

From Preston's Cultural Framework Board:



# SOMETHING'S ✦ BREWING ✦

PRESTON'S 12 YEAR CULTURAL STRATEGY

An Introduction To Our Cultural Priorities For Preston

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**PRESTON:  
A CULTURAL  
CITY**





Preston is a vibrant city, which celebrates its diversity and its long-standing cultural traditions. It is a city that is not afraid to avoid conformity, and which persistently tests and innovates. From some of the oldest Caribbean Carnival and South Asian Mela events in the UK, to its gathering of over 30,000 people each Easter to roll their eggs down a hill, to the much-lauded Preston Model and its leading role in the industrial revolution, the city has pioneered and supported a different view of culture and regeneration and is a place of genuine innovation.

Preston's range of cultural institutions, network of independent artists and creative industries throughout the city are committed to a renewed proposition for culture. There is an authentic understanding of socially engaged arts practice through organisations like Alison on the Brookfield estate. The establishment of The Birley artist studios, a hub of nearly 30 artists, the Society 1 co-working space and the ambition of the Harris Museum, all in the heart of the city shows its commitment to ensuring there is space for local artists and creative industries in the city centre. Make North and others have brought high quality tuition, facilities and engagement to communities outside the city centre.

The presence of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in the city centre brings with it 38,000 students, of which 4,000 study in the Faculty of Culture and Creative Industries. UCLan's Media Factory and Creative Innovation Zone houses state of the art new technologies and has been connecting students to live projects in industry, bringing mutual creative benefit to both. In Certain Places, a curatorial partnership based at UCLan has, since 2003, worked with artists to question, test, disrupt and shape places in the city and has developed a national and international reputation for this work.

Preston also has an active community arts sector and a music scene which hosts not only mainstream but also underground music and artforms. It has an appetite for performance art and fringe theatre, hosting community hubs and key voluntary agencies such as Caritas community centre and Integrate, a Disability charity, both of which support arts and cultural activity in the city.



The Guild is a significant cultural event in Preston dating back to 1179 and taking place every 20 years to celebrate the establishment of a Guild Merchant by Henry II and the renewal of the town's royal charter. Since 2015 Lancashire Encounter has sought to build an exciting annual event, which brings together all of the city and the county's finest arts and culture, hosting this beside national and international performances. Encounter highlights the Guild heritage whilst also framing Preston as the home of English Procession.

With this backdrop Preston is well placed to approach its post-covid recovery in the city with creative innovation, building on ongoing collaborative practice. Evidence of the city's desire for a different approach includes its commitment to be the first council to trial Universal Basic Income in 2021.



The Brewtime Collective, a self-organised network of independent creative and cultural practitioners, has begun to pilot the concept of Prestoning, a term that celebrates the city's uniqueness, its generosity of spirit, desire for risk-taking and pioneering, and its grounded but ambitious approach to culture. Prestoning highlights the ability of this city to harmoniously bring together cultural events across its many communities and mixed art forms. This strategy will also champion the Preston Model and approaches to community wealth building and seek to understand how these may be applied to a Preston Cultural Model.



# CONTEXT & JOURNEY



In 2014 Preston City Council brought together a Cultural Framework Board, to establish Preston as a major centre for culture in the North West, to drive cultural ambitions and to commission a Cultural Framework for the sector. This will lead its activity and direction through to the next Guild in 2032.

The independent sector, the board and the council collectively decided to boldly and collaboratively develop this framework for the city, heralding the voices of Preston's artists, creatives and arts organisations. This galvanising process resulted in the establishment of The Brewtime Collective, a driving force behind this document.

Led by Curious Minds, a process of consensus workshops was initiated in which all aspects of the city's creative and cultural actors were invited to consider and question the city's needs, barriers and desires with regard to a vibrant and forward-looking Cultural Framework.

Alongside this process Blaze, an organisation that supports the next generation of creative producers, consulted young people (12-24) on their vision for the cultural future of Preston. The Brewtime Collective also commissioned a sector mapping report, which contained recommendations regarding the development of the Cultural Framework. These documents are drawn together here to give an overview of the priorities discovered through this democratic process. Consideration has also been given to Arts Council England's new strategy Let's Create, Preston's new City Investment Plan and 'Remade', the Cultural Investment Strategy for Lancashire as key documents that surround these priorities.

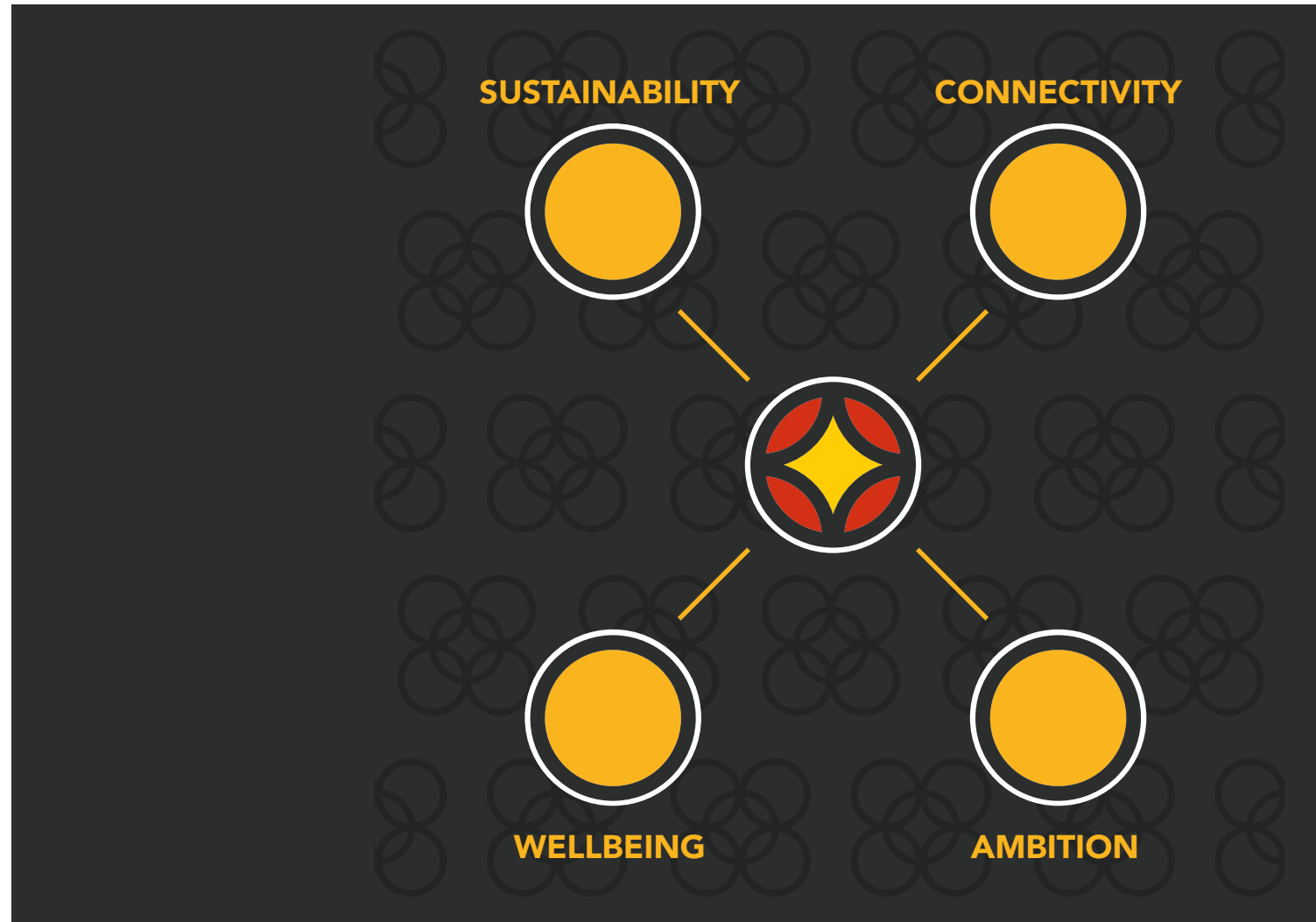


# PRIORITIES FOR PRESTON

Across the consensus workshops, the Blaze report and the Brewtime mapping report there is a comprehensive range of priorities which reveal the breadth of the sector, its shared ambitions and its awareness of the world in which it presently dwells. 117 artists engaged with these consensus workshops and attendees are listed in Appendix A.



*The shapes and forms in the logo are inspired by recurring architectural elements found throughout the city: squares, circles & diamonds. The four outer circles represent the four priorities of the cultural strategy; sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing & ambition. The area where the shapes meet is circled, representing the coming together of people & ideas to form the strategy. The central diamond shape is the result of all these things working together, creating a 'new' Preston, looking forward to The Guild celebration in 2032.*





# SUSTAINABILITY

Preston needs a cultural sector; which understands the ecological restrictions of working in a sustainable way and addresses the needs of our shared response to the climate emergency; a sector which builds on its successful engagement

with all aspects of Preston's diverse communities; a sector which seeks sustainable and developing funding streams and income, and a sector which ultimately invests in the next generation of artists, creatives and producers.



## A SUSTAINABLE SECTOR WILL...

01. Raise the confidence and profile of Preston's wonderful cultural sector and facilitate stronger collaboration between artists, communities and organisations. In doing so it will attract the attention of larger national funders who presently overlook the city and deliver increased income.
02. Highlight the aspirations of all young people for who culture includes gaming, influencers, fashion and self-generated content.
03. Create opportunities for young people and support the artists and art forms of tomorrow.
04. Focus on skills development and graduate retention worthy of a University City.
05. Support the pipeline of cultural careers, not only for those who can access academic study.
06. Invest in and support the development of existing organisations and creatives as well as new and emerging creatives.
07. Encourage strong cultural leadership, which understands and continues to accentuate diversity, celebrating a diverse range of voices within, and without, the sector.
08. Increase funding and resources to facilitate a place for creative risk taking.
09. Ensure recognition of the time and talent of artists through fair pay.
10. Consider creative responses to the needs for innovation in terms of transport, energy and food sourcing.





# CONNECTIVITY

In both digital and physical terms Preston's cultural sector needs places to connect, to meet, to share, to collaborate and to promote its innovative, diverse and ambitious creative practice.



## A CONNECTED SECTOR WILL...

- 01. Seek and unlock fit for purpose physical spaces for cultural activity in the city.
- 02. Build trust, understanding and skill sharing between creatives, organisations and cultural stakeholders such as City Council, Arts Council etc.
- 03. Develop strong partnerships which connect policy makers to independent artists and all aspects of the sector in between, not only in a financial sense, but through skills exchange and collaboratively attracting other funding.
- 04. Utilise the new Preston Cultural Framework Board as a vehicle to lead change and development in the city and connect independent creatives and institutions together, working collaboratively, to realise the city's ambition.
- 05. Provide efficient, shared online space to promote events and to reveal the critical mass of activity, which happens in Preston, all in one place.
- 06. Connect to the strong community arts sector, understanding and identifying community values that bring cultures together to form a multicultural society.
- 07. Support grass roots cultural activity in the city through strong independent artist networks.
- 08. Facilitate ownership of shared space and understand the feasibility of long-term cultural venues in the city centre.
- 09. Connect people, skills, knowledge and events in order to create a harmonious, collaborative and enjoyable city
- 10. Provide a coordinated voice beyond the city connecting Preston to other major events throughout the county and beyond.
- 11. Investigate and develop the concept of 'Prestoning', becoming the centre of a creative 'Magnetic North' and the narrative of a 'City of Firsts'.







## WELLBEING

A strong framework should support and contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of Preston's residents as, demographically, some of England's most deprived communities, including the artists and creatives who are the working hands of this cultural

scene. This priority will grow partnerships and develop work with local communities in the everyday, not only in one-off annual events, intersecting alongside health partners, the voluntary sector, businesses, education and other sectors.

## A SECTOR WHICH PRIORITISES WELLBEING WILL...

01. Acknowledge and address the prevalence of mental health issues amongst our populous, but particularly amongst young people.

02. Seek out a range of diverse role models that fit Preston in the 21st Century and resonate across all communities.

03. Show genuine care for artists by ensuring work is properly resourced in terms of time and finance.

04. Acknowledge and celebrate the green spaces accessible from Preston's city centre and use these as cultural venues.

05. Ensure that the contribution of voluntary groups and individuals to the fabric of Preston's arts and cultural life is recognised and respected when celebrating the arts sector.

06. Use the cultural scene to bring together socio-economic groups, ages, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientation and deaf and disabled people, ensuring a shared narrative and authentic access to the arts sector.

07. Seek funding and partnerships that build on and bolster Preston's expertise in socially engaged practice, social prescribing and community arts.





# AMBITION

In 2032, our city will support ambition. We will nurture artists from young to old and organisations from small to large, to flourish and create innovative, risk

taking, edgy, subversive work. We will become a city of inspiring firsts. We want our city's ethos of ambition to permeate the culture and creativity in ALL aspects of the city



## AN AMBITIOUS SECTOR WILL...

01. Prize the arts and culture of our diverse communities which will be recognised as part of the whole British culture scene and will be integral and embedded not only at singular or separate events.

02. Ensure that recruitment to workforce and structures is diverse and includes under-represented groups to help arts and cultural activity flourish. This includes a broad section of appointments e.g. libraries, museums, events management and representation at senior Board level decision making.

03. Welcome experimentation and risk-taking.

04. Invest in place making, leisure activities and cultural employment, which makes Preston a healthy, vibrant and enjoyable place to live and work.

05. Take a leadership role in redefining what arts and culture means and the role it can play in all aspects of our lives and articulate this at a national level.



# APPENDIX A

Here is a list of attendees and participants for the consensus workshops, each having a role or providing input for the development of the cultural framework strategy and its priorities.



Arts Council England  
Rebecca Atherton  
Shirley Bailey  
Charlotte Berry  
Colin Binns  
Blaze  
Blog Preston  
Blue Moose Dance  
Des Butler  
Debs Bradshaw  
Anthea Carpenter Procter  
Rebecca Chesney  
Roberta Cialfi  
Joshua Cobbin  
Garry Cook  
Joanne Cook  
Mick Cracknell  
Creative Lancashire  
Creativity Works Preston  
Maya Danne  
Deafway  
Derelict  
Disability Equality North West

Events Live Ltd  
FS Creative  
Steve Fairclough  
Robin Fanner  
Fired 4 U  
Bob Fletcher  
Stephanie Fletcher  
Kim Graham  
Siobhan Haley  
Hawk Dance Theatre  
Heritage Fund  
Lubaina Himid  
Charlie Holt  
I Love Alison  
Initiate Theatre  
Jackie Jones  
Jazz In The Park  
KTB Music  
Susie Knowles  
Konstruct Consulting  
Lancashire County Council  
Lancashire Encounter  
Lady G Life

Rhys Leeds  
Alan Livesey  
Katharine Lonsdale  
The Love & Etiquette Foundation  
Emma Lowther-Wright  
Brett Lund  
Hilary Maddiss  
Make North  
Alan Marley  
Flora Martyr  
Julie Mayer  
More Music  
Rob Mullender  
Jon Nisbett  
Jamie O'Connor  
Alex O'Toole  
One Voice Community Choir  
Anthony Padgett  
Norman Payne  
Poppycock Theatre  
Pam Potter  
Preston Black History Group  
Preston City Council

Preston City Mela  
Preston Jazz & Improvisation Festival  
Preston Windrush Generation  
Preston Youth Theatre  
Neil Procter  
Sheridan Rawlings  
Gavin Renshaw  
Benedict Rutherford  
Salsa Northwest  
Melony Saunders  
Daniel Squires  
Denise Swanson  
Theatre Moth  
They Eat Culture  
University Of Central Lancashire  
Ann Vanner  
Bernie Velvick  
Lauren Velvick  
Well Arty  
Shiryn Wynter



# ABOUT SOMETHING'S BREWING

Something's Brewing is the working title for Preston's 12-year cultural strategy for the City.

The strategy is being driven and shaped by the Preston creative community, with the support of the Cultural Framework Board.

For more information about Something's Brewing, or to express an interest in getting involved email: Rita Whitlock on [r.whitlock@preston.gov.uk](mailto:r.whitlock@preston.gov.uk).

Preston's Cultural Framework Board was set up to oversee and support the delivery of the City's Cultural Framework. It brings together strategic cultural partners from across the city with practicing artists. The membership of the Cultural Framework Board is made up of representatives from:

**Preston City Council (PCC)**

**Lancashire County Council (LCC)**

**University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)**

**Marketing Lancashire**

**Lancashire Encounter**

**Creative Lancashire**

**The Harris Museum and Art Gallery**

**Places for People**





Something's Brewing. 2021.