



SPECIFICATION FOR BOSCOMBE CULTURAL EVENTS PROGRAMME

DESTINATION AND CULTURE DIRECTORATE

DN637823

Author:	Michael Spender/ Martha Covell
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1. Historical and cultural context

1.1 The Cultural challenges facing BCP conurbation are listed in the BCP Cultural Enquiry (Tom Fleming Report) and include:

- Geographical realities and challenges - a poly-centric conurbation which loses 50% of its hinterland capacity to the sea, traffic congestion and low density sprawl;
- A cultural productivity gap, with a relatively low number of spaces and places for cultural production;
- Talent retention - It is not sufficiently 'sticky' to give local cultural producers and creatives confidence they can build a career in the conurbation;
- The 'Invisible city' – a particularly complex place to develop and deliver culture due to its polycentric nature, disproportional importance of neighbourhoods rather than a single city centre and unique demographic profile with a large very old and very young population.
- Young people and diversity undervalued - surveys show that young people want more opportunities to watch live music and performances, more festivals, more international food, stronger nightlife and improvements in safety and transportation.
- Tourism for tomorrow - tourism is not credited as being a progressive force in the conurbations contemporary cultural life;
- A Whole Place Approach- there are too many 'cold-spots' and areas which lack cultural amenity in the conurbation.

1.2 Boscombe High Street was largely built up in the Victorian era, is a high density mixed use neighbourhood of predominantly three storey terraced buildings of various ages and styles.

1.3 Key landmark buildings include the Royal Arcade and the O2 Academy (originally named the Grand Pavilion Theatre – a substantial Grade 2 listed theatre of significant heritage value). The architectural heritage of these buildings creates an opportunity for investment and attracting in more businesses and visitors. It is a Unique Selling Point of Boscombe, yet their tatty appearance and low usage detracts from this.

1.4 The Royal Arcade is now mostly vacant as the offer is outdated. However, its heritage character and covered precinct offers an opportunity for renewal and reuse for food, shopping, and entertainment uses, which is the subject of another Towns Fund project.

1.5 The O2 Academy, is one of the best medium-scale gig and night club venues in the South, operating about 15 evenings a month, with artists such as Rag'n'Bone Man, Kasabian, Example and the Libertines featuring in the current programme. The O2 Academy has a

substantive footprint at the heart of the Towns Fund programme area, as well as a substantive cultural programme. However, it operates in isolation to the town centre and other venues on Boscombe High Street, which also include:

- BEAF (Bournemouth Emerging Arts Festival) which occupies a large former department store and hosts music, arts and entertainments events a few times a year;
- Various events put on by the Coastal BID throughout the year;
- Chaplin's and Cellar Bar- live music venue open a number of evenings a week hosting small live bands and acts;
- The Black Cherry Comedy Club, Restaurant and Bar - a new venue in a former betting shop.

- 1.6 There is an opportunity for the Cultural Events Programme to bring these organisations together and to create a cultural destination in Boscombe.
- 1.7 This project is focused on the pedestrianised core of Boscombe town centre, known as Boscombe High Street. It was pedestrianised in the 1970s and another challenge is the length of the pedestrianised area and its impenetrable nature, the latter of which will be addressed by the implementation of Phase 1 of the masterplan.
- 1.8 The low quality of the public realm on Boscombe High Street (the precinct) is a challenge, namely this is a fairly wide carriageway with a few trees and a collection of paving, seating, bins and planters some left over from the 1970's which are dated. However, this is also a distinct opportunity as it is wide enough to accommodate the street market and fairly large-scale events.
- 1.9 In 2020 the vacancy rate of the retail units on the High Street (including those in the Sovereign Centre) was 22.6% (Coastal BID survey) while there was a 24% decrease in footfall on the High Street between 2014-2016 (Boscombe Retail Study, fsp 2016). Since then, visual inspections indicate occupancy rates on the High Street have improved and four new shops have opened (a Polish supermarket, a skateboard shop, a small coffee shop and pharmacy). However, the quality of the retail offer on the High Street remains poor in places and undiversified. Vacancy rates at the western end of the High Street remain high with several premises remaining vacant. We are to start monitoring the footfall on the High Street as part of the Towns Fund project and up to date baseline information will be collected for 2022.
- 1.10 Anecdotal information indicates that footfall on the High Street in 2021/2022 has returned to similar levels to those before the covid-19 pandemic and has even increased in summer months, offering a real opportunity for renewal and investment at this time, with potentially

more local people using the High Street than before. This is supported by a car park survey undertaken in 2021.

- 1.11 The overall Towns Fund represents a considerable opportunity that will be used to unlock ambitious regeneration plans for this disadvantaged neighbourhood. There is major investment potential around enhancing the cultural offer and building on the numerous creative businesses in the area, creating improvements to public realm, along with the creation of office and community spaces that will help to provide significant new opportunities for local people. These transformational plans will set a new ambition for the area, ensuring Boscombe is in a position to not simply survive, but positively thrive for the foreseeable future.
- 1.12 There has been some investment by BEAF, Black Cherry Comedy Club, O2 Academy and Chaplins Cellar Bar in cultural events in recent years. However, this has been un-coordinated. With the exception of BEAF, it does not specifically target local artists, or provide a year-round, accessible offer. Neither is it focused on the public realm. Other investment in Culture has been targeted at the main centres of Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole.
- 1.13 The Bournemouth Towns Fund programme includes important capital programme enhancements which will make Boscombe a better place to live, work and visit. The programme is well engaged with the Boscombe community, one that is noted for a local community of creative industries and practitioners, but one which is generally deprived in its opportunities for cultural participation and activity.
- 1.14 If the culture of Boscombe were to be described it might be characterised as based in community, diverse, sometimes edgy, cash poor, street, pop-up.
- 1.15 A strong, sustainable Cultural Events Programme throughout the Towns Fund programme will address cultural deprivation and bring enhanced economic activity and jobs to Boscombe, supporting the local retail and hospitality sectors, driving, for example, a more developed night-time economy.
- 1.16 As part of the national Academy Music Group, the O2 does not play a proactive role in the local cultural ecology or engage with programming. There may however be opportunities for the organizers of the Cultural Events Programme to exploit creative links with the O2 programme to add value to its own offering and help support retail and hospitality businesses by increasing the dwell time locally of those attending gigs.
- 1.17 The programme will provide an important opportunity for the community to engage with and enjoy the major development and opportunities that the regeneration of Boscombe will afford. The programme will enable a legacy to be fully established and for sustainable, self-funded programme of events to continue.

- 1.18 A Cultural Events Programme will be the “glue” that unites the creative and other communities and groups with the Towns Fund capital programme. It will give a voice and a role in the programme for diverse and under-represented arts and community groups, enabling real ownership and sense of identity and place at the heart of the Towns Fund programme. Without this there is a risk that some groups could feel marginalised and excluded from the “expensive” capital outputs of the programme.
- 1.19 As is well documented, cultural activity has a great ability to contribute to placemaking, health and wellbeing. The proposed contribution to this programme will reap benefits in these areas far outreaching the level of financial intervention through the Towns Fund, and with additional funding from external sources the potential for significant added value is immense.
- 1.20 A Cultural Events Programme will assist geophysical connectivity in the area, in a way that the capital programme will not be able to stretch to, as well as helping connect existing cultural and community landmarks, from the town centre to the seafront. Obvious examples of programming that would help achieve this are parades, carnivals, and fixed and managed busking pitches.
- 1.21 The programme should be a framework that celebrates and helps bring together the many diverse cultural activities already being delivered by individuals, groups and organisations based in or operating in Boscombe. A number of these will benefit from development and training opportunities provided or enabled by the Events Programme, as well as benefitting from production, administration, technical, procurement and marketing support from a central resource. Additionally strategic new programming should be brought into the overall package to ensure an exciting, balanced, attractive and diverse overall programme which represents all communities and groups in Boscombe.
- 1.22 Coalescing around and featuring existing key activities, such as the prominent BEAF festival and, if possible, O2 Academy gigs, a rhythmic series of events will bring out the best of Boscombe at key times of the year (such as school holidays and half-terms, bank holidays, pre-Christmas and Christmas). This frequency of events will be essential to support the local day and night-time economy. Activity will bring visitors to Boscombe and residents into town. Half-day and day-long events will increase dwell time, encouraging people to use the hospitality and retail offer more extensively. This is a similar pattern to activities that the Coastal BID currently support in Boscombe High Street.
- 1.23 The Cultural Events Programme will have a positive impact on the retail, hospitality, and tourist economy of Boscombe, and will benefit jobs in the wider economy, as well as the creative sector. The economic impact on the local economy will significantly multiply the grant investment.

2. Bournemouth Town Investment Plan

- 2.1 BCP Council has been awarded £21.7 million of Towns Funding towards ten projects contained in the Bournemouth Town Investment Plan, subject to the satisfactory completion of detailed business cases by May 2022.
- 2.2 The Cultural Events programme project forms an integral part of the Town Investment Plan, linked to a number of projects, critically, the masterplan, the High Street project and the Royal Arcade project, as well as other projects being delivered by stakeholders in the area. The events Programme will be focused around the pedestrianised precinct on Christchurch Road in the centre of Boscombe.
- 2.3 The vision of the Bournemouth Town Investment Plan is: 'By 2030 Boscombe-Bournemouth will be well connected, diverse, healthy and safe. Building on the areas arts and creative sector as well as our built seaside heritage, there will be more jobs for a wider variety of sectors. The community will have greater access to good quality jobs, training, leisure activities and homes'.
- 2.4 Boscombe continues to be an area of entrenched deprivation under the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019, despite long standing multi-agency regeneration efforts. The impact of the coronavirus and the decline of secondary commercial areas has further added to the issues affecting Boscombe.

3. The Cultural Events Programme

- 3.1 A strong, sustainable Cultural Events Programme will address cultural deprivation and bring enhanced economic activity and jobs to Boscombe, supporting the local retail and hospitality sectors, driving, for example, a more developed night-time economy.
- 3.2 The Events project will help deliver some of the objectives of the Towns Fund. One objective of the Towns Fund included in Paragraph 1.23 of the Towns Fund Prospectus (2019) states: 'Perception of place is an important 'pull' factor in business location decisions and can affect a place's capacity to attract and retain workers. Many towns already have a strong heritage and sense of place, and benefit from their cultural and civic assets'.
- 3.3 The main challenges facing the Bournemouth city region are summarised within [BCP Council's Corporate Strategy](#) (February 2020) and relate to:
 - Sustainable Communities
 - Dynamic Places
 - Connected Communities
 - Brighter Futures
 - Fulfilled Lives

- 3.4 The Cultural Events Programme for Boscombe will be delivered in partnership with programmes being delivered by various stakeholders in the area, including Bournemouth Emerging Arts Fringe Festival (BEAF) The Coastal BID and the BCP Cultural Compact. The BCP Cultural Compact, a multi-sector independent body, supported by the Council and Arts Council England (ACE), which has been established to support the cultural ecology of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, and deliver on the recommendations of the 2019 Cultural Enquiry report – notably the talent development and retention and festivals strands.
- 3.5 A contractor or consortium of contractors is sought to be producer/curator and deliver the Boscombe Cultural Events Programme for the period February 2023 to March 2026. This is a three-year programme, allocated as (Yr 1) February 2023 - March 2024, (Yr 2) April 2024 - March 2025, (Yr 3) April 2025 - March 2026, but it is expected that the first period February 2023 - March 2024 will be spent piloting programming and seeking match funding.
- 3.6 The successful contractor's fee payable for the five-year programme will be £98,000 in total. In addition, BCP Council will provide £30,000 by value in kind support work, principally through support of events by its Events team and the Towns Fund Programme Management Team.
- 3.7 The successful contractor(s) is anticipated to seek additional grant and other funding to support the programme. To deliver an impactful and inclusive programme it will be desirable for this match funding to be significant in scale if possible. The Towns Fund award and council in kind funding will provide match funding for grant applications.
- 3.8 The successful contractor(s) will work collaboratively and inclusively with the Boscombe community and cultural organisations and individual creatives to ensure that the entire local creative community has opportunities to participate and/or benefit from the programme. The five-year programme will enable a legacy to be fully established and for sustainable programming to continue.
- 3.9 The programme will be overseen and monitored by Bournemouth Towns Fund Programme Management Team and BCP Council's Destination and Culture Service Directorate, which has experience of managing similar sized events in Poole and Bournemouth.

4. Scope of works

- 4.1 The contractor(s) will be required to work with at least 10 local artists to either deliver or advise on the programme and this is to be captured under the output 'Number of local artists engaged in Cultural Events Programme activities each year'.

- 4.2 The contractor(s) will be required to hold workshops every year with members of the public in order to inform the content of the programme for that year and engage local residents and businesses. It could also inspire a new generation of local artists to stay in the area.
- 4.3 The events programme will benefit all the shops and businesses on the high street and increase footfall, primarily on the days when events take place.
- 4.4 A street arts/busking strategy will support all local artists and musicians and provide a complementary programme, enriching the public offer, facilitating wider engagement and the sense of Boscombe, and in particular the High Street/Precinct being a cool, open place where good things happen spontaneously.
- 4.5 If viable, a meanwhile-use pop-up scheme for artists could be developed with local owners of empty shopping units, in conjunction with the High Street project.
- 4.6 One of the great benefits of an annual, consistent cultural activity programme is the opportunity it affords for macro and granular research, consultation, engagement, and evaluation of social, economic and cultural trends. This data can provide rich insight into the benefits of activity and identity with a place, and powerful learnings which can drive change, development, and investment.
- 4.7 A programme, coinciding with the development and delivery phase of the wider Towns Fund programme will be essential to ensure that it fully engages with and is informed by cultural activity during this phase.
- 4.8 When the programme is concluded it is essential that the Cultural Events Programme does not wither on the vine and is sustainable. A Legacy Plan should be agreed by 2025/26.
- 4.9 Early investment in tech and infrastructure, and development of cost-effective practices and partnerships with local creatives and groups will be essential to ensuring the sustainability of the legacy programme. Continued, enhanced cultural activity in Boscombe will be a key measure of the success or failure of the overall Towns Fund Programme.
- 4.10 The programme needs rhythm and focus to ensure high impact with the resources available. It will be concentrated on the town centre and High Street/Precinct and has the opportunity to connect this long stretch of High Street. For example, annual carnivals and parades are an excellent means of connecting places, people and communities.
- 4.11 The programme will be sensitive and appropriate to Boscombe and nurture a sense of place.
- 4.12 The contractor(s) will provide an annual report of events and activities, with clear and comprehensive details of outputs, outcomes, numbers of participants and income and expenditure account for review and evaluation by the council.

- 4.13 The contractor(s) will prepare an annual proposed programme of activities, outputs and outcomes, with a clear income and expenditure budget, for agreement with the council, which retains the right to reasonably amend or veto proposed activities.

5. Key elements of the Towns Fund Cultural Events Programme

- 5.1 A high profile and high impact, carefully curated, year-round events programme focused on the pedestrianised precinct on Christchurch Road, Boscombe;

- A four-year programme, with at least four events a year, coinciding with the development and delivery phase of the wider Towns Fund Programme;
- Potential for an annual carnival or parade;
- Involvement of numerous local artists and organisations;
- A street arts/ busking strategy to add to the organised Events programme;
- A viable meanwhile-use pop-up scheme for vacant premises, for artists and Creative industries running alongside the High Street project;
- A Legacy Plan to be prepared and agreed by 2025/6.

- 5.1.1 Achievement of the following outputs, in accordance with the Business Case approved by the Bournemouth Towns Fund team and DLUHC to be reported on a six monthly basis to the Towns Fund Programme Management Team:

Output	Target
£ spent directly on project delivery	98000
£ co-funding spent on project delivery (private and public)*	30000
£ co-funding committed (private and public)*	30000
# of temporary FT jobs supported during project implementation*	10
# of enterprises receiving grants	1
# of enterprises receiving non-financial support	10
Number of visitors to arts, culture and heritage events and venues	10000
Number of local artists engaged in Cultural Events Programme activities each year	10
Number of workshop participants each year	40
Number of new arts commissions	17
Number of programmed event days (Total)	17
Legacy Plan for the programme agreed by 2025/6	1

6. Requirements of the Contractor(s)

- 6.1 Whether an individual applicant or a consortium of two or more organisations or individuals, the lead applicant must be a legal entity in the form of a charity, community interest company, limited company, partnership or similar.
- 6.2 The successful contractor(s) will have an excellent track record of designing, producing and delivering outstanding cultural events and other activities with beneficial outcomes for individuals and communities, and positive impact on urban environments, ideally but not necessarily for public sector clients.
- 6.3 The successful contractor(s) – or at least one partner in a consortium - will have excellent local knowledge and experience of Boscombe and its community and be plugged in to local cultural networks and ideally have experience of delivering cultural events and activities in the area.
- 6.4 An ability to provide the council with clear and comprehensive annual reports describing the annual events and activities, numbers of participants, income and expenditure and proposals for the ensuing year's programme, for agreement.

7. Performance Management

- 7.1 The contractor(s) will provide an annual report of events and activities, with clear and comprehensive details of outputs, outcomes, numbers of participants and income and expenditure account for review and evaluation by the council.
- 7.2 The contractor(s) will prepare an annual proposed programme of activities, outputs and outcomes, with a clear income and expenditure budget, for agreement with the council, which retains the right to reasonably amend or veto proposed activities.
- 7.3 The contractor(s) are requested to respond to all requests from the council by email within 48 hours.
- 7.4 If the contractor(s) is unable to deliver the specified number of events and outputs for budgetary reasons they will at the earliest opportunity contact BCP Council to discuss the programme and finances so that a mutually agreed approach to future activity and financing can be arrived at.

8. Payments

- 8.1 The supplier will be paid on presentation of invoices in arrears on a quarterly basis.
- 8.2 The supplier will be required to submit electronic invoices.

9. Standards

- 9.1 The appointed contractor(s) shall perform the service with a high standard of skill, care and diligence as practiced by professional persons and consulting firms performing services of a similar nature. In addition, and having due regard to the client's commitment to provide high quality services which give value for money, the appointed consultant shall give particular attention to and is required to achieve a high standard of quality in every aspect of the contractual service.
- 9.2 The contractor(s) may engage whatever combination of professional creatives and volunteers that is appropriate to deliver high quality work and events. However all volunteers and professional creatives must be treated with due respect and care in all matters and professional creatives must be reimbursed at Arts Council England agreed rates of pay for work undertaken.

10. Contract management

- 10.1 It is anticipated that contract management meetings will be required at the commencement of the contract and at subsequent points in the work programme as advised by BCP Council, at the beginning of each of the contracted years.

11. Termination

- 11.1 The contract between BCP Council and the contractor(s) can be terminated by either party at any stage during the contract period by giving no less than 12 weeks notice in writing to the other party.
- 11.2 BCP Council will require all information and data held in connection with this work to only be held for 7 years, after which time it should all be deleted and disposed of confidentially.