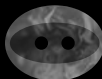


# Culture is our plan

Bradford District  
2021 – 2031





# **The cultural strategy for Bradford District 2021 – 2031**

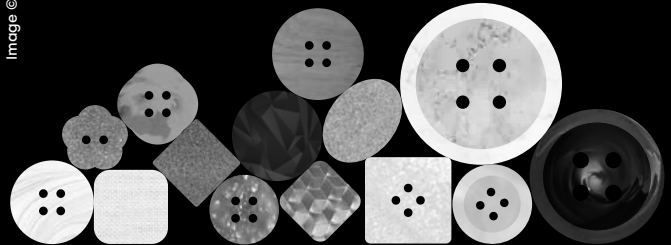
Something exciting is happening in Bradford District. We are experiencing a cultural renaissance and facing the future with new-found confidence and hope.

Culture is important in everyone's lives. It can make a sustainable contribution to the prosperity and happiness of everyone in the District and it is vital as we recover from COVID-19 and strive to level up with the rest of the UK.

For the full plan visit  
[cultureisourplan.co.uk](http://cultureisourplan.co.uk)



Image ©Tim Smith



We are the fifth biggest local authority in England and, while we are proud of our many famous cultural attractions, we don't have the range of cultural activity a place this size demands.

We have historically underperformed in attracting national investment and our existing arts, culture and heritage organisations lack the power to engage all our diverse communities.

But, with the support of our national partners and the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, we have a huge opportunity to mobilise our creative communities to drive our recovery. We can become an incubator for creativity, a globally renowned place with a diverse cultural workforce brimming with innovative ideas. We can attract more artists and help people realise their creative visions.

And we have a set of conditions that make us uniquely placed to succeed:

1. We're the youngest place in Europe — More than 30% of the District's population are currently under the age of 20. Young entrepreneurial populations create the technologies, businesses and jobs of the future and stimulate wider economic growth.



Image ©Nigel Hillier

**8 out of 10  
people rated  
culture as  
important  
to them**

Culture and Me Survey 2020





# 94% said culture makes Bradford District a better place to live

Culture and Me Survey 2020



2. We are cosmopolitan — Bradford is the diverse face of modern Britain. By 2025 more than half our population will have South Asian, Eastern European, African, Caribbean or Arab heritage amongst many others. Diverse teams are more successful, and we are determined to harness the power of our diversity.

3. We have an acclaimed cultural scene — From The Alhambra to The Brick Box, from Mind the Gap to Kala Sangam, from Cliffe Castle to Impressions Gallery, from Saltaire industrial village to the world's first City of Film, we have an extraordinary base to build from. 54% of our visitor economy is already triggered by culture.

4. We have a powerful culture of entrepreneurship — Self-employment here has grown by 23% in ten years and in 2017 Barclays bank named us the best place in the country to start up a business. Our creative sector is collegiate and has shown itself incredibly resilient in the face of COVID-19.

5. We have famous landscapes and many beautiful historic buildings — Our mills and hills make for extraordinary locations for cultural activity. Compared to other parts of the country, property prices are very affordable.



6. We are at the heart of the north — We are the core of the Northern Powerhouse. We were central to the relocation of Channel 4 to Leeds and our diverse young population is an asset for any business addressing younger, global audiences, particularly in film, TV and digital media.

7. The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council is bucking national trends and investing in our independent arts, culture and heritage sector, convinced of the value it adds. This has already inspired major new national investments by National Lottery Heritage Fund in St George's Hall and the former Odeon Cinema which will become Bradford Live in 2022. Meanwhile, Arts Council England has supported our communities and young talent in the Creative People and Places and Bradford Producing Hub programmes.



Image ©Tim Smith

**88% said  
it improves  
their  
wellbeing**



Culture and Me Survey 2020

**Susan Hinchcliffe, leader of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and chair of the Bradford Cultural Place Partnership**

"I am delighted to see the fruition of Culture Is Our Plan, which has been made with the people of our District over a two-year period. The plan doesn't pretend to have all the answers. But it offers a ten-year vision, ten ambitions and ten targets to help us on a journey of culture-led recovery and regeneration.

Every two years there will be a gathering of our growing cultural sector. It will be made up not only of artists, curators, designers, box-office assistants and conservators, but also of those key workers who are the bedrock of our communities – doctors, transport workers, hairdressers, factory workers; in fact anyone and everyone for whom culture is a part of life.

At these cultural events we will share our progress and reset our targets to create the next edition of the plan. We will reaffirm our collective belief in the power of creativity to benefit the lives of everyone in the District. So, pencil May 2023 in your diary.

Halfway along our journey we aim to become the UK City of Culture 2025. Winning this designation would put rocket fuel in our tank and accelerate our journey to a better future. But whether we win that accolade or not, Culture Is Our Plan will stand, and will be our guide to a better, more creative, inclusive and successful Bradford District for everyone."



**Now is exactly the moment, as we emerge from COVID-19, to unlock Bradford's untapped creative potential**

Image ©Bradford 2025



# Our vision



Image ©Bradford Art Party



Image ©Rachel Shaw

**Bradford will offer a new definition of art, culture and heritage that reimagines our District as a place that is knowingly different and radically alternative.**

**A place to realise new ideas, where creativity is celebrated in every home and on every street corner and where we will prove the positive impact of culture in everyone's lives.**



**By 2031 we want to see:**

**→ People living better and happier lives, having better mental health, skills and jobs**

**→ Our District as a destination of choice for people to experience exceptional cultural activity and for artists to create exceptional work**

**→ A thriving, diverse and sustainable cultural and creative sector playing a leading role in the growing economic success of the District**

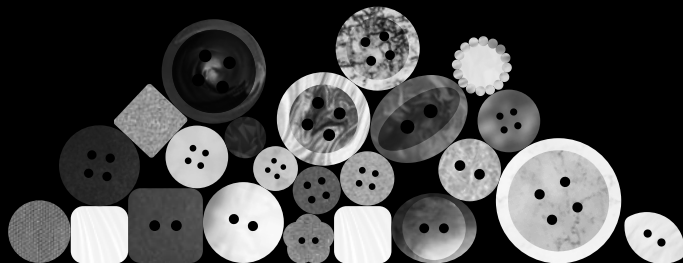
Image ©Nigel Hillier



## **Our ambitions**



We have ten ambitions for ten years to help us realise our vision. Find out more at [cultureisourplan.co.uk](http://cultureisourplan.co.uk)



# Having fun



We will build a calendar of exceptional festivals and events, celebrations and one-off moments across the District – from the hyperlocal to the global. We will show that Bradford is open for business, building capacity, giving permissions, unlocking spaces and encouraging innovators. We will make the District a great place to live and a host of choice for national and international cultural events and partnerships.

Image ©Karol Wyszynski



## Case Study

### **Bradford Eid Festival Mohammed Atique Organiser**

*Held at Moor Park, the Bradford Eid Festival is the largest annual event of its kind in the north.*

The Eid Festival is a family event organised, set up and delivered from start to finish by volunteers. The aim is quite simple: it's to bring the community together. We use the Islamic religious festival of Eid as an excuse, first, because British Muslims need an avenue to celebrate Eid, and second, because it gives us a reason to bring people from other faiths and cultures together to celebrate the Muslim faith and culture.

We've been going since 2014, starting off as a small community event and growing naturally over the years. At its peak, we had 30,000 people attend over the weekend. The event is free and we try to get as many people from underprivileged backgrounds as we can to come and enjoy the day. You can bring your family and have ample fun, learning about different cultures and different people. You can bring your own picnic, lay it out on the grass where there's live entertainment as the kids run around, without it costing a penny. Like all things British, however, it's weather dependent.



Image @Bradford Eid Festival





**The aim is quite simple: it's to bring the community together.**



Image ©Bradford Eid Festival



The festival captures the ambition of 'having fun'. There are activities the entire family can get involved in. We have performances of qawwali and nasheed, the Islamic devotional music. We have a bazaar that consists of over 50 stalls set up by people from Bradford and across the country. There is a food court catering in produce from India and Pakistan, with the exception of burgers. We have chaat, curry, biryani, fast food, chai and falooda stalls. We also have the largest fun fair in the region.

In the next ten years, our ambition is for the festival to continue to grow, to expand the programme and to encourage more people to attend. Instead of being a weekend, the Eid Festival could be a whole week of celebrations.







# Creativity thrives in every corner of the District

From Shipley to Little Germany, Manningham to Keighley, and Buttershaw to Ilkley, we will celebrate the creative people in every street. Our culture will happen in our homes, our mills, hills, streets, markets, moors, community centres, libraries and parks as well as in our cultural venues.



## Case Study

**Bloomin' Buds**  
**Katie Mahon**  
**Founder & Artistic**  
**Director**



Image ©Bloomin' Buds

*Bloomin' Buds Theatre Company creates professional verbatim theatre exploring working-class narratives.*

When the first lockdown was announced on 23 March 2020, I was pregnant. I started shielding on 16 March, so we stopped all of our sessions. Instead, we tried to take creativity to the homes of people we would usually work with to make it accessible to everyone.

We had lots of arts and crafts materials, so I decided to give them out to children whose parents were struggling financially to entertain them all day long. We distributed just over 2,000 arts-and-crafts packs in Bradford in April 2020. With Arts Council England funding, we also created an online exhibition called Working-Class Voices in Lockdown in which 11 working-class artists produced content on our social media.





**Now is our chance  
to reach out to those  
people and take  
creativity to them  
in a way that is  
accessible.**



Image ©Bloomin' Buds



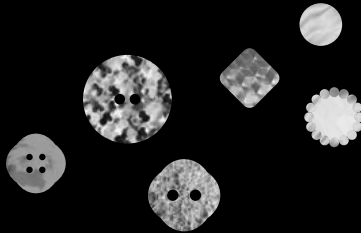
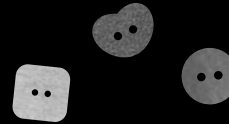
A lot of people from disadvantaged backgrounds are already resourceful and creative. They have to be to survive. They don't often have the opportunity to channel that in an artistic way. If you've got a family and you can't pay bills, you can't feed your children, you're worried about losing your job, or someone in the house is suffering from poor mental health, going to a theatre is going to be the last thing on your to-do list. If there were the right kind of support to channel the creativity, resourcefulness and initiative a lot of working-class people have to have, they could do great things.

For creativity in Bradford to thrive in every corner, there needs to be more outreach work done in local communities about what's already going on. Now is our chance to reach out to those people and take creativity to them in a way that is accessible. That is what Bloomin' Buds is doing.



Working with families, schools, careers service, universities and colleges, we will create a critical mass of coordinated training and employment pathways for young people. We will champion creative careers, evidencing their viability, to mobilise a whole generation of young, talented, digitally native people and ensure they take the lead in shaping the future success of the District.

## Creating an explosion of opportunity





## Case Study

### Peaceophobia/Speakers' Corner Sajidah Shabir Mariyah Kayat

*Speakers' Corner is a social collective co-run by women and young girls in Bradford to bring people together and create positive action.*

**MK** I've been part of Speakers' Corner since 2017. I'm an apprentice producer with Common Wealth Theatre, so it's almost full circle for me working where I used to volunteer.

Speakers' Corner helped me grow as a person. I spoke at panel discussions and in front of crowds at a young age about personal topics like my mental health, self-care, body image, and body positivity. I'm also an assistant producer for a Common Wealth play called Peaceophobia, a story about three Muslim men and their cars. Seeing a play grow from start to finish from when Peaceophobia was a Speakers' Corner campaign about Islamophobia in 2018 has been amazing.

We have Speakers' Corner, this amazing platform that allows young people to share creatively. But where else can people do that?



Image ©Jack King



Image ©Aina Khan



**As a young teenager and as a south Asian woman from Bradford, spaces like Speakers' Corner nurture your creativity and identity, they're really important.**

Image @Karol Wyszynski



**SS** I'd heard about Speakers' Corner from my friends who were taking part in WOW Bradford in 2018. During my A-levels, I felt really uninspired. Just hearing them talk about going after school one day a week to this cool place where they could be creative and put on events inspired me to go and see what it was about.

When I was at Speakers' Corner, I remember saying to one of the producers, 'Ever since I was a little girl, I loved watching Bollywood movies. I want to recreate them, bring them to Bradford and share our beautiful culture.' She said, 'You could get an apprenticeship in directing!' Then Common Wealth Theatre opened up this post for assistant producer. So, I applied, and I got it.

I'm working on a bunch of things. I had the amazing opportunity to co-produce a photography project with Mariyah called Sisterhood which showcased and celebrated the beautiful talent and the uniqueness of Bradford's young women. As part of International Women's Month in March 2021, it appeared in Lister Park and on billboards in Bradford.

As a young teenager and as a south Asian woman from Bradford, spaces like Speakers' Corner nurture your creativity and identity, they're really important. These spaces allow you to be free.

# Bradford will know itself better

We will share the District's history and the diversity of our cultural heritage with pride. Our culture will speak honestly and openly, won't tolerate racism or discrimination and will have difficult conversations when needed – giving confidence to our communities, celebrating difference, bringing people together, boosting pride and promoting mental and physical wellbeing.



Image ©Bradford Museums and Galleries



Image ©Laura Ashworth



## Case Study

### **Above the Noise** **Jo Quinton-Tulloch** **Director**

*Above the Noise was an exhibition at the National Science and Media Museum of 15 stories from Bradford, showing how using media technologies, communities can bypass the narratives of the mainstream media.*

When we started talking to people to explore what Above the Noise would be about, we kept hearing a narrative about 'bad news Bradford'. Whenever national media chose to report about Bradford, it was more often than not from a negative perspective. We worked with that to find a way of giving people agency.

Over 100 people worked with us to tell their stories about the impact of image and sound technologies on their lives. We displayed some fabulous intergenerational stories; we showcased the Belle Vue Studio and the story of the Bradford 12. We also looked at how people have used technology to tell their own histories and cultures. We shared Bradford stories, but these are also universal stories. We showcased Bradford as a truly cosmopolitan city.







**The museum is a place where we tell stories all the time, we give a platform to them.**



Above the Noise, which ran March–June 2019, was part of a three-year action research project at a significant moment for the National Science and Media Museum. The project enabled us to reflect on our work and ask some really tough questions. It highlighted the tensions that exist within complex organisations, where different priorities and practices exist, and the challenges we face in seeking to work locally and collaboratively. It also helped us explore the work that is needed to address inequalities and become a more inclusive and accessible museum, both for people who visit and for people who work here.

The museum is a place where we tell stories all the time and we want to tell stories that are relevant to more people and showcase their histories. We recognise the power involved in that. That's one way the museum can help Bradford know itself better.

While we welcome about 450,000 visitors a year, there are still people in Bradford who haven't been to a museum. One of my ambitions is that every single person in Bradford regularly engages in the arts and culture – that it becomes an integral part of their lives.



Image ©Science and Media Museum



**Live life  
better**

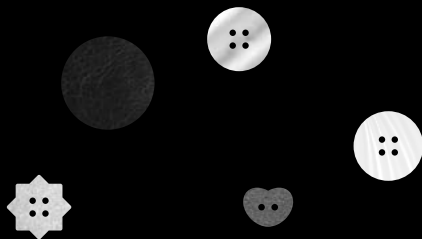


Image ©Tim Smith

Our arts, culture and heritage will become part of the District's City of Research. We will use the unique data from Born in Bradford and our partnership with Bradford Institute for Health Research to prove the positive benefit of art, culture and heritage on everyone's lives.





## Case Study

**Through Our Lens**  
**Harry Berry**  
**Morgan Foord**  
**Hamza Saraj**  
**Tia Weighman**



Harry Berry 17

*Through Our Lens was a project by artist Carolyn Mendelsohn in which young people in Bradford responded to the pandemic through photography. Their work was displayed on billboards in the summer of 2020.*

**HB** Being part of Through Our Lens gave me a sense of structure when everything was really up in the air and no-one knew what was going on with school and the pandemic.

One of the best things about Through Our Lens is that it's given me a chance to engage with young people from different backgrounds across Bradford. I've also developed new skills, whether that's in photography or the confidence to speak about why I took a photo and what it means to me. In order for life to get better in Bradford, there needs to be sufficient support and engagement with young people that wasn't there before.



Tia Weighman 16



Morgan Foord 17



**TW** The pandemic really impacted me mentally. Through Our Lens was a source of security where I could be myself and express my ideas through photography. When it comes to taking photographs, I'm shy and very much doubtful of myself. But the sessions helped me not to doubt what I do, and to have a sense of pride in myself.

**MF** When I was taking my GCSE exams, Through Our Lens helped create some serenity in a time that was confusing. I had lost a lot of 'growing up' experiences due to lockdown. But the project gave back that social aspect many of us were missing. It was addressed to us young people, asking us: 'What is your story?'

Lockdown was lonely and I missed my family and friends. But seeing other people respond to my photographs, seeing other young people agree that it was a shared experience was extremely comforting.

**HS** This project has been a massive part of my life since it began and has enabled me to express my inner creativeness. It came to me at the perfect time when lockdown was starting. Through Our Lens enabled me to meet like-minded people who shared the same interests as me. It shaped me into who I am today.

Hamza Saroj 15



# Making the most of what we have



Image ©Cain Lewis

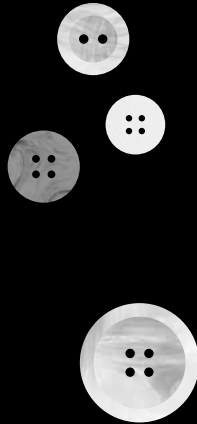


Image ©Karol Wyszynski

We will build on our existing assets, revitalising historic buildings, re-energising our high streets, reimagining temporary spaces, our landscapes and cityscapes. Sustainability will be our goal, making re-use, upcycling and repurposing the cornerstones of our creativity and ensuring new cultural assets make a positive impact on sustainable development too.





## Case Study

**Keighley Creative**  
**Gemma Hobbs**  
**Naseem Darbey**



*Keighley Creative is a volunteer-led arts organisation, providing exciting projects and fun activities for local communities from a repurposed department store in Keighley town centre.*

At Keighley Creative, we're trying to show people how to work as artists. It's a little bit behind-the-scenes. Everyone sees the polished end result of a gallery. But we want to open up our doors to show the general public what it's like to work in the arts, the beautiful reality behind it. We don't want it to be that people have to go to somewhere like London to experience the arts, things like this can exist on our doorstep.

This idea of 'making the most of what we have' is very true to the Keighley Creative project. It's about making the most of our artists and their work as well as making the most of the old Sunwin House department store we are based in. It's about working across organisations, too, recognising and valuing what we have right here in our town, all of the skills, the talent and the enthusiasm.



Image ©Gemma Hobbs





**This idea of ‘making the most of what we have’ is very true to the Keighley Creative project.**



Image ©Lisa Holmes,  
Keighley Creative  
and The Leap



We have studio holders. We have a yearly arts and film festival that started in 2019 and was a fantastic success. Then we've got our exhibition gallery programme where we show professional artists alongside community shows. Then there's the educational side of what we do and our outreach work which we kept going right through the pandemic with our Drawing Box Project and the drawing sessions we ran with the public through the big shop windows of our building.

Now we want to find a permanent home for arts and community in the heart of Keighley and we're working with our Towns Fund board and have had massive support locally for the idea. We have thought about all sorts of places including old mills which say so much about our past. In the end we have decided old stores are just as important a part of our heritage. They are real landmarks too, familiar and friendly, designed to welcome people in, accessible to all. And our high streets need to be reimagined and rescued and we want art and culture to play a big role in that.

# Making the most of who we are



The people of Bradford are our greatest creative asset. We are a cosmopolitan district, and it is in our differences that we find our richest culture. Our culture will represent our rich diversity and offer something for everyone but not the same for everyone – it won't be one size fits all.



Image ©John Bolloten

Image ©Tim Smith





## Case Study

### **Tranquil Productions Lloyd Thompson Founder & Director**

*Tranquil Productions is a breakdancing company founded in 2004 by a Bradfordian who performs and teaches breakin' not just in Bradford but around the world.*

I first got into breakin' at St John's Church on Wakefield Road. Dylan Goggs taught there and he used to dance in the 1980s. He was grateful for breakin' in his life and decided to run breakin' classes and pass it onto the children in the area. I was a really shy kid. I tried lots of different things but I found it difficult to find my thing. I came across breakin' in that church, and I knew instantly that's what I wanted to do.

With Tranquil Productions, we always had a community-based focus. We wanted to maintain that community and share the Bradford breakin' culture with as many people as possible. The goal was the same throughout lockdown. Thank God we managed to secure a grant from Arts Council England for a massive, world-wide digital breakin' event called Tech Styles Digital in August 2020. The event had people performing from Israel, Japan, USA and countries in Africa.



Image @Karol Wyszynski



**Our work speaks  
to this ambition.  
It's by the people  
of Bradford, for the  
people of Bradford.**



'Making the most of who we are' is something I've always had to do. There's always been amazing people that have helped me move forward, but I've had to make the most of every situation, every opportunity.

Our work speaks to this ambition. It's by the people of Bradford, for the people of Bradford. Everything has been built from the ground. Hip-hop is a relatively new form of dance that people enjoy doing. It's artistic, it's urban, it's creative, it's something we've seen grow organically despite little funding. We're elevating the city as a whole through breakin' in Bradford.

There is a big emphasis on new projects but that's a shame when you've got amazing existing work that is underfunded. If over the next ten years artists like myself are able to strengthen connections with the council to further support everything that is already going on, that will lead to a better future for Bradford.



Image ©Lloyd Thompson

# Network capacity

We are at our most powerful, effective and sustainable when we work collaboratively. By sharing resources, we will build and diversify our sector networks. As a creative community, we will share equipment, knowledge and skills, supporting, championing and mentoring each other. We will work collectively to develop inclusion, talent, participation and audiences. We will ensure every District agenda, from health to planning, education to transport, keeps culture in mind.



Image ©Karol Wyszynski



Image ©Andrew Dixon





## Case Study

### Bradford Producing Hub Lisa Mallaghan Project Director

Image ©Bradford Producing Hub  
Creativity Council Members



*If it's live and in need of support, it's sure to have Bradford Producing Hub fighting its corner.*

Bradford Producing Hub (BPH) is an Arts Council England pilot programme to test new approaches to producing live arts. It's one of only two in the country. We're all about the development of live arts, increasing career opportunities, encouraging participation, creating brilliant work for audiences and making Bradford a really live, exciting place that's just full of performance all the time.

We commission performance, including music, theatre, dance, circus and comedy – anything that is live. We provide everything from that first step in for somebody that's always loved doing creative stuff but never quite turned it into a career through to in-depth training programmes. Whether it's at an individual level through to the whole of Bradford, BPH is asking what's missing and then trying to fill those gaps. We're looking at how we can get access to empty shops, for example.



Image ©Karol Wyszynski



**Whether it's at an individual level through to the whole of Bradford, BPH is asking what's missing and then trying to fill those gaps.**



BPH led a piece of research called the Joint Cultural Needs Analysis. It shouted so loudly about people being disconnected, not knowing what's go on, who to ask for, about institutional racism and the lack of cultural diversity. One of the first things BPH needed to address was how to bring people together, so a creative person can come to one place and not have to knock on everyone's doors only to have doors shut in their face.

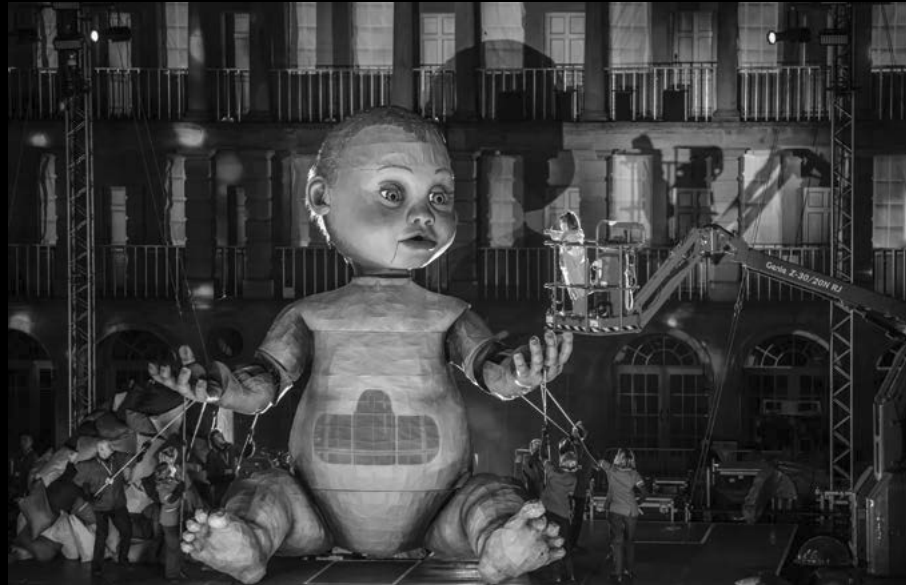
We've been working with Bradford Fringe Festival, which has grown astonishingly fast since Laura Brooks started running it in 2019. We've been adding to her skills and providing her with the networks, knowledge and expertise she needs to achieve her vision. We also identified quite early on that Black artists were underrepresented, so BPH worked with Tanya Vital to create a Black Artist Network.

BPH is only funded until 2023, but it's clearly working and we need it to continue. When we win UK City of Culture 2025, a huge proportion of the jobs it creates will go to Bradford's creatives. I see BPH's job as intrinsic to Bradford's readiness, stepping up and upscaling when the time comes.

Image ©Karol Wyszynski

# Thinking big

We will be bold and entrepreneurial, encouraging our creative partners to make ambitious work across the District. We will create the right environment for culture to flourish, bringing with it more work and jobs. Bradford will be a fertile ground for visionary projects, partnerships and national and international collaborations.





## Case Study

### **Bradford Literature Festival** **Syima Aslam** **Co-founder & Director**



*From the start, Bradford Literature Festival has looked outwards to claim a place for the city on the cultural map.*

It started off as an idea between two women, me and Irna Qureshi. We wanted to create a literature festival in the heart of Bradford. The important bit about Bradford Literature Festival is 'Bradford'. What we needed as a city was something that would put us on the cultural map and that would connect us nationally and internationally. When we were setting the festival up, I certainly didn't think it would be just for local audiences. If you programme for the communities of Bradford, you are automatically nationally and internationally relevant.

The ambition 'thinking big' in the context of Bradford Literature Festival was always that this would be an international destination festival where writers would come from around the world to take part, and that those people would inspire our young people. We are the changing face of contemporary Britain, so it's really important for Bradford to be recognised as an international city with people from around the world. The conversations we have in this city are nationally and internationally relevant, and they just can't be had anywhere else in the UK.





**Being able to bring national and international artists and writers into Bradford and have them inspire our young people was really important.**



I was very conscious when I was growing up that I didn't have the opportunity to go to a literature festival. My access would have been through school, and I think that's equally pertinent to a lot of our young people. Being able to bring national and international artists and writers into Bradford, take them into schools and have them inspire our young people was really important. So too was creating a safe space for dialogue and discussion, to address the elephants in the room and to have the difficult conversations.

When we think about the future, it's important to tell young people they can achieve anything. We're a young city, we are the drivers of change for the future. Bradford Literature Festival has shown Bradford should always be thinking big and that there is no limit to the ambition for this city.



Image ©Tim Smith



Image ©Bradford Literature Festival



# We will tell our own story

We will tell the world new stories about the District's incredible people and distinctive places. Culture will take a lead in our District's sustainable regeneration and will redefine us in the eyes of regional and national neighbours. We will bid to be UK City of Culture 2025 and leverage our global networks to become a regional, national and international cultural destination.

Image Belle Vue Studios  
©Bradford Museums and Galleries





## Case Study

**Bradford City of Culture  
Pakeezah Zahoor  
Programme and  
Community Coordinator**



Image © Tim Smith

*The key to Bradford's UK City of Culture 2025 bid is to celebrate the place people actually live in.*

When I moved back home to write my dissertation while doing a master's degree at the University of Manchester, I felt so uninspired by the job prospects available to me in a recession-hit world. How would I fulfil my potential and thrive here? Then I happened to see that Bradford Literature Festival was being set up that year. I wrote them a really desperate email asking for a job. They said they could offer me an internship, so I quit my full-time job at a bank and did the internship. That was my first experience in the culture sector.

Before that, the culture sector wasn't something I thought was a viable career path. Having done that internship opened my eyes to a sector which had been invisible to me.

I still felt like I had to leave Bradford to get better opportunities, so I got a job at Manchester International Festival. Since then, I've come home and worked with Ilkley Literature Festival, the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford Literature Festival again, before joining the Bradford 2025 team.





**Part of what we're doing with Bradford 2025 is to make sure when we 'speak Bradford' to the wider world, it feels like the Bradford people actually live in.**

Image ©Muslim Women's Council/The Leap/Mike Simmonds



Let's face it. Bradford gets totally written off. There is a lot of insecurity about being from Bradford as well as being from an immigrant background and being told you need to 'assimilate, assimilate, assimilate'. That insecurity is something I've rebelled against in my work.

Part of what we're doing with Bradford 2025 is to speak to people across the District so we can understand what Bradford is for them, how they experience it, and to make sure that when we 'speak Bradford' to the wider world, it feels like the Bradford people actually live in.

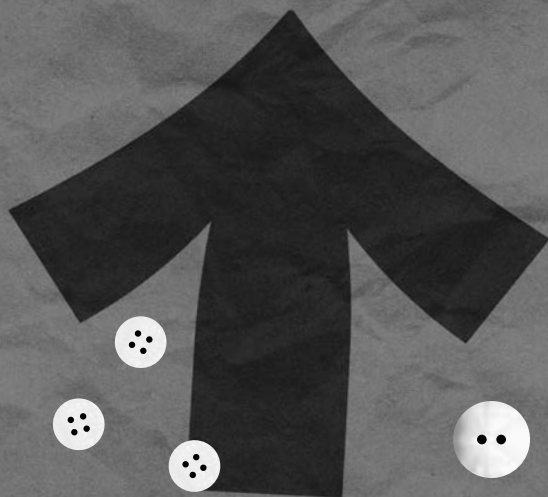
Stories have a real-world impact, they can define who we are, what we believe about ourselves, and what we think is possible. That's how people will get behind this bid: if we write our own story in a way that feels true.

Image ©Tim Smith



# Our Targets

**We have ten targets to measure our progress against over the next ten years**



**Give every primary age child in the District the opportunity to learn the District's story through co-creation of a Bradford Curriculum**



**Increase the number, range, scale and ambition of arts, culture and heritage activity and partnerships, creating 3,000 jobs in the District and increasing visitor numbers and spend**



**Realise capital projects that will rehouse, reimagine and repurpose the District's cultural and heritage assets**

↑  
**Adopt the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals to measure our success not only in carbon reduction but also in equalities, decent jobs, good education, wellbeing and reducing poverty**

↑  
**Give 250,000 people in the District's most deprived wards the opportunity to get involved with arts, culture and heritage activities**

↑  
**Ensure that 70% of people will be 'satisfied with the range of cultural activities in the District and near to where they live' (50% in 2021) and that 80% of people will feel culture in Bradford 'represents me and my life' (50% in 2021)**

↑  
**Draw 50% of Bradford's creative workforce, audiences and cultural leadership from people currently underrepresented in the culture and creative industries sector**

↑  
**Regularly engage 70% of people in the District in arts, culture and heritage activities**

↑  
**Create a calendar of high-quality festivals and events with local, national and international significance, with a view to Bradford District being designated UK City of Culture 2025**

↑  
**Level up national investment per capita to match other major English cities**



**Culture is all our stories and how they are interpreted to help us understand each other. This pack of buttons was brought from Bombay Stores. To me it represents Bradford's textile heritage, our diversity and our distinctiveness.**

Image and words ©Jennifer Sobol



## Who we are

The Bradford Cultural Place Partnership commissioned Culture Is Our Plan with funds from City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Arts Council England. The Partnership is chaired by Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe and membership includes leaders of the major strategic cultural initiatives in the District alongside representatives of the independent arts, culture and heritage sector:

- Arts Council England
- Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture Bid
- Bradford College
- Bradford Cultural Education Partnership
- Bradford Producing Hub
- City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
- Cultural Voice Forum
- The Leap, Creative People and Places programme, led by Bradford Institute for Health Research
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- University of Bradford

The independent sector representatives are nominated by the Cultural Voice Forum, a network open to everyone working in arts, culture and heritage in our District. It brings together more than 250 people to share sector knowledge, experience and opportunity.

## Thank you

Culture Is Our Plan is an ongoing conversation with people across Bradford District. So far, almost 3,000 people have participated. We'd like to thank everyone who has been involved, who has given their time and ideas, completed a survey or shared their own creative work. We are grateful for the case studies of what Bradford is and can be and would like to give special thanks to:

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Now that you know about the plan, we'd love for you to share it. Head over to our website where you can find out more about each of our ambitions and use the share links to help us make culture part of everyone's plan.

You can also find versions of the plan as Easy Read and British Sign Language as well as audio versions in English, Punjabi, Urdu and Polish on our website.

[cultureisourplan.co.uk](http://cultureisourplan.co.uk)

