Creative Medway Cultural Strategy
Easy read version

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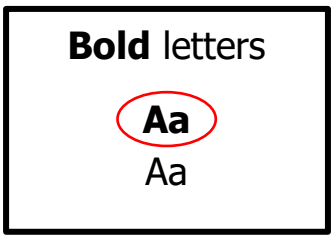
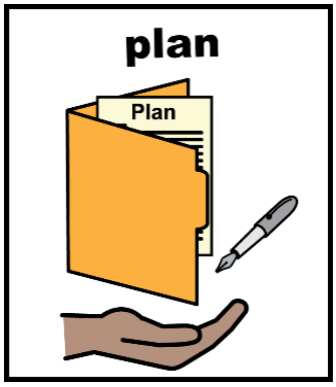
Introduction

This is an easy read version of the Creative Medway Cultural **Strategy**. This document will explain the strategy in plain language and give the key points.



Some of the harder words or phrases will be in **bold** and we will explain what they mean.



A **strategy** is a long-term plan.

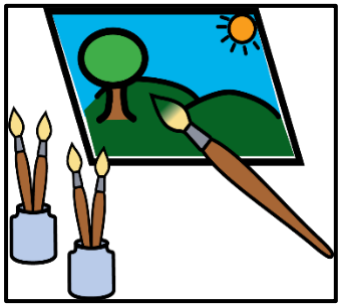
This strategy was written by a group called **Creative Medway** and Medway Council.

The strategy will help **Creative Medway** help more creative things happen for people in Medway between 2020 and 2030.

Creative Medway is a group of **volunteers** who work in the **arts and culture sector**, as well as some people who live in Medway.

A **volunteer** is someone who does work for free.

A **sector** is a group of companies or people who work in similar jobs.



The **arts and culture sector** is made up of companies like theatres, museums and art galleries, and people like artists, filmmakers and poets.

Medway and our culture

About 280,000 people live in Medway. This may **increase** to 315,000 people by 2035.

Increase means the number will get bigger.

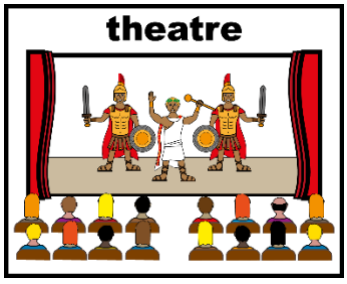
Medway is made up of five towns: Chatham, Rochester, Gillingham, Strood and Rainham.

There are also lots of **rural** areas in Medway.

Rural means lots of fields, farms and woodlands.

Medway has lots of young people because there are lots of colleges and universities.

Medway has a lot of history and a lot of **cultural activities**. We have lots of artists, galleries, museums, dance and theatre. We have a lot of **creative** people making **cultural activities**.

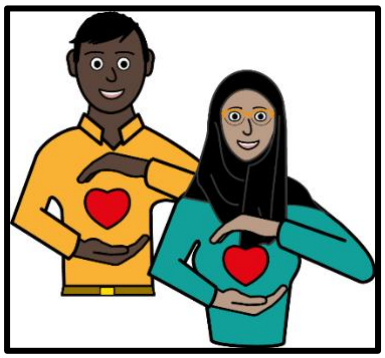


Cultural activities are when we do **creative** things. There are lots of creative things we could do. Like going to the theatre or visiting an art gallery, library or museum.

Creative things can be when we use our imagination, like when we paint a picture, bake a cake, read a book, dance or tell a story.

Medway has low to medium arts engagement compared to the rest of the country. This means that not very many people get involved in cultural activities at the moment.

Why do we want this strategy?



We think that cultural activities make our lives better. We get to meet new people, learn new things, express our emotions and feel good about ourselves and our community. This strategy will help make people's lives better in Medway.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) lockdowns stopped people from doing cultural activities for a long time. Some companies who made cultural things lost a lot of money and some even closed down.

Now that lockdowns have stopped, we want to help people do cultural activities again.

Medway is close to London and to Europe and has **good transport links**. This means people can travel to Medway easily.

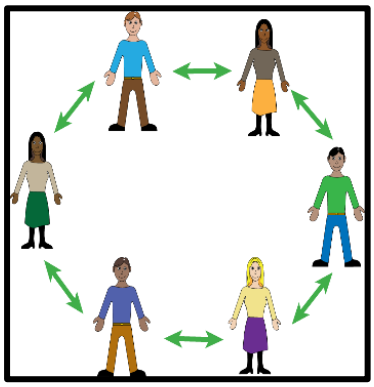
People already do lots of great creative things here. We hope this means that people will want to visit Medway if we have more creative activities.

This strategy will help us talk to lots of people who live and work in Medway. It is important that everyone can share their ideas and work together.

This strategy will help us plan how to do more creative activities. We hope this will bring more money to Medway and will help us make our community even better.

We will talk to people even more to make sure everyone is happy about our creative activities. If they are not happy, we can try and change things.

Who was involved?



We worked with lots of people and organisations to make this strategy. We wanted to get lots of opinions and find out what people thought.

We talked to:

- People who live in Medway
- People who work in Medway in creative jobs
- People who want to work in Medway in creative jobs

We met people in online workshops on Zoom.

We also called people on the telephone and met in person.

Some people we spoke to are Deaf, so we talked to them using **British Sign Language**.

British Sign Language is a way for Deaf people in the UK communicate. It uses hand movements instead of spoken words.

We talked about our ideas and people told us what they thought about them.

Our vision

This strategy will show our **vision** for culture in Medway in the next 10 years. A **vision** is what we want for the future.

Our vision is that Medway will be famous all over the world for its creativity and culture.

We think that doing creative things makes everyone feel good. We want everyone to be able to join in.

Our values

Our **values** are what we think are really important and how we want things to be done.

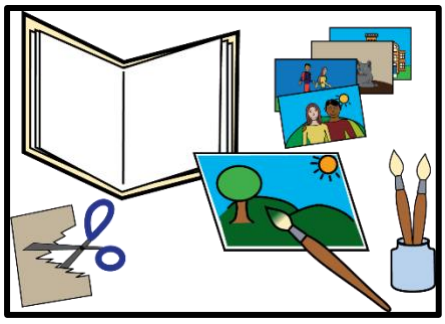
Our values are:

- Work hard together
- Listen to others and what they need or want
- Everyone can take part
- Make changes if we need to
- Think ahead to the future
- Be **environmentally friendly**

Being **environmentally friendly** means we will choose to do activities that will not harm the environment.

These values make sure we listen to everyone's thoughts and share our ideas to work together. We will ask people what they think lots of times to make sure everyone is happy.

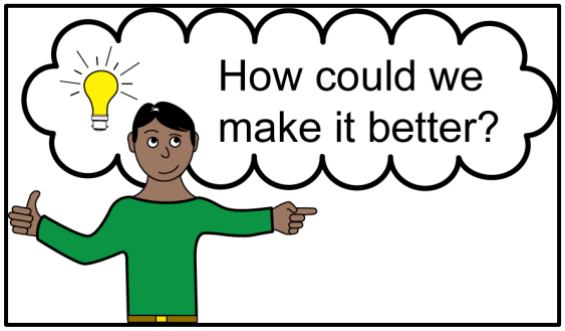
Our goals



By 2030, we want:

- People in Medway to have access to lots of different cultural activities
- People in Medway to create things throughout their life
- Lots of people to visit or work in Medway because of our cultural activities
- Have lots of spaces in Medway to make creative things and for people to see them
- To be world famous for our cultural activities
- For people who make creative things to meet each other, so they can learn from each other and share ideas

Our ideas



This strategy shows our ideas for how we can **improve** Medway's cultural activities.

Improving something makes it better.

Our ideas fall into 5 **themes**. **Themes** are how we group ideas together. Our themes are:

- **Connectivity**
- **Shared ambition**
- **Spaces and places**
- **Creative people**
- **Community engagement**

We will now explain each of these themes and what we want them to do.

Connectivity

Connectivity is when people feel connected or in touch with others.

- We want Medway cultural activities to connect to other parts of life, like schools or healthcare
- We want people who work in Medway's cultural jobs to connect to each other, so they can learn and share
- We want people who live and work in Medway to share their ideas about our cultural activities
- We want everyone who shares their ideas to feel heard
- We want to learn from everyone who shares their ideas
- We want to include people from different backgrounds and cultures
- We want to work with people in Medway but also in other areas and even in other countries

Shared Ambition

A **shared ambition** means everyone trying to achieve the same goals.

- We want people to think Medway is a nice place to create cultural activities, and to visit them
- We want people who live in Medway to share our ideas and to work together with us
- We want people to be proud of living and working in Medway
- We want to create a set of rules so that everyone makes cultural work that is **accessible** and **high quality**

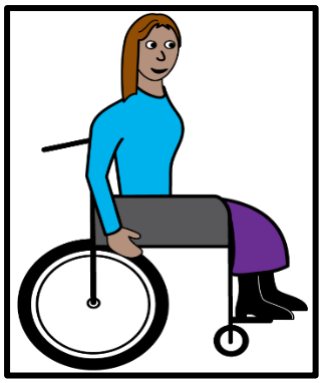
Accessible means that disabled people can still take part.

High quality means it is really good.

Spaces and Places

Spaces and places are the places where people can create and visit cultural activities.

This could be theatres, museums, galleries, studios or libraries. Or it could even be parks, schools, offices or online like on a website or social media.

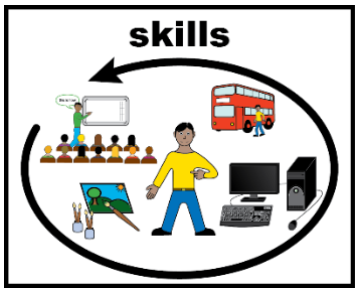


- We want these spaces to be accessible for disabled people
- We want Medway to have lots of spaces where we can make and visit cultural activities
- We want there to be spaces all over Medway
- We want these spaces to be affordable for the people who work in them
- We want to share our ideas for making culture accessible, so that everyone can do it

Affordable means we have enough money to buy or rent the space.

Creative People

Creative people are the people that make cultural activities. This could be artists, poets, film-makers, theatre-makers or many others.



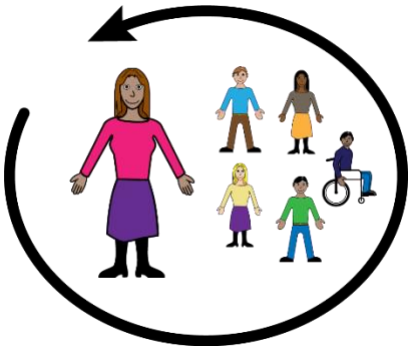
- We want creative people in Medway to feel supported and valued
- We want creative people to have the chance to learn new skills and meet new creative people
- We want creative people to help each other and share ideas
- We want schools to help children learn more about working in the creative sector
- We want creative people to know how to get help if they need it, like **funding** or **training.**

Funding is when someone gives money to a creative person to help them make their work.

Training is when creative people can learn new skills that they can use to create more or better work.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is how we get people who live and work in Medway involved in our plans.



- We want people all over Medway to get involved in creating cultural activities
- We want people all over Medway to have access to lots of cultural activities
- We want people in Medway to choose what happens in their community
- We want people who make cultural activities to listen to people who live in Medway, so they can have their voices heard and share their ideas
- We want to welcome everyone in Medway, even people who don't normally like cultural activities

Our action plan

To help us achieve our goals and ideas, we have set up a group, which includes:

- Creative people
- Organisations in Medway like schools, charities and businesses

The group meets often and talks about what cultural activities are happening, and if they can be made better.

The group makes sure that this strategy is working and that people know about it.

The group will help the creative people make their work better so that more people will come and see it.

The group will check that the strategy is working by looking at information such as **data**.

Data is numbers to record things, like how many people have gone to a cultural activity, or how many cultural activities happen in a year. It helps us check if our strategy is working.

Every year the group will organise a big event. At this event, they will speak to people who work in creative jobs and people who live in Medway. They will ask what cultural activities they got involved in, and what they liked or didn't like.

Then they will ask everyone to help us make cultural activities better for more people, and make Medway a better place for creative people to work.

Contact us

Thank you for reading this easy read version of the Creative Medway Cultural Strategy.

If you have any questions, you can contact us using the information below:

Email: hello@creativemedway.co.uk

Creative Medway Website: https://creativemedway.co.uk

Creative Medway Cultural Strategy – full document: https://creativemedway.co.uk/resources

Document created by Kasia Senyszyn on behalf of Creative Medway

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