Fabric District; MerseyCare; British Music Experience; Arena Conference Centre, National Museums Liverpool, Liverpool Vision, Liverpool City Council

#### **Documents :**

##### Liverpool City Council (LCC)/ Culture Liverpool(CL):

- LCC (2008) Cultural Legacy Scrutiny Panel (LCC, committee meeting 9/09/2008)
- LCC (2010) Recall the Past to Inform the Future: A Heritage Investment Framework for the City of Liverpool 2011-2015
- Liverpool First / LCC (2010) Liverpool Cultural Strategy Delivery Plan: 2010-2014 Stakeholder Summary
- LCC (2011) Vision aims, priorities and values: Our Vision
- LCC (2012) Report to Select Committee (Culture and Tourism) Cultural Strategy 2012/13 (LCC, committee meeting 19/06/ 2012)
- Culture Liverpool / LCC (Undated) *Liverpool Culture Action Plan 2014-2018*.
- LCC (October 2017) Ten Streets Supplementary Planning Document
- LCC (March 2018) Mayor of Liverpool Inclusive Growth Plan- A strong and growing city built on fairness,
- LCC (2018) – Budget Book 2018/19

##### Liverpool City Region(LCR)/ Liverpool Enterprise Partnership (LEP):

- LCR/ LEP (November 2014) Visitor Economy Strategy and Destination management Plan
- LCR (2018) Culture and Creativity Strategy and Framework Draft for Consultation

Combined Authority Cultural strategy related press releases:

- <http://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/news/liverpool-city-region-introduces-1-for-culture-programme-to-support-cultural-activities>
- <http://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/news/st-helens-named-as-the-first-borough-of-culture-in-the-liverpool-city-region>

Liverpool Vision (LV), Liverpool First, Liverpool Visitor Economy Network (LVEN)

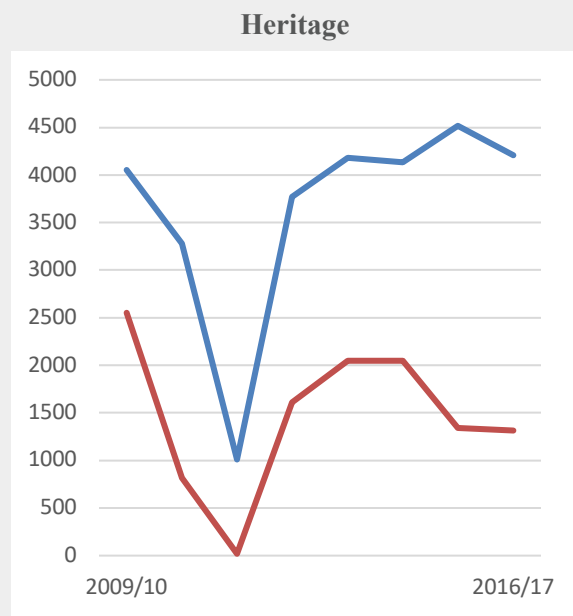
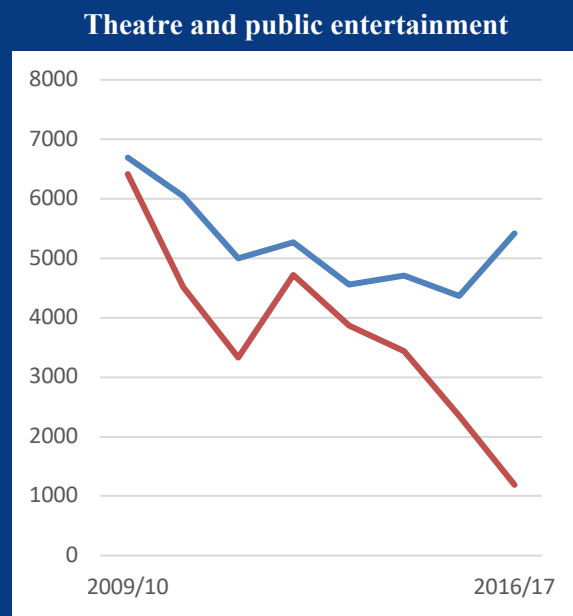
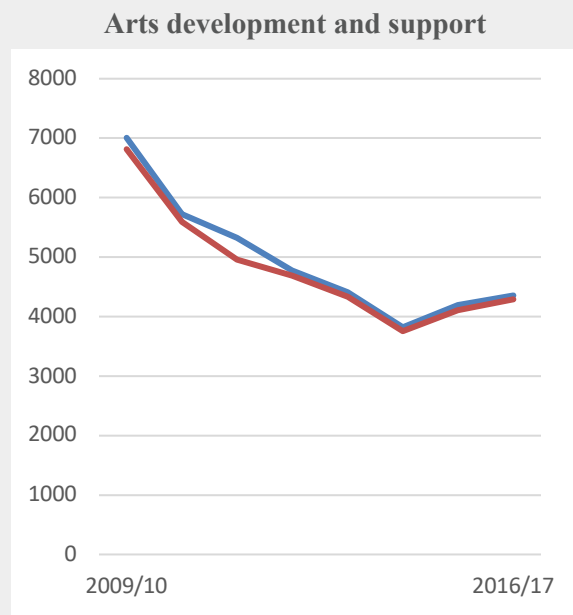
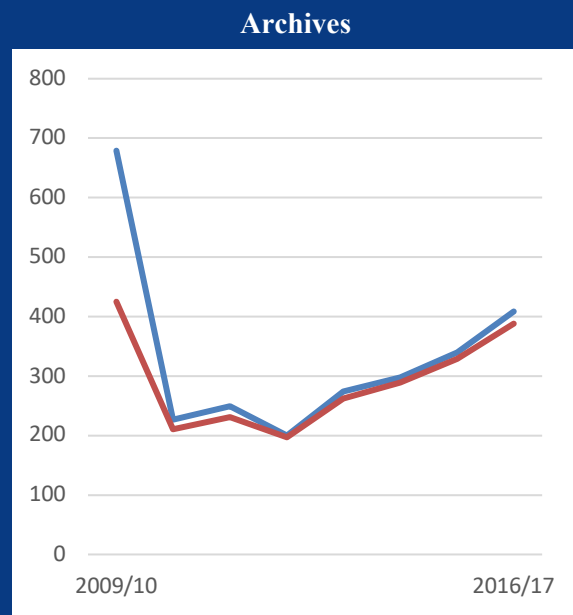
- LVEN with Amion (?) People, Place and Prosperity, An Economic Perspective Liverpool 2024
- Liverpool Vision (26th July 2000)– Strategic Regeneration Framework
- Liverpool First (2008/9) Sustainable Community Strategy Liverpool 2024 - A thriving international city 2014-2018 (Liverpool First)
- Liverpool First Prospectus (May 2002)

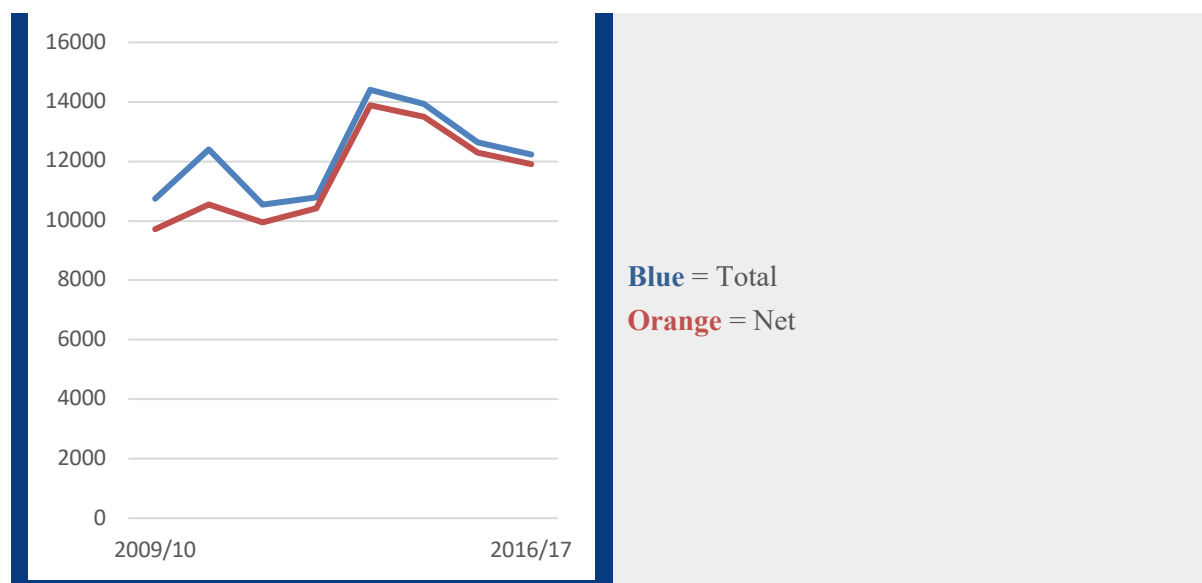
Liverpool 2008 ECoC Bid document:

- Liverpool 2008: The World in One City (2003)

### **6.3. Local Government Spend Graphs**

**Figure A.** Revenue expenditure on culture-related services by Liverpool City Council (£000s), 2009/10-2016/17





**Table B.** Total revenue spend per capita by Liverpool City Council on culture-related service areas – ranking versus the ‘Core Cities and UKCCs’ comparator group

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Archives	3	6	5	7	5	7	7	4
Arts development and support	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	1
Heritage	1	1	3	2	1	1	2	1
Theatre and public entertainment	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3
Libraries	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	1

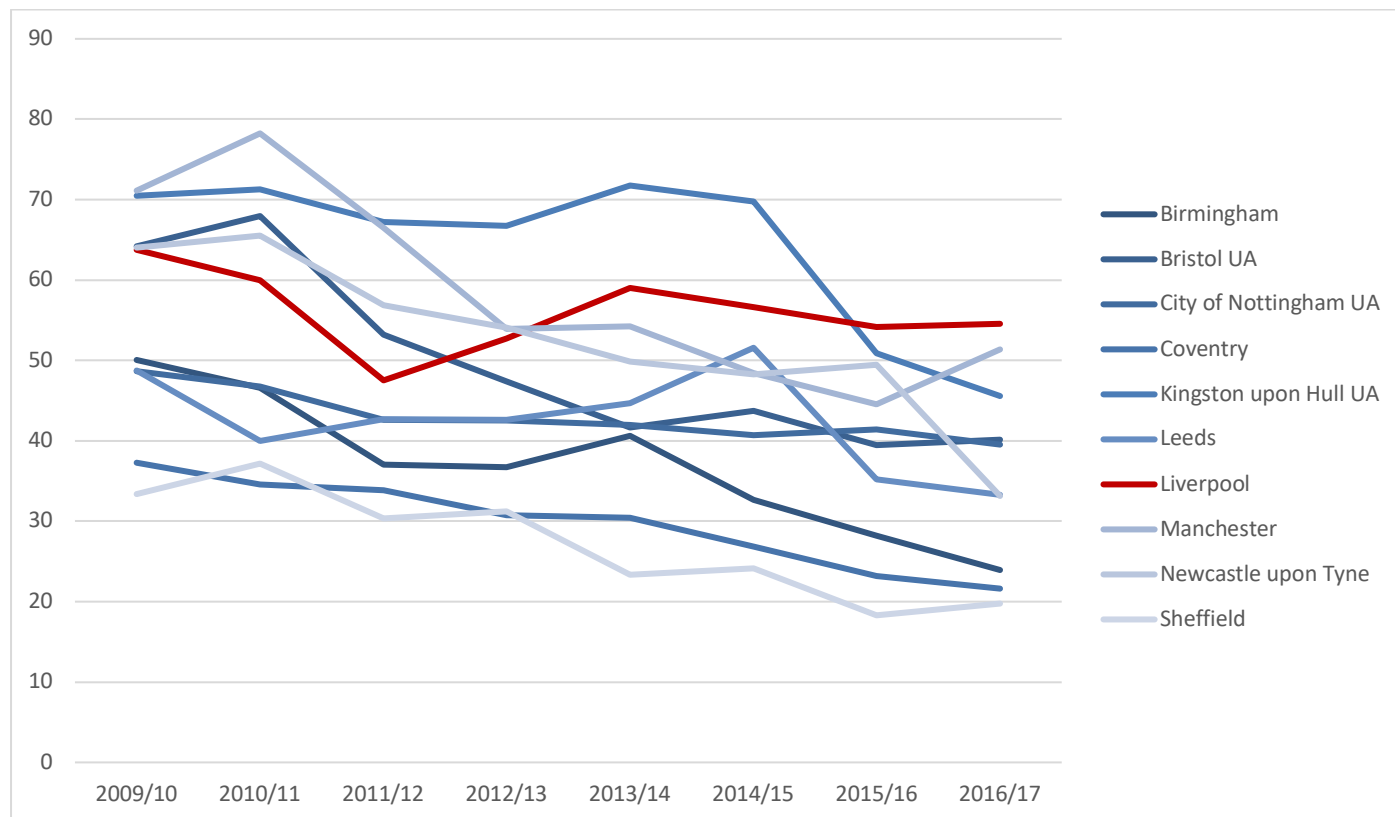
**Table C.** Net revenue spend per capita by Liverpool City Council on culture-related service areas – ranking versus the ‘Core Cities and UKCCs’ comparator group

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Archives	5	6	6	7	5	6	5	3
Arts development and support	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Heritage	1	2	6	2	1	2	3	2
Theatre and public entertainment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Libraries	4	3	3	2	2	1	2	1

Note: Only local authorities in England form part of the data series – so measures above are ranked out of 10. (Birmingham, Bristol, Nottingham, Coventry, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield.)

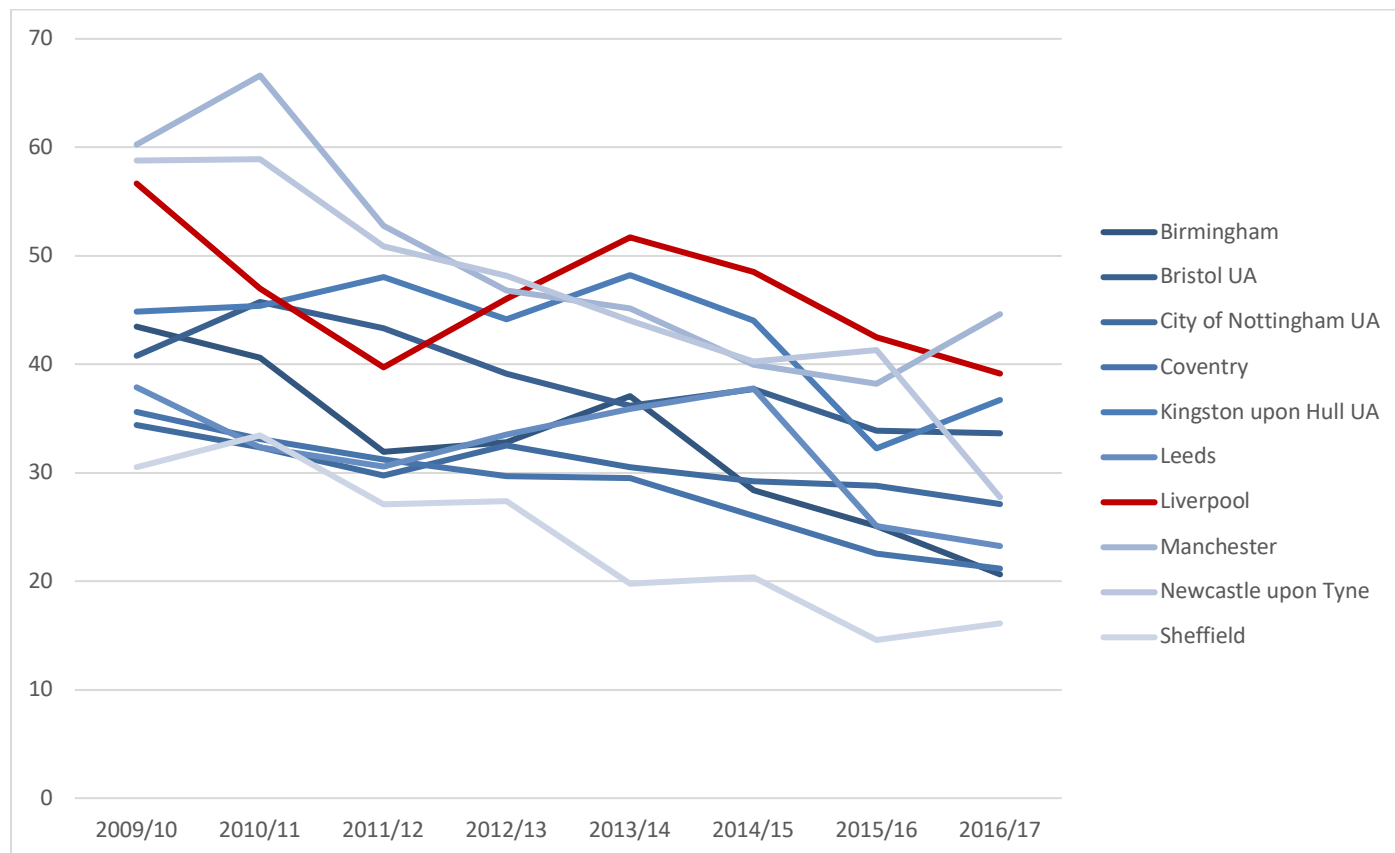
**Figure B. Total revenue spend per capita (£) -- Liverpool and the Core Cities ("All categories" definition)**

*Archives (111), Arts development and support (112), Heritage (113), Museums and galleries (114), Theatres and public entertainment (115), Library services (150)*

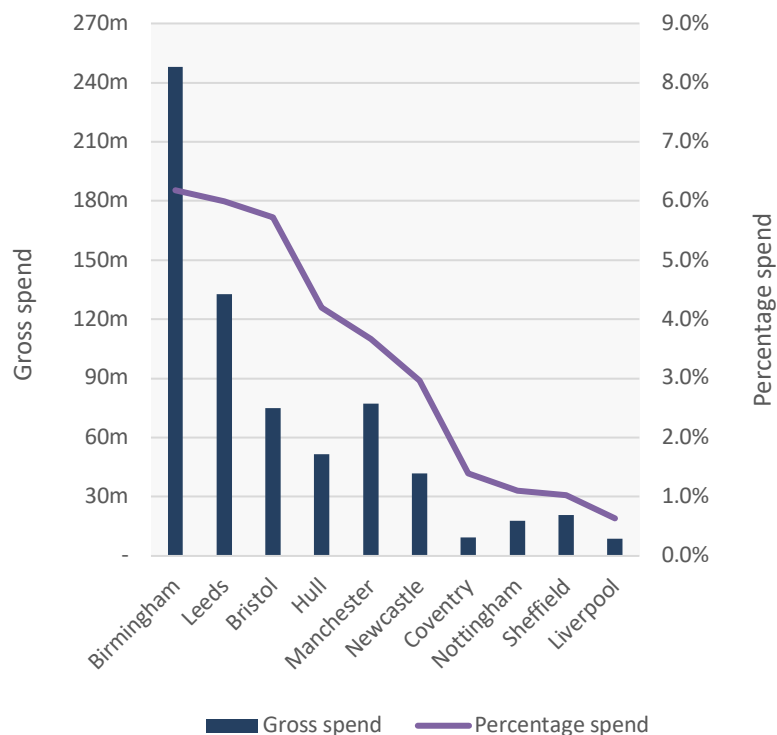


**Figure C. Net revenue spend per capita (£) -- Liverpool and the Core Cities ("All categories" definition)**

*Archives (111), Arts development and support (112), Heritage (113), Museums and galleries (114), Theatres and public entertainment (115), Library services (150)*



**Figure X.** Local authority capital expenditure on culture-related services, in gross terms and as a percentage of total capital expenditure (2008/09-2016/17)



**Figure Y.** Local authority capital expenditure on culture-related services, in gross terms and as a percentage of total capital expenditure (2008/09-2016/17)

