

## Organisational Perspectives

### ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVES RESEARCH

Partnerships and collaborative working have been central to Culture Kent and the wider ambitions of the *Cultural Destinations Programme*. To help Culture Kent achieve a key aim to grow partnership capacity and facilitate cross-sectoral working, research was required to *understand tourism and cultural/arts organisations' perceptions of the opportunities and barriers associated with cross-sectoral working, in the context of developing cultural destinations*. This research insights paper has been developed to disseminate the key findings of that research to industry.

### HEADLINE FINDINGS FOR KENT

- **Existing levels of partnership and cross-sectoral working:** The online survey found that 76% of the arts and cultural organisations surveyed, and 94% of the tourism organisations, had engaged in some form of cross-sectoral collaboration. However, the in-depth interviews suggest that the nature of such partnership work has been rather limited, and generally restricted to short-lived or one-off collaborations.
- **Multiple models of partnership working:** Drawing from 'The art of partnering' 2015 Report (King's College Cultural Enquiry in collaboration with the BBC), the Evidence Review supported 3 core modes of partnership working:
  - goal-oriented – short term, often one-off, fragile and formed for a particular purpose (e.g. funding application consortium);
  - network-based – loose group of organisations (including local, regional, national or international hubs) to make contacts, share information, and to discuss shared aims and funding opportunities; and
  - resource-based – complementing/supplementing capacity; reducing transaction costs, increasing value for money and enabling economies of scale – posing the greatest challenges for implementation.

The research supports a complex reality where organisations favour different styles and degrees of collaboration for different strategic purposes, ranging from one-off funding bids, to sharing audience data and accessing new markets, to improving service quality or mission delivery. All represent differing levels of commitment within a range of partnership relationships over varying time frames, in order to achieve distinct strategic outcomes.

- **The time is right for increased cross-sectoral working:** Key drivers are converging to support the move to more cross-sectoral working between tourism and culture/the arts.
- **Critical factors influencing readiness to engage in cross-sectoral working:** Organisational structure, governance models and the wider environment within which organisations operate were found to be key factors, and more significant than sectoral affiliation.
- **Collaborative preferences:** Decisions as to whether to engage in goal-oriented, network-based or resource-based collaborations are a product of the external environment, internal organisational factors, and associated perception of opportunities and barriers to collaboration. This is summarised by the Collaborative Preference Model (Figure 1) developed through the Culture Kent Organisational Perspectives research.

The primary research that informs these findings comprises of:

- 62 online surveys;
- 12 semi-structured interviews with organisations sampled across the sectors;
- 6 Culture Kent Pilot Project Lead reflective interviews; and
- a Round Table Discussion Event attended by 25 stakeholders.

The research has been shaped throughout by a review of the existing evidence, carried out in the early stages of the project.

### DO TOURISM AND CULTURE/THE ARTS CONSTITUTE SEPARATE SECTORS?

The view of tourism and culture/the arts as two separate sectors is reinforced by the institutional landscape of national sectoral organisations, and is often articulated through a widespread mind-set encountered on the ground.

Closer analysis of organisational practice reveals a much more complex reality in that organisations are positioned across a 'sectoral continuum' reflecting a high degree of fluidity in organisational positioning across the sectors.

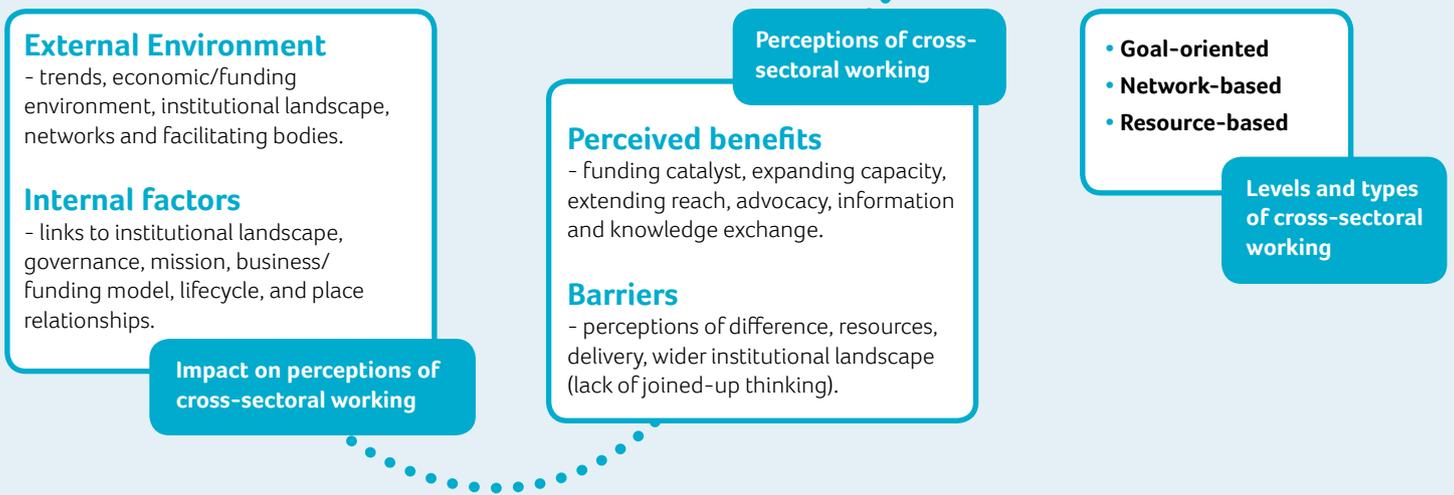
Despite this a 'two sector mind-set' still exists in institutional /organisational thinking, compounded by perceptions of difference with regard to priorities, language, and philosophy.



Image credits:

Turner Contemporary - courtesy of Turner Contemporary;  
Harbour Arm Artworks- courtesy of Creative Foundation.

**FIGURE 1: COLLABORATIVE PREFERENCE MODEL**



## PRECONDITIONS FOR CREATING CULTURAL DESTINATIONS

Insights from the Evidence Review and the primary research highlight:

- a cultural destination should be understood as **‘a networked space delivering a total experience to visitors that helps them to understand a location and its people, through history and contemporary culture’**;
- cultural destinations need to be meaningful from both a visitor and organisational/institutional perspective; and
- the concept of the cultural destination, when applied to Kent, requires the development of multiple networked spaces that make sense at a regional and sub-regional/destination level.

Achieving this for Kent requires changes in the wider enabling environment and organisational practice, to achieve the following preconditions for creating cultural destinations:

- ✓ Place-focused cross-sectoral working
- ✓ An effective enabling environment
- ✓ A healthy underlying ‘creative economy’
- ✓ Joined-up thinking - strategic planning, programming and curation of cultural destination experiences
- ✓ A shared goal and vision
- ✓ Understanding of perceptions of difference
- ✓ Collaboration integrated into working practices
- ✓ Time, people and resources- collaboration and cross-sectoral working take time to develop and embed within a locality. They also require sufficient resources and leadership to be developed and sustained over time.

These preconditions constitute a set of principles that can provide the basis for understanding how Kent can move forward in terms of using cross-sectoral working and cultural tourism as a base from which to develop sustainable and resilient cultural destinations. It must be recognised, however, that many of these preconditions are dependent on sufficient public and private sector investment in both financial and human resources, over a sustained period of time.

*Image credits: Summer of Colour- Red Ladies - courtesy of Turner Contemporary; Folkestone Digs by Michael Sailstorfer, Folkestone Triennial 2014, photo Stuart Wilson - courtesy of Creative Foundation; Fan Bay Moon Walk, photo Sebastian Edge - courtesy of Dover Arts Development; bOing! Festival 2016, photo Manu Palomeque - courtesy of Gulbenkian.*



## MOVING FORWARD

The full report identifies key themes in the research relevant to:

- existing organisations and networks/institutional actors operating as facilitators within the wider external environment (enabler level); and
- those working within and leading tourism and cultural/arts organisations in Kent (organisational level).

Four key themes and associated actions highlighted by the research are summarised below:

### 1. A transition from sectoral identification to networks based on location, proximity and identity:

- **Organisational networks and identity:** Organisational networks operate at national, regional, and very local levels. Their activities plug into, feed, and reflect place distinctiveness at different scales, with consequences for destination image and identity. The marketing of Kent as a cultural destination has to balance the building of a coherent sense of regional identity with the need to embrace the diversity of Kent's offer, and celebrate the variety of lenses through which the county can be viewed and experienced. Further work on mapping networks and understanding the cultural tourism DNA of specific destinations in Kent will help facilitating organisations/networks to embed cultural tourism more fully within destination marketing and management planning. It will also help to empower individual organisations through a common sense of purpose and links to an enhanced sense of place.

### 2. Improved joined-up thinking and delivery:

- **Focus on the visitor experience** - cultural tourists do not make the same 'supply side' distinctions between destination attractions and cultural activities in the wider visitor economy that professionals do. As one interviewee states 'we need to see this from the visitor perspective – visitor journey.'
- **Sharing information and programming** - Programming and sharing of information is seen to be crucial to the development of an attractive cultural destination.

### 3. Understanding and addressing perceptions of difference:

- **Advocacy** - Pilot Leads have described how involvement with the Culture Kent Pilots has often been transformative, raising awareness of the benefits of cross-sectoral working. For some organisations the Pilot Projects have significantly contributed to their realisation of the relevance of cultural tourism and visitors to cultural/arts organisations.
- **Blurring of community, local and visitor markets** - The artificial distinction between local/community audiences and visitors needs to be broken down within the context of a thriving cultural destination, where local audiences and community engagement can sustain cultural attractions year round. Raising awareness about the value of local markets – *exploring their own doorstep* - is key here. The current strength of the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market needs to be communicated to those working in cultural/arts organisations, where the terminology is perhaps not as well known.
- **Addressing tensions over seemingly incompatible missions** - Showcasing the outcomes of Culture Kent Pilots and disseminating best practice and legacy outputs of the Project could help to break down these barriers.

### 4. Understanding the different levels and types of cross-sectoral working:

- There is no *one size fits all solution* and collaborative preferences will change over time for different organisations. Reliance on goal-oriented short-term, one-off partnership projects, however, produces fragile collaborations. Cultural destinations will develop more resilience over time if more network and resource-based collaborations are successful.



Fan Bay (photo Sebastian Edge), courtesy of Dover Arts Development

More detailed findings and analysis can be found in the following Culture Kent Research Programme reports and resources:

- Report 2- Organisational Perspectives
- Culture Kent Research Programme Summary of Findings Report
- Culture Kent Pilot Project Case Study Summaries 1-6
- Culture Kent Round Table Insights – Best Practice; and Legacy and Ways Forward.

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*Thomas K, Scott J, Brebeanu R and Berkeley-Cornner R (June, 2017) Culture Kent Research Programme Research Insights Paper 2: Organisational Perspectives*

**“Culture can drive tourism and arts can illuminate and enhance heritage and engage visitors in a host of new and original ways.”**

Joanna Jones, Dover Arts Development