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**To: Leadership Board**

**On: December 6, 2023**

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**Report by: Chief Executive**

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**Heading: Future Paisley Programme – Interim Evaluation update**

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## **1. Summary**

This report provides members with an update on the ongoing evaluation of the Future Paisley Programme and 100 projects, events and initiatives delivered within the Programme since 2018. The report outlines the evaluation approach and details the mechanisms being used to collect, organise and analyse data, supported by a range of qualitative tools including evidence reviews, case studies and policy reviews. Combined this is enabling the cultural regeneration team to develop Future Paisley's story of change and describe the impact of individual projects on their intended audience and the cumulative impact of the programme overall.

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## **2. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Leadership Board notes the progress being made to evaluate the Future Paisley Programme and agrees a further evaluation report will be presented in June 2024, with a final Programme Review to be published at the end of 2024. Board also notes the programme evaluation will attempt to evidence the benefits of a range of funding programmes, designed to strengthen Renfrewshire's cultural and creative sectors and which have supported delivery of 363 projects, events and activities across Renfrewshire since 2016.

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## **3. Background**

3.1 Future Paisley is a programme of investment designed to create social and economic change in Renfrewshire by harnessing the power of arts, culture, and heritage. The investment has funded a wide range of activity across Programming, Marketing,

Cultural Sector Development, Strategic Development, and the Cultural Workforce. Future Paisley has remained agile and responsive, building a resilient and sustainable cultural economy in Renfrewshire.

- 3.2 Renfrewshire's journey with cultural regeneration began in 2014 with *Paisley the Untold Story*<sup>1</sup> and Paisley's bid to be the UK City of Culture, a prestigious designation awarded to one UK city every 4 years. Since the UK City of Culture competition began in 2009, winning cities have seen significant changes to their cultural sectors and wider economy<sup>2</sup>. Paisley made a historic bid as the first town to ever be shortlisted, but ultimately lost the bid to Coventry. Not wanting to lose the momentum built during the bid through significant community engagement and participation, Renfrewshire Council decided to continue with the planned investment in its cultural sector and its cultural venues and historic buildings<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.3 In 2018, after the UK City of Culture bid was completed, Renfrewshire Council set aside funds under the name of the *UK City of Culture Legacy Programme* and committed to carrying forward the work that was developed during the bid process. The Paisley 2021 Partnership agreed to continue and to maintain important relationships with Renfrewshire's business community, national agencies, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, University of West Scotland (UWS) and the Glasgow School of Art (GSA), and to develop and launch of a new tourism brand for Renfrewshire. As the funding period continued, projects grew beyond the original concepts generated during the bid and in March 2019 the investment was renamed *Future Paisley*, directed by the Future Paisley Partnership Board, to enable Renfrewshire Council and partner organisations to "move forward confidently and strategically from the Bid Legacy"<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.4 Work continued as planned until March 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic caused a crisis which demanded immediate intervention for both the cultural sector and the wider Renfrewshire community. Renfrewshire Council and OneRen quickly pivoted funds that were being used to support cultural production to support recovery for cultural practitioners<sup>5</sup>; programming was moved online to provide community and connection for Renfrewshire residents while isolating at home; and the networks and partnerships that had been developed through Future Paisley programming was utilised to promote communication between artists and services.
- 3.5 Considering the major changes to the programme caused by the pandemic and the variety of new insights into Renfrewshire's cultural economy, there was need for a redevelopment of Future Paisley's evaluation framework. The new framework was a

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<sup>1</sup> *Paisley the Untold Story* was a strategy document and action plan which laid out the justification and action plan for revitalising the Paisley Town Centre through its building and heritage assets. [Paisley: The Untold Story - Renfrewshire Website](#)

<sup>2</sup> [hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/institutes/culture-place-and-policy-institute/report/cultural-transformations-the-impacts-of-hull-uk-city-of-culture-2017.pdf](http://hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/institutes/culture-place-and-policy-institute/report/cultural-transformations-the-impacts-of-hull-uk-city-of-culture-2017.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> This includes work on the [Paisley Town Hall](#), the [Paisley Museum](#), the [Paisley Library](#) (also called the Paisley Learning and Culture Centre), the [Paisley Arts Centre](#), and the open funding for general historic properties in the town centre under the [TH.CARS2 programme](#). All of the funding for these programmes comes from outwith the Future Paisley budget.

<sup>4</sup> Future Paisley Annual Overview, Leadership Board Papers from 2020-02 meeting.

<sup>5</sup> This was approved at the Renfrewshire Council Leadership Board meeting on 19 February 2020.

collaborative project between Renfrewshire Council and the Centre for Culture, Sport and Events (CCSE), a partnership initiative between the council and UWS. Additional support was sought from DHA Communications. Initial changes to the framework such as the revision of the 5 Step Changes and the creation of 15 strategic objectives aligned with the Step Changes was completed and approved by the Future Paisley Partnership Board in 2021<sup>6</sup>. The framework was fully completed in January 2023 with a thorough new approach for collecting monitoring and evaluation data introduced for project leads, building on data collected previously.

- 3.6 As the programme now approaches its final months of funding, focus has shifted to project continuity and evaluation of impact. All funding will be assigned by April 2024, with select projects continuing into the 24/25 financial year. All funds will be spent by April 2025.

#### **4. Evaluation progress**

- 4.1 The Future Paisley evaluation is reviewing all projects that received funding from Future Paisley from its inception in 2018 to its completion in April 2024. It will not include activity funded prior to this point or during the Paisley 2021 UK City of Culture Bid unless the activity was continued into 2018 and received funding from Future Paisley. One such exemption are the early rounds of CHEF funding, which were distributed prior to the establishment of Future Paisley.
- 4.2 This report is created as a midway reflection on the evaluation of the full Future Paisley portfolio. At this point in the evaluation, all project data has been cleansed and project lead interviews have been conducted to fill gaps in the data, with only 4 of the 30 project lead interviews remaining. Some projects have therefore not been able to be fully recorded. Additionally, many projects are still in delivery. The data in this report is therefore subject to change based on further project lead meetings and the new data produced as projects conclude.
- 4.3 Data used for this interim report is based primarily on the data that was available up to Reporting Period D, which ended in June 2023. Using data available and collected in meetings with the project leads, nearly half of all projects had been completed with budgets fully spent and all data collected. 84% of projects have aligned investment, intended impact and audience and participant data. All data is on track to be completed for the final report.
- 4.4 Evaluation of the programme is being supported by CCSE and their first interim report is available at **Appendix A**.

#### **5. Evaluation findings: how Future Paisley investment was used**

- 5.1 The evaluation is confirming that most Renfrewshire residents will have had contact with a Future Paisley project, but no individual resident would be able to lay out every project that has been part of the programme. Future Paisley has taken a wide reaching,

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<sup>6</sup> This was approved at the Future Paisley Partnership Board meeting on 17 June 2021.

holistic approach to cultural regeneration in Renfrewshire. For this reason, many strands of investment are not front facing or even visible to the public.

5.2 In order to make the scale of work undertaken through Future Paisley accessible and digestible, activity is divided into 5 pillars: Programming, Marketing, Cultural Sector Development, Strategic Development, and the Cultural Workforce. These pillars describe specific types of activities that took place with support from Future Paisley funding, and each project can be categorised into one of these pillars. These pillars sit separately from the 5 Step Changes within the Future Paisley Evaluation Framework, which focuses on strategic outputs and the impact of activity rather than the tangible type of activity a project produced.

5.3 This section of the report will go through each pillar of activity to explain the type of projects that sit within it. For a full breakdown of projects within each pillar, see ***Appendix B***.

#### 5.31 Programming

Programming is the most public facing and one of the most important elements of the Future Paisley investment.

The category includes the major festivals and one-off events that promote Renfrewshire as a cultural destination. It also includes projects that bring professional artists directly to Renfrewshire residents through original productions of plays from critically acclaimed production companies and the commission of art installations. These festivals and events were further supported by public programmes aimed to engage residents and their families in cultural participation, such as the *Opening Year Programme* taking place in the newly renovated cultural venues in the Paisley Town Centre and *Cultural Engagement Programmes* happening throughout Renfrewshire.

A key feature of these activities has been co-creation. Over 60% of programming activities were either co-designed with the local community or co-produced with a partner organisation. Co-design was often accomplished through sustained contact between residents and professional artists. For example, the production *Other Side of the River* brought the touring theatre production company *In Motion* to Ferguslie Park to work with residents on a variety of cultural projects surrounding their production of *Other Side of the River*. Projects included a co-created series of monologues written by residents and a podcast series interviewing Ferguslie Park residents about how they viewed their home. In total, the production held 67 participatory sessions with residents as part of the production. An evidence review that seeks to identify the lasting benefits of co-design for individuals and communities is being undertaken at present.

#### 5.32 Marketing

A major push in marketing was necessary for Renfrewshire to capitalise on all the positive stories generated through the UK City of Culture campaign and subsequent Future Paisley programming. Prior to Future Paisley, Renfrewshire did not have a destination brand or sustained destination marketing.

The projects funded through this pillar can be split into two key functions: the development of strategies and branding for marketing Renfrewshire to the public – visitor, relocater and investor audiences, and *data commissions* and *cultural insight*

*projects* that were funded to provide business intelligence to influence the decisions made for marketing and visitor engagement.

The highlight of this pillar, the launch of the Paisley.is destination brand has seen a significant return on investment. With a budget of only £190,775, Paisley.is has generated over 1.2 billion opportunities to see and hear positive things about Renfrewshire and funded annual visitor campaigns, supported by VisitScotland.

### 5.33 Cultural Sector Development

To deliver programming and ensure that Renfrewshire's cultural sector can sustain and continue to grow, Future Paisley funded several major initiatives to strengthen and grow cultural organisations and support local arts professionals. This is one of the largest financial commitments from Future Paisley, as devolving the provision of arts and cultural activity - beyond the council and OneRen, is critical to sector sustainability and to cultural diversity and to continuing to deliver Future Paisley's step changes.

Cultural Sector Development included several key activities. The largest of which were the Cultural Funding grants, which funded the delivery of cultural programmes, projects to increase access to culture, and the development of sustainable business models in arts organisations. Future Paisley also provided funding for Renfrewshire to participate in national grant programmes that require contribution from local authorities. As of October 2023, Cultural Funding grants have awarded 363 individual grants through these programmes.

In addition to supporting established organisations and artists, Future Paisley recognised that strong cultural and creative sectors are reliant on a regular supply of freelance artists. To help connect freelance artists with work opportunities and develop new artists emerging in Renfrewshire, Future Paisley funded several programmes offering *Artist Support*. Discipline specialists from the Arts Team at OneRen hosted networking events and meet-up groups for practitioners within music, theatre, film, and visual arts, leading to initiatives such as the POP Newsletter for sharing paid creative opportunities with artists and the monthly Sma'sh Hits! open mic nights for musicians to test new music. As a result, new networks, partnerships and collectives have emerged.

### 5.34 Strategic Development

One of the aims of Future Paisley was to give all residents access to culture by making cultural participation an embedded part of day-to-day life in Renfrewshire. Projects therefore needed to take an innovative approach to culture to not only produce cultural events and support cultural organisations, but to integrate arts and culture with other systems.

Many of the activities within Strategic Development were focused on embedding arts and cultural practice within existing services such as youth services, the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, social work and criminal justice services. Others consisted of new long-term partnerships formed to create permanent connections between Renfrewshire communities and arts professionals. Aspects of these activities may have included programming or supporting creative organisations but were primarily focused on establishing ongoing relationships.

One example is Castlehead School of Creativity, a partnership between Castlehead High School and Glasgow School of Art to create pathways for Castlehead pupils to Art School, and to embed studio-based practice across school curriculum. The partnership has created new cultural programming at the school such as the Creativity Week engaging pupils across year groups to engage in arts and creativity and STEAM projects. Several new SQA approved courses have been introduced to recognise and inspire entrepreneurialism and design thinking and applying creativity to all subjects. As well as considerable benefits to the school and to young people, Project Leads cite the increased communication between institutions as one of the greatest outputs of the programme. For example, during the pandemic, both institutions collaborated to quickly respond, creating opportunities to develop new arts curriculum resources and to influence a national conversation about higher education admissions processes to art schools for students impacted.

### 5.35 Cultural Workforce

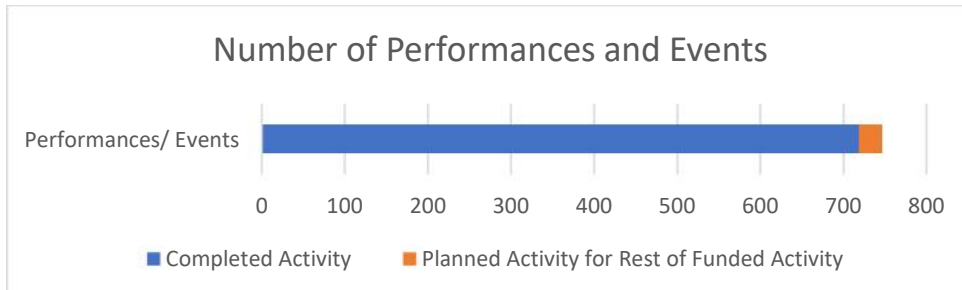
Finally, to deliver all the activity described in the pillars above, there were operational costs that were covered by Future Paisley. These investments bolstered the capacity of Renfrewshire Council and OneRen, to enable the administration and delivery of Future Paisley activities.

There was a significant investment from Future Paisley in Cultural Workforce. This included funded posts and temporary project-specific posts with Renfrewshire Council, OneRen and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. These roles included the council's cultural regeneration team (2 FTEs) to oversee the implementation of the programme. Projects across the Future Paisley portfolio were able to be delivered because of this investment which created dedicated time and expertise.

## **6. Evaluation: what the numbers are telling us so far**

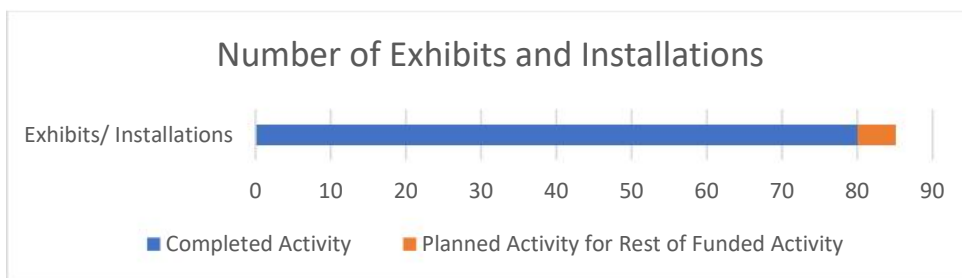
- 6.1 It is important to note that the data collected during this period only covered the 100 core activities that were managed by Renfrewshire Council and OneRen. These activities span across multiple pillars of work but are only representative of approximately 40% of the Future Paisley investment. The outputs described below should therefore only be regarded as part of the total outputs of the Future Paisley programme.
- 6.2 Future Paisley funded nearly 100 core activities that were delivered by the council and OneRen, as well as 363 activities delivered to date by local organisations funded through the grant programmes. The initial stages of the evaluation included significant work to breakdown the outputs and audience/participant data for these projects.
- 6.3 A separate analysis of the activity generated by the funding programmes will be part of the final evaluation report. This will include all activity data broken down into the project pillars and include financial information to show proportionally how much of the Future Paisley funding was used to generate those outcomes. As several projects are still running, this level of data was not available at the time of the interim report.

6.4 Each activity funded through Future Paisley included multiple outputs. These could be multiple public performances, a series of training workshops, or an ongoing cultural participation group. The number of performances, events, exhibitions, art installations, and participatory sessions generated by this portion of the Future Paisley funding are shown in the charts below.



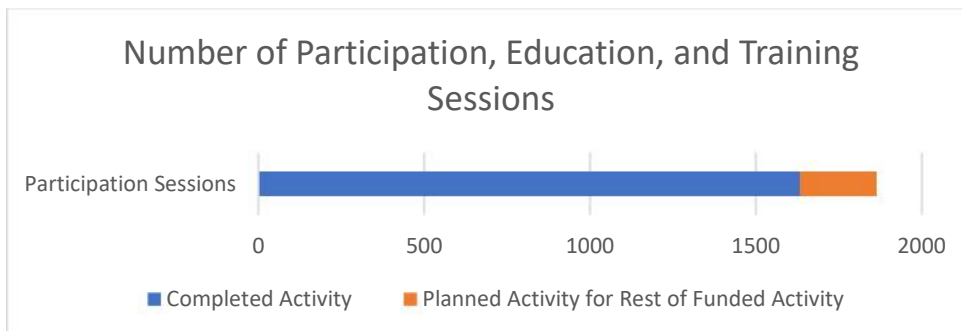
**Performances:** an act of presenting a play, concert, or other form of entertainment.

**Event:** a planned public or social occasion, something which happens at a particular time, to bring people together.



**Exhibition:** a temporary asynchronous showcase of work, ideas or creativity, in physical or online spaces.

**Installation:** a permanent artwork or cultural experience that is installed in a community space.



**Participation:** a cooperative effort to give input, make decisions, resolve issues, and assign actions together.

**Education:** a chance for people to come together to learn new things and be engaged in the learning.

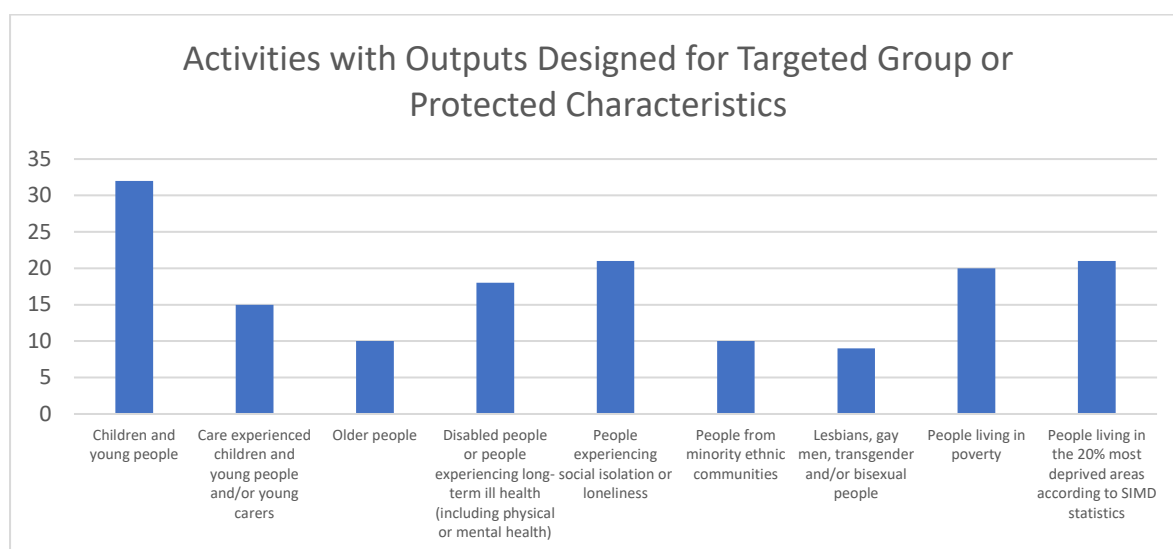
**Training:** teaching, education, instruction or professional development.

6.5 From the 100 activities led by Renfrewshire Council and OneRen, there was a combined number of 239,383 audience members and participants.

6.6 To get an idea of what these large audience number tangibly look like, it is useful to consider an example like the Paisley Halloween Festival. Around half of the Future Paisley audience members came from the Paisley Halloween Festival between 2018 and 2022, the most attended event in the Future Paisley programme. The Paisley Halloween Festival had run prior to the Future Paisley investment but saw a large rise in attendees, from 12,465 in 2016 to 45,000 in 2022 due to additional investment. During the years that Future Paisley has supported the festival, the council was able to leverage that contribution to obtain other external funding from sources such as EventScotland which allowed the festival to consistently grow despite the challenges faced during the pandemic. There has also been a significant rise in participatory sessions and community participation in the festival.

6.7 Alternatively, participation numbers are smaller but often represent a similar sized impact. For example, The Sculpture House opened in October 2022 and during their first year of programming have had 1,835 recorded participations. These numbers represent recurring visits from local schools, regular interaction with community members, and prestigious visits from national arts leaders coming to observe the structure of Sculpture House’s unique partnership. While the number is significantly smaller, the impact on the community and Renfrewshire’s reputation is comparable. This will be demonstrated in the final evaluation.

6.8 Additionally, all project leads were asked to track when an activity they led was designed for a targeted group or a protected characteristic. The spread of activity across these target demographics are represented below. The Y-axis represents the number of activities that identified as working with the groups identified. It doesn’t represent all engagements, i.e., one activity may have included 30 participatory sessions for young people. This will be included in the final evaluation report where possible.



## 7. Evaluation next steps

7.1 While these initial stages of evaluation have heavily focused on quantitative data for each project, the approach for the remainder of the evaluation will focus on creating detailed qualitative evaluation. The final report will provide a clear picture of the types and amount of activity taking place within the programme as well as the impact and wider benefits of these projects.

7.2 Qualitative analysis is already being undertaken, supported by CCSE, to further examine the impact of the programme, this includes the development of five case studies each of which highlights a project or initiative with an explicit, public-facing element to their work. The aim is to provide further insight into the ways in the projects have created and added value at the local and national levels. To date case studies discussing the Open Mind Summit (OMS), Glen Cinema Commemoration and ArtBOSS work have been completed – see **Appendix C**.



- 7.3 In addition, a series of rapid reviews of academic literature that draws on work locally and elsewhere have been completed to inform and understand the impact of the activities of Future Paisley - The Role of Arts & Culture in Lifting Communities Out of Poverty (2020/21), Social Value of Community Events (2021/22), Wellbeing and Measurement (2022/13).
- 7.4 Three doctoral research students have been engaged in investigating elements of policy and practice of particular interest to Future Paisley and the Future Paisley Partnership. In addition to the final thesis, each researcher has written a policy insights document to highlight the areas of their work of particular interest to Future Paisley stakeholders and to assist the evaluation of the programme. Dr Lan Pham looks at the health and wellbeing dimension of Future Paisley in *Building a radical vision for health and wellbeing in Paisley*, Dr Conor Wilson looks at how Paisley's image and reputation have been constructed and, how this relates to changing ideas about cultural regeneration within the town in *Telling the untold story: Image, representation and cultural regeneration in Paisley*, Niclas Hell reflects on the Public value of festivals and events: *A Case Study of Paisley's City of Culture Events Legacy*. The policy insights can be found at **Appendix D**.

## **8. Planning beyond March 2024**

- 8.1 Renfrewshire Council will have invested around £10million in cultural regeneration including cultural funding between 2016 and 2024. All programme funding will be assigned by April 2024, with select projects continuing into the 24/25 financial year. All non-recurring funds and funding for current cultural funding programmes will be spent by April 2025. The Future Paisley Partnership Board is expected to cease in 2024.
- 8.2 A recurring council investment to support Cultural Workforce, Marketing, Cultural and Creative Industries Development and Strategic Development will continue following the end of the Future Paisley programme. Initially this was expected to provide £460,000 of recurring investment to OneRen to deliver the five Step Changes over the long-term and to support the reopening of new cultural venues. In addition, council services would receive £412,000 to continue priority activity, plus £120,000 ringfenced for future cultural sector development.
- 8.3 As part of the council's Right for Renfrewshire Programme, savings have been applied to recurring Future Paisley investment. The agreed savings will reduce the council's recurring cultural regeneration budget from £532,000 to £265,000. The savings confirmed will also reduce OneRen recurring Future Paisley budget from £460,000 to £368,000 from April 2024. This is outlined below:

<b>Renfrewshire Council</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Step Change</b>	<b>Investment</b>
Cultural workforce	Tourism Officer - lead development and implementation of Renfrewshire's Tourism Action Plan	1 – Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and Internationally 5 – Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy	£117,000
	Creative events producer - lead creative production of Renfrewshire's event and festivals strategy	2 – Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities 4 – Transform Paisley into a vibrant Town Centre	
Activity	Marketing	1 – Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and Internationally	£20,000
	Cultural sector development	3 – Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation 5 – Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy	£100,000
	Programming	2 – Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities 4 – Transform Paisley into a vibrant Town Centre	£28,000
		<b>Total investment</b>	<b>£265,000</b>

<b>OneRen</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Step Change</b>	<b>Investment</b>
Cultural workforce	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	£290,000
Activity	Stakeholder Engagement and Marketing	1 – Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and Internationally	£20,000
	Arts Development	2 – Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities 3 – Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation	£12,000
	Creative Learning	2 – Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities	£15,000
	Libraries Programming	2 – Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities	£12,000
	Volunteering	2 – Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities 5 – Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy	£7,000
	Renfrewshire Makar	3 – Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation	£12,000
		<b>Total investment</b>	<b>£368,000</b>

8.5 In addition, work is ongoing with partners Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, University of West of Scotland and Glasgow School of Art, and with council services, to determine which Future Paisley projects in receipt of temporary funding, might be continued within mainline budgets. These discussions are being

aided by emerging data as part of the programme evaluation, case studies and evidence reviews. A summary of activity to be continued beyond March 2024 will be included in the final evaluation in 2024.

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### **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** – none
  2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
  3. **Community/Council Planning** – Council Plan PLACE (Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to live, work and visit) - delivering Future Paisley, our far-reaching cultural regeneration programme, harnessing the power of the arts, heritage and culture for social and economic change.
  4. **Legal** – none
  5. **Property/Assets** – none
  6. **Information Technology** – none
  7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report
  8. **Health & Safety** – none
  9. **Procurement** – none
  10. **Risk** – none
  11. **Privacy Impact** – none
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** –not applicable
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# FUTURE PAISLEY EVALUATION

Interim Report

## ABSTRACT

This interim report reflects on the progress to date of the suite of interventions comprising Future Paisley, the activities, events and programmes developed around Paisley's 'unique and internationally significant story and, which uses targeted investment to deliver positive change.'

Prepared by: Centre for Culture, Sport & Events (UWS) in partnership with Renfrewshire Council



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## 1.0 Introduction

This interim report reflects on the progress to date of the suite of interventions comprising *Future Paisley*, the activities, events and programmes developed around Paisley's 'unique and internationally significant story and, which uses targeted investment to deliver positive change.'<sup>1</sup>

*Future Paisley* originated in the bidding process for UK City of Culture 2021. Although that accolade was ultimately awarded to Coventry, the network of stakeholders and collaborators who worked with such enthusiasm to develop and deliver the bid recognised that the process itself had been of value and, that there was potential to harness the ideas and interest generated over the bidding time frame to achieve some significant goals for the town and surrounding region.

That investment in culture can bring substantial benefit to individuals, communities and regions is widely recognised (e.g. Duffy & Waitt; 2011; Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016; Matheson, 2005; Miesner & Mason, 2006). However, acknowledgement of this broadly accepted position does not diminish the obstacles to be overcome by anyone seeking to position culture as a central consideration for service design and delivery. The challenges inherent in attempting evaluation of benefits deriving from cultural programmes are illustrative of this point. Identifying the cause-and-effect associations at work within and across projects and programmes based on culture is not without difficulties, but with careful planning, committed and focussed – and, admittedly, sometimes painfully slow – work, it is not impossible.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the strides that have been made in evaluation of Renfrewshire's *Future Paisley* work. Over the last few years, members of Renfrewshire Council's Cultural Regeneration team have come together with colleagues from University of West of Scotland, Project Leads and Project Officers and many other who have been involved across the gamut of *Future Paisley* activity. They were able to share their knowledge, insights and expertise, reflect on what has been achieved and, on what has been less successful; to dig down through the layers to identify the essence of what it is that they have accomplished. This careful process of reflection and iteration has allowed those involved to fully recognise *what* it is they have set out to do, *which* signposts are indicators of success and *how* these achievements can be evidenced as contributors to the aims detailed in the *Future Paisley* Step Changes.

While this process has very much been a collaborative one, the leadership and guidance of DHA Communications<sup>2</sup> Tamsin Cox has been of crucial importance. Tamsin's long experience as an evaluator, and prior collaborations with members of the CCSE team at UWS, made the decision to engage her to work with the CCSE team to deliver the evaluation straightforward. Tamsin worked closely with members of the Renfrewshire Council Cultural Regeneration team and CCSE at UWS to agree and develop an approach to devising an appropriate and accessible evaluation framework alongside a suite of supporting resources and reports aimed at evidencing the success of the *Future Paisley* programme and ensuring that – going forward – evaluation of similar workflows can be approached with clarity and confidence.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/futurepaisley>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dhacommunications.co.uk/>

This interim report is a way post on this journey. It provides a concise guide to the work done to date on evaluating *Future Paisley* alongside some insight into the mechanisms of evaluation ‘in action’ and the tangible outputs that this work is beginning to produce. Please note that this report is *not* a full evaluation of the *Future Paisley* programme. While some evaluations have been completed, others have yet to commence. It is not our intention here to offer detailed insight into every project undertaken under the *Future Paisley* banner, but to provide an informative overview of accomplishments to date.

## 2.0 *Future Paisley*: Investing in Culture & Developing an Evaluation Approach

The origins of *Future Paisley* have been outlined briefly above. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the significance of the decision to progress a programme of investment based on belief in the benefits of culture even when the initial impetus of the UK City of Culture bid had ebbed away.

The bidding process drew together a somewhat unusual mix of community stakeholders who – while they had been involved in serving their community in a variety of ways, often over several years – had not necessarily had cause to work together directly. With the momentum provided by the bid, this ‘new’ networking and knowledge sharing opportunity generated enthusiasm and a palpable buzz about what *could* and *might* be achieved. The hopes and aspirations of Paisley and Renfrewshire were captured in 5 Step Changes which were – in many ways – the foundation of the evaluation work.

The Step Changes are:

- 1. Radically Change Paisley’s Image and Reputation in Scotland, the UK & Internationally.**
2. Raise Prosperity & Increase Wellbeing in our Communities.
- 3. Paisley Will be Recognised for its Cultural Innovation.**
4. Transform Paisley into a Vibrant Cultural Town Centre.
- 5. Develop a Sustainable and Resilient Creative Economy in Renfrewshire.**

These statements have functioned as the guiding principles for the cultural investments made with the aim of leveraging the benefits of arts and culture in large and small-scale projects across the community. The range of projects and programmes nestled under the *Future Paisley* umbrella is quite eye-popping. Extending across the flagship capital investment signified by the redevelopment of Paisley Museum to the Glen Cinema Memorial work and the innovative ArtBOSS programme by way of the Halloween Festival, the Tannahill Makar, Castlehead – School of Creativity, Paisley Book Festivals, Cultural and Social Prescribing undertakings supported by CHEF and CODF<sup>3</sup> and beyond.

The ways in which such activities *might* contribute to each, or every, Step Change could be the subject of endless, robust discussions but the task of the evaluation team was to find a way to transform those connections into clear pathways of achievement. The first step along this road involved matching each Step Change with a set of Strategic Outcomes which clearly and concisely described the ways – and areas – in which projects contributing to a given Step Change could expect to see demonstrable effects, outputs and outcomes.



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<sup>3</sup> Culture, Heritage and Events Fund and Cultural Organisations Development Fund.



So, for example, under Step Change one, *Radically Change Paisley's Image and Reputation in Scotland, the UK & Internationally*, the corresponding Strategic Outcomes are:

- Increased Civic Pride
- Paisley Positioned as a Destination of Choice
- More People Visit Renfrewshire Attractions & Events<sup>4</sup>

However, before these steps were taken, it is important to acknowledge the painstaking, but crucial, work done to ensure that the Step Changes themselves were the best and most appropriate articulation of what Paisley and Renfrewshire were aiming to achieve. At the outset of the *Future Paisley* work, six Step Changes had originally been developed and – among these – some of the Step Changes were differently phrased. Initially, Step Change One set out the ambition to *Establish Paisley as a Centre of Excellence for Cultural Regeneration through Leadership, Partnership and Collaboration*. Step Change Two initially aimed to *Lift Communities Out of Poverty*, number three declared that *Paisley Will be Recognised for its Cultural Excellence*.<sup>5</sup> Though admirable in their sentiment, it was soon recognised that – when it came to outlining clear and achievable steps which could, in turn, be meaningfully evaluated – these objectives needed to be framed in a different way.<sup>6</sup>

To accomplish this, CCSE led a workshop session at the January 2020 *Future Paisley* Partnership Board (FPPB). Here, partnership members came together to problematise, probe and tease out the essence of what it was the initiative was trying to achieve under these Step Changes, to identify measurable parameters within which change would be apparent.

This workshop began a process of revision which – after a COVID 19 enforced pause in proceedings – recommenced in 2021, led by Renfrewshire Council and the Future Paisley cultural regeneration team. This activity included:

- A follow up workshop (February 2021) in collaboration with CAHSC<sup>7</sup> to continue work to re-develop and define Step Change 2 (Lift Communities out of Poverty),
- Recommendations to the FPPB meeting (March 2021),
- Additional, smaller, focussed workshops with stakeholders, delivery partners, cultural practitioners, programme leads and CAHSC and CREW<sup>8</sup> representation though April and May 2021. Here, participants scrutinised the wording of Step Changes and, set new strategic outcomes, within agreed parameters.<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> The full range of Step Changes and Strategic Outcomes are mapped in the finalised *Future Paisley* Evaluation Framework. See: <https://ccse.uws.ac.uk/resources/>

<sup>5</sup> The original Step Changes were: 1) Establish Paisley as a centre of excellence for cultural regeneration through leadership, partnership, participation and collaboration; 2) Work with partners across Paisley to help lift communities out of poverty; 3) Paisley will be recognised for its cultural excellence, through the development of a modern, resilient and innovative cultural sector which connects Paisley's; 4) Transform Paisley into a vibrant cultural town centre; 5) Grow a significant new dimension to Paisley's economy and, 6) Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and internationally.

<sup>6</sup> A FPPB field trip to Glasgow's East End was aimed at helping stakeholders to gain fresh insight into place-based approaches to regeneration and the role of culture had played. The itinerary included stops at Clyde Gateway and Red Tree Magenta, the Athletes Village in Dalrnarnock and the Cuningar Loop, the Baltic Street Adventure Playground in Dalrnarnock, the Glasgow Women's Library and David Dale Gallery. The day was a great opportunity to learn from a nearby example of successful cultural regeneration, and to discuss pertinent issues that arose, such as when a local authority should step in and when it should take a step back and others (e.g. local community members, artists and/ or entrepreneurs) should lead.

<sup>7</sup> Culture, Arts, Health & Social Care group.

<sup>8</sup> Cultural Regeneration Engagement Workstream.

<sup>9</sup> See: FPPB Minute, June 2021 (Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June).

- A revision of the wording of several the Step Changes alongside a reduction in the overall number of Step Changes from 6 to 5. The Step Change *Establish Paisley as a Centre of Excellence for Cultural Regeneration through Leadership, Partnership and Collaboration* was removed from the list. New formulations for two retained Step Changes were as follows: *Lift Communities Out of Poverty* became **Raise Prosperity & Increase Wellbeing in our Communities** and, *Paisley will be Recognised for its Cultural Excellence* was revised to become **Paisley Will be Recognised for its Cultural Innovation**. Thus, paving the way for creation of a practically feasible approach to measuring genuinely and meaningfully occurring change in projects operating in, and contributing towards, these areas.
- Development of the theory of impact.

More discussions on the evaluation framework continued in four half-day workshops – taking place online in early December 2021 – during which Tamsin Cox led sessions in which *Future Paisley* project leads were asked to drill down into the mechanisms through which their projects were delivering change and, to come to full(er) understanding of the outputs related to specific activities undertaken in the project, the expected outcomes based on the outputs, and the specific Step Changes and Strategic Outcomes to which the project and its outcomes contribute.<sup>10</sup> These discussions also were also important for finessing the Strategic Outcomes which sit beneath each Step Change, ensuring that they were worded as precisely and usefully as possible. From late 2021 to early 2022, significant additional work was also undertaken within the Cultural Regeneration Leadership team at Renfrewshire Council to map Strategic Outcomes for each Step Change.<sup>11</sup> The information collected through this process – and during an array of follow up work undertaken in one – to-one and group settings by Tamsin Cox alongside Renfrewshire Cultural Regeneration Officers and others could be collated, sifted, analysed and found a place in the hierarchy delineated by the Step Change and Strategic Outcome framing.

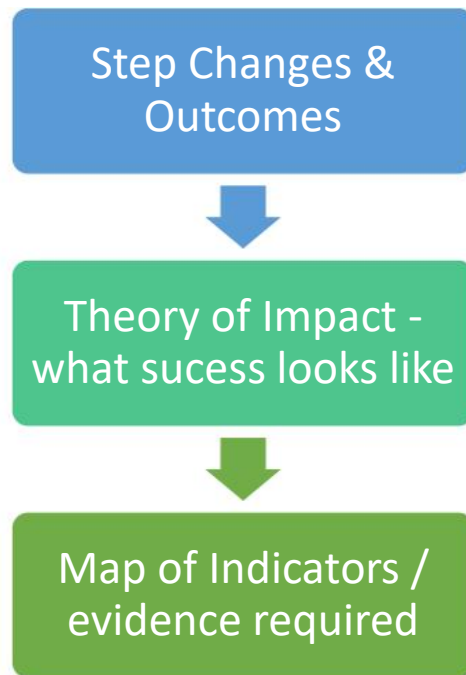
## 2.1 The Evaluation Framework & Evaluation Programmes

The process through which information gathered across the variety of activities contributing to Evaluation Framework development can be summarised thus:

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<sup>10</sup> Projects were divided into groups based on common thematic areas of activity, e.g. Major Events & Performance Partnerships, Step Change 2, Place-focussed projects and Arts/Film Development.

<sup>11</sup> See: *Future Paisley, Story of Change – MAPPING.pptx*



The evaluation framework can be usefully thought of as a map which allows for navigation from the big, overarching ambitions contained in the Step Change and Strategic Outcomes, towards a set of tangible indicators through which they can be seen/understood to have been achieved. As evaluation within each project/programme proceeds, these indicators function as headings or groupings into which evidence from different projects and investments can be drawn together to understand how each project contributes to the Step Changes. Using the indicators as a guideline, each Strategic Outcome within the framework is further sub-divided as a range of Sub-Outcomes which serve to advance the process of unpicking and refining the linkages between strategic aims and the practical approaches to demonstrating their realisation.

Furthermore, members of the UWS and Renfrewshire Council teams working to develop the evaluation undertook focussed work to revise and streamline internal reporting within Renfrewshire Council for *Future Paisley* projects. This work has resulted in a refreshed Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting Template aimed at bridging the gap between what projects might be doing on the ground and the wider ambitions encapsulated in the Step Changes and Strategic Outcomes. The schedule now requires that completed summary reporting documentation is submitted once per quarter rather than twice. This documentation maps directly onto the Evaluation Framework meaning that the information gathered here is easily fed into the (underpinning *Smartsheets* and) Dashboard,<sup>12</sup> developed to provide a rolling overview of projects and their progress.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=f3f976e43d3142e78b19ddb1fe72958d>

## 2.2 Evaluation Programme

Once the set of indicators was in development, it was necessary to create a programme of data collection, collation, analysis and reporting based upon the indicator framework. This process was approached by grouping together the different indicators from the Evaluation Framework according to their commonality, and particularly the likely data source. *How* this data collection could be approached was then suggested and, any design needs for specific surveys or tools to support project leads and Renfrewshire Council staff identified. In addition, relevant data that were already being collected and could be drawn upon for evaluation purposes were also sought out during this process.

Broadly, this process was internal and, its primary function was as a steppingstone for the evaluation team on the path to fully understanding how and where projects and programmes were operating and contributing to the overarching aims contained in the Step Changes and Strategic Outcomes. At this stage, grouping data in this way better reflected indicators that functioned *across* different Step Changes and, which are more likely to apply across a group of projects. Moreover, this process took the work that had been done to develop the (abstract) Evaluation Framework and started the process of transforming it into a (practical, concrete) programme of data collection, collation, analysis and reporting. Or, of progressing from the strategic aims expressed by the Step Changes and translating them into data areas and recognisable approaches to collect and collate appropriate and relevant data to evidence achievement.

Now, the team set about:

- Reviewing existing data collection and evaluation,
- Working with Project Leads and Council Officers to identify gaps, understand resources for data collection and agree what further support may be needed,
- Designing tools or templates, or offering other support, to help projects fill gaps identified,
- Reviewing and signing-off agreements for data collection over the remainder of the collaboration agreement.

The steps outlined above led to a position whereby, the Evaluation Framework had been finalised<sup>13</sup> and further work was undertaken to ensure that those working in *Future Paisley* projects have a full understanding of and insight into the Evaluation Framework and associated tools. To this end, over the summer months of 2022, work continued to:

- Group projects/activities according to how similar projects/activities are. (e.g., projects aiming for explicit wellbeing outcomes should be grouped together).
- Review what we knew about data collection within the groups.
- Run a session with each group to fill any gaps in understanding about existing evaluation plans and potential resources for data collection and, ascertain and agree what data collection support (e.g. specifically designed of tools) they need.
- Undertake that design work and, review it at a second session with groups to confirm and sign-off both the design and the approaches to collecting data.
- In addition to the above, work was done with Renfrewshire Council officers to agree:
  - How data across activities/projects will be collated, analysed and reported,

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<sup>13</sup> The Evaluation Programme work also functioned reflexively here, helping the team to refine the Evaluation Framework.



- What resources/support will be provided to individual activities/projects who may need it.

## 2.3 Development of Resources

A range of resources – outlined in the Partnership Agreement(s) between UWS/CCSE and Renfrewshire Council – have been produced over the course of this evaluation work. They include:

- An Evaluation Framework,
- Case Studies (see Section [3.1](#) below),
- Evidence Reviews (see Section [3.3](#) below),
- Evaluation Tools (e.g. question banks for evaluation survey design),
- Revised reporting pathways (a new reporting schedule was agreed and, the summary reporting documentation to be used was refreshed) and documentation for CHEF & CODF projects & programmes.
- A trio of doctoral research students have been engaged in investigating elements of policy and practice of particular interest to *Future Paisley* and the Partnership. Each researcher has produced a brief policy insights document highlighting the most relevant learning emerging from their work.

These resources will be available to all on the *Resources* tab of the CCSE website.<sup>14</sup>

## 3.0 *Future Paisley* to Date: A Snapshot

The CCSE evaluation team have provided – and will continue to develop – a selective summary of some of the evaluation findings taken from *Future Paisley* projects. Some are already completing evaluations themselves and we have acted as a sounding board to specific projects. We continue to meet on a one-to-one basis with some of the funded projects to advise them of the appropriate evaluation approach, methods and tools linked to their objectives and the relevant Step Changes. There is agreed capacity for members of the CCSE team to support this work as necessary going forward.

*Table 1* provides a summary of a range of *Future Paisley* activity matched to the Evaluation Framework's Step Changes and Strategic Outcomes; relating these programmes and projects to the areas in which Project Leads it is expected that they will be able to provide (or in the case of completed projects, have provided or, are in the process of gathering) evaluation data to evidence impact. It is important to note that *Table 1* is not exhaustive but draws upon the data available at the time of writing. It shows the principal areas in which projects *expect* to be able to demonstrate impact. However, it may be the case that once data is gathered, it is possible to show that impact has exceeded these areas and project effects have accrued for additional Step Changes/Strategic Outcomes in the evaluation framework. The Cycle Arts Festival is an example of this. *The Cycle Arts Festival Renfrewshire 2022 A Place Partnership at OneRen project Report for Funders* details more areas of impact than those listed in reporting documentation submitted over the project's lifetime (see: FV Cycle Arts Fest Project monitoring & evaluation report, May – August 2022). It should also be kept in mind that the opposite scenario is possible (though, improbable) and there will be insufficient data to evidence impact in some expected areas in spite of efforts made.

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<sup>14</sup><https://ccse.uws.ac.uk/resources/>

**Table 1 – Expected Evidence of Strategic Impact across a Range of FP Programming**

<b>Step Change 1: Radically change Paisley’s image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and internationally</b>		
<i>Strategic Outcome 1: Increased civic pride</i>	<i>2: Paisley positioned as a destination of choice</i>	<i>3: More people visit Renfrewshire attractions and events.</i>
Artists & Residents – Gallowhill Colouring Renfrewshire Common is as Common Does (Theatre/Dance) Cultural Organisations Development Fund (CODF) <i>Future Paisley</i> Exhibition New Voices Paisley Book Festival Paisley Halloween Festival Paisley.is Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Sma’sh Hits (Music Meet Up) Tannahill Makar Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme 2 (TH.CARS2)	<i>Future Paisley</i> Exhibition Other Side of the River PACE Theatre Commission (Frances Poet) Paisley Halloween Festival Paisley.is Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme 2 (TH.CARS2)	Colouring Renfrewshire Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group <i>Future Paisley</i> Exhibition Paisley Book Festival Paisley Halloween Festival Paisley.is Performance Programme (Children & Families) Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Sma’sh Hits (Music Meet Up) Underwood Lane Visitor Data Consultation Visual Artist & Craft Maker Awards (VACMA) Winter Programme (Performances & Events)
<b>Step Change 2: Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities</b>		
<i>Strategic Outcome 4: Cultural participation contributes to enhanced mental health and reduced loneliness in our communities</i>	<i>5: Children and young people thrive through everyday access to arts and culture</i>	<i>6: The cultural offer is dispersed and accessible across Renfrewshire, enhancing wellbeing in our communities.</i>
ArtBOSS Artist & Residents – Gallowhill Artists in Residence – Erskine Arts CODF Common is as Common Does (Theatre/Dance) Cultural Volunteering Programme Culture, Arts, Health & Social Care (CAHSC) Programme Cycle Arts Festival Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group Johnstone Textile Space Paisley Book Festival Performance Programme (Children & Families)	ArtBOSS Artists & Residents – Gallowhill Artists in Residence – Erskine Arts Castlehead School of Creativity Colouring Renfrewshire Creative Learning Programme Cultural Champions Cycle Arts Festival <i>Future Paisley</i> Exhibition New Voices Paisley Halloween Festival Performance Programme (Children & Families) Renfrewshire Promise Champions	ArtBOSS Artists in Residence – Erskine Arts CAHSC CODF Colouring Renfrewshire Cycle Arts Festival Ethnic Community Cultural Steering Group <i>Future Paisley</i> Exhibition Johnstone Textile Space Other Side of the River Paisley Halloween Festival Performance Programme (Children & Families) Renfrewshire Promise Champions

Renfrewshire Promise Champions Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Seedhill – The Bothy Project Sma’sh Hits (Music Meet Up) Social & Cultural Prescribing Tannahill Makar The Promise Arts & Culture Programme The Sculpture House Winter Programme (Performances & Events) Wallneuk Crafters	Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Tannahill Makar The Promise Arts & Culture Programme The Sculpture House Winter Programme (Performances & Events)	Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Social & Cultural Prescribing The Promise Arts & Culture Programme Underwood Land Winter Programme (Performances & Events) Wallneuk Crafters
<b>Step Change 3: Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation</b>		
<i>Strategic Outcome 7: Renfrewshire has a thriving, resilient and diverse cultural sector</i>	<i>8: Innovation in Paisley’s programming leads to wider engagement by local and national audiences</i>	<i>9: Community led production and programming increases cultural participation and activism</i>
Cultural Volunteering Programme Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group Green Room Sessions In the Frame Making Movie Moves New Voices Open Mind Summit Paisley Book Festival Paisley Film & Media Space Sma’sh Hits (Music Meet Up) Thread (theatre co-productions) Underwood Lane VACMA VAM! Artists’ Meet Ups	Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group <i>Future Paisley</i> Exhibition New Voices PACE Theatre Commission (Frances Poet) Paisley Book Festival Paisley Film & Media Space Paisley Halloween Festival Performance Programme (Children & Families) Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Sma’sh Hits (Music Meet Up) The Sculpture House Thread (theatre co-productions) Winter Programme (Performances & Events) Wallneuk Crafters	Artists & Residents – Gallowhill Common is as Common Does (Theatre/Dance) Creative Learning Programme Cycle Arts Festival Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group Glen Cinema Commemoration Green Room Sessions Paisley Book Festival Paisley Halloween Festival Renfrew on Film Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Seedhill – The Bothy Project Sma’sh Hits (Music Meet Up) Wallneuk Crafters Winter Programme (Performances & Events)
<b>Step Change 4: Transform Paisley into a vibrant cultural town centre</b>		
<i>Strategic Outcome 10: Paisley town centre is revitalised through the opening of major cultural venues and attractions</i>	<i>11: Paisley’s town centre is revitalised through improvements to the public realm</i>	<i>12: Paisley town centre is animated by cultural production and participation</i>
Paisley Halloween Festival Visitor Data Commission	Royal National Mòd - Mòd Phàislig, 2023 Fringe Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme 2 (TH.CARS2)	<i>Future Paisley</i> Exhibition Paisley Film & Media Space Paisley Halloween Festival Winter Programme (Performances & Events)

**Step Change 5: Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy in Renfrewshire**

<i>Strategic Outcome 13: Organisations and sole traders working in Renfrewshire’s creative economy develop sustainable and resilient business models</i>	<i>14: Pathways into employment and progression routes in Renfrewshire’s tourism, cultural and creative sectors are being supported</i>	<i>15: The tourism, cultural and creative sectors in Renfrewshire are vibrant and employment opportunities are developing</i>
Artists in Residence – Erskine Arts CODF Cultural Volunteering Programme Cycle Arts Festival Paisley Film & Media Space Renfrewshire Creative Networks Support The Sculpture House VAM! Artists’ Meet Ups Visitor Data Commission	CODF Cultural Volunteering Programme Cycle Arts Festival Johnstone Textile Space Renfrewshire Creative Networks Support VAM! Artists’ Meet Ups Visitor Data Commission Wallneuk Crafters	Artists in Residence – Erskine Arts CODF Colouring Renfrewshire Cycle Arts Festival Johnstone Textile Space Renfrewshire Creative Networks Support Visitor Data Commission Winter Programme (Performances & Events)



### 3.1 Case Studies

As part of the evaluation work, the CCSE evaluation team committed to developing 5 case studies each of which highlights a project or programme from *Future Paisley* and, which focus on some of the projects with explicit, public-facing elements to their work.

Here, the aim is to provide insights into facets of *Future Paisley* and the ways in which these undertakings have created and added value at the local and national levels. To date case studies discussing the **Open Mind Summit (OMS)**, **Glen Cinema Commemoration** and **ArtBOSS** work have been completed.

The **OMS** offers great insight into the attempts to build capacity in the independent sector. The case study relates this work and provides a basis for thinking about what has worked and what this means for the future efforts to develop networks. The case study relating the **Glen Cinema Commemoration** highlights the successful community engagement undertaken and relates the ripple effects that have emanated from the response to participation in the work undertaken. Further, it shows how the project has allowed a challenging moment of local history to be spoken about and remembered. The **ArtBOSS** case study evidences the transformative potential of supported arts and cultural engagement for (care experienced) young people and young carers.

Going forward, two additional case studies will be compiled, these will reflect on examples the cross-sectoral approaches taken by some projects, a major event or festival (the Halloween Festival) and a venue focused project (Paisley Museum). These case studies are available on the *Future Paisley Resources* tab of the CCSE website.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.2 *Future Paisley*: Some Current Evaluation Insights

While the case studies highlight the achievements of several *Future Paisley* projects and programmes, there is a huge amount of important and impactful work ongoing elsewhere. There follows brief summaries of the achievements of a trio of *Future Paisley* projects and programmes which – at the time of writing – have completed their cycle of *Future Paisley* funded activities. The narrative relayed below draws upon data and feedback received through the reporting framework put in place as part of the Evaluation Framework to capture outcomes, outputs and impacts across the gamut of *Future Paisley*. The synopses provide insight into the types of data being collected for evaluation purposes.

#### 3.2.1 *Future Paisley* Exhibition

The *Future Paisley* Exhibition contributes to Step Change 1, Strategic Outcomes 1, 2 & 3, Step Change 2, Strategic Outcomes 5 & 6 and Step Change 4, Strategic Outcome 12.

The *Future Paisley* Exhibition work was delivered from December 2021 – 2022, £138,000 of the £177,000 total budget for the project was provided by *Future Paisley*. In partnership with Lateral

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<sup>15</sup> <https://ccse.uws.ac.uk/resources/>

North,<sup>16</sup> The Town Centre Heritage Regeneration Scheme - TH.CARS2,<sup>17</sup> the Cultural Regeneration Engagement Workstream (CREW) and OneRen,<sup>18</sup> the *Future Paisley* Exhibition programme comprised:

- Physical and digital exhibitions exploring Paisley’s past, present and future. The physical exhibition comprised two fixed exhibitions and a lite exhibition which visited 6 locations.
- Workshops engaging school and community groups and resulting in *Postcards from the Future* collection which were also exhibited.
- A trio of *Grand Conversaciones* bringing together national and international expertise in architecture, design and regeneration to discuss, reflect upon and reimagine Paisley’s past, present and future.

From January – April 2022, there were over 2,000 visitors to the physical exhibition in Paisley, more than 400 of this number attended with school and community groups who hosted ‘takeover’ style visits / events / workshops in the space. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

- 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed the exhibition.
- 89% agreed or strongly agreed that the exhibition had taught them something about Paisley.
- 56% agreed or strongly agreed that the exhibition had made them feel more confident about Paisley’s future.

Over the full course of *Future Paisley* Exhibition activity, almost 7,000 visited the event. There were 180 registrations for the *Grand Conversaciones* events and 120 eventual attendees. The audience comprised interested locals, professionals and academics.

The Exhibition work provided an opportunity for visitors to feed into discussions pertaining to Paisley’s future, particularly about significant challenges such as the climate emergency and post-pandemic recovery. A foremost element of the Exhibition legacy is recognition and integration of these contributions into strategy and planning going forward.

Examples of feedback responding to the Exhibition include:

- *“I really enjoyed the Future Paisley exhibition because I got to see a lot of buildings that I hadn’t seen in real life and realised how big Paisley actually is. The Grand Fountain was a big surprise – it’s so colourful and I’d never actually seen it before so didn’t know it existed... My hope for the town is for it to be more inclusive and environmentally friendly and for people to think about what we’ve done to the planet.”*

(Darci, S2 pupil, Paisley Grammar).

- *“I love the architecture of Paisley; it goes back ages... and new buildings keep getting added but the old ones are still there, and it’s got a great collection.”*

(Murray S2 pupil, Castlehead High School)

- *“The pupils loved the workshops - I overheard one say they wished they could do it every week! They really enjoyed getting the opportunity to get their thoughts and feelings about Paisley across in a creative way. They loved the fact the exhibition had such variety, from the wool on the wall to the videos and 3D images on iPads.”*

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<sup>16</sup> <https://lateralnorth.com/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/THCars2#aboutthcars2>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.oneren.org/>

(Gemma Fraser, Art & Design Teacher, Castlehead High School).

### 3.2.2 The Cycle Arts Festival

The Cycle Arts Festival contributes to Step Change 2, Strategic Outcomes 4, 5 & 6, Step Change 3, Strategic Outcome 9 and Step Change 5, Strategic Outcomes 13, 14, & 15.

The first Cycle Arts Festival took place in August 2021. A second edition ran 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> August 2022. The Cycle Arts Festival<sup>19</sup> sought to blend events and activities designed to promote arts, cycling, environments and wellbeing. Working in mixed media and in collaboration with local communities, artists delivered specific creative interventions tied to places along cycle routes around Renfrewshire. By creating work for unusual or significant locations and localities, the festival aimed to deliver a narrative of place for Renfrewshire linking to ideas of environmental sustainability, wellbeing, embedded local cultures, history of place, cycling and social change.

Intended Festival outcome aims included:

- Fostering an environment in which groups or individuals collaborated to deliver the festival (building on the success of the 2021 edition).
- Inspiring locals living close by the Paisley – Lochwinnoch cycle route altered their usual routine to view the outdoor art events.
- Encouraging local people explored the arts route and exhibitions by bike and on foot.
- Inspiring artists and arts organisations to reconsider where and how arts events can be staged.

The 2022 event focussed on cycle generated power, featuring a Cycle Powered Music Showcase at Lochwinnoch in partnership with the Castle Semple Visitors Centre. Many events were free and the ‘pop-up’ nature of a great number of the festival’s elements led to people happening upon them during their daily activities around an about the Paisley – Lochwinnoch cycle route. Guided rides to the featured artworks and Dr Bike repair and maintenance services were also included in the programme. Overall, the programme comprised 22 events in 11 locations on or near the cycle route, 7 live performances, 5 exhibitions (3 installations), 2 days of short film showings, 6 workshops, 5 cycling events and 1 cycle powered music showcase and, 33 artists participated to deliver the event.

The Cycle Arts Festival was delivered in collaboration with several local and national partners.<sup>20</sup> *Future Paisley* provided just over £12,500 of the overall £32,923 funding to support the festival. Over the course of its 2022 activities, the Cycle Arts Festival reached around 2,300 children and adults, for comparison, the 2021 event recorded 725 attendees.

Feedback from attendees at the event included:

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<sup>19</sup> <https://cycleartsrenfrewshire.co.uk/>. Development of the website allows event partners or any other organisation presenting creative activities connected to the cycle route to present them on the site throughout the year (see: Cycle Arts Festival Renfrewshire 2022. A Place Partnership at OneRen project Report for Funders)

<sup>20</sup> Sustrans, Cycling UK, Castle Semple Visitors Centre, ReMode, The Scope Network, Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust and Lochwinnoch Arts Festival, (photographer and filmmaker) Kevin Cameron, (textile artist and researcher) Gillian Steel, Morrisons at Johnstone and OneRen.

- “[I’ve learned] [h]ow some arts events can seem embedded into a place. ‘The Art of Weaving’ short film seemed part of the Renfrewshire woods, as though the plants for natural dyes are around us too. There is so much of nature we have forgotten. More like this please!”
- “[...] it was great to see dance in a public place and, also to how people reacted to it as they stumbled upon it. It worked well in a rural setting too.”
- “It’s great to see a performance like this in Johnstone. We just don’t get anything like this!”
- “Where else but in Paisley could an event like this about textiles happen – and within meters of one of its historic mill buildings! This made it feel all-the-more relevant to me and others who have grown up here and live here.”
- “I liked the way this workshop had just popped up in Morrisons car park. Like it seemed quite natural to be there for local people to enjoy! It was lovely to watch I hope more people stop like me and get involved!”
- “I didn’t think this [the cycle powered music stage] would work but it’s just inspiring with all the really talented local musicians and with Music Broth supporting! I loved Scunnart! The setting is beautiful and works really well. What a real find for an outdoor music event like this. let’s make it an annual event!!!”
- “We learned about the amphibians in our garden pond!”

### 3.2.3. Wallneuk Crafters (initially: Women’s Unpaid Work)

Wallneuk Crafters contributes to Step Change 2, Strategic Outcome 4 and Step Change 3, Strategic Outcome 8.

Wallneuk Crafters began in September 2019 (initially as Women’s Unpaid Work) and ended in September 2023. Initially the project was slated to cease activity in April 2023. However, the decision was taken to extend the timeframe. Alongside delivery partners, Renfrewshire Council Criminal Justice, the project initially relied upon £18,750 in funding of which almost £9,000 was derived from *Future Paisley*.<sup>21</sup> Wallneuk Crafters aimed to develop and make a range of textile products with women who attend the workshop sessions. These products were then sold to benefit social causes. The project enabled the development of practical and creative skills and – through participation – sought to increase confidence, resilience and aspirations for women attending the group.<sup>22</sup> Wallneuk Crafters’ sessions were based in Paisley, but attendees came from across Renfrewshire.

Initially, Wallneuk Crafters focused on the development of a range of products which were sold to sustain the group’s activities. This work then progressed and diversified into a Paisley Threads project which comprised the creation of fidget blankets based on Paisley’s textile heritage and, for donation to care home residents in Renfrewshire.

Over the course of the first reporting period (to September 2022), Wallneuk Crafters reached 30 women who attended who attended workshops in alternate weeks until their COs were completed. Though the COVID19 pandemic women were able to produce work at home and guidance was

<sup>21</sup>The extension was supported with additional funding, thus the final budget for the project has been not less than £20,000 through to June 2023 (correspondence with Micaela Levesque, 18.10.2023).

<sup>22</sup> Wallneuk Crafters participants were recipients of court mandated Community Orders (CO). Each case is assessed and allocated to an appropriate group. Women allocated to Wallneuk Crafters qualify as vulnerable and might not be able to cope in a mixed group, for example, they have often experienced domestic abuse and/or mental health challenges.

provided. A textile artist – Nikkita Morgan<sup>23</sup> – was commissioned to lead several work strands. These included:

- Introduction to Embroidery
- Christmas Bunting for soup kitchens & food pantries
- Book bags: embroidered bags for local primary 1 pupils starting school in 2023

As the project developed outputs have included Zimmer Frame Bags for Paisley’s Disability Resource Centre and Care Homes and Spud Bags, for harvesting vegetables at local growing initiatives.

It is evident that the delivery team found collection of feedback from Wallneuk Crafters participants challenging (this is often the case when working with vulnerable and/or marginalised groups). In addition, COs are mandatory, thus women may have entered the programme with varying levels of expectation and may not have felt positive about their prospects however, some responses were forthcoming. For example,

- *“Can I get a full-time job here please? 😊”*
- *“I have loved learning how to stitch.”*
- *“I have most enjoyed learning how to use the sewing machine.”*

In the period March – October 2022, five women completed their COs with Wallneuk feeding back that:

- *“The project has helped me with my confidence.”*
- *“I will take everything I have learned into the future.”*

In the period April – July 2023, two women completed their COs with the Wallneuk group, with observations that:

- *“I have enjoyed making things, especially bags. I hope to continue to sew in the future.”* And,
- *“I won't know what to do with my Mondays anymore! I have really enjoyed coming and chatting to you all & learning new sewing skills each week.”*

Furthermore, the Wallneuk Crafters project manager observed that: *“As the Manager of the Unpaid Work Unit, I have noticed that the women working with the Artist appear more engaged in the work they are doing and appear more confident in trying new skills. This will hopefully have a positive impact upon them in the future in terms of their self-confidence and self-belief.”*

### 3.3 Evidence Reviews

As part of our ongoing work within CCSE, we agreed with Renfrewshire Council to provide a series of rapid reviews of grey and academic literature that draws on work locally and elsewhere to inform the activities of *Future Paisley*.

To date 3 reviews have been completed. These are:

- **The Role of Arts & Culture in Lifting Communities Out of Poverty (2020/21)**
  - This work examined, policy approaches to the utilisation of arts and culture for social good.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://nikkitamorgan.com/>

- Art and culture and the alleviation of poverty in developing and transition economies.
  - UK based examples of interventions with more tangible economic effects, and
  - Social prescribing & Social prescribing and social capital.
- **Social Value of Community Events (2021/22)**
    - This review presents an overview of research regarding the social value of community events.
    - Addresses collective and shared social impacts linked to community and connectedness.
    - Examines the impact at an individual level.
    - Identifies any negative impacts from hosting and staging events locally.
    - Presents the methods & approaches used to assess the social value of events.
- **Wellbeing and Measurement (2022/23)**  
In this review, we are particularly seeking insight into:
    - What measures, particularly standardised, are commonly used to gauge wellbeing in projects focussed on arts, culture and mental health?
    - What are the pitfalls/challenges or examples of great practice?
    - What, if anything can we learn about proportional/appropriate application of tools?
    - What, if anything can we learn about data collection methods and issues – e.g., collecting data from young people?

These reviews are available to read on the Future Paisley Resources tab of the CCSE website, the final reviews in the series will be published here in due course.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.3.1 Policy Insight Papers Drawing on Doctoral Research

As part of the *Future Paisley* work, a trio of doctoral research students were recruited to investigate three areas of policy and activity of particular interest to the *Future Paisley* Partnership and, the Council going forward. Having begun their work in 2019 these researchers have now completed their explorations of the cultural and policy landscape in Paisley and Renfrewshire.

In addition to the final thesis, each researcher has written a briefer policy insights document that aims to highlight the areas of their work of particular interest to *Future Paisley* stakeholders.

- Dr Lan Pham considers the health and wellbeing dimension of *Future Paisley* in **Building a radical vision for health and wellbeing in Paisley**.
- Dr Conor Wilson looks at how Paisley's image and reputation have been constructed and, how this relates to changing ideas about cultural regeneration within the town in **Telling the untold story: Image, representation and cultural regeneration in Paisley**.

<sup>24</sup> <https://ccse.uws.ac.uk/resources/>



- Niclas Hell reflects on the **Public value of festivals and events: A Case Study of Paisley's City of Culture Events Legacy**.

### 3.4 Next Steps

- The evaluation team will continue to provide support to Project Leads in the process of designing and delivering their project evaluations.
- The fourth and fifth evidence reviews will be completed.
- Two additional case studies (focussing on the Halloween Festival and Paisley Museum) will be prepared.
- A final report – building upon this interim report – will round out the Paisley story and reflect further on the process will be finalised by the end of May 2024.
- The resources webpage will be augmented with reporting and evaluation material deriving from *Future Paisley* activity. Open to all, the page will be a permanent legacy of the *Future Paisley* investments enabling other interested parties to review the activities undertaken and to utilise the archived learning deriving from these.
- The above will help to embed the leaning from *Future Paisley* and the evaluation process at an institutional level within Renfrewshire based stakeholder bodies. The evaluation team will seek to support this process as appropriate including mentorship opportunities and forum for debates and professional development.

## 4.0 References

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## Appendix B: Full List of Future Paisley Projects

This list is a full list of Future Paisley projects sorted by their pillar of activity.

Pillar of Activity	Sub-Category	Project Title	Description
Programming	Festivals	Cycle Arts Festival (PLACE)	Cycle Arts Festival in an outdoor mixed arts festival held in Renfrewshire celebrating art, nature, and the joy of cycling. The festival features art installations, performance pieces, and film screenings along a cycle route between Paisley and Lochwinnoch. The festival was launched during Future Paisley in 2021 and ownership of the festival has now been passed on to a volunteer oversight group which plans to continue the festival in 2024.
		Paisley Book Festival	Launched in 2020, the Paisley Book Festival (PBF) is a flagship event for Renfrewshire. The 10-day festival features a diverse programme with a variety of guest authors including an annual Writer in Residence sponsored by Creative Scotland as well as an annual school outreach programme bringing authors directly to Renfrewshire schools.
		Paisley Halloween Festival	The Paisley Halloween Festival is a major annual event for Renfrewshire, drawing in some of the largest audiences of any event throughout the year and generating significant income for Renfrewshire businesses. The festival was founded in 2014 before the Future Paisley programme began. Future Paisley's contributions have supported the festival in expanding their community engagement programme.
		Mòd Phàislig Fringe Festival	The Royal National Mòd (also called The Mòd) is the largest festival of Gaelic speaking in Scotland. It was held in Paisley in 2023 (Mòd Phàislig). Future Paisley funded the Fringe programme which featured children's activities, several exciting themed Family Cèilidhs, and live music in bars across Paisley among other activities. The Mòd Phàislig Fringe also hosted the opening and closing concerts for the festival.
	Events	Open Mind Summit	The inaugural Open Mind Summit took place in Renfrewshire in October 2019 and continued via digital delivery in 2020 and 2021. The summit brought together young people and professionals across services to explore the role of creativity and culture in improving young people's wellbeing through three days of presentations and activities.

		Renfrew on Film	Renfrew on Film is an annual event that brings together archival footage of Renfrewshire with modern artistic commissions inspired by the area. The programme includes one major event in Renfrewshire town hall as well as a series of outreach screenings at local care homes and churches. This year 2023 was the programmes 9th year; however, it has only been funded by Future Paisley for the past 2 years when it returned to in person events following the Coronavirus pandemic.
		Renfrew Pipe Band Competition	The inaugural Renfrew Pipe Band Competition was held in 2023 and featured pipers and drummers from across Scotland playing bagpipes drums through Renfrew.
		Scots Language Awards	The award ceremony for the Scots Language Awards was held in Johnstone Town Hall in 2023 supported by Future Paisley.
	Productions	Common is as Common Does with 21 Common	Common is as Common Does was a theatre and dance production developed by the acclaimed production company 21 Common in partnership with residents of Johnstone. The piece was performed by residents of Johnstone and premiered at the Johnstone Town Hall.
		NTS Future Proof	Paisley participated in the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) “Future Proof” project through the production of the play <i>Do’s and Don’ts</i> . The production was co-created with a professional artist sourced by NTS and local young people and took place in a large truck which toured around Paisley during the production.
		NTS OZ!	This collaboration with National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) was originally scoped to take place during Summer 2023, however, the production was unable to go forward and the contracts had to be dissolved.
		Other Side of the River	This project was a professional quality theatre production co-produced by One Ren and In Motion Theatre Company. The production included an extensive community engagement programme, a premiere in Renfrewshire, and a national tour to 8 locations in Scotland that are not on the standard theatre touring route.
		Pace Partnership	Pace Theatre in partnership with One Ren are commissioning writer Frances Poet to write a new play that will be produced and premiered in Paisley. The

			performance will be a professional performance featuring young people on equal footing with the professional actors.
		Performance Programme (Children and Families)	This programme includes many smaller theatrical productions run by One Ren, with a particular focus on material appropriate for younger audiences.
		Positive Stories for Negative Times with Wonder Fools	This project, led by theatre company Wonder Fools in collaboration with Traverse theatre, allowed young people around the world to participate in creative activities despite the long-lasting challenges produced by the 2020 pandemic through the commission of five short plays. Future Paisley covered fees allowing two Paisley based organisations to participate.
		Project Development	Two theatre artists, Oliver Emmanuel and Gareth Williams, were hired to develop some potential ideas for theatre productions which were ultimately not taken forward by the Future Paisley programme.
		Radical War	Radical War 1820-2020 aimed to mark 200 years since Scotland's Radical War of 1820 and raise awareness of Paisley's role in it. A series of events were planned with the local community and included a series of installations and digital events that could be enjoyed while social distancing.
		Thread	<i>Thread</i> was the title of a new Scottish musical created by Fraser Scott, Iona Ramsay and Bethany Tennick of Paisley based theatre and film production company Kick the Door. Thread was presented in co-production between Kick the Door and OneRen at Renfrew Town Hall in May 2022.
		Underwood Lane	<i>Underwood Lane</i> was the title of a theatre co-production between Tron Theatre and One Ren. The production saw the premier a new John Byrne musical play at the Johnstone Town Hall with a subsequent run in the Tron Theatre in Glasgow.
	Commissions	Artist in Residence at Erskine Arts (PLACE)	This project brought an artist to Erskine to design an installation in an unused outdoor space near the Erskine Arts building. This project was part of the Place Partnership with Creative Scotland.
		Dargavel Modular Classroom Design	This project brings an artist together to work with the Dargavel Pupil Council to co-design the interior of 3 new modular classroom units that will be located in the grounds of Dargavel Primary School.
		Future Paisley Exhibition	The Future Paisley Exhibition was a physical exhibition looking at Paisley's past, present and future, and the assets and attributes that make it a

			resilient place that has seen it through past difficulties and that it can build from to face challenges of its future. Visitors had the opportunity to contribute through visual engagement mechanisms and through written cards.
		Glen Cinema Commemoration	This project commemorated the 90th anniversary of the Glen Cinema disaster, in which 69 children were killed and 40 were injured during a children's matinee. It included the creation of a new public artwork within Paisley town centre, which was developed through collaboration with local people.
		Windows on COP26 (PLACE)	Paisley Windows on COP 26 was a climate action themed art trail around Paisley Town Centre utilising the window space of local Renfrewshire businesses with an accompanying screening event
	Building Opening Programmes	Library Opening Programme	This programme of events will accompany the opening of the new Paisley Library on the Paisley High Street.
		Museum Closing Events	This programme of events accompanied the closing of the Museum prior to renovation.
		Museum Opening Events	This programme of events will accompany the opening of the new Paisley Museum.
		Paisley Arts Centre Opening Programme	This programme of events will accompany the opening of the refurbished Paisley Arts Centre.
		Paisley Town Hall Opening Programme	This programme of events will accompany the opening of the new Paisley Museum.
	Cultural Engagement Programmes	Artists in Residence Gallowhill	Artists & Residents Gallowhill was a project which brought artists to the Gallowhill area to co-create with residents a socially engaged arts programme building connections, confidence and skills and embedding culture within Gallowhill.
		Easter Programme	The Easter programme was aimed at children and families during the school holidays to allow them to spend quality together time in Johnstone and Renfrew Town Hall venues. The events included film screens and arts workshops.
		Libraries Programme	This budget programming delivered by One Ren in libraries across Renfrewshire.

		Summer Camps Across Renfrewshire 2023	This project funded a range of activity to be delivered during the schools Summer Break across Renfrewshire. The activity was specifically selected to ensure that children, young people, care experienced young people and young carers, and young people with additional needs were able to access Summer programming.
		Summer of Fun	Summer of Fun 2023 was a programme that supported local organisations to run free arts and culture activity for young people during the 2023 Summer Holiday. Future Paisley supported three specific projects that applied for grants to bolster the arts and culture offering for the programme.
		Tannahill Makar	The Tannahill Makar assumes the role of Poetry Ambassador for Renfrewshire. They run a programme of literature and cultural events with community organisations and reflects the life of Renfrewshire through formal readings of poetry at dates requested by The Provost's Office and One Ren.
		Winter Connections	Winter Connections was a programme which created cultural opportunities within warm spaces for the wintertime. Grants were all under £2,000 and created a large programme of activities.
		YoYP Legacy Project	This programme was funded as a continuation of the work completed during the 2017 Year of Young People and included events for young people and families around the theme of "Participation".
Marketing	Marketing Renfrewshire	One Ren Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement	This budget covered the reoccurring funding for One Ren which supports their marketing and stakeholder engagement programme.
		Paisley Museum Branding and Marketing	Future Paisley funded the development of a three-year marketing strategy to support the launch of Paisley Museum and position it as a must-see attraction in the west of Scotland. PR firm Flint was then hired as a consultant to create a national tactic plan to deliver the Paisley Museum strategy.
		Paisley.is	Paisley.is is the destination brand for Paisley and Renfrewshire that was funded and developed from Future Paisley. The brand's purpose is to tell the story of Paisley and Renfrewshire in a new and positive way and position Paisley and Renfrewshire as a great place to visit, invest, live and work.

		PR Agency - AMA	To support the launch of the Paisley.is brand, PR Agency AMA was contracted to develop a targeted PR and media strategy. The contract was funded by Future Paisley.
	Data Commissions and Cultural Insights	Evaluation of Events Programme	The Renfrewshire Council Events Team annually commissioned an evaluation and analysis of the major events throughout the year.
		Great Place Scheme	The Great Spaces Scheme was a programme run by the National Lottery supporting council areas to gain insight into their cultural landscape through consultation with the local arts community. Renfrewshire applied and was selected, seeking to learn how to build capacity and leadership as a cultural destination, transform area image and create a sustainable platform for future development and to support heritage and culture.
		UNESCO Creative Cities Consultation	Future Paisley funded an external consultant report exploring the possibility of Paisley becoming a UNESCO Creative City. The report ultimately recommended against it.
		Vis a Vis Evaluation of Arts Connection	Future Paisley funded a consultation from company Vis a Vis to assess the best way to support the organisations that have received CODF funding (also known as Arts Connection).
		Vis a Vis Evaluation of CHEF/CODF	Future Paisley funded a consultation from Vis a Vis about the operational elements of CHEF and CODF.
		Visitor Data Commission	Several key organisations in Scotland collect data on visitor trends in local regions as well as nationally. Future Paisley provided funds to give Renfrewshire access to this data.
Creative Industries Development	Cultural Funding	CHEF	The Culture, Heritage, and Events Fund (CHEF) delivered a variety of arts and culture programmes across Renfrewshire through grants to local organisations. Programmes ranged from small creative writing groups to internationally touring plays and were regularly able to work with niche interest groups or reach populations that were more likely to be missed by the large-scale events delivered through the rest of the Future Paisley programme. The fund also served as a devolved investment in Renfrewshire's cultural economy, building a cultural network beyond the

			council and giving organisations the opportunity to build experience with applying for funding grants to support cultural activity.
		CODF	The Cultural Organisations Development Fund was a unique fund open specifically for Renfrewshire organisations delivering creative and cultural programmes to develop their organisation and build capacity. CODF was unique from other organisational development funds as it was completely adaptable to each organisation, ensuring that the funds would be used to address their specific needs and set them up for long term success.
		Creative Wellbeing Fund (CAHSC)	The Creative Wellbeing Fund aimed to improve the wellbeing of Renfrewshire residents (adults aged 18+) living with the impact of inequalities through <i>increasing opportunities</i> for participation in arts and cultural activities. It funded a variety of new programmes across Renfrewshire designed for target groups who have previously had less access to arts and culture events.
		Making Arts and Culture Accessible Fund (CAHSC)	The Making Arts and Culture Accessible Fund aimed to improve the wellbeing of Renfrewshire residents (adults aged 18+) living with the impact of inequalities through <i>removing barriers</i> to accessing artistic and cultural activities. It funded a variety of accessibility measures for arts and culture events, training for staff about working with people with additional support needs, and subsidised tickets for target groups to attend arts and culture events.
		RCRRF	Renfrewshire's Cultural Recovery and Renewal fund (RCRRF) was a collection of three grant programmes established during the pandemic in 2020 using £211,257 of repurposed CHEF and CODF funds. The three funding streams were Artists Development Grant (ADG), Town Centre & Neighbourhood Creative Installations (TCNCI), and Cultural Organisation Support (COS) and they all contributed to supporting artists and cultural organisations during the sudden closure of cultural venues.
		VACMA	The Visual Arts and Craft Makers Awards (VACMA) is a small grants programme run by Creative Scotland in partnership with local authorities. The grants support professional visual artists and craft makers in their creative development. Future Paisley has provided funding to allow

			Renfrewshire to participate in VACMA for 11 funding rounds between 2019 and 2023.
	Artist Support	Arts Connection	Arts Connection is a voluntary network of established arts organisations in Renfrewshire who have all received CODF funding to discuss their work and explore possible collaborations.
		Creative Networks Support (PLACE)	This project funded a Creative Network Promoter for Creative Renfrewshire to create a digital directory of creative professionals on the Creative Renfrewshire website. This project delivered the specific strand in the Renfrewshire Place Partnership focused on supporting creative networks in Renfrewshire.
		Cultural Development Workshops	The Cultural Development Workshops were a series of events available for creatives and cultural organisations who live, work or practise in Renfrewshire. Workshops addressed key business practice topics for creative workers and provided advice for building portfolio and gaining career stability.
		Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group	The Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group is a group working together to co-produce, programme, and curate work relevant to Renfrewshire's Ethnic Community throughout the year.
		Greenroom Sessions	The Greenroom Sessions were a series of artist led meet-up/networking sessions for theatre and performance creatives and freelancers who work or live in or around Renfrewshire. Each session had a particular focus to incentivise attendance across the wide scope of disciplines that can be encompassed under the heading of "theatre and performance".
		In the Frame	In the Frame was a project aimed at supporting the films scene in Renfrewshire. It included 4 key projects: Online meetups, Renfrewshire Moving Image Showreel, New Voices, and Making Movie Movies.
		POP Newsletter	POP! News is a digital newsletter for creative professionals in Renfrewshire. The letter is emailed to subscribers monthly and shares links and information about national and local funding, creative networks, work opportunities, and inspiration.
		Sam'sh Hits	Sma'sh Hits was a project to launch a creative collective of musicians in and around Renfrewshire, aimed at providing an opportunity for creative people



			to meet, connect, discuss ideas, and collaborate. This was ultimately delivered through a monthly Open Mic Night.
Strategic Development	Embedding Arts in Services	Art Boss	ARTBOSS is Young Creative Producers project developed and delivered as part of Future Paisley. The programme introduces care experienced young people to key skills in arts producing to break down barriers to the national arts and cultural landscape. It is a partnership between One Ren and Renfrewshire Council Youth Services and is overseen by the Culture, Arts and Social Care group, a strategic group established as part of the Future Paisley programme.
		Artists in Residence Seedhill (The Bothy Project)	This project worked with people in recovery to make a Bothy space in the grounds of CIRCLE Recovery Hub on Paisley Road where meetings, workshops, events can happen. It is organised by service users in recovery and supported by both One Ren and CIRCLE.
		CHAT (CAHSC)	The Culture, Arts, and Health Training (CHAT) programme is a training programme covering health awareness sessions and creative practices for medical practitioners, allowing health and social care professionals to build and awareness of cultural activities and organisations they can bring into their practice.
		Colouring Renfrewshire	This project worked in partnership with Project Search Renfrewshire to offer creative work experience and help with future employability for young people with learning disabilities and autism. The young people chose events and locations in Renfrewshire to be included in a Colouring Renfrewshire 2 book, commissioned artists to create the book, and managed the production and promotion of the final book.
		Creative Learning Programme	The Creative Learning Programme worked in partnership with schools across Renfrewshire to co-create the formal learning offer for the new Paisley Museum. 12 schools went through intensive workshops to co-create the new cultural curriculum offered by museum staff for visiting schools and the plans were shared with and reviewed by other schools throughout the network.
		Cultural Champions Network	The Cultural Champions programme was a project that created a network of named champions in schools across Renfrewshire who shared information

			about the wider cultural offer in Renfrewshire. Future Paisley funded a network co-ordinator who helped package the offer, identify barriers to access, develop audience engagement strategies and encourage uptake.
		Cultural Social Prescribing	Cultural and Social Prescribing was a programme working to improve community health and wellbeing through connections to existing cultural programmes in Renfrewshire. Future Paisley funded a part-time Cultural and Social Prescribing Officer post, who worked with clients experiencing loneliness and isolation to connect them with opportunities to make meaningful connections with others. The Officer worked in partnership with a network of One Ren services and wellbeing organisations to identify cultural programmes and worked with GP Community Links to identify potential participants in the programme.
		Cultural Volunteering Programme	This budget supported the development of new system to support One Ren’s volunteering opportunities. The project included the creation of policies, opportunity screening procedures, and a digital platform for promoting volunteering opportunities in Renfrewshire. These new systems have been launched and are ready to support the increase in opportunities as Renfrewshire’s cultural venues begin to reopen.
		Renfrewshire Community Wellbeing Network (CAHSC)	As part of the Culture Arts Health and Social Care programme, a network was created with organisations in Renfrewshire interested in supporting cultural activity for people involved in health and social care services.
		Renfrewshire Promise Champions	This project was part of upholding Renfrewshire Council’s commitment to #KeepthePromise to improve experiences for care experienced young people. Working with care experienced young people serving as “Promise Champions”, the council co-designed and developed a 10-week arts programme supported them to share the experiences of care experienced young people with the community via arts and culture.
		The Promise Arts and Culture	This project was part of upholding Renfrewshire Council’s commitment to #KeepthePromise to improve experiences for care experienced young people. The Promise Arts and Culture Programme engaged young people who may be disadvantaged and marginalised due to their lived experience of care and caring to get involved and stay involved in arts and culture. The

			programme included a summer arts programme as well as a variety of individual events to reach those who could not regularly attend a full programme.
		Wallenuk Crafters	Wallenuk Crafters (previously called Women's Unpaid Work) is a collaboration with One Ren and Renfrewshire Council Criminal Justice which allows people completing Community Payback Orders to participate in craft projects that give back to the community as a way of completing their Unpaid Work hours. The group is led by a professional textile artist and builds participants confidence while giving them a new creative skill. The programme has facilitated the completion of 2957 hours of CPO.
	Long-Term Partnerships	Castlehead School of Creativity with Glasgow School of Art	Castlehead School of Creativity is a partnership developed during the Paisley 2021 UK City of Culture Bid and delivered through the support of Future Paisley. The partnership is between Castlehead Highschool and Glasgow School of Art. Together, they have created a programme that develops creative, confident and curious young people through studio-based teaching and learning integrated across a broad range of disciplines. Since the School of Creativity's inception, Castlehead has become a top school in Art and Design in Scotland, shown improved outcomes for students, and brought thousands of young people to the Glasgow School of Arts campus to see the potential of their creativity in a professional and academic setting.
		CCSE Research Centre with UWS	The Centre for Culture, Sports, and Events is a collaboration between Renfrewshire Council and University of West Scotland to create and academic hub for culture research in Renfrewshire. The initial agreement provided funding from Future Paisley for 3 PhD students to complete research through the centre on topics relevant to Renfrewshire's cultural ambitions and included a variety of research outputs from the centre to increase the knowledge base around Renfrewshire's cultural economy.
		Johnstone Textile Space (PLACE)	Johnstone Textile Space is a partnership working project developed with local Johnstone and Renfrewshire Partners – organisations and artists—to take a vacant space in Johnstone Town Centre and create a destination space that champions contemporary innovation within textiles and applied

			arts and celebrates uniqueness of place for Johnstone and the historical Textile production in the area.
		Paisley Film and Media Space (PLACE)	This project supported a core collective of Renfrewshire film makers and digital artists to lease an accessible vacant space in Paisley Town Centre to create an embedded cultural space which reimagines the Digital future of Renfrewshire toward 2045. This is part of the Place Partnership Vacant space to Creative use development strand. The partnership found space in the High Smiley Building, which is currently being refurbished by UWS, with plans for the group to run the cultural space in partnership with the University after renovations are complete.
		The Sculpture House	Sculpture House Collective (SHC) are a visual and community arts organisation. Sculpture House Collective comprises of three artists: Laura Aldridge, Nick Evans, and James Rigler. The Sculpture House is an innovative collaboration with Renfrewshire Council, providing the collective a studio and creative space in Ferguslie Park in exchange for cultural services run by the artists for the local community. The collective has a long-term lease of the space to allow them to fully embed in the community. Since establishing themselves in the building in October 2022, the group has delivered nearly 100 cultural sessions through public programming and schools outreach programmes and regularly fully book activities held in the space.
Cultural Workforce	Funded Posts	One Ren Posts	Future Paisley has provided funding to cover increased staffing costs at One Ren as they have delivered the cultural offer and cultural strategy for Renfrewshire during Future Paisley.
		Renfrewshire Council Posts	Future Paisley has provided funding to cover increased staffing costs within the Council as they have delivered the new destination brand and marketing strategy and overseen the delivery of the Future Paisley programme.
		Temporary Posts (CAHSC, Place Coordinator, etc.)	Several projects mentioned above have included temporary posts that have supported their delivery. These include the CAHSC Coordinator, the Place Partnership Coordinator, the Cultural and Social Prescribing Officer and several other positions. These posts were funded through project budgets,

			but ultimately were part of the cultural workforce supporting the Future Paisley programme.
	Operational Costs	Partnership Participation Fund	This budget covered administrative fees incurred during the delivery of the Future Paisley programme including costs for hosting Leadership Board and the Steering Group, transportation for touring the cultural venue build sites, and a variety of other costs.



## ArtBOSS Case Study

Dr Sophie Mamattah CCSE/UWS

## Background & Introduction

ArtBOSS is an innovative arts and creativity programme for young people. It focuses on the provision of arts and creativity opportunities for care experienced young people and young carers (primarily 14-18 age group) with the aim of enabling participants to develop their skill set while also supporting them to access activities with which they may not otherwise engage. This partnership model was devised to combine arts programming with a youth work approach to sustain engagement with the young people who attended. This model aimed to safeguard young people, improve health and wellbeing, and develop personal and social skills which could be bench marked against Youth Work outcomes.

A range of activities, including regular meet ups, workshops, artist engagement, mentoring, event planning/delivery and field trips comprise the dynamic and diverse approach taken to programme delivery. ArtBOSS aimed to provide a setting within which participants might:

- Develop a set of transferable competences, including project management, communication, marketing, contracting, evaluation and risk assessment.
- Enhance their soft skills, such as team-working, problem-solving and communication/ relational skills.
- Cultivate a network of contacts within and across the arts and cultural realm, potentially leading to valuable volunteering and career development opportunities.
- Increase their awareness of wellbeing and mental health.
- Benefit from increasing their awareness of the importance of good mental health and, potentially, to experience improvement in their own wellbeing and mental health.<sup>1</sup>

Initially developed through the Culture, Health and Social Care (CAHSC) group, ArtBOSS derives from a partnership between OneRen, Renfrewshire Council Youth Services and Children's Services. ArtBOSS is part of the Future Paisley programme.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See: Future Paisley 2021 Reporting Template— Art Boss (29th October 2021).

<sup>2</sup> As the programme progressed, management and reporting were conducted through Youth Services and OneRen with a joint report submitted to Future Paisley on a quarterly basis.

Future Paisley, a 'programme of cultural events and activity based around Paisley and Renfrewshire's unique and internationally significant story which uses targeted investment to deliver positive change'<sup>3</sup> has supported ArtBOSS with funding of £87,781 over three<sup>4</sup> years. ArtBOSS was initially intended to run from March 2020 to January 2023<sup>5</sup>. The first ArtBOSS cohort that began activity in March 2020 graduated in March 2022 to become Yo! Producers, (AKA: Yo! Producers or Creative Young Producers). A new ArtBOSS group also started at this time, running concurrently with the Yo! Producers and, for which members of Yo! Producers had the opportunity to fulfil mentoring roles, passing on—and further enhancing—their knowledge and experience.<sup>6</sup>

In this case study, we draw on published reports and key stakeholder interviews to explore the contribution that ArtBOSS and associated activities have made to the Future Paisley programme. Part of the Future Paisley Evaluation Framework, ArtBOSS is an excellent representation of Step Change 2 [Raise Prosperity and Increase Wellbeing in our Communities], Outcome 5: Children and young people thrive through everyday access to arts and culture. The aims and objectives that have underpinned the approach taken within ArtBOSS contribute to a range of outputs correlated to Outcome 5. These findings are set within the relevant parts of the outputs, outcomes and indicator frameworks developed as part of the Future Paisley evaluation process. Furthermore, ArtBOSS outcomes contribute to Step Change 1 [Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and internationally], Outcome 1: Increased Civic Pride.

Reviewing the data provided, we can evidence the ways in which the activity supported through ArtBOSS has facilitated access to arts and culture for those who are often found to be under-represented in this realm. Furthermore, involvement with ArtBOSS has enabled participants to multiply the benefit accruing from their involvement.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/futurepaisley>

<sup>4</sup> Initially Y1—£16,000; Y2—£24,500; Y3—£30,000. Y1 & Y2 recorded underspends on their available budgets (see: Future Paisley Reporting Template—ArtBOSS (May-October 2022)). An additional £17,781 supported the extension of the programme from April – September 2023. These funds were reassigned following the closure of another project (correspondence with Micaela Levesque, 31.10.2023).

<sup>5</sup> ArtBOSS has been funded until September 2023 and have applied to the National Lottery Community Fund (Young Start) for external funding to continue their activities (interview with Marie Collins, October 2023). See: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/young-start>

<sup>6</sup> A core group of 12-14 young people attended the first iteration of ArtBOSS regularly. Approximately 8-10 of them have progressed to Yo! Producers. ArtBOSS II has about 6 new starts attending consistently (interview with Marie Collins, October 2023).



Renfrewshire has a coherent, diverse and accessible cultural offer for children and young people, which meets their needs.

<sup>7</sup> Initially, the majority of referrals were made by Children's Services. Gradually, the process has evolved. Most referrals now come from social work area teams, schools and their Wellbeing Officers and from other groups within Youth Services (interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Correspondence with Siobhan Gray & Fiona Taylor, 30.10.2023.

<sup>9</sup> ArtBOSS programme Report October-December 2022.

ArtBOSS set out to provide arts and cultural opportunities for care experienced children and young people and young carers. In so doing, the programme is specifically aimed at a group which might otherwise encounter barriers to participation or, to accessing arts and culture through conventional channels. ArtBOSS is a targeted programme<sup>7</sup>, every effort is made to understand a young person's needs before they join the programme and, to identify any barriers that they may need support to overcome prior to attending the group.<sup>8</sup> ArtBOSS offers clear avenues through which participants can access arts and cultural activities within their communities.

The activities undertaken within ArtBOSS encompass a diverse range of opportunities, incorporating a variety of arts and cultural types. For example, the programme of meet ups from October through December 2022 included Halloween workshops, pumpkin carving and costume making, photo shoots, event planning (for Frosty Festive Town Christmas event), a Christmas gift drive and pantomime attendance.<sup>9</sup> Across its full timeline, ArtBOSS has provided the opportunity for the young producers to:

- Work with a professional artist to create and publish their own graphic novel,<sup>10</sup>
- Contribute their views on the reconfiguration of Paisley Museum (working with Museum staff to highlight their preferences for the space and develop a social media),
- Work with Lateral North<sup>11</sup> as part of the Townscape, Heritage & Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme 2 (TH.CARS2). ArtBOSSes were the main producers of a new walking tour app charting Paisley's musical history,<sup>12</sup>
- Visit cultural spaces and review exhibitions, activity which also contributed to ArtBOSSes completion of their Bronze Art Award.<sup>13</sup>
- Participate in film-making workshops with artist Seamus Killick.

The programme of activities that comprises ArtBOSS is designed and developed in close consultation with participants. This co-productive approach has intensified over time. Initially, ArtBOSS co-ordinators<sup>14</sup> concentrated on providing a wide range of taster opportunities. With time, the young people have been increasingly involved in deciding where to focus their attention with due consideration to the obligations of their Art Award portfolio and, available budget.<sup>15</sup> Such an approach allows for the fulfilment of external requirements while simultaneously ensuring that participants are interested and engaged in their programme and, have an awareness of factors that contribute to its realisation.

<sup>10</sup> See: The Attic [https://issuu.com/artboss/docs/graphic\\_novel\\_art\\_boss\\_5](https://issuu.com/artboss/docs/graphic_novel_art_boss_5). Workshops with the artist Charlotte Cabrie contributed to the graphic novel's development.

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://lateralnorth.com/>

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://paisley.is/visit/paisleys-musical-history/>. This work involved weekly sessions alongside Lateral North and local musicians, charting local musical history while also learning about sound recording, app integration and the Paisley music scene. Sessions contributing to this output included work with Fèis Phàislig (<https://feisphaislig.com/>), songwriter Michael Cassidy (<https://www.musicglue.com/michael-cassidy/about>) and a tour of – and recording session at – Bricklane Studios (RL Arts Team – Project Evaluation & Monitoring Framework, July – September 2021).

<sup>13</sup> RL Arts Team—Project Evaluation & Monitoring Framework, July–September 2021. Bronze Art Award, see: <https://www.artsaward.org.uk/site/?id=65>.

<sup>14</sup> the Arts Programme Coordinator and Community Learning Officer.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Marie Collins, October 2023.

# Participation in the arts and culture by the most disadvantaged children and young people is sustained

<sup>16</sup> See: Bronze Art Award Qualification Specification.

<sup>17</sup> The Bronze Art Award requires 40 hours of guided learning and an additional 20 hours of independent learning time. The award is of the same standard as GCSE grades 1-3. In order to achieve the award, learners are required to 'create an individual arts log or portfolio that demonstrates how they meet the following [criterion]: 1) Development of interests, knowledge and skills through active participation in any art form; 2) Experience of at least one arts event/experience as an audience member; 3) Research into the work of an artist/craftsperson that inspires them, and; 4) Experience of passing on an arts skill, (see: Bronze Art Award Qualification Specification).

<sup>18</sup> Correspondence with Siobhan Gray & Fiona Taylor, 30.10.2023.

<sup>19</sup> See: <https://www.artsaward.org.uk/site/?id=66> for outline and, for qualification criteria: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhwdmnr>.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Marie Collins, October 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023.

<sup>22</sup> RL Arts Team Project evaluation and monitoring framework—ArtBOSS (May–October 2022).

Through participation in ArtBOSS, young producers have had the opportunity to undertake their Bronze Art Award which aims to enable 'learners to develop a basic understanding of arts practice and some knowledge of arts provision in the community' and, through this process, 'to grow their arts and leadership talents'.<sup>16</sup> A qualification such as this requires the awardee to present their achievements in a systematic way.<sup>17</sup> In turn, this process assists them in recognising and—potentially—utilising their skills. In order to deliver and verify the Arts Award, Youth Services staff completed training with Trinity College. This approach facilitated the provision of an award that matches the arts and cultural experience.<sup>18</sup>

When, in March 2022, those participating in the first ArtBOSS cohort were able to proceed to the newly inaugurated Yo! Producers programme, they were in the process of completing their Bronze Art Award. Continuation to Yo! Producers came with the prospect of progressing towards completion of the Silver Art Award.<sup>19</sup> The creation of Yo! Producers has ensured that there is an onward pathway for those who have completed the initial programme and wish to continue their creative skills development. Further, the Silver Art Award, places greater emphasis on encouraging volunteering, mentoring and leadership qualities<sup>20</sup> and, 'finding out about professionals; arts professionals and what they do and how you can [...] go to university [and] do any kind of arts career.'<sup>21</sup> A number of Yo! Producers identified the achievement of their Silver Award as a primary goal in programme feedback.<sup>22</sup>

The initiatives undertaken through ArtBOSS have often created networking and steppingstone opportunities for widening knowledge of the local cultural and arts offerings and furthering participation in arts and culture in a variety of ways. For example:

- Work on the walking tour app developed to contribute to THCARS2 brought ArtBOSSes into contact with Fèis Phàislig, an arts organisation specialising in 'promoting interest, education and participation in the traditional arts and Gaelic culture across Renfrewshire'.<sup>23</sup>
- The music walking trail app launched at Paisley's Spree Festival, 2021.<sup>24</sup>
- Participation in artist facilitated workshops to construct giant creepy crawlies displayed at Paisley's Halloween Festival contributed to Bronze and Silver Art Award qualifications and, provided opportunity for some ArtBOSSes to volunteer as event stewards.<sup>25</sup>
- Graphic novel, The Attic, was launched at the Paisley Book Festival.<sup>26</sup>
- Collaboration with researchers at UWS on the Paisley School of Arts<sup>27</sup> project placed ArtBOSSes at the intersection between art, creativity and knowledge creation; using photography, video and sound recording to create artwork generate new ways of thinking about 'Paisley, people, arts and education'.<sup>28</sup>

Notably, feedback from ArtBOSSes highlighted the genuine enjoyment they experienced from the degree to which they were able to participate in the Fèis Phàislig led workshop. Further, one ArtBOSS observed 'through my experience at ArtBOSS, it has given me the confidence to volunteer at other creative groups.'<sup>29</sup> This latter point is underscored by ArtBOSS's Co-ordinator and Producer Marie Collins, who observed that involvement in ArtBOSS has led participants to discover additional groups of interest and, whereas previously lack of knowledge or confidence may have held them back, now 'they've got friends [...] they can go along with'. Furthermore, a wide range of trips and visits has opened up the local cultural landscape which has, in turn, been a catalyst for exploration.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See: <https://feisphaislig.com/>.

<sup>24</sup> See: <https://paisley.is/visit/paisleys-musical-history/>.

<sup>25</sup> ArtBOSS Programme Report October–December 2022.

<sup>26</sup> See: Artistic Youngsters Create a Graphic Novel—Paisley Daily Express.

<sup>27</sup> See: <https://sites.google.com/sbe.uws.ac.uk/psa/home>.

<sup>28</sup> RL Arts Team Project evaluation and monitoring framework – ArtBOSS (April–June 2022). See: Fresh Expeditions, <https://sites.google.com/sbe.uws.ac.uk/psa/community-projects/fresh-expeditions>

<sup>29</sup> See: Future Paisley 2021 Reporting Template: ArtBoss.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Marie Collins, October 2023.

Taking part in arts and cultural activities on a regular basis enhances young people's mental health and wellbeing.

<sup>31</sup> For example: Arts Council England, (2018); Fancourt & Finn (2019).

<sup>32</sup> Correspondence with Siobhan Gray & Fiona Taylor, 30.10.2023.

By way of helping care experienced young people and young carers to find pathways towards art and cultural endeavours, ArtBOSS has sought to enhance their mental health and wellbeing. The value of arts and culture for health and wellbeing outcomes is widely acknowledged.<sup>31</sup> Through provision of such activities, ArtBOSS opened a route towards the recognised benefits of such engagements. Furthermore, there were a wide range of settings in which ArtBOSS was delivered (workshops, both in-person and—as necessary through the Pandemic—online, day trips, events and other happenings), creating environments that functioned as safe spaces for social interaction—underpinned by a youth work pedagogy—and, when appropriate, discussion of worries, concerns and accomplishments and joys of day-to-day life.<sup>32</sup>

Among reported benefits, ArtBOSS participants described making new friends, being inspired by others, increased confidence and self-esteem, improved teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills.<sup>33</sup> ArtBOSS involvement also helped young people—for whom circumstances at home could be challenging—to counter social isolation and, participate in a positive community setting.<sup>34</sup> By late 2021, group sessions were 'opened [ ... ] half-an-hour early for the young people to come in, chat and have access to support from youth workers before the session [began].<sup>35</sup> This allowed [ the young people to feel validated/supported.'<sup>36</sup> In turn, such support ensures that participants are then able to concentrate on, and engage with, the arts programme.<sup>37</sup> The explicit inclusion of a 'youth work' aspect of the ArtBOSS offer has—in the view of Community Learning Officer and ArtBOSS co-coordinator, Siobhan Gray—been significant for achieving good, regular attendance for a core group of ArtBOSSes as 'the young people are not just getting an arts club. They have the youth work element attached to it, so they know there's the role models to go to [ ... ] young people experiencing issues or needing support with anything can come to us outwith [the ArtBOSS] sessions. So, there's a lot more support there for them than just once a week.'<sup>38</sup>

In addition to the opportunity to validate the ArtBOSS experience through the achievement of a Bronze or Silver Art Award, recognition was also accrued when ArtBOSS received the accolade of the Young Scots Arts Award.<sup>39</sup> This success was both thrilling and effort affirming, imbuing group members with confidence and self-esteem; indeed it is something that members of that group still recall with pride.<sup>40</sup> An additional dividend has been 'put[ting] ArtBOSS on the map, even just locally' which brought benefit with regard to partnership working and negotiating local opportunities for ArtBOSSes as potential collaborators now knew of the group.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>33</sup> RL Arts Team Project evaluation and monitoring framework—ArtBOSS (April-June 2022).

<sup>34</sup> RL Arts Team Project evaluation and monitoring framework—ArtBOSS (April-June 2022).

<sup>35</sup> This is part of the youth work self-evaluation approach, initiated to further support young people's social and wellbeing needs (Correspondence with Siobhan Gray & Fiona Taylor, 30.10.2023).

<sup>36</sup> RL Arts Team Project evaluation and monitoring framework—ArtBOSS (October-December 2021).

<sup>37</sup> Correspondence with Siobhan Gray & Fiona Taylor, 30.10.2023.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023.

<sup>39</sup> See: Craggins, (2021).

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Marie Collins, October 2023.

## Young people develop new skills, both arts and culture-focussed skills and transferable skills

ArtBOSS has striven to provide participants with both knowledge of, and insight into, 'all the skills that they would need to be a young producer [...] understanding of all the things you could do [...] and [with experience and skills] to put on their CV.'<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the emphasis on provision of high-level opportunity, working alongside sector professionals on many occasions, has been a crucial contributor to participant retention while also ensuring that ArtBOSSes are enabled to grow their skills set and networks to the greatest extent.<sup>43</sup>

Witnessing positive progress in the development of participants' soft skills and the way in which they are able to better manage their interpersonal relationships has been reported as one of the most gratifying outcomes of the programme.<sup>44</sup> For example, the volunteering opportunities on offer through ArtBOSS count towards Saltire Hours.<sup>45</sup> The Hours are the Scottish Government's way of celebrating, recognising and rewarding the commitment, contribution and achievements of young volunteers in Scotland, aged between 12 and 25.<sup>46</sup> Registration on the Saltire Hours portal allows volunteers to track their hours; certificates are awarded for significant milestones (e.g. 25, 50, 100 hours of time banked), outstanding contributions can be acknowledged thorough nomination for a Summit Award. Some ArtBOSSes have already achieved their 500-hour Saltire certificate.<sup>47</sup> The Youth Work approach assists young people in the process of reflecting on their experiences in order to understand their progression and have insight into their personal development.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Marie Collins, October 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023.

<sup>45</sup> <https://saltireawards.scot/>

<sup>46</sup> See: <https://saltireawards.scot/about>

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Correspondence with Siobhan Gray & Fiona Taylor, 30.10.2023.



People feel pride in Paisley and are optimistic about the town's future

Involvement with ArtBOSS has brought programme participants into contact with Paisley's broader cultural, social and historical landscape in a variety of ways. Trips and visits, activities such as developing the walking tour app, collaborating with museum staff as Youth Ambassadors and, the contribution to the recent Chimes Project<sup>49</sup> have the potential to reframe and reinvigorate ArtBOSSes' views of their hometown. Indeed, both Marie Collins and Siobhan Gray made observations in this regard. The opportunity of involvement in flagship elements of Paisley's cultural offer—such as Sma' Shot Day and the Halloween Festival—has helped ArtBOSSes to recognise that cool stuff does happen in Paisley.<sup>50</sup> Such activities have also fostered a valuable sense of ownership, whereby ArtBOSSes 'will say [that] they've created music for [the Chimes Project] and they're so proud that they want to tell their friends about it [...] and say "we've been here, we did this project" [...] there's much more ownership over Paisley [...] they are quite proud of where they come from.'<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> See: Restoring the sounds of history: The Chimes Project brings Paisley Town Hall's Carillon back to life.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Marie Collins, October 2023.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Siobhan Gray, October 2023.



## Insights from ARTBOSS

The ArtBOSS programme demonstrates that multifaceted benefits can accrue from creating an appropriately resourced and supported cultural space for a specific group who might otherwise struggle to access arts and cultural experiences. Crucial contributions to its success have included:

- Co-production of the project agenda alongside programme participants. Empowering ArtBOSSes to make decisions about where the group should focus has helped to ensure engagement and sustained interest.
- Provision of Youth Work support within the art space. Ensuring that attendance at ArtBOSS guarantees a safe space to talk and seek assistance with any problems or issues improves focus and increases positive associations with attendance at ArtBOSS.
- Opportunity to engage in high-level/ high-quality collaboration with sector professionals—and subsequently to see work displayed/ performed in professional event settings—means that the future possibilities offered by the arts and cultural sector, and the pathways towards them, are clearly in evidence for programme participants. ArtBOSS offers far more than the opportunity to 'do some arts and crafts.'

- ArtBOSS has adapted to meet needs as the programme has developed. It is now recognised that all new staff facilitating this programme should undergo training for working with young people who have experienced trauma before taking up their role. This has been identified as a crucial change in approach which, links ArtBOSS into the Promise.<sup>52</sup> To ensure a youth-centred approach, knowledge of safeguarding and child protection procedures are crucial element of a needs-led approach.<sup>53</sup>
- The focus on volunteering, leadership, and mentoring (particularly evident within Yo! Producers), is a significant benefit; particularly as this can be further recognised through mechanisms such as Saltire Hours.
- Progression of ArtBOSSes and Yo! Producers into other opportunities,<sup>54</sup> their involvement in supporting other young people in their communities to access arts and cultural experiences and, in planning / seeking funding to support the future of the programme is a significant success.

Going forward, it would be valuable to attempt to track the kinds of opportunities that (former) ArtBOSS participants are able to access. Ideally, ArtBOSSes will have both recognised qualifications (Silver & Bronze Art Awards), volunteering experience (Saltire Hours) and other programme derived experience and networking to build upon.

<sup>52</sup> <https://thepromise.scot/>

<sup>53</sup> Correspondence with Siobhan Gray & Fiona Taylor, 30.10.2023.

<sup>54</sup> For example: Youth Services Youth Leadership Residential Training.

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**ART BOSS**  
CREATIVE YOUNG PRODUCERS  
SUMMER PROGRAMME!

TUESDAYS  
1PM-3PM  
GLENBURN  
COMMUNITY CENTRE  
LUNCH PROVIDED

- 1 5TH JULY  
WHAT IS A CREATIVE PRODUCER?
- 2 12TH JULY  
THE GUIDE TO BECOMING THE ULTIMATE VLOGGER
- 3 26TH JULY  
CREATIVE WRITING & FILMMAKING
- 4 2ND AUGUST  
BEACH PHOTOGRAPHY (MILLPORT TRIP)
- 5 9TH AUGUST  
LET'S GET AN ARTS AWARD!





## **Glen Cinema** Case Study

Dr Sophie Mamattah &  
Prof Gayle McPherson CCSE/UWS

## Background & Introduction

The Glen Cinema tragedy resulted in the deaths of 71 children, who, upon attending a matinee film on Hogmanay 1929, lost their lives in a stampede that began when a smoking film canister caused a panic in the auditorium. While the appalling loss of so many young lives—and the inevitable and lasting damage done to so many others—undoubtedly had profound and long-lasting consequences, for many years a veil of silence was drawn around the events of 'Black Hogmanay.'

2019 marked the 90th anniversary of the Glen Cinema Disaster and, the decision was taken to commission a public artwork memorial; an opportunity to acknowledge, commemorate and communicate the intense loss experienced by so many. While the finalised artwork was created by the artists who won the commission—Rachel Lowther and Kerry Stewart—the involvement of two of the tragedy's remaining survivors,<sup>1</sup> the local community and children in aspects the commemoration work was recognised as crucial for ensuring that the town's voice was heard. Community engagement was recognised as vital for raising awareness about the events of New Year, 1929—many of those who had been caught up in the tragedy had never spoken about it—and, for establishing relevance and connection to the final artwork for the local community. The emphasis on a community focused approach was strongly expressed in the tender for the artistic commission and, was a one of the elements of the potential opportunity of particular interest to the artists who created the final work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Emily Brown and Robert Pope collaborated with Rachel and Kerry. At the time, they were thought to be the only remaining survivors of the Glen Cinema tragedy. After the unveiling of Rattle/Little Mother, it became apparent that a third survivor was still living in the Paisley area. Due to the trauma experienced, they choose not to discuss the tragedy (correspondence with Rachel Lowther & Kerry Stewart, 24.03.23).

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Rachel Lowther & Kerry Stewart, December 2022.



The success of this approach has resulted in the commissioning, consultation, design, making and installation of the Glen Cinema Memorial. This was supported by a £50,000 award from Future Paisley/Events' Team Core budget.<sup>3</sup> The artists' involvement in the project began in 2019, continuing until the unveiling of the completed commission—Rattle/Little Mother—at Dunn Square, Paisley on 30th November 2021. The bronze takes as its inspiration a child's celluloid rattle of the era. With the names of the children whose lives were lost inscribed around its plinth, the memorial 'hovers between a nostalgic lost object—a portal to the children of the 1920s—and a sacred or devotional object, carrying the story of children as their own protectors'<sup>4</sup> on that day.

Alongside the creation and installation of Rattle/Little Mother, a wider programme of commemorative events and activities took place 2019–21. These included members of the community:

- A lantern procession, involving children and young people from local primary and secondary schools, who, with others from the community, walked from Dunn Square to Paisley Abbey. In preparation, pupils had participated in related educational and workshop activities.<sup>5</sup> The procession included around 170 children and young people, almost 200 lanterns were made in workshop sessions preceding the event.<sup>6</sup>
- A commemorative service at Paisley Abbey with input from a number of local creatives; Starlight Youth Music Theatre participated, and musicians Carol Laula and Tom Urie wrote and performed a song—Hush Now (Happy New Year). This service was attended by approximately 500 invited guests.<sup>7</sup>
- Screenings of The Glen Cinema Disaster commemorative film (dir. Paul Mothersole)<sup>8</sup> and an exhibition of artifacts and archival material.

<sup>3</sup> £25,000 of the budget came from Future Paisley, £20,000 from Town Centre Regeneration and £5,000 from Paisley Rotary Club. Approximately £10,000 was spent on the Abbey event, film and exhibition and £40,000 on the commission of Rattle/Little Mother, community engagement and installation (correspondence with Suzi Maciver, 15.12.22).

<sup>4</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/2ns7mkxy>

<sup>5</sup> An interdisciplinary learning resource pack—Commemoration: The Glen Cinema Disaster 1929–2019—was also developed through the Great Place Scheme at Renfrewshire Council. The resource was intended 'to help learners explore and learn about commemoration. Renfrewshire's rich local history can be a meaningful starting point to examine people, past events and societies. The Glen Cinema Disaster of 1929 provides a relevant context for developing knowledge and skills within CfE Literacy, Expressive Arts and particularly Social Studies Experiences & Outcomes. The pack is intended for teachers to use with their P5–7 classes.'

<sup>6</sup> According to Council records, 184 young people attended workshops hosted at a number of locations and groups (including: Paisley Grammar School, 5<sup>th</sup> Paisley Girls' Brigade, Todholm, Mossvale & St Peter's Primary Schools, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, PACE Youth Theatre). Of these participants 171 attended the procession having made 196 lanterns. Young people, parents and staff from this group accounted for 167 of the approximately 500 Abbey Service attendees (see: Final Lantern Making Workshop Schedule—Glen Cinema).

<sup>7</sup> See: Abbey Service—Tickets.xlsx

<sup>8</sup> Currently, the film can be viewed online: Trailer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzvTs7yURws>), Part I (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEQKagxCti8>), Part II (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upJm2bADIYk>) and Part III (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkxy7T7nP8Q>).



Reviewing the data provided and speaking with some of those closely involved in the development and delivery of this work, we are able to evidence the ways in which the activity supported through Future Paisley has been successful; setting these findings within the relevant parts of the outputs, outcomes and indicator frameworks developed as part of the Future Paisley evaluation process. The Glen Cinema work contributes to Framework Outcome 9: Community led production and programming increases cultural participation and activism.<sup>9</sup>

Developed and delivered through the Town Centre Planning Team, the suite of undertakings contributing to, and culminating in, the unveiling of the Glen Cinema memorial and associated activities involved a range of community and community group members (including STAR Project, children from local schools and groups, Paisley Development Trust<sup>10</sup>) whose collaboration with the Council team and the commissioned artists contributed significantly to the project's success.

<sup>9</sup>Outcome 9 sits under Step Change 3: Paisley will be Recognised for its Cultural Innovation.

<sup>10</sup>Paisley Development Trust is no longer active.

## Communities & Professional Artists/ Cultural Organisations Work Together to Co-Design Arts and Cultural Events

The suite of work undertaken to mark the 90th Anniversary of the Glen Cinema Tragedy builds upon the activity of the Paisley Development Trust (PDT). Commemoration of the Tragedy was central to the Trust's work over a number of years; Trust members led the preparations for commemoration of the 75th Anniversary in 2004; events involved bringing survivors together for reminiscence, re-creation of a 1920s/30s cinema in the old Liberal Club Building in High Street, curation of an exhibition and provision of opportunity for children and survivors to discuss and compare their experiences of cinema. Paisley has a rich history of cinema<sup>11</sup> and was once home to around 13 picture houses. The contemporary experience of cinema is often the out-of-town multiplex.<sup>12</sup> A torch light procession—involving Paisley Buddies, scout and girl guide groups and other community members—and a service at Paisley Abbey were also organised.<sup>13</sup> The 80th Anniversary—in 2009—saw the beginning of the annual commemoration at the Cenotaph. 'Although a place of remembrance' and recognised as a 'fitting' place to go, the Cenotaph was nevertheless 'not quite the right place to remember 71 kids.'<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup>This continues to be reflected in current work which includes the Place Partnership project, Paisley Film & Media Space.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Tony Lawler, December 2022.

<sup>13</sup>A monument commemorating the names of those who died is located at Paisley's Hawkhead Cemetery. Plaques raised by the Local Authority and the Scottish Film Council can be found at the site of the old cinema building and a small collection of contemporaneous cuttings and artifacts are stored at 'The Secret Collection'.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Tom Lawler, December 2022.

The sculpture was devised on the basis of a process of research, collaborative workshop discussion and activities undertaken by commissioned artists—Rachel Lowther and Kerry Stewart. These activities involved two survivors of the tragedy and their families, Paisley Grammar students, STAR Project<sup>15</sup> members, Renfrewshire Council officers and a Working/Steering Group.<sup>16</sup> The preparatory work undertaken with community and school groups was foregrounded by Kerry and Rachel as a crucial contribution to their creative and research process. The children they worked with were hugely interested in—and engaged by—the workshop they participated in.<sup>17</sup> It was—as Rachel Lowther recalls—in one of these groups that ‘these girls [...] had an idea. They made these little shoes and bags of the children [...] their idea for a memorial was the things that children might have left behind. So that idea stayed in our mind.’ This, along with survivor Emily Brown’s recollection of managing to escape despite becoming separated from her siblings who, in turn, were able to cling onto each other and make their way out alongside other similar stories, encouraged the artists’ focus on the way in which children—in the absence of any adults that day—had tried to look after each other. In the artists’ view, these stories and ideas were crucial for their process of realising their final ideas which were then taken forward to the working group for discussion and deliberation.<sup>18</sup> Kerry Stewart, Rachel Lowther and Tony Lawler expressed the view that the memorial sculpture was very much the right fit for Paisley; at last, providing those affected by the Tragedy with somewhere to go and, an appropriate place for the inscription of the names of the children who died.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> STAR Project community members participated in 2–3 online workshops of 2 hours’ duration. Prior to the workshops, Rachel and Kerry distributed craft packs to participants. The carefully considered preparation and delivery meant that the sessions were ‘exceptionally accessible’ to members. Approximately 18 community members took part in Zoom workshops and offline equivalents (provided to support community members who—for whatever reason—did not access the online event) where views and responses were fed into the Zoom discussions (interview with Heather Kay, February 2023).

<sup>16</sup> The membership of this group comprised a range of local community members and creatives, many of whom had been involved in commemoration of the Tragedy for a number of years—often through the PDT. Among them were Trust members Tony Lawler and Piero Pieraccini, Starlight Music & Theatre’s Mari Wilson, PACE Theatre’s Jenni Mason, Great Place Scheme’s Peter Gilchrist, Film-maker Paul Mothersole, Renfrewshire Makar—Brian Whittingham, musicians Tom Urie & Carol Laula and Future Paisley’s Leonie Bell.

<sup>17</sup> Plans for workshops in Schools were severely disrupted by the COVID19 pandemic. The artists were able to conduct one session with approximately twenty S3 pupils at Paisley Grammar. Plans to work with primary school pupils had to be shelved as arranging access in the prevailing circumstances was too onerous (correspondence with Rachel Lowther, 20.02.23). While the ideas generated in the workshops with STAR Project community members are not tangibly reflected in the finalised Rattle/Little Mother piece, workshop participants nevertheless felt that their contribution to the discussion was heard and valued (interview with Heather Kay, February 2023).

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Rachel Lowther & Kerry Stewart, December 2022..

<sup>19</sup> Some STAR Project community members also expressed the view that the memorial was ‘long overdue’ (interview with Heather Kay, February 2023).

The activities outlined above clearly demonstrate the ways in which the Glen Cinema work has built on community responses to a hugely significant local event, to generate a response that is appropriate and grounded in the community understandings of the Tragedy. While it is challenging to conclude that cultural participation has been increased significantly across all the groups that took part in elements of the Glen Cinema work, the suite of work and the approach taken has certainly provided opportunity for community togetherness.

Community togetherness is evident in the workshop, lantern procession and Abbey service events, it is also seen in the quiet discussions at the site of Rattle/Little Mother that both Tony and Rachel have witnessed.<sup>20</sup> These shared moments of curiosity for those who are perhaps unfamiliar with the place that Glen Cinema occupies in Paisley's history and, reflection for those who do, suggest the ways in which the Rattle/Little Mother can operate as a focus for the community and remove barriers to art, potentially enabling those who feel they do not 'understand' art to approach this work as a response to a specific, historical event. The commissioned artists are of the view that the Council's early willingness to trust the process of artist-led consultation and development work—thereby relinquishing degrees of control and decision making to the community and artists—was also crucial here, as was the early involvement of 'arts people' in the commissioning process.<sup>21</sup> Such an approach can also be considered as a significant removal of obstacles to participation that might usually be present in a public arts creative process.

<sup>20</sup> Interviews with Rachel Lowther & Kerry Stewart and Interview with Tony Lawler, December 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Rachel Lowther & Kerry Stewart, December 2022.

The removal of barriers for those who might have felt uncertain about engaging with art and culture is clearly evident in the preparatory and research work that Rachel and Kerry undertook. They were able to relate the positive way in which community members who participated in workshops responded to the works shown to them as a catalyst for their discussion and activities. In these pieces—which included memorials to American George Floyd and Rachel Whiteread's Holocaust memorial—people 'related to the tragedy, so they could relate to the art as well.'<sup>22</sup>

For STAR Project community members, the opportunity for involvement in artist-led workshops attracted some who had not previously taken part in STAR activities, including 'at least two unique- community members that joined specifically to get involved with that [work], that had not previously engaged with STAR Project' and, who have remained engaged with STAR Project to some degree from that point on.<sup>23</sup> At STAR Project, the discussion and reflection generated through the Glen Cinema process have developed into wider—and still ongoing—deliberation and research into 'the origin of statues' in and around Paisley and Renfrewshire and 'a much bigger conversation around regeneration' for community members. The desire to further develop these wider activities originating from the Glen Cinema work into a Fun Palace Weekend<sup>24</sup> engagement is also high on the community's agenda.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Rachel Lowther & Kerry Stewart, December 2022.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Heather Kay, February 2023.

<sup>24</sup> <https://funpalaces.co.uk/>

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Heather Kay, February 2023.

## Development of Cultural Assets

Rattle/Little Mother has its permanent home in Paisley's Dunn Square, close to the site of the Glen Cinema (recently occupied by Burtons) and, at the crossroads of a number of Paisley's central thoroughfares. The sculptures successful installation is a substantial new addition to the town's cultural assets.<sup>26</sup> Further, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that the work provides a locus for local people and, draws the attention of visitors from further afield who happen to spot it when in Paisley.<sup>27</sup> Rattle/Little Mother is also listed on the Art UK website.<sup>28</sup> Art UK is an open access registry of public art assets across the United Kingdom. As Rattle/Little Mother is featured here, the potential for wider discovery of the work, and the reasons behind its creation are increased.

Artists Rachel Lowther and Kerry Stewart are keen to develop a book project based on their Glen Cinema work. Currently, this idea is in its very early stages however, the fascinating and important stories and social history that emerged through their research are a huge motivation. Tony Lawler is also very supportive of this potential project.<sup>29</sup> If successful, a publication such as this would be a valuable additional facet of the work that has gone into these commemorative projects.

<sup>26</sup>The unveiling was mentioned in Parliament by MP Gavin Newlands on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.

<sup>27</sup>Interview with Tony Lawler and Interview with Kerry Stewart & Rachel Lowther, December 2022.

<sup>28</sup><https://tinyurl.com/242yf3bh>

<sup>29</sup>Interviews with Rachel Lowther & Kerry Stewart and Interview with Tony Lawler, December 2022.

# Learning from the Glen Cinema Project

The successful development of such prominent cultural assets (and attendant activities) for Paisley was only possible as a result of the embrace of genuine community focussed engagement approaches.

The Glen Cinema work demonstrates the cultural and community value to be gained from taking an approach that builds local community activity and engagement over a number of years. The Council's support for the memorialisation work of PDT built relationships and generated trust which then transitioned into the larger funded activities undertaken for the 90th Anniversary of the Tragedy.

<sup>30</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/wfpb2tw4>.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Tony Lawler, December 2022.

In addition, valuable facets of the approach comprised:

- Trusting the commissioned artists to work with the community and to take a degree of risk in so doing.
- Prioritising approaches that were community focussed and, spotlighted local views, life histories and knowledge at an early stage thus artists responding to the tender opportunity were likely to be enthusiastic about embedding the community in their approach to the commission.
- Including 'arts people' at early stages of commission, artists felt comfortable and understood at meetings with the commissioning panel.
- Inclusion of those who had been involved in commemoration work for many years on the Working/Steering Group bringing long held local knowledge, insight and engagement to the process. There was also a pre-existing relationship of trust between those on the PDT who had worked with members of the Town Centre Planning Team over a period of a number of years.

Going forward, Paisley Museum is developing a display relating to the Glen Cinema Tragedy<sup>30</sup> and—as discussed above—the artists who co-created the sculpture commission are keen to develop a book project if possible. Tony Lawler is keen to begin planning for the upcoming 100th Anniversary of the Disaster, potentially further developing some of the ideas and harnessing the momentum that emerged during the work toward the 90th commemoration in 2019.<sup>31</sup>

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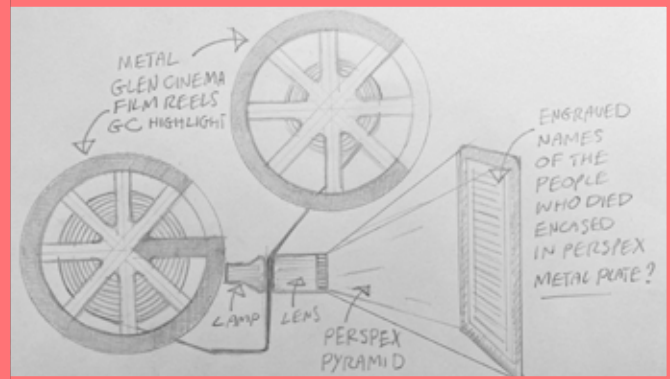
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"I want my biddy peony back \* Emily was with little sister, My & Jean 10. Little sister lost her shoe & \* thought parents would be mad. 10yr old held Byrold's hand through out but Emily was separated in the crush. friend, Julie (6) jumped off the balcony. Emily saw her biddy before funeral & could only see a scratch on the R side of her face \* her mother took the shilling off her for being rude to the newspaper man. Emily said she got "a whole shilling!"  
Lynne & Lorraine LOVE the 71 feet because it is a direct representation in the right place. Next they like the bell.



All images courtesy of:  
Rachel Lowther and Kerry Stewart





## Open Mind Summit Case Study

Dr Sophie Mamattah and  
Prof David McGillivray CCSE/UWS

## Introduction and Background

“Open Mind Summit is about coming together with like-minded individuals of all ages to be inspired, learn, collaborate, develop capacity around measuring change, growing our cultural ambition as well as connecting Renfrewshire with a wider national and international context”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Create Paisley (2019) OMS Event Booklet: Welcome

<sup>2</sup>Create Paisley (2019) OMS Event Booklet: 10

OPEN Mind Summit (OMS) was an annual event exploring the role of creativity and culture in improving young people's wellbeing. The inaugural summit took place in October 2019, timed to coincide with World Mental Health Day and attracting more than 100 delegates keen to share learning and inspiration and, to establish and grow connections. The OMS's declared aims were:

- Increased understanding of the positive impact of culture and creativity on young people's wellbeing
- New and improved collaborations between funders, research, third sector & artists
- Capacity building around evaluation and measuring wellbeing, including the use of new technology and approaches
- Raising cultural ambition through engaging in high quality work
- Connecting Renfrewshire with national and international partners<sup>2</sup>

The changing circumstances of 2020 meant that OMS transitioned to online delivery to continue the discussion of the value of arts and culture for young people's wellbeing. While the 2020 edition took the role of creativity and culture in helping children and young people overcome isolation and loneliness as its theme, the 2021 event foregrounded *Mental Health for All* through the lens of a trio of sub-themes: Nature for All, Connections for All and Justice for All. Since its inception in 2019, the Summit has attracted noted speakers including author and activist Darren McGarvey<sup>3</sup>, spoken word artist Steven McLeish<sup>4</sup>, Hope for the Future's<sup>5</sup> Jo Musker-Sherwood and Mental Health the Arts<sup>6</sup> Angela Awuah. They, alongside an array of locally and nationally active arts and culture stakeholders—educators, artists, researchers, youth workers, funders and young people themselves—have had the opportunity to both showcase and debate the value of interventions and projects they deliver and participate in.

The OMS is part of *Future Paisley*—a progressive and far-reaching approach to cultural regeneration which seeks to mobilise culture in pursuit of positive social change. Renfrewshire based youth arts charity, CREATE Paisley, partnered with Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Leisure and others (e.g. Kibble, Science Ceilidh, UWS's Centre for Culture Sport & Events<sup>7</sup>) to deliver OMS. The receipt of support from *Future Paisley* was crucial for establishing OMS which was commissioned as part of a suite of projects and programmes with an overt focus on arts, creativity and wellbeing.<sup>8</sup> These projects received a combined total of £156,675 to support the development and delivery of their activities. OMS received £8,500 in Year 1, £5,500 in Year 2 and £11,685 in Year 3 from Future Paisley. The Summit has also received additional external funding for related activities as its scope has broadened.

<sup>3</sup><https://darrenmcgarvey.com/>

<sup>4</sup><https://tinyurl.com/ytpm3vn2>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.hftf.org.uk/>

<sup>6</sup>[https://twitter.com/mhta\\_ldn](https://twitter.com/mhta_ldn)

<sup>7</sup>CCSE

<sup>8</sup>The others were: Renfrewshire Mental Health and the Arts Festival (SMHAF), Open Mind Fest, Art Boss- Young Producers & Culture Cares: Culture Buddies and Expansion of Community Connectors between GPs and arts.

While OMS ran annually from 2019, the interest and interactions generated through the relatively short and intense engagement opportunities it afforded led CREATE Paisley to establish the *Open Mind Network*—OMN<sup>9</sup>—as a novel community of practice for “practitioners across Scotland and sectors passionate about supporting young people around creativity and mental health and wellbeing.” The OMN aims to meet quarterly online to:

- Support network building
- Share developing practice and challenges openly
- Signpost to resources and build connectivity

OMN meetings launched in early 2022. To date, the Network has explored themes such as ‘play,’ ‘gathering’ and ‘reducing loneliness and improving mental health in an unequal world’. CREATE sought to further build on the annual platform that OMS provided through international commissioning (including the 10,000 Miles project undertaken with Right2Dance<sup>10</sup>), also investigating the possibility of convening smaller events as part of Children’s Mental Health Week and connecting to the wider programme as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival.

<sup>9</sup><https://twitter.com/OpenMindNW>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.right2dance.com/>

In this case study, we draw on published reports and key stakeholder interviews to explore the contribution that OMS and associated activities have made to the *Future Paisley* programme. Part of the Future Paisley Evaluation Framework, the OMS is an excellent illustration of Step Change 3 [Paisley will be Recognised for its Cultural Innovation], *Outcome 7: Renfrewshire has a thriving, resilient and diverse cultural sector. Within that ambition, the stated aims and objectives of OMS contribute to a number of outputs associated with that outcome.* These findings are set within the relevant parts of the outputs, outcomes and indicator frameworks developed as part of the Future Paisley evaluation process.

Reviewing the data provided, we are able to evidence the ways in which the activity supported through OMS and OMN has enabled local cultural organisations operating in the creativity and wellbeing/ mental health space to progress their work.

## Local organisations in receipt of regular funding/operating on a more stable footing

CREATE Paisley received resources from Future Paisley to develop and operationalise the OMS idea. Local organisations also received funding to help deliver the Summits. Although the direct support from Future Paisley for OMS has now ended, the OMN does not currently require a great deal of resource to support its ongoing activity<sup>11</sup>. For participants, some of the value of OMN currently derives from its smallness and the flexibility gained from operating in online spaces.<sup>12</sup> Going forward, an additional funding ask may be useful for ensuring continued impact and to ensure that Network activities are delivered in a format that suits the maximum number of participants. The networking and connections garnered through involvement in OMS and OMN has increased the knowledge of those working in relevant fields elsewhere have been beneficial in terms of highlighting potential future partners for joint funding applications.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Alan Clark, December 2022.

<sup>12</sup> It is possible to host attendees from across the world in the same virtual space quite straightforwardly. Interview with Alan Clark, December 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Lewis Hou & interview with Alan Clark, December 2022



## Independent networking within the sector supporting CPD and creating new partnerships

<sup>14</sup>According to the relevant evaluation summaries, the corresponding figures for OMS I were artist/creative 21.1%, youth worker 9.2% and young person 7.3% and, for OMS II, 17.4%, 12.9% and 3.2%. Ideally, more young people would have been involved across the realisation of OMS and OMN. Young people were significantly involved in OMS I as presenters and performers, but this was more challenging after the shift to online necessitated by the onset of the COVID19 pandemic. While young people were very much involved in the micro-commissioned work, finding a crossover space for practitioners and young people to engage would be a definite 'ambition for improvement going forward' [interview with Alan Clark, December 2022].

<sup>15</sup>OMS I delegate feedback.

One of the evident successes of the OMS initiative is its ability to connect individuals and organisations with an interest in the themes of creativity, mental health, wellbeing, and young people. Evidence from existing OMS evaluations demonstrates a diversity of participants including artists, teachers, children's charities, young people, etc. For example, at OMS III (2021), 17.4% of attendees identified as Artist/Creative, 12.9% as engaging in youth work (though only 3.2% identified as 'young person')<sup>14</sup> demonstrating that the summit was potentially a good platform for making connections. A testimonial from a Principal Teacher at St Catherine's Primary School who attended OMS I provides an illustration of the value of the initiative, with evidence of increased awareness of resource available for and approach to mental wellbeing. Awareness of the 'link between culture, creativity and ambition' was a valuable take away alongside recognition that 'the work of third sector organisations [is] looking to deliver the same positive outcomes for our children [...] in the future [the delegate] would like to try and bring them into school to link up and co-plan for our children and young people to deliver the best possible outcomes'.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the success of OMS is reinforced by, and reflected in, the formation of the Open Mind Network which has commissioned some creative works (i.e. the 10,000 miles dance collaboration and film with Right2Dance/ Yellow Wheel<sup>16</sup>). OMN represents a response to the positive reaction to OMS. Though currently unfunded the OMN operates efficiently, the use of micro-grants to support future commissions is currently under consideration. The development of OMN is strong evidence of engagement and community building so far, providing a viable platform for networking and relationship building which may lead to future opportunity. Evidence from the OMN 2022 Impact Report shows that over the course of three online events (to date), a trio of focused themes have been explored, 72 practitioners attended (37-11-24), four keynote speakers gave talks, eight spotlight teach-meets were hosted by network members, 416 followers were generated on the network's social media accounts, 20 members joined their Slack group and 16 resources have been shared on that platform.<sup>17</sup> Evidence from an evaluation of OMN indicates that people joined the network to 'Learn from others', 'Discover what projects and programmes with MH focus are ongoing across Scotland' and 'Build relationships with other practitioners in same field', further illustrating the OMN's capacity to facilitate connections and expand networks. In addition to the opportunity to become acquainted with other stakeholders in the field, the OMN has enabled the strengthening of pre-existing relationships with collaborators who have benefitted from the invitation to engage with the Network and, in turn, to reflect on their work within the supportive and informed professional space it provides. While there is still some tweaking to be done in terms of finding the most effective formula for delivery of the OMN, in its current form, it is relatively self-sustaining; benefiting from the group-wide recognition of the shared value that the network and commissions have, so far, brought for the community of practice.

'[The] shared value and the network and shared value and commissions [...] there's a real sense of, this is something that's healthy, that's good that says it's valuable to all [...] that sense of actually seeing that shared value across the network is really refreshing from our point of view'<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> This activity was funded using the money saved from the original commission when Ys2 and 3 of OMS went online.

<sup>17</sup> See: 2022 Impact Report, Open Mind Network.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Alan Clark, December 2022.



## (Volunteer) organisations building their professionalism and increasing their capacity

Involvement in both OMS and OMN has assisted stakeholders to identify approaches to advancing their work in future; perhaps in ways that had not been previously appreciated. Participation in the space provided by OMS and OMN has allowed those involved to access the networks and expertise residing in other organisations. For example, Science Ceilidh<sup>19</sup> is predominately active on the East Coast and in the Highlands and Islands. Involvement in OMS and OMN has been a positive opportunity for the organisation to find out about what's happening in Renfrewshire and, to develop West Coast networks.<sup>20</sup>

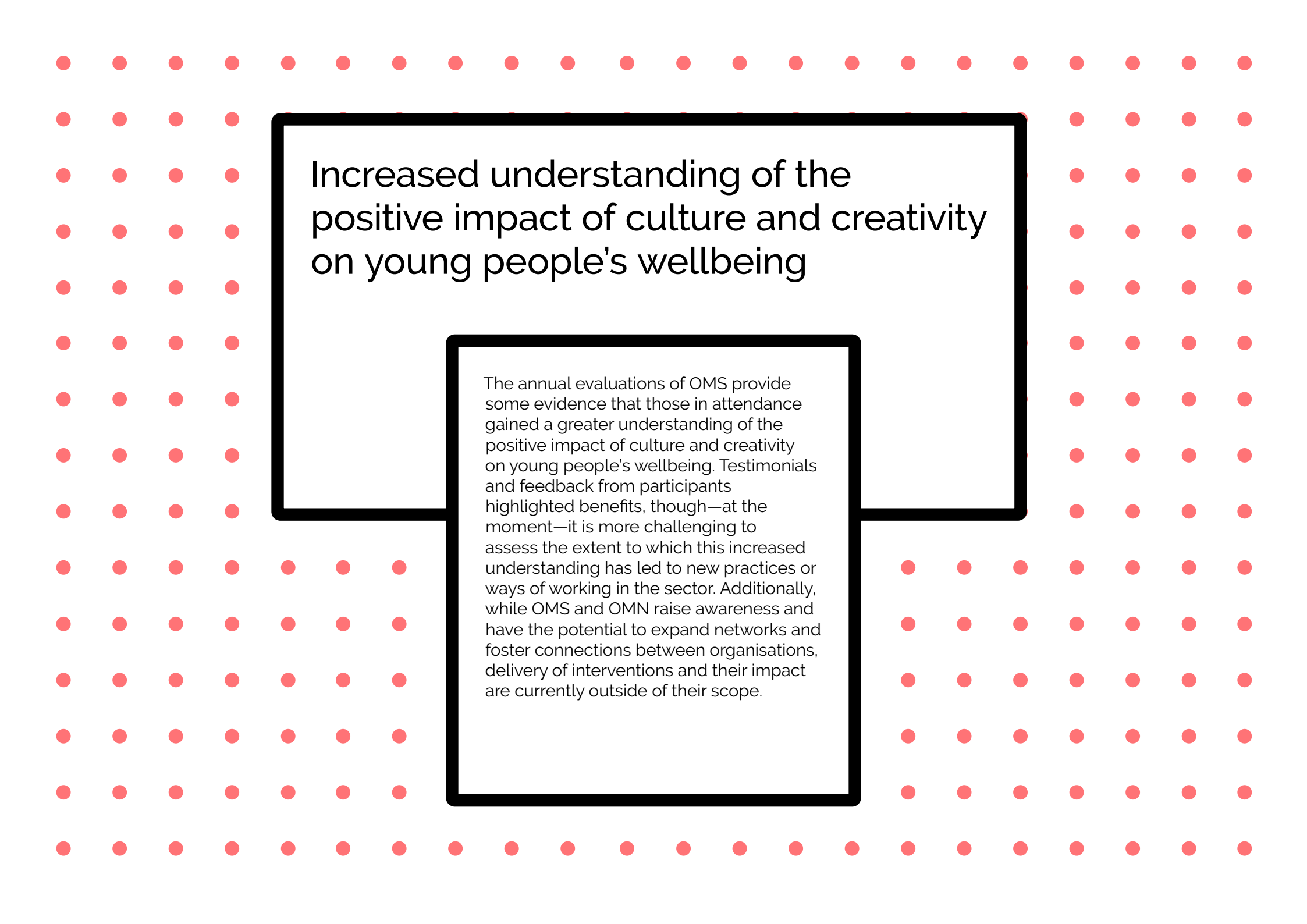
The micro-commissioning undertaken through OMN also led to international dance collaborations between Paisley-based Right2Dance and partners in Australia. Working towards a final piece that was film based rather than performance focussed meant that those involved in realising the commission gained experience of working in a novel format—which also comprised preparatory work done online—alongside insight into potential avenues for future development and partnership working that had not been considered previously. Undertaking this commission during the COVID 19 pandemic, Right2Dance were able to successfully maintain local cultural provision for the young people who took part and, to ensure their centrality to the creative process through which the work was developed.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.scienceceilidh.com/>

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Lewis Hou, December 2022.


<sup>21</sup> Interview with Aileen Palumbo, December 2022.

'We don't always focus on mental health themes, but we're very much doing something that's very positive for them [young people]. They tell us that it's very important that they come and see their friends [...] you know there's all these different aspects of what we're doing [...] They get a chance to have a voice, to be part of developing choreography, to learn different skills.'<sup>21</sup>



## Increased understanding of the positive impact of culture and creativity on young people's wellbeing

The annual evaluations of OMS provide some evidence that those in attendance gained a greater understanding of the positive impact of culture and creativity on young people's wellbeing. Testimonials and feedback from participants highlighted benefits, though—at the moment—it is more challenging to assess the extent to which this increased understanding has led to new practices or ways of working in the sector. Additionally, while OMS and OMN raise awareness and have the potential to expand networks and foster connections between organisations, delivery of interventions and their impact are currently outside of their scope.



## New and improved collaborations between funders, research, third sector and artists

The OMS is a collaborative venture between Future Paisley, CREATE Paisley, Kibble and other external partners. Participation in the Summits has increased awareness of the direction of travel, interests and expertise within each organisation. Potential for collaboration and/or funding applications based on the connections made through the network has been identified as a possible future benefit. Improved connectivity between stakeholders in the same space is also seen as crucial for bettering impact through a 'multiplier effect' resulting from a fuller knowledge of work that is being undertaken or has already been done by others in the field.<sup>22</sup>


<sup>22</sup>Interview with Lewis Hou, December 2022.

## Capacity building around evaluation and measuring wellbeing, including the use of new technology and approaches

As a recipient of resources from Future Paisley, OMS has been expected to capture and document the outputs and outcomes from each Summit latterly continuing this with regard to the OMN. To that end, OMS's initiators have produced evaluation reports for each Summit; these have focused on participant numbers, speakers, workshops organised and feedback from attendees.

The question of evaluation and how best to capture and measure the impact of activity in this area also formed part of discussions at OMS and OMN events. While challenging to quantify direct effects, there has been opportunity for event attendees to hear about approaches to, innovations in and challenges encountered here.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Alan Clark, December 2022.



## Raising cultural ambition through engaging in high quality work

Gaining greater knowledge of the expertise and ambitions residing in other organisations working in the same field, has been beneficial. Participation in OMS and OMN has helped some to clarify their focus and, to identify where they wish to direct their energy going forward. In terms of raising ambition in a more tangible way; there is evidence that involvement in the micro-commissions supported through OMN has potentially expanded the horizons of those who took part, demonstrating the wide-ranging possibilities of a dance-based career to performers who may not have considered this before.

## Connecting Renfrewshire with national and international partners

The OMS has been successful at drawing attention to what is going on in Renfrewshire from a wider constituency of artists, young people's organisations and other stakeholder in the arts, wellbeing and children/young people fields. The OMN is itself a network formed out of OMS but with a wider geographical reach and membership. Each OMS has drawn speakers from across of Scotland and further afield. National agencies have been attracted to talk about policy and practice nationally.<sup>24</sup>

The current web-based format of OMN has facilitated participation of interested parties based in other parts of the UK and further afield.

<sup>24</sup>Speakers and participants at OMS included speakers from Mental Health the Arts and Hope for the future. Paul Ramchandani—LEGO Professor of Play in Education, Development & Learning—has participated in OMN. Practitioners from 'from Norway, people from Australia, from Scotland [have been] altogether in the same virtual room [...] talking about the work and why it was so impactful for them during lockdown' (Interview with Alan Clark, December 2022).

## Insights and Recommendations

There is some uncertainty regarding the efficacy of the OMS (and OMN) attempts to involve young people in some of its activities. This challenge, however, has been recognised as something to address going forward.

Sustainability, financially and in terms of opportunities for artists going forward when funding for OMS ended is not assured, however, the OMN provides an example of how the OMS might seek to sustain the activity and benefits built through the initial cycle of funding. Some level of financial investment may still be required to focus in on health and wellbeing outcomes in the most beneficial way.

Much is still achievable through the OMN which is valuable as a small and adaptable professional community of practice. Shared values are recognised as crucial for the Network's 'low maintenance' success to date.

Going forward, it is important to keep in mind that depth of engagement can be as valuable as breadth. Networkers can garner value from deepening current connections as well as from finding and building new ones.

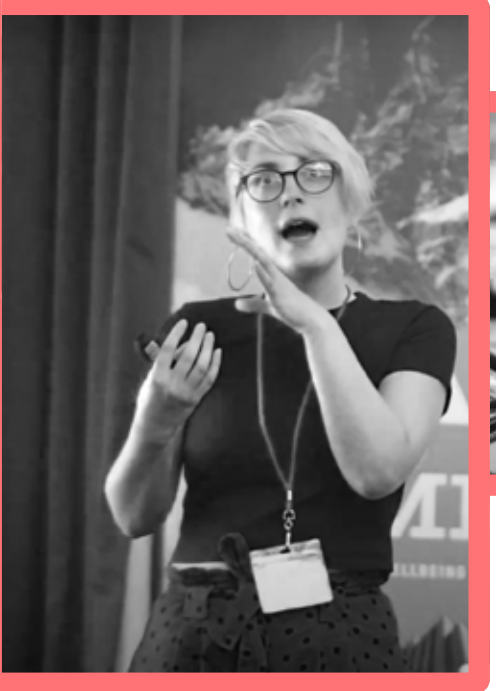
There are questions over the most appropriate model for sustaining the OMN offshoot of OMS and how it can be supported to become peer led.

Participant feedback underscored benefits of attendance at OMSs for understanding young people's wellbeing, it is more challenging to assess the extent to which this increased understanding has led to new practices or ways of working in the sector. Finding ways to discover and track change could be very valuable. If sustained, OMN could be one place in which evidence of such change over time is reported and can be reflected upon and shared.

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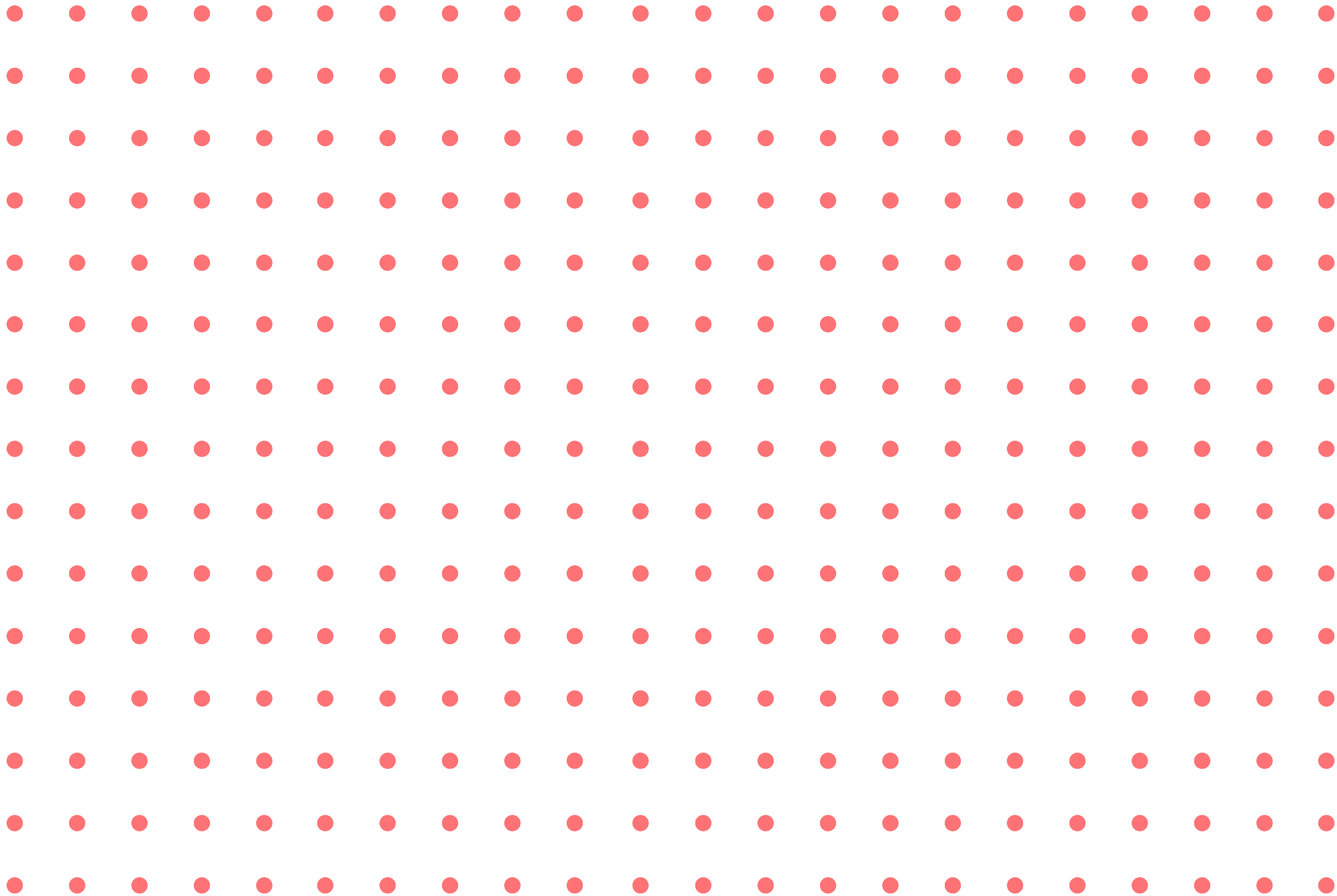




**Building a radical vision for  
health and wellbeing in Paisley**

**Dr Lan Pham**  
UWS







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## 1.0 Executive Summary

This consideration of policy recommendations for the health and wellbeing dimension of Future Paisley begins with an overview of key topics: the use of culture and the arts for social purposes, particularly health and wellbeing, further, what do we mean by health and wellbeing and, the influences of evaluation on these meanings? Together these four topics show that the way we think about health and society needs to be shifted towards a framing of public health that focuses on relational health and how relational health emerges from everyday experiences.

Research findings build on this approach by examining the topic of loneliness as a public health issue, developing a language for relational health and, looking at the relational work currently happening in Paisley. These findings also demonstrate that culture can contribute to relational health through facilitating encounters between community-centered health and cultural democracy. Policy insights are provided by placing the research in context, in terms of time and geographical area. A further insight is given by examining how evaluation can contribute to the shift to relational health.

As it is situated outside the sectors of culture, health and wellbeing, Future Paisley is an opportunity to provide the innovative action needed to change how we view health and wellbeing, arts and health activity and evaluation. The recommendations outlined in this paper could help Future Paisley realise this opportunity. These recommendations could bolster what is already going on in Future Paisley, particularly with regard to the interest in system change and excellence in socially engaged practice that has informed the Future Paisley approach. The are also avenues through which

interested parties might explore how Future Paisley is more than the sum of its component activities. Future Paisley was built on the bold collective ambition of the UK City of Culture 2021 (UKCoC21) bid. A radical and relational vision for health and wellbeing could continue this legacy. There are seven recommendation themes:

- developing a clear ambition for culture, arts, health and wellbeing
- evaluating 'what matters' and 'what works'
- explore the links between the processes of community-centred health and cultural democracy
- explore the role of boundary workers and boundary spanning work
- make visible the atmospheres, affective resources and places that create health and wellbeing
- developing a more complete understanding of loneliness in Paisley
- developing a vision for relational health from local knowledge

## 2.0 Purpose

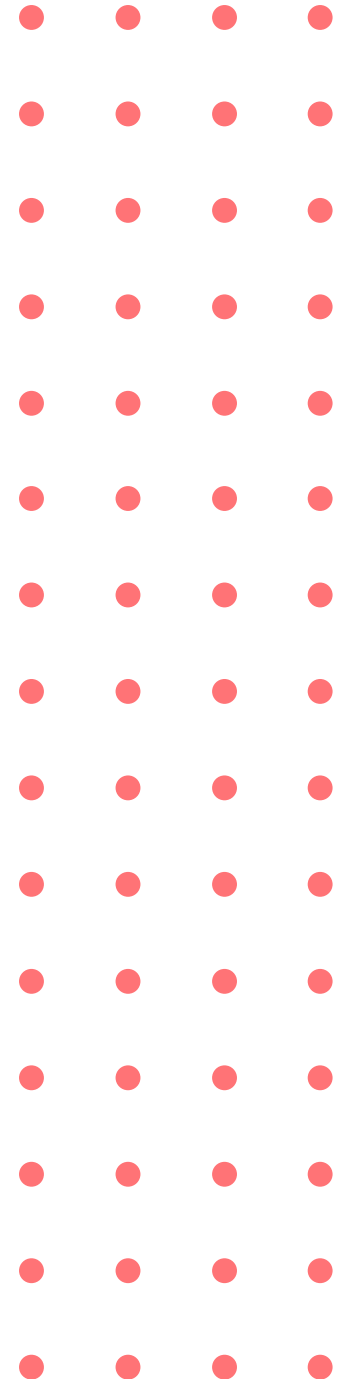
Cultural regeneration policy has traditionally emphasised economic benefits. Wellbeing has been a growing policy focus due to a strategic interest in the wellbeing economy and the growing evidence base on the impact of culture and the arts on health and wellbeing.

This report explores how cultural regeneration policy can help or hinder the contribution of culture to improving health and wellbeing. The report does not take the approach of 'what works' or make a 'case for the arts' by searching 'for the ultimate impact evaluation toolkit, applicable to all art forms, all audiences and in all geographical and social context' (Belfiore, 2021, p. 8). There have been concerns about the limits of this approach, such as the issues related to how to measure wellbeing (Oman, 2021) and, the potential to fixate on issues in such a way that one reduces attention paid to 'what matters' (Carlisle et al., 2007).

My research approach aligns with Belfiore's argument which considers research as an interaction of ideas with policy rather than in terms of providing evidence into policy. Asking 'what is culture for?' requires starting our investigation by asking what we trying to improve when we seek to improve health and wellbeing? This investigation is not about finding a definition of health and wellbeing that gives room for the social purposes of arts and culture. Instead, it is about *what health and wellbeing ideas are needed to address our stalling progress on various health and wellbeing issues*. Only once this idea is established can the role of culture in improving health and wellbeing be considered. Then, with our ideas of culture, health and wellbeing in place, we can begin to think about the purpose of evaluation in a cultural regeneration policy that seeks to improve health and wellbeing.

My ideas of how a cultural regeneration policy should envisage health and wellbeing and the actions a policy should focus on to realise this vision, draw on a range of evidence. These insights combine diverse knowledge from academia, policy and practice, and knowledge across topics ranging from community art and cultural regeneration to public health and loneliness.

I build on this knowledge to provide recommendations about *what the purpose of evaluation should be and what evaluation activities could help realise a radical vision for health and wellbeing*.





## 3.0 Key topics overview

### 3.1 How are culture and arts used for social purposes?

Future Paisley's interest in improving health and wellbeing brings together two topics that are concerned with the social impact of culture and the arts. The arts and health field brings together existing practices that combine culture, the arts, health and wellbeing. In the UK, the most visible and influential mapping of this field is the Inquiry Report which was set up in 2014 and published in 2017 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health, and Wellbeing (APPGAHW). This report calls for recognition of the contribution the arts make to health and wellbeing.

Place-based policies have used culture and the arts for social ends, such as cultural regeneration policies. Historically these policies have been mostly focused on the economic benefits of culture and the arts. The rise of health and wellbeing to a point where it is (potentially) considered as the main approach for discussing the benefits of culture and the arts (Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2020) and interest in the wellbeing economy<sup>1</sup> has placed increased focus on the use of culture in place-based policies for wellbeing ends.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/groups/wellbeing-economy-governments-wego/>

## 3.2 What do we mean by health and wellbeing?

Policy and projects need to understand what it is they seek to improve when they set out to improve health and wellbeing. How health and wellbeing are defined shapes how people are valued and seen, as well as what part they play in policy and projects.

The dominant ways of thinking about health and wellbeing promote the values of individualism and human exceptionalism. This view uses reductionist approaches to streamline human experience into models and interventions that minimise the richness and uniqueness of people and their everyday life. These ways of thinking limit the effectiveness of society's responses to complex health challenges such as obesity and health inequalities (Hanlon et al., 2011; Rutter, Marshall and Coutts, 2020; Blue, Shove and Kelly, 2021). The dominant way of thinking about health and wellbeing has squeezed out the radicalness of new thinking about the area (Kickbusch, 1996) and entrenched the idea of health and wellbeing as the product of poor individual life choices that—in turn—can be fixed by changing individual behaviour (Kriznik et al., 2018; Smith and Anderson, 2018).

Such ways of thinking restrict our understanding of the full benefits of arts and culture. This is particularly so for the benefits that align with the Christie Commission<sup>2</sup> on the future delivery of Scotland's public services. The Commission found that positive approaches to public services reform centre on people's lives and communities of place and interest (White, 2009; Scottish Government, 2011). Therefore, without tackling ways of thinking that promote individualism, human

exceptionalism and reductionism, new ideas for arts and health interventions will have their potential for improving health and wellbeing blunted.

For the purposes of this document, it is useful to think of health as a relational phenomenon. Improving relational health means thinking about how we can be well together (Atkinson et al., 2019) and what it means to be collectively healthy. A useful question was posed by Berry (1994): can individuals be healthy in a toxic environment whether at home or in ecosystems?

Addressing these matters through the lens of relational health can help Future Paisley answer the question its exhibition posed to residents: How can Paisley evolve to meet the big issues facing the world in the next decade: from recovery from the pandemic to the climate emergency?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.whatsonrenfrewshire.co.uk/event/100442-future-paisley-exhibition/>





### 3.3 What can culture and the arts do for health and wellbeing?

The positive health outcomes deriving from cultural and art activities have been well researched, but how these activities create health outcomes has been less examined (e.g. Raw, 2014). What culture and the arts contribute is unclear (Secker et al., 2018). How a project or programme works is usually framed as a mechanism or pathway. However, the benefits of engaging with culture and the arts will vary for individuals, and the benefits may not be related to the engagement itself but, as Sagan (2017) argues, in the accumulation of benefits, as this accumulation is what leads to change. Duff (2016, p. 71) illustrates the process of accumulation; it starts with unassuming moments and, the author argues, that 'what counts is the extent to which these practices and relations begin to ramify, to accumulate, to resonate together in the formation of an assemblage of health.' A focus on these processes of accumulation and health and wellbeing as an experience, suggests that health and wellbeing should be thought of as something that emerges from everyday moments. Therefore, the experience of health and wellbeing that results from engaging with culture and the arts cannot be predicted or fully known.

A vision of culture and, a vision of health and wellbeing is needed to answer the question of how a policy can leverage culture and the arts to address health and wellbeing needs. There is a gulf between cultural practitioners and individuals regarding what constitutes meaningful activity and what is defined as culture. Many cultural policy and cultural projects have failed because they have struggled to negotiate this space (Jancovich and Stevenson, 2021).

An emphasis on 'what matters' leads to a focus on informal and everyday cultural activities, small-scale and organic assets, such as knitting circles and allotments (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016). This emphasis brings attention to what it means to be

human and, to experience life. Valuing 'what matters' would emphasise valuing the experience of culture, a form of knowledge that policy research in the field of culture often takes little account of (Bennett, 2004) and, in turn, leaving casual leisure less valued (Oman, 2021). One reason for the low valuation of casual leisure Oman (2020) argues, is policy makers' tendency to place value on activity that can be recorded and measured. Culture as a meaningful everyday activity is found not in measurements or survey categories. Rather, it is far more likely that the value of culture will be captured in the way people speak about an experience they have had, using their own words (Oman, 2020).

Furthermore, the UK does have a tradition of community arts that aims to stimulate wellbeing and community engagement (Symons and Hurley, 2018). The cultivation of health and wellbeing through an approach rooted in place and people's everyday life has been part of the practice of community artists. Therefore, relational and meaning-making work and a focus on 'what matters' is a type of knowledge that artists possess, utilisation of this resource should be a central concern for those wishing to leverage arts and culture for health and wellbeing benefits.





### 3.4 What can evaluation do for health and wellbeing?

The emphasis on outcomes and impacts in 'evidence based' approaches can obscure other benefits (Carlisle et al., 2007; Porter, Roberts and Clements, 2007), and generally dilute the value of knowledge and expertise of practitioners, people and communities (Carlisle et al., 2007; White, 2009).

The conversation around evaluation usually revolves around barriers to undertaking it effectively and, how to improve the process using toolkits and frameworks.

**There is less questioning of what this search for evidence and wellbeing data does to how we think about culture, the arts, health, and wellbeing.** The purpose and value of evaluation have been an issue in cultural regeneration, in which there has been a tendency to focus on economic benefits more than other types of benefits (Campbell et al., 2016). The difficulty of defining and measuring health exacerbates the issue of identifying what are we seeking to improve when we are improving health and wellbeing.

These issues regarding the purpose of evaluation can be seen in Scotland, where arts and health activity is potentially caught in a self-reinforcing loop of evaluation. Artists consulted on their opinions about carrying out arts and health activity reply that they are concerned about evaluation. These concerns are channelled into recommendations for 'better evaluation' (Rocket Science, 2021). However, the desire for evaluation to provide evidence into 'what works' can hinder relational health and relational working and, instead, entrench dominant health and wellbeing ideas (White, 2009). The focus can be pulled away from 'what matters' and what is meaningful activity to individuals. In turn, this increases the likelihood of failure in cultural policy and cultural projects (Jancovich and Stevenson, 2021).

# 4.0 Findings

## 4.1 Loneliness

Loneliness is considered a critical public health issue (Frost and Cowie, 2019, Lim, Eres and Vasan, 2020) and, an issue that the Scottish Government has a strategy to tackle.<sup>4</sup>

Loneliness is a subjective feeling of a gap between the relationships a person wants and what they have. Three types of loneliness have been described in academic and grey literature (Mansfield et al., 2019):

- social—absence of social connection, the perception of social isolation and dissatisfaction with the quality of relationships
- emotional—absence or loss of meaningful relationships that meet a deeply felt need to be recognised and 'belong' to someone or a group such as at work or in a family
- existential—less related to the specifics of relationships and is about a sense of disconnection from others and the world

Loneliness and social isolation have evolved into a policy concern for Future Paisley. In April 2021, a workshop was held to review Step Change 2, 'Lifting Paisley's communities out of poverty' and the associated strategic outcomes. A revised Step Change was proposed in 2021 'Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities' with an attached outcome of 'Enhanced mental health and reduced social isolation in our communities.' Based on my research, I raised the question of whether loneliness should be included with social isolation because

addressing social isolation does not always translate into addressing loneliness (Burholt, Nash and Phillips, 2013). I raised concerns that focusing on loneliness obscures the differences between types of loneliness (Dahlberg and McKee, 2014), leaving undisturbed the greater focus on social loneliness than emotional loneliness in policy and practice (Mansfield et al., 2019). In addition, existential loneliness is less discussed in policy and research.

My research finds that policy considerations of loneliness lack nuance of how connections are formed, what people are connected to, and quality of connections. The dominant approaches to addressing loneliness as a health issue focus predominately on fixing people and differ in their conclusions from research that explores people's experiences of loneliness in terms of what matters to them. Loneliness is many things to people, but without room for feelings, we have an incomplete understanding of loneliness and an incomplete assembly of resources to live with it.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/connected-scotland-strategy-tackling-social-isolation-loneliness-building-stronger-social-connections/>

## 4.2 Health and wellbeing—developing a language to think about relational health

My research finds that how we think about health and society needs to be shifted towards a framing of public health that resists dominant ways of thinking. Without this shift, practice and projects will have their potential for improving health and wellbeing constrained due to a lack of visibility and focus on the relational work involved. Paying attention to the following ideas can help us think about the collective character of relational health and how relational health emerges from everyday experiences.

### Atmospheres

**What this term means:** Atmospheres are about *what places and events mean and how they are felt*. Understanding atmospheres requires understanding of how we constantly encounter and make sense of our surroundings, what we do in them, with whom, and how we ascribe value and meaning to this (Sumartojo and Pink, 2018). The concept of atmospheres has been used to understand how a sense of being wellbeing can be facilitated (Fletcher and Barroso, 2020). Duff's (2016) research explores how atmospheres are encountered and facilitated in the recovery process. Three atmospheres helpful to health are identified: **atmospheres of sociality, atmospheres of safety, belonging and becoming well, and atmospheres of hope and belief.**

**Why we need this term:** By reflecting on how places are experienced, Atmospheres help bring a focus to the relational work needed to make a space *feel* a certain way, such as safe and social. This focus can help us value the people who do relational work and their

practices, including those in the cultural sector (White, 2009; Raw, 2014). The focus on *how we make meaning* highlights the everyday moments that my research shows accumulate into feelings that—in turn—are helpful to health.

**How does this relate to Paisley:** I have found various examples of these atmospheres in Paisley. the importance of Art Boss<sup>5</sup> project to participants in terms of social connections; an atmosphere of sociality. Paisley Museum's work with care-experienced children and young adults<sup>6</sup> asked *how the Museum feels* to the group when they visit and *what the Museum can do* to make people feel like they belong when they visit.

**How do atmospheres change how we think about health and wellbeing:** Evaluations tend to think of places, such as a safe spaces or welcoming spaces, as factor or process that contributes to the outcome of health and wellbeing.<sup>7</sup> Highlighting the relational work that creates these spaces can help make the relational nature of health more visible.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oneren.org/culture/arts/arts-in-the-community/art-boss/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.npconference.uk/event-7-reimagining-museums-as-caring-places-27-april>

<sup>7</sup> One example that I discussed with people in Paisley is <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/place-space-wellbeing-loneliness-art-sport-culture/>

## Affective resources and infrastructure

**What this phrase means:** Affective resources shapes moods and feelings and transform an individual's capacity to improve health and wellbeing. Examples include hope, belonging and optimism (Duff, 2011, 2016). Affective resources help create atmospheres.

**Why we need this phrase:** Social infrastructure is a concept on the rise (Middleton and Samanani, 2022) and growing in familiarity to policymakers (Kelsey and Kenny, 2021). The concept is concerned with spaces where people connect with others (Latham and Layton, 2019). To be effective as a tool, consideration of social infrastructure should be combined with consideration of affective infrastructure to make more visible the work of facilitating atmospheres.

**How does this relate to Paisley:** Projects, organisations and practitioners across Paisley are concerned with creating spaces that people feel they belong to and also belong to people, (e.g. the Recovery Hub and Paisley Museum). This concern contributes to the evident interest in practices such as co-creation with groups. There is a history of community-centred and peer approaches to tackling loneliness in Paisley. In 2020, RAMH<sup>8</sup> led the Renfrewshire Connected Champions Project. The project used a peer-led approach to support others in overcoming barriers to social connectedness. In various research encounters, an interest in community gardens became clear. Nature is threaded through a range of cultural projects.<sup>9</sup> Examples such as Paisley Museum and the RHSCP Connectedness Network show that developing affective resources and infrastructure deriving from hope and optimism in Paisley.

**How does it change how we think about health and wellbeing:** Recognising affective resources helps bring attention to emotional loneliness and existential loneliness through consideration of the quality and feeling of social encounters rather than the quantity. Living with loneliness requires affective resources, as well as social and material resources.<sup>10</sup> Thinking this way centres the diversity of human experience and the range of things we have relationships with, not just other people but also nature, places and ideas. In doing so, we push back against dominant ways of thinking that entrench human exceptionalism and individualism and, increase focus on how we can collectively be well together.

<sup>8</sup> Recovery Across Mental Health: <https://ramh.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://cycleartsrenfrewshire.co.uk/>

<sup>10</sup> Such as money, services and objects

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page consisting of a grid of red dots. The dots are arranged in 12 rows and 4 columns, with a small gap between the first and second columns.

## Places that create relational health and wellbeing

**What this phrase means:** I draw on academic ideas about how places that create health and wellbeing are made and, what the health and wellbeing qualities of these places are (Duff, 2012; Kearns and Milligan, 2019). These ideas consider these places as the interaction of affective, social and material resources to create certain types of atmospheres. These places are 'created by' our relationships and how we make meaning.

**Why we need this:** This phrase makes visible the health and wellbeing related output of relational work and relational practices.

**How does this relate to Paisley:** Future Paisley's cultural regeneration programme is described in documents as physical and environmental, social, and economic. The social dimension focuses on thriving communities with cohesion, creativity, and opportunities for children and young people. Affective resources are not explicitly mentioned. In Paisley, an interest in places that create health and wellbeing is apparent. Paisley Museum staff have had conversations with Dr Nuala Morse about the idea of the museum as a space of social care. Her research builds on the work of museums as places of health and wellbeing by considering health and wellbeing through the notion of care and community engagement practice as care practice. She terms this practice 'the museumness of care,' a practice with distinct relational, affective, and material dimensions.

**How does it change how we think about health and wellbeing:** We can think about places as a combination of affective, social and material resources to create connections that grow atmospheres that make us well. This way of thinking makes visible the processes of relational health and the work of facilitating relational health. This way of thinking widens who we think of as health and wellbeing workers and enables us to value the work that already exists and work that practitioners know contributes to health and wellbeing.

### 4.3 How does culture fit with relational health?


The Paisley example shows how investment in community-centred health leads to the emergence of everyday cultural experiences that Oakley (2015) argues should be the starting point for area-based regeneration. Health, seen through the lens of community-centred health, can be seen as practices of everyday living (of community and belonging), rather than health as something identified and, to be achieved.

Placing community-centred health as the focus for encounters for culture and health makes this an amenable setting for idea of cultural democracy suggested by Kelly (1985), which is culture arising from communities, through common meanings and purpose. Creative acts help shape this description of culture (these can range from jokes to informal sports and dance music). Research has also shown how these creative acts also generate atmospheres and resources that facilitate enabling places that generate health (Anstiss, Hodgetts and Stolte, 2018). The range of excellent practices and projects in Paisley means that the town has the conditions for this emergence to take place. Three of the ten projects cited in Audit Scotland's report into community empowerment during COVID come from Renfrewshire.<sup>11</sup>

During my time in Paisley, RHSCP and its community-centred health activities have become more involved in Future Paisley and bringing culture, arts, health, and wellbeing together more widely. RHSCP's involvement with Future Paisley is layered and connected with Renfrewshire's Third Sector Interface (TSI), Engage Renfrewshire's engagement with the local third sector and, involvement with Future Paisley at both strategic and delivery levels. This layering creates multiple possibilities for third-sector organisations to interact with Future Paisley, either directly or indirectly. Interactions that are created by this layering are enhanced by the strong partnership between RHSCP and Engage Renfrewshire.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/community-empowerment-covid-19-update>





Creative Scotland's report mapping Arts and Health provision notes that organisations need a strong TSI to help build partnerships with HSCPs. Paisley's example offers insight in terms of what 'strong' could mean in this context and, how these partnerships inform the landscape for culture, arts, health, and wellbeing.

Relationships between community organisations weave threads for an asset-based approach. The more threads that exist, the more health and wellbeing processes can be woven. The greater the diversity of threads, the greater the quality, and the richer and more robust the cloth will be. An asset-based approach picks the most useful thread. In Paisley this thread is culture (in other places the thread could be nature, food, or a historical narrative). I find connections emerging in Paisley from cultural activity to other social challenges.

The above insights focus on how culture might be mobilised to shift our ideas of health to relational health and expand the current arts and health field. This field has tended to focus on artist-led activity more than culture that emerges from grassroots activity. This field focuses more on projects than places.

## 4.4 Who is doing the work of culture and relational health?

Creative Scotland's mapping of arts-related activity focuses on professional artists (Rocket Science, 2021) and the healthcare workforce. This focus is narrower than the scope of the activities my research has uncovered in Paisley. Creating more interaction between culture, arts, and health and wellbeing, requires people who can cross boundaries between sectors. Daykin (2019) terms these individuals— who build bridges between different groups and domains—as boundary workers. The CAHSC coordinator role<sup>12</sup> could be considered a boundary worker, along with the three other new posts created to support the delivery of the redeveloped Step Change 2.<sup>13</sup> The collective purpose of these four roles is to function as builders of the cultural ecology in health and social care in Paisley. The relational work includes configuring, deepening and opening up to others existing relationships and, transporting them into new partnerships. COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of having a network of community-health activity that is wider than the formal health sector therefore collaborative, cross-sector working is required (Head of Strategic Planning and Health Improvement for Renfrewshire, 2021). Boundary workers are in an ideal place to be the 'systems 'knitters', who can link together disparate knowledge, relationships and resources across complex settings' and facilitate a mindset for co-design (McKercher, 2020, p. 64).

<sup>12</sup> The two-year post was advertised in April 2022. This role creates for CAHSC the resource of a dedicated staff member to drive forward the agenda of embedding culture and the arts in health and social care sector. The job holder will also be responsible for designing a cultural strategy for health and social care sector and developing partnerships and networks.

<sup>13</sup> Social and Cultural Prescribing Co-ordinator, a Cultural Champions Network Co-ordinator focussing on creative learning, and an Arts and Cultural Engagement Support Worker focussing on The Promise (<https://thepromise.scot/what-is-the-promise/care-experienced-people>).



## 4.5 What are the practices of culture and relational health?

The starting point for engagement should be 'where people are' rather than 'what an intervention brings;' listening is an important part of this process. Paisley Museum's listening exercises and its co-production projects are examples of this.<sup>14</sup> A member of the Renfrewshire Arts Team commented that they had never had a job that required so much listening. Interviewees talked enthusiastically about the many conversations they had in their roles in Paisley and how this was a core part of the strength of Paisley's bid. Engage Renfrewshire led engagement with the public about the UK City of Culture 2021 (UKCoC21) bid, and 36,000 people joined in the conversation (Crearie, 2018), corresponding to approximately half of the population of Paisley and a fifth of the population of Renfrewshire.

Listening is an essential process for service development. Services should be meaningful to be trusted. Listening to those affected by the service is key to understanding if a service works or fails. The skill of listening is a relational process as it requires reciprocity and may create affective encounters as people feel seen. Listening builds resources and infrastructure. Listening is an essential part of co-design (McKercher, 2020), and therefore Future Paisley's aims for excellence in co-design and co-production practice.

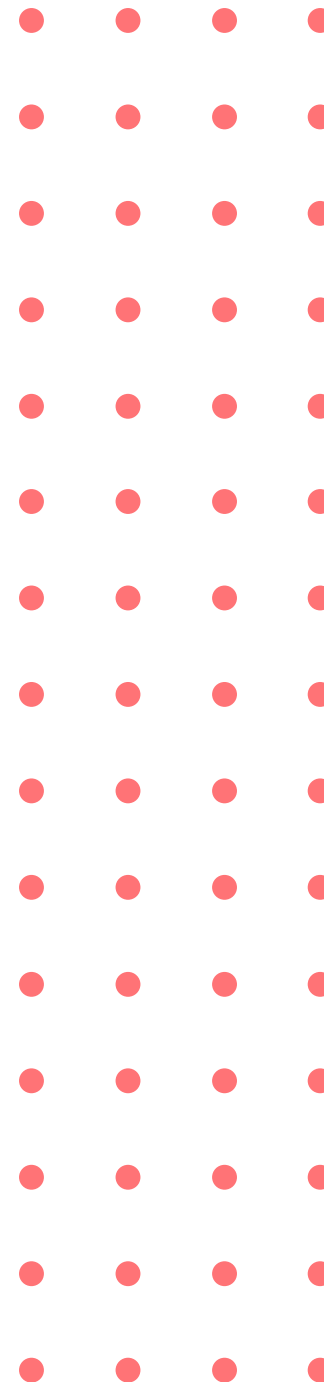


<sup>14</sup> <https://reimagined.paisleymuseum.org/news-stories/listening-to-local-priorities-2/>

## 5.0 Policy Insights

### 5.1 The Future of Future Paisley

My research followed an interim phase of Future Paisley's development. The disruption of COVID-19 also impacted Future Paisley's work and my research which ended at a time when new activities were starting. I found evidence of the desire to think differently about public services and observed that much of the work with young people is about increasing the imagining of potential futures. The admission of potential is the admission of a future and of hope, which is an important affective resource for health-generating places. Staff involved in an art project workshop with young people asked how we can know what effect this project may have in 20 years. A participatory evaluation with young people for Creative Scotland (Media Education, Nugent and Deacon, 2020) answers by focusing on what we can know, which is letting participants tell their stories in ways which felt meaningful to them so the experience of evaluation is beneficial to their lives and participants are happy to keep returning with updates. I have recommended this evaluation report to practitioners in Paisley to deal with the question of how to evaluate prevention, incorporate possible futures into reports and, to co-create evaluation.



## 5.2 Where is Paisley in relation to other areas?

Cultural regeneration policy is an ongoing process developing similar structures to policies and strategies developed in other places where culture, arts, health, and wellbeing are being brought together (e.g. Wales,<sup>15</sup> Greater Manchester, and the Australian state of Victoria).<sup>16</sup> Similar activities include co-creation with communities, developing social prescribing and coordinator roles to embed culture and arts in healthcare, (e.g. CAHSC coordinator role).

In conversations with people in Paisley, I shared documents, reports, and blog posts from other areas. In these conversations, I highlighted Paisley's ambition to be the leading place for creative health activity (despite Paisley/Renfrewshire's significantly smaller population compared to other areas). Greater Manchester's ambitions in *Social Glue* (Parkinson, 2021) resonate with Paisley's ambitions, though Renfrewshire has approximately 6% of the population of Greater Manchester.

### What can evaluation do?

Evaluation processes set the stage for what and whose knowledge is valued. Evaluation can both bring practitioners closer to policy or distance them from it and, as such, is a site of tension.<sup>17</sup> Processes are usually structured by dominant ways of thinking about health and wellbeing, which may not align with practitioners' knowledge or experience.

Evaluation practices are not currently suited to relational health. To understand relational health benefits, questions about how we can be well together, and what it means for us to be collectively healthy must be asked. These questions require a different approach to data. How to evaluate health and wellbeing as more than the sum of individual people is a challenge that requires more attention (Atkinson et al., 2019). When projects attempt to develop a collective wellbeing framework, this work tends to focus on incorporating social relations only.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nhsconfed.org/publications/advancing-arts-health-and-wellbeing>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/our-work/arts-and-social-connection>

<sup>17</sup> <https://failspaceproject.co.uk/gallery/>

For a policy that uses culture for multiple ends, Future Paisley has little discussion of the use of culture and the arts in evaluation. Potential health and wellbeing spaces are being created, the artist in-residence projects in Paisley could be used innovatively, to capture how these spaces form. Creative projects could be undertaken to co-create atmospheres with people in the space or, to chart the growth of affective resources by following how a sense of belonging forms and, how it is formed within physical spaces. Creative methods could follow the accumulation of small moments over time. Through these activities, the relational work and values of care that are required to create these spaces can be illustrated. These activities could bring together '*what works*' and '*what matters*.' Is it possible to harness the creative thinking of the Future Paisley commissioned artists to engage, challenge and inform the ethos and purpose of evaluation? By so doing, we can start considering how to approach a complex challenge like understanding and illustrating relational health.



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## 6.0 Recommendations

The health and wellbeing dimension of Future Paisley have gone through more development than other dimensions. Health and wellbeing have long been part of cultural regeneration programmes (Matarasso, 1997; Campbell et al., 2016). However, when compared to the economic dimension of these programmes, there are no established delivery and evaluation approaches and structures. Future Paisley offers lessons on developing a health and wellbeing dimension that is rooted in culture, health and wellbeing activities that are meaningful to people. Evaluation can help illustrate these lessons.

Paisley has a vision of what culture is and what culture is for. The vision for health and wellbeing is less clear. My first recommendation is this vision should be clarified through a clear ambition for culture, arts, health and wellbeing.

## Developing a clear ambition for culture, arts, health and wellbeing

Greater Manchester's Social Glue document outlines clear ambitions for culture, arts, health and wellbeing<sup>18</sup> and suggests recommendations that go beyond current practice.<sup>19</sup> In this document, the outlined vision for health and wellbeing aligns with and exceeds Greater Manchester's social vision for health and wellbeing, by including affective resources. This approach will ensure that any approach to tackling health and wellbeing can be applied to a range of social challenges (e.g. climate change). Greater Manchester's vision for health and wellbeing is built on the foundation of being the UK's first Marmot City region.<sup>20</sup> Future Paisley's vision should also build on Paisley's current strength for example RHSCP's relationships with the third sector and the potential uniqueness of its CAHSC Coordinator role.

This vision should not be a definition. Organisations and people need to have their own meanings of health and wellbeing for activities to be meaningful. The vision should be about we value and the work we want to make visible. This vision requires more than excellent practice and fantastic projects, these need to come together collectively and be more than the sum of its parts. This vision could be in the form of a manifesto produced through participatory methods.<sup>21</sup> Drawing on the best of the 'old' and combining effectively with new innovation will help Paisley to achieve its goals.

Thinking about relational health draws on many examples of relational ways of working and practices (such as listening and co-production) which gather in 'what matters'. Therefore, evaluation should be more than a new scale to measure relational health or new ways of evidence gathering to capture relational work. My research shows that when scales and models have been applied to new ideas of health and wellbeing, the radical potential of these ideas have been blunted. My second recommendation is about what evaluation should seek to do.

<sup>18</sup> "By 2024 Greater Manchester will be the UK city-region where heritage, culture and the arts play a key part in the health and wellbeing of its diverse residents and workforce; a global leader addressing systemic inequalities across the life-course, demonstrating and nurturing the power of collective, creative action for social change."

<sup>19</sup> "Greater Manchester should move beyond Social Prescribing, linking green and blue spaces, heritage and the arts to the potential to live well."

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gmhsc.org.uk/opinion/greater-manchester-is-a-marmot-city-region-what-does-that-mean-and-how-will-it-improve-our-health-and-reduce-inequalities/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://manifestosfromtimesofcrisis.com/manifesto/#26>



## Evaluating 'what matters' and 'what works'

Evaluation should be a process to make systems, strategies and services more human. Evaluation should bring practitioners closer to the policies that they deliver. The process should be joyful and messy, not just tasks and tick boxes. It should be meaningful to the people it is intended to benefit, not a performance for funders. I recommend that evaluation consider the question that Doherty and De St Croix (2019) posed in their research on evaluating and valuing youth work: what is the everyday, and what is the remarkable? This question provides a way of understanding 'what matters' to go alongside the interest in 'what works. Evaluation should seek to highlight the ways of working that develop and embed 'what matters' into projects, practices and service design. Highlighting these ways of working such as listening, co-production and co-creation would help make the work of relational health visible. There is a growth in interest in these ways of working in Scotland.<sup>22</sup>

Evaluation should do more than document health and wellbeing outcomes. Future Paisley should bring Paisley's expertise in ways of working such as co-production and lived experience,<sup>23</sup> to create evaluation processes that contribute to health and wellbeing by facilitating a collective voice and shared meanings. Creative approaches to 'what matters' already exist in Paisley, (i.e. the manifesto by Paisley Book Festival's 2021 writer-in-residence<sup>24</sup> and Creative Scotland's Culture Collective network).<sup>25</sup> These processes should be brought together to build a shared understanding of relational health.

The recommendations in this report are not about how evaluation can make a 'case for the arts' or, provide a toolkit. These are recommendations for what evaluations should focus on for Paisley to offer lessons elsewhere on developing its health and wellbeing dimension. These recommendations can help develop the radical nature of this dimension by using evaluation as a tool to shift towards relational health rather than enforce the dominant ways of thinking;

My recommendations seek to help Paisley in its aspirations to be radical, suggesting a practical radicalness that comes not from new ideas or innovation but, from recognising and valuing what exists and through helping us think collectively about health and wellbeing. By using evaluation to investigate relational practices and ideas, we can build a picture of the work done to facilitate relational health and shift ideas of health and society. In so doing, we can start to explore how collective wellbeing is more than the sum of individual wellbeing. I recommend the following practices and ideas for evaluation to investigate these processes.

<sup>22</sup> <https://binks-hub.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/news/23303142.renfrewshire-new-poverty-panel-help-shape-policy/>

<sup>24</sup> [https://paisleybookfest.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Imagining\\_Paisleys\\_Radical\\_New\\_Future.pdf](https://paisleybookfest.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Imagining_Paisleys_Radical_New_Future.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.culturecollective.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/National-Evaluation-of-the-Culture-Collective-Programme\\_Part-One\\_March-2023.pdf](https://www.culturecollective.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/National-Evaluation-of-the-Culture-Collective-Programme_Part-One_March-2023.pdf)

## Exploring the links between community-centred health and cultural democracy

The role of culture in contributing to relational health should be explored; how these two processes are linked and how meaningful activity emerges is important. At a national level, a useful question to ask is how does culture emerge from the Scottish Government Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, and how does this emergence in Renfrewshire compare with other Scottish Local Authorities? Understanding this process can help us gain insight into the culture, arts, health and wellbeing ecosystem in Paisley and to identify what, if anything, is Paisley doing differently. This question is of national interest as TSIs are key to facilitating arts and health (Rocket Science, 2021). As Engage Renfrewshire has a dedicated Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund Officer, Paisley provides helpful conditions for study. This role is not always present in other TSIs. This study would also offer one avenue for understanding the role of the TSI and HSCP relationship in facilitating culture, arts, health and wellbeing activity that is meaningful to people. At a grassroots level the idea of social movements in community-centred health and cultural democracy could be explored.

## Exploring the roles of boundary workers and boundary spanning work

Research exists into these roles in social care and healthcare. Paisley offers a great opportunity to apply and extend this research to those working across culture, arts and social care, particularly with the role of CAHSC coordinator. Such an exploration would offer an opportunity to examine the role of a HSCP in delivering a cultural regeneration strategy, a topic that has been little explored. This would also add to a neglected dimension of the arts and health activity in Scotland, which currently focuses on artist-led activity.

## **Making visible atmospheres, affective resources and places that create health and wellbeing**

Paisley offers an excellent place to explore the development of these ideas as places such as the Recovery Hub and Community Circus Paisley have recently opened, and Paisley Museum is opening next year. These places and resources develop as people's relationship with them develops. The opening of several cultural venues offers an opportunity to apply any lessons learned. The opportunity to track how these places and resources form and, how the practitioners and practice involved develops, has been less present in research and evaluation. Such an investigation would offer the opportunity to explore terms that may have more established practice in Paisley (e.g. the idea of Museums as Spaces of Social Care). Extending this idea into non-Museum spaces and considering what a network of these places could do to create affective infrastructure for collective wellbeing could be a new application of this idea.

## **Developing a more complete understanding of loneliness in Paisley**

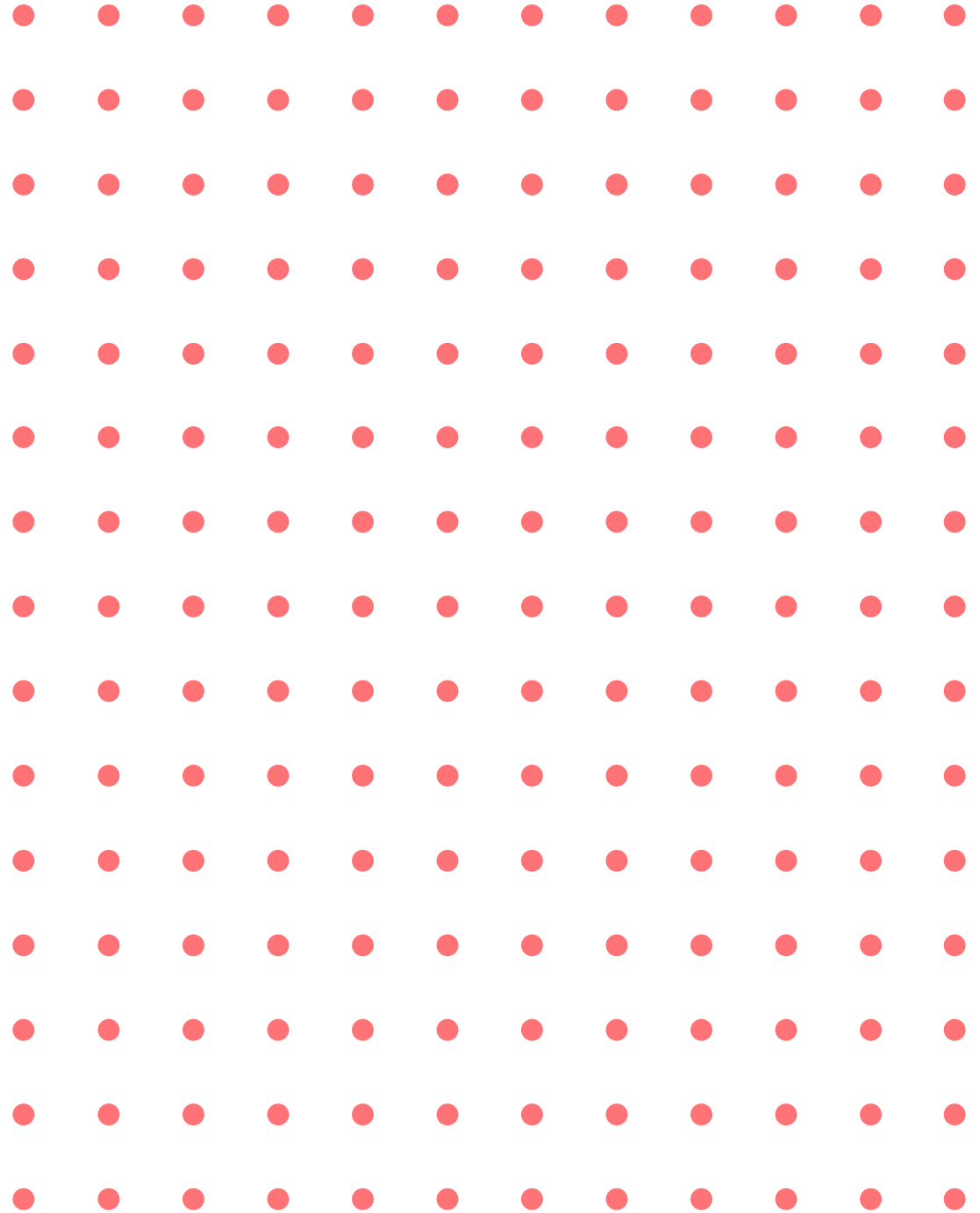
Evaluation should consider all three types of loneliness and how these types of loneliness form a cluster of feelings that may also include senses such as 'sense of belonging' or 'sense of stigma'. This consideration would help to view loneliness as a relational health issue. The difficulty of evaluating the two less explored types of loneliness, emotional and existential, should be considered an opportunity to be radical in evaluation processes and bring experience of loneliness into the process. Given the existing peer-led activity regarding loneliness, Paisley provides a great opportunity to be innovative in evaluation processes.

## **Developing a vision for relational health from local knowledge.**

My suggestion for relational health is built on insights from Paisley, but it has not been developed with people in Paisley. There are activities where people are creatively developing their own ideas of health and wellbeing (RSHSP Connected Network loneliness photography project and Paisley Museum's activities around the idea of Museum as a Space of Social Care and the listening exercise). A vision for relational health should build on this existing knowledge and, on existing practices such as reciprocal listening.

Future Paisley offers an opportunity to provide the innovative action needed to change how we view health and wellbeing, arts and health activity and evaluation as it is situated outside the sectors of culture, health and wellbeing.

The recommendations in this report are designed to help Future Paisley realise this opportunity. My recommendations would bolster what is already going on in Future Paisley regarding an interest in system change and excellence in socially engaged practice and explore how Future Paisley is more than the sum of its component activities. Future Paisley was built on the bold collective ambition of the UKCoC21 bid. A radical and relational vision for health and wellbeing would continue this legacy.





## 7.0 Final thoughts

Two years have passed since I had the unique opportunity of being involved with Future Paisley's activities. At this time Future Paisley was emerging from an interim phase of aligning strategy and delivery in order to clarify health and wellbeing outcomes and activities. Health and wellbeing have subsequently become the largest dimension of Future Paisley.<sup>26</sup>

The insights and knowledge I have gained from my time in Paisley resonates with my current role of tackling a key societal issue<sup>27</sup> by bringing together data with voices of experts by profession and experience. This role has taken me to places in Scotland that are considering the same questions that I have explored in my research: how to create system and culture change so that we embed in strategy, policy and services the

expertise of people and communities who experience the issues we are tackling. Questions that have also been part of the history of Scottish public services reform (Scottish Government, 2011). My research interest in how to change systems so we can keep seeing people as human with individual histories and experiences and not just service users or clients, are shared interests amongst individuals, practitioners and strategic leadership.

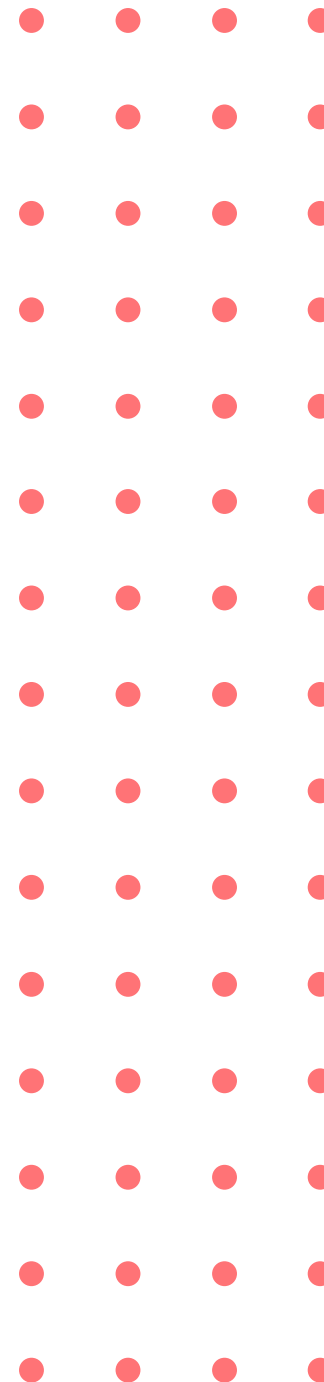
In Scotland, there is an appetite to learn about the practical actions needed to carry out this work and, to discover what policy and leadership can do. There is currently an opportunity for Paisley, if equipped with a vision of practical radicalness, to be at the forefront of these conversations.

<sup>26</sup> <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=f3f976e43d3142e78b19ddb1fe72958d>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/violence-against-women-girls-independent-strategic-review-funding-commissioning-services-report/pages/15/>

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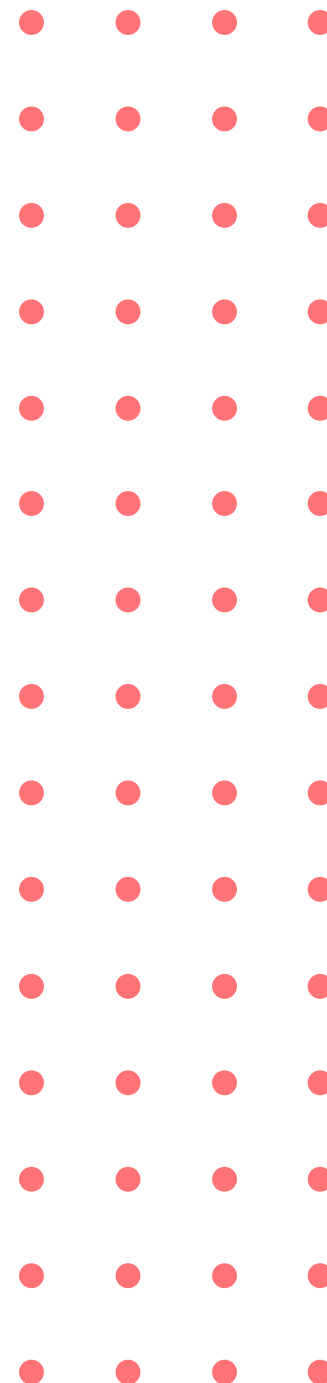
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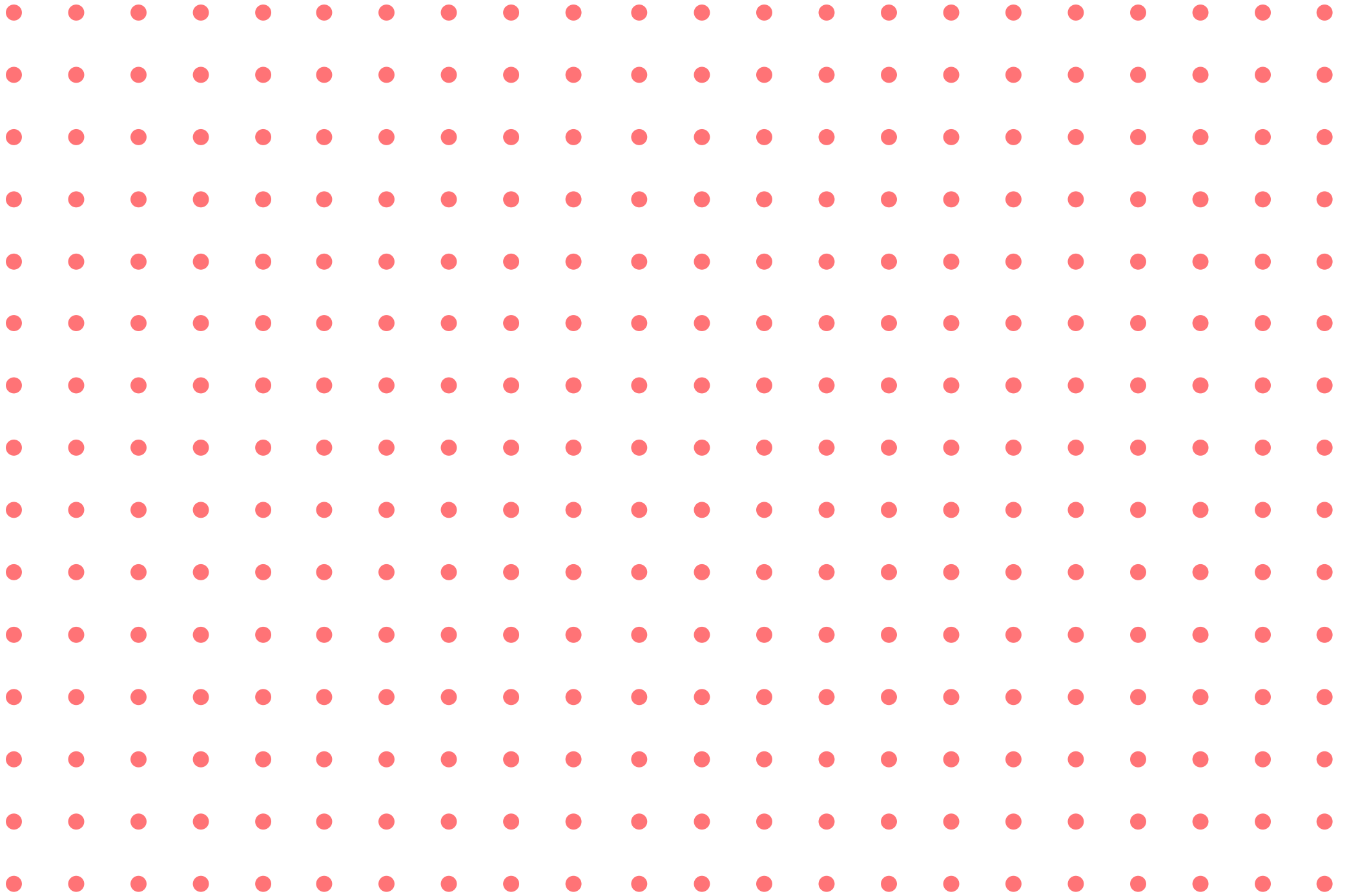


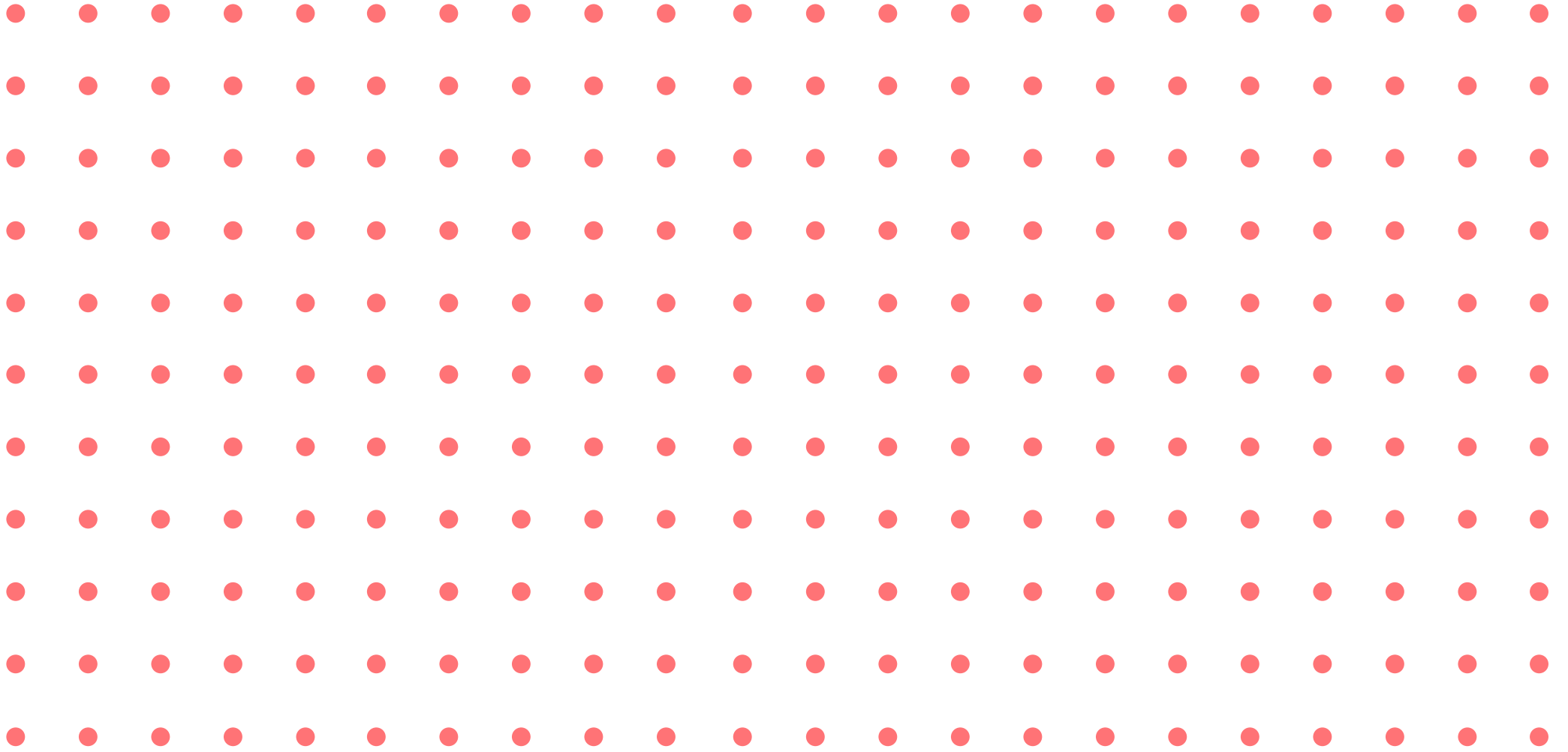
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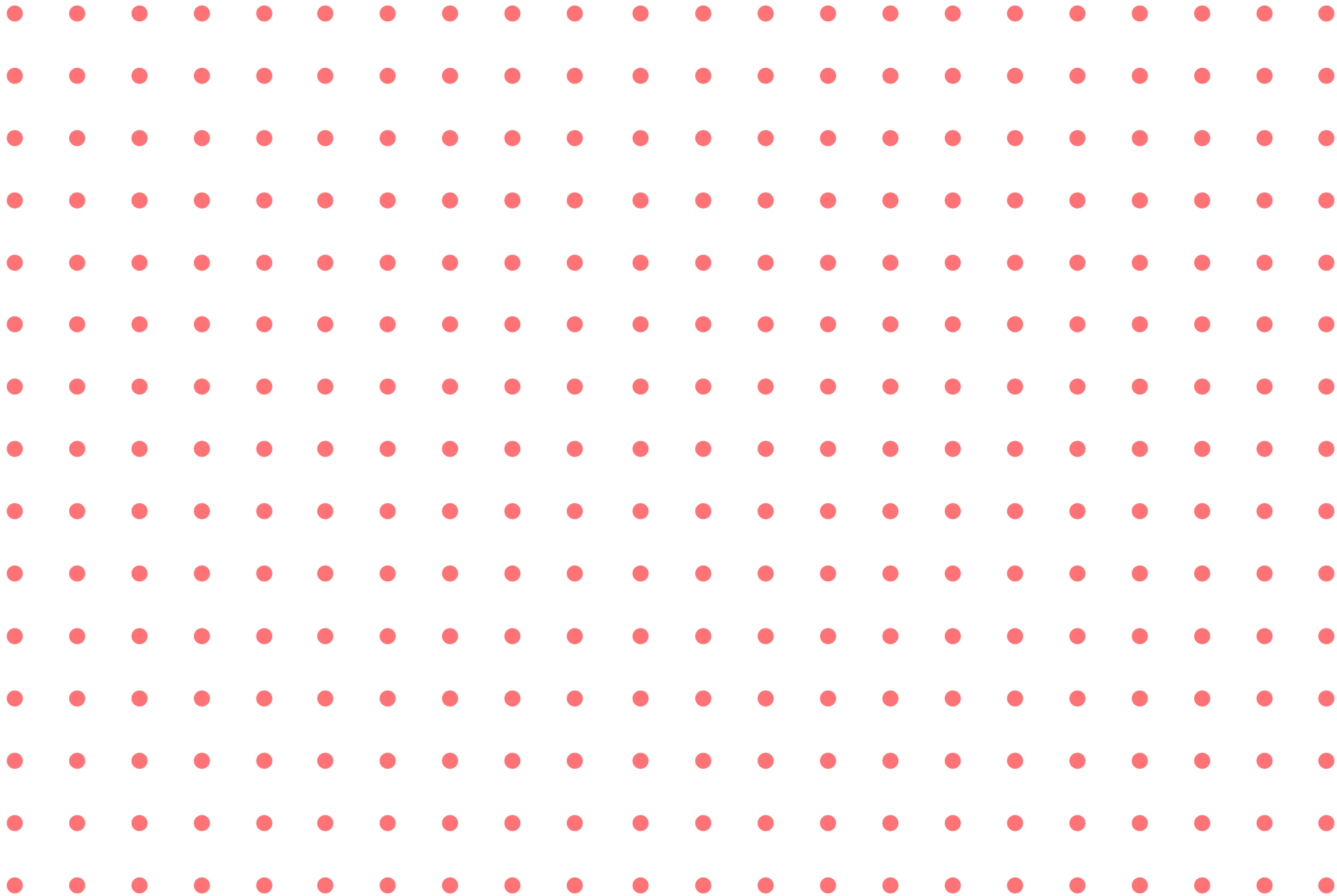
Renfrewshire  
Council

# **Public Value of Festivals and Events**

A Case Study of  
Paisley's City of  
Culture Events Legacy

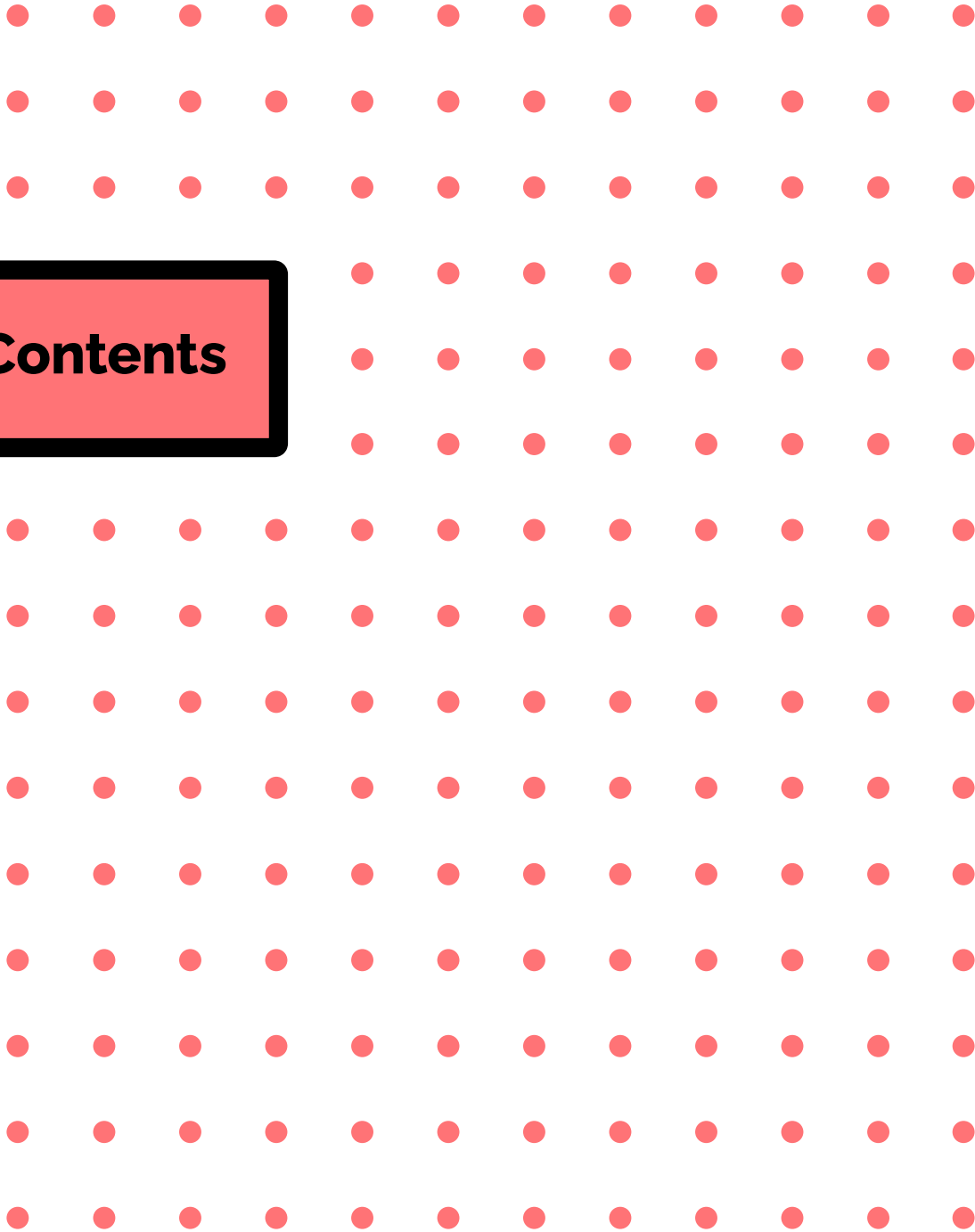
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UWS





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# Contents





## Executive summary

This study investigates the economic and social value created by public, cultural events in Paisley. To counter deindustrialisation and social problems, Renfrewshire Council has invested in a culture-led urban regeneration scheme fronted with cultural events. This events programme is examined in terms of its contribution to public, social, and economic values. The events programme is part of an extensive cultural investment programme, and supported Paisley's bid to become UK City of Culture 2021, a bid that ultimately lost out in favour of Coventry.

In this study, economic, social, and public evaluation methods were used, thus aggregating a significant quantity of qualitative and quantitative data. These data are used to draw a comparison and, in order to provide a more complete picture of the effects of hosting public events.

In comparison with events in analogous towns and cities, events are popular in Paisley. They are visited by a large percentage of locals each year, as well as tens of thousands of visitors from outwith the local authority. In 2018, 142,000 event visits were recorded of which the >40,000 visiting the Halloween festival were the largest group. The survey data utilised in this study was collected from event visitors, Paisley inhabitants, shopkeepers, non-profits, politicians, as well as local authority and national civil servants.

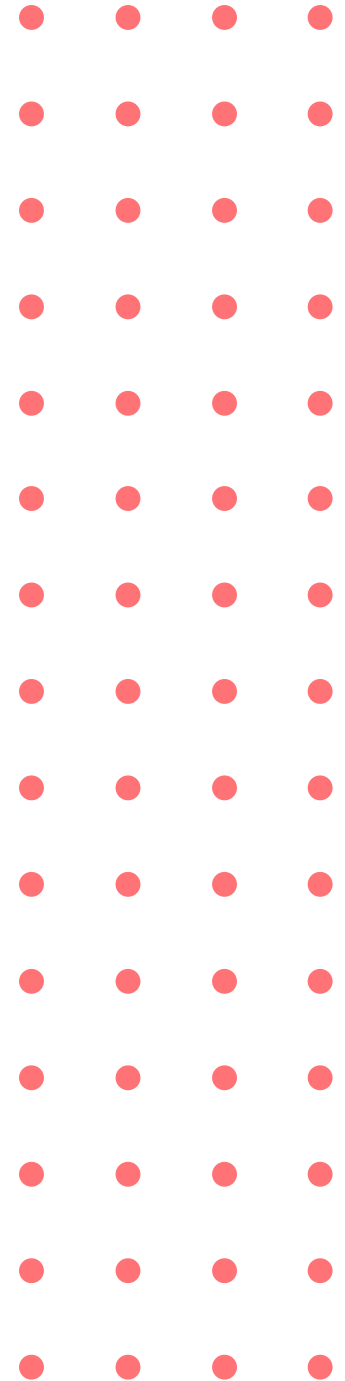
Willingness-to-pay for an event was £13.67 per respondent and event, over 200% of the public funds outlay. A minority of local shopkeepers who were negatively affected by events were, nevertheless, mostly tolerant of them because of the perceived collective gains deriving from the events programme. A total experience value of £33 per visitor was estimated excluding local shopping (in turn adding an additional £35 per visitor to the local economy) compared to a £6.80 public investment.

The social values created were substantial, in several instances these were more extensive than the economic benefits. Most local shopkeepers were affected positively, but the majority of those negatively affected were willing to bear a loss of several thousand pounds per year and still support the events programme. Events were also deemed important for the community. A great number of altruistic opinions were evident throughout the data collection. Elite actors involved in this research also universally appreciated the social value created, though politicians and private sector representatives prioritised the economic regeneration of Paisley above all else.

The observation data generated showed a partially contrasting view, with some locals being sceptical of the benefits of events. Potentially, this is because the data was collected after the first surge of investment in cultural infrastructures but before some long-term results were evident. In addition, through observation conducted at Scottish Government and Renfrewshire Council, the nationally updated event and regeneration policy after the supercharged investment surge into culture that began in Paisley in the early 2010s, was tracked. The more permanent solution for regeneration offered by the Future Paisley investments may see new results in terms of both opinions, attention/engagement, and reputation.

Policy insights and recommendations include:

- 1. Maintain and develop the events programme**
- 2. Identify and start dialogue with dissenting groups**
- 3. A new evaluation policy**
- 4. Differentiated events**





## Background

Paisley has struggled with the effects of socioeconomic deprivation and a somewhat negative reputation for over half a century. The automotive industry, the maritime industry in Port Glasgow, and especially the locally all-important textile industry were curtailed during the 1960s and 1970s. This led to a decline in areas where industries rather than services created wealth: a story echoed across Scotland, Britain, and Europe. Over time, attempts to address these negative trends have included investment in urban regeneration focusing on retail, and on improving the physical environment. Though the physical environment of Paisley did improve, dilapidated buildings were renovated or rebuilt, and the High Street was pedestrianised and made more attractive, Renfrewshire Council decided to shift focus towards the popular culture-led regeneration around 2010.

With the publication of *Paisley: The Untold Story*<sup>1</sup> (2014), Renfrewshire Council made a commitment to invest in culture and heritage as part of a strategic urban regeneration project. Research demonstrates the connection between cultural investments and positive results in terms of urban development (OECD, 2019; Miles & Paddison, 2005). Furthermore, several major organisations, including the UK Government and the OECD have published policy papers and recommendations outlining how investment in major events and festivals could open policy windows, create public support, and boost the speed and quality of

regeneration. The neighbouring city of Glasgow is one of three or four internationally recognised examples of how investment in culture and events can turn negative reputation, brain drain, and urban decay around, leading to the development of more positive narratives. With the pursuit of the UK City of Culture 2021 designation, Paisley sought to proactively address some negative perceptions of the town. The events programme was one of the areas where money was invested into producing more positive attention for the town. Even before the bid, the events programme was already larger than those of several towns of similar size

<sup>1</sup>See: <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3485/Paisley-The-Untold-Story>

to Paisley. Nevertheless, the Local Authority envisaged public events as a valuable arena for showcasing the major event capabilities requested by the DCMS<sup>2</sup> for bidders. The Council commissioned consultancy evaluation reports, which focused on the potential economic influx and demographics of visitors. In the evaluation of public goods, social and economic values are seldom studied together. This is because few tools can be used to gauge both simultaneously. In turn, this means that few interventions are understood in terms of both social and economic values. By looking at the behaviours and sentiments of attendees, stakeholder interviews, and previous economic data, this study investigated both sets of values. The target of the economic analysis was to understand

the values experienced by visitors and how this could be translated into monetary terms. The social value element of the research looked at these experiences and other potential values, and their contribution to sense of community, pride in place, social cohesion, social capital, equity/inclusion, and participation in the public sphere.

The events programme is also a flagship for the transformation in Paisley; it is not as well-funded as the reimagined museum and town hall, but it has received significant media attention, made immediate economic impact, and direct interactions from locals and visitors. Thus, its role as a driver of change, producer of support, and arena for opportunities is clear.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Culture, Media & Sport.

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## Culture and regeneration in Paisley

Historically, Paisley has an existing reputation of being a cultural site, partially as an ecclesial centre making the town a centre for listed buildings. More recently, several popular bands and artists have hailed from Paisley. The local music scene was well known, not least during the 1970s, when Glasgow took a more prohibitive stance towards youth culture. Paisley's *laissez-faire* attitude made it a hub for punk and rock culture. The comparison to Glasgow in terms of culture is not unwarranted, being 11 minutes away by train.

Glasgow's implementation of culture- and event-led regeneration techniques starting in the late 1980s, culminated in the successful delivery of European Capital of Culture in 1990 and influenced Britain as a whole. Culture-led regeneration became *comme-il-faut* for those who were ineligible for waterfront regeneration (usually by the sea) or, not attractive enough for hyper regeneration (such as London's Canary Wharf) strategies. In the 2000s, UK government officials actively promoted using culture-led regeneration, speaking of Glasgow as well as Bilbao and Barcelona as prime examples of the transformative powers of cultural investment. Liverpool's European Capital of Culture in 2008, also deemed successful by government and locals, constituted proof that the Glasgow model could be replicated or at least adapted.

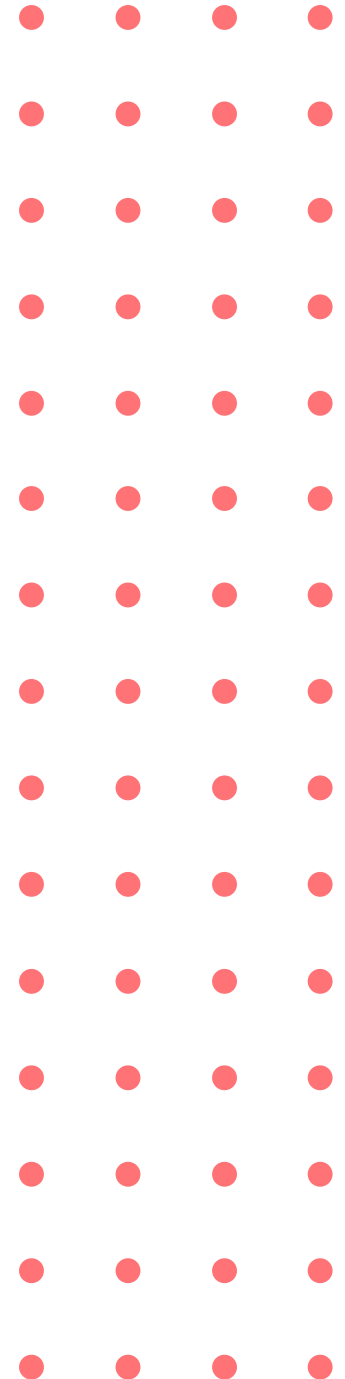
Paisley's approach to culture-led regeneration was based on the idea of replacing the previous industrial economy with service jobs in creative businesses, attracting new inhabitants interested in consuming and contributing to these businesses. A raised profile and increased reputation of the town would attract tourists, boosting and reshaping the hospitality sector. Event venues, the UK City of Culture bid, and an ambitious events programme were part of the vanguard of progression towards a permanently transformed Paisley.

# Aims and objectives

The aim of this PhD research was to widen the scope of topics that can be feasibly studied within a public value framework, specifically applying this approach to cultural events and festivals in Paisley to bridge traditionally conflicting methods of event evaluation and improve public investment strategy. This was realised by addressing three research objectives/questions:

- How did Paisley's public events and festivals programme 2016–2019 contribute to the local economy?
- What social impacts were generated due to the Paisley public events and festivals programme in 2016-2019?
- How can the social impacts of public events and festivals be quantified and presented in non-monetary terms?

The baseline evaluation of economic impact was the contribution to the local economy, and the calculation of effects which can be translated into economic figures. In addition, social and public values were analysed. As the town did not win the designation, the ambitious goals of the Paisley 2021 bid have not been summarised in the type of evaluation typically produced by those hosting major events. Nevertheless, the bid was part of a set investments and expectations. The slogan brought into operation after the announcement for UK CoC 2021, "The journey continues..." (Paisley.is, 2017), bears witness to Renfrewshire Council continued investment in step changes towards cultural and economic regeneration. An evaluation of the event-related efforts around losing bids is of both public sector and academic interest. Published guides for prospective bidders claim that value can be achieved even without a win—though non-winning bids do seldom generate large-scale evaluations (OECD, 2019; DCMS, 2021). Informing policymakers about the consequences of cultural investments has the potential to improve the quality of information used to make decisions.



# Research methods

To achieve the research aim and objectives, a mixed methods approach was adopted, making use of both qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected over an extended period of time, in different settings, and from people with different relationships to Paisley. Data were collected across the full duration of the study. Data sources are outlined in Tables 1 and 2:

## Quantitative data

Phase 1 (2019)	Site	Respondents	Collection period
Structured attendee interviews	Events	205	Autumn 2019
Shopkeeper semi-structured	In shops	60	Autumn 2019
Phase 2 (2021-2022)			
Digital questionnaire	Online + events	202	2022
Secondary Data			
Renfrewshire Council Evaluations	Events	11,000/1,978	2016-2019
SIMD	Public data	Scotland	2020 publication

Table 1: Quantitative data collection

## Qualitative data

Type	Respondents	Collection period
Elite actor interviews	11	2020-2022
Observation data	n/a	2019-2023

Table 2: Qualitative Data Collection

## Structured attendee interviews

Primary quantitative data were collected during 2019, 140 structured attendee interviews partially based on the ATLAS event evaluation questionnaire were conducted at three events: Paisley Halloween Festival, Fireworks Extravaganza, and Christmas Lights Switch-on. The attendees at Paisley events are the most direct beneficiaries of the events programme. Their opinion is the most obvious measurement of how successful the experience of the events was. This survey contained questions relating to both social and economic value, and more open discussion about the events in Paisley. This was part of an extended pilot, which meant that some aspects of the study approach were developed later. As it happens, this work also became a snapshot of the last few events to take place before the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## Shopkeeper interviews

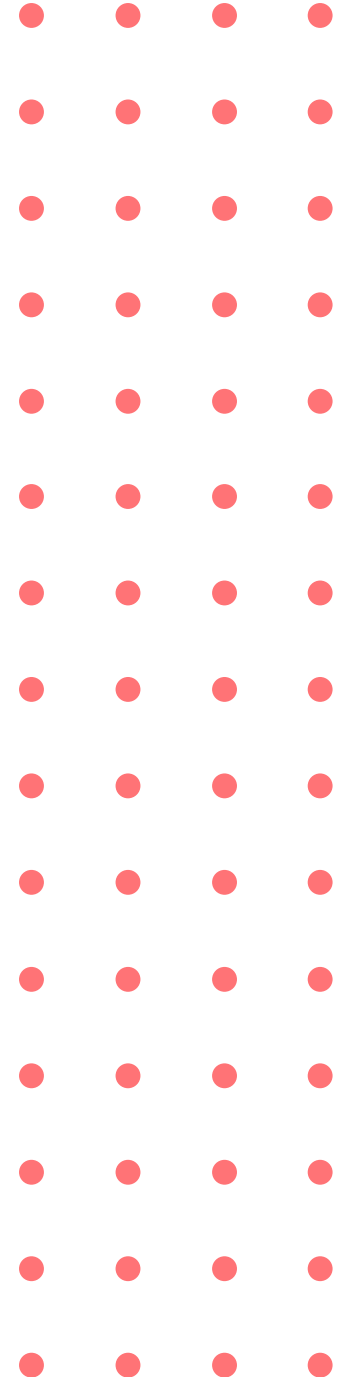
In the days following two of the aforementioned 2019 events, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 60 representatives in shops around Paisley town centre. Open-ended questions gave respondents the ability to express opinions relating to the events programme in their own words. Shop representatives were asked about both economic and other impacts to them and their peers. Local shops are regarded as important economic beneficiaries, which in turn is the main quantifiable effect of events. Their hitherto unheard perspective on Paisley events both economically, culturally and socially adds to the perspective of citizens-consumers, tourists, and public bodies.

## Digital questionnaire

In early 2022, an electronic questionnaire was distributed to three sets of respondents. The majority was found in local social media groups, thus focusing on locals rather than a general sample of visitors; these were amply captured by Renfrewshire Council evaluation reports. A smaller number of respondents were also approached at Paisley events in the first half of 2022; there had been minor events in 2021, but as COVID-19 restrictions were in effect until April 2022, that was the starting point for a regular events schedule. 202 respondents completed the survey. The majority of questions related to social values (sense of community, pride in place, social cohesion) and use values of the cultural experience. Open-ended questions proved a fruitful way of getting more data from respondents.

## Renfrewshire Council evaluations

Pre-existing secondary data was also made available by Renfrewshire Council. This data was collected and collated by various commissioned consultants (EKOS, James Law, Culture Republic), using with similar methodologies. Using the EventImpacts framework (n.d.), questionnaires were carried out on site at events and festivals. It is notable, however, that the EventImpacts framework has several methodological flaws for academic use: the reliance on simple Economic Impact Analysis for a "cautious estimate," the lack of externalities and multipliers and the catch-all treatment of site and local area.





### **Elite actor in-depth interviews**

In 2021 and 2022, eleven interviews were conducted with a selection of elite actors from Scottish Government, Paisley community groups, Renfrewshire Council, and local businesses. This later series of interviews constitutes the bulk of the qualitative source material. Key questions were asked in a semi-structured style, to achieve what McIntosh & Morse (2015) call the Descriptive/Divergent type of interview, which “applies the same interview guide to disparate groups of participants to discern differences and similarities in perspectives and experiences among them with respect to the dominant discourse that underpins the interview guide” (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The difference in experiences and relevant topics of respondents made the latter parts of the interview more open-ended, with an open discussion on value, Paisley, and events.

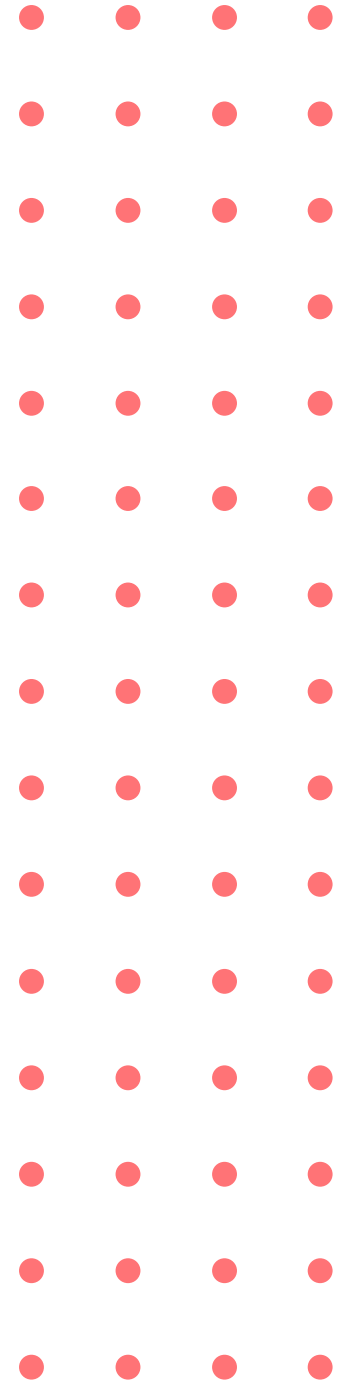
### **Observational Data**

As researcher, I was embedded in the regeneration team at Renfrewshire Council from early 2019 until lockdown began in March 2020. Observational notes were taken of the processes and the PhD studentship enabled participation in shaping the approach to evaluation. These notes form large informal pieces of knowledge on the subject matter of events in Paisley. Additionally, I was placed in the Scottish Government, at the office for the Scottish implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals; National Performance Framework. This placement was undertaken in the spring of 2022 and allowed for an additional insight into larger-context policymaking. Additional experiences made while living and working in Paisley over the course of four years were discussed as observational data. Though problematic in terms of validity, the contrast between the majority of responses in the data and the informal discussions experienced on the street gave rise to insights about the positionality of the researcher, and about defending one's hometown in official registers.

## Summary of findings

Findings suggest that support for the events programme was strong, and respondents were willing to spend time and money to visit and experience them. Willingness to spend was several times the actual public investment. Shop representatives were typically willing to support the events even when it meant losses of trade. All stakeholders expressed support for the cultural investment programme, especially the public events, but several also discussed the long-term reduction in levels of engagement after the lost bid despite the universally accepted 'The Journey Continues' approach. Several stakeholders expressed concern over the effect of investments ending in 2024, especially the impact of funding ceasing. Other respondents argued that the 2024 finish line for the strongly increased investment was built into the project from the start. According to them, 'going mainstream' was crucial to see the real effects of the interventions.

The preparation for long-term work with culture, without additional funding, is evident in Renfrewshire Council's cultural policy, which has turned towards *cultural regeneration* rather than culture-led regeneration. Culture is increasingly integrated into other parts of the public sector and its partnerships, including the National Health Service, social services, and urban planning. Working holistically shows that Renfrewshire Council believes in culture as a means of improving people's lives beyond the ideas at the foundation of culture-led regeneration: investing in high-profile events venues, bringing in service sector business, and showcasing major events.





## Economic effects

Findings showed that spending rose considerably during events, and taking into account Paisley's unique setting socioeconomically, geographically, and within the Greater Glasgow area, a greater added value could be identified with the techniques in this study than previously. Locals mentioned the pride they felt seeing the town come alive, and the sense of community or cohesion this created. Shopkeepers used the phrase "It's good for the town." These factors were more important to respondents than the shows on offer, or the socioeconomic aspects. "It's nice to see the town come alive," and "I'm proud to show my friends Paisley when the events are on" reflect positive sentiments, but sometimes positive sentiment was phrased negatively; Paisley is nice during the festivals, but not as nice at other times. Observational data indicated that the almost universally positive opinion regarding the cultural investment and bidding process was associated with externally defending the town. This is a phenomenon found in the literature as well (Chalip, 2017).

The result of the economic impact minus organiser expenditure (£1.1m) was £2.9m per year after casual visitors and a local economic effect were deducted. This meant that sales were generated at almost 4 times the organiser expenditure.

Including estimated travel costs and the willingness to pay<sup>3</sup> for the events, the experience value of the events minus all costs was £7.7m net positive.

## Social effects

Increased social cohesion due to the positive experience of Paisley's urban environments was a value which could be observed beyond direct survey questions (with the lower validity that comes from stated rather than actual behaviour). The sense of the development of a common movement to support the bid was a contributing factor to the success; this still showed positive effects and goodwill for the events programme.

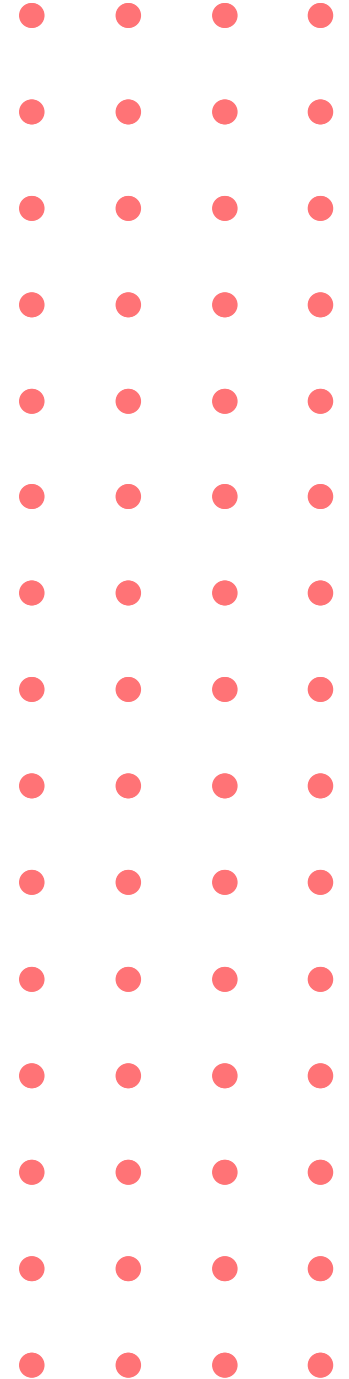
Findings show that socioeconomically deprived groups were proportionally more likely to visit the events hosted as part of the programme. From an organisers' perspective this finding is positive as the programme was designed to attract people from within and outside the town, focusing on *inclusive growth*. Most visitors liked the events and had previously attended others. Findings suggests that those who had visited one event in Paisley often returned to attend more events. These findings aligned well with the public value framework used for this study; especially the increased opportunity to take part in culture and high-quality programmes is an important good which would otherwise be difficult to achieve. People in areas of deprivation were as willing to pay for Paisley events as more affluent groups, despite having a lower disposable income; attendance at such occasions meant more to them.

<sup>3</sup> Willingness to pay (WTP) measures the maximum price that a customer is willing to pay for a product or service. Correctly used, it avoids some validity issues seen in stated preference methods.

The events programme was a crucial part of rallying local stakeholders around the UK City of Culture bid and represented a strong link in the partnership chain. According to interview respondents, the partnership, whilst intact, had started to wane in the post-bid period. Several stakeholders were less engaged in Renfrewshire Council's business, though none attributed this to decreasing direct economic support.

## Negative sentiment

Negative aspects could be observed primarily when people did not perceive that they were speaking to a researcher. The sense that Paisley needed to be defended from outward negative opinion was also expressed in quantitative data, but this impression was strengthened by the contrast between the very positive opinion in the quantitative data and the more ambivalent opinions expressed on the street. Additionally, some event fatigue was observed; 5-7 major events per year was considered plenty, and anything more than that were considered too many by the respondents.





## Policy insights

### **1. There is substantial support for the events programme (and wider investments)**

The minority of Paisley shopkeepers who lost money from the events were willing to forgo that income to an astounding extent; they still supported the events programme. The support for events and culture in Paisley was virtually unopposed in all groups studied: stakeholders from all sectors, including event visitors and the Paisley general public. The events programme is popular, and it is growing in popularity with the long-term commitment; most visitors are returning, and a large percentage of first-time visitors have visited other Paisley events.

### **2. Some values created are long-term, but support may be waning**

The partnership approach of the UK City of Culture 2021 bidding process brought local and national stakeholders together for a shared vision. This, and the public consultations, worked well in rallying private, public, and civil sectors as well as the general public. By 2019, there was evidence that momentum had begun to slow/cease. Findings from this research highlight the emergence of doubts in the value of cultural investments that was not evident in 2017-2018 evaluation reports. Some elite respondents noted that the sense of a common goal and co-operation had degenerated during the time after 2017. It is always difficult to maintain momentum and forward trajectory in the sustainability of networks and ongoing financial support post-bid, but it is imperative that this continues to be a priority if successes are to be built upon.

### 3. Investment in local business for event expenses is low

The current primary indicator in the evaluation reports is Gross Value Added (GVA), which measures economic influx minus outflux. 80-90% of event organiser spend leaves Renfrewshire, which causes a £1m bleed according to the GVA model. Although the GVA measure has several limitations, local stakeholders have noticed that too little is sourced locally, which affects their support and Renfrewshire Council goodwill negatively. Local investment for event costs is a common way to boost GVA numbers as well as supporting local creative business.

### 4. Events carry their weight several times over

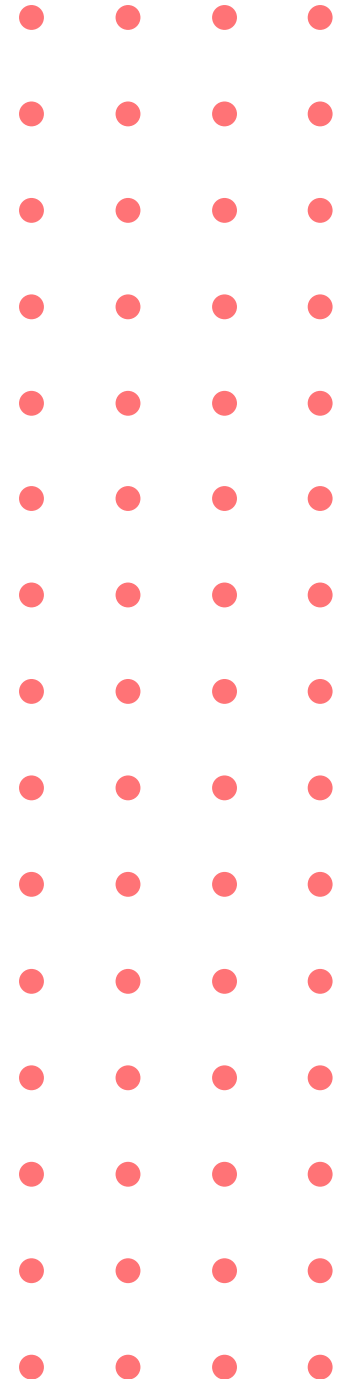
Events in Paisley are a good investment. The net influx to local businesses is realistically around 4x the organiser expenditure (more cautious estimations instead state half that). Visitors' average willingness to pay was £13.67 per event (compared to £6.80 actual public expenditure). A large majority of local respondents want to pay for events via tax rather than via tickets, even if they would not attend all (or any) events. The full value of visitor experiences (all actual transactions excluded) is estimated at £5.5m per year. Shopping brought circa £4m (for comparison, aggregated consultation reports instead claim £1.8m) to local retail and hospitality industries which would otherwise have gone elsewhere.

### 5. Stakeholders acknowledge social values, but they are still considered intangible

All stakeholders, and other groups of respondents, speak highly about the social value created through the events and cultural investments in Paisley. The most common comment from on-site and survey respondents was that 'the town comes alive' and brings a 'sense of community' during events. Several stated that they would only bring friends into Paisley when events were on, because they could be proud of what the town became then. The most common reaction from shopkeepers when asked about events was "it's good for the town". Pride, community, altruism, support, and cohesion are values which many societies fight to retain through active, expensive interventions. In Paisley, respondents expressed these to be direct effects of investments in the events programme.

### 6. Some groups express event fatigue

Most respondents considered 5-7 events per year to be an ideal amount; more frequent events were considered negative, even in groups which thought that events were currently important, under-financed, and valuable. Targeting each group of attendees with more than these 5-7 events may not be necessary, and heavy investment in key events should take priority.





# Policy Recommendations

## 1. Maintain and develop the events programme

The events policy in Paisley has shown adaptability to changing needs, national policies and updated scientific evidence. It remains a valuable showcase for Paisley's competences. The programme is a strong touristic attraction active throughout the year, with popular support across virtually all groups. These strengths are rightly seen as a part of a strong UK City of Culture 2021 bid legacy. If the programme stagnates or diminishes, it will not easily regain the current position.

## 2. Identify and start dialogue with dissenting groups

The contrast between positive and negative opinions seems odd at first. However, locally negative consensuses and widely varying opinions expressed in different settings are not unknown phenomena. The pre-bid consultations are now a decade old; sympathies may have come and gone. Liaising with trustworthy community groups and business representatives (such as Paisley First) to open a new dialogue about the aims of the cultural regeneration policy should be prioritised to avoid potential weaker support. The pre-bid consultation was a firm ground to stand on in terms of public support. Following it up with a new survey of needs and opinions a decade down the road is a sound use of resources.

## 3. A new evaluation policy

Whilst the long-term gains of time series data may be useful, the usage of event evaluation data has been limited. The analysis provided by consultancies has been useful but could be utilised for more purposes without increasing input. The toolkit used, EventImpacts, has launched new features not yet in use in Renfrewshire. A smaller number of respondents, a more in-depth analysis, using more of Eventsimpacts, and possibly adding an SDG filter, could potentially mean more insights could be gained for a similar price tag. Using the same questions and toolkits for key parts would mean not breaking continuity and backwards compatibility.

## 4. Differentiated events

Co-funded events such as the Paisley Book Festival and the UNBOXED premiere, as well as national events for niche audiences hosted in Paisley (Trans Pride 2022, 2023 Vegan festival) all contribute to showcasing Paisley as a potential key events player in Scotland. Niche audiences are key to making use of Paisley's many (and increasing) event venues, as well as counteracting event fatigue.

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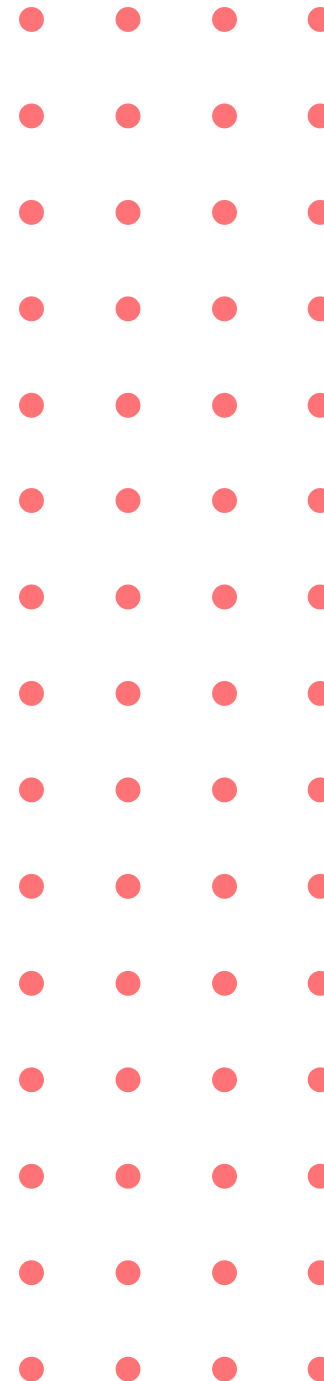
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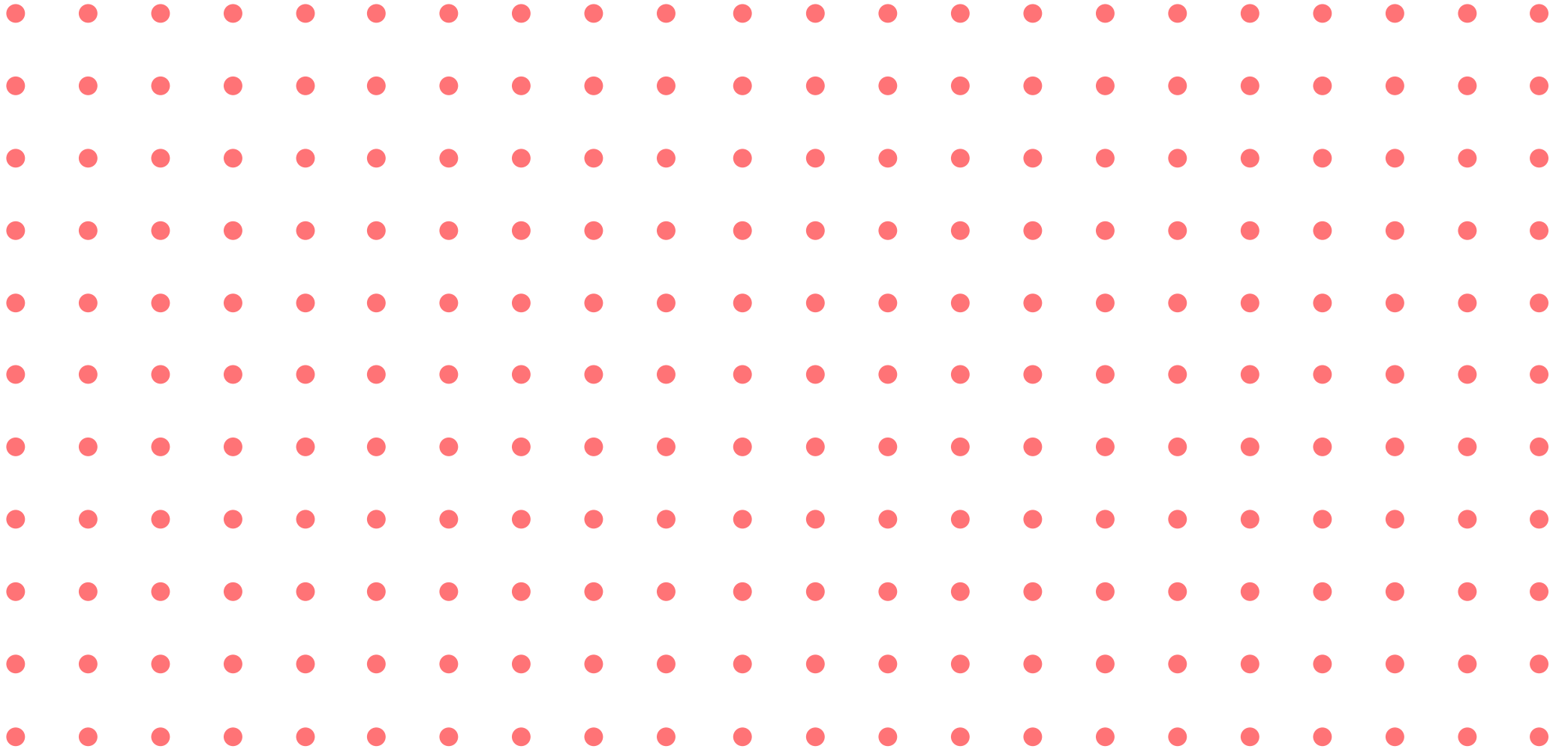
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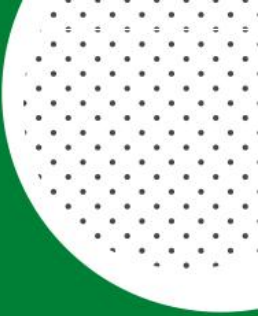
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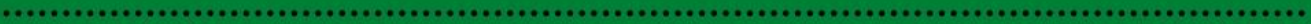


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**Telling the Untold Story:  
Policy Insights from PhD  
research carried out between  
2019-2022**





This policy insights report was produced by Dr Conor Wilson from the University of the West of Scotland to share the findings, analysis and recommendations from his PhD research entitled 'Telling the Untold Story: Discourses, Cultural Regeneration and the Hybridity of Cultural Regeneration in Paisley' undertaken between 2019 and 2022.





(Paisley is) a town that punches well above its weight, an **ambitious underdog** determined to take its place at the table and **unapologetically show off its best bits** (The Independent, 20 June 2019)



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# Executive Summary

Culture and creativity have long been associated with debates about urban regeneration. Beyond the immediate economic impacts, culture is often used as a way of transforming area reputations. However, there is also substantial critique of some forms of 'culture-led' regeneration. These criticisms cannot, however, be applied to every form of cultural regeneration. Indeed, there has been little research that considers how smaller urban places might utilise the positive effects of culture without the harmful impacts of gentrification.

This policy insights report outlines the key findings and insights from PhD research carried out between 2019 and 2020. This research explored how Paisley's image and reputation was constructed, and how this relates to changing ideas about cultural regeneration within the town. The research utilised a variety of different methods including: newspaper analysis, documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and online workshops to explore how representations of Paisley, culture and regeneration have changed between 2014 and 2020.

Findings from this research suggest that cultural regeneration activities have successfully generated newspaper reporting about Paisley. Interviews with key personnel involved in cultural regeneration shows that particular 'key messages' about Paisley have been successfully reflected in the newspaper reporting about the town. However, online workshops held with local stakeholders suggest that cultural regeneration activities have had a more mixed impact at local level. Local residents were broadly supportive of cultural regeneration activities, though some work is required to raise awareness.

Based on these findings, three key policy insights have emerged. To begin, there has been some shift in how the approach underpinning Paisley's cultural regeneration has been represented. A more 'holistic' approach to cultural regeneration has emerged, as opposed to an approach that is solely culture-led. However, this research suggests that there is a consistent focus on large-scale, flagship projects and their associated economic impacts.

In addition to this, newspaper representations of Paisley consistently link the town with 'industrial decline' and the emergence of the 'post-industrial society'. This creates a risk of reinforcing negative stereotypes about Paisley, even when discussed within the context of 'regeneration'. This suggests that further research is needed to explore the link between Paisley's image, cultural regeneration and broader ideas around 'territorial stigma'.

This policy insights report is split into three sections. Section one will contextualise the study by giving an overview of debates about culture-led regeneration, cultural regeneration and creative placemaking, as well as outline the research methods that were used. Section two gives an overview of the key findings from this research. Section three discusses the key insights that have emerged from this study in more depth. Finally, the conclusion summarises the report and pulls together key recommendations from this research.



# Section 1: Background and Methods

# Background: Cultural Regeneration

Culture and creativity have long been viewed as a cure for the ills of the contemporary urban condition. Culture and creativity, it is argued, can provide an economic and reputation boost to towns and cities while improving their image, developing their economies and attracting inward investment. However, there have also been various criticisms that have been made of 'culture-led' regeneration. Common criticisms include 'gentrification', in which existing residents are displaced due to rising living costs and replaced with wealthier new residents.

This PhD research adopted a more nuanced understanding of cultural regeneration, arguing that there are three main types of cultural regeneration: culture-led (and creative city) strategies, creative placemaking and cultural regeneration.

In an approach which is solely culture-led, culture is leveraged, principally, to secure economic transformation. One of the most prominent versions of culture-led regeneration are 'Creative City' approaches, which suggest that cities must compete to attract and retain a 'creative class' of residents by becoming bohemian, trendy places (Florida, 2004). There are a number of problems with this approach. Advocating for the migration of the 'creative class' into disinvested urban areas creates the immediate problem of gentrification and risks exacerbating urban inequalities. There has been, therefore, a significant volume of criticism aimed at the 'Creative City' approach to cultural regeneration.

Beyond the 'Creative City', there are a number of other approaches that might be called 'culture-led' regeneration'. For example, bidding for cultural events and festivals, and

building flagship 'cultural facilities', such as museums and other cultural landmarks (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Comunian and Mould, 2014).

These approaches have followed from the apparent success of other cities. For example, Glasgow's year as European Capital of Culture (ECOC) is said to have developed the 'Glasgow model' of using cultural events to leverage economic and physical regeneration goals (Garcia, 2005). Similarly, the 'Bilbao effect' emerged in the construction of the Guggenheim Museum within the city which is said to have provided a 'blueprint' for using cultural facilities to regenerate 'run-down' areas (Mould, 2018).

However, the speed at which culture-led regeneration strategies have proliferated creates the problem of 'serial reproduction'. Serial reproduction, according to Richards and Wilson (2006), undermines the uniqueness of culture-led regeneration as the strategy of - for example - hosting cultural events or building cultural landmarks - is replicated by other cities hopeful of replicating the success of the initial project.

In addition to this, other approaches to 'culture-led' regeneration have attracted similar criticism to Florida's 'Creative City'. From this perspective, both event-bids and flagship cultural projects have a similar competitive logic that foregrounds economic regeneration. This means that the problem of gentrification, and an approach that is too 'top-down' and focused on economic and physical regeneration remain under an approach that is wholly culture-led. However, this does not mean that a more holistic form of cultural regeneration cannot exist. Since 2010, literature has begun to emerge on a more 'bottom-up' alternative called creative placemaking.



Creative placemaking, it is argued, can harness the positive effects of culture without the harmful effects of more top-down approaches (Oakley, 2015). In doing so, we might go beyond criticisms of top-down culture-led regeneration without disregarding them entirely. From this perspective, creative placemaking might provide a more holistic vision for cultural regeneration that goes beyond a narrow focus on economic (re)development.

Creative placemaking refers to a 'process whereby partners shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities' (Markusen, 2013: 292). Oakley (2015) has argued that this involves small-scale cultural investment at a neighbourhood level, as well as an approach that is less principally concerned with economic development objectives. Taken together, creative placemaking amounts to an approach to cultural regeneration that foregrounds local community voice and participation, co-production and small-scale cultural investment in hopes of developing a more holistic version of cultural regeneration.

Despite the proliferation of generally positive scholarship, there remains some skepticism towards creative placemaking. Critics maintain that the differences between creative placemaking and other, more 'top-down' iterations of culture-led regeneration are overstated. Furthermore, some critics have maintained that creative placemaking can be linked to issues of gentrification. There has been some concern expressed that creative placemaking while focusing on *liveability* can - paradoxically - *exclude* the most marginalised members of society from cities by contributing to rising living costs (Pritichard, 2016; Mould, 2018).

However, in this PhD study I argued that focusing too heavily on issues of gentrification - which is largely limited to larger cities - doesn't account for the experiences of smaller urban places seeking to leverage the benefits of culture. As a result, this research aimed to understand Paisley's journey between 2014-2020, to explore how ideas about cultural regeneration grew and changed over this time, and how they were represented in newspaper representations.

Now that this report has provided an overview of the debates surrounding cultural regeneration, I will briefly provide an overview of Paisley's changing approach during the research period.



# Background: Paisley's Approach

Prior to 2014, Paisley has historically been the focus of many urban regeneration policies. For example, Ferguslie Park was one of twelve community development projects in the UK in 1979. The area was also targeted under the 'New Life for Urban Scotland' initiative which ran specifically in Scotland. More recently, Paisley has turned towards culture, heritage and events as a means of regenerating the town. This report will briefly consider three main periods in which Paisley's approach to cultural regeneration has developed: the publication of *Paisley: The Untold Story*, bidding to become the 2021 UK City of Culture (UKCoC), and the development of Future Paisley.

## Paisley: The Untold Story

In 2014 Renfrewshire Council published plans to use Paisley's culture and heritage offer to redevelop the town and transform the town's reputation. The report outlined the 'under-exploited' cultural and heritage 'assets' that could be used as a foundation for the broader economic and physical regeneration of the town. The report outlined the potential redevelopment of Paisley town hall and Paisley Museum, and a potential 2021 UKCoC bid. Throughout *The Untold Story* the approach to regeneration is referred to as 'heritage-led'. This is a process whereby the local authority - and partners - utilise culture and heritage assets (both existing and future) to develop the town's economic and physical infrastructure. More generally, *the Untold Story* is similar to other 'culture-led regeneration approaches' in which culture and heritage 'assets' are used principally to secure the physical and economic transformation of 'run down' or 'declining' spaces, such as Paisley town centre.

## Paisley 2021: Bidding for UKCoC

Following *the Untold Story*, it was announced in 2015 that Paisley would bid to become UKCoC in 2021. Paisley ultimately lost the bid to Coventry. However, it was the first town to be shortlisted despite not having city status. Following the bid campaign, there was a renewed commitment by key partners to ensure the bid had an enduring cultural, social and economic impact. The regeneration approach adopted during the bid was similar to the culture-led approach that emerged from the *Untold Story*. For example, the UKCoC bid focused on the use of a large-scale cultural event as a catalyst for broader economic and physical regeneration. This is not a unique feature of event bids, particularly as bidding teams have to adapt to the top-down demands of the bidding process (Cunningham and Platt, 2018). From this perspective, perhaps, *not winning* the bid can present an opportunity to develop a more holistic and unique approach to cultural regeneration.

## Future Paisley

Following the 2021 UKCoC bid campaign, Renfrewshire Council and partners launched *Future Paisley* to oversee cultural regeneration activities taking place within the town. In the post-bid period, there has been a shift in both language and approach to cultural regeneration in Paisley. There has been a shift away from the culture-led approach outlined in the *Untold Story* towards a more 'holistic' cultural regeneration strategy. This new approach is described as an integrated process in which culture can both lead and support a broader economic, social and physical transformation of the town.

However, it remains unclear how much this approach differs from other more culture-led approaches. Much of the activities carried out under Future Paisley remain dependent on major cultural investments - such as the multi-million-pound refurbishment of Paisley museum and Paisley town hall. This suggests that there is still an element of culture-led regeneration in that leveraging culture for physical and economic transformation is still at the heart of Paisley's approach.

Despite *some* continuity with culture-led, regeneration, however, Paisley's model of cultural regeneration also more closely resembles creative placemaking. This can be seen in the language of a more 'holistic' approach that centres the local community voice, and the 'social' alongside economic and physical transformation.

Having outlined the both debates about culture-led regeneration and creative placemaking, as well as the development of cultural regeneration in Paisley, I will now outline the research methods that were used to conduct this PhD research.

# Research Aims and Objectives

Based on the background information discussed in this section, this PhD research had the following aims and objectives:

- Explore how Paisley's decline and regeneration are represented in newspaper reporting between 2014-2020
- To understand the conditions of possibility that enable or constrain discourses of cultural regeneration in Paisley
- Critically analyze how representations of Paisley reflect discursive shifts in cultural regeneration strategy and the extent to which this reflects a changing relationship between culture, place and regeneration in Paisley

The aims and objectives of this study informed the research methods that were used during this PhD research, which are discussed in the next section.



# Research Methods

This section provides an overview of the research methods that were used to conduct my PhD research. To begin, I discuss the use of newspaper and documentary data. I then discuss the primary data collection carried out for this study, including 'elite' interviews carried out with key stakeholders and decision makers, as well as online workshops held with local residents in Paisley.

## Newspaper data

A total of 150 newspaper articles were collected and analysed for this study. All articles collected were focused specifically on cultural regeneration in Paisley and were categorised both by their general sentiment, and the time of publication. The aim of collecting newspaper articles was to identify how cultural regeneration in Paisley has been discussed in the media between 2014-2020 and to track any changes in how this representation has changed.

## Documentary data

In addition to newspaper articles, other documentary sources were also collected and analysed as part of this research. Documents included in this research include policy documents produced by Renfrewshire Council, Centre for Culture, Sport and Events (CCSE) and Future Paisley. Additionally, reports such as *the Untold Story, Paisley Town Centre: 2030* and the 2021 Bid document were included as data to be analysed. Documentary data enabled the researcher to examine the 'official' narratives, ideas and discourses around

cultural regeneration as they developed. As with newspaper reporting, placing documentary data in chronological order enabled this research to examine how Paisley's approach to cultural regeneration changes over time.

## Semi-Structured Interviews

A total of 16 semi-structured interviews were carried out during 2020 and 2021. Interviews were held with key stakeholders within Renfrewshire council, third-sector agencies, the former UKCoC bid team and within Future Paisley more generally. Interviews explored how decisions about cultural regeneration, and Paisley's representation, were made before, during and after the 2021 UKCoC bid. Additionally, interviews allowed this research to examine the debates, tensions and discussions that were had about cultural regeneration at an 'elite' level within the local authority and key partners.

## Online Workshops

Finally, online workshops were held with local residents in Paisley. Workshops were held to ensure a greater range of perspectives were included in this research. Additionally, workshops allowed this research to explore how local voices can challenge, or reflect, the dominant narratives and ideas used to represent Paisley and cultural regeneration. Three workshops were scheduled, however only two took place due to low attendance. Workshop one was held independently (i.e by the researcher), whereas workshop two was held with the 'Star Project' a local community organisation, which helped ensure access to grassroots voices in the community.



# Section 2: Findings and Analysis



# Findings

The next three subsections present the findings from this research. First, I will first discuss the findings from newspaper and documentary data. Second, I discuss interviews with 'elite' actors in Paisley. Finally, I will discuss online workshops held with local residents.

## Newspaper reporting

A total of 150 newspaper articles were included in this study. Local, national and international newspapers were included within the 150 articles. However, the majority (57%) of them were from 'local' sources such as the Paisley Daily Express. Beyond the local press, 32% were from Scottish national newspapers, 9% were from UK-wide newspapers and only 2% were from international newspapers. This suggests that representation, and discussion, of cultural regeneration in Paisley has been most prominent locally and within the Scottish national context, with a comparative lack of representation in the UK and international press.

Beyond the *volume* of newspaper coverage, it is important that some attempt is made to gauge the *sentiment* of newspaper reporting. In general, newspaper reporting of cultural regeneration in Paisley was positive - 78% of the articles included in this study adopted a generally positive tone, whereas as only 14% were categorised as 'negative'. This is consistent with previous research which illustrates that bidding for cultural events can be leverage positive newspaper and/or other media coverage.

Finally, in relations to newspaper reporting, the research tracked how the *volume* of newspaper reporting changed between 2014-2020. In doing

so, it was found that newspaper reporting on cultural regeneration in Paisley spiked significantly during the UKCoC bid period. However, there was also a large spike in newspaper reporting *after* the UKCoC bid with the launch of Future Paisley, and the *Paisley Town Centre 2030* vision strategy launch. This underlines that event bids can be leveraged to secure increased, largely positive, newspaper reporting. However, it also suggests that other cultural regeneration activities can generate similar levels of newspaper reporting.

Focusing on the *content* of newspaper reporting, three main themes emerged from qualitative analysis: Paisley town centre, the 'international significance' of Paisley's cultural offer and the heritage assets outlined in the *Untold Story*. Paisley town centre was the focus of much newspaper reporting on cultural regeneration. The town centre was invoked as both a *justification* for regeneration but also as a *target* of it. Newspaper reporting emphasised the impacts of changing consumer habits that have resulted in painful town centre decline. This decline was used to justify a culture-led strategy that could reorientate the town centre around the needs of a post-industrial economy. This is reflected in the nature of cultural regeneration itself, of which the economic and physical regeneration of Paisley town centre is a major facet.

Newspaper reporting also highlighted the 'international significance' of Paisley's culture and heritage offer. This focused on selling the quality of Paisley's cultural assets, such as Paisley Abbey and Paisley Town Hall thereby underlining that Paisley was a 'cultural' town. This is perhaps unsurprising during a competitive bidding process for a large-scale cultural event. Nonetheless, the 'international'

significance' of Paisley's cultural offer was also used to position Paisley as an 'underdog', undeserving of its reputation as the poster-boy for post-industrial decline. The 'underdog' narrative positions Paisley as a small town that has made a substantial and unusually large contribution to the world, particularly in relation to other towns and cities of a similar size. This combines with a need to put Paisley 'back on the map' by increasing awareness of the town's culture and heritage offer.

It follows, therefore, that some discussion of *how* Paisley's culture and heritage assets were represented *beyond* their 'international significance' is needed. All of the 'heritage assets' outlined in the *Untold Story* are discussed, to some extent, in newspaper reporting about cultural regeneration. Most prominently, newspaper reporting frequently discussed the redevelopment of Paisley Museum and Paisley town hall. More specifically, the flagship capital projects were represented as a way of stimulating economic regeneration and growing the visitor economy.

When taken together, representation of Paisley's culture and heritage offer demonstrates some continuation of culture-led regeneration in that they are focused on 'selling' Paisley's offer, developing flagship cultural projects and leveraging an enhanced external image. While this is not, in itself, problematic it does appear somewhat at odds with the more holistic values of creative placemaking. This tension was explored further in semi-structured interviews with decision makers and those involved with cultural regeneration in Paisley.

## Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews with 'elite' actors in Paisley revealed that cultural regeneration within the town was framed as a response to the pressures of industrial decline. More specifically, respondents emphasised that they believed that Paisley suffered from a poor external area reputation. Notwithstanding particularly disadvantaged areas of the town - such as Ferguslie Park - the decline of Paisley town centre was believed to have reinforced negative perceptions about Paisley and cemented Paisley as a 'poster child' for industrial decline and poverty. In sum, perceptions of town centre decline were - at least in part - the basis through which cultural regeneration projects were legitimised in Paisley.

Beyond its decline, Paisley town centre was also central to discussions about cultural regeneration, both in the concrete projects being launched but also in more general visions about a 'regenerated' Paisley. As previously discussed, investment in Paisley museum and Paisley town centre was at the forefront of the town's economic and physical regeneration. However, interviews revealed that such redevelopment sits within a broader reimagining of the town centre space. In an era of retail decline and low occupancy rates, respondents imagined a vibrant town centre populated with independent boutiques and a 'coffee shop culture'.

The vision of a vibrant town centre ushered in by flagship cultural facilities appears to reflect previous models of culture-led regeneration

and the creative city. This reflects some of the tensions that emerged in discussions about the development of Paisley's approach to cultural regeneration. Respondents who were involved in both earlier iterations of Paisley's approach (such as the *Untold Story* and during the UKCoC bid) tended to foreground the economic and physical impacts of cultural regeneration. However, respondents who came into post following the bid, or those who remained in post-bid, tended to stress the need for a more 'holistic' approach that accounted for Paisley's economic, physical and social transformation.

The contrast between these responses can perhaps illustrate the difference between culture-led and cultural regeneration. Cultural regeneration more closely resembles the values of creative placemaking by championing a more holistic approach. However, this does not mean that an element of culture-led regeneration is not implicit in Paisley's approach. The consistent emphasis in interviews about 'flagship' projects and economic regeneration suggest that there has been *some* continuation with the previous, more culture-led approach.

In sum, interviews with key stakeholders revealed that Paisley was understood as having a poor external image and reputation. Respondents emphasised the role of town centre decline in contributing to this reputation which, in turn, legitimises the cultural regeneration strategies that have emerged since the launch of the *Untold Story* in 2014. However, Paisley's approach to cultural regeneration has changed between 2014-2020 driven, in part, by changing personnel with different ideas about *what* cultural regeneration should look like.

## Online Workshops

Finally, this section concludes by discussing the findings of online workshops held with local residents. Prior to this, however, the low attendance at both workshops means that there is a need for some caution about the findings presented.

Local residents in both workshops reflected the views expressed in interviews with elite stakeholders, in that there was a consensus that Paisley suffered from a poor area reputation. Additionally, this was exacerbated by issues of town centre decline and the number of vacant units on Paisley high street. Local residents also expressed that negative newspaper representation (both locally and nationally) created a false representation of Paisley as being more dangerous and violent than they believed it to be. Interestingly, respondents also tended to emphasize more positive aspects of Paisley they would like to see represented by discussing the heritage assets outlined in the *Untold Story* such as Paisley abbey and Paisley town hall, as well as other cultural events hosted in the town - such as Sma' shot day and the Halloween festival. In this respect, there is a clear similarity between how cultural regeneration was represented in newspapers and how local residents conceived of positive aspects of the town.



In addition to this, local residents were also broadly supportive of cultural regeneration. In particular, local communities were supportive of anything perceived to help 'regenerate' Paisley town centre. However, some caution is needed given that many local respondents weren't fully aware of the extent of the cultural regeneration projects that were currently taking place in the town. Indeed, some local respondents didn't recall the UKCoC bid taking place. While this may raise some questions about the long term legacy of event bids, it doesn't necessarily undermine the positive impact of the bid itself. Indeed, local respondents spoke positively about seeing more positive representations of the town, and about 'flagship' projects aimed at transforming the town centre.

In sum, workshops with local residents follow similar trajectories as interviews held with 'elite' actors. To begin, there was a consensus across both interviews and workshops that Paisley had a negative area reputation. This has been exacerbated by town centre decline and creates a need to regenerate Paisley high street. Furthermore, local residents were broadly support of cultural regeneration, in principle at least. However, local residents were not necessarily aware of the nuances of a shift from a more culture-led approach to cultural regeneration.

## **Conclusions**

Overall, this section has given an overview of the findings that emerged from his PhD study by discussing the use of newspaper and documentary data, semi-structured interviews and online workshops.

It is clear that cultural regeneration in Paisley has had an impact on the way in which the town has been represented - both the UKCoC bid and other large-scale capital projects have resulted in consistent newspaper reporting about cultural regeneration. However, the consistent focus on economic regeneration raises questions about how successful the shift from culture-led regeneration to a more holistic cultural regeneration has translated to newspaper reporting.

The final sections of this report will discuss the key policy insights from this research. I will outline three main insights: First, I will discuss the importance of key personnel in shaping cultural regeneration strategies, I will then discuss the issues that arise when using images of decline to legitimise cultural regeneration more generally, finally I will outline the difficulties that arise when trying to (re)develop and reshape approaches to cultural regeneration.



# **Section 3: Policy Insights and Conclusion**

# Policy Insights

The next three subsections will present the key policy insights emerging from this PhD research study. I will first discuss the role of key personnel in shaping approaches to cultural regeneration. I will then discuss the role 'town centre' decline in representations of Paisley, and how emphasizing town centre decline might reinforce the town's negative area reputation. Finally, I will discuss how best to understand Paisley's approach to cultural regeneration - as a hybrid approach that incorporates elements of both culture-led and cultural regeneration.

## **Insight 1: People, Policy and Cultural Regeneration**

As indicated by interviews held with 'elite' personnel, there were a plethora of different ideas about what cultural regeneration meant. While Paisley's strategy has been fairly uniform and consistent both in internal documentation and in newspaper reporting, different actors and decision makers had different ideas about cultural regeneration, and this has changed over time.

As indicated by newspaper reporting, documentary data and interviews, the initial period of cultural regeneration (between 2014-2017) is reflective of an approach which is more culture-led. In this period, much of the focus is directed towards leveraging culture as a means of securing economic and physical transformation. In this sense, many of the criticisms of culture-led regeneration outlined in section one could be applied to Paisley's approach in that it focused too heavily on top-down economic outcomes. However, there is a clear shift towards a more holistic approach that more closely reflects creative placemaking after the bid period ended in 2017.

This change in approach was, in some ways, necessitated by not securing the UKCoC title. However, this was also necessitated by the recruitment of staff who were experienced within Scotland's cultural sector, who brought a fresh perspective to debates about culture-led regeneration in Paisley. This can be seen with the recruitment of the strategic lead for cultural regeneration and a cultural regeneration officer to oversee the post-bid legacy and transition into what became Future Paisley. In this period, Paisley's approach - while retaining an element of culture-led regeneration - becomes more aligned with the values of creative placemaking.

In sum, this suggests that it is important to ensure personnel involved in key decisions about cultural regeneration are grounded in the debates that exist about culture-led regeneration, creative cities and creative placemaking. In being aware of these debates, key personnel were able to move Paisley's approach towards best practice as identified in the literature.

## **Insight 2: Post-Industrial Paisley: Town centre decline and regeneration**

From this research it is clear that respondents felt that Paisley had a negative area reputation. At the heart of this were persistent discussions about town centre decline, which were frequently referenced in newspaper articles about Paisley and cultural regeneration. This suggests that the consistent focus on the decline of Paisley town centre have contributed to the construction of Paisley's negative area reputation. Despite this, images of town centre decline were used to justify and legitimise cultural regeneration itself.

Foregrounding 'post-industrial' decline to demonstrate the need for regeneration in Paisley town centre suggests the priority should be stimulating the town's struggling economy and achieving physical transformation, as opposed to more holistic strategies. This is evidenced by the prominence of newspaper reporting on Paisley Museum and Paisley town centre, and the use of these 'assets' to develop the visitor economy and regenerate the town centre. In sum, leveraging town centre decline creates a tendency towards more culture-led approaches and makes it more difficult to fully embed an approach grounded in the more holistic values of creative placemaking.

I propose the concept of 'post-industrial Paisley' to understand the tendency to rely upon narratives of post-industrial (and town centre) decline to legitimise cultural regeneration. As a policy insight, this study stresses the need for some caution in this area, particularly as this relates to trying shift toward a less culture-led approach. With this in mind, the final policy insight will situate Paisley's approach to cultural regeneration, and discuss how leaders in Paisley have been enabled and constrained in departing from a purely culture-led approach.

### **Insight 3: Cultural Regeneration: A hybrid approach**

Finally, this PhD research proposed the concept of hybridised placemaking to describe Paisley's approach to cultural regeneration.

Hybridised placemaking proposes that Paisley's approach cannot be reduced to either culture-led regeneration and or creative placemaking. Rather, Paisley's approach incorporates *both* the top-down logic of culture-led regeneration alongside the more bottom-up ethos of creative placemaking. This suggests that decision makers are often constrained by previous policy that creates a degree of path-dependence that is not easy to change. Additionally, national and international influences constrain how it is possible to think about cultural regeneration more generally.

Hybridised placemaking, therefore, reflects the locally specific particularities of Paisley's approach - incorporating a significant focus on town centre regeneration that is suggestive of a more culture-led approach, while pivoting toward a more holistic version of cultural regeneration that is rooted in values of social justice. As a policy insight, this report does not suggest that it is impossible to change strategy. Rather, this suggests that there is a need for a degree of caution when representing *what* cultural regeneration can achieve at a local level - particularly given the plurality of significant challenges facing towns such as Paisley.

# Recommendations

Based on the three police insights from this PhD research, I will conclude by sharing three recommendations for policy makers responsible for cultural regeneration in Paisley:

- Ensure personnel with expertise in the cultural sector and cultural policy continue to be at the forefront of discussions about cultural regeneration in Paisley.
- To embed the language of cultural regeneration in external communications and, in doing so, reduce the reliance on large-scale cultural facilities to promote cultural regeneration in Paisley.
- Based on workshops with local residents, ensure local communities are engaged and aware of the activities taking place under the banner of Future Paisley





# Conclusion

Overall, this report has summarized PhD research conducted between 2019 and 2022. In doing so, I have demonstrated the key policy insights that have emerged from this research.

This research has demonstrated that there is a considerable literature that has amassed around the topic of culture-led regeneration and, more recently, creative placemaking. More specifically, there has been a large amount of criticism aimed at culture-led ideas that - it is argued - focus too heavily on physical and economic transformation. However, the emergence of creative placemaking has raised some questions about the possibility of a more holistic approach that goes beyond the well-worn criticisms of the creative city and culture-led regeneration.

Building on this, this report has given an overview of the development of Paisley's cultural regeneration strategy between 2014 and 2020. This report outlined the baseline document the *Untold Story* as the starting point for all future cultural regeneration activities within the town. Additionally, it also discussed the UKCoC bid which occurred between 2015 and 2017, in which Paisley was the first town to be shortlisted without having city status. Finally, this report also discussed the development of Future Paisley and the shift towards the language of a more holistic approach to cultural regeneration.

This report also briefly discussed the methods that were used to conduct this study. It has outlined a qualitative study that utilised various methods to collect and analyse data - such as newspaper and documentary data, semi-structured 'elite' interviews and online workshops with local residents. Additionally, this

report also provides a brief overview of the key findings from the research. In doing so, this study has shown that cultural regeneration in Paisley has received generally positive newspaper reporting, with a persistent focus on 'flagship' cultural projects and economic regeneration. Further, this shows that respondents had a unanimous view that Paisley had a negative area reputation, but that there were tensions and differences in how cultural regeneration was understood.

Finally, I have given the main policy insights based on the findings and analysis presented during this research. The report has highlighted the importance of key personnel in shaping the initial period of culture-led regeneration and later in reorienting towards a more holistic cultural regeneration. I have also suggested that newspaper reporting, and broader discussions, which frame cultural regeneration purely as a response to town centre decline limit focus towards economic and physical transformation, inhibit a shift away from culture-led regeneration. Lastly, this report outlined Paisley's hybrid approach - which incorporates both creative placemaking and culture-led regeneration.

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