



“It’s not somebody coming in to tell us we’re so uneducated we need to draw pictures”\*

\* Corby resident and participant in audience voice workshop

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## Executive Summary

“They’ve invited us into it, haven’t they?  
It’s saying ‘Look at what can be enjoyable’.  
‘Would you like to participate in this? This is your opportunity’.  
‘You are invited’.  
It’s that welcome and offer, isn’t it?\*

\* Audience voice participant for Made in Corby

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Creative People and Places (CPP) is a national action research programme funded by Arts Council England that aims to increase arts participation in places where historically there have been fewer opportunities for people to get involved with arts and culture. The programme comprises a network of 21 independent projects across England, and there were three initial rounds of CPP funding from Arts Council England starting in 2012. Each CPP is led by a consortium which must include at least one non-arts partner, and each CPP has created their own ten-year vision for their place.

There is strong evidence<sup>1</sup> that CPP Places are successfully reaching communities that are usually considered to be amongst the least engaged in arts and culture, and this research aims to map and analyse the approaches that are being used across the network of CPP Places that are enabling this to happen.

## Methodology

A variety of sources have fed into this research:

- Desk research provided background on the impacts and learning already gained from the CPP programme, as well as themes, models and approaches to engaging 'new' arts audiences from other programmes and research.

<sup>1</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/audience-profiling-and-mapping-2014-2016](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/audience-profiling-and-mapping-2014-2016)

- Semi structured telephone or skype interviews using a standard set of questions around approaches, activities and learning, with a representative from every CPP Place (mainly directors)
- A workshop and mapping exercise with CPP teams at a CPP network peer learning gathering.
- Audience voice group discussions with self-identified 'new' audiences at three CPP Places.

## Findings

### 1: Principles – the values and beliefs that underpin this work

#### **An authentic, meaningful and ethical approach**

Many people leading these programmes are driven by strong ethical principles around social justice, democracy, and developing social and cultural capital, and they ascribed their success in reaching new audiences to these principles.

#### **Reject the 'deficit' model**

CPP areas have low levels of arts engagement, primarily because they have very limited arts provision, not necessarily because people who live there aren't interested in arts and culture. A number of CPP Place directors spoke eloquently of not ascribing to a 'deficit model' in which communities are considered to be 'lacking' in some ways that the provision of arts and culture will solve.

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### **The power of the personal**

The power and impact of individuals and personal relationships came through in all of our conversations with both CPP directors and with audiences. The personal attributes that make these individuals effective include empathy, patience, persistence, vision, enthusiasm, responsiveness and flexibility.

### **Sharing power**

Collaborative decision-making and sharing power with communities (in a whole range of different ways) was mentioned time and time again as a critical success factor in our interviews. Being ready to share decision-making, to collaborate, give some things up, be flexible and adaptable, and meet people where they are, are fundamental principles to engaging new audiences.

### **Rooted stories**

Creating new artistic work – music, performance or visual arts – that tells stories of, or is inspired by, the people and the place, is a key part of most CPPs programming approach. For many CPP communities, shining a light on their histories and their stories – which have been invisible and untold – has been a transformational experience. Directors talked about the power of working in this way that is both hyper local and connected outwards to artists and ideas beyond the local community.

### **Participation works**

Participation within CPP is a broad term, encompassing public involvement at various stages and various levels of artistic activity, from singing in a community choir to commissioning artists; from taking part in a practical workshop to joining a ‘Go See’ trip; from signing up as a community connector to working with an artist to co-create work. All CPP Places are committed to providing participation opportunities at some level and both audiences and professionals are clear about the value and impact of these experiences.

### **Listening**

CPPs are using a variety of creative methods to have meaningful consultations with their communities. At Appetite in Stoke, their Supper Club is a mechanism for feedback as well as programming, at Back to Ours in Hull they use ‘Programming Poker’ to find out what people are interested in, and at LeftCoast an inflatable sofa and the lure of an ice-cream van encouraged conversations with residents of a local estate.

### **Honesty, trust and transparency**

It is vital to build trust with the communities we want to engage, and many CPP communities are (justifiably) wary of another short term ‘project’. This – of course – takes time, and it also requires honesty and transparency around sharing information; not over promising; and being true to your word – delivering on what you said you would.

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### **Patience**

It isn't news that new relationships – with communities, with audiences and with partners – take a long time to build and develop, but it is worth repeating and reinforcing. Many CPP projects view themselves as agents of social change and are aware of the time – generations even – it takes to change ingrained patterns of behaviour, as one CPP director put it “It's been longer and more labour intensive than we expected, more like a social regeneration project that will take 25 years”. A number of CPP directors spoke about the “invisible ground work” that needs to happen before you even get as far as talking about how you might work together.

### **Provide a quality experience**

It goes without saying that producing and presenting the highest quality work possible is crucial. If audiences first arts experiences are mediocre or second rate, it will be hard to encourage them to return. It is also worth remembering that quality counts across all aspects of the audience experience, not just the art.

### **Engagement on their terms not yours**

A strong theme coming through our conversations was recognising – and providing opportunities for – people to ‘engage’ with arts programmes in a variety of different ways. And – this is the important

bit – viewing these different ways as a spectrum rather than a hierarchy, in which pausing to watch an outdoor arts performance whilst doing your shopping is just as valuable as joining a commissioning panel. Letting go of prescriptive ideas about what constitutes ‘depth’ of engagement and valuing people's engagement with the arts, on their terms, not ours is a pre-requisite for genuine audience engagement.

## 2: Practice – what are CPP places doing

### **Establish authentic personal relationships**

Individual relationships are at the heart of engaging new audiences, and this relationship building is happening gradually, face to face, and in real life rather than digitally.

In terms of developing relationships directly with audiences, it involves:

- Meeting people on their patch not yours
- Skills of empathy, flexibility and enthusiasm
- Offering a proactive invitation
- Employing staff who have a real and genuine connection with the place and the people

In terms of developing organisational partnerships too, personal relationships (and cups of tea) are just as critical as aligned objectives and strategic fit.



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Non-arts voluntary and community groups – such as allotment societies, walking groups, refugee groups, residents associations, playgroups, language and supplementary schools and heritage groups – have proved effective partners for many CPP projects, and overall are the most common types of partners.

Many CPP projects name-checked a large number of other non-arts partners ranging from local authorities through housing associations, local employers and businesses to churches, libraries, the police and shopping centres.

Research undertaken by Voluntary Arts has explored the relationship between CPP programmes and voluntary and community arts groups<sup>3</sup>. Our interviews suggested that there is some work happening with these groups across the CPP network but they are, on the whole, less partnered with than non-arts community groups.

On the whole, CPPs are doing less work with the funded arts sector than any other types of partner. This is not surprising, as, by definition, many CPP places are in places with limited arts infrastructure, however, a number of projects did note the value of working with regularly funded organisations in terms of their programme legacy, and many have connected with arts organisations outside of their local area for commissions and 'Go See' trips.

<sup>3</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/role-voluntary-arts-activity-creative-people-and-places](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/role-voluntary-arts-activity-creative-people-and-places)

### **Free is not the answer but make it as easy as possible to pay**

Many CPPs are working in places where residents are severely economically disadvantaged, so the affordability of arts events is a key concern for both CPP directors and audiences. However, the cost of arts events is just one of a number of interconnected practical, attitudinal and psychological barriers faced by audiences, and a free experience or free tickets alone do not lead to engaging new audiences.

Many CPP Places are shifting from having 'free' as the default option for their events to more considered pricing; mindful of how price signals value and quality. Most directors noted that their audiences were willing to pay, as long as they thought the experience would be 'worth it' and our conversations with audiences reinforced this. Building trust is a vital first step towards paying for tickets.

Places are using a range of flexible approaches to payment – responsive to their local communities – to make it as easy and simple as possible for audiences to make a financial contribution, beyond the traditional 'box office' model.

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### Marketing approaches

The following were all noted by both audiences and CPP staff as important:

- Keep it personal: old fashioned – and labour intensive – talking to people face to face generates trust, enables people to ask questions and develops rapport.
- Social media: increasingly important in Places from the earlier rounds of Arts Council funding, that – crucially – have already established ‘real life’ audience relationships.
- Speak to people in their language not yours: using clear and simple language to describe events, and what to expect, helps to reduce risk and uncertainty. Focus on the experience, and don’t use ‘arty’ language, or even the word art.
- Use pictures not words: ensure you have a suite of enticing images and video content, both as promotional and advocacy tools.

### 3: Programming approaches

#### Regularity and frequency

Programming that is regular (and frequent if possible), and follows a consistent pattern of timing, makes it easy for people to get into the habit of attending.

### The value of challenge and surprise

A number of CPP directors spoke about the power of bringing audiences something amazing and out of the ordinary, that they haven’t experienced before. For a number of CPPs this means ‘taking the unfamiliar to the familiar’ – programming unusual work in familiar spaces.

#### Places and spaces

It is self-evident that arts events happening in non-arts spaces are likely to reach non-arts audiences. People can stumble across experiences incidentally; programming in places that people are already familiar with and comfortable in can remove one of the risk factors of arts going for the first time; presenting work in unusual or iconic spaces, which have a particular place in the history and memory of local people can be a powerful draw; and ‘taking the unusual to the usual’ can help residents re-imagine their local area in new and surprising ways.

#### Timing

Timing of events is a simple but important factor; thinking about the optimum timing of events for audiences – not for organisers. CPPs are mindful of bus timetables, market days and other local factors.

#### Taster sessions and ‘Go See’ trips

Many CPPs spoke about the value of offering the opportunity to ‘try out’ different arts experiences, in small ways and without a big time or financial commitment as a

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useful way to introduce and demystify different art forms. 'Go Sees' too have been used effectively by many CPPs; organising a trip outside the local area to visit a venue, see a performance or an exhibition and meet artists can provide inspiration and new ideas for programming and build knowledge and confidence as audience members.

### **Outdoor Arts**

Outdoor Arts are a key part of many CPP programmes, the benefits are perceived to be accessibility for all communities due to the visual, non-text based nature and the fact they are non-ticketed (generally free), and take place in familiar locations. However there are some places that have scaled back on their presentation of large scale outdoor arts events, for both practical reasons (budgets, weather risk and appropriate locations) and philosophical reasons (a perception that such work, whilst providing amazing one off experiences, doesn't necessarily lead to the long term behaviour change they hope to achieve).

### **Family activities**

For many CPPs family events are a key way to reach new audiences. Even if parents don't consider themselves arts goers, many are looking for, and value, activities to do with their children.

### **Working with the 'right' artists**

In places that are commissioning new work, finding the 'right' artist was a key consideration. Places talked about

the challenges that artists face working in these contexts, and the need for them to be ambitious, flexible and enabling.

## Things we noted

Are CPPs doing anything new? Yes, we think they are. Whilst some of the individual practices within CPP may feel familiar and tried and tested, it is the combination of the scale of investment, the local focus and the explicit principles of community and audience focus which is unique.

A number of places commented on a tension between 'new' audiences and 'sustained engagement' noting that the challenge for CPPs is sustaining and developing long-term cultural engagement in their communities.

In common with many other projects, the teams delivering CPP programmes are not always the same people who wrote the original bids, and, as befitting an action research programme projects have made significant changes to their approach, reflecting on and learning from their experience. It is credit to Arts Council England as funders that this freedom and flexibility to review and change was built into the programme.

Not all CPP places are doing all the things we list above and we think the differences are driven more by the individual

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leadership approaches and values of the project directors than the specificities of the individual places.

The CPP network is going through a period of churn at senior level, with a number of directors moving on from the programme; using the CPP Network and the lead partner at each CPP to retain, embed and sustain the knowledge and insights gained from leading a CPP programme feels important.

### Conclusions and recommendations

It feels ethically and morally right that CPP Places – which have had transformative audience impacts in some of the most financially and socially disadvantaged areas in the country – should be prioritised for long term public investment through regular funding from Arts Council England. Of course they should be held to the same high standards as other regularly funded organisations, and of course they should go through the same rigorous application process, but CPP projects can – and are – playing a key role in “helping our divided society” (Sir Nicholas Serota).

Our conversations with audiences confirmed to us the power and the benefits of including audience voice in research projects such as these. We encourage the CPP Network to continue to incorporate audience voices in research and evaluation commissions.

There is a definite sense that many CPPs are working in a particular way, with a shared set of values and approaches. It feels to us that there is significant learning from these approaches which could benefit other parts of the cultural sector that genuinely want to engage a broader range of people with their work.

We are not suggesting that CPP has a monopoly on meaningful audience engagement, but we are convinced there are aspects of the CPP approach that could be genuinely game changing for the wider cultural sector.

These are:

- **The values and principles that lay behind efforts to engage more people with arts and culture have a big impact on how this work is then carried out**, and, we would suggest, how effective it is. For leaders, making these values visible in your behaviours and practice feels like it is important.
- **If the cultural sector expects audiences to change their behaviour we need to change first.** We need to change philosophically in how we think of audiences and participants as creators and partners; we need to change what, where and when we programme; and we need to change how we find and communicate with audiences.
- **Many of the practices we heard about in our conversations stem from a belief that the arts are for ‘ordinary’ people.** If we really want a broad range of

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people to engage with the arts we need to communicate in a way that speaks to a broad range of people, not in way that speaks only to other arts professionals, to experts and to critics.

- **There are no shortcuts to genuine audience engagement.** It takes a long time and it needs serious investment – it also requires people with patience, empathy, resilience, enthusiasm, vision, creativity and genuine warmth.
- **Step away from the art.** To make connections with people who don't think the arts are for them it's vital to work with non-arts partners, to use non-arts places and spaces, to connect with non-arts individuals and to use non-arts language.
- **Whilst at the same time...** It is important to create art that is meaningful and relevant to people; that speaks of their lives, their histories and their experiences. Not art that is bounded by these factors, but uses them as a starting point to tell engaging and amazing stories.

### Further research

Working with the 'right' artists was a key theme in our conversations and further research into how these

artists work and what it is about their approach that makes the difference would be beneficial to the CPP network and beyond.

We suspect that CPPs are making a valuable contribution to Arts Council England's Creative Case for Equality and Diversity<sup>4</sup> and this could be further explored and highlighted.

More robust and sophisticated quantitative research – at a network level – could help to demonstrate the link between the CPP approaches and the impacts they are having.

The CPP Programme appears to be enabling/creating a cohort of audience focused cultural leaders, and this feels important if the cultural sector genuinely wants to expand its audience reach. Further research into these leadership behaviours could help unpick what is making this possible.

Related to this, it could be beneficial to map the trajectory of leaders who have moved on from CPP into other roles in the sector.

<sup>4</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/equality-diversity-and-creative-case-data-report-2016-17](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/equality-diversity-and-creative-case-data-report-2016-17)

## 1: Introduction and background

“Because being able to be part of something...”

“it is sort of leading the way forward for other communities to think if they can do it we can start doing it as well.”\*

\* Audience voice participant for LeftCoast, Blackpool

# 1: Introduction and background

**Creative People and Places (CPP) is a national action research programme funded by Arts Council England that aims to increase arts participation in places where people are less likely to take part in arts and cultural activity.**

The programme comprises a network of 21 independent projects across England, that each deliver a bespoke programme of work locally, and collectively represent the national voice of Creative People and Places.

Reflection, evaluation and sharing learning are crucial to the CPP Programme and this report is the latest in a series of reports, visuals, toolkits, case studies and think pieces, which can be found on the CPP website.

Audience engagement is at the heart of the CPP Programme, and this research aims to map and analyse the range of different approaches to engage new audiences that are being used across the network of CPP Places; to identify the success factors and challenges of these approaches; and to share the learning and insights gained by CPP Places to support audience engagement, both within and beyond the CPP Network.

# 1: Introduction and background

## Creative People and Places facts

There are 21 CPP Places across England and there were three initial rounds of CPP funding from Arts Council England so the CPP Places are at different stages in their evolution. Many of the projects are now in a second three-year phase of funding.

### 2012

Appetite, Stoke  
bait, South East Northumberland  
Creative Barking & Dagenham  
Ideas Test, Swale and Medway  
LeftCoast, Blackpool and Wyre  
Right Up Our Street, Doncaster  
Transported, Boston and South Holland

### 2013

Creative People and Places, Hull\*  
Creative Black Country

Creative People and Places Hounslow  
Creative Scene, North Kirklees  
East Durham Creates  
First Art, Ashfield, Mansfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire  
Heart of Glass, St Helens  
Made in Corby  
Peterborough Presents  
Super Slow Way, Pennine Lancashire  
The Cultural Spring, Sunderland and South Tyneside

### 2014

Home, Slough  
Market Place, Forest Heath and Fenland  
Revoluton Arts, Luton

\*Creative People and Places Hull originally received funding in 2013, but the host organisation went into liquidation. Back to Ours, the new Hull CPP began in delivery in 2017.

# 1: Introduction and background

## Creative People and Places principles

The overall aim of CPP is to increase levels of arts engagement in areas of the country where there have historically been fewer opportunities to get involved with arts and culture (each CPP Place is in an area which was ranked amongst the lowest 20% in England for arts engagement as measured by the Active People survey<sup>5</sup>). The programme principles are that communities take the lead in shaping local arts provision; that long-term collaborations develop inspirational and sustainable art programmes; and that lessons are learnt about the process of providing excellent art experiences and engaging communities. Each CPP is led by a consortium which must include at least one non-arts partner, and each CPP has created their own ten-year vision for their place.

<sup>5</sup> *The Active People Survey led by Sport England was a national survey of leisure and recreation habits. From 2008 to 2010 the survey measured adult engagement with arts and culture. The Active People Survey has been replaced by the Active Lives Survey*

<sup>6</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org/our-learning/audience-profiling-and-mapping-2014-2016](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org/our-learning/audience-profiling-and-mapping-2014-2016)  
<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum>

## CPP is engaging new people with the arts

We know that CPP places are reaching more people from places of least cultural engagement. Audience profiling demonstrates that 91% of CPP audiences are from low or medium engaged Audience Spectrum groups<sup>6</sup>. CPPs are successfully turning the usual pattern of arts attendance on its head - almost half of CPP audiences are from communities that are 'usually' the least engaged in arts and culture.

So, what are these CPP projects doing to reach these audiences? What have they learnt? And how might some of these approaches work in the wider cultural sector?

## 2: Methodology

“I’m on my own and it’s nice to get out and meet different people, and it’s nice to try new things and hey, if I make an idiot of myself, well, do we really care?”\*

\* Audience voice participant for Ideas Test, Swale and Medway

## 2: Methodology



**Desk research**



**CPP Place interviews**



**CPP network workshop**



**Audience voice discussions**

We decided to take a multi layered approach to this research; to consider and reflect back evidence from three different sources about engaging new audiences. These sources were published or desk research, primary research amongst professionals delivering the CPP programme, and audiences involved in the CPP programme.

Desk research provided background on the impacts and learning already gained from the CPP programme, and identified approaches and examples of practice considered effective in reaching new audiences. This helped to inform the research questions for our interviews with directors of CPP Places. A full list of the desk research sources consulted can be found in the appendix.

We held semi structured telephone or skype interviews with a representative from every CPP Place, this was usually the director, but in some instances other members of the senior team. As one of the aims of the research was to provide a comprehensive mapping of approaches across the whole CPP network, it was important to consult with every Place. A full list of all the interviewees can be found in the appendix.

## 2: Methodology

We also ran a workshop with CPP teams at a CPP network peer learning session in Hull to gather more in-depth thinking on some areas.

We thought it was important to include the voice of audiences in this research. We met with groups of people from three CPP programmes who considered themselves 'new' to the arts, and explored how and why they got involved; reflecting on how their own experiences related to what the professionals and the literature were telling us.

The wide variety of evaluation approaches undertaken by different places meant it was challenging to find comparable, objective, evidence of the impacts and effectiveness of different approaches across the network. The most useful data in this regard is the audience profiling undertaken by The Audience Agency<sup>7</sup> which demonstrates to what degree different CPP places are reaching audience groups who are less engaged with the arts, and to what extent their audiences are reflective of the communities in which they are working.

<sup>7</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/audience-profiling-and-mapping-2014-2016](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/audience-profiling-and-mapping-2014-2016)

### 3: An iterative process

“You’ll do the one thing and then you get dead excited and then you want to do it again, do something else.”\*

\* Audience voice participant for LeftCoast, Blackpool



# 3: An iterative process

At each stage of our research we identified key themes, points of interest and areas we wanted to explore further. These interim findings informed the next step in the process and helped to steer our questioning, enabling us to dig deeper and find out more about some of the approaches to engaging new audiences being highlighted to us along the way.

## Desk research

We consulted a number of research sources to identify existing themes, models and approaches to engaging 'new' arts audiences.

The aim of expanding audiences for arts and culture by reaching people who don't currently engage (rather than, for example encouraging existing audiences to attend more frequently) is not a new one and has been a recurring feature of Arts Council England's strategic funding interventions for many years<sup>8</sup>.

We looked at a number of publications and reports that focused or touched upon cultural engagement, as well as a number of specific CPP reports and case studies (it was beyond the scope of this research to examine the evaluation reports for every CPP Place). The full list of sources can be found in the appendix.

<sup>8</sup> For example 'New Audiences' which ran from 1998 - 2003, 'Not For the Likes of You' in 2004 and 'Strategic Touring' since 2011

Our aim was to identify existing acknowledged approaches to audience engagement, which we could then check against CPP activity, to see if and how these approaches were working in practice, and to uncover if CPP Places are doing anything new or different to reach and engage new arts audiences.

The following themes were consistent across the different sources we consulted, and helped inform the topic guide for the CPP director interviews.

- **For some authors the notion of 'new' audiences itself is contested**, bound up with the 'deficit' model of arts funding. This model sees the role of arts funding to 'bring art to the people' in order to improve or fulfil their currently incomplete lives.
- **Values:** how beliefs underpinning this work – such as equality, respect and trust – make a difference
- **Partnerships:** the types of partnerships (particularly non-arts), that are most useful in reaching new audiences and how the partnerships work in practice to be effective.
- **Using existing infrastructure:** the balance between creating new structures and programmes and investing in or partnering with existing networks and organisations (particularly non-arts).
- **Ambassadors:** the effectiveness of creating networks of individuals to contribute to decision-making and generate of word of mouth.

### 3: An iterative process

- **Community decision-making structures:** the power (and challenges) of creating different structures for community decision-making.
- **Programming approaches:** the impacts of programming art in non-arts spaces, and how timing, location and scale make a difference to audience reach.
- **Programming content:** the relationship between the types of arts programmed and audience engagement.
- **Communications:** the importance of style and approach to copywriting and imagery, and selection of appropriate communication tools.

### Interviews

We interviewed each CPP director or nominated member of staff, using a consistent set of questions.

What became clear to us at this moment in our research was the different stage of development that each CPP is currently at, as well as the different phases of funding in some cases. There were a number of places with recently joined directors and some with directors who are on their way to pastures new. The majority of places were right at the beginning of the second three-year phase of their funding and this meant they were able to speak confidently about the learning from phase one and give information about how things will be working in phase two, but they were unable to say whether or not these new approaches will be more or less successful in reaching new audiences.

We identified the key themes emerging from across all 21 interviews and used these to inform our planning for the workshop in Hull with the CPP teams as well as the three audience voice discussions.

### 3: An iterative process

#### Audience voice

We held audience voice sessions in three CPP Places. These were facilitated workshops with community members who self-identified as 'new' audiences, and had engaged with their CPP in a variety of different ways. We met members of Mereside and Friends in Action (MAFIA) at LeftCoast in Blackpool, a group of workshop participants at Ideas Test in Kent and a group of participants and event attendees at Made in Corby. Participants created a timeline of their involvement with the CPP, and we used this as a framework to discuss their first engagement with CPP, what motivated the participants to get involved and stay involved, and their personal highlights. The conversations were informal and broad ranging and covered programme content, marketing, location of activity and principles and values.

#### CPP peer learning workshop

Participation and partnerships were the two areas we decided to focus on in the Hull workshop, and we held a series of small group discussions with people working for CPP Places exploring these in more detail.

We also identified two areas of research that we wanted to map across all 21 places in a standardised way: programme content and mechanisms for community decision-making; each Place completed a simple scoring matrix to indicate how much they used different approaches across their activities.

## 4: Mapping approaches across the CPP network

“Realising you don’t have to go to London or a big city to experience quality.”

“... it’s on your doorstep.”\*

\* Audience voice participant for Made in Corby

# 4: Mapping approaches across the CPP network

**The interview process gathered information about the different approaches people are taking to engaging her audiences and we identified the key areas we thought would be useful to map in a more robust, quantitative way.**

## Approaches to community consultation and programming

At the CPP network peer learning workshop we asked representatives from each CPP (mainly directors) to complete radar diagrams that would give us an indication of how much emphasis they place on different programming content and different mechanisms for community decision-making. Each Place indicated the level to which they are doing a particular type of programming or community decision-making method by scoring it out of 10 with 10 being the highest level of activity and 0 being the lowest.

The radar diagrams in the Appendix illustrate the responses from across the 21 places.

## Clusters

### Programming Content

Figure 1 shows the extent to which places are using different programming approaches; the bigger the picture frame graphic the more prevalent this approach is across the network, and the Places listed beneath are those CPPs doing most of this type of activity.

Outdoor Arts is the most prevalent programming approach across the network, and taking existing touring productions is – by some considerable margin – the least.

### Community Decision-Making Mechanisms

Figure 2 shows that the most common approach to community decision-making across the Places is bringing together panels of local people to commission specific projects; localised and place-wide community networks are also used by a number of projects.

## 4: Mapping approaches across the CPP network

Programming Content: Figure 1

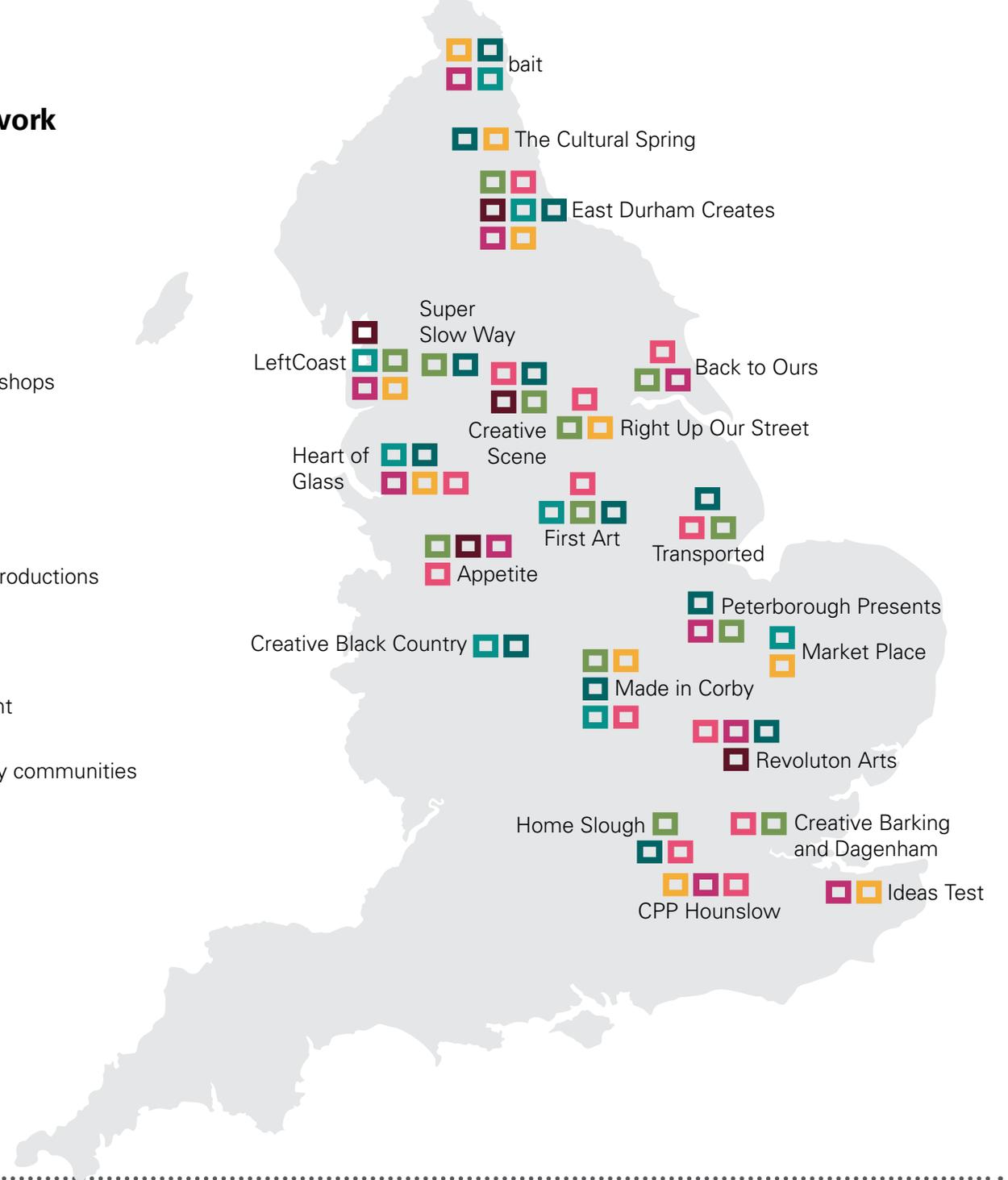


## 4: Mapping approaches across the CPP network

### Programming Content: Map 1

Coloured symbols indicate where Places have self scored their level of activity in that area as 8+ (out of 10).

- Community workshops
- Festivals
- Outdoor Arts
- Existing touring productions
- Commissions
- Skills development
- Work produced by communities



## 4: Mapping approaches across the CPP network

### Community Decision-Making Mechanisms: Figure 2



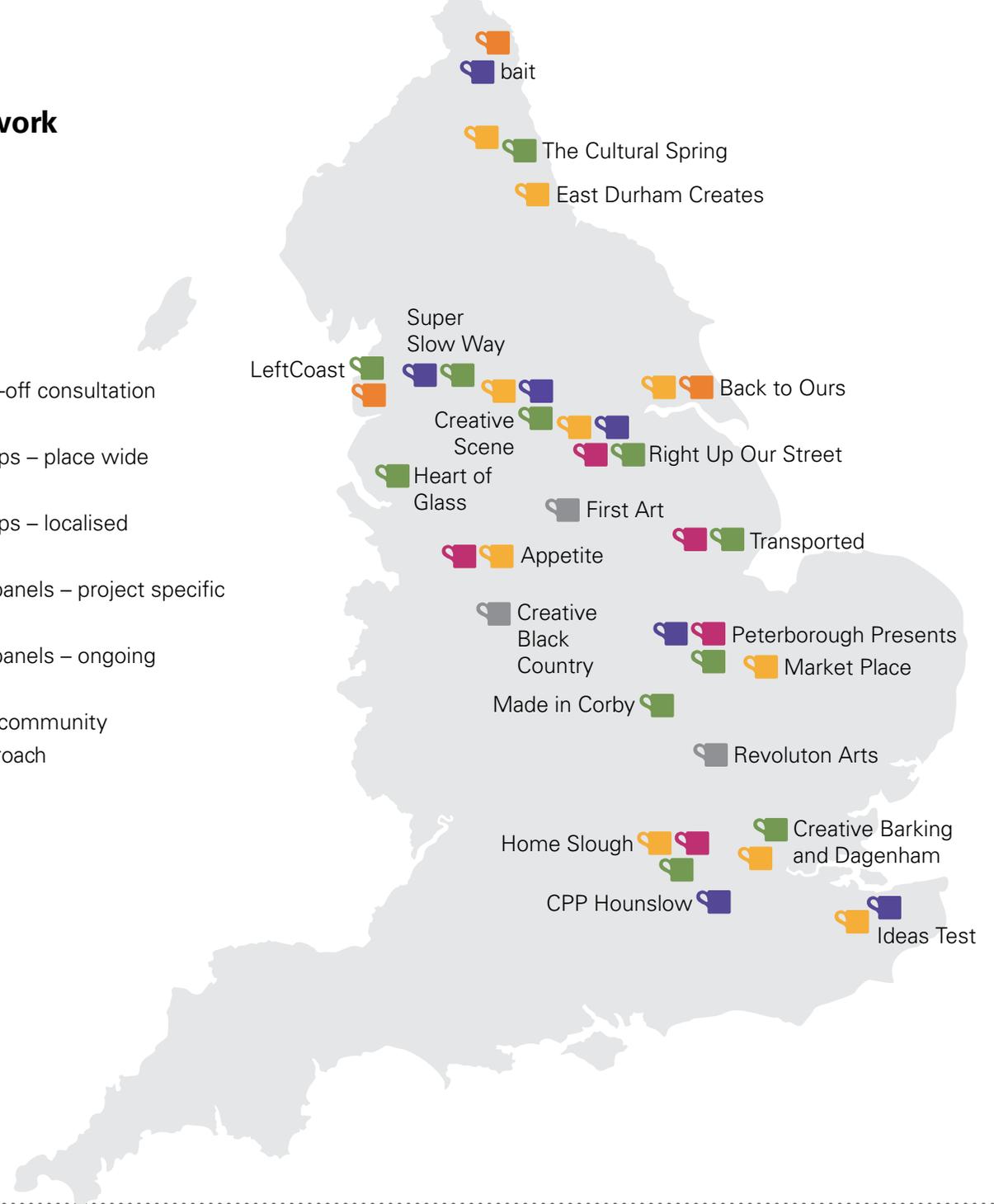
## 4: Mapping approaches across the CPP network

### Community Decision-Making Mechanisms: Map 2

Coloured symbols indicate where Places have self scored their level of activity in that area as 8+ (out of 10).

Grey symbols indicate where Places have no predominant community consultation approach.

-  Response to one-off consultation
-  Community groups – place wide
-  Community groups – localised
-  Commissioning panels – project specific
-  Commissioning panels – ongoing
-  No predominant community consultation approach



## 4: Mapping approaches across the CPP network

### What are the connections?

As part of our analysis we also looked at the characteristics of different CPP Places – were they urban or rural, distributed or concentrated, former industrial – and compared this with their different approaches; there didn't appear to be a relationship with between the characteristics of a Place and their programming or community decision-making approaches. Similarly we looked at Audience Spectrum data to see which places appeared to be most successful at reaching 'non engaging' audiences' and again, there didn't appear to be

a relationship between those places and their approaches to programming or community decision-making.

However there clearly *is* a relationship, and more robust and sophisticated quantitative research – at a network level – could help to demonstrate the link between the CPP approaches and the impacts they are having.

The findings that follow are our attempt to define and elaborate on the CPP 'Formula' in a qualitative way; to unpick exactly what it is that the CPP Places are doing that is transforming the usual patterns of arts engagement.

## 5: Findings

“For me just to get involved in the art. Especially the mosaic tiles... I do that at home now, I didn't realise how therapeutic it could be

“and how particular I was with attention to detail.”\*

\* Audience voice participant for Made in Corby

# 5: Findings

We have organised the themes that emerged from our research into three sections:

- **Principles** – the values and beliefs that inform this work
- **Practice** – what activities CPPs are actually undertaking
- **Programme** – what kind of art is programmed; where, when and how

There is, of course, a relationship and connections between these different factors, and there is some overlap and repetition where, for example we have included examples of activities that demonstrate values and beliefs in action. It felt useful to us to explore *what* CPP Places are doing to engage new audiences as well as *why* and *how* they are doing it.

It proved exceedingly difficult – if not impossible – to distinguish between engagement with ‘new’ audiences, from audience engagement generally in our conversations with CPP Place directors. However, we don’t think this is necessarily a problem; CPPs are working in areas with low levels of arts engagement, and therefore Places reflections on their engagement approaches will, by definition, be focused on audiences who are not likely to be existing arts goers. Our conversations with self-identified ‘new’ audiences in Blackpool, Corby and Kent also reinforced themes apparent in the conversations with directors.

## Principles

### An authentic, meaningful and ethical approach

We were struck in our interviews with CPP directors by how many people leading these programmes are driven by strong ethical principles around social justice, democracy, and developing social and cultural capital. And, how they ascribed their success in reaching new audiences to these principles.

This was described by one director as acknowledging and respecting the challenging life situations of some of the communities they are working with; as they put it *“there are too many urgencies in these people’s lives for a trip to Manchester to the theatre”*, whilst another considered their role to be both ‘small’ and ‘large’ political in terms of *“naming democratic deficits and pursuing ethical enquiries”*. A number of Places are acutely aware of the responsibilities and tensions of having a significant budget to spend in areas in which community structures and resources have, as they describe it, been ‘decimated’ as a result of cuts to public funding. Historically too, many CPP Places have experienced decades of disinvestment and neglect, communities feel ignored, and as one director described *“people have always felt second best and let down”*.

## 5: Findings

In response to this, some Places have focused their programme explicitly around socially engaged arts practice<sup>9</sup> (for example Heart of Glass, Super Slow Way, East Durham Creates and The Cultural Spring), in which, as one director put it *“art finds a meaningful place in people’s lives”* whilst another was clear that *“everything we do should make a useful and lasting difference to the area”*.

For a number of CPP projects their arts activities are part of a wider programme of social and community development; at bait in South East Northumberland their key partnerships are with agencies in the community and voluntary sector, and their hoped for outcomes explicitly include impact on wellbeing; at LeftCoast in Blackpool a new community group called the MAFIA (Mereside and Friends in Action) has been formed, which as well as organising arts programmes has created a community orchard, leads litter picking and organises fundraisers for a local family support charity.

<sup>9</sup> *By which we mean art programmes which aim to create some kind of social (or political) change, and are created collaboratively by artists and communities working together.*

<sup>10</sup> *From the Swedish Community Historian Sven Lindqvist*

### Reject the ‘deficit’ model

A number of directors spoke eloquently of not ascribing to a ‘deficit model’ in which communities are considered to be ‘lacking’ in some ways that the provision of arts and culture will solve. Other projects – such as First Art in Bolsover – have a background in community arts and

are committed to the principles of *“Digging where you stand”*<sup>10</sup>, that is revealing, celebrating and amplifying arts activities that are already happening in an area rather than bringing in programmes from outside.

CPP areas have low levels of arts engagement, primarily because they have very limited arts provision, not necessarily because local communities aren’t interested. As one director put it *“just because people are low engagers, it doesn’t mean they are unwilling, they still have cultural curiosity.... people are receptive, we need to change what we present and how we present it”*. Many people we spoke to noted how receptive audiences have been to a range of different – and often challenging – arts experiences, and the importance of not underestimating, assuming or patronising audiences in terms of the type of arts experiences they might be interested in.

A conversation with residents from the Mereside estate in Blackpool demonstrated this. The group (mainly mums) became involved with LeftCoast through their local Children’s Centre, and one of the outcomes of their relationship with LeftCoast was that they established themselves as a community group – Mereside and Friends in Action (MAFIA). The group has been working alongside the police, LeftCoast and other partners to commission an art-work outside a new local police station on the estate. The chair of the MAFIA described the process after they agreed a short list of artists.

## 5: Findings

*“We got these eight people, there was one lady who was a mosaic sort of person, and I could see the mosaic on the floor and everybody was going to go with that, the safe option, the mosaic. But I could see what was going to happen, I think the church would put a cross in, we’d put a tree in and a windmill, and I said ‘Can you do it with modern materials, it’s going to be a statement of art for the building, you don’t want it an old traditional mosaic on the floor.’ Anyway [the artist we chose] said his bit, he had done something for South Manchester Children’s hospital, and he had come in and he knew nothing of Mereside, Mereside has got a terrible reputation, people come through, don’t stay, pass through. Unless you live on Mereside you don’t stop. So he was coming in with a clean sheet, he didn’t know anything about us and wanted to do it from what he felt from us....*

*...it was the thought of the unknown, I didn’t know what we were going to get.*

[So that’s a real risk]

Yeah

[A mosaic would be a lot safer]

Yeah”

### The power of the personal

At Ideas Test in Kent their hypothesis is *“individuals make change, not organisations”* and the power and impact of individuals and personal relationships came through in all of our conversations with both CPP directors and with audiences. Engaging people who are new to the arts doesn’t happen with spreadsheets in an office or with Facebook advertising campaigns, it happens through the power of personal relationships. The personal attributes that make these individuals effective include empathy, patience, persistence, vision, enthusiasm, responsiveness and flexibility. Supporting and resourcing them appropriately is vital too and they could be CPP team members or artists.

There are many ways this power of the personal manifests itself, which are explored in more depth in the practice section that follows.

## 5: Findings

### Sharing power

The value, complexities and challenges of working *with* people on arts programmes rather than *to* them has already been explored in detail in Chrissie Tiller’s *Power Up*<sup>11</sup> think piece and its practical companion *Shared Decision-Making Toolkit*<sup>12</sup>, so we won’t repeat that here. However, it is worth reinforcing that collaborative decision-making and sharing power with communities (in a whole range of different ways) was mentioned time and time again as a critical success factor in our interviews (At Heart of Glass they consider that “*knowledge lives everywhere*”, and a number of other projects talked about the power of creating work in partnership with artists and communities in a process in which everyone has “*an equal seat at the table*”). Being ready to share decision-making, to collaborate, give some things up, be flexible and adaptable, and meet people where they are, are fundamental principles to engaging new audiences.

<sup>11</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/power](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/power)

<sup>12</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/shared-decision-making-toolkit](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/shared-decision-making-toolkit)

<sup>13</sup> Mark Robinson: *Faster but Slower, Slower but Faster. Creative People and Places learning 2016. Available here [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/faster-slower-slower-faster](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/faster-slower-slower-faster)*

### Rooted stories

A previous CPP report<sup>13</sup> noted that “*if art pays attention to more people, they will return it*”. Creating new artistic work – music, performance or visual arts – that tells stories of, or is inspired by, the people and the place, is a key part of most CPPs programming approach. For many CPP communities, shining a light on their histories and their

stories – which have been invisible and untold – has been a transformational experience.

Directors talked about the power of working in this way that is hyper local but connected outwards to artists and ideas beyond the local community, one commented “*we are building on the pride and history of the area, but not being constrained by it*” whilst another described creating “*moments, not monuments*”. Many CPP places are former industrial areas, where people’s sense of identity and history is still defined by generations of mining, milling, fishing or making, and where the very geography and fabric of the towns and villages where people live was created by these industries, and is still visible today. Striking a balance between celebrating and recognising this history and imagining a new future is an issue many CPP directors are grappling with. Even in places without this industrial heritage, building on what makes this place special to the people who live here, and telling the stories that are important to them – which can range from being Freddie Mercury’s birthplace to the people power of the Marsh Farm ‘riots’ of 1995 – is a fundamental way to make arts programmes that are relevant to people’s lives.

### Participation works

Participation within CPP is a broad term, encompassing public involvement at various stages and various levels

## 5: Findings

of artistic activity, from singing in a community choir to commissioning artists; from to volunteer stewarding at an event to joining a 'Go See' trip; from signing up as a community connector to working with an artist to co-create work. All CPP Places are committed to providing participation opportunities at some level and say things like:

*"The more people do, the more sustainable their engagement is likely to be"*

*"We are strong believers that the best way to build relationships with the arts in getting actively involved"*

*"People will want to see work if they are part of the process"*

*"Participatory opportunities are critical, more important than opportunities to be an audience"*

Audiences too, echo this sentiment

*"I think there's something, you know, when you're involved in it, like the Mardi Gras, you know, when you are designing your umbrellas, and I didn't expect how good that would be when you went to the actual event itself and to watch all the kids who had designed all these umbrellas and to see all the lights and then to see all through East Carlton Park, it was something quite amazing to see."*

*"So I like poetry, but I never knew how much I liked it until that day. Because we sat down with a group from Nottingham and they said 'Oh, we're just going to do a really easy task' and I didn't even really know I was writing poetry. But it was me*

*and my two kids at the same time, and my sister who has got Asperger's, who has no idea how to express herself, and they said 'Oh, tell us your fears' and I was like straight off, but the kids didn't get it. That made us talk about our fears, so actually that opened it. But in the end, they taught us how to kind of piece it all together into a poem. And at the end we had a poem that made absolute sense that was individual to us. Getting emotional again. I loved it. Fantastic. Yeah, that was the best day ever. And since then, we've all enjoyed poetry since."*  
(Made in Corby)

*"That [Lightpool] was absolutely amazing. All the kids loved it as well. We got VIP front of the parade and everyone was like 'Oh my God'... They had the trams, the illuminated trams following us behind that as well. Even the workshops, the kids enjoyed the workshops, picking out the lights and putting them on and stuff...It was absolutely amazing... When they park it on the Prom, it was like really bronze, it was absolutely amazing wasn't it?"*  
(LeftCoast)

*"And then I did the glass art workshop and made a dragonfly. And it really turns out just like the one on the poster... and I was very vain and put it on Facebook and I did a link to Ideas Test and the teacher... Well, I'm not a great Facebooker at all and I don't often post anything, but I thought my friends can just have a look at this and I got lots of likes, and I felt really proud of it"*  
(Ideas Test)

## 5: Findings

### Listening

CPPs are using a variety of creative methods to have meaningful consultations with their communities. At Appetite in Stoke, their Supper Club is a mechanism for feedback as well as programming, at Back to Ours in Hull they use “Programming Poker” to find out what people are interested in, and at LeftCoast an inflatable sofa and the lure of an ice-cream van encouraged conversations with residents of a local estate. One CPP talked about the importance of *“never stop listening”* whilst a number of other CPPs used small scale, open access, arts activities in the public realm as a mechanism to have informal conversations with people.

### Honesty, trust and transparency

Related to ethics and authenticity, it is vital to build trust with the communities we want to engage, and, as we have noted, many CPP communities are (justifiably) wary of another short term ‘project’. This – of course – takes time, and it also means not over promising, and being true to your word – delivering on what you said you would. Many CPP Places noted the value of doing small things as soon as possible to demonstrate what *is* possible, rather than getting carried away by what *might* or could be possible. Whilst others spoke of the importance of transparency and honesty around sharing information with communities who

are involved in decision-making; financial information in particular; being honest about the budget that is available, how much things cost, and the financial implications of different decisions.

### Patience

It isn’t news that new relationships – with communities, with audiences and with partners – take a long time to build and develop, but it is worth repeating and reinforcing. For CPPs, the principle of taking your time works at both the strategic and the operational level. As one director put it *“like building a network of friends, it takes time and energy getting to know people”*. A number of directors spoke about the *“invisible ground work”* that needs to happen before you even get as far as talking about how you might work together. At bait in Northumberland this included two months of chatting and cups of tea at a local social club, at Creative Scene in West Yorkshire it took two years development time with the local rugby club to create a new theatre piece, and in Hounslow months of *“tramping the streets”* of an estate to recruit members of a Local Advisory Group. Many CPP projects view themselves as agents of social change and are aware of the time – generations even – it takes to change ingrained patterns of behaviour, as one director put it *“It’s been longer and more labour intensive than we expected, more like a social regeneration project that will take 25 years”*.

## 5: Findings

### Provide a quality experience

It goes without saying that producing and presenting the highest quality work possible is crucial. If audiences first arts experiences are mediocre or second rate, it will be hard to encourage them to return. Much has already been written about the challenges of identifying and defining 'quality' and 'excellence' in CPP<sup>14</sup> which we won't repeat here. It does seem important though to remind ourselves that quality counts across all aspects of the audience experience, not just the art. By quality we mean enabling audiences to have the best possible experience – from the advance information provided, to the practicalities of arriving and navigating the event itself, from heart stopping thrill of the performance to being able to find the toilets – as one CPP director described *"it's about the whole customer journey, the lighting and the car park, these are not little but big things"*.

### Engagement on their terms not yours

A strong theme coming through our conversations was recognising – and providing opportunities for – people to 'engage' with arts programmes in a variety of different ways. And – this is the important bit – viewing these

<sup>14</sup> *What it Does to You: Excellence in CPP*  
[www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/what-it-does-you-excellence-cpp](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/what-it-does-you-excellence-cpp)

different ways as a spectrum rather than a hierarchy, in which pausing to watch an outdoor arts performance whilst doing your shopping is just as valuable as joining a commissioning panel. One CPP director talked of *"recognising that participation could be sitting next to someone who says 'that's a bit weird isn't it?'"* whilst another described *"layering ways to engage – it's OK to be curious but not involved, you don't have to be fully committed."*

Whilst one of the principles of the CPP programme is opening up decision-making about what and how arts get made, not everyone in communities necessarily wants (or has capacity for) this level of responsibility, and some Places have come to a more nuanced position about shared decision-making since the start of their project; *"I have shifted my thinking, I was focused on handing over programming decisions to the community, but now I acknowledge there are other roles and ways of decision-making they could be involved with."*

Underlying both of these is the ability to let go of prescriptive ideas about what constitutes 'depth' of engagement and to value people's engagement with the arts, on their terms, not ours.

## 5: Findings

### Learning

One CPP invested in a leaflet drop to 40,000 homes in their first year to invite people to a series of consultation events. Whilst some events were well attended, most people who came had some interest in the arts already. The following year, a partnership with the local shopping centre enabled them to use an empty shop for six weeks. It was staffed every day, and presented a programme of events and activities which gave the team the chance to meet and talk to people in an informal setting. They had different types of conversations with a wider range of people.

### Practice

#### Establish authentic personal relationships

One of the principles we identified is that people create change, and individual relationships are at the heart of engaging new audiences; this relationship building is happening gradually, face to face, and in real life rather than digitally.

In terms of developing relationships directly with audiences, it involves meeting people on their patch not yours.

*"It was Cath. She was doing three days a week. She was on a year's contract two days a week at the Children's Centre, for LeftCoast and Better Start, and all of us individually go in there and she started talking to all of us individually and then getting us to go to different events"*  
(LeftCoast)

*"But basically, the initial contact was through Marian and Helen coming into our workplace and saying 'Would you be interested in being involved in a project?'"*  
(Made in Corby)

It requires a particular set of skills and approach

*"Yeah, she's amazing  
Cath hollers and you go  
She's got the gift of the gab.  
She can work with all ages.  
She's really, really good.  
She is on a level with anyone from all different walks of life.  
Yeah, it doesn't matter who you are  
She's got no airs and graces.  
She's adaptable  
And she's a people person  
She just gave all of us confidence to believe... Well what she said was she was just a housewife who got together with another group of mums and they built this amazing park and why can't we do the same. She just made us all believe anything...  
Yeah. If she can do it anyone can and anything is achievable if you don't take no for an answer"*  
(LeftCoast)

*"And the ladies here, who work here, are all so nice, and the ladies that do the workshop are just lovely.  
Yes, because you know how they pop out [of the shop] There is somebody there. 'Do come in'. Actually, really nice staff, aren't they?  
Lovely ladies.  
And they're very welcoming and...  
And they do look after you.  
Oh, yes"*  
(Ideas Test)

## 5: Findings

It's about pro-actively and enthusiastically inviting people to get involved.

In Hounslow *"for Outdoor Arts one-on-one conversations on the High Street work, talking to people by staff and stewards. Giving people a flyer plus a conversation validates the proposition and creates trust"*

At Creative Scene *"Flyers work, but it matters who hands them out... someone they know"*

At Home, *"with the big event I think you need to be there... People visibly in branded t-shirts talking to people, to tell them what's going on and let them know they can be involved"*

Audiences agreed:

*"They have those little flags out there, and my daughter saw what was going on and I think there was somebody outside 'Come on in'. You kind of think 'Shall I, shan't I?' and of course when you've got kids with you..."*

*"We'd been ready to go, got given all the leaflets 'Come back and do this, come back and do that'. And then of course I think when we did come back and do one thing, ended up giving our e-mail address, then of course getting updates with what's going on. It kind of snowballed from there."*  
(Ideas Test)

*"At the same time, someone said 'Oh, at the weekend, here's some leaflets for a day out on a bus, fiver each to Lincoln Arts Festival'"*  
(Made in Corby)

*"She opens you up to experiences that you never even considered that they were things you wanted to do. Like that Departed... something completely different... there is no way I ever would have thought to buy tickets to go and watch anything like that..."*  
(LeftCoast)

Some CPPs noted the importance of employing staff who have a real and genuine connection with the place and the people as a way to build trust.

At Creative Black Country *"[name's] background as a South Asian director brought a different flavour and made it easier to connect... as a creative producer born and bred in Sandwell, she's local and it's easier to engage"*

At LeftCoast *"some (of the team) are arts professionals but some are community activists. The team are relatively local and this feels authentic"*

At Right Up Our Street *"Art Advisor [name] is local and has been involved with the programme since day one"*

## 5: Findings

### Learning

One CPP discovered that the people running community centres in their local area were in active and hostile competition with one another for declining funding, and these individuals were more of a barrier than a gateway to communities.

<sup>15</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP\\_CreativeBarkingDagenham.pdf](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP_CreativeBarkingDagenham.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP\\_IdeasTest.pdf](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP_IdeasTest.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/SceneMakers.pdf](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/SceneMakers.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/shared-decision-making-toolkit](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/shared-decision-making-toolkit)

In terms of developing organisational partnerships too, personal relationships (and cups of tea) are just as critical as aligned objectives and strategic fit:

*“Relationships, time, personal politics, it is labour and time intensive but it has to be”* Heart of Glass

*“Looking at our criteria for successful partnerships – we’re consciously now working with partners where there is a real energy and a balance of energy. People energy more than budget”* bait

### Create networks, connectors and ambassadors

Much has already been written about community networks established across the CPP programme:

- Cultural Connectors in Creative Barking and Dagenham<sup>15</sup>
- Community Catalysts at Ideas Test in Kent<sup>16</sup>
- Scene Makers at Creative Scene in Kirklees<sup>17</sup>

These groups have a dual role of both helping to shape and design the CPP programme through programming and commissioning decisions, as well as acting as advocates and ambassadors to generate word of mouth.

Figure 2 on p28 outlines the range of different ways CPP Places are involving people in decision-making within their projects, and the *Shared Decision-Making Toolkit*

available on the CPP website<sup>18</sup> provides some practical tips and approaches.

A key aspect of creating such networks – either formal or informal – that came from our conversations was the importance of finding the ‘right’ people. Thinking about communities in terms of communities of interest as well as geographically defined, a number of CPP directors spoke about findings ‘gatekeepers’ as a starting point to getting to know people. These can be ‘official’ community leaders, but it can be just as, if not more, effective if they are individuals who are well connected, trusted and knowledgeable in an informal way. As one director commented *“it’s about finding the informal hubs – hairdressers not community centres”*. These informal hubs could be Rita in the chip shop, could be a local mum, could be Amit at the Cost Cutter. The best way to find such individuals is to spend time informally in these community settings getting to know people, on their patch.

We heard from one such person in the Audience Voice sessions:

*“I kept saying ‘This is on, this is on’ because I don’t do internet, I’m just learning the Facebook and I throw the phone about, don’t like it, but I usually do information from you tell me something and I will tell everyone else. That’s the clique I’m in, I go tell everybody. And then they said ‘Well, such and such is on and it’s got the Philharmonic Orchestra’ and ‘Oh, I like that’ you know, I like that”*

## 5: Findings

### Learning

One CPP reflected how open questions and a 'blank canvas' don't work when you're starting to work with community groups to design programmes; you need to give people options, choices and a framework to help decision-making.

*type of music. 'Oh, when is it on? Right, get tickets, right'. And when you get there, there's this 'Oh, yeah, hello, hello' everybody I know. So that's how I got started. And now they phone me and they say 'Well, such and such is on, don't forget to tell everybody'. So that's what I do...*

*'We've got a bus going to such and such and we've got so many seats left, how many friends have you got?' things like that. 'Can you fill a bus?'. 'Hang on, let me go and get my list'. And I go round all the usual suspects. 'Are you free? Are you free? Yeah, yeah, okay. I've got 12, whatever, you know'. That's how I get involved."*

(Made in Corby)

### Work with non-arts partners

Partnership is a key principle of CPP and has already been explored in other CPP documents<sup>19</sup>, but we think it is important to reinforce the benefits of working in partnership – with non-arts partners particularly – as a way to reach new audiences.

CPPs are more likely to be working with non-arts partners in the community, private and public sectors, than they are to work with arts partners. This is partly because – by definition – there is a limited number of arts venues, networks and organisations in CPP areas, but more importantly it is because working these partners is more effective in

reaching people through other aspects of their lives. For some CPP directors this approach is self-evident:

*"Working through non-arts groups provides easy wins – if someone is engaged with society and community they are easier to get to an arts event"*

*"With non-arts audiences it makes sense to work with non-arts partner – it's obvious"*

The key reason for this is the partners role as a 'bridge' to new audiences, both strategically and operationally:

*"Our [theory of change] is based on the belief that working in partnership with organisations that people already know and trust is critical to engaging new people"*

*"Our poetry writing workshops are in partnership with the leisure trust who supply the venues"*

Such partnerships can support the legacy and sustainability of the CPP programme:

*"Adding on to partner's work so when we leave there will still be things in place"*

*"We are now identifying community partners to create a network of places where [our workshop programme] can happen"*

<sup>19</sup> Case Study: Working with Non-Arts Partners at Heart of Glass [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP\\_HeartOfGlassSt.pdf](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP_HeartOfGlassSt.pdf)



## 5: Findings

community groups. In those CPP areas where there has been limited work together, the reasons were variously described as a lack of such groups in the area and an unwillingness amongst such groups to work with CPP, described by one director as *“they do what they do and are wedded to it”*. In areas where there has been partnership working with the community arts sector it has most often been small grants to groups to develop their work or commissioning artists to work with the groups to create new pieces of work.

### **The funded arts infrastructure**

On the whole, CPPs are doing less work with the funded arts infrastructure than any other types of partner. By definition many CPP places have few NPOs (National Portfolio Organisations; organisations who receive regular revenue funding from Arts Council England) on their patch (though in some places this has changed in the most recent NPO funding round). Where there are NPOs, the CPP may be based there as the lead partner (Appetite at the New Vic Theatre in Stoke, CPP Hounslow at Watermans Arts Centre and Right Up Our Street at darts in Doncaster), or there may be NPOs on the project consortium. Some CPPs are working with NPOs in their wider region or beyond, for example East Durham Creates with Sage Gateshead and Arc in Stockton; First Art with Derby Quad and Manchester Camerata; bait with Live Theatre and Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. This work ranges from ‘Go Sees’ through supporting

local talent development, to commissioning new creative work with communities.

A number of projects noted the value of working with regularly funded organisations in terms of their programme legacy, commenting that these organisations may be able to sustain new community relationships independent of the CPP project.

A small number of interviewees described these arts partners as the hardest to work with. One described work with them as *“fraught with difficulty”* and described the awkward situation of an expectation amongst existing arts companies that they would receive funding from the CPP project, allied with frustration about the value of funding that had been allocated to the CPP project compared to their own organisations; whilst another commented that in their experience arts companies find it hard to change their approach, are bounded by their venue, and can perceive working with CPP projects as *“difficult”*; another person reflected that their relationship with NPOs was mainly *“transactional”*. The issue of working with arts companies also came up in the marketing focused questions; a number of CPP directors noted that they have to ‘translate’ copy from some companies and artists they are working with to make it more understandable and engaging for their communities. This is explored in more detail in the marketing section on page 46.

## 5: Findings

### Free is not the answer but make it as easy as possible to pay

Many CPPs are working in places where residents are severely economically disadvantaged, with limited disposable income, and so the affordability of arts events is a key concern; one CPP director commented *“all our events are free because of the levels of deprivation in our area.”*

Audiences we spoke to concurred:

*“To take that time out, and the fact that it was free, you didn’t have to spend over the odds to get involved and do that and do something we both really loved,”*

(Made in Corby)

*“I came to the ceramics workshop and I did screen printing, for me there was four that I wanted to do but they were a week apart and I couldn’t afford...If they’d been a month apart, I probably could have afforded to have done all of them, but I couldn’t.”*

(Ideas Test)

However, the cost of arts events is just one of a number of interconnected practical, attitudinal and psychological barriers faced by audiences, and a free experience or free tickets alone do not lead to engaging new audiences. Many CPP directors we spoke to were shifting from having ‘free’ as the default option for their events to more

considered pricing *“we started off free but it had no value to people or expectations of quality”*. All commented on the importance of having a price on events to signal their value and their quality, and for some, even if admission is free, having a notional charge or ‘booking fee’ to create some kind of transaction. Many others were conscious of the need to generate income from ticket sales to build their financial sustainability, but were clear this was a challenge *“there’s a conflict between building and sustaining audiences and generating income”* and, as one director commented, *“the economics of it are never going to wash their face”*. There was also awareness of the need to be responsive to the local context, one director noted *“we are looking at ways to earn more income, but there is no tradition of paying for the arts here, so we need to be careful”* whilst another noted *“we have tried pay what you want which means it ends up being free.”*

Most directors noted that their audiences were willing to pay, as long as they thought the experience would be ‘worth it’ with one commenting *“willingness to pay is based on trust – of the venue, of the artists, the makers, or the content”*, whilst another noted that when they began their regular programme of outdoor events, a number of audience members approached staff with unsolicited donations after the performances had finished. The same director commented that in their experience there wasn’t financial resistance to paying per se, but that associated costs like childcare were an issue.

## 5: Findings

### Learning

Legacy and responsibilities to participants needs even more thought than usual in CPP Places because of the limited arts infrastructure. Two Places recalled projects they had done with particular communities; participants had an amazing time and were keen to continue and do more, but there was nowhere else to direct them to continue or develop their engagement.

This was echoed by audiences

*“Something completely different...  
That Departed, there is no way I ever would have thought to buy tickets to go and watch anything like that...  
No...  
LeftCoast arranged some complimentary tickets because of the MAFIA and everything had done so many other events with them. But that’s something that all of us would have never thought about going to...  
yeah, we enjoyed it.  
It was really, really good...  
[So if there was something like that again next summer...]  
Yeah, definitely.  
100%.  
Definitely.  
And if we get tickets I would pay for the tickets...  
Yeah, definitely. If I couldn’t get complimentary tickets I would pay...  
...It is good, yeah, definitely.”  
(LeftCoast)*

Pricing options at CPP events include regular paid for tickets which are at consistent price bands across the whole programme to help people become familiar with the price and enable them to plan and budget for their attendance; cheaper ‘locals’ price for events; inviting voluntary contributions, ‘pay what you think’; and donation opportunities at free events.

Places are using a range of flexible approaches to payment to make it as easy and simple as possible for audiences to make a financial contribution – beyond the traditional ‘box office’ model. One CPP noted the importance of having a variety of payment mechanisms – especially cash, as some people in their area didn’t use credit or debit cards – and selling tickets in a variety of places like a shopping centre, pub or Working Men’s Club. Two CPPs mentioned keeping back an allocation of tickets for direct sales in community settings.

As well as introducing payment for events, some directors noted the importance of explaining the full cost of programmes to partners and commissioning panels. Not surprisingly communities are unaware of the economics of arts programming and production, and one director commented *“when we explain how much it costs, there is surprise, and then a willingness to contribute.”*

### Marketing approaches

A number of places noted they were resourcing their marketing activities more in terms of time and people than budget. As we would expect, CPPs are using a variety of different marketing approaches and communication channels to promote their

## 5: Findings

programmes, and directors talked of the need for appropriate targeting of activities based on a well-developed understanding the intended audience. One director described their approach as *“audience development in a genuine way – ‘Where are the people you want? How will you get to them? How will you talk to them?’”*

Clear themes in our conversation were:

### **Keep it personal**

Many places noted that old fashioned – and labour intensive – talking to people face to face generated trust, enabled people to ask questions, developed rapport, and was a key part of their approach. One Place director noted *“Our Audience Development Officer spends a lot of time talking at community group meetings, shows a video clip, gives out brochures, for example going to Soft Play sessions to publicise a family rave.”*

Audiences too backed this up

*“Best to have the most direct approach to marketing, as I run a business myself, a mere leaflet drop of something like that wouldn’t work, it would end up in the trash perhaps.*

*...It is word of mouth.*

*...it is good, yeah, word of mouth is the best, and again if you put posters up, or Facebook things, people still ignore it whenever there’s that tendency.*

*So, you either then use word of mouth by having people*

*trained or know enough about it to tell, to speak to others or stop people in the street to say ‘How about this?’ but also you could back it up with a physical leaflet, hand them out, give it personally, stick it in their hand.”*

*(Made in Corby)*

*“Big problem in Corby is, I mean I do voluntary usher in the theatre, and when we’ve got something on, even like with the Christmas Carol, the first couple of performances are very sparsely attended and people, they’ve seen the posters, everything, but they wait for somebody to come and see it and tell them how good it is.”*

*(Made in Corby)*

### **Social media**

A number of CPP directors noted they were increasingly using social media. *“Facebook is huge”* was a common response, mainly from Places in the earlier rounds of Arts Council funding, that – crucially – have already established ‘real life’ audience relationships. Activities include boosted Facebook posts, Facebook advertising, and creating closed Facebook groups.

Audiences too had a positive response to Facebook

*“I first saw it on Facebook, I think social media is where they’ll share events and it’s very good if you’re interested and you go ...*

*Yeah, because it pops up on your Facebook about events and*

## 5: Findings

### Learning

At Appetite in Stoke if arts companies they commission are unwilling to change their own copy, they have created “Appetite says” which they use in their publicity as an introduction; describing events in their own style, which is clear and simple and focuses on the experience.

One Place has started to note how audiences describe the work they have seen as part of their evaluation and then uses that language in their marketing.

*things like that, and I've got a daughter who has two young children, and I'm often with them on a Saturday, and so we would look for events that you can go to and participate in.”*  
(Made in Corby)

### Speak to people in their language not yours

A number of CPP directors commented that they often need to ‘translate’ information provided by companies and artists, one noted *“Lots of copy from artists is awful, we need to keep it as simple as possible, it is convoluted and doesn't say anything to anyone... they are not thinking about audiences.”*

Using clear and simple language to describe events – and what to expect – is key. One Director noted *“Plain English is key”* whilst another commented *“check– would my Dad understand it”*.

One CPP noted that *“changing the language doesn't have to dumb down the art. Focus on the experience rather than what it is”* whilst another noted the importance of reducing risk and uncertainty for audiences: *“Make it easy and obvious what you're coming to – will I have to dress up as a fairy? How much will candyfloss cost? – it's not helpful to have a mystery – let people know ‘no food will cost over £5 or bring a packed lunch’ – spell it out.”*

Many directors mentioned not using ‘arty’ language, or even the word art, in materials – *“we have a list of banned words, rarely mention art, don't use ‘installation’ or ‘immersive’*

*or ‘commission’ – we learned the hard way”* – and this was echoed by audiences.

*“I think sometimes people think ‘It's an arty centre’... I think you're quite right about what you said about them thinking ‘Oh, it's art’ because I used to be very much like that because I can't draw... People being really clever and, you know. ...Yes, and then you think you'll make a fool of yourself.”*  
(Ideas Test)

*“Because if you look at the leaflets they're all quite arty farty, so... And you think coming from a council estate they're just not going to do things that council estate people do.”*  
(LeftCoast)

*“Don't tell them it's an art thing  
...Yeah.*

*...Just get them to come along.  
...And tell them after.*

*...Because the Field Festival doesn't say ‘Art’ does it?  
...You hear ‘Field Festival’ and you think it's going to be like a big music thing.”*  
(Made in Corby)

### Pictures not words

Heart of Glass have a ‘Documentation Associate’ on their team and a number of other CPPs noted the importance of creating enticing images and video content, both as promotional and advocacy tools.

## 5: Findings

### Learning

Experience of developing a community brass band in one CPP place made them realise that for community music groups it is important to set a low entry level and focus on a cheap instrument that you can learn quickly – they are now establishing a ukulele collective.

One CPP struggled to work effectively in a community centre setting but found a more willing partner in the café owner next door who was happy to display a photography exhibition, and now features a programme of regularly changing exhibitions.

### Programme

#### Regularity and frequency

Programming that is regular (and frequent if possible), and follows a consistent pattern of timing, makes it easy for people to get into the habit of attending. For some CPPs this regularity is a key part of their programming approach; regular small-scale participation sessions such as craft workshops, choirs or bands; regular programmes of outdoor arts in the same location; a series of festivals, have all worked to start to create arts going habits amongst local communities.

#### The value of challenge and surprise

A number of CPP directors spoke about the power of bringing audiences something amazing and out of the ordinary, that they haven't experienced before. One director spoke of *"creating moments for people – giving them an epiphany"* whilst another commented *"to change perceptions you need to see high quality arts, something you haven't seen before, to set a benchmark"*. For a number of CPPs this means 'taking the unfamiliar to the familiar' – programming unusual work in familiar spaces, which is explored in more detail in the following points.

### Places and spaces

It is self-evident that arts events happening in non-arts spaces are likely to reach non-arts audiences. There are a number of aspects to this; people who may not make intentional visits to arts venues can stumble across experiences as they catch a train, do their shopping or walk their dog; programming art in places that people are already familiar with, comfortable in and trust – for example libraries or community centres – can remove one of the risk factors of arts going for the first time; presenting work in unusual or iconic spaces, which have a particular place in the history and memory of local people can be a powerful draw; and 'taking the unusual to the usual' can help residents re-imagine their local area in new and surprising ways.

For all CPPs, presenting work in non-arts venues is a key part of their approach, and this ranges from bus stations to hospitals, shopping centres to sports clubs, derelict factories to parks, pubs to church halls and bingo halls to working mens clubs.

### Timing

Timing of events is a simple but important factor; in places where there is no 'tradition' or 'habit' of arts going, thinking about the optimum time for audiences – not for organisers

## 5: Findings

– is important. One director noted *“the standard 7:30 start doesn’t work around here, as there are no buses”*. Many CPPs are tuned into this and responsive to their local context, one commented *“[place] doesn’t have a night time economy, you need an early slot”* whilst for another, their programme for older people is specifically scheduled around the bus timetable.

### Taster sessions and ‘Go Sees’

Many CPPs spoke about the value of offering the opportunity to ‘try out’ different arts experiences, in small ways and without a big time or financial commitment as a useful way to introduce and demystify different art forms. Get Creative<sup>21</sup> and Fun Palaces<sup>22</sup> both provide useful frameworks for such activities.

‘Go Sees’ too have been used effectively by many CPPs; organising a trip outside the local area to visit a venue, see a performance or an exhibition and meet artists can provide inspiration and new ideas for programming and build knowledge and confidence as audience members. There are numerous examples of these across the CPP Network, here are just a few examples:

First Art organised a trip to Manchester which included a backstage tour of the Bridgewater Hall and the chance to meet violinist Nicola Benedetti.

Local Advisory Group members from the Hounslow CPP saw a performance of La Traviata at the Royal Opera House, as part one of their ‘Welcome’ events.

Community members from East Durham Creates visited Lumiere in Durham.

Made in Corby organised a trip to Derby Feste.

Members of the MAFIA in Blackpool travelled to Liverpool to find out more about Assemble and the Granby Street project, and for a couple of members of the group it was one of the highlights of their involvement with LeftCoast

*“That Wednesday, I went on Granby Street and it’s like amazing...”*

*Well they’re inspiring because you see... That Granby Street is...for community to have got together and we were really, really lucky, Joe, one of the ones that spearheaded Granby Street, he just happened to be walking around as our coach pulled up and he took like an hour and a half hour out of his day and gave us a guided tour round the streets, talked us through everything. And that was just on spec.*

*...It wasn’t arranged, we bumped into him just by luck, and he actually took us into one of the houses that was just ready to go on the market, showed us all the re-claimed marble and stone they done.*

*....amazing.”*

(LeftCoast)

<sup>21</sup> [www.voluntaryarts.org/get-creative](http://www.voluntaryarts.org/get-creative)

<sup>22</sup> <http://funpalaces.co.uk/about/>

## 5: Findings

### Outdoor Arts

The Outdoor Arts sector has done an excellent job of proving the social and community impacts of Outdoor Arts<sup>23</sup> and – perhaps as a result of this – some CPP Places spoke about feeling under pressure in the early stages of their programmes to bring in ‘scale and spectacle’ to reach audiences. For many CPPs, Outdoor Arts programmes have remained an important part of their programme (as Figure 1 on page 26 illustrates), though many have reduced the scale of work they present. Those places that do include this work in their programme describe its benefits in terms of accessibility for all communities due to its visual, non-text based nature and the fact it is non-ticketed (generally free) and takes place in familiar locations. For those places who aren’t doing this kind of work it appears to be for both practical reasons; budgets, weather risk and location (in that their area is dispersed and lacking a central, neutral space which would work effectively); and philosophical reasons; a perception that such work, whilst providing amazing one off experiences, doesn’t necessarily lead to the long term behaviour change they want to achieve, one CPP director commented *“we did a little at the beginning then stopped, as such work has limited impact in terms of systemic change in the area”* whilst for another *“it’s not the same sustained relationship, it’s better to slow down and work at community level”*

<sup>23</sup> [www.isanuk.org/advocacy/facts-figures/](http://www.isanuk.org/advocacy/facts-figures/)

### Family activities

For many CPPs family events are a key way to reach new audiences. Even if parents don’t consider themselves arts goers, many are looking for, and value, activities to do with their children. At LeftCoast a member of the team being based at a children’s centre and building relationships with parents was the catalyst for a whole programme of family focused activities; at Made in Corby, they have established relationships with local primary schools – so can now distribute publicity through book bags; and at Revoluton Arts in Luton a promenade family performance was developed in the predominantly Pakistani area of Bury Park.

Family activities were a route in for many of the audience members we spoke to:

*“Like I said, my son, he’s so into art, loves to draw, loves to paint, and I thought there’s not many places around that I knew about that I could take him to get involved and to do a lot more, rather than just doing it at home. So, we kind of went along to the community centre, which is just around the corner from us, and they were doing the mosaic tiles and then they were doing the painting and stuff. And it was just, I find it quite therapeutic as well, just by doing it, but then also having to spend I’d say more quality time with Jack doing things that he obviously just*

## 5: Findings

### Learning

One CPP noted that they had experimented with changing the time of year, timing and location of their annual Outdoor Arts festival over the last three years, and whilst they gained useful insights into the pros and cons of different approaches, key feedback was that audiences were confused.

*enjoyed, because everyone knows with kids, if you need to take them to the shops or to town, they don't want to do that."*

(Made in Corby)

Some audience members we spoke to also recognised and appreciated the longer-term impacts of introducing children to arts events:

*"And even the kids, if they grow up with something like that, as they're growing up they'll get used to it and then they'll continue it and then when they have their kids and then it will just continue."*

(LeftCoast)

### Working with the 'right' artists

In places that are commissioning new work, finding the 'right' artist was a key consideration. Places talked about the challenges that artists face working in these contexts, one director described it as *"a tough environment... everything happens in non-art spaces so the artist is exposed socially, culturally and physically. And the weather is crap"*. Another described how they split up members of a music ensemble they had commissioned and sent them off individually to spend time at the local mental health unit and in a factory. For this work to be successful artists need to be ambitious, flexible and enabling, as one director described it *"artists who have their own practice that is developed, with brilliant facilitation skills and genuinely interested in co-creation... there have been some experiences when the formula hasn't quite been there – artists feel they have been commissioned to make work 'in response to' people or 'on' people"*.

## 6: Things we noted

“You need to build good relationships with people on a permanent basis, not just be pulling people in....”

“because if they think you’re just someone that comes in and then goes... you’re a one trick pony.”\*

\* Audience voice participant for LeftCoast, Blackpool

## 6: Things we noted

Are CPPs doing anything new? We did pick up on an element of ‘emperors new clothes’ about the programme – ‘surely this is standard audience development’, or ‘surely it’s basically community arts with bigger budgets’. Our view is that whilst some of the individual practices within CPP may feel familiar and tried and tested, it is the combination of the scale of investment, the local focus and the explicit principles of community and audience focus which is unique.

A number of places commented on a tension between ‘new’ audiences and ‘sustained engagement’ noting that the challenge for CPPs is sustaining and developing cultural engagement in their communities; that the programme isn’t about creating a series of one-off attendances but regular engagement and long-term impacts and changes in people’s behaviour.

‘We inherited a business plan’ was a frequent remark in our interviews. In common with many other projects, the teams delivering CPP programmes are not always the same people who wrote the original bids, and – as we would hope in an action research programme – a number of projects have made significant changes to their approach, reflecting on and learning from their experience, for example;

*“The first iteration of the business plan had an annual festival, a seasonal festival that was three years ahead of its time. We reviewed after the first festival – only 15% of audiences hadn’t been to the arts before. The quality was excellent*

*but it had no relevance to local people and they were bored. So we reviewed the programme and started again.”*

It is credit to Arts Council England as funders that this freedom and flexibility to review and change was built into the programme. For further detail of how CPPs navigated the early stages of their programmes see Ruth Melville and Ben Morgan’s *Building Whilst Flying*, available on the CPP website.<sup>24</sup>

There are a wide variety of different approaches across the CPP network and of course, not all the places are doing all the things we list above. This difference is driven the specificities of the individual places, but even more so we would suggest by the individual leadership approaches and values of the Project Directors.

Some CPP Places have now been operating for five years, and the CPP network is going through a period of churn at senior level, with a number of directors moving on from the programme around the same time as undertaking this research. Retaining organisational knowledge will be important for individual places going forward. The CPP National Network with its mechanisms for peer learning and experience sharing can play a key role in supporting new leadership, and it is interesting to reflect on the responsibility of the lead partner at each CPP in terms of embedding, sustaining (and applying more widely) the knowledge and insights gained from leading a CPP programme.

<sup>24</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/building-whilest-flying](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/building-whilest-flying)

## 7: Conclusions and recommendations

“You get quality time because you’re out of the house and you are purely focused on what your kids are doing, so I think that’s one of the biggest factors for me.

“And the ideas.\*

\* Audience voice participant for Made in Corby

## 7: Conclusions and recommendations

One CPP Project (Heart of Glass in St Helen's) has already successfully applied to join Arts Council England's National Portfolio of regularly funded organisations. Many CPP Places have had considerable success in creating excellent art experiences with communities, in some of the most financially and socially disadvantaged areas in the country, places that – in some cases – have suffered from generations of neglect combined with 'helicoptered in' project funding which has made no real difference to people's lives. It feels ethically and morally right that these Places should be prioritised for long term public investment through regular funding from Arts Council England. Of course they should be held to the same high standards as other regularly funded organisations, and of course they should go through the same rigorous application process, but CPP projects can – and are – playing a key role in "helping our divided society" (Sir Nicholas Serota). As well as engaging a broader, more diverse and more representative audience with arts and culture, they are having a profound impact at both the individual and community level – increasing civic pride, generating cultural and social capital, increasing confidence, enabling community connections and transforming the lives of many of the people they are reaching.

Our conversations with audiences were fascinating and broad ranging, and included eloquent personal testimonies

about the impacts of getting involved with their local CPP. Whilst this material was beyond the scope of this enquiry, these conversations confirmed to us the power and the benefits of including audience voices in research projects such as these. Whilst all individual CPP evaluations have included an audience perspective – either quantitatively or qualitatively – this hasn't (until now) been a feature of the national evaluation approach. We would urge the CPP Network to continue to incorporate audience voices in research and evaluation commissions.

Whilst not exactly a cult, there is a definite sense that many CPPs are working in a particular way, with a shared set of values and approaches, a 'CPP way' if you will. It feels to us that there is significant learning from these approaches which could benefit other parts of the cultural sector that want to engage a broader range of people with their work.

Of course there are many organisations that are not part of the Creative People and Places Network that are already working in this way. We are not suggesting that CPP has a monopoly on meaningful audience engagement (the Gulbenkian inquiry into the civic role of arts organisations<sup>25</sup>, for example, features many examples) but it feels useful to us to focus on aspects of the CPP approach that are most transferable across the broader cultural sector.

<sup>25</sup> <https://civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk>

## 7: Conclusions and recommendations

These are:

- **It's not just what you do but why you do it.**

The values and principles that lay behind efforts to engage more people with arts and culture have a big impact on how this work is then carried out, and, we would suggest, how effective it is. For leaders, personal reflection about why this important to you, and making these values visible in your behaviours and practice feels like it is important.

- **If the cultural sector expects audiences to change their behaviour we need to change first.**

We need to change philosophically in how we think of audiences and participants as creators and partners; we need to change what, where and when we programme; and we need to change how we find and communicate with audiences.

- **Who is all this stuff for anyway?** Many of the practices we heard about in our conversations stem from a belief that the arts are for 'ordinary' people. If we really want a broad range of people to engage with the arts we need to communicate in a way that speaks to a broad range of people, not in a way that speaks only to other arts professionals, to experts and to critics.

- **There are no shortcuts to genuine audience**

**engagement.** It takes a long time and it needs serious investment – it also requires people with patience, empathy, resilience, enthusiasm, vision, creativity and genuine warmth.

- **Step away from the art.** To make connections with people who don't think the arts are for them it's vital to work with non-arts partners, to use non-arts places and spaces, to connect with non-arts individuals and to use non-arts language.

- **Whilst at the same time...** It is important to create art that is meaningful and relevant to people; that speaks of their lives, their histories and their experiences. Not art that is bounded by these factors, but uses them as a starting point to tell engaging and amazing stories.

## 8: Further research

“You think you’ll make a fool of yourself. But the teachers at both the classes I came to were so good at helping you every step of the way, so it didn’t matter if you couldn’t draw.\*

\* Audience voice participant for Ideas Test, Swale and Medway

## 8: Further research

Working with the ‘right’ artists was a key theme in our conversations, as illustrated in the programme section on page 52. Some CPP Places are explicitly delivering programmes of ‘socially engaged art practice’ and even amongst those places that don’t describe their work in this way, there is a recognition that some artists and companies have been more effective and successful than others. Further research into how these artists work and what it is about their approach that makes the difference would be beneficial to the CPP network and beyond.

We suspect that CPPs are making a valuable contribution to the Arts Council’s Creative Case for Equality and Diversity<sup>26</sup> and this could be further explored and highlighted. Given the correlation between disadvantage and minority groups, CPPs are well placed to be leading the way in this area. A number of CPP places have significant BAME populations, and are working with these communities as artists, audiences and decision makers. Other places have large proportions of older people and people with disabilities and long-term health issues; across the board CPP places are areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage.

We struggled in this research to fully do justice to both a qualitative enquiry into engagement approaches across the CPP network and creating a consistent and robust

quantitative picture of practice across the network. More robust and sophisticated quantitative research – at a network level – could help to demonstrate the link between the CPP approaches and the impacts they are having.

The CPP Programme appears to be enabling/creating a cohort of audience focused cultural leaders, and this feels important if the cultural sector genuinely wants to expand its audience reach. This style of leadership is manifest at the philosophical level in how CPP directors talk about their practice as well as at the strategic and operational level. For example why do these leaders find it easy to implement simple things that actually have a significant impact – like using clear and understandable language to describe arts events – that other parts of the cultural sector seem to find so difficult? Further research into these leadership behaviours could help unpick what is making this possible, and there could be potentially fruitful discussions between CPP and, for example, the Clore Leadership programme.

Related to this, it could be interesting to map the trajectory of leaders who have moved on from CPP into other roles in the sector, exploring what difference their CPP experience has made to their practice, how are they applying this in their new roles, and what impacts it is having in these new contexts and organisations.

<sup>26</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/equality-diversity-and-creative-case-data-report-2016-17](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/equality-diversity-and-creative-case-data-report-2016-17)

## 9: Acknowledgements

“We would say hello in the playground and that, but people that we wouldn’t socialise with

“and now everyone has come in too, making friendships that weren’t there before.” \*

\* Audience voice participant for LeftCoast, Blackpool

## 9: Acknowledgements

**There are many people to thank who made this research possible.**

All of the CPP leaders who found time in their busy schedules to talk to us with passion and insight about their work; the participants in the audience voice sessions – members of the MAFIA in Blackpool, workshop participants in Kent and audience members and participants in Corby – whose contributions were enlightening and often inspirational.

We have tried to be true to the spirit and content of all the contributions and information we received, and any errors or omissions in this report are ours rather than our contributors.

Finally, thanks to the CPP National Network, in particular Amanda Smethurst, Tamsin Curror, Rachel Adam and Steph Fuller who originally commissioned us to undertake this work.

## Appendix

“To take that time out, and the fact that it was free, you didn’t have to spend over the odds to get involved and do that and do something we both really loved.”\*

\* Audience voice participant for Made in Corby

# Appendix

## Desk research sources

*Building Relationships with People New to the Arts.*

A resource produced by CPP for the 2016 Arts Marketing Association conference.

*Building Whilst Flying; Learning from the Creative People and Places Programme.* Ruth Melville. CPP 2015

*Creative People and Places Audience Profiling and Mapping 2014 – 2016 National Report.* The Audience Agency 2017.

*Creative People and Places Comparing Events of Different Types in 2015.* The Audience Agency 2016.

*Creative People and Places End of Year One Evaluation Report; Process, progress and emerging outcomes.* Ecorys 2015.

*Creative People and Places End of Year Two Evaluation Report; Progress and outcomes.* Ecorys 2016.

*Creative People and Places End of Year Three Evaluation Report; Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year three.* Ecorys 2017.

*Creative People and Places Engaging Communities in the Arts: Right Up Our Street case study.* Ecorys 2015

*Creative People and Places Engaging Communities in the Arts: Ideas Test case study.* Ecorys 2015

*Creative People and Places Engaging Communities in the Arts: Made in Corby case study.* Ecorys 2015

*Creative People and Places Engaging Communities in the Arts: Creative Barking & Dagenham case study.* Ecorys 2015

*Creative People and Places Engaging Communities in the Arts: Appetite case study.* Ecorys 2015

*Creative People and Places Non-Arts Partnerships: Heart of Glass case study.* Ecorys 2016

*Creative People and Places Non-Arts Partnerships: Transported case study.* Ecorys 2016

*Creative People and Places Non-Arts Partnerships: East Durham Creates case study.* Ecorys 2016

*Faster but Slower, Slower but Faster; Creative People and Place Learning 2016.* Mark Robinson. CPP 2016

*People Place Power conference report 2016.* Mark Robinson CPP 2016.

*Power Up.* Chrissie Tiller. CPP 2017

*Re-thinking Relationships; Phase One of the Inquiry into the Civic Role of Arts Organisations.* Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 2017.

*Shared Decision-Making; Tips, tools and case studies from Creative People and Places projects.* Louise White for MB Associates. CPP 2017

*The New Audiences Programme Final Report.* Arts Council England. 2003

*The Role of Voluntary Arts Activity in Creative People and Places.* Robin Simpson. Voluntary Arts 2016

*Towards a Cultural Democracy; Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone.* Nick Wilson, Anna Bull and Jonathan Gross. Kings College London 2017

## Appendix

### CPP Interviews

Appetite, Stoke. [Karl Greenwood](#)

Back to Ours, Hull. [Louise Yates](#)

bait, South East Northumberland. [Rachel Adam](#)

Creative Barking & Dagenham. [Lindsey Pugh](#)

Creative Black Country. [Sajida Carr](#)

Creative People and Places Hounslow. [Jan Lennox](#)

Creative Scene, North Kirklees. [Vicky Holliday](#)

East Durham Creates. [Nikki Locke](#)

First Art, Ashfield, Mansfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire. [Paul Steele](#)

Heart of Glass, St Helens. [Patrick Fox](#)

Home, Slough. [Milan Govederica](#)

Ideas Test, Swale and Medway. [Steph Fuller](#)

LeftCoast, Blackpool and Wyre. [Tina Redford](#)

Made in Corby. [Helen Willmott](#)

Market Place, Forest Heath and Fenland. [Kate Hall](#)

Peterborough Presents. [Josie Stone](#)

Revoluton Arts, Luton. [Angela Rivers](#)

Right Up our Street, Doncaster. [Sally Lockey](#)

Super Slow Way, Pennine Lancashire. [Laurie Peake](#)

The Cultural Spring, Sunderland and South Tyneside.

[Emma Horsman](#)

Transported, Boston and South Holland. [Nick Jones](#)

# Appendix

## Individual Places – characteristics and activities

### Place characteristics

- Dispersed
- Concentrated
- Former industrial
- Rural
- Urban

### Programme content

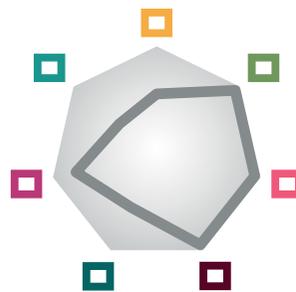
- Community workshops
- Festivals
- Outdoor Arts
- Existing touring productions
- Commissions
- Skills development
- Work produced by communities

### Community decision-making mechanisms

- Response to one-off consultation
- Community groups – place wide
- Community groups – localised
- Commissioning panels – project specific
- Commissioning panels – ongoing

### Level of activity

The highest level of activity, 10, is on the outside of the radar and the lowest level, 0, is at the centre. This example for Appetite illustrates that festivals, outdoor arts and existing touring productions make up the largest part of its programme, followed by skills development.



### Appetite



### Programme content



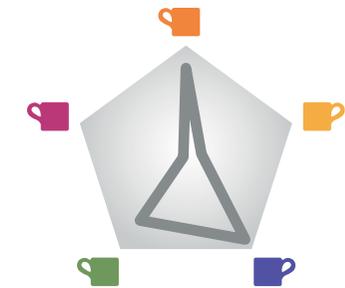
### Community decision-making mechanisms



### Back to Ours

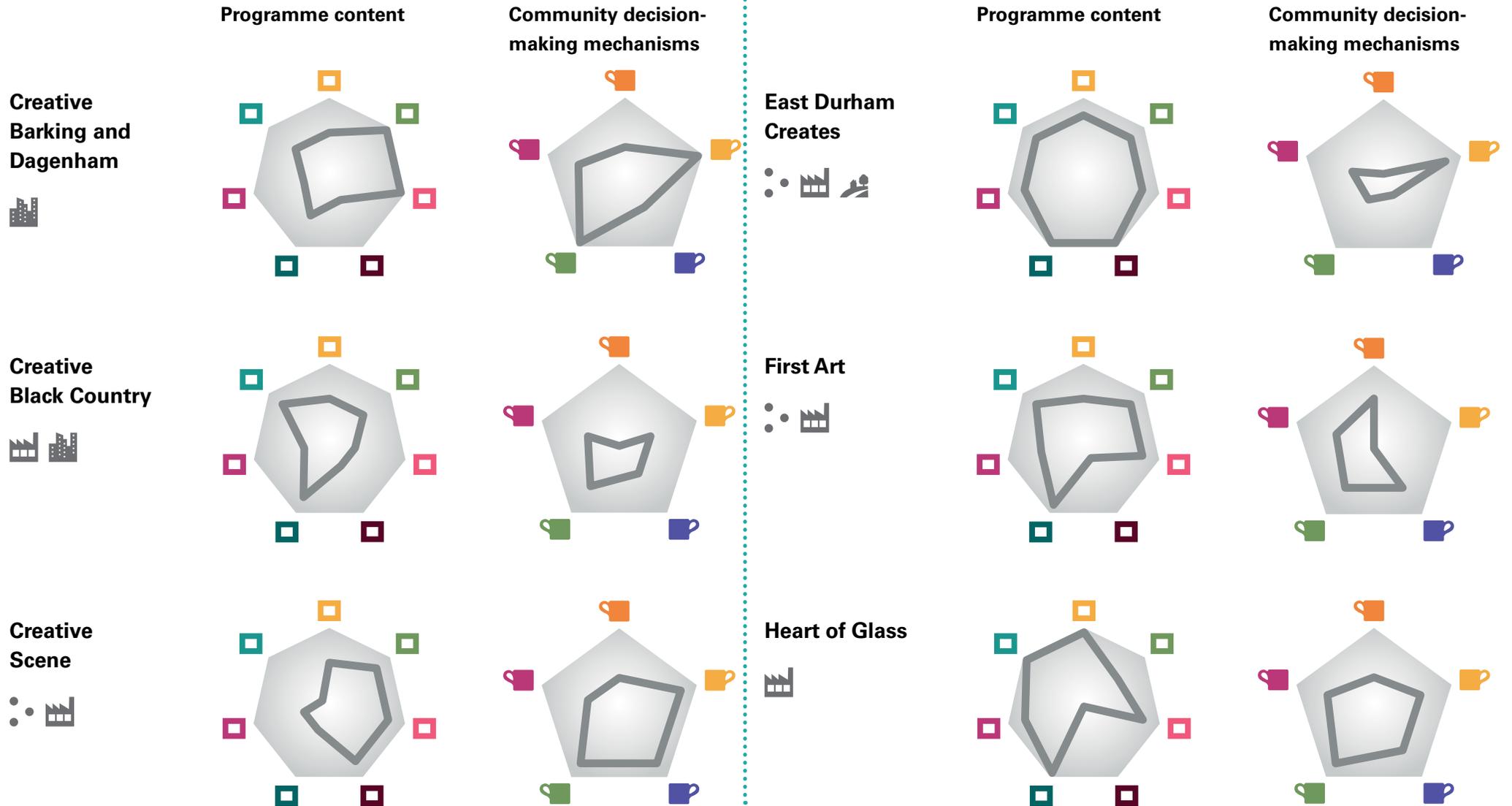


### bait



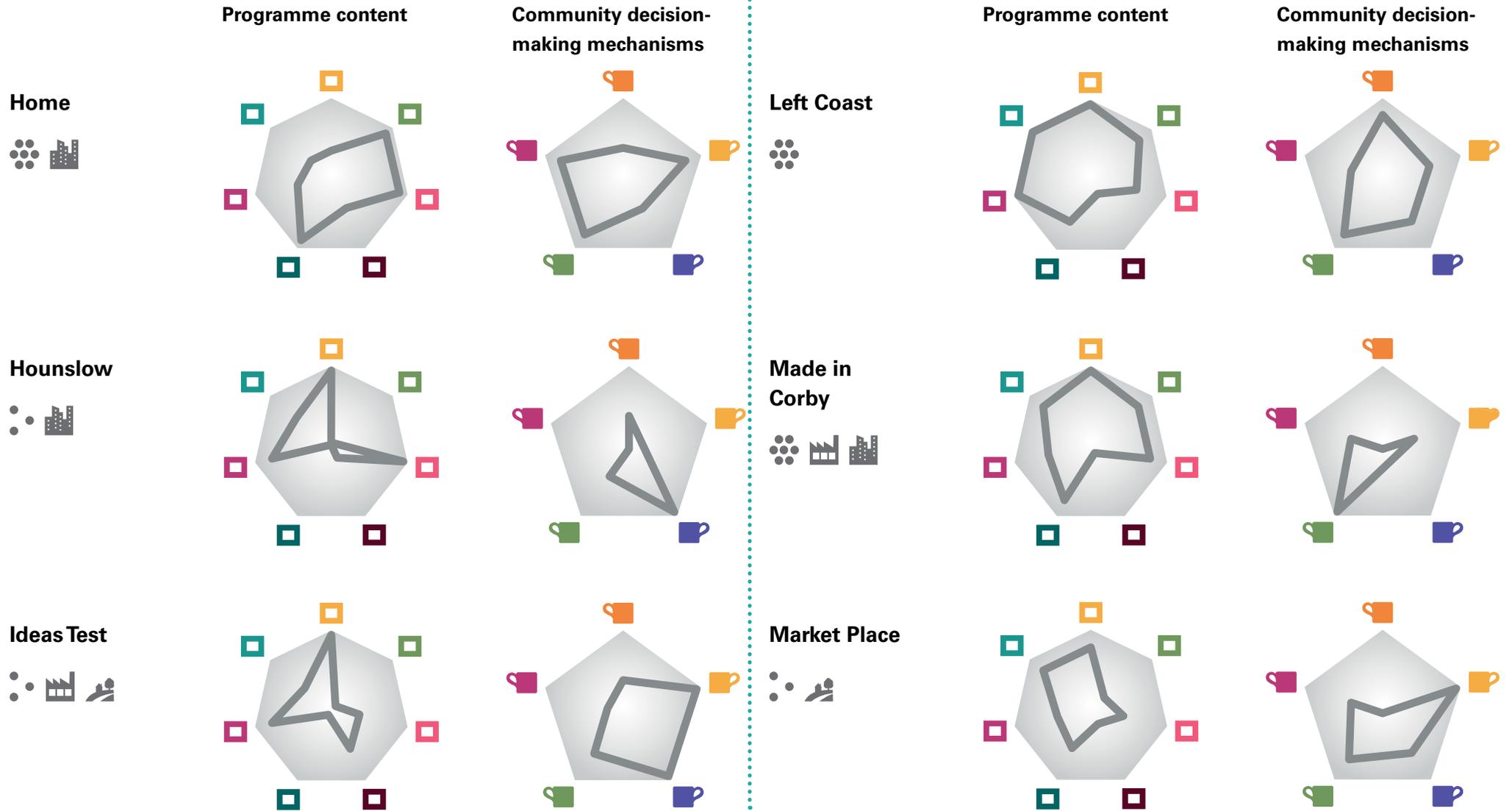
# Appendix

## Individual Places – characteristics and activities



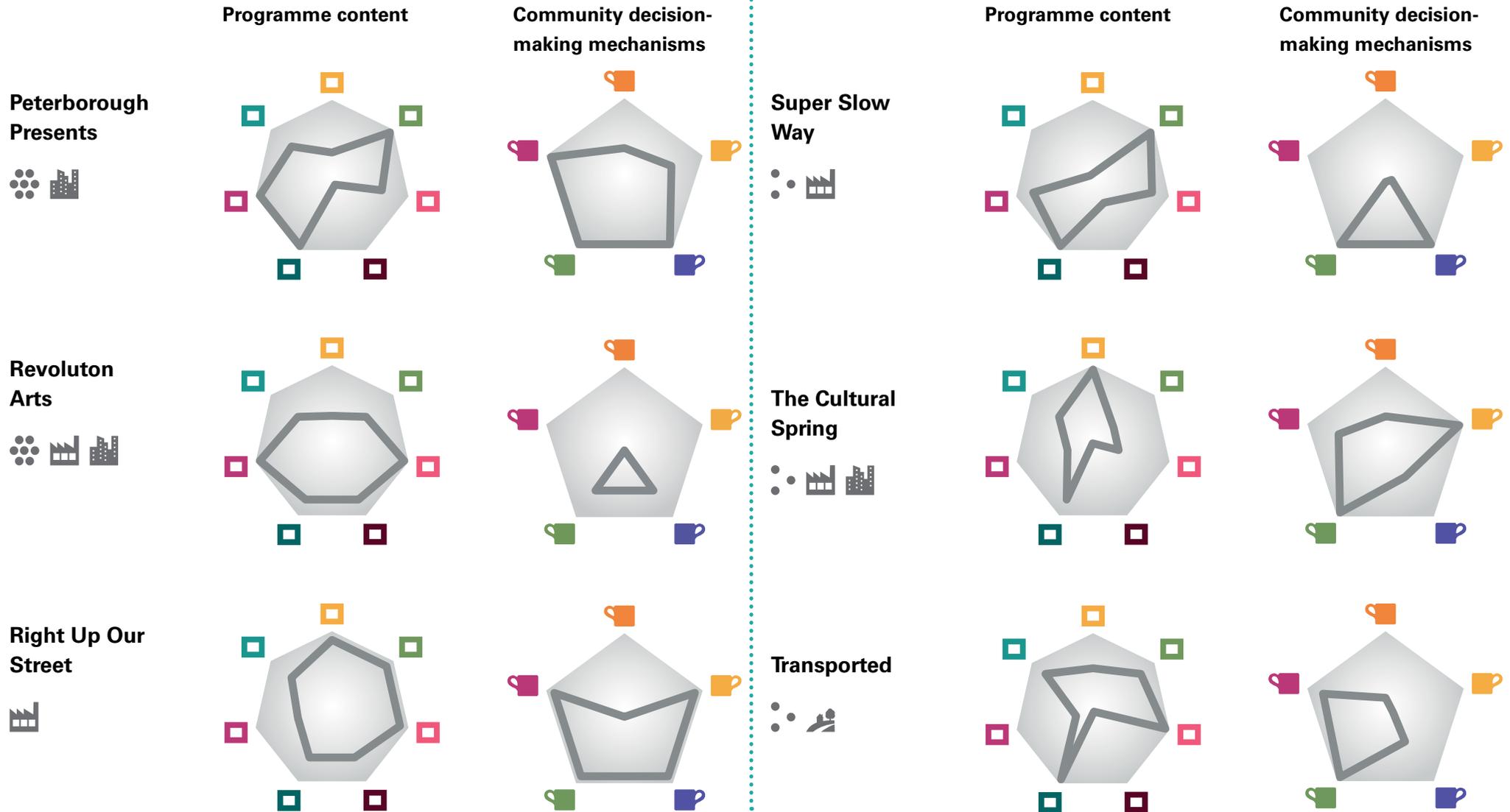
# Appendix

## Individual Places – characteristics and activities



# Appendix

## Individual Places – characteristics and activities





info@creativepeopleplaces.org.uk  
www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk

LinkedIn: Creative People and Places network  
Twitter: @CPPnetwork  
YouTube: Creative People and Places



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