



Report to the Partnership for South Hampshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 07 March 2024
Report of: Charles Freeman
Culture, Creative Industries and Built Environment Lead
Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH)
Subject: SUPPORT FOR CREATIVE NETWORK SOUTH

SUMMARY

Creative Network South (CNS), which has been supported by PfSH since 2015 provides an important forum for local organisations, with an interest in the development of the creative economy, to exchange views, influence key decision makers and take forward activities and workshops to support the sector.

Over the past year the network has:

- supported the development of the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)
- commissioned a feasibility study in Partnership with Solent LEP, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and Fareham Borough Council which explores the opportunity to establish a screen agency to serve the area.
- supported local universities to re-establish a creative industries research network.

The Government has announced that a number of functions previously delivered by the LEPs should be transferred to upper tier local authorities. Work is progressing within Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight to determine the future provision of economic development support activity.

It is proposed that CNS be supported by PfSH in 2024/25 in order to provide continuity to the creative sector.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

- a) NOTES the contents of this report;
- b) NOTES that the Joint Committee will be asked to AGREE that the Partnership for South Hampshire continues to support Creative Network South in financial year 2024/25, by allocating a budget of £15k to fund the work of the network and its coordination; and
- c) CONSIDER any comments to be passed on to the Joint Committee for its consideration.

PLEASE NOTE this report is a draft version of the PfSH Joint Committee report and is subject to change before being considered by the PfSH Joint Committee. The final report will be published ahead of the PfSH Joint Committee.

Background

1. The PfSH culture, creative industries and built environment workstream includes work to develop the creative economy which is delivered by CNS. Work to promote design in the built environment is delivered by the Quality Place Practitioners Group made up of design officers working within the planning departments of partner authorities.
2. CNS has been hosted by Hampshire Chamber of Commerce since 2015. The network chairman is Ross McNally, chief executive of Hampshire Chamber of Commerce. The work of the network is coordinated by Charles Freeman. Core funding for the network of £15 000 is provided by PfSH.
3. CNS meets four times a year. The network members include:
 - creative businesses – businesses ranging from IBM to individual freelancers which have, at times, engaged with the network.
 - sector support bodies – such as [Artswork](#) which has delivered employability programmes on behalf of CNS and [Aspace Arts](#) which helped establish a studio providers network. CNS is currently working with Portsmouth Creates, The Island Collection and Southampton Forward on a project to develop the screen sector.
 - PfSH partner local authorities, universities, colleges of further education, and arts venues.
4. The Quality Place Design Practitioners Group (QPDPG) - meets periodically to share good practice in relation to place making and design in the built environment. Work in the past has included the publication of PfSH design guidance and the delivery of the Solent Quality Place Awards.

Activities over the last year

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

5. CNS has supported Hampshire Chamber of Commerce in embedding the interests of the creative sector within the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). CNS also supported Hampshire Chamber of Commerce to embed the interests of the creative sector within the EM3 LSIP.
6. The LSIP identified four key issues for the creative industry to address:
 - A lack of awareness of career pathways in the creative sector.
 - A need to establish a brokerage service to support learners in the creative sector access placements and/or freelance opportunities whilst still learning.
 - To establish more inclusive and diverse pathways to employment in the sector, particularly focusing on the needs of individuals brought up in areas identified by the index of multiple deprivation as being deprived, minority groups and people with disabilities and/or neurodivergent traits.

- To develop more flexible continued professional development opportunities within the sector including bite sized modular flexible badged training opportunities.
7. Hampshire Chamber of Commerce intends to use CNS as their conduit for engaging the sector, driving the implementation of the LSIP within the creative sector over the next two years.

Development of the Screen Sector in the South Hampshire area

8. The screen sector including film, television, games and visual effects (VFX) is predicted to experience strong growth across the UK in the coming decade.
9. Over the past year CNS has worked closely with the Southern Policy Centre, Solent University, and Making Waves Festival to build support for the development of the screen sector in the central south.
10. In 2022 the Southern Policy Centre published a report, "[Growing South Hampshire's Film Economy](#)". It described proceedings at a workshop sponsored by CNS at Fareham College.
11. In response to this report Dr Roy Hanney of Solent University and Ajay Parekh, a local freelance producer, prepared a prospectus supporting the development of the sector ([Unleashing the Economic Potential](#))
12. This work was discussed at a second film workshop held in September 2023. After the workshop it was agreed that a feasibility study investigating the possibility of establishing a screen agency should be supported. Jo Nolan of Screen South has been commissioned to complete this work, which is being jointly funded by CNS, Solent LEP, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and Fareham Borough Council. The feasibility study is due to be completed in March 2024. The total budget for the study is £10k made up of contributions from the above funding partners.

The Development of a Creative Industries Research Network to serve the Solent and South Hampshire area.

13. In its early days, CNS supported a research network made up of academics from local universities. This network supported the development of CNS creative industries declaration in 2018, however, during the Covid period the network was unable to meet. CNS is now working with Solent University and The University of Southampton to re-establish the network.
14. On 19 January 2024 a symposium will be hosted at Solent University bringing together scholars, practitioners, policymakers and strategists in the creative and cultural sector to explore how a 'Networks of Practice' approach can enhance our understanding of the economic, social, and cultural value that the sector provides. Through an exploration of practical case studies, the event will delve into themes of sustainability, inclusivity, and economic vitality in post-pandemic landscapes. In

addition to local speakers, colleagues from Kings College, University of Birmingham and University of Groningen will attend the event with sector leaders to form an expert panel.

The Quality Place Practitioner Group.

15. The Quality Place Practitioner Group continues to meet to review good practice in relation to place making and design in the built environment. Regrettably, the group propose to postpone the Solent Quality Place Awards 2024 due to lack of capacity to promote, manage and deliver the event.

Future Working

16. In 2022 the Partnership for South Hampshire commissioned the Southern Policy Centre (SPC) to run a series of conversations exploring future partnership arrangements in support of the creative industries. (see [Culture and Creative Industries in the Central South](#))

17. SPC identified a strong desire amongst partner organisations for continued collective working and partners identified three key priorities for future work:

- the contribution culture and the creative industries makes to economic development, skills, and employment
- the contribution that culture, and the creative industries make to placemaking
- the contribution of culture and creativity, make to health and wellbeing.

18. Discussions subsequently took place to consider how future cultural and creative sector partnership working should be embedded within the policy partnership infrastructure serving the area. Solent LEP identified a cultural workstream and was successful in gaining funding for a cultural audit. Connections were also made with Business South in how to support the sector. However, in March 2023 the Government confirmed that LEPs will not receive future central government funding. Therefore, the long-term structure for supporting economic development in the area is still evolving. It is proposed that the current working arrangements with Partnership for South Hampshire supporting CNS should continue for a further year whilst the new arrangements evolve.

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Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: None

Enquiries: For further information on this report please contact:

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