

Arts Council England

Review of the Cultural Compacts Initiative

Final report

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BOP
Consulting



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Summary

Strong and sustained collaboration between strategic place-based partners can support collective, coordinated action to grow a place's cultural ecosystem, to drive lasting social and economic benefits. Cities and towns with a clear vision for culture supported by business, local authorities, education and the cultural sector can align activity and funding and leverage new resources.

Cultural Compacts represent a step-change approach to working in partnership across sectors. These partnerships bring together local authorities, businesses, education providers, cultural and community leaders, driven by a shared ambition for culture and place, to co-design and deliver a vision for culture within a place.

The central conclusion of the Cultural Cities Enquiry was that, in the face of unprecedented socio-economic and environmental challenges and a rapidly changing funding landscape, cities need a new kind of leadership for culture: based not just on collaboration within the sector itself, or on the traditional support of local authorities, but on a wider coalition of support across different local sectors and interests. Hence one of its main recommendations: the establishment of 'Cultural Compacts'.

The purpose of the funding made available in 2019 by Arts Council England and DCMS was to enable the creation of such formal goal-driven, cross-sector partnerships in 20 places across England.

Eighteen months into the programme – and eight months into the Covid-19 crisis – this review reports on progress so far and draws out lessons for the future.

The overall conclusion is that, broadly speaking, the funding and support provided through this initiative have enabled partnerships in the places concerned, to generate new visions and ambitions for the cultural sector and its links with the other sectors, position culture more prominently in local agendas, formulate collective plans and build a wider base of support. This indicates that the programme is adding value in places and making a difference.

Not surprisingly, the Covid-19 crisis has delayed progress in all areas. But in many cases, the interruption has been an opportunity to build deeper relationships among the parties involved in the Cluster (or its creation) and to re-examine priorities. In some areas, the crisis has re-enforced the need for a

strong, broadly-based cultural leadership – especially where culture is seen as a potential driver for recovery and renewal.

Whilst the initial phase of the programme has been relatively successful, there is still progress to be made to ensure the Compacts achieve their full transformational potential. Two challenges, in particular, are shared to some degree by all the Compacts:

- Embedding diversity and inclusion into the composition of the Compact itself and across its programme of activities. This is not a priority for all Compacts and, whilst there are intentions to address this issue there is not a strong understanding of the needs and specific actions to take to address this at a local level.
- Creating genuinely cross-sector partnerships, with deep engagement from, in particular, the private sector and the health sector. There are obvious reasons why it has been a short-term challenge in some places with the latter. When it comes to the private sector, so much depends on the nature and makeup of the local economy and on historical links and relationships. For all places, it is a work in progress.

It is too early to assess the overall impact of the Cultural Compacts. But progress so far shows encouraging signs that effective partnerships are being developed. These will enable places to achieve the longer-term goals expected by the programme: to leverage more investment into local cultural development in a sustainable way that will provide lasting social and economic benefits for cities and towns.

In the meantime, this review has five key points for consideration for the Arts Council and its national partners, and for the Compacts themselves:

- 1. Positioning, leverage and impact.** The experience of the Compacts so far demonstrates that a more strategic, broader based approach to cultural leadership can raise the profile of culture and start to leverage additional resources. This lesson is worth noting and sharing more widely by both ACE and the individual Compacts. As Compacts evolve other important lessons around achieving longer-lasting impact will emerge.
- 2. The challenges of diversity and cross-sector engagement.** Compacts will only succeed in their aims if they engage new partners and stakeholders and if they set ambitious targets for diversity and inclusion. This was recognised by the Compacts we spoke to. They reported that this is a work in progress.

There are no simple, quick answers. All parties, local and national, have a role to play in addressing these challenges.

3. **Independence and autonomy.** The appointment of an independent chair is highly beneficial for Compacts. The skills, knowledge and independent local profile of the Chair is proving to be an important success factor for all Compacts, along with autonomy from any particular sector, institution or interest group.
4. **Investment Plus.** The small amount of funding provided by Arts Council England and DCMS has been useful – and in most cases wisely invested. But how the investment is supported by Arts Council England is even more important to the longer-term success of the Compacts: recognition and endorsement, advice and guidance, and the opportunity to learn from other places.
5. **The Role of Arts Council England.** (Strongly related to the lesson above). Regardless of future funding arrangements, the Arts Council has a vital role to play in the evolution of the Compacts using its name, influence and convening powers to endorse place-based partnerships, to advise and lead (especially on the two challenges above) and to enable peer-to-peer learning and exchange. Naturally, the presence of a local government that is available to embark in the opportunity is also of central importance.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report

In February 2020 Arts Council England commissioned BOP Consulting to conduct a review of the Compacts programme. The purpose of the review was to review progress so far and to explore to which extent the model works.

Our method was mainly qualitative and combined interviews, roundtables, and document review. Please refer to the Appendix for a full description of our method (section 9).

This report is structured in three main parts: after this first introductory section, which gives an overview on the programme and on its status, sections 2 to 7 present the findings of the review. This central section explores:

- The Compacts model and what it has allowed places to deliver from an operational point of view (section 2).
- The impact of Covid-19 presented as stand-alone section for its major impact on the programme development (section 3).
- The two core elements of the programme: cross sectoral partnerships and the linkages with wider local policy (section 4).
- Key successes and challenges (section 5).
- The keys to success, as reported by Compacts (section 6).
- The value added by the programme (section 7).

The report closes with some final remarks and conclusions (section 8).

1.1.1 What is a Cultural Compact?

In 2019 Arts Council England (ACE) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) supported the creation of 20 Cultural Compacts.

These Compacts are partnerships designed to support the local cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development, with a special emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector itself and the local authority.

The Compacts model was included in the recommendations of the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry, an independent enquiry into the cultural resources of Britain's

cities. The Enquiry was launched in January 2019 and aimed at developing new models that will help arts and culture thrive in our cities. The Enquiry board considered the recommendation of setting up Cultural Compacts to help place make a step-change in the strategic governance of culture and help more people and more places benefit from engaging with cultural opportunities.

The purpose of a Compact is to facilitate the co-creation and co-delivery of an ambitious vision for culture in a place. Each selected Compact is expected to lead a step-change in the sustainability and contribution of culture to the life of that place. The form, functions and activities of a Compact are expected to vary according to the place where it is set up. All Compacts are expected to be defined by the ambition of developing the local cultural sector and boosting its engagement with health agencies, business, universities and other sectors. Compacts are not intended to support existing partnership arrangements but rather to widen the support base for culture around a compelling vision for the role of culture in the place.

1.1.2 The key programme objectives

As laid out in the logic model there are four central objectives for the Cultural Compacts programme:

1. Increase the connectivity between the arts and cultural sector and broader aspirations and priorities, including local recovery plans within Compact areas through strategic partnerships with relevant sectors.
2. Facilitate the development of a shared ambition among project partners for culture's contribution to local development; and the adoption of a coordinated approach to deploy cultural assets in support of joint priorities.
3. Increase capacity and strategic planning for the development and delivery of joint initiatives that strengthen the local cultural ecosystem and leverage resources (human, financial, and property) to support these.
4. Secure commitment from Compact members to continue working in partnership and support sector-recovery efforts.

1.1.3 How funding has been allocated

In 2019 Arts Council England collaborated with DCMS to support the roll-out of a first cohort of Cultural Compacts across England. DCMS contributed £110,000 to a joint funding initiative with Arts Council England to support 11 Compacts. Arts Council England provided additional funding to facilitate the set-up of a further 9 Compacts, investing a total of £323,000. These early adopters have been identified by Arts Council England and DCMS in collaboration with the Core Cities Group and the Key Cities Group.

Each Compact received an individual grant between £20,000 and £30,000 for one year's activity, with the requirement that local partners would provide at least 30% match funding. Funding was awarded based on the ambition and scope of the proposed activity. Figure 1 lists awarded places and funding amounts allocated.

Figure 1 Arts Council England /DCMS grant awarded

Place	Grant awarded £
Birmingham	£30,000
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP)	£20,000
Cornwall	£20,000
Coventry	£28,500
Exeter	£20,000
Hull	£20,000
Liverpool	£20,000
Medway (Rochester, Chatham, and Gillingham)	£20,000
Morecambe Bay	£20,000
Newcastle Upon Tyne	£20,000
Norwich	£20,000
Nottingham	£30,000
Sheffield	£22,000
Slough	£20,000
Southwark	£20,000
Sunderland	£23,000
Tunbridge Wells	£20,000
Wakefield	£20,000
West of England Combined Authority (WECA)	£20,000
Wolverhampton	£20,000

Source: Arts Council England, 2020

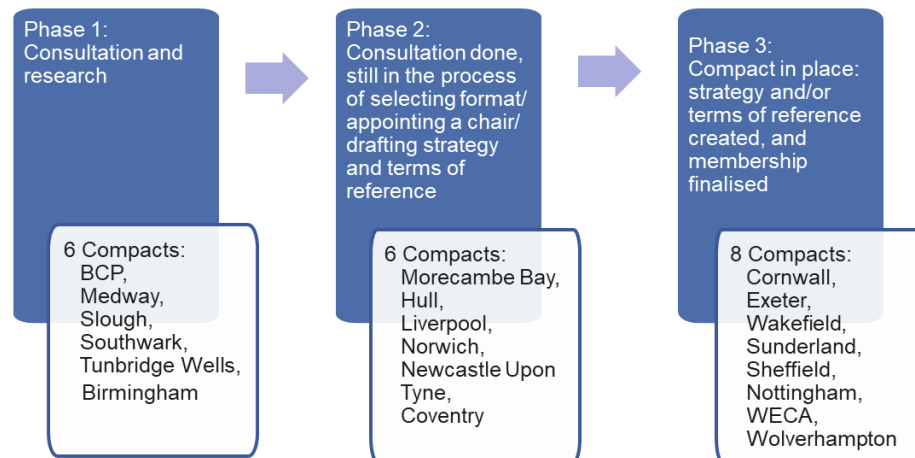
1.1.4 Awarded Compacts are in different development stages

Each Compact is at a different stage in their process of setting up their Compact, some having received their funding later than others and others having experienced delays due to Covid-19. For this reason, the findings from this review should be considered as initial. We have classified the development of Compacts into three phases:

1. **Consultation and research**, when the lead organisation is in the process of or has just completed consultation with the organisations and stakeholders active in the cultural sector (and beyond) to identify barriers, needs and opportunities for the sector.
2. **Finalisation of the Compact**, when the lead organisation is in the process of or has just completed exploring which formats and financial models the Compact should have. In this phase Compacts might also spend time to select and appoint a Chair and draft a formal strategy and terms of reference.
3. **Compact in place**, when the Compact is formally constituted, has a list of members, a strategy and/or terms of reference.

Figure 2 below shows the status of each Compact.

Figure 2 Status of Compacts



Source: BOP Consulting, 2020

Different stages of development do not correspond to disparities in the quality of the Compact outcome. This means that even though Compacts are in different stages of their development, this does not mean that places still in early stages are of lower quality. In fact, the status is not a description of the Compacts' quality. This disparity is often linked to delays or interruptions caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic and some areas have deliberately decided to spend more time and resources in certain phases. This has allowed them to create stronger Compacts and consequently have a stronger impact.

For example:

- *Medway is using their extensive consultation activities to get a clearer sense of the needs of their artistic community.*
- *Tunbridge Wells and Wolverhampton are taking time to carefully select their Chairpersons to make sure their Compacts will have a strong and respected voice in their area.*
- *Morecambe Bay is spending time to strengthen the newly established relationship between its Local Authorities to create stronger partnerships.*

2. Delivery: Compacts have used the funding as intended

Our research highlighted key actions undertaken by Compacts from an operational point of view. These broadly align with the expectations of the funders and with the programme design.

In terms of **key actions**, the funded areas:

- Extended their capacity and leadership to develop the Compact or to start internal conversations towards this ambition. The funding allowed lead organisations to either hire new staff members (e.g. Wakefield, Coventry, Cornwall), extend the capacity of existing staff members (e.g. Exeter), and/or appoint external consultants to provide sectorial expertise, leadership and/or managerial support, or strategic advice (e.g. Wakefield, Medway, Liverpool, Sheffield).
- Consulted with stakeholders, cultural sector, organisations operating in the educational, charitable or cultural sector and the wider public to identify needs and agree an overall direction of work.

“ We really invested in engagement. We had over 70 meetings strategic stakeholders and we held an open-space event where about 150 people turned up. [...] It was to think how culture could help our area to be what it aspires to be.

- In many cases, successfully selected and developed a structure and governance model for the Compact. Most commonly, Compacts are organised around a Board with members appointed by invitation and led by a Chair.

For example:

- Sheffield named their Compact “Sheffield Culture Collective” to reflect the ‘flatter’ organisation of the group. They selected a Board model led by a Chair and with members appointed by invitation, due to the swift timescale required by the project funding. Their intention is to refresh the Board on a yearly basis.

- Exeter set up a Compact which is integrated into a wider strategic partnership Board providing direction to the city on points such as urban development, wellbeing, economic growth, education, transport and culture – Liveable Exeter.
 - Medway opted for a ‘pentacle structure’ - a hybrid model where at the core, the Compact group has high-level strategy and advocacy remits and from this stems a series of petals, each corresponding to a workstream linked to the cultural strategy.
- Built partnerships with organisations, businesses and individuals operating across the cultural and creative sector in their area and beyond. These included stakeholders from education, business and Business Improvement Districts, Local Enterprise Partnerships, public bodies, health partners and practitioners.
 - In some cases, and when the Compact has had enough time to develop itself, Compacts have delivered activities using a coordinated approach. See section 7 for more detail on the value added by the programme.

For example:

- Cornwall used its Compact to deliver a pilot project developed through a shared approach. Members shared responsibilities and resources to curate a series of small events for the community. The ambition is to plan the calendar of cultural activities in the city together and market the events accordingly.
- Nottingham delivered a non-stopping digital festival of three days to support the community during Covid-19. This also generated some income for the artists and practitioners involved.

3. Impacts of the pandemic: Covid-19 led Compacts to pause and rethink

Unsurprisingly, the Covid-19 crisis has had a major impact on the development of the Compacts. In most cases the pandemic paused or delayed the activities.

“ Covid-19 has continued to create a ‘hovering’ and hiatus where it feels very difficult to commit to anything. There has been so much uncertainty but also such a need for clear answers.

That said, the delay and the need to respond collectively to the crisis has led to an increased collaboration between groups operating in culture in many of the areas. Through closer collaboration Compacts were able to reflect on and refocus their activities.

Compacts responded to this crisis in two main ways:

1. Using their network, often not yet formally constituted as Compact yet, to convene meetings and deliver support, especially for the cultural and creative sectors needs in the context of the early days of the pandemic.
2. Rethinking the Compact’s initial strategy and adapting it to the needs of the sector in this new context.

“ A negative thing like Covid-19 I think in reality has been such an opportunity, because in many ways it’s not about the new normal and going back to things, it’s about this opportunity for real change.

For example:

- *Nottingham decided to scrap the initial plan of their newly formed Compact when the pandemic hit. The new focus is now around the current financial sustainability of the sector and its future sustainability. The city organised a non-stop three days digital festival generating income for artists and established the ‘Robin Hood Fund’ to support organisations operating in the city. Following the early days of the pandemic, in which the city focused especially on providing emergency*

support, Nottingham also decided to build up its ambitions, starting consultations to move the BBC Orchestra as resident in Nottingham. They reported that they were being seen as the representative body for the cultural sector by local government and key stakeholders in the recovery planning.

- *Wolverhampton decided to shift their focus and create a support network for practitioners as well as start to plan a recovery for the city that could bring economic regeneration. This included thinking how ‘meanwhile’ and empty retail spaces could be used differently. They also initiated a Compact+ scheme bringing together their Compact, Birmingham’s and then inviting towns geographically located in between to join meetings with them.*
- *Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) had to pause the activities for the establishment of their Compact. They set up a Cultural Action Group to consult on common challenges and come up with an action plan. Among the Group’s tasks is also to suggest a structure and timeline for the Compact.*

Our research also shows that the profile and/or weight of the Compacts grew in areas where culture was key to local post Covid-19 recovery plans; especially where the crisis created a need to look more creatively at the drivers for recovery. In some of these cases, the Compacts acted as the representative body for the local cultural sector, providing leadership at a strategic level.

Some have also reported that the pandemic forced stakeholders to widen their geographies finding common ground within a broader area, supporting them in advocacy, coordinated delivery and networking.

“ People are now seeking local communities and different ways to be heard at governmental level. In order to be heard, however, you need to have an idea of what you want. During the initial phases of the pandemic nobody was thinking about the long term, but I feel there is a pressure to create and address long term plans now. We are thinking about recovery and partnership working beyond boundaries. Covid-19 gave the opportunity to become more cohesive and consolidate links beyond our LA.

4. Cross sectoral partnerships & linkages with wider local policy: Compacts have provided a new opportunity for places to embed culture in wider partnerships and policy

Cross-sectoral partnerships and linkages with wider local policy are two key elements of the Compacts initiative. At a time when other sectors (such as retail and tourism) are struggling, culture can step in and provide support for the local community and economic resilience. The Compact model is well placed to drive this.

On the creation of partnerships:

- Many of the Compact areas already had at least one cultural partnership in place and a strong history of effective cultural policies (*e.g. Liverpool, Sunderland, Norwich*). The Compacts initiative in these cases reinforces existing partnerships and adds that cross-sectoral element to them.
- For areas that are approaching the Cultural Compact concept afresh, it is too early to say if cross-sector partnership working is 'improved' or 'sustained'.
- Initial interviews have registered a general increase of stakeholder's understanding of the potential of cultural-led economic development. This is especially true for places where partnerships and groups (for the cultural sector and beyond) were not in place previously (*e.g. Morecombe Bay*).

On cross-sectoral partnerships enabling culture to be embedded in wider policy at a local level:

- In many cases the development of the Compact is strongly linked to capital or significant development projects in the city (*e.g. Exeter, Nottingham, Sheffield, Coventry*). In these cases, there seems to be more cross-sectoral working.

- There is an ambition to bring in stakeholders from the health/wellbeing sector and the private sector, but this is proving challenging in some places, especially for the current emergency the sector is facing.
- In most of the cases, the Compact was formed after the creation of a cultural strategy for the city/town/area. In other cases, the Compact is formally used to develop and/or input into such strategy.
- In some cases, Compacts created specific capacity and momentum for local areas to take advantage of regional or national policy initiatives.

For example:

- *Medway is using their major focus on public consultation also in preparation of their application to the UK City Capital of Culture initiative.*
- *As part of their Compact, Cornwall designed an action plan that could benchmark cultural activity across 12 months 3 years and 10 years also to support the Truro Town Deal.*

5. Key successes and challenges: Compacts have enabled places to develop shared ambitions for socio-economic development, but there is still progress to made

Compacts reported many early **successes** enabled by the Compacts model. The most reported were:

- Working on and developing shared ambitions for social and economic development in the Compacts' areas, such as an increased cross-sectoral working, a more coordinated delivery and management of cultural events and activities in the area, or longer-term plans for the cultural sector in the area. Some of these were new, some others have started to emerge with the creation of the Compact.
- Creating a cross-sectoral group which could bring culture at the forefront of local policy contributing to drive local development.
- Involving the community in an independent group, where its members also include new stakeholders beyond the 'usual suspects' and those who do not work directly in the cultural sector (see section 5).
- Communicating effectively from the grassroots upwards to make sure as many voices as possible were heard at a local policy level.
- Creating a space where all parties could share learning and discuss common challenges, especially the ones caused by Covid-19.

Some of the **challenges** highlighted included:

- Covid-19 and the uncertainty and delays it generated (see section 3).
- Challenges in formalising the role of a Compact Chair and identifying the right person to perform this role (see section 5).
- Incorporation of Diversity and Inclusion perspectives within the Compact's development and delivery. Only a few (*e.g. Sunderland and Newcastle*) have embedded the concept within their Compact, and many are not clear if the concept is about design of the Compact or of the outcomes/outputs. Many

Compacts referred to existing frameworks/policies at a council level. Initially, for many Compacts this was not a key priority. However, we identified a shift in this approach within the last months of our consultation although many are still struggling to identify the right approach to this issue.

- Understanding how to approach and engage some specific sectors, such as the health/wellbeing sector and the private sector.
- Understanding how to maintain balanced cross-sectoral representation, and how the governance model of the Compact can help in this.

“ The main thing we've been looking at is how to engage different stakeholders. It's quite difficult to ensure that everybody is represented without overwhelming the structure of the compact so it's unable to actually deliver. And we really interested to learn more about different Compacts and how they're going about the structure.

- Having a space where to meet regularly for peer-to-peer support and knowledge exchange across Compacts, given their strong willingness to learn from each other. The network meetings were reported as useful, and although there was a good awareness of the Slack channel, it had a low utilisation.
- Leveraging additional resources, which has not yet happened. Generally, the Compacts took quite a narrow view of the opportunities and resources they could leverage, seeing these mainly as financial (grants / public funding) or simply the opportunities presented by working collaboratively with others. In many cases the expertise of Compacts' members didn't best position them to think more creatively around the potential leverage opportunities such as releasing the value of local assets or considering the implementation of financial / investment strategies locally.
- In some cases, the name of the initiative (“Cultural Compact”) has been reported as 'complex' and 'not immediate'. But some had worked around this by choosing a new name for their Compact and interviewees reported that this wasn't a critical issue.
- The Cultural Cities Enquiry's (CCE) findings, recommendations and the role they play as the basis for Compacts initiative is not fully understood by the

Compacts and thus they are not as focussed on some of the key areas as Arts Council England might have hoped. For instance, the CCE's recommendations around focussing on investment such as pursuing joint investment opportunities, Corporate Social Venture Funds, tax reliefs and levies don't appear to have been an area of focus for the Compacts to date. Nor does it seem that the recommendations around diversity targets and talent pathways are understood or embedded in the Compact models that have been set up.

6. Key to success: Compacts report that having a strong Chair and being independent are key to success

Our research identified a number of early-stage success factors for the establishment of Cultural Compacts:

- **Being independent.** Compacts reported that having a group of people working independently to support the cultural and creative sector was key. This allowed parties to act freely and put the interests of the local sector at the heart of the Compact.

“ We went out to invite the sector and highlighted that it was all very a-political. They all wanted to be involved because it was a neutral space.
- **Appointing the right chair, with the appropriate skills, and with a high local profile and a wide network.** Compacts reported that having a Chair with strong leadership that could create momentum and give access to key contacts was a key element for success. Some reported that appointing someone from the business or corporate sectors helped in giving a signal of freshness and openness of the local cultural sector. Conversely, others said that in some contexts the challenge of finding an appropriate Chair has acted as a barrier causing delays for the development of the Compact.
- **Having permission to fail and experiment.** As the Compact model is relatively new, places have had to experiment. Having space to fail has been key to ensure an appropriate level of confidence for some of the less experienced Compacts.
- **Bringing together a rich cross-sectoral group.** Having a rich, diverse and active cross sectoral group helped in creating a successful Compact and realising connections that would have not happened so easily otherwise.
- **Being clear and realistic.** Some found that a key element of a successful Compact has been building and maintaining shared expectations. This

included crafting a shared ambition for the Compact's aims and objectives, and at the same time being realistic about what the group could deliver.

“ Culture can't do everything – but it can do some things, including supporting other sector agendas such as public health.

7. Value added by the programme: While Compacts are not always the sole driver of a new approach to partnership working, the process and extended capacity are adding real value

While Compacts have not always been a decisive factor to drive a fresh approach in the way culture works and is perceived at a local level, the framework, the process of implementing a Compact and the small amount of funding they received has added to the capacity and profile of these areas' cultural development agenda.

Our research evidenced this both in areas with a strong recent history of partnership working and in areas with previously existing structures. Compacts are **adding value** within places in three main ways:

1. Extending and reinforcing *strategic capacity* which:

- provides extra resources to take stock, review and set priorities
- provides license and encouragement to review who is at the table, their roles and relationships
- is a useful framework/benchmark to draw on and benchmark to work from (can save time and money)
- provides a small flexible pot of money to undertake quick strategic pieces of work
- encourages more formal relations with greater accountability
- provides a peer group to learn from

2. Providing the opportunity to build *higher profile and greater credibility* for the place and its cultural ecosystem which

- has the weight of the Arts Council England name behind it
- earns a place at top table

- strengthens capacity to engage with key place-based agencies and initiatives like LEPs and Healthy Cities
- attracts wider diversity of interest, especially from the private and health sectors
- strengthens the Compact role as a broker/relationship manager
- helps to widen engagement outside traditional local authority areas (e.g. Combined Authorities)
- positions the place to bid into national schemes/investment – in culture and other areas

For example:

- *Hull reported that the Compact framework has been a very useful national benchmark and reference point, which saved them between six months to one years' work. Although they were already on the journey to build a sector based on strategic partnerships, Compact has definitely added value*
 - *Liverpool reported that Compact has proven useful as an opportunity for fresh thinking around priorities. This included reviewing the strategy, reconsidering who's around the table, rethinking strategic relationships with other bodies and networks, and discussing the balance of activities across the Local Authorities involved*
 - *Exeter reported that Compact has helped to attract more partners and to position culture more strategically around bigger agendas. Culture now has a more prominent voice*
- ### 3. Providing a flexible pot of money that can be used at the discretion of the Compact to achieve impact in a variety of ways that are specific to each place.

For example:

- *Exeter reported using some of their funding to commission an audit of public spaces in the city that has now be widely used by a range of stakeholder in their Covid-19 response planning.*

8. Conclusions

The four objectives of the Cultural Compacts programme are to:

1. Increase the connectivity between the arts and cultural sector and broader local aspirations and priorities, including local recovery plans within Compact areas through strategic partnerships with relevant sectors.
2. Facilitate the development of a shared ambition among project partners for culture's contribution to local development; and the adoption of a coordinated approach to deploy cultural assets in support of joint priorities.
3. Increase capacity and strategic planning for the development and delivery of joint initiatives that strengthen the local cultural ecosystem and leverage resources (human, financial, and property) to support these.
4. Secure commitment from Compact members to continue working in partnership and support sector-recovery efforts.

On the whole, the Compacts who had moved beyond Phase 2 (i.e. the consultation and research phase) have broadly achieved objectives 1, 2 and 4 or were demonstrably on route to doing so. In terms of the third objective, the majority of the Compacts had certainly increased their capacity and strategic planning capabilities but at this early stage it's difficult to assess the Compacts' abilities to leverage additional resources.

We found that there would be scope for Arts Council England to provide additional support to the Compacts in the following areas:

- Helping Compact leads understand the basis of the Compacts initiative to be found in the recommendations of the Cultural Cities Enquiry. Ensuring they understand the key priorities identified in the Cultural Cities Enquiry report and how these can translate into the Compacts initiative.
- Helping Compacts understand the crucial nature of identifying and recruiting a strong Chair and ensuring Compacts understand the variety of opportunities to leverage resources (human, financial, and property) that might be open to them with the right expertise represented across their membership.

- Supporting the sharing of knowledge and experiences across the network of Compacts, ideally through facilitating open conversations across key themes e.g. establishing a Compact / governance models, focussing on investment, building a focus on diversity, engaging specific sectors etc. These key themes could be proposed by Arts Council England or Compacts seeking to share best practice or seek input from other Compacts from their experiences.

Despite the delays and challenges caused by the Covid-19 crisis, the 20 Cultural Compacts have made a strong start. At this early stage, the funding, the process and the support package as a whole have clearly helped to raise the profile of culture in recipient areas and to build a wider local coalition of support – and to position culture to attract more, and more varied, support and funding.

Although all Compacts are engaging a wider range of partners and developing ambitious programmes, there is still much progress to be made with the twin challenges of diversity and cross-sector engagement. Compacts are unlikely to fulfil their transformative potential without addressing these challenges.

However, for now, the areas which have been awarded Compact status look well positioned to realise the core aims of the programme, as expressed in the Culture Cities Enquiry:

“ Strong and sustained collaboration between strategic city partners can support collective, coordinated action to grow a city's cultural ecosystem, to drive lasting social and economic benefits. Cities with a clear vision for culture supported by business, city authorities, education and the cultural sector can align activity and funding and leverage new resources.

9. Appendix

9.1 Method

The method for this review consisted of:

- **Baseline semi-structured interviews with each Compact (x19¹)** with project leads (c45 minutes) to cover specific local context and ambition, progress to date, Compact structure, opportunities and challenges and expected outputs. Please see below for a copy of the topic guide used. All 20 Compacts have been invited for interview and 19 replied positively to the request.
- **Roundtables (x3)** conducted with Compact leads (c1 hour each) to explore specific themes. Please see ‘Roundtable themes’ for an overview of the themes explored.
- **Follow up in-depth semi-structured interviews (x6)** with project leads for selected case studies to explore best practices and value added by the initiative.
- **Meta-analysis of case studies (x6)** To enrich and check the information gathered throughout the process. The case studies received were from: Cornwall, Exeter, Medway, Sheffield, WECA, Wolverhampton.
- **Interview with key Arts Council England staff** to review achievement of Compacts against aims and reflect on process, best practice and learnings.
- **Collation, analysis and review of additional documentation** including Compacts applications, internal logic model, notes from Compact event, terms of reference, press, briefs etc, analysed in line with framework.

9.2 Interviews topic guide

Intro: activities and outputs

1. Could you please tell me about the stage your Compact is currently at? Could you provide me with a short overview of your Compact?

Seek for: specific local context, Compact's ambition/vision, general picture of the Compact, activities delivered, partners.

2. In our introductory email, we asked if you could provide us with some facts and figures for your Compacts. Could you please let us know the following?
 - How many engagement events (face-to-face or online) with members and stakeholders have you organised to date?
 - How many research projects have you conducted if any? (Including surveys to practitioners, feasibility studies, research projects commissioned etc.)
 - Looking back at your proposal, is the list of your Compacts members changed significantly? If yes, which new members have you secured?
 - Have you leveraged any additional funding (for Compact activity or joint initiatives) at this stage?
3. Have you built any relationships or collaborations with other Compacts?
4. Has participating in a Compact created additional capacity for delivery that you would have otherwise?

Outcomes and impacts of their intervention

5. What have been the key successes of the Compact so far (on your members and on the cultural and creative sector in your area)?

Seek for:

- *New and/or improved (better quality, economically sustainable and long term) partnership working between the cultural sector and other sectors; and linked to this*
- *Increased intra-sectoral engagement and understanding (of each other's role in the local area, understanding of each other's strategic priorities)*
- *Members and stakeholders have an Increased understanding of cultural-led social and economic regional development (present or potential)*
- *Members and stakeholders align their strategic priorities and planning to support the delivery of shared outcomes between the cultural sector and other sectors within Compact areas*

¹ BOP were unable to engage one Compact in this review due to the Compact's limited capacity at this time.

6. To which extent has the Compact led to a change in strategic development plans in your area?

Seek for: Cultural assets are incorporated or are planned to be incorporated in local strategic development plans or recovery plans within the Compact area, incl. sector or local recovery plans/initiatives post-Covid

7. (If appropriate to the Compact) To what extent has your Compact matched the expectations you had for it?
8. Do you think these the changes or outcomes you have identified would have happened anyway, even if you hadn't secured the funding?
9. One of the objectives of the programme is to facilitate inclusion and a diverse representation of people in the local creative and cultural sector. To which extent has this been part of your plan, and what successes can you highlight in this sense?
10. Is there any further documentation that it would be worth us seeing? (e.g. evaluation, terms of reference, case study)

Process

11. Now we would ask you about the process of setting up the Compact and delivering the activities.

Has the Compact developed as intended so far?

(Were there enough resources? Were there any unexpected or unintended issues in the delivery of the initiative? To what extent has the initiative reached all the people that it was intended to?)

12. (if it did not come up explicitly in the previous question) To which extent has Covid-19 impacted the work of your Compact?

13. What worked well, or less well, for whom and why? What could be improved?

9.3 Roundtable themes

Roundtable 1: Enabling a successful Compact. What are the key conditions that need to be in place for a successful establishment of a Compact? (4 participants)

Roundtable 2: Diversity. How can Compacts work to ensure and promote equality and diversity? (3 participants)

Roundtable 3: Cross-sectoral engagement. How can Compacts make the most out of the cross-sectoral approach, so central in the Compacts initiative? (3 participants)

Figure 3 List of interviewees involved in consultations

Place	Interviewee	Roundtable(s) attended / follow up interviews, if any
Nottingham	Nigel Hawkins – Head of Culture & Libraries, Nottingham City Council	Roundtable 1 Roundtable 3
Birmingham	-	
Coventry	Val Birchall - Head of Sport Culture & Destination, Coventry City Council	
Sunderland	Keith Merrin - Chief Executive, Sunderland Culture	Roundtable 1
Sheffield	Alexis Krachai - Director, Sheffield Property Association Julie Kenny - Chair, Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust Martin Mckerverey - Chair, Sheffield Property Association Rebecca Maddox - Head of Business Development, Culture, Sheffield City Council	
Wakefield	Julie Russell - Service Director Arts Culture & Leisure, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, and Monika Wilcox - WX3 Programme Manager, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	
Morecambe Bay	Lawrence Conway - Chief Executive, South Lakeland District Council, and Imelda Winters-Lewis, lead officer for the Morecambe Bay Cultural Compact	Roundtable 2
Hull	Malcolm Relph - Head of City Economy, Hull City Council	Follow-up interview
Liverpool	Sarah Lovell - Lead Officer Culture, LCR Combined Authority	Follow-up interview
Newcastle Upon Tyne	Andrew Rothwell - Culture & Tourism Manager, Newcastle City Council	
Wolverhampton	Heather Clarke - Service Development Manager, Wolverhampton Council	Roundtable 1
Southwark	Aileen Cahill - Head of Culture, Environment and Leisure Department, London Borough of Southwark	
Cornwall/Truro	Vicky Reece-Romain - Culture Officer, Cornwall Council	Roundtable 2 Follow-up interview
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Michael Spender - Museum and Arts Manager, BCP Council, and Andrea Francis - Cultural Development Manager, BCP Council	Roundtable 3
West of England Combined Authority (WECA)	Lynda Bird - Head of Performance, Planning & Projects, WECA	Roundtable 1 Roundtable 3
Exeter	Jon-Paul Hedge - Director of Communications & Marketing for Exeter City Council, and Dom Jinks - Director Exeter Culture	Follow-up interview
Norwich	Nikki Rotsos - Director, Director of strategy, communications and culture, Norwich City Council	Follow-up interview

Medway (Rochester, Chatham, and Gillingham)	Paul Cowell - Head of Culture, Medway Council, and Liz Moran - Chair of Medway Cultural Compact and Co-director of the Institute of Cultural and Creative industries at University of Kent	Roundtable 2 Follow-up interview
Slough	Jackie Gray, Libraries & Culture Development Manager - Slough Borough Council	
Tunbridge Wells	Hilary Smith - Economic Development Manager, Tunbridge Wells Council	

Source: BOP Consulting, 2020

BOP Consulting

BOP Consulting is an international consultancy specialising in culture and the creative economy.

BOP convenes the **World Cities Culture Forum** (WCCF), an international network of more than 35 cities. www.worldcitiescultureforum.com

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