



Bury Council
Cultural Economy Strategy
2015 - 2018

*Developing economic growth through arts
and culture*

Foreword

Globally, the cultural economy is one of the fastest growing sectors. In addition to bringing employment and income, cultural activities promote civic pride and strengthen community cohesion and contribute to health and wellbeing.

Bury Council's vision, purpose and values look to '*lead, shape and maintain a prosperous, sustainable Bury that is fit for the future*'. A vibrant cultural economy will make a vital contribution to this aim. The Borough has a wealth of creative talent and cultural assets which offer opportunities to generate income and promote community prosperity. We value our cultural diversity, built heritage, natural environment and range of visitor attractions and services. They are a resource for the residents of the Borough and also for the many people who visit us for day trips or longer stays. A vibrant cultural economy will generate economic benefit; celebrate diversity; identify and nurture talent; and support community cohesion.

We want to build on our strengths and raise the regional, national and international profile of the Borough as a cultural destination. This Strategy will promote sustainable economic growth from our natural, built and community assets. It reflects the ambition of the Economic Strategy for Bury 2010-2018, to achieve '*increased recognition and quality of Bury's local tourism and cultural products and better linkages between local attractions leading to more visitor and resident spend*'.

We have identified three key objectives which make the most of existing assets and emerging opportunities:

- *a leadership position in UK cultural economy innovation*
- *contributing to local economic prosperity and employment opportunities*
- *Making the most of the Borough's cultural offer*

These three objectives reflect a vision and ambition which represents the ground-breaking potential of cultural action in Bury's economy. Despite limited resources and the difficult financial situation in recent years, the cultural sector continued to be a strong growth area and research indicates that this contribution to the local economy is projected to continue to grow over the next 10 years. The Council is dedicated to working with partners to offer operational and structural support in order to deliver the benefits of our cultural economy to local communities and the greater Manchester conurbation. I am very proud of the work that has gone on in the Borough and I am confident that this Strategy provides a sound base for the future. It is my privilege to support and formally present this Strategy.

Councillor Paddy Heneghan
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Culture

Introduction and Context

Bury has a strong identity and is growing as a visitor destination. It has a unique position both as part of the Greater Manchester conurbation and gateway to the scenic attractions of Pennine Lancashire and the north. Assets include Bury Art Gallery, Museum and Sculpture Centre, the Met Performing Arts venue, Bury Cultural Collection (Archives), the Borough's markets, East Lancashire Railway (ELR), The Fusilier Museum, the Irwell Sculpture Trail and Burrs Country Park. The Borough's cultural offer has achieved significant regional and national recognition in recent years:

- ELR was awarded Lancashire Tourism 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year' Award in 2014;
- The Met won 'Best Entertainment Venue' at the 2014 Manchester Tourism Awards and is the UK centre for a number of performing artforms;
- Bury achieved Purple Flag status in 2015 in recognition of the quality of its evening and night-time economy offer;
- International acclaim for the Art Gallery programme and cultural trading practice;
- Ramsbottom hosts one of Europe's top Chocolate Festivals;
- Bury has won the 'Best Large Town' category in the North West in Bloom Awards for 11 years running and the Gold Medal Award for Britain in Bloom in 2013;
- Radcliffe won Gold Award for North West in Bloom for the fourth consecutive year in 2014;
- Bury Market won the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) 'Market Attraction of the Year' in 2015, with previous awards in 2006, 2009 and 2012;
- Bury was runner-up in the 2015 Academy of Urbanism Great Town Award.

A vibrant cultural economy promotes regeneration and sustains jobs and businesses in the wider economy. The Greater Manchester Strategy for the Visitor Economy 2014 - 2020 and the Economic Strategy for Bury 2010 - 2018 both recognise the potential of culture in the sub-regional economy.

Engagement in arts and culture also makes an important contribution to the health and economic wellbeing of the local population. Participants of all ages can develop creative problem-solving and communication skills and better intellectual ability. These benefits have a strong positive influence on longer-term health, employability and participation in society and, as a consequence, create savings for health, welfare and local authority services.

Bury's growth has been contrary to the prevailing national economic trend and the area has outperformed neighbouring towns in Greater Manchester for both the daytime and night-time economies. Borough-wide visitor spend rose from £238 million in 2009 to just over £302 million in 2012 and numbers employed in tourism increased from 3,546 to 4,074 in the same period. This Cultural Economy Strategy provides a framework for increasing income from Bury's cultural assets to support their viability and contribute to wider prosperity across the Borough.

Delivering the potential of culture will be driven and measured by:

- economic impact;
- quality;
- uniqueness/innovation;
- sustainability;
- capacity/potential to attract regional or national attention;
- capacity to lift aspirations/expectations of local communities.

Objective 1 - Leadership & Innovation

Building Bury's reputation as a cultural centre

Planning together

A baseline of enhanced partnership and joint working has been developed over the last 5 years through the local Cultural Economy Group, particularly between cultural, leisure and retail services. The Council will develop the work of the Cultural Economy Group to bring together partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. In particular, the Group will:

- work to reinforce a spirit of co-operation;
- minimise duplication in research, promotion, training and event planning across Bury;
- present a more coherent 'Bury Brand' and combined offers to visitors and local residents;
- co-ordinate opportunities for sponsorship and investment;
- increase access to funding opportunities and encourage businesses to invest in events in Bury;
- maximise return on investment of funds and effort.

It is also vitally important that Cultural Economy activities are firmly embedded in all of the planning and development of Bury's economic initiatives.

Leadership and innovation

A key element of establishing a high impact sustainable contribution to the economy will be the commitment to innovation and leadership. The borough's 2 flagship centres – the Art Museum/Sculpture Centre and The Met Arts Centre – have the international reputation and track record to facilitate national attention to Bury. The Council will promote these centres as resources supporting local innovation and development.

Sharing resources

Collectively, organisations involved in the cultural economy possess an array of talents, knowledge, funding sources, networks, target audiences and communication channels. The Council will lead by example - it will enable cultural economy partners to benefit from its training, development, marketing and funding opportunities to support growth throughout the sector.

We will:

- ensure that Bury Council's strategies, operations and service delivery support the growth and improvement of the cultural offer;
- expand and develop the work of the Cultural Economy Group to share resources, co-ordinate activity and secure investment;
- support events and attractions through marketing, training and grant activities to maximise return on resources invested.

Objective 2 - Developing talent and entrepreneurship

Bury Council will work with partners to identify funding and development opportunities to develop the skills needed to grow the local cultural economy

Growing talent and skills

Industries of the twenty-first century will depend increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation. Bury must aim to become a 'Creative hub' contributing towards shared goals at both a national and Greater Manchester level. Matched with the strong entrepreneurial drive displayed throughout the Borough, culture presents opportunities for high quality employment and economic growth. It takes artists, performers, craftspeople, designers (often in breaking new technologies), food producers, cultural sector managers and people who work in entertainment, arts and leisure services to create a healthy and sustainable cultural economy. It is important to nurture talent and to attract and retain the best people to work in the Borough's cultural sector. This includes supporting artists and producers to learn necessary business skills so that they can build a successful career.

The Council will identify and promote opportunities to tailor and target existing initiatives to support the creative sector. Creative Skillset, the industry skills body for creative industries, promotes national provisions for apprenticeships within the creative sector. The Arts sector and business, schools, further education colleges, Business in the Community and the

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce promote the development of business skills which are vital for cultural economy organisations and practitioners. The Council will work with partners including Bury Third Sector Development Agency (B3SDA) to promote volunteering and develop volunteers' skills and talent. It will also examine how residents of Bury can learn about and access the learning and career opportunities available in Salford at MediaCityUK. This key connection is especially vital for the local Digital sector.

Spreading the benefit

The Borough's cultural trading, festivals and events present potential for 'spin-off' benefits for businesses and organisations. Bury has a portfolio of major events with international and national status such as English Folk Expo, Homegrown and the Big Whistle, both hosted by the Met, The international Text Festival and the Asia Triennial. Forthcoming events include Bonsai Europa in October 2015 and the European Network of Culture Centres conference in February 2016. In addition to the income generated for the venues and local accommodation providers, the increased spending power brought into the Borough can be captured by other businesses and facilities, through special programmes, offers and packaged promotions. Major events across Greater Manchester, such as Manchester's status as European City of Science 2016 and the associated EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) in July 2016, also present exciting opportunities for local businesses and attractions. By communicating the benefits of major local and regional events, the Council will work to secure sponsorship and investment from local businesses to maximise potential return.

We will:

- develop and share a database of opportunities for business skills and talent growth in the cultural economy;
- engage with Arts sector and business, schools, further education colleges, Business in the Community, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and B3SDA to ensure that their activities support and are accessible by cultural sector practitioners and organisations;
- relaunch a Digital Bury Development Plan aimed at developing continued growth in this key sector;
- support the growth of strategic high impact events, festivals and conference business.

Objective 3 - Making the most of the Borough's Cultural Offer

Bury Council is committed to working with partners to achieve sustained growth in the cultural economy

Supporting attractions and events

Bury's cultural offer has enormous potential for income generation, economic growth and increasing the number of visitors to the Borough. A range of emerging initiatives and trends signal an exciting time for the Borough's cultural economy. The Council will ensure that its own operations facilitate the growth and income-earning potential of these initiatives:

- planned refurbishment of the Met, ELR's development plan and the Burrs Country Park Strategy;
- international programmes at Bury Art Gallery, Museum and Sculpture Centre, The Met and The Fusilier Museum;
- promotion of retail and day-time leisure facilities and development of the night-time economy, including building upon Bury's Purple Flag status by encouraging businesses and organisations to expand their evening activities and promoting the status within and outside of the Borough;
- increasing use of the Borough's parks for planned leisure and recreation events, such as 'I Will if You Will';
- continued commissioning of contemporary public art on the Irwell Sculpture Trail;
- interest in locally-sourced food and regional food specialities with scope for co-ordinated promotion of markets in Bury, Radcliffe and Ramsbottom and food events such as Ramsbottom Chocolate Festival and Incredible Edible in Prestwich and Ramsbottom;
- support for events such as Bury Light Night, English Folk Expo and Homegrown, Ramsbottom Festival and ELR's special galas.

The Art Gallery, Museum and Sculpture Centre as a resource

Bury Council has invested in developing Bury Art Gallery, Museum and Sculpture Centre as a hub for cultural activity. In addition to direct income generation from its shop and 'paid for' workshops and talks, its location will prompt visitors to use other outlets and services in Bury town's culture quarter and other parts of the Borough. It is also linked to a Sculpture Trail through the Borough. The Gallery's assets include its collections, exhibition and event spaces, staff expertise and access to cultural networks. The building also hosts Bury Library and its archives. The Council will promote these as a resource for cultural organisations across the Borough to increase the breadth and number of activities.

Attracting Visitors

The borough and its partners will develop marketing opportunities that attract regional, national and international visitors. Digital promotion is crucial and increasingly important with the VisitBury website designed to be a focal vehicle. This is supplemented with various social media platforms and more traditional printed material, 'What's On' guides, local print and broadcast media, regional tourism marketing and specialist arts and culture channels.

Reaching out

Bury has gained experience, income and profile from exhibitions such as the Gallery's lead role in Greater Manchester Museums Group's (GMMG) exhibition to China in 2012 and its international exhibition programme featuring artists from China and Europe. Both the Art Museum and the Met have international leadership reputations. The Council plans to build upon these activities to reach new national and international audiences who will visit Bury or experience its cultural highlights in other locations. By using exchanges and loans, Bury can raise awareness of its collections through other galleries and give the Borough's residents and visitors' access to major works from across the world. There are developing opportunities in China and Japan and the Council will also work with partners to strengthen links with other parts of the UK and Europe. This includes collaboration within Greater Manchester and the North West to jointly bid for projects and funds to create exhibitions.

We will:

- maximise use of tourism, arts and culture marketing opportunities to attract regional, national and international visitors;
- build on international experience to develop the Borough's reputation as a cultural centre and reach new audiences;
- co-ordinate and disseminate a schedule of major events to secure sponsorship and enable local businesses to plan for and benefit from increased visitor numbers.

Cultural Economy Action Plan 2015 - 2016

	Objectives	Actions	Key Projects	Key Milestones and Outputs	Lead
1	Leadership & Innovation Building Bury's reputation as a cultural centre	Ensure that Bury Council's strategies, operations and service delivery support the growth and improvement of the cultural offer.	<p>Increase profile for cultural offer in borough and GM marketing and tourism activities</p> <p>Research and propose a process of linking cultural trading opportunities with local and GM business and trade development programmes</p>	<p>Year on year 10% increase in hits to Visit Bury website; Specialist Arts media campaigns promoting international programmes</p> <p>Proposal presented for joint working across GM economic forums linking cultural missions to trade by April 2016</p>	<p>Arts, Museums & Tourism Service</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service/Economic Development</p>
		Expand and develop the work of the Cultural Economy Group to share resources, co-ordinate activity and secure investment	Expand stakeholder engagement with CE Group and cultural economy impacts	Increased representation from different subsectors of the cultural economy is secured	Cultural Economy Group

	Objectives	Actions	Key Projects	Key Milestones and Outputs	Lead
		Support events and attractions through marketing, training and grant activities to maximise return on resources invested.	Establish Cultural Action Plan contributing to Purple Flag programme Refresh Bury Culture Quarter Action Plan	Action Plan developed by December 2015 Plan Adopted by April 2016	Cultural Economy Group/ Economic Development Cultural Centres Group
2	Developing talent and entrepreneurship Bury Council will work with partners to identify funding and development opportunities to develop the skills needed to grow the local cultural economy	Develop and share a database of opportunities for business skills and talent growth in the cultural economy	Investigate cultural sector training needs; Progress development of cultural sector apprenticeships/training including external partnership & funding Establish annual programme of training opportunities	Review complete in line with Economic Strategy refresh Establish 1 training programme per year	Arts, Museums and Tourism Service /Economic Development

	Objectives	Actions	Key Projects	Key Milestones and Outputs	Lead
		Engage with Arts sector and business, schools, further education colleges, Business in the Community, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and B3SDA to ensure that their activities support and are accessible by cultural sector practitioners and organisations.	<p>Establish professional development programmes for local cultural producers</p> <p>Create an Events Advice Package and levels of support available to community event organisers</p>	<p>Annual programme of training opportunities established by April 2016</p> <p>Package available by December 2015</p>	<p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p>
		Relaunch a Digital Bury Development Plan aimed at developing continued growth in this key sector	<p>Develop support for Bury Digital industry competitiveness including partnership for international contract bidding and trade missions.</p> <p>Develop partnership working with higher education sector and</p>	<p>Plan re-launched April 2016</p> <p>Partnership working developed by April 2016</p>	<p>Economic Development</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p>

	Objectives	Actions	Key Projects	Key Milestones and Outputs	Lead
			close working with Media City/BBC		
		Support the growth of strategic high impact events, festivals and conference business	<p>Create and apply Strategic Event Criteria to identify key events that have the potential for highest local economic impacts within existing resources</p> <p>Roll out Sustainability Development support for the category of events with measurable potential to become Strategic Events</p>	<p>Agreed portfolio of key events by December 2015</p> <p>Review and adoption of qualifying events by June 2016</p>	<p>Cultural Economy Group</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p>
3	Making the most of the Borough's Cultural Offer Bury Council is committed to working with partners to achieve sustained growth in the cultural economy	Maximise use of tourism, arts and culture marketing opportunities to attract regional, national and international visitors.	<p>Review & update Events Marketing, co-ordinate to strategic Cultural Economy Developments</p> <p>Review of GM & Marketing Manchester support</p> <p>Negotiate greater prominence for Bury</p>	<p>Review completed Dec 2016. Refreshed events marketing policy 2016</p> <p>Review as part of Visitor Economy Strategy;</p> <p>Bury status enhanced in GM promotions</p>	<p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p>

	Objectives	Actions	Key Projects	Key Milestones and Outputs	Lead
			Cultural offer within GM cultural tourism activities		
		Build on international experience to develop the Borough's reputation as a cultural centre and reach new audiences.	<p>Develop new cultural products to tour.</p> <p>Establish international agency role for other UK cultural services.</p> <p>Increased profile for Bury through international festivals</p>	<p>1 touring product in 2015-6; 2 touring products per year thereafter</p> <p>Represent 50 UK organisations by 2016</p> <p>Minimum of 3 per year</p>	<p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p> <p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p>
		Co-ordinate and disseminate a schedule of major events to secure sponsorship and enable local businesses to plan for and benefit from increased visitor numbers.	<p>Establish Bury as an international hub for cultural conference business</p> <p>Increase impact of the Bury Cultural Centres Group joint working</p> <p>Increase engagement of cultural activities in Night Time Economy planning</p>	<p>Host 2 international cultural conferences per year from 2016</p> <p>Co-ordinated programmes/marketing and joint bidding 2016</p> <p>Cultural Actions identified & delivered</p>	<p>Arts, Museums and Tourism Service</p> <p>Cultural Centres Group</p> <p>Cultural Centres Group</p>