

REGIONAL CASE STUDY REPORT: CHATHAM, ENGLAND, THE UNITED KINGDOM

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1. Introduction

DISCE is a research project funded by the European Commission, via Horizon 2020. The overall research question that DISCE is seeking to answer is: What are inclusive and sustainable creative economies, and how can they be developed?

To answer this question, we conducted ten regional case studies across Europe. To select the case study locations, we established the following criteria as the primary basis: the locations had not been extensively studied and they were of comparable size, with population of approximately 150,000. Additionally, we sought locations that are diverse in terms of their creative economy profile and planning, ranging from cities with an established reputation for creative economy, to those for whom this is not the case.

In this document, we present a brief overview of one of our ten case study locations, the city of Chatham. We present key facts about the city, with a particular attention to how the 'creative economy' has previously been understood, based on a review of existing academic literature, publicly available data, and policy documents.

A key feature of the DISCE research project is that we are using 'creative economies' with a deliberately inclusive meaning, involving creative activity outside of paid employment, as well as within paid employment. This is reflected in the range of academic texts, publicly available data and policy documents we are concerned with: not only focusing narrowly on the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), but more broadly on areas such as cultural participation, and, in some cases, aspects of community development.

To read more about the distinctive DISCE approach to understanding and developing inclusive and sustainable 'creative economies', please see the publications on the project website: <https://disce.eu>.



2. Facts and Figures

2.1 Overview of the City

Chatham is one of five towns (including Rochester, Gillingham, Rainham, Strood) that make up the Medway – a unitary authority that was formed in 1998 after a local government reorganisation excluded Medway from the larger county of Kent. Chatham lost its independence as a separate borough in 1972 as a result of the Local Government Act, however, it has retained a distinctive geographic identity as a separate entity within the larger Medway region. Chatham is part of the parliamentary constituency of Chatham and Aylesford but, has been previously included in the constituencies of Mid Kent, Rochester and Chatham, & Maidstone. Despite being governed by a single unitary authority, there are significant differences between the five towns that make up the Medway. Much of the central Chatham area for example, scores in the highest (1) decimal on the English Index of Multiple Deprivation, with the neighbouring town of Rochester scoring in the lower deciles.¹

With a population of around 280,000 Medway is one of the largest urban areas in the South East. 40 miles eastwards from London and near direct transport connections to the European continent situated in Ebbsfleet, Gravesend. Historically the River Medway has been a location of strategic significance for access to London from France.

Despite the multiple transformations and geographical changes over the years, Chatham as a town has retained its own distinct maritime heritage. The Chatham Dockyard was initially built in the 16th century, expanding over the course of time to become the main British Royal Navy Base, and from the 18th century serving as a major shipbuilding and repair centre up until its closure in 1984. The dockyard closure left over 7,000 local workers unemployed. The subsequent deindustrialization has led to further unemployment and dereliction in the area from which Chatham has not fully recovered (Turok, 2009). As unemployment grew, the overall image of Chatham began to deteriorate; gradually the town became associated with poverty and criminality overshadowing other legacies, characteristics and features of this historic place (Pleasant, 2019).

Medway has many heritage sites that attract visitors such as the second oldest cathedral in England and a Norman castle in Rochester or the historic Dockyard in Chatham. Yet, because local retail, leisure, and hospitality facilities lack in num-

¹ <https://maps.cdrc.ac.uk/#/geodemographics/imde2019/default/BTTTFPT/12.279590386425571/0.5328/51.4102/>

bers and quality, Chatham (and Medway more widely) has overwhelmingly failed to capitalise on its rich history and many cultural/recreational assets.

Medway benefits from having (subsidiary) campuses of several major Higher and Further Education Institutions (HE/FE) such as the University of Greenwich (Chatham), University of Kent (Chatham), Canterbury Christ Church University (Chatham) and Mid-Kent College (Gillingham). University of the Creative Arts (UCA) (Rochester) – previously known as Kent Institute of Art and Design (KAID) – is another important HE institution in the history of Medway however the UCA announced plans to close the Rochester campus in 2021, with other closures announced at the Mid-Kent campus.

Today, Medway is part of the Thames Estuary, a programme backed by the Government as the UK's biggest growth opportunity (Thames Estuary, 2021). It is dedicated to transform the region comprised of East London, North Kent, South Essex, and the Thames itself by attracting investment, creating more jobs, developing infrastructure, and improving productivity in the region to ensure more sustainable growth of the Estuary region and the UK economy. Within this new development programme creative economy is seen as a key driver of long-term growth and development of the estuary area, which is supported by a major new programme – the Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC). Recognising a strong network of existing creative and cultural assets in Chatham specifically, TEPC's envisions to turn the town into a regionally important cultural hub.

2.2 Socio-Economic Profile

The unemployment rate in Medway was estimated at 4.3 percent in 2021 (ONS, 2022), which is slightly higher than the UK average of 4.1 percent (ONS, 2022a).

In Medway gross disposable household income (GDHI) in 2018 was about 5,338 million pounds (ONS, 2021). The region is growing quite rapidly, with GDHI in 2018 increasing by 19.5 percent since 2013 and by 3.9 percent since 2017. In 2018 GDHI per head of population was 19,213 pounds (ONS, 2021), which is below the British average of 21,109 pounds (ONS, 2020).

2.3 Cultural and Creative Profile

In 2019, the creative industries employed 2.1 million people across the UK (DCMS, 2020). Across the entire Southeast region, in 2019 an estimated 334,000 people were employed in the creative industries and 103,000 for the cultural sector (DCMS, 2020). Within Medway (there is no specific data for Chatham), according to the Creative Nation local profile compiled by Nesta, 5,675 people were employed in the creative industries in the year 2015-16, with a reported 1,863 creative business. The Nesta data includes employment data linked to the DCMS defined 'creative industries' and does not include monitoring of those employed in the arts and cultural sector.

According to the Nesta data, the largest creative sector in Medway is IT, software, and computer services, with 2,615 employees and 970 businesses. The sector where Medway has the strongest employment specialisation is Architecture, with 1.0x as much activity as the UK average.

In Medway arts engagement has tended to be somewhat lower than the national average, with 57.4% of people in Medway having engaged in or attended an arts event according to the 2016/17 Active People survey, as compared with the then England figure of 60.3% (GJG Consultancy, 2020d).

2.4 Inclusivity and Sustainability

Unfortunately, no official Eurostat statistics or data were available applicable to the domain of the cultural and creative sectors.

3. Creative Economies: Research and Public Policy

3.1 Overview of Academic Studies

DISCE researchers conducted a web-based search, for academic publications and policy literature including webpages of the Medway Council, Kent County Council, Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership, etc. For the list of academic studies including overview of each paper & use of DISCE key terms see Appendix 1.

None of the academic publications reviewed speak directly to the DISCE approach on inclusive and sustainable creative economies. Furthermore, Medway and even more so Chatham remain empirically understudied across various research fields relevant to the DISCE project. However, DISCE key words were found in some of the available reports. For instance, 'creative economy' and 'creative ecology' were referred to in two papers (Comunian and Alexiou, 2015; Comunian, 2017). Close reading of a paper by Turok (2009) identified a correlation with other key terms such as 'sustainability' (not mentioned in relation to creative economy, but in relation to wider regional development), 'inclusivity', 'care' and 'cultural participation' in relation to regional development and regeneration policy.

Turok's (2009) paper connects with the DISCE approach to some extent as it raises concerns about the sustainability and inclusivity of top-down regeneration programmes such as Thames Gateway – an ambitious regeneration project led by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to provide extra housing and jobs to the area – which the author argues tend to prioritise regional interest over the needs of the established local communities. The study argues that since the Thames Gateway was largely preoccupied with supplying housing for the greater Southeast region across Medway's numerous brownfield sites, it failed to address the needs of (or care for) the existing residents of the deprived Medway area for additional employment, skills and public services (including cultural facilities, leisure and sport amenities) (Turok, 2009). Interestingly, it pointed out that the new housing in Medway, which is mostly affordable to London bound commuters, may further worsen the condition of the local community by stretching public services. Furthermore, the local community may be negatively affected by unwillingness/inability of an incoming commuter-focused population to engage in local civic activities (or structures of care) such as school project associations or youth and charitable projects.

A book chapter by Comunian and Alexiou (2015) uses the FUSE Festival in Medway as a case study to map and explore the creative processes behind arts festivals and highlight various factors and interactions that influence these processes. The authors adopt a complexity theory perspective, a concept that considers the various interactions and responses that change/order systems and argue that festivals (and other forms of project-based forms of creative work) can be approached as complex systems because they follow the principles of complexity theory. Since any ecology or ecosystem is, in effect, a complex system, it can be argued that this chapter's logic resonates with the DISCE approach and methodology. The study suggests that creative work needs to be studied in context – considering various internal and external as well as human and non-human elements (namely people, places, audiences, and various external influences).

A further paper by Comunian (2017) also uses the FUSE festival 2011 as a case study to explore the impact of festivals on participating artists. This paper offers insights into how temporary creative events such as festivals can help nurture and support emerging artists locally. Findings of this paper suggest that local festivals can act as vital structures of care (to use DISCE terminology) for emerging visiting/touring artists but more importantly local artists by giving them valuable opportunities to develop their work and professional networks. Consequently, festivals have a lot of potential to have long-term positive impact on local development.

A PhD thesis by Pleasant (2019) explores the effects of deindustrialisation – caused by the closure of the dockyard – on working-class people in Chatham namely their work identities and communities. Although it does not directly speak to any of the DISCE keywords it does offer an interesting analysis of the dockyard closure impacts on the local workforce and its culture in a broader sense.

Finally, the literature review did not uncover any academic studies that considered the role of higher education in Chatham or Medway's creative economy, which is particularly noteworthy in this geographical context that houses several subsidiary branches of major universities such as the University of Greenwich (Chatham), University of Kent (Chatham), Canterbury Christ Church University (Chatham), and University of the Creative Arts (UCA) (Rochester).

3.2 Overview of Public Policy Documentation

No documents were identified that speak about creative economy policy in Chatham specifically, but Medway as a whole. For the list of policy documents (with bibliographical details), plus commentary on data gathering see appendix 2. Summary of the existing policy documentation is presented in table 1.

Table 1 Existing policy documentation

	What this document is about?	To what extent creative economies are discussed in the document? ²
Medway's Cultural Strategy 2014-2019 Rich heritage – great future (Medway Council, 2014)	Outlines five strategic priorities of Medway's cultural strategy: Stewardship, Engagement, Contribution to Economic Prosperity, and Health and Wellbeing.	Creative economies mentioned
Draft Cultural Strategy 2009-2014 (Medway Council, 2009)	Identifies the five strategic priorities of Medway's cultural strategy (listed above).	Creative economies mentioned
Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 Background Research (GJG Consultancy, 2020d)	Gives background information on Medway's cultural provision and engagement by identifying and mapping local cultural organisations and exploring local audiences (using Audience Spectrum cultural segmentation, Mosaic profiling and Target Group Index).	Creative economies mentioned
Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 Consultation Report (GJG Consultancy, 2020c)	Outlines the model of consultation with local stakeholders that has been used to develop the new Cultural Strategy of Medway.	Creative economies mentioned
Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030: Interim Consultation (GJG Consultancy, 2020)	Reflects on the work carried out up until Phase 3 of the Cultural Strategy by covering the context of the strategy's development; the strategy's approach; key findings; the strategy's vision for Medway's cultural future; next steps of the strategy.	Creative economies mentioned
Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030: Full report (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)	Provides a full report on the Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030. Sets out a working definition of culture and the thinking behind the strategy development. Outlines the vision for the future of Medway culture by specifying values and themes around which it is built. Offers an overview of the current state of Medway's cultural ecosystem and sets out Creative Medway Delivery model.	Creative economies mentioned
Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 (GJG Consultancy, 2020b)	A shorter version of the above document: Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030: Full report.	Creative economies mentioned
Regeneration, Culture and Environment – Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Briefing note – No.02/20 (Medway Council, 2020a)	Sets out information on the Cultural Development Fund.	Creative economies mentioned
Regeneration, Culture and Environment – Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Briefing note – No.05/20 (Medway Council, 2020b)	Sets out information on the University of Kent's Cultural Development Fund.	Creative economies mentioned

² The classification includes four categories:

- Focus on creative economies
- Creative economies mentioned (e.g. culture, cultural or creative sectors or industries, creative businesses/companies, creative workers/people/class, cultural hotspots/hubs)
- Creative economies not mentioned but addresses closely related topics (e.g. innovation, innovative industries/companies, knowledge cities, knowledge-intensive sectors)
- Overall economy of the city or region (creative economies not mentioned specifically)

Towards a National Prospectus for the Creative Economy in the South East (High House Production Park, 2015)	Puts forwards five sector-led initiatives to improve a cultural and creative infrastructure in the South East.	Focus on creative economies
South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN): Terms of Reference (SECEN, 2016)	Sets out Terms of Reference of SECEN.	Focus on creative economies
Thames Estuary Production Corridor: An Industrial Vision to Create a World-Class Location for the Creative Industries (Greater London Authority, 2017)	Sets out the vision of embedding the creative industries – UK's fastest growing sector – into the development of the Thames Estuary.	Creative economies mentioned
Thames Estuary Production Corridor: From Vision to Action (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)	Summarises the strategy of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor.	Creative economies mentioned
Thames Estuary Production Corridor: The Case for Investment (Hatch Regeneris, 2020)	Sets out a clear case for investment in the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, and the strategy of delivery.	Creative economies mentioned
South East LEP Skills Strategy 2018-2023: An employer led partnership approach to skills for flourishing, inclusive economy (SELEP, 2018)	Outlines SELEP's vision for skills development in the South East.	Creative economies mentioned
IDEAS TEST: CPP3 Business Plan 2020-2023 (Ideas Test, 2020)	Sets out a three-year plan of action of Ideas Test touching upon its vision, mission, goals, values and more importantly seven key activity stands for the period of 2020-2023.	Creative economies mentioned
Review of the Cultural Compact Initiative: Final Report (BOP Consulting, 2020)	Reports on the progress of Cultural Compacts programme co-funded by the Arts Council and DCMS.	Creative economies mentioned
Skills and employability plan for Medway 2035 (Medway Council, 2019)	Sets out Medway's plan for skills growth across primary, secondary, further and higher education.	Creative economies mentioned
Medway 2035 (Medway Council, N.D.)	Sets out the regeneration aims and objectives for Medway across six priority areas: (1) destination and placemaking; (2) inward investment; (3) innovation; (4) business accommodation and digital connectivity; (5) sector growth; (6) improving employability.	Creative economies mentioned

3.3 Terminology and Stakeholders of Public Policy

What language / terms do these policy documents use?

The selected policy documents at the municipal level tend not to use the term 'creative economy' (and never 'sustainable and inclusive creative economy') but use various closely related terms such as 'creative sector' (Medway Council, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020a), 'cultural' or 'culture sector' (GJG Consultancy, 2020), 'creative industries' (Medway Council, 2009, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020) or 'creative industries sector' (Medway Council, 2009, GJG Consultancy, 2020). 'Creative economy' is a more familiar term across policy documents aiming at a larger geographical scale such as the South East (High House Production Park, 2015; Hatch Regeneris, 2019).

'Inclusivity/inclusive/inclusion' appears in related contexts and in a variety of ways, such as 'inclusive approach' to cultural governance (GJG Consultancy, 2020, 2020a), 'inclusive growth' (Hatch Regeneris, 2019), 'inclusion, equality of access and participation' in culture (GJG Consultancy, 2020a) or 'social inclusion' (Medway Council, 2014).

'Sustainability/sustainable' is found in a wide variety of contexts, some of which can be related to the creative economy, such as 'sustainable music ecology' (GJG Consultancy, 2020), 'sustainable business models' (GJG Consultancy, 2020a), 'sustainable growth' (Greater London Authority, 2017; Hatch Regeneris, 2020), 'financial sustainability' of creative/cultural organisations and professionals (GJG Consultancy, 2020b).

See Appendix 3 for a list of key term usages in the policy documents.

Who is responsible for 'creative economy policy' in Chatham?

The documents indicate that policy related to the range of activities DISCE refers to as creative economy has been addressed by authorities at different levels. While there is little policy directly framed in terms of creative economy at the municipal level (Medway Council), there is a lot that speaks to creative and cultural sectors and creative industries as well as to arts and culture. Creative economy is something that is addressed by policy bodies/documents at higher levels such as the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) (see High House Production Park, 2015 Hatch Regeneris, 2019, 2020).

The Head of Culture and Libraries is a municipal officer responsible for the cultural services across Medway. In 2019, Paul Cowell, a former culture and events manager from Southwark Council joined Medway Council in this role. Under this new leadership the council have devised several policy documents (GJG Consultancy, 2020, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d) and initiatives (Medway 2025 – UK City of Culture) in connection to the creative economy.

Furthermore, under this leadership there has been a shift towards a collaborative and inclusive approach to cultural governance, with Medway Council adopting a targeted approach to engage as many stakeholders as possible into the formulation of the new cultural strategy - Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030. It is worth highlighting that in addition to public funding from Medway Council the strategy was funded by Arts Council England and supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as well as produced in consultation with various stakeholders including (11) volunteers in the Drafting Group. The strategy was delivered by GJG Consultancy supported by Ruth Melville Research and the Audience Agency.

In addition to Medway Council another important body that impacts 'creative economy policy' in Medway today is South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). SELEP is one of 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that the government established across England since 2011 to foster partnership for growth between business, government, and education. SELEP incorporates 11 working groups each having its own focus and agenda; this includes a working group titled Southeast Creative Economy Network (SECEN) which works on accelerating growth in the digital, creative and cultural sector specifically, since its establishment in 2013 (SELEP, 2016). SECEN is a partnership between local authorities, education bodies and creative businesses in the SELEP area. SECEN works in partnership with SELEP the Greater London Authority (GLA) to support the concept of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) – an ambitious programme aspiring to unite East London, the North Kent Coast and South Essex to create a major centre for creative and cultural production along the estuary (Hatch Regeneris, 2020). TEPC attracts funding from both The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and DCMS (Creative Estuary, 2021). TEPC is also supported by Creative Estuary – the Cultural Development Fund project supported by DCMS – a consortium of public sector and cultural organisations such as SELEP, Kent and Essex County councils, the Greater London Authority and 11 local authority areas (including Medway Council) represented by Thames Gateway Kent Partnership and Opportunity South Essex, SECEN, University of Kent, University of Essex, Locate in Kent, and cultural organisations Metal, and Cement Fields.

How – and how much – 'creative economy' policy has been developed?

In 2014 Medway Council published a document called 'Medway's Cultural Strategy 2014-2019: Rich Heritage – great future', which outlines four strategic priorities of the cultural strategy:

- Stewardship
- Engagement
- Contributing to economic prosperity
- Health and wellbeing (Medway Council, 2014).

The four strategic priorities were adopted by the previous Cultural Strategy 2009-2014; deemed successful in their establishment and development as well as resonant with the DCMS mission statement and objectives these priorities were carried over into the subsequent strategy. In general, this seems to be quite general and acts as an extension of the previous strategy. Thus, to fully understand Medway's cultural strategy between 2014-2019 it is advisable to also look a little bit further back in time.

As per more recent development of 'creative economy policy' in Medway as outlined in the 2020 Cultural Strategy (GJG Consultancy, 2020a), a crucial aspect to note is its explicitly 'inclusive approach' to policymaking that is underpinned by the following six values: (1) Working in partnership, (2) Strategic and long-term thinking, (3) Environmentally sustainable actions, (4) Enhancement of inclusion and access for all, (5) Recognition of culture as integral to wellbeing and health, (5) Evaluating impact before moving on. It is noteworthy that within this new strategy the issue of inclusion is no longer limited to the idea of cultural participation and access to culture/art but participating in and having access to policymaking as well. As such, delivery of the strategy will be disseminated via Creative Medway, an open collaborative framework arranged across five working groups managed by five Theme Working Group Champions, five key stakeholders from other sectors, a Facilitator and the Creative Medway Chair.

There are several documents that speak to Chatham's creative economy policy from the regional level: 'Thames Estuary Production Corridor: An Industrial Vision to Create a World-Class Location for the Creative Industries' (2017), 'Thames Estuary Production Corridor: From Vision to Action' (2019) and 'Thames Estuary Production Corridor: The Case for Investment' (2020). These documents identify an enormous potential of 'creative and cultural production activities' for generating additional economic output and jobs both to the Southeast region and to the UK more broadly. Building on the exiting creative resources (e.g., businesses and faculties) along the Thames Estuary, TEPC aims to promote the area as a world class location for the creative industries. Within this vision for the estuary, Chatham has been identified as an emerging 'hub for creative and digital activity' for Kent anchored around established companies such as Dovetail Games and Medway campuses of major universities such as Greenwich, Kent, and Canterbury Christ Church that support creative production locally through the provision of necessary courses and research (Hatch Regeneris, 2019 p.14). These policy documents build a case for developing a series of both large ('Growth Engines') and small scale ('Local Sparks') investment initiatives to 'further enhance the region's creative, cultural and production capacity' (Hatch Regeneris, 2020 p.15).

Under the umbrella of TEPC, Creative Estuary represents a major source of investment (with a total of 20 million available) towards creative, cultural and heritage initiatives in the estuary area.

Creative Estuary has already unlocked £4.3 million investment from the DCMS Cultural Development Fund that was awarded to the University of Kent to deliver seven 'Sparks' across the estuary to help the region develop its identity, its places and spaces, as well as its people (see Medway Council, 2020a, 2020b). Some of these Sparks have had direct impact on Medway and Chatham. For example, one of the Spark's (Estuary 2020) aims to support the development of a shared cultural identity for the Thames Estuary through the organisation of a multi-art festival – Estuary 2020 – on 107 miles of Thames Estuary dedicated to exploring the rich and diverse culture of the region and attracting new audiences. Chatham was one of the four hubs for this festival. Another Spark (Estuary Commissions) is dedicated to the development of the creative and technical producing capacity in the region by offering residencies, training, mentoring and creative bursaries to various creative workers and organisations at different scales; this included commissions for a digital arts festival – Electric Medway 2020 – held in Chatham. The Public Assets for Culture Spark, dedicated to identifying and pooling assets of local authorities to provide more spaces for cultural production awarded £100,000 directly to Medway, funding which supported the conception of The Docking Station – an innovative creative digital hub that is due to launch in the future (2025) in one of the unused listed buildings in the Historic Dockyard of Chatham (Medway Council, 2020b).

3.4 Thematic Review of Public Policy Documentation

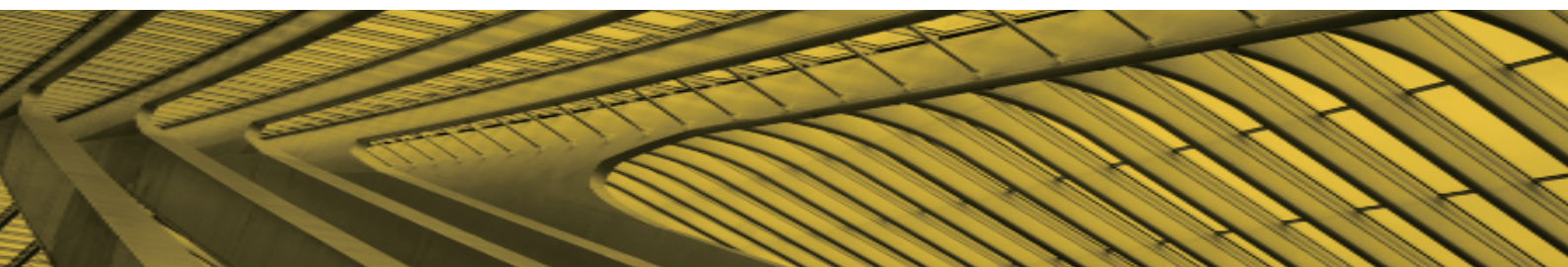
3.4.1 Creative Economy Policy & Cultural Opportunity

What are the aims of creative economy policy in Chatham? What does success look like?

One of the central aims of creative economy policy coming from the local (unitary) authority level – Medway Council – is to enhance inclusion and participation not only with respect to participating in cultural activity but also policymaking. Through various open meetings and consultation sessions local authority has gone a long way to ensure that a truly wide range of the stakeholders are involved in the development and implementation of Medway's new cultural strategy – Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030.

Underpinned by this central aim the strategy first, seeks to ensure that Medway becomes a much more interconnected place 'physically, digitally and philosophically' (GJG Consultancy, 2020a p.19). This means that creative and cultural sectors must not only become more interconnected between one another but also other sectors (including health, education, regeneration). Interconnectedness of creative sectors must also be improved with local communities but also places connecting Medway to Kent, the UK, and the rest of the world.

Second, the strategy aims to address a shortage of spaces for the creative sector across Medway by ensuring that creatives have appropriate spaces throughout their careers. Creative spaces (real but also virtual) are to become recognised and protected for their social, economic and community value.



Third, the strategy seeks to attract new talent to Medway as well as support existing creatives. Here, enhancing the provision of training and development opportunities is a key aim to achieve in the next 10-year period. Finally, increasing cultural participation levels is another important target to achieve.

What challenges and opportunities for creative economy in this location are identified?

Despite the previous attempts and ambitions of Medway Council in establishing more creative workspaces throughout Medway (see Medway Council, 2014), the area continues to lack affordable spaces for the creative sector (GJG Consultancy, 2020a). Specifically, there is a lack of places where people can work but also come together, collaborate and exchange ideas. This gap in the creative infrastructures presents a clear opportunity for future development and growth of the creative economy in Medway, which the cultural strategy aims to fulfil by 'reclaiming underused in-between spaces' (GJG Consultancy, 2020a p.23) such as empty shops and churches (GJG Consultancy, 2020c) and 'filling in-between times', primarily the night-time economy (GJG Consultancy, 2020a p.23).

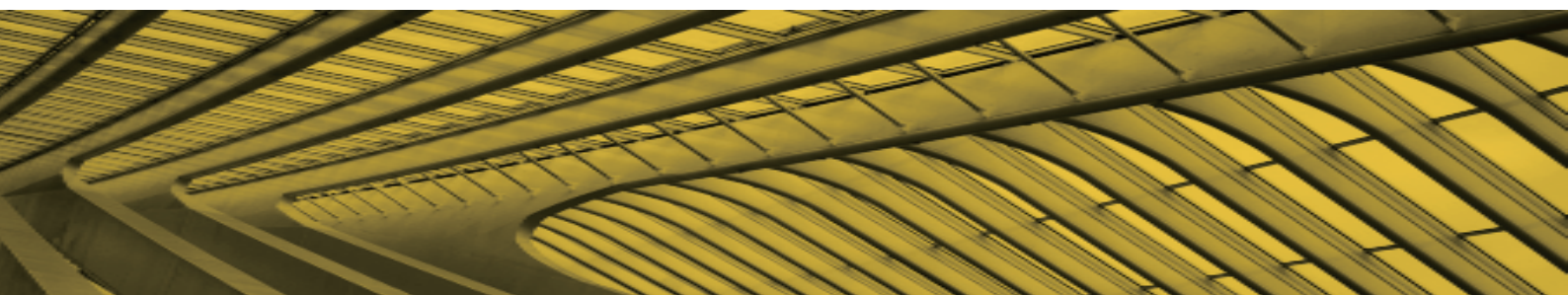
Here the emphasis is made on two overlapping strands of action. First, more creative spaces could be potentially unlocked through the development of the night-time economy, which is reported as underdeveloped across Medway at the current moment. Experimenting with and piloting new types of vibrant night-time spaces in the town centres is proposed as a promising opportunity in this respect (GJG Consultancy, 2020a). Second, this lack of spaces may be addressed by widening the geography of the existing ones through the improvement of public transportation between the towns. Via community consultations (with Tier 3 stakeholders – people how live and work locally) GJG Consultancy (2020c) identified Medway's bus service as a potential challenge for the creative economy as it stops running early and hinders access not only to places of work but also cultural events in the later hours. Hence, developing the improved transportation is a vital challenge to address to ensure a more sustainable and inclusive creative economy across Medway.

In addition to gaps in the creative infrastructure some gaps in the wider creative ecosystem are identified, which are seen as opportunities for the future development of Medway's creative economy (GJG Consultancy, 2020a). Specifically, it is argued that Medway needs to provide more opportunities for young creatives from early ages through both formal and informal education provision. Thus, further improvement/development of the creative curriculum in schools is short-listed as an important opportunity for the creative economy locally. It should be noted here that the strategy embraces ecological thinking by acknowledging the evolutionary nature of creative careers. In other words, there is a recognition that different levels of support are needed for creatives and organisations at varying stages of life. Consequently, an important opportunity to pursue here is to promote an intergenerational approach and a culture of mentoring when it comes to the provision of training and development opportunities across Medway (Ibid.).

Various (mentoring) schemes that link existing talent of Medway across generations but also linking it into the wider regional, national, or international groups that can offer support is a compelling opportunity for Medway to explore. According to 'Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 Consultation Report' particularly there are opportunities for more collaborative work across the wider Kent region (GJG Consultancy, 2020c).

Another challenge for creative economy of Medway is a lack of spaces where 'people can collaborate to design, test, scale and engage with imaginative and enterprising ideas together' (GJG Consultancy, 2020a p.23). Similar gap has been reported across the wider area of the Southeast where creative businesses are said to be widely dispersed and thus operating in isolation while experiencing difficulties in accessing finance and affordable workspace (High House Production Park, 2015). Here the proximity of the Southeast to the capital is seen as an opportunity to promote the area as the prime location for accessible workspace enhanced with various support services (or to use DISCE terminology care structures) such as, for example, bespoke business support (Ibid.). The logic behind this argument is that often it is easier/faster to reach some areas in the Southeast than traveling within certain parts of the capital, making South East not only an attractive place to live (for its affordable housing) but also an attractive place to work or base one's business. However, to capitalise on that opportunity, the lack of affordable space needs to be addressed as well as more platforms for cross-sectoral working need to be put in place to interconnect various knowledge-intensive sectors.

Another vital challenge to overcome/address is around the inclusivity (or perhaps exclusivity) of cultural governance in Medway. Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 Consultation Report' found that certain initiatives (namely, the UK City of Culture bid) continue to be exclusively driven by Medway Council and fail to engage with relevant stakeholders. Despite the inclusive approach to the conception of the new cultural strategy, local stakeholders (reported) certain barriers to engage with other council-led projects. For example, they shared that there is a lack of clarity around how to engage with and support the Medway's bid for the UK City of Culture. In this respect the establishment and strengthening of collaborative frameworks such as Creative Medway and The Medway Place Board represent a clear opportunity for the future development of Medway's creative economy. Finally, an important challenge to be addressed is the low engagement in culture among Medway communities, which appears to be lower than regional averages (GJG Consultancy, 2020a, 2020d). While there are many creative practitioners across Medway who deliver engagement work with communities, their work is often project-based and fragmented. Thus, an opportunity to be addressed here is to cultivate a long-term engagement with communities (GJG Consultancy, 2020a).



What opportunities for ‘aesthetic capability’ – opportunities to ‘participate’, to have cultural ‘experiences’, etc. – are identified within the documents and data?

According to the TGI survey data communities across Medway mostly engage with pop/rock concerts, theatre performances including plays, art galleries and comedy shows with 38%, 45%, 26% and 24% survey respondents indicating that they engaged at least once in one of these cultural activities in the past 12 months respectively. Some of the least popular forms of cultural engagement are contemporary dance (8%), opera (9%), ballet (10%), and jazz concerts (10%) (GJG Consultancy, 2020d). As mentioned above, engagement/participation in cultural activities across Medway is lower than the national and Southeast averages (GJG Consultancy, 2020d). Only pop/rock, comedy and cinema consumption compares similarly to the South East (GJG Consultancy, 2020d).

The new cultural strategy intends to turn that around in part by acknowledging/ highlighting that community engagement is not an exclusive responsibility of creative people and organisations, but a collective ambition of various stakeholders including (but not limited to) authorities, educational institutions as well as members of the local community themselves, who need to come forward, voice their needs and be proactive (GJG Consultancy, 2020). This commitment is indeed audible from the inclusive approach Medway Council adopted to devise its current cultural strategy that sought voices and input not only from creative workers but residents more widely.

In addition to the council, another key initiative with respect to developing opportunities for ‘aesthetic capability’ across Medway is Ideas Test (founded in 2012) – one of 30 Creative People and Places (CPP) projects developed by the Arts Council England to enhance engagement in arts and cultural activities in places with least engagement experience. Ideas Test works across both Swale and Medway and mainly focused on working with young people (14-25), families, and older people (55+) with a broad mission to help these people ‘live more creative lives’ (Ideas Test, 2020 p.2).

There are seven overlapping activity strands through which Ideas Test is trying to achieve this mission:

1. Co-Commissioning
2. Youth Leadership and Voice
3. Art in the Everyday
4. Festivals and Outdoors
5. Capacity Building and Legacy
6. Strategic Engagement
7. Evaluation.

Through co-commissioning (1) creative projects Ideas Test has been facilitating residents, creatives, organisations, and businesses to take a proactive role in guiding the creative life in the area as well as to encourage collaboration and unity. There is also a strand of work focused on young people specifically (2), which is not limited to simply exposing youth to arts experiences but is more about providing them with opportunities for various skills development, industry placements and production possibilities both locally and across the UK. Furthermore, Ideas Test seeks to provide more opportunities to engage with creativity on a daily basis (3) supporting various amateur and collaborative project that bring creativity into local places like libraries and shopping centres. These activity strands feed into Ideas Test's work around festivals (4), which seeks to help programme and improve the quality of local festivals. Three final strands of work are about capacity building (5), strategic engagement (6), and evaluation (7) meaning that Ideas Test seeks to promote different kinds of collaboration and learning locally; maintain and improve its relationships with strategic partners such as Kent County Council, Medway Council and Arts Council; and work on improving the ways it evaluates its own impacts.

It is worth noting here that while there are a many creative practitioners and organisations that offer opportunities for cultural engagement, this provision – due to its project-based nature – often appears temporary and fragmented and fails to offer engagement opportunities in a more continuous, uninterrupted, and sustainable manner (GJG Consultancy, 2020a), which represent a clear opportunity for further improvement in this respect.

Who is involved in the creative economy? (What kinds of activities / projects, organizations, and people are understood as being involved in the creative economy?)

Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 predominantly uses the terms 'cultural' and/or 'creative sectors' (GJG Consultancy, 2020a). It also uses the term 'creative ecosystem' when it specifically wishes to convey the interdependence between different parts of the sector. This policy document usefully provides its working definition of culture, which appears to be broad and inclusive incorporating not only cultural infrastructure (i.e. museums, galleries, theatres, libraries, music venues, public art, festivals and events) of the area but also things like 'heritage, food, the night-time economy, creative interventions in the public realm and creative industries' (GJG Consultancy, 2020a p.10). It should be noted that this document treats creative industries as a subset of a wider cultural sector (this is similar to GJG Consultancy, 2020c). Additionally, this document highlights that cultural and creative production is spread across public, private, and non-profit spheres as well as supported by/interacts with sectors beyond cultural including, but not limited to, education, health, and regeneration both locally and elsewhere (connecting Medway to the rest of the UK). The creative economy of Medway is intended to be governed collaboratively through frameworks such as Creative Medway and The Medway Place Board that bring various creative economy stakeholders together to ensure inclusive decision making.



Who is involved in creative economy policymaking? And what processes are in place for developing creative economy policy and data? (This includes how information is generated and shared, and processes of consultation, deliberation and decision making.)

According to the reviewed policy documents 'partnership' or 'consultation' approach seems to have been an important principle behind developing creative economy policy at the local (unitary) authority level as early as 2009. For example, the 'Draft Cultural Strategy 2009-2014' explicitly states that the strategy adopted a 'partnership approach' and sought to coordinate the public, voluntary and private sectors in order to make sure that cultural provides work together to deliver this strategy. The key partners responsible for the strategy at the time were:

- Cultural Partnership
- Medway Council
- Arts Council Southeast
- Southeast England Development Agency (SEEDA)
- Thames Gateway North Kent (TGNK)
- Sport England
- English Heritage
- Higher and Further Education institutions
- Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)
- Kent and Medway Museums Partnership
- Government of the Southeast (GOSE)
- Tourism Southeast
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Sport National Governing Bodies
- Greening the Gateway
- Business organisations
- Kent Architecture Centre

Furthermore, to include the voice of the wider community, this document relies extensively on various feedback surveys from various cultural organisations, feasibility studies and other available data on the composition as well as wants and needs of local communities.

'Medway's Cultural Strategy 2014-2019: Rich Heritage – great future' also seems to imply that consultation was in place during the formation of the cultural strategy for the period of 2014-2019 by stating that: 'the strategy is a culmination of a great partnership effort by those representatives of our cultural life who come together with Medway Council' (Medway Council, 2014 p.1-2). Beyond this statement this document is somewhat ambiguous in terms of specifying how and who was involved. However, members of the Medway Cultural Partnership (at the time comprised of: Artists, Arts Council, Canterbury Christchurch University, Chatham Historic Dockyard, English Heritage, French Hospital, Gillingham Football Club, Icon Theatre, Ideas Test, Kent Architecture Centre, King's Rochester, Medway Council, Nucleus Arts, Rochester Cathedral, Royal Engineers Museum, University for Creative Arts, University of Greenwich, University of Kent) seem to have been involved to some degree.

Despite this commitment to consultation in the previous years, the actual involvement of the local stakeholders (both creative practitioners and audiences) seems to have remained rather limited. In 2020, during a Strategic Consolation exercise with the key (Tier 1 – discussed in more detail below) stakeholders GJG Consultancy (2020c) found that the previous Cultural Strategy (2012-2019) was predominantly led by the council, focused on council's assets and resources, and often failed to delegate ownership and responsibility for the delivery of the strategy on other stakeholders (from Tiers 1,2 and 3). Furthermore, though Community Consolutions (with Tier 3 stakeholders) with wider communities around Medway GJG Consultancy (2020c) also found that there is very limited awareness of the existence of the cultural strategy among the general public, thus indicating its limited involvement into the processes of governance.

Since 2020, processes of consultation within local policymaking have been revaluated and become more pronounced, with recent policy documents produced on behalf of Medway Council (GJG Consultancy, 2020, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c) explicitly foregrounding the practice of consultation in devising the next Cultural Strategy of Medway aiming to include a wide range of stakeholders ranging from local cultural sector to external suppliers to the sector, the education sector, community organisations, residents who engage, residents who don't engage, sponsors and funders, tourists, local businesses, and housing developers.

'Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 Consultation Report' presents the model of consultation behind the new strategy that includes three tiers (Tier 1,2 and 3) of involvement with the strategy process (GJG Consultancy, 2020c). Hence, the resultant strategy was informed not only by key strategic players in the local and regional contexts or members of the Cultural Partnership (Tier 1), but also other people who are actively engaged in cultural production or use creativity for the development of Medway (Tier 2) and people who simply live and work in the area and therefore deserve to be heard (Tier 3). This inclusive model of consultation is very consistent with a broad and incisive definition of culture (discussed previously) put forward by the same authors in the document titled 'Medway Cultural

Strategy 2020-2030' Full Report (GJG Consultancy, 2020a).

In the full report Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 sets out the delivery model of the strategy – the Creative Medway Delivery Model led by Creative Medway that puts local people at the centre. The idea behind this model is that the widest possible range of local stakeholders ('Creative Congress') are not only responsible for informing and developing the strategy but also for delivering it. Creative Congress includes five Theme Working Groups each developing and delivering on different Themes (Connectivity, Shared Ambition, Spaces & Places, Creative People and Community Engagement) around which the strategy is built. What is notable about this model is that it recognises the cost of participation in these working groups and allocates a budget to offset costs of participation and thus encourage engagement in the working groups. At the centre of this delivery model is the 'Creative Medway Compact' (discussed in more details below) – a group that co-ordinates the themes, oversees the delivery of the strategy and advocates for Medway's culture locally but also on the regional and national levels.

Is there any indication of how local / municipal / regional creative economy policy in this location relates to national policy?

Local creative economy policy in Medway today relates to the national policy mainly through the Cultural Compacts programme started by Arts Council and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2019. Joined funding from these two institutions went to support the roll-out of 20 Cultural Compacts across England including one in Medway where it unlocked a £20,000 public grant and at least 30% of match funding from local partners (i.e., Medway Council) to create a Cultural Compact locally (BOP Consulting, 2020).

The Compacts model was first introduced by the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry – an inquiry into the cultural resources of Britain's cities (developed by Art's Council England and Core Cities UK) aimed at developing new models that would facilitate the development of arts and culture in cities. The central conclusion of this enquiry was that in the face of current economic, social, and environmental difficulties cities need new kind of leadership for culture. Hence, it called for a change towards a more strategic governance of culture: the one that goes beyond the traditional support of local authorities, or even collaboration within the sector itself, but incorporates a much wider partnership across different sectors and interests through the establishment of Cultural Compacts. The main purpose of Compacts is to facilitate co-creation and co-delivery of a vision for culture in different cities/places. Each compact is expected to vary according to the place where it is set up. However, each is expected to be defined by the ambition of developing the local cultural sector and facilitating its engagement with other stakeholders such as health agencies, businesses, universities and so on (BOP Consulting, 2020).



In Medway the allocated funding went to support the very first phase of its Cultural Compact's development – consultation and research – for which it gave Medway Council extra capacity/resources to attract external consultancies such as GJG Consultancy, Ruth Melville Research and The Audience Agency for further expertise and strategic advice. In turn this funding yielded the key policy documents (i.e. GJG Consultancy, 2020; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d) that underpin Medway's current cultural strategy.

3.4.2 Creative Business Development & Entrepreneurship

Is there any strategy for creative businesses / entrepreneurship /self-employment for the city? Or is there a business / entrepreneurship development strategy for the city and any specific reference to creative business / entrepreneurship within it?

There is no separate strategy that speaks directly to creative businesses/entrepreneurship/self-employment in Medway specifically even though Medway explicitly positions itself as a location with a diverse and growing business base in high-value technology, engineering, manufacturing as well as other knowledge intensive activities including culture and creativity (GJG Consultancy, 2020a). These terms and topics, however, feature directly and indirectly in various policy documents at different scales with more documents speaking to the issue of creative businesses/entrepreneurship across the wider region of Southeast and as part of Thames Estuary Production Corridor (e.g. High House Production Park, 2015; Hatch Regeneris, 2019, Hatch Regeneris, 2020).

For example, aiming to support all kinds of business and entrepreneurship across Medway the council has pledged to identify additional (edge-of-centre) sites that would provide businesses with needed workspace and facilities, as well as to secure the highest possible broadband speed particularly in concentrated employment zones (Medway Council, N.D.). In fact, Medway aspires to become a smart city – or 'the leading smart city in the south-east' – therefore it is committed to investing into smart technology across many areas/services including transport and health care. At the moment smart city policy for Chatham and Medway remains very limited, but it seems like a more comprehensive strategy – Smart Cities & Open Data Strategy for Medway – is in the pipeline.

Are businesses / entrepreneurship included in policy discussions of the creative economy? If so, how?

As discussed, recent policy documents produced on behalf of Medway Council identify collaboration between different sector actors including businesses and entrepreneurs at different scales. Furthermore, creative businesses in the area get to engage with/influence creative economy policy through the Southeast Creative Economy Network (SECEN), which works to promote growth of the creative economy across South East and does so in partnership with local authorities, education bodies and creative businesses across the area.

Are there any discussions or recommendations for attracting creative businesses / entrepreneurship to the area?

Attracting creative businesses and entrepreneurship is a topic touched upon by several policy documents. Firstly, attracting more businesses (including creative ones) to Medway is one of the key priorities of the council's regeneration plan – Medway 2030 (Medway Council, N.D.). The council is actively working on securing inward investment to attract new (high value) businesses to the area as well as to support local businesses to grow by providing advice, guidance, and various funding and support instruments. So far this has primarily been pursued via investing in hubs for start-ups and small businesses such as Chatham-based Innovation Centre Medway (founded in 2009) or Innovation Studios Medway in Rochester (founded in 2017) that give entrepreneurs space and different kinds of support to grow their businesses. Another similar hub for knowledge-intensive businesses – Innovation Park Medway – is underway.

Secondly, attracting new and supporting 16,000 existing creative production businesses across the Estuary is an important imperative of Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) which actively seeks to enhance the provision of space for creative and cultural production in the area. So far, this programme has unlocked £4.3 millions of public funding (i.e. Cultural Development Fund aka Creative Estuary), a significant part of which went to enhancing the provision of space (e.g. the Docking Station) for various creative and cultural production activities as well as enhancing the capacity of local businesses through various training opportunities (e.g. RE:Generation 2031) (Medway Council, 2020).

Are there any challenges / opportunities in relation to creative businesses / entrepreneurship in general?

Medway 2030 shortlists the lack of modern office space as a challenge in relation to facilitating further business growth across Medway (Medway Council, N.D.). Thus, Medway Council is determined to continue identifying potential sites that could provide the necessary land and facilities for new and existing businesses across Medway.

Another important challenge that emerged from policy literature (at the regional level of the Southeast) is that across all sectors (including the creative sector) there is a shortage of entrepreneurial, leadership, management, and digital skills throughout the SELEP area (SELEP, 2018). Hence, there is a need to strengthen the provision of both technical and professional skills to increase productivity and competitiveness of 19,170 local enterprises that make up IT, Digital and creatives sectors of the SELEP area (SELEP, 2018). 'Skills and Employability Plan for Medway 2035' shares similar observations for Medway more specifically where local businesses voiced their concerns with respect to shortages of management and leadership skills, but also other soft skills like aptitude and work ethic amongst local workforce (Medway Council, 2019).

Growth of creative businesses is seen as a Medway-wide growth opportunity according to different policy documents. For example, 'Skills and employability plan for Medway 2035' (Medway Council, 2019) has shortlisted creative and cultural sector as a priority sector in terms of generating employment across Medway along with health and social care, (advanced) manufacturing and engineering, construction, and IT and digital. This document, however, highlighted a high number of micro businesses and freelancers in this sector as a challenge in this respect (perhaps in terms of needing different approach/support to enter the sector). 'Medway 2030' similarly treats creative and cultural sectors as key sectors for the local growth and positions itself as a thriving 'creative hub' with an ambition to develop into a 'creative city' (Medway Council, N.D.). This resonates with the logic and ambitions that underpin the TEPC programme for the entire estuary area, which recognises Chatham as one of the strategic locations. TEPC sees strong network of existing creative and cultural assets and projects in Chatham as an opportunity to turn the town into a regionally important cultural hub.

The proximity of the entire SELEP area (East Essex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend, and Thurrock) to London is seen as an opportunity with respect to attaching more businesses to the area that are currently based in London, especially ones in finance and creative sectors (SELEP, 2018).

How are creative businesses / entrepreneurship described, imagined, or referenced in these documents?

Businesses/entrepreneurship are discussed in policy documents in various ways, but most frequently – and similarly to the creative industries more widely – in relation to its potential generate regional growth, innovation, and employment. Medway 2030, for example, proposes to support business creation and growth across Medway for the sake of boosting skills, jobs but also innovation across the area (Medway Council, N.D.).

3.4.3 Higher Education & Creative Workers

Is there a creative Higher Education strategy for Chatham? Or is there a Higher Education strategy that includes any specific reference to creative Higher Education within it?

There is no specific creative HE strategy for Chatham or Medway more widely. However, topics around creative HE feature in many other policy documents (Medway Council, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020a; Medway, 2019, NA). For example, HE seems to be a central pillar that supports Medway's regeneration policy, which not only seeks to reimagine Medway as a 'Smart and Sustainable Waterfront University City' (p.24) – around a shared campus at Chatham Maritime – but also aspires to grow high-value businesses and high-quality employment to boost skills, jobs, innovation and economic growth locally. A key priority here is to improve employability in the area to retain graduate talent, which in turn is expected to promote Medway as a 'creative city' (Medway Council, N.D.).

Medway aspires to develop a thriving further and higher education ecosystem. There are (subsidiary) campuses of four major HE institutions within its jurisdiction – the University of Greenwich (Chatham), University of Kent (Chatham), Canterbury Christ Church University (Chatham), and University of the Creative Arts (UCA) (Rochester). Plus, there is a further education college – Mid-Kent College (Gillingham) which trains approximately 3,000 students each year (Medway, 2019). Excluding the University of Greenwich – which does not offer any creative subjects on its Medway Campus – these institutions cover a wide range of creative disciplines including subjects such as journalism, animation, digital and media, craft and production design, performing arts, music and fine art, photography as well as fashion and textiles (Medway Council, N.D.). The aim here is to increase the percentage of students (currently estimated at 12,000) who stay in Medway after they graduate. Further investment into innovation and creative hubs such as Innovation Centre Medway, Innovation Park Medway, or the Docking Station as well as facilitation of dialogue between businesses and HE sector are perceived as key means in this respect. The Docking Station is specifically dedicated to cultural and creative industries that will offer a wide range of facilities and services ranging from exhibition spaces to a start-up/accelerator zone. Greater alignment between education and employers is also recognised as a key requirement to drive up the skills levels across the entire SELEP area (SELEP, 2018).

The importance of more effective ways of fostering/harnessing creative talent in the area is also highlighted within documents that speak to creative economy policy more narrowly (Medway Council, 2014; GJG Consulting, 2020a). For instance, 'Medway's Cultural Strategy 2014-2019: Rich Heritage – great future' identified this issue as a key means of achieving one of its strategic priorities that at the time was to maximise contributions of the creative sector to the economic prosperity of Medway. More recent creative policy documents (from the council) focus less on the economic aspects but instead acknowledge the central role of cultural and creative education organisations within Medway's creative ecosystem for their capacity to support creatives through different stages of their career and life (GJG Consulting, 2020a).

Are HEIs included in policy discussions of the creative economy? If so, how?

'Medway's Cultural Strategy 2014-2019: Rich Heritage – great future' pointed out that Medway has a 'flourishing higher education sector' and highlights it as a 'key contributor to Medway's Cultural Strategy' (Medway Council, 2014 p.14). Indeed, as the review of the policy documents suggests, HE institutions seem to have been actively involved in policy discussions around the creative economy. As discussed, local HE institutions have continuously been included in various consultations behind Medway's cultural strategies since at least 2009. There is also significant recognition across policy documents of the value HE institutions provide to Medway through their capacity in fostering innovation, supporting start-ups and more importantly equipping people with valuable skills.

Are there specific discussions or recommendations for attracting students to the area to study creative subjects?

The review of the policy literature identified few specific discussions/recommendations for attracting students to Medway to study creative subjects. For instance, Medway's current cultural strategy aspires to attract 'young creatives' to Medway through the enhanced provision of education opportunities (both formal and informal) especially with the development of post-16 opportunities (GJG Consultancy, 2020a p.24). Here the focus is no longer exclusively on HE institutions only, but also incorporates primary and secondary education as well as 'informal' types of education. Furthermore, creative curriculum from early years is now seen as an important factor that helps to develop 'home-grown' creative talent by reaching the future workforce well in advance of career choice.

Are there any imagined or predicted challenges / opportunities in relation to students in general?

An important challenge stood out from the reviewed policy documents in relation to students. That is, the numbers of students undertaking creative subjects across Medway are dropping (Medway Council, 2019). Plus, creative subjects are disappearing from the curriculum (Medway Council, 2019). However, it is not clear which subjects specifically (and at what levels of education: primary, secondary, tertiary) have been affected the most. In addition, it was announced during the course of this research project that a key institution – the University of Creative Arts (UCA) – which offers a wide variety of creative courses in the area is due to close its campus in Medway in 2023. This closure is likely to have significant impacts on the numbers of students studying creative subjects in the area and possibly could hinder Medway's aspirations of becoming a 'creative city'.

How are creative / cultural workers described, imagined, or referenced in these documents?

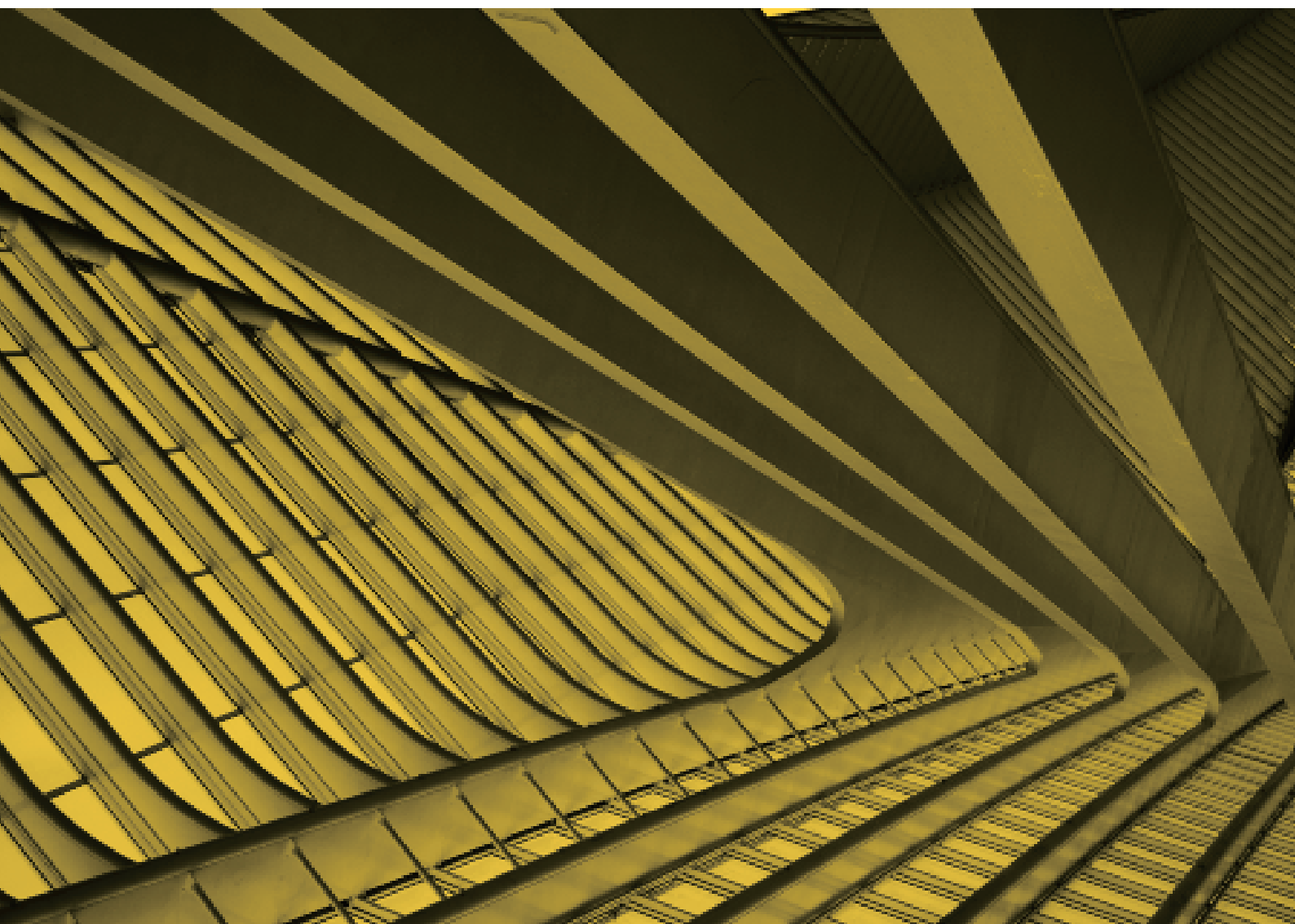
Documents tend to refer to the creative/cultural workers as 'creative people', 'creative/cultural workers, practitioners and/or professionals' or simply 'creatives.' There seems to be a uniform appreciation in the policy literature of the project-based and freelance nature of creative employment and the challenges that surround it. There is also recognition that many creatives either run or are employed by micro businesses. Therefore, many policy documents propose action that would help creative businesses scale up and/or help creatives advance their professional capacity (via provision of skills development opportunities, affordable workspace, and financial support).

Documents around Medway's current cultural strategy (GJG Consultancy, 2020; 2020a) are particularly interesting in terms of how creative/cultural workers are described as they put forward a more nuanced understanding compared to other (and older) documents. Specifically, creative workers are understood as evolving/changing throughout their career. Hence, the understanding that different levels of support are needed for creatives at different stages of not only their career but life in general.

Along with professional or established creatives, ‘grass roots’ creatives (e.g., amateur creatives, emerging artists, graduating students, etc.) are identified and treated as equally important players within a creative ‘ecology’. This understanding has important policy implications in terms of effectively supporting creative people throughout their entire life starting with providing opportunities for young creatives from early years through creative curriculum within formal and informal education.

Do these policy documents include input from the creative/cultural workforce? If so, whose voices are included?

As discussed, the ‘partnership’ or ‘consultation’ approach seems to have been an important principle behind developing creative economy policy at the local (unitary) authority level at least as early as 2009. However, despite this commitment to consultation in the previous years, the actual involvement of the local stakeholders (both creative practitioners and audiences) seems to have remained rather limited until recently when Medway Council started working on its current cultural strategy and the Creative Medway Compact, which put creative workforce at the very centre of policymaking processes.



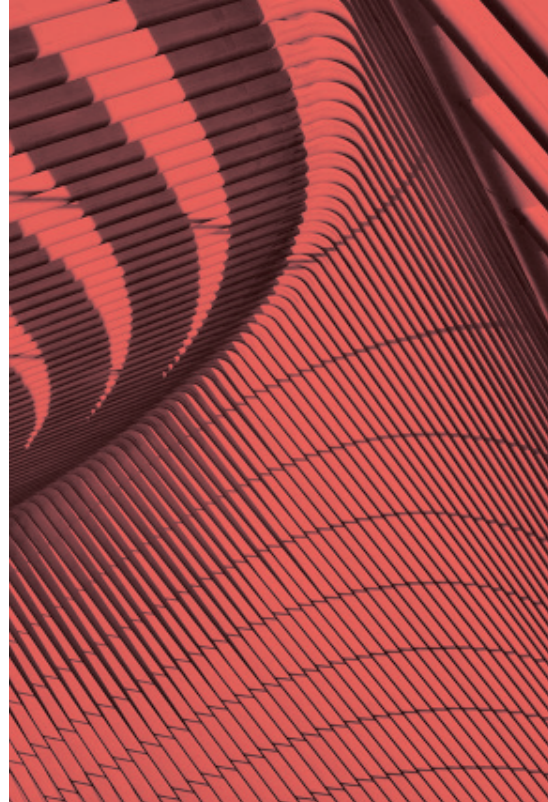
4. Conclusions

4.1 Headline Findings from the Preceding Analysis

The preceding review of existing studies, policy documentation and data provides an important analysis of how creative economy is currently imagined, managed and governed within Medway. This provides a set of key insights that DISCE's research speaks to, as we offer new understandings and possibilities for creative economy in Medway and Chatham more specifically – with our detailed empirical findings, conceptual innovations, and policy recommendations to be published at the end of the project, in 2022.

Our analysis of the existing academic and policy documents related to 'creative economy' in Medway leads to the following conclusions:

- 1.** There is little by way of explicit, direct, and sustained 'creative economy' policy for Medway and no such policy focused on Chatham more specifically. However, there is a range of policy of significance to the creative economy, such as Medway's Cultural Strategy and overarching regeneration, skills, and employability plans.
- 2.** There is little terminological consistency in the existing documentation regarding creative economy and creative economy policy in the city. A wide range of terms is used – in a variety of ways. The specific term 'creative economy' is employed rarely and usually in documents concerned with larger scales (such as TEPC or SELEP). The terms 'cultural and/or creative industries' and 'cultural and/or creative sector(s)' are used more frequently, as well as a number of other related terms.
- 3.** Medway Council has demonstrated a significant shift towards a more inclusive and collaborative approach to creative economy policymaking, one that aims to involve as many stakeholders as possible as demonstrated in the formulation of the new cultural strategy - Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 and the creation of Creative Medway. Despite this shift, there is a continued concern within creative economy-related policy literature (at different levels) on increasing the provision of creative spaces and skills development opportunities for the benefit of existing creative workers and for the purposes of attracting more creative talent from elsewhere.



4. There is a lack of existing research that looks at HE institutions in connection to the wider creative economy of Medway and/or Chatham.

In the context of these conclusions, we look forward to offering a range of new insights on the basis of our fieldwork in Chatham. This will include providing new accounts of the what the ‘creative economy’ in Chatham consists of, what range of ‘value’ it generates (and for whom), and what are challenges and opportunities – beyond those identified above – for developing a distinctively ‘inclusive and sustainable’ creative economy in Chatham and Medway more widely.

4.2 DISCE’s Approach & Next Steps

Our distinctive methodological approach challenges and expands prevailing accounts of creative economy, offering new insights into how creative economies can be supported to develop inclusively and sustainably. Our approach to the creative economy is deliberately very inclusive: involving not only people who work in the ‘creative industries’ and those who do creative jobs outside of the creative industries. We also include people involved in creative activities outside of paid employment. This is integral to our ‘ecological’ framework, in which we emphasise the interconnections and interdependencies between cultural and creative activities of many kinds, including ‘everyday’, amateur and community creativity.

We have therefore been very mindful about how we reach and recruit our research participants: ensuring our recruitment is not constrained by relying on a small number of gatekeepers. In Chatham we have conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with a deliberately wide range of people involved in the creative economy in the city. This diversity of participants in our research will be reflected in the distinctive insights into Chatham’s creative economy to be published in 2022.

To keep up to date with these publications, please sign up to the [DISCE](#) project email list via our project website. Here you can also read reports providing more detail on the distinctiveness of DISCE ecological approach to studying and developing creative economies: for example, in our case study framework (2019) and our initial policy briefing (2020). These and other DISCE publications can be accessed here: <https://disce.eu/publications/>.

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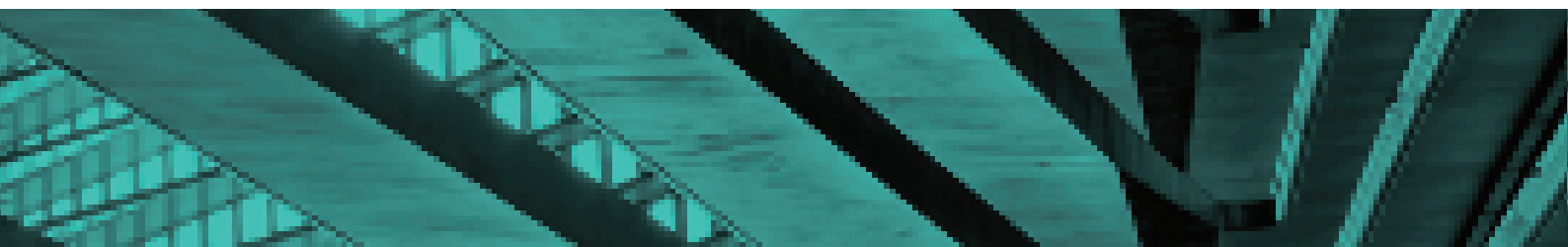
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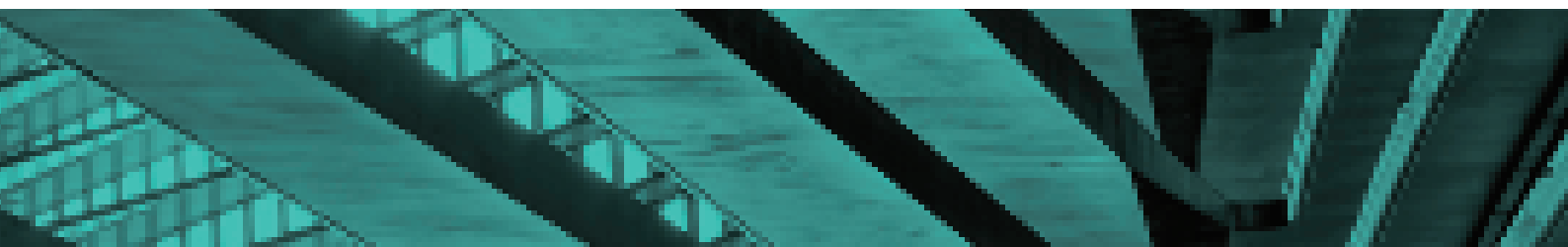
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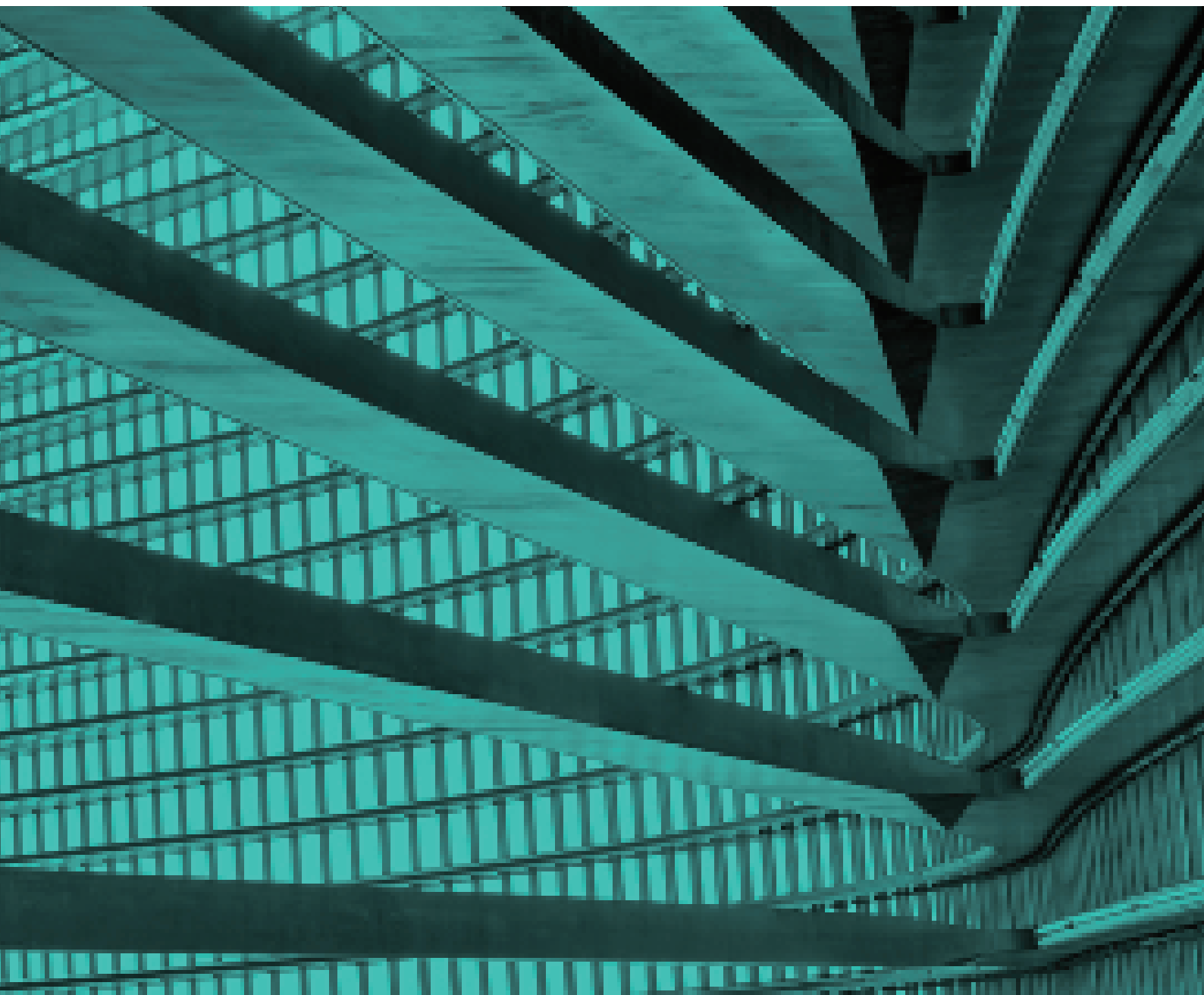


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Appendices

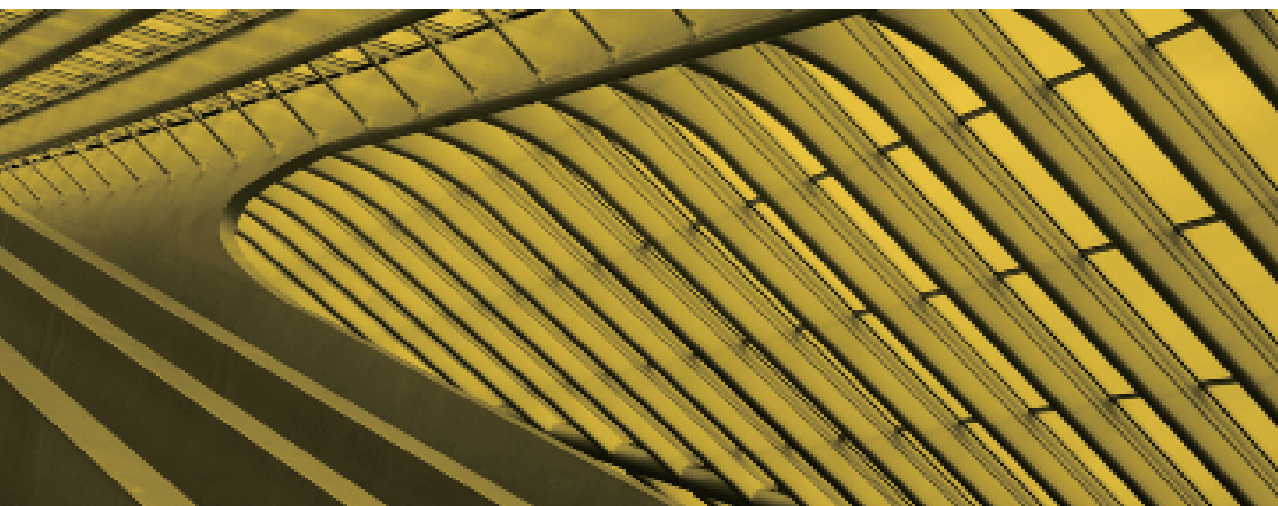
Appendix 1 – List of academic studies: including overview of each paper & use of DISCE key terms

Comunian, R. (2017). Temporary Clusters and Communities of Practice in the Creative Economy: Festivals as Temporary Knowledge Networks. *Space and Culture*, 20(3), 329–343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331216660318>

Comunian, R., & Alexiou, K. (2015). Mapping the Complexity of Creative Practice: Using Cognitive Maps to Follow Creative Ideas and Collaborations. In N. Duxbury, W. F. Garrett-Petts, & D. MacLennan (Eds.), *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry* (1st ed., pp. 276–302). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315743066-14>

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Turok, I. (2009). Limits to the Mega-City Region: Conflicting local and regional needs. *Regional Studies*, 43(6), 845–862. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400903095261>



Publication	What the paper is about	Key arguments	DISCE keywords
Turok (2009)	This study looks at the Thames Gateway initiative through a city region lens and illustrates the contrast between local (secondary cities and towns) and regional agendas (the core city) of city-region thinking.	Pursuing narrow regional objectives such as the supply of new housing may lead to unsuitable development locally (within secondary cities of the city region). The paper calls for more sensitivity towards local circumstances (of secondary cities) to ensure more sustainable planning and development.	Sustainability: environmental sustainability; sustainable communities; sustainable regeneration policies that are inclusive
Comunian and Alexiou (2015)	The study adopts complexity perspective and analyses creative performances of seven performing artists who participated in FUSE festival 2011 in Medway. It seeks to capture and explain some of the systemic connections and dynamics behind festivals and projects within festivals.	Festivals can be approached as interconnected complex systems that are also open to external environments. It found that a network of human and non-human elements (discussed under the headings of people, places, external factors, and audiences) influence the ability of artists to deliver their projects overtime.	Sustainability: (economically) sustainable artistic practice Ecology: the ecology of creative projects; festivals and artistic projects are seen as complex systems hence as ecologies. Exclusion and Inclusion: complicated funding processes/experiences may lead to exclusion of new partners Cultural participation: participation/involvement of community has a strong impact on the success of cultural/creative festival projects. Creatives/Creative practitioners Network: networks of creative practitioners/projects; ecology
Comunian (2017)	Using the case study of FUSE festival in Medway, this study explores the role of art festival as platforms for knowledge and network development in the CCLs. Instead of measuring the impact of festivals on local economy or communities, this paper distinctively aims to understand the impact of festivals on partaking artists.	The role of the FUSE festival 2011 is explored in supporting various types of artists and creative companies. Findings suggest that festivals facilitate professional learning and network development. The paper also find that place can be a strong determinant in the strength of ties facilitated by local festivals as local festivals such as FUSE tend to build stronger relationship with local artists and thus be more inclusive and supportive towards them in comparison to visiting/touring artists.	Network: Knowledge networks, temporary knowledge communities, temporary clusters; community of practice Trust: trust between creatives is developed over time and leads to stronger relationships (communality) Creatives/cultural and creative practitioners/artists Creative economy CCLs: DCMS definition Ecology: the festival's ecosystem; ecosystem of support

Pleasant (2019)	This PhD thesis explores the effects of deindustrialisation – caused by the closure of the dockyard – on working-class people in Chatham namely their work identities and communities.	It is argued that deindustrialisation in Chatham has led to the devaluation of working-class communities, identity, and culture locally.	Exclusion and Inclusion: homophobia and exclusion of the feminine by working class masculinity
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Appendix 2 – List of policy documents (with bibliographical details), plus commentary on data gathering

BOP Consulting. (2020). Review of the Cultural Compact Initiative: Final Report. Retrieved from https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/201102_Compacts_Report_031220_0.pdf

GJG Consultancy. (2020). Medway Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 Interim Consultation.

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Greater London Authority (GLA). (2017). Thames Estuary Production Corridor: An Industrial Vision to Create a World-Class Location for the Creative Industries. Retrieved from https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/tepc_vision_2017.pdf

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- Medway Council. (2020b). Regeneration, Culture and Environment – Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Briefing note – No.05/20.
- SECEN. (2016). South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN): Terms of Reference. Retrieved from <https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2019/09/SECEN-terms-of-reference.pdf>

SELEP. (2018). South East LEP Skills Strategy 2018-2023: An employer led partnership approach to skills for flourishing, inclusive economy. Retrieved from <https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2018/09/SELEP-Skills-Strategy-v14-0818-WEB.pdf>

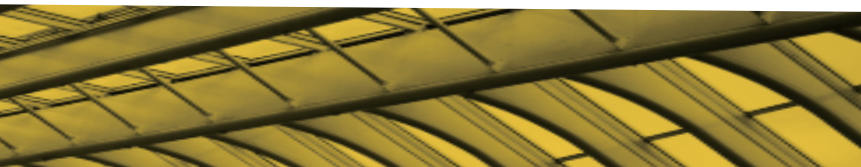
Commentary on data gathering

DISCE researchers conducted a web-based search, including webpages of the Medway Council, Kent County Council, Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership, etc.

Appendix 3 – Use of Terms Related to ‘creative economy’ in Existing Policy Documentation

1) Policy documents use the following terms when speaking about topics related to “creative economy”:

- Cultural, tourism and creative industries (Medway Council, 2014)
- Creative, tourism and leisure industries (Medway Council, 2014)
- Creative and tourism sectors (Medway Council, 2014)
- Creative sector (Medway Council, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020a; High House Production Park, 2015)
- Creative industries (Medway Council, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020; High House Production Park, 2015; Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Culture sector (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Cultural sector (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Cultural and creative sectors (GJG Consultancy, 2020a; Hatch Regeneris, 2020)
- Arts and cultural sector (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Arts and culture (Medway Council, 2009, GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Creative activities (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Cultural events (Medway Council, 2009; 2014)
- Cultural activities (Medway Council, 2009; 2014)
- Sustainable music ecology (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Outdoor art sector (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Creative ecology (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Creative industries sector (Medway Council, 2009, GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Cultural ecosystem (GJG Consultancy, 2020a; GJG Consultancy, 2020d)



- Creative goods and services (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Cultural services (Medway Council, 2009)
- Cultural and creative production (GJG Consultancy, 2020a; Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Night-time economy (Medway Council, 2009, GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Culture and creative industries (Medway Council, 2009)
- Culture and leisure (Medway Council, 2009)
- Creative, cultural and heritage initiatives (Medway Council, 2020b)
- Creative sector (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Creative economy (High House Production Park, 2015)
- The digital and creative industry (High House Production Park, 2015; Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Cluster of cultural and creative production (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Creative and cultural industries (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Creative and cultural economy (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Creative and cultural production activity(-ies) (Hatch Regeneris, 2019, 2020)
- Ecosystem of creative and cultural activity and infrastructure (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Creative and cultural production (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Creative and cultural ecosystem (Hatch Regeneris, 2020)

2) Term “inclusive” is used in the following ways but not always in the contexts of “creative economy”:

- Inclusive approach (GJG Consultancy, 2020, 2020a)
- Inclusion and access for all (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Inclusion, equality of access and participation (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Inclusive growth (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Increasing levels of engagement and inclusion (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Social inclusion (Medway Council, 2014)



3) Term “sustainable” appears in the following ways but not always in a connection with the “creative economy” (sometimes used when addressing climate, ecology and environmental issues):

- Sustainable Economy (Medway Council, 2014)
- Culture’s sustainability (GJG Consultancy, 2020, 2020a)
- Green agenda (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Diverse and sustainable partnerships (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Environmental sustainability of actions (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Environmental sustainability across the creative production sector (Hatch Rege-
neris, 2020)
- Environmental responsibility (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Innovative creative approaches to sustainability (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Sustainable music ecology (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Sustainable business models (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Sustainable and environmentally responsible strategy (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Financial sustainability (GJG Consultancy, 2020b)
- Sustainable cultural use (Medway Council, 2009) for heritage sites
- Sustainable tourism (Medway Council, 2009)
- Self-sustaining, creative and cultural infrastructure (High House Production Park,
2015; Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Sustainable freelance careers (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Sustainable opportunities for creative sector (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Sustainable growth (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Sustainable provision of space for creative and cultural production (Hatch Rege-
neris, 2020)

4) When speaking of people and institutions that are or might be participating in the creative economy, the following concepts are used:

- Creative talent (Medway Council, 2009, 2014)
- Volunteers (Medway Council, 2014)
- Creative enterprises (Medway Council, 2009, 2014)
- Cultural providers (Medway Council, 2009, 2014)
- Creative Entrepreneurs (Medway Council, 2014)
- Creative people and organisations (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Grass roots (amateur voluntary arts organisations, emerging individual artists, semi-commercial music venues to graduating students) (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Artists and arts organisations (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Creative community (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Micro-firms, non-profit organisations and creative professionals (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Large public and private cultural institutions and businesses (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Different public, private and non-profit organisations, and individuals engaged in cultural and creative production (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Artists, makers, storytellers and cultural influences (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Cultural players (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Creatives (Medway Council, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020a; Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Creatives, artists and entrepreneurs (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Cultural organisations (GJG Consultancy, 2020a; GJG Consultancy, 2020d)
- Creative organisations (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Cultural and educational organisations (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)

- Home-grown and new-to-Medway talent (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Creative practitioners (Medway Council, 2009; GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Creative businesses (Medway Council, 2009; High House Production Park, 2015; Greater London Authority, 2017; Hatch Regeneris, 2019)
- Freelancers and microbusinesses (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Artists and creative professionals (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Creative workers (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Creative workforce (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Creative and cultural talent (Hatch Regeneris, 2020)

5) Terms related to “creative education” appear in the following ways:

- Creative curriculum (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Creative, higher and further education (Medway Council, 2009)
- Cultural education High House Production Park, 2015)

6) Terms used in connection with “technology and innovation” appeared in the following forms:

- Creativity and innovation (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Innovation to accelerate growth (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Innovation and growth (High House Production Park, 2015)
- Entrepreneurial innovation (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Creative and innovative thinking (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)

7) Other terms used in the context of “creative economy” or could be associated with this term include the following:

- Cultural offer (Medway Council, 2009, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Culture and leisure activities (Medway Council, 2014)
- Cultural participation (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Creative workspace (Medway Council, 2014; GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Grassroots culture (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Cultural assets (GJG consultancy, 2020a)
- Cultural infrastructure (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Creative and cultural infrastructure (Hatch Regeneris, 2020)
- Cultural life (GJG Consultancy, 2020a)
- Artistic studios, rehearsal spaces and workshops (GJG Consultancy, 2020)
- Cultural hub (GJG Consultancy, 2020b)
- Creative hub (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Creative clusters (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Knowledge economy (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Future industry (Greater London Authority, 2017)
- Creative and cultural production hubs and assets (Hatch Regeneris, 2019, 2020)
- Culture and creativity (Hatch Regeneris, 2019)

