

Evaluation of the Cultural Destinations Fund (Phase 2)

Summary Report



Contents

Background and context	1
About this summary report	1
Overview of Cultural Destinations Fund phase 2	2
Evaluative assessment of the Cultural Destinations Fund programme	4
Outcomes achieved through the programme	5
Cultural Destinations Fund: Evidencing achievements	7
Enablers and barriers to project success	10
Enablers	10
Barriers.....	11
Recommendations	13
Recommendations for local leaders and project managers.....	13
Recommendations for Arts Council England, Visit England and visitor economy policy makers	14
Annex A: Cultural Destinations Fund (phase 2) projects	A-1

Contact:

Rebecca Edwards

Tel: 0161 250 2670

email: redwards@sqw.co.uk

Approved by:

Jo Hutchinson

Associate Director

Date: 01/06/2021

Disclaimer

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for, and should not be relied upon by, any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party. Whilst SQW has used reasonable care and skill throughout, it is unable to warrant either the accuracy or completeness of information supplied by the client or third parties, and it does not accept responsibility for any legal, commercial or other consequences that arise from its use.

Cover photo by [Tarpit Grover](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Background and context

1. The Cultural Destinations Fund programme set out to maximise culture's contribution to the local visitor economy in several localities across England by supporting partnerships that brought arts and culture, and tourism partners together over two phases. The second phase of the programme invested £4.2 million between April 2017 and January 2021 to support eighteen local partner consortiums (with at least one cultural organisation and a Destination Management Organisation) to build on culture's potential to help grow visitor economies.
2. The cultural and the tourism sectors are each, in their own right, significant contributors to local economies. Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) data valued the arts and culture industry in 2016 at £10.8 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA), supporting over 137,000 jobs.¹ Tourism also has a significant and growing role in the British economy, and in 2017 contributed £106 billion (GDP) and supported 2.6 million jobs².
3. Culture is closely intertwined with tourism and both sectors form part of the visitor economy. The cultural sector is already making a major contribution to the visitor economy; £4.5 billion of spending by inbound visitors, more than 25% of annual spending by international visitors, is attributable to the UK's culture and heritage sectors.³ Cultural destinations are attractive to domestic and international visitors and in 2019, 18 of the top 25 most visited attractions in the UK were in the cultural sector⁴.

About this summary report

4. SQW evaluated the first phase of the Cultural Destinations Fund programme in 2017.⁵ This report presents a summary of the evaluation of its second phase undertaken in 2020. It sets out the key findings from the evaluation and includes key learning and recommendations for local leaders and project managers, and for Arts Council England, Visit England and visitor economy policy makers. It is worth noting that a longer technical report was provided to Arts Council England and Visit England. In addition, four case studies of 'the use of digital', 'resilience', 'continued participation' and 'private sector partnerships' were developed as part of this evaluation and are available on Arts Council England's website.
5. The evaluation research and reporting were undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic, however it did not have a significant impact on project delivery, as this was largely complete when the COVID-19 outbreak occurred. Nevertheless, associated closures and lockdowns will impact the achievement of longer-term and sustained outcomes in both culture and tourism sectors. This report summary should be read in this context. Moreover, the learning and recommendations summarised here could be considered in the context of supporting the recovery of both the culture and tourism sectors.

¹ Cebr (2019) [Economic impact of arts and culture on the national economy](#). Arts Council England

² VisitEngland/VisitBritain (2017) Tourism in England. <https://www.visitbritain.org/value-tourism-england>

³ HM Government (2019) Industrial strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-sector-deal>

⁴ Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (2019) <https://www.alva.org.uk/details.cfm?p=423>

⁵ SQW (2017) Evaluation of Cultural Destinations. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/cultural-destinations#section-5>

Overview of Cultural Destinations Fund phase 2

6. The Cultural Destinations Fund phase 2 is a £4.2m programme that was delivered in partnership by Arts Council England and Visit England between April 2017 and January 2021.
7. The programme aimed to support the positioning of culture as a prominent part of the local visitor offer to drive the growth of the visitor economy, and to build partnership capacity in the cultural and tourism sectors; to achieve the following aims⁶:
 - more and different types of people experience the arts and culture in local destinations in a way that contributes to the growth of the local visitor economy
 - increased income leading to greater sustainability and resilience for cultural organisations and tourism businesses in local destinations
 - repositioning of culture as a prominent part of the visitor offer and local economic growth plans
 - a commitment from public and private sector partners to continue working in partnership to support the growth of the local visitor economy through cultural tourism beyond the life of the Cultural Destinations Fund programme.
8. Eighteen projects (consortiums) across England were awarded grants of between £128,000 and £500,000. Figure 1 presents a map of the funded projects. The timing and duration of projects varied, Table A-1 in Annex A sets out the start and end date for each project and the total programme funding received. Project information can be found in the main report.
9. The evaluation commenced in 2019 with a period of scoping research. The Evaluation Plan was agreed in June 2019, by which time six projects had completed⁷. The evaluation was based on the following data:
 - consultations with project leads: 16 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with projects leads for each area (including those that were still delivering as the evaluation commenced - referred to as live projects- and completed projects)
 - meta-analysis of evidence and learning from 17 projects' evaluation and final reports⁸
 - collection and analysis of monitoring data from 11 live projects in 2019 and 2020
 - e-survey of local stakeholders in 2020: returned by 59 stakeholders, representing 15 projects.

⁶ The four programme aims for phase 2 have remained the same as phase 1.

⁷ The evaluation commenced in 2019 and at this time, six projects had or were due to complete imminently. As a result, these projects were considered differently in the evaluation, as it would not be possible to monitor outputs or ongoing progress. These **six projects, which completed delivery in March 2019 or earlier, are classed as 'completed'**. The **remaining twelve projects were considered in the evaluation as 'live'** – although, at the time of reporting for the final evaluation, nine projects had finished.

⁸ Two projects were unable to participate in the consultations. One project did not provide programme documentation.

Figure 1: Cultural Destinations Fund phase 2 projects



Source: Produced by SQW 2018. Licence 10003099

Evaluative assessment of the Cultural Destinations Fund programme

10. The Cultural Destinations Fund programme aimed to support the positioning of culture as a prominent part of the local visitor offer to drive the growth of the visitor economy, and to build partnership capacity in the cultural and tourism sectors. This section presents a summary assessment of the Cultural Destinations Fund programme - firstly, as a mechanism for delivering the anticipated outcomes (process evaluation reflections), and secondly, of the overall impact delivered.

Process evaluation reflections

- **Programme ambition:**
 - The rationale and overall focus of the programme remains valid; there are clear benefits to both the cultural and tourism sector of facilitating increased collaboration and partnership working.
 - Alliances developed between the cultural and tourism sectors through the programme have demonstrated synergy achieved from working together. Some of this would have happened anyway, however the evidence suggests that many of the outputs and outcomes would not have occurred at the same pace or scale without the programme.
 - The feedback from projects suggests that further work is required in some areas, particularly in engaging large, corporate tourism businesses, and that this is unlikely to happen without strategic support and targeted interventions.
- **Programme structure:**
 - The programme was set up to enable localities to develop approaches to working across the cultural and tourism sectors in ways that best suited their local contexts.
 - Those contexts varied widely, from urban destinations to remote rural places, from projects with a handful of partners to those embedded in multi-sector partnerships, and from new to well established.
 - The Cultural Destinations Fund therefore facilitated a wide variety of approaches and allowed each area to develop its own plans and objectives.
- **Synergy and partnership development:**
 - The bottom up, organic approach to programme design has delivered a wide range of approaches, each with its own ambitions, local objectives and deliverables. It enabled places to adopt an approach that was relevant to their local context.

- There are examples of activities that released local synergies through partnership working (for example, joint marketing campaigns delivered by a cultural consortium).
- However, with no set benchmark of the specific outputs the projects were expected to deliver with the funding, and without baseline analysis, it becomes difficult to measure performance across the projects.

Outcomes achieved through the programme

11. The Cultural Destinations Fund programme phase 2 was a joint endeavour between Arts Council England and Visit England. They sought to build on phase 1 of the programme and to promote and enhance partnership working between their respective sectors. The full evaluation report has demonstrated the different approaches, challenges and achievements experienced by these areas.
12. Based on evidence from participating projects and their partners, the evaluation findings indicate that **the programme has achieved locally variable but overall good progress towards delivering against the Cultural Destinations Fund phase 2 outputs and outcomes** set out in a logic model (available in Annex A of the main report).
13. In particular, the evaluation evidence indicates that **significant progress has been made in the achievement of programme outcomes including partnership work, building capacity, and the repositioning of culture as a prominent part of the local visitor offer.** For example:
 - Almost all projects, both in consultations and within project documents reviewed, highlighted an increase in coordination, networking and partnership working. This was one of the projects' key successes and potentially, projects' most significant legacy.
 - Over 500 organisations benefitted from training sessions across 10 projects, with over 1,200 people attending – this focused on digital skills and knowledge of tourism/the tourism sector.
 - In response to the e-survey, most stakeholders responded that their area is better known for being culturally rich as a result of the programme (52 out of 59) and that the cultural sector is recognised as a key sector in visitor economy strategies including Destination Management Plans (36 out of 58).
14. **However, that achievement is not experienced to the same extent in all the project areas.** This is primarily due to the context in which the projects were delivered. Some places had existing networks and/or a strong cultural offer which was enhanced through the programme. Whereas other areas began from a different, lower starting point, meaning that fewer outcomes were observed.

- 15. The effect on the visitor economy of participating areas has not been sufficiently well evidenced.** It is likely to have been locally significant in some areas but nationally modest. This assessment is affected by three different factors:
- i.** The timescale - for visitor numbers from outside an area to increase there is a delay between informing and inspiring potential visitors, affecting their booking behaviour and seeing footfall. Under normal circumstances this can be measured over months or years.
 - ii.** Data collection mechanisms were not implemented by the programme from its outset - in order to assess the achievement of this aim, evidence generated through robust data collection would be required at baseline and programme completion.
 - iii.** The unprecedented circumstances that the programme completed under - the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated national and regional lockdowns will have created unexpected opportunity for some areas and significant negative effects for others.
- 16. While elements of project delivery are being or are expected to be sustained in some project areas, this is not consistent across the projects.** Building in sustainability plans from the outset could ensure a focus on delivering activities that have the potential to be sustained without continued public funding.

Cultural Destinations Fund: Evidencing achievements

17. The evaluation process found evidence to suggest that **progress has been made towards all four overarching programme aims and they have been partially met**. The assessment of the aims is 'partial' as the evidence of achievement is variable across the Cultural Destinations Fund projects. In some areas there is good evidence of achievement, in others, the aim has not been achieved, and for some areas it is not possible to assess as evidence has not been collected by the projects.

Aim 1: More and different types of people experience the arts and culture in local destinations in a way that contributes to the growth of the local visitor economy

- Baseline visitor data is not available across the project areas, and therefore it is **difficult to attribute any increase solely to the Cultural Destinations Fund programme**. However, the visitor data provided has been produced primarily based on the number of visitors to new events delivered by the Cultural Destinations Fund project. This provides some confidence to claim that the programme has resulted in additional people experiencing arts and culture in local destinations. Monitoring data from the live projects estimates that the **total number of visitors** to cultural destination partners/organisations (across eight projects) was **21 million**.
- **Project responses regarding impacts on visitor types were variable**. Some noted that this type of effect was beyond the scope of their project. However, other projects reported increases in visitors travelling from further afield, including international visitors. In addition, a small number of projects noted an increase in local audiences, including different types of audiences, for cultural organisations.
- **Anecdotally**, there was **some evidence that increased visitor numbers has supported increased sales** (and revenue) by cultural and tourism organisations (four projects). However, the majority of projects were uncertain of their project's impact on visitor spend and visit duration.
- Currently, **there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the local visitor economy has grown** (pre-COVID-19), and the contribution of Cultural Destinations Fund projects to any such growth.

Aim 2. Increased income leading to greater sustainability and resilience for cultural organisations and tourism businesses in local destinations

- There is **limited evidence to suggest that the Cultural Destinations Fund programme has led to increased income** for cultural organisations/tourism businesses across the cultural destination areas. A small number of examples were provided by projects of cultural organisations that have increased their income as a result of increased sales, mainly from a marketing campaign or from a new product offer.

- However, the achievement of broader outcomes (such as increased capacity in digital skills) indicates that the **resilience of cultural organisations is likely to have increased**. This is demonstrated in how organisations have been able to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak; including transitioning to an online/digital offer. There were also some examples of projects that have worked with partners to develop joint funding bids or that have secured additional funding following project completion. In such examples, the sustainability of organisations was considered to have increased.
- **The sustainability and resilience of tourism businesses is less clear**, and the evaluation has found limited evidence to suggest that the Cultural Destinations Fund programme has led to greater sustainability and resilience among tourism businesses.

Aim 3. Repositioning of culture as a prominent part of the visitor offer and local economic growth plans

- **The perception of the cultural sector has changed** and there is increased recognition among local stakeholders of the value of culture and its contribution to the economy. This has been aided through the achievement of tangible visitor outcomes through the Cultural Destinations Fund programme and changes in the perception of areas as cultural destinations, both among internal stakeholders and external audiences. However, each area started from a different position and there is a **notable variation across the projects** in the achievement of this aim.
- **There is greater strategic alignment between the cultural and tourism sector locally**, as evidenced by commitments in local strategic and economic growth plans (e.g. local economic strategies, LEP strategies and Destination Management Plans). Previously, the sectors had been less visible or connected; although this is not the case across all the Cultural Destinations Fund projects. This is partly a result of the strong partnership work that has taken place between projects and local stakeholders, such as local authorities, combined authorities and DMOs, which the Cultural Destinations Fund programme has galvanised.
- **There is increased joined-up working and greater investment in culture and tourism locally**. This is demonstrated by the partnerships between the cultural and tourism sectors, both within and across local organisations. **However, further work is required to ensure the role of culture is recognised in local economic development across all the project areas**.

Aim 4. A commitment from public and private sector partners to continue working in partnership to support the growth of the local visitor economy through cultural tourism beyond the life of the Cultural Destinations Fund programme

- On the whole, the **evidence on the sustainability of local partnerships is positive**. There are multiple examples provided by completed projects of **partnerships that have continued after project delivery completed**.
- **However, this is not consistent across the programme. A few areas**, particularly those that are smaller or have limited resources/infrastructure, **are not expecting to continue formal partnership arrangements**. This is primarily due to the resource required to maintain this. It was anticipated that informal, ad-hoc partnership work will continue as and when relevant, drawing on the networks developed through the project.
- **The extent to which partnership outcomes have been observed as a direct result of the programme is variable across the project areas**. In some cases, partnership working was already developing in project areas, but the programme has accelerated and strengthened those partnerships. Whereas in other project areas, relationships and partnerships did not exist at all and have been created for the first time.

Enablers and barriers to project success

Enablers

18. Project leaders and partners reported multiple **enablers of project successes. They were experienced to varying degrees by the projects**, dependent on the focus of project activity. Six common themes which were experienced across the 18 projects are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Key enablers in realising the Cultural Destinations Fund aims

Key enablers

Strong partnership working

Consortiums were a requirement of the Cultural Destinations Fund programme. Raising the awareness of culture and tourism with key decision-makers from the local authorities, combined authorities, and DMOs ensures that the two sectors are involved in strategic decision-making and are better represented in local economic plans. Working in partnership across multiple sectors locally was advantageous for a number of reasons:

- creation of a joined-up offer strengthened the perception of the area as a cultural destination to external visitors
- it created opportunities for dialogue to allow partners to create a joint understanding about what the visitor offer is, and should be
- it gave culture partners a stronger voice locally, particularly when applying for lobbying for funding
- it pooled resources or reduced inefficiencies with regard to marketing and promotional activities.

Dedicated project manager role

Large consortiums with multiple stakeholder relationships required a dedicated project manager to both manage and facilitate partnership development, and co-ordinate and manage project delivery. It was considered advantageous if the individual project manager or management team were able to draw upon existing contacts/relationships in the area as this could expedite activity.

Relevant, targeted cultural offer

The cultural offer of an area was articulated, tested and marketed using a number of different approaches:

- audience research helped projects understand their existing markets and identify target markets to broaden the appeal of arts and culture

- testing new approaches or trialling new events was used to see what approaches worked with different demographics in different areas

In several places, projects re-packaged the unique appeal of the local area or the existing cultural offer, through new itineraries or thematic marketing. This:

- generated increased interest from both local audiences and audiences from outside the project area (potentially requiring fewer resources)
- benefited existing cultural organisations/events through improved ticket sales.

Using digital channels in marketing and promotions

Digital advertising and marketing using social media channels was effective in targeting specific audiences in particular locations; this was a relatively new approach for most cultural organisations. Many recognised the benefits and intended to continue using these mechanisms after the programme.

Building capacity in the cultural sector through relevant training

Training delivered to cultural and tourism organisations helped to create opportunities for working and learning by both tourism and cultural sectors, and increase the use of digital tools in project delivery and in product development. This resulted in projects using digital approaches more routinely, with many sustaining this following project completion.

Longer-term delivery

Projects benefitted from the longer time scales if they were involved in both phase 1 and 2 of the programme. This enabled projects to focus activities in phase 1 on audience research, product testing, and building partnerships/consortiums, and to further develop this in phase 2; subsequently implementing new products, strengthening partnerships, and better promoting the cultural sector.

Source: SQW analysis of Cultural Destinations Fund evaluation evidence

Barriers

19. There were a number of **barriers** identified in the consultations **which inhibited projects' ability to deliver some of the programme aims locally**. While the barriers listed in Table 2 are not exclusive to specific projects, the evidence indicates that they were more often reported by **smaller projects** (both in terms of the amount of funding received and the geography of the project). The barriers have been described as five key themes in Table 2.

Table 2: Key barriers to realising the Cultural Destinations Fund aims**Key barriers****Limited number of high profile cultural attractions**

- Projects delivering in areas where the cultural offer was less developed focused their resources on developing an offer and bringing new events/products to the market. This meant that these projects had fewer resource for other activities, such as partnership coordination, engagement of policy makers, and marketing and promotions. While such projects have made good progress, the outcomes they have achieved are more modest, and harder to evidence.

Engaging strategic decision-makers

- Projects delivering across a smaller geography, with less funding, found it difficult to engage strategic decision-makers; for example, local authorities, LEPs and wider DMOs. This is for two reasons; a lack of existing strategic relationships locally, and insufficient project resource and capacity to dedicate to developing and maintaining those relationships.

Project scale

- Smaller scale projects have prioritised some of the programme aims, with an expectation of working towards others in the longer term. Examples of longer term aims include an increase in visitor numbers across the wider area, and increased income and financial sustainability of cultural organisations.
- The level of funding also presented challenges for smaller projects in evidencing outputs/outcomes, as data collection measures had not been implemented.

Engaging the private sector

- Several projects described difficulties in engaging local hoteliers and accommodation providers, in part, due to the businesses' limited capacity. In some areas, this has resulted in a lack of a joined-up visitor offer and creates a challenge for projects in achieving an increase in overnight visitor stays. This is a common barrier experienced by a range of urban projects.
- Securing initial engagement from the private sector and tourism businesses can be challenging and takes time; projects reported that they had experienced some scepticism from businesses initially as they did not recognise the potential benefits of collaboration. Capacity of private sector partners to engage was also a barrier as many are micro or small independent businesses with limited staffing capacity.

Working with cultural organisations to adapt their ways of working

- A few examples were provided by projects of challenges that had been experienced as a result of reluctance from cultural organisations to adapt their ways of working to better align with the tourism sector. This included organisations' appetite to become more commercial, their capacity to attend face to face training, and difficulties in adapting to tourism timescales (where planning must be at least a year in advance).

Source: SQW analysis of Cultural Destinations Fund evaluation evidence

Recommendations

- 20.** The Cultural Destinations Fund programme has shown that over an extended period of time, organisations from the cultural sector and the tourism sector can work together to improve visitor and audience experiences and create new ones. They can also advocate for the importance of their sectors to build support for local strategic investment. However, it has also shown that the efforts required to achieve this are significant and need to be sustained, with resilience and sustainability remaining an ever-present challenge.
- 21.** The evaluation report suggested a number of recommendations for local stakeholders, for Arts Council England, Visit England and visitor economy policy makers. It is acknowledged that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has created such a shift in the realities of both the culture and the tourism sector that focusing on the recovery of these sectors is paramount. Therefore, the recommendations in this report are not given a timescale. They are summarised in the sections that follow.

Recommendations for local leaders and project managers

- **Support local networks of cultural organisations collaborating with tourism groups**

Connecting partners in the cultural and tourism sectors requires networks that operate effectively at three levels: between cultural organisations, between the culture and tourism sectors, and between both tourism and cultural sectors and local strategic decision-makers.

- **Ensure dedicated resource to facilitate partnerships**

Partnership working across diverse and dispersed sectors requires strong leadership and networking skills. Having a dedicated person who is responsible for managing and coordinating local partners; hosting regular meetings and touchpoints and keeping a focus on key priorities is essential.

- **Recognise the time required to develop partnerships**

Partnership working takes time to develop at a local level and to understand each other's priorities, challenges, drivers, and language. This time needs to be invested prior to project delivery to ensure that activities are mutually beneficial.

- **Engage the private sector through business representative organisations**

Working with local business representative organisations, such as Business Improvement Districts and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), helps secure engagement from the private sector, and identify opportunities for mutually beneficial collaborations.

- **Connect regularly with strategic decision-makers**

Exposure to and regular touchpoints with strategic decision-makers in local authorities and LEAs is important in raising and maintaining awareness of project outcomes, and the value of the cultural and tourism sectors to the local economy.

- **Research and understand the target market/s**

Cultural destinations need to understand their visitor markets. Partnerships that have undertaken visitor and audience research on cultural products/events have found it valuable. Partners need to be able to respond flexibly to ensure that collaboration priorities align with their evidence base.

- **Build evaluation in from the start of project delivery**

Local partnerships should commission impact evaluation research from the start to build consensus among key stakeholders regarding their success measures, and to implement relevant data collection mechanisms to better evidence their collective impact and inform strategic decision making.

Recommendations for Arts Council England, Visit England and visitor economy policy makers

Programme design

- **Design interventions that bring quick wins as well as longer term benefits**

The tourism sector and the cultural sector sometimes work on different time scales to plan and implement activities or programmes. Tourism partners should be encouraged to focus on interventions with cultural partners that bring quick wins (such as domestic tourism) alongside longer term marketing strategies.

- **Create opportunities to learn from the culture sector (visitor economy policy makers)**

The Cultural Destinations Fund programme found that when people from different sectors learn together, they appreciate their counterparts' perspectives and learn their language. Tourism organisations should be encouraged to participate in knowledge exchange events alongside their cultural sector peers.

Partnership working

- **Build strategic partnerships between cultural and tourism partners**

Local partnerships need a strategic imperative to accelerate collaboration. This should be provided by national partners creating direction (through joint ambition statements)

and opportunity (with shared budgets or national initiatives). For example, national initiatives, such as deals with national hotel chains to create a Cultural Concierge programme, or with rail providers to develop packages, could be adapted and developed further through local collaborations with tourism and culture partners. Let's Create, Arts Council England's 2020-2030 strategy, provides a framework for interventions that build strategic capacity to reach all communities.

- **Encourage learning between local partnerships**

Several partnerships developed similar outputs such as new websites, integrated booking systems or digital itineraries. Where programmes fund several partners to deliver similar activities, a discretionary fund for learning workshops should be considered. This could encourage those partners with experience of marketing, working with digital companies and DMOs to network and share their experiences and insights.

- **Support partnership creation in localities where they are not active**

Identify areas that might benefit from a more collaborative approach between culture and tourism – either because the sectors are not featured in local economic plans or because they are areas of the country that are underperforming economically and require greater attention as part of the levelling up agenda. Grants to support partnership creation, research and strategising in advance of bid development might help accelerate partnership working in these places. Interventions would be to build capacity.

- **Lever economic impact from areas where partnerships are well established**

Programmes focused on delivery should expect more from areas that have well established partnerships (those that have a strong and well developed cultural offer, are attractive to domestic tourists, and are committed to learning transfer between sectors). Interventions would promote economic growth and resilience.

Monitoring and evaluation

- **Require consistent, robust, and regular output reporting from the outset**

Reported outputs need to be reviewed against milestone plans and supportive conversations held with projects that appear to be delayed, while those projects that are achieving strong outputs should be encouraged to share any effective practice. This would address inconsistencies in project's understanding of the overall programme aims and maintain focus on delivery.

- **Build evaluation in from the start to facilitate programme-level learning**

To ensure that a consistent focus is maintained on achieving all the programme objectives, an evaluation framework that sets out the theory of change should be developed or commissioned from the start. This will support the capture of the right

baseline data. It will also guide delivery agents about the data capture required both for their own local evaluation as well as a programme level evaluation.

- **Invest to capture visitor number data consistently and routinely**

Visitor data, both at a project level and in the cultural sector, has not been collected consistently and therefore it is not possible to say whether objectives have been achieved. Any future strategic intervention will need either to recognise this evidence gap or create a programme level solution that might include commissioning visitor or audience research at a programme level.

Annex A: Cultural Destinations Fund (phase 2) projects

Table A-1: Cultural Destinations Fund projects; timing and funding received

Project title	Start	End	Funding
Birmingham	May 2018	March 2020	£500,000
Cheshire East Council	April 2017	March 2020	£300,000
Creative Kernow (Cornwall)	April 2017	December 2018	£150,000
Coventry City of Culture	April 2017	March 2020 (extended from July 2019)	£200,000
England's Creative Coast (Kent)	January 2018	June 2021 (extended from January 2021)	£500,000
Halifax Culture Hub	April 2017	March 2020	£150,000
Islands' Partnership (Isles of Scilly)	April 2017	December 2019	£147,600
Lakes Culture (Kendal)	April 2017	September 2018	£128,000
Lincoln City Centre Partnership	April 2017	March 2019	£150,000
Look Sideways:East (East Anglia)	April 2017	September 2021 (extended from March 2020)	£300,000
Marketing Manchester	April 2017	March 2019	£220,000
Nottingham Contemporary	April 2017	March 2019	£150,000
Pedalling Culture (Milton Keynes)	April 2017	November 2019 (extended from March)	£300,000
Stoke-on-Trent Cultural Destinations Partnership	April 2017	April 2020	£300,000
Sheffield Theatres for Sheffield Culture Consortium	April 2017	March 2019	£150,000
Bristol and Bath Cultural Destinations (West of England)	January 2018	December 2019	£150,000

Project title	Start	End	Funding
Wakefield Cultural Consortium (Beam)	April 2017	November 2020 (extended from March 2020)	£223,000
Woolwich	April 2017	March 2020	£270,000

Annex B: Source: SQW analysis of project information

SQW

Contact

For more information:

Jo Hutchinson

Associate Director, SQW

T: +44 (0)161 475 2116

E: jhutchinson@sqw.co.uk

Beckwith House
1 Wellington Road North
Stockport
SK4 1AF

www.sqw.co.uk

About us

SQW Group

SQW and Oxford Innovation are part of SQW Group.

www.sqwgroup.com

SQW

SQW is a leading provider of research, analysis and advice on sustainable economic and social development for public, private and voluntary sector organisations across the UK and internationally. Core services include appraisal, economic impact assessment, and evaluation; demand assessment, feasibility and business planning; economic, social and environmental research and analysis; organisation and partnership development; policy development, strategy, and action planning. In 2019, BBP Regeneration became part of SQW, bringing to the business a RICS-accredited land and property team.

www.sqw.co.uk

Oxford Innovation

Oxford Innovation is a leading operator of business and innovation centres that provide office and laboratory space to companies throughout the UK. The company also provides innovation services to entrepreneurs, including business planning advice, coaching and mentoring. Oxford Innovation also manages investment networks that link investors with entrepreneurs seeking funding from £20,000 to £2m.

www.oxin.co.uk