

Culture, Creativity and Regeneration in Bristol

Three Stories

Final Report

June 2013

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Introduction

“This is a city where we experiment with new ideas and test ways of doing things. We are fast becoming the UK’s creative capital, a city of experimentation...”

Mayor George Ferguson

40 years ago, the idea that culture and creativity might drive the regeneration of our cities was little understood. Culture was largely defined in terms of entertainment choices rather than economic or social development. For some urban planners, overtones of the bohemian, the intellectual and the academic undermined the sense that there was something of substance to be found in a word which has increasingly come to define how we live together as individuals and as communities. As the move from manufacturing into services focused increasingly on creative enterprise, successful cities developed a nuanced understanding of the benefits of a culture-led approach to regeneration. Over the last four decades the transformational power of creativity has grown into a common-place as cities and their hinterlands from Baltimore to Berlin, from Beijing to Barcelona and from Bordeaux to Bristol have appreciated its social and economic as well as its cultural value.

During the growth years of the 90s and the noughties the regenerative value of culture has been quantified. We now have evidence to show what is possible and how it might be brought about. European cities that understood and acted on the evidence thrived as those that ignored it lost competitive edge. In some cities, over the recent period, the rhetoric of economic growth that accompanied the emergence of the creative industries has come to sound a little hollow. In Bristol, it remains rooted in the reality of how a significant proportion of the city’s economy works. New media and communications companies, film, TV and radio production companies, animators, designers of all kinds (products, graphics, silicon, software, games), architects, musicians, writers, artists, sculptors, performers, chefs and other “creativity-driven” enterprises have individually and collectively voted with their feet. That so many have chosen to live and work in Bristol enhances the city region’s creative capacity and builds its social capital. They are part of a self-fulfilling prophecy through which people of talent and energy are being drawn to the city and choosing to stay. At the same time, high quality employment opportunities are being created for young Bristolians – bringing about a virtuous circle of social and economic benefit.

Against this background of haphazard competitive advantage, Bristol hasn’t always benefitted from an integrated strategy. As a result, a long-term approach to public investment in culture combined with a fleet-footed private sector response to opportunity has been hard to sustain. The *Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone* now provides an opportunity to make sense of Bristol’s experiences of culture-led regeneration over the last 40 years. To succeed, the Zone needs to draw on the lessons of the past as it builds Bristol’s future. Only by doing so will it unlock the city’s existing market strengths and use them to meet challenging inbound investment and employment targets. This report therefore tells three culture-driven regeneration stories in Bristol to find out what happened, why it might be important and what can be learnt. By developing an analysis of different experiences over the last 40 years, it provides foundations for the Enterprise Zone – as well as for the wider role of culture in Bristol over the next decade.

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Section 1 sets the scene with an overview of the role of culture in social and economic regeneration. By drawing together the arguments for public benefit, it makes the case for creativity as a driver of positive change.

Section 2 then describes three very different experiences of culture-driven regeneration in Bristol over the last four decades. They range from the 40 year development of *Harbourside* as a focus for leisure in the heart of the city through the 25 year community regeneration of parts of *Bedminster and Southville* to the explosion of grass roots energy which has characterised developments in *Stokes Croft* over the last decade. Although the stories are chosen for their differences as well as for their similarities, this section also summarises the attributes that all three hold in common.

Finally, Section 3 asks what these stories might have to say about the next 20 years. It asks how the lessons of the past might be most fruitfully applied to Bristol's future. Following the logic of the brief, special attention is paid to the implications for the Enterprise Zone and for the evolving cultural role of *Bristol City Council* under the leadership of its first elected Mayor. Although no recommendations for future action are made, the issues emerging from the research from key perspectives are brought together in this final section.

This work has been commissioned by Bristol City Council (BCC) and managed through Watershed. It is based on action research carried out in January and February 2013 during which we have drawn on the documentation listed in Annex B. More importantly, we have talked to many of the people who were actively involved in the three Bristol stories over the last four decades as well as those with responsibility for making the decisions on which the future of the city region now depends. They are listed in Annex A. A draft version of the report was vigorously discussed at three seminars in May 2013 to which all the people with whom we spoke (and others) were invited. Over 40 people attended. The final section now incorporates the seminars' most significant themes.

Thanks are due to everyone we spoke to for making time available in busy schedules. Their recollections of what happened (and their sense of what it might mean) may not always be the same – but the passion they share for Bristol represents a significant city asset during a period of continuing economic uncertainty.

The project brief speaks of “culture, creativity and regeneration in Bristol”. Although we have used terms like “culture-led” and “creativity-driven”, they don't imply that social and economic benefits of the kind set out in Section 1 flow solely or uniquely from arts, media and heritage activity. The regenerative impact of creativity depends on a dynamic relationship with a range of variables. Some of them might be embraced by a broader definition of culture; others either form part of the environment (patterns of economic growth and recession for example) or are expressed through their relationship with other areas of public policy. The long-term cultural regeneration of a city requires a collaborative strategy of sustained ambition put into practice through strong and consistent leadership. This report shows that within such a strategy, for Bristol, culture and creativity have an important and continuing role to play.

Peter Boyden
June 2013

1 Context

The role of culture in economic and social regeneration

This section offers a framework for culture and the creative industries as a medium of economic and social change.

1.1 Culture and the Creative Industries

Culture is a broad term. In regeneration terms, it has historically focused on arts programmes and museum services delivered by local authorities and on public investment in the independent charitable trusts running theatres, galleries, arts centres and festivals. This report uses a broader definition embracing cultural heritage, the creative industries and other forms of post-digital cultural expression. It reflects all that is distinctive in a city as it seeks the “place-making” advantage on which its economic and social well-being depends. Culture can be seen as linking areas of policy which determine the quality of public life for both individuals and communities. It has mutually beneficial connections with transport, health, employment, housing, education and skills. It also touches on the political mechanisms through which democracy works and the evolving relationship between the built and natural environments.

Creativity is an even broader term. It is widely understood as an economic driver paying innovation and enterprise dividends which reach beyond arts and cultural heritage. Creative responses are as important to social challenges as they are to commercial opportunities. To maximise their impact, culture’s economic benefits need to reach into communities blighted by long-term disadvantage. Bristol must provide a flourishing environment for social enterprise and cultural entrepreneurs just as it nurtures creativity-driven relationships with its historic economic strengths in science, technology and high-tech engineering.

Although these wider perspectives determine the relationship between culture, economic and social regeneration, we also need a working definition of culture as a starting point. The definition used in the national 2008 *Creative Britain* strategy included public investment in music and dance of all kinds, theatre from different traditions, festivals, new media and the visual arts - and aligned it with commercial activity across these areas and in television, film, graphic design, computer games and architecture. It emphasised intellectual property, the creative use of digital technologies and a central commitment to emerging talent in a thriving creative economy fuelled by entrepreneurial energy. The term “cultural heritage” is also used to embrace a proactive argument for an accessible public domain, green spaces, historic visitor attractions, museums and the built environment. These are therefore the areas on which we focus.

1.2 Economic Impact

Nationally, the position is clear. Recent evidence from respected sources reveals the extent to which culture is outperforming other economic sectors. The November 2012 edition of the Confederation of British Industry magazine *Business Voice* shows the continuing impact of the cultural economy during the recent period of economic contraction and highlights the creative industries as a priority area in the CBI’s growth strategy. In doing so, it points to 1.4m

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jobs in direct employment, a 3.2% contribution to UK Gross Value Added and a 10.6% share in UK exports. The CBI argues persuasively that these figures move the cultural economy out of the niche and into the mainstream.

As part of its engagement with the Government's forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review, in November 2012 Arts Council England (ACE) and the National Museum Directors' Council commissioned a study from the *Centre for Economics and Business Research*. The report draws together national data on the economic impact of arts and heritage activity. Published in May 2013, the results are compelling. Among other things they show that while the arts budget accounts for less than 0.1% of public spending, it generates 0.4% of GDP. In 2011, arts and culture produced a turnover of £12.85bn which created £5.9bn in Gross Value Added. It also points out that, in the same year, £856m in annual tourism spend was directly attributable to arts and culture.

In April 2013, Nesta's *Manifesto for the Creative Economy* backed up these figures with a call for a renewed policy-led approach. It starts from the proposition that the UK creative industries account for one tenth of the whole economy and employ 2.5m people – providing more jobs than financial services, advanced manufacturing or construction. Nesta's Chief Executive spells out the national rationale for focusing on culture and creativity during a period of economic constraint: "*While much of the rest of the economy appears becalmed. The creative economy continues to experience a heady mix of growth, new business models and stunning new technologies that are making culture even more intense and engaging*". The manifesto offers 10 "refreshed policy recommendations" to consolidate the competitive advantage implicit in the ACE data. It provides persuasive new definitions for the creative industries and makes a series of proposals through which to move the sector forward.

Before turning to the three Bristol stories, we need to clarify the local significance of this national perspective. The *Centre for Economics and Business Research* work shows how it has become possible to measure the impact of culture-generated expenditure through what is known as a "multiplier effect". "Direct" economic impact is defined as spending generated through cultural consumption by local people and visitors on hotels, restaurants, bars, transport and retail. It also includes local investment in cultural production and delivery. This spending is then either lost to the city or re-spent within the local economy as it is used to pay staff, suppliers and overheads. Payments made to staff will also be spent with local businesses to produce what is called "induced" expenditure. The process is repeated as supplier and overhead payments are recycled as "indirect" expenditure until leakages from the local economy outstrip the weakening residual impact. Like other cities, Bristol benefits very considerably from all three. Research into the 2009 *Banksy versus Bristol Museum* exhibition, for example, suggests that the total direct, indirect and induced expenditure of that single event might be as much as £12.5m.

Although questions could no doubt be asked about multiplier methodologies, the sum is clearly significant – especially when considered annually and scaled up across a full range of cultural forms across the city. It demonstrates the financial return on public investment in culture. On their own, the figures are impressive – but they don't tell the whole story. Though it is less easily measured, the vibrancy of Bristol's cultural offer plays a central role in attracting inbound investment as well as in the attraction and retention of a talented workforce. It is widely seen as a critical "quality of life" consideration and sits alongside infrastructure and education as the prime motivators of corporate relocation. The city's cultural profile is also acknowledged by both universities as a crucial magnet for attracting undergraduates and maintaining Bristol's graduate retention figures at the top end of the

national league table. For similar reasons the cultural offer (especially when high profile festivals and events are included) lies at the heart of Bristol's growing tourism economy.

There are also other, more subtle, economic impacts. In a strategic marketing sense, over the last 20 years Bristol has developed an international reputation as a radical, energetic, diverse and unorthodox hotbed of cross-discipline creative practice – especially in urban visual art, performance and the creative use of digital technologies. The latter is closely allied to and reinforces the City's historic strengths in film, animation and broadcast production. It also provides a seductive environment for young entrepreneurs working in business start-ups and attracts relocations across the cultural spectrum from performers to software developers and games designers. In this sense Bristol's creative industries have a complex and richly inter-dependent relationship with its cultural infrastructure. Although these "soft" impacts are harder to measure, they have real significance for the city's economic future. There are important employment outcomes – not just for people moving to the city, but, crucially, for young Bristolians. Although there are related issues for education and skills, this is perhaps the primary mechanism through which economic regeneration translates into social impact. It is also the best way to ensure that when stable growth returns to the economy (as it will) that it reaches deeper and further into the city than was the case between 1992 and 2008.

1.3 Social Impact

Section 2 reveals recurring characteristics of urban decline and regeneration in each of the three stories. They demonstrate the entwined nature of social and economic impacts and the extent to which they are a mirror image of each other. Bristol is a complex, multi-layered city. Its communities (of class, ethnicity, gender, age or cultural inclination) draw strength from their independence and their inter-action. Positive economic conditions provide social benefit only for those they touch. A city which inhibits access to the benefits of creative Bristol is profoundly damaging. The gap between creative movers and shakers (many of whom have chosen to live and work in Bristol rather than grown up in it) and the long-term problems in established city communities suggests that work remains to be done to spread the social impact of the cultural economy more widely. This report focuses on three parts of central Bristol. What happened in Clifton, Cotham and Redland over the same period would have been different – as would the stories of Hartcliffe, Knowle West or Lawrence Weston. In each case the options for intervention are different – just as they are for Enterprise Zone. Although there can be no "one size fits all" solution, it is a given that, in the long-term, the social impact of culture in Bristol must be city-wide.

Social regeneration is a long-term proposition, less easily measured than its economic counterpart. Much has been written about the fragmentation of established communities and the isolation of individuals with no stake in a collective future. These real concerns drive the imperative for social inclusion and mobility. Publicly funded organisations delivering arts, media and heritage programmes to mainstream audiences in dedicated cultural city centre buildings are only part of the story. Active engagement has greater regenerative power than passive consumption. If people don't take part in cultural activities (either by choice or through social and economic exclusion) then they and their communities won't feel the benefit.

People without a voice struggle to express need or access support. The ability to articulate a personal passion sparks the capacity for community advocacy. Social change therefore requires programmes to reach into communities containing only small numbers of traditional cultural consumers. The fulfilment of individual potential is a big step towards community confidence. Increased aspiration leads to educational success. Cultural celebration through

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festivals and carnival allows different creative traditions to express themselves while building cohesive communities. Creative programmes in hospitals and among young offenders have proven success rates. A single exposure to the transformative power of creativity can have an transformative impact on a young life.

All these social impacts depend on sustained investment – not easy in the middle of what is widely recognised as the worst recession since the 1930s. They also require an understanding by public service commissioners of how effectively cultural organisations can use non-arts spending for social purposes. As cultural funding comes under continuing threat, the ability to deliver measurable social outcomes opens up new lines of public investment for arts and heritage organisations. Programmes for young people will maximise culture's regenerative impact. As a mechanism for building social capital they create and sustain productive networks which unlock the future for excluded children. They also provide the bottom rung of the ladders of progression which build the employment skills on which the continuing impact of the creative industries depend. 23% of Bristol's population is aged between 16 and 29 – compared with a national average of 17.5%. Formal links feeding back into the creative industries talent pipeline amplify the social value of culture by spreading its economic impact into the most disadvantaged parts of the city. Harnessing the creative energy of these young people is the key to economic prosperity and to sustainable communities.

2 Three Bristol Stories

40 years of culture, creativity and regeneration in Bristol

This section tells three stories of culture, creativity and regeneration in Bristol. They are chosen for their differences rather than their similarities. Harbourside is an epic 40 year saga of high profile public and private sector regeneration – a high-stakes game involving major public and private investment in the physical transformation of the city’s historic heart. In Bedminster and Southville, the development of the *Tobacco Factory* has spearheaded the regeneration of a rundown south-of-the-river suburb on foundations built by 25 years of incremental community development. The nature and pace of change in Stokes Croft over the last 10 years shows what can happen in a much shorter period (even during a recession) to transform an inner city area through radical, sometimes transgressive, grass-roots cultural activity. To demonstrate the scale and complexity of what has happened, Annex A sets principal milestones from all three stories in a four decade timeline.

2.1 Harbourside

The story starts with the water and the docks. Entering Bristol by river, travelling beneath Brunel’s bridge and continuing into the heart of a 1,000 year old maritime city, is an extraordinary experience in the 21st century - just as it must have been in the 12th. The Avon Gorge, Clifton’s terraces and the Floating Harbour provide the city with a unique set of historic and topographic reference points. The wider harbour complex contains nearly eight miles of water. Together they represent a remarkable civic asset - providing compelling visual images through which the Bristol “brand” is communicated to the world.

On 5 July 1970 the *Great Britain* was towed beneath the suspension bridge to complete her journey back from the Falklands. Over 100,000 people welcomed her home. As she entered the Cumberland Basin (also crowded with spectators) and berthed in the Floating Harbour, her surroundings reflected the urban decay which accompanied the final years of the city centre docks as they moved towards commercial closure in 1975. Two years later, the end of Bristol’s last shipbuilding company at Albion Yard signed off 800 years of maritime tradition during which ocean-going and coastal vessels were built in and traded from the heart of the old city on the banks of the Avon. Explorers, privateers, slavers and merchant traders had given the city her distinctive character as they made Bristol into the nation’s second city. In 1970, the decaying clutter of redundant working docks, timber yards, railway sidings, transit sheds and warehouses presented a dismal epitaph to Bristol’s seafaring and commercial heritage as it sought a new role in a post-manufacturing world. It seemed hard to imagine a process through which the necessary vision and investment might turn a public no-go area into the leisure and residential heart of one of northern Europe’s finest water-based cities.

A walk around the waterfront 43 years later shows how much has changed. The *Great Britain* now occupies the Great Western Dock (in which she was built) as the centrepiece of an award-winning visitor attraction and museum. Alongside her is the *Brunel Institute* – an education and conservation centre opened by the *SS Great Britain Trust* in collaboration with the *University of Bristol*. On the water next to her is moored the replica of John Cabot’s square-rigged caravel *Matthew* while, to the rear, the headquarters of the Oscar winning *Aardman Animations* represent Bristol’s international success as a centre for the creative

industries. Further down Wapping Wharf (past the *Maritime Heritage Centre* and *the Point* residential development) is *M Shed*, Bristol's highly successful new social history museum. Across the water sits *Arnolfini* - an international contemporary arts centre and regeneration icon. Past the *Architecture Centre* and over the artist-designed *Pero's Bridge*, *Watershed* (the UK's first Media Centre) drives the City's commitment to a networked future unlocking the creative potential of digital technologies. At the heart of Harbourside, *Lloyds TSB* headquarters sits alongside *Millennium Square* and the *@Bristol* Science Centre – Bristol's flagship Millennium project. The Ted Cullinan designed residential, retail, office and hotel development leads through Canons Marsh to further housing on *Capricorn Quay*, *Poole's Wharf* and *Rownham Mead*. Opposite them, *Underfall Yard* reflects and reinforces the Floating Harbour's 19th century engineering and ship building history. *Spike Island* (an artists studio collective opened in the disused Brooke Bond tea factory) lies behind earlier residential developments on *Baltic Wharf*. They take us on towards *Bristol Marina*, a cluster of companies at the "making" end of the creative industries spectrum including *Green Ginger* and the *Bristol Old Vic* workshops, the working dry dock at *Abel's Yard* and back to the *SS Great Britain*. The extent of the change over four decades is extraordinary.

It takes about an hour to stroll around the now fully accessible waterfront. Over four decades, public funding has worked alongside private investment to create a mixed-use environment balancing commercial activity and housing with public spaces and cultural attractions. Framed to the north by the terraces of Clifton, Brandon Hill and the cathedral and to the south by the green hills of North Somerset, the walk passes through a remarkable density of creative activity. Although by no means all the new commercial and residential structures command universal approval (indeed, some are widely disliked), there is city-wide enthusiasm for the overall impact of the change. Bristolians regularly vote with their feet. On a sunny Saturday, thousands of people soak up the atmosphere among the bars and restaurants, ferry boats and festivals which give Bristol its distinctive 21st century flavour. Visitors from all over the world mingle with locals from all parts of the city as they proudly share in the city's new-found cultural identity. Though it may not always have felt like it as events unfolded, the journey from dockside dereliction to a leisure and cultural centre is a significant success story.

Harbourside in the 1970s

Harbourside's renaissance has its roots in Bristol's stuttering response to post-war regeneration. By the turn of the 1970s, the city docks clearly faced problems as commercial shipping moved downstream leaving 175 acres of disused industrial land and over three miles of inaccessible man-made water frontage in the heart of the city. The City Council's 1966 Development Plan Review adopted a ruthless approach which presumed the supremacy of the car. Reclaiming land for commercial development by filling in the docks as part of the construction of an Outer Circuit Road was an active option – vigorously resisted by, among others, the *City Docks Group* and the *Bristol Civic Society*. Opinions were heatedly rehearsed in Public Inquiries as opposition became better organised.

In 1972 John Pontin took a lease on *Bush House* with the intention of developing it as a long-term home for *Arnolfini* and the *JT Group*. The pivotal public/private relationship between JT and the city has been a constant throughout the development of the old city docks. It has been responsible for significant parts of its cultural presence – including *Arnolfini* and *Watershed*. Although initially it was an instinctive rather than a strategic proposition, the first links between culture and regeneration were thus forged at a very early point. In retrospect it can be seen as a pioneering commitment to an approach from which public, philanthropic and private sector interests might seek mutual benefit. BCC's 1974 opening of the *Industrial Museum* on Princes Wharf added to the momentum for change as it established the first of the area's major heritage attractions.

From 1973 annual power boat races provided an extraordinary spectacle as powerful machines diced with death through the derelict dockland. They formed part of a cluster of water-based activities (including rowing regattas, a sailing school, Bristol Marina, a ferry service and early *Harbourside Festivals*) through which the docks set their course for a public domain future. Floating restaurants and night clubs also began to appear. Reflecting the need for a vision capable of attracting prospective developers during a period of recession, in 1974 BCC commissioned a study on the development of the city docks from *Sir Hugh Casson*. His report was the first articulation of a future playing to the strengths of the location and arguing that “*the waters of the harbour used to unify and to separate, to enliven and relax should be returned to the citizens for their enjoyment.*”

In 1975 and 1976 exhibitions were hosted at *Bristol Museum and Art Gallery* under the banner “*Twenty Ideas for Bristol*”. They reflected the growing public debate about the future of the city centre and the nature of late 20th century urbanism. As the commercial docks finally closed in 1975, environmental and community concerns began to be acknowledged alongside the need for developer investment and profit. A vigorous debate around a contemporary inflection of Bristol’s architectural legacy ebbed and flowed. Although the term was unheard of in the 1970s, the stage was set for culture-led regeneration. The opening of *Arnolfini* in the refurbished Bush House in 1975 was therefore iconic in the true sense of the term. Its radical ambition and the blurring of creative disciplines combined with exciting public spaces hinted at a moment of important change.

Harbourside in the 1980s

At the beginning of the 1980s, renewed questions were raised about Harbourside’s role and function. New options for a leisure-driven future were discussed amid increasing demands for a formal strategy in which public interests might be defended in the face of commercial imperatives. Identifying sources of investment and formulating a long-term view wasn’t easy. The scale of the residual dereliction was intimidating. Even if the prevailing political ideology had been more sympathetic, public funding for social purposes was hard to find in a pre-lottery era. Under these circumstances, the 1982 opening of *Watershed* in E and W Sheds was counter-intuitive. It bravely looked towards a post-digital world of emerging creative industries and 21st century cultural business models. In the 1980s its independent film, photography, conference and events programmes (as well as a vibrant bar and catering offer) raised the area’s profile as a leisure destination on the margins of the city centre. Although the active early support of the *JT Group* was again influential, it would be 20 years before *Watershed* reached its full potential as a key facilitator at the heart of the city’s creative networks. In 1982 *JT* also acquired 125 year head leases on the adjacent U and V Sheds. The potential to bring these buildings (some of which had functioned in the 1970s as the *Bristol Exhibition Centre*) into the leisure development mix offered the opportunity to extend culture-led regeneration into the heart of the old city docks.

As the decade progressed, the economy recovered and private investment increased. Although the first residential development at *Baltic Wharf* was completed in 1986, the real game changer was *Lloyds TSB*’s decision to move its retail banking headquarters from London to Bristol – along with 1,500 staff. Infrastructure and quality of life (including the city’s cultural offer) were the determining factors in the choice of Bristol. The new building was to occupy a crucial site cleared by the spectacular demolition of bonded tobacco warehouses early one Sunday in May 1988. The foundations were laid for the introduction of significant public capital investment in the 1990s and the subsequent private sector investment in Canons March in the 2000s.

One last event of significance at the end of the 1980s deserves special mention. In 1989, through the good offices of the Chamber of Commerce, the *Bristol Initiative* was formed to bring the influential business sector closer to the city's strategic planning. Under the energetic leadership of John Savage it narrowed the gap between public and private sectors which had long been seen as a structural fault line in Bristol's development. It also understood the power of culture, education and social equity in a successful city and was closely involved in the formation of the *Bristol Cultural Development Partnership* - innovatively resourced by BCC, ACE and the Bristol Chamber of Commerce.

Harbourside in the 1990s

Although the surprising depth of the 1991/92 recession didn't get the decade off to a good start, the new *Lloyds* building and its adjacent amphitheatre (consciously designed for public events) were a strong statement of intent. So too was the 1991 opening of a new headquarters on Gas Ferry Road for *Aardman Animations* – the Oscar-winning Bristol company which came to symbolise the city's fast growing success in TV, film and, especially, animation. It also sharpened Harbourside's focus as a home for the creative industries. As the economy grew, private investors became more confident. At much the same time, City Council planners underwent a change of approach under a new Head of Planning. Section 52 and 106 agreements began to provide crucial infrastructure.

The increased activity generated a wave of more formal planning. In 1990 *L and R Leisure* were commissioned to produce a Leisure Master Plan – kick starting a protracted process for the development of sites around and beyond the new *Lloyds* building. Two years later, a group of Bristol architects (under the name *Concept Planning Group*) produced a planning brief to which chartered surveyors *Drivas Joinas* responded in 1993 with a development framework to move things forward. Supported by the *Bristol Initiative* the five main landowners (BCC, the JT Group, British Rail, the Gas Board and Lloyds TSB) then came together to produce the 1994 *Harbourside Accord* (with an explicit commitment to culture) and establish the *Harbourside Sponsors Group*. The landowners naturally sought to maximise the value of their holdings - though only two of the five were based in Bristol and might be said to have had the city's long-term interests at heart. The fact that the City Council was both a significant landowner and the statutory planner no doubt complicated the position. Even during a period of sustained economic growth it wasn't an easy situation.

Other planning documents in the mid-1990s included the *City Centre Strategy*. It zoned Broadmead and Cabot Circus as retail centres, Temple Quay as the focus of commercial activity (with an emphasis on financial services) and saw Harbourside as the main area for leisure and entertainment - with a range of cultural and water-based events and attractions. It was anticipated that the old city centre would link and reinforce these three areas. The 1996 *Bristol Legible City* initiative aimed to "provide the glue to the *City Centre Strategy*" and to promote Bristol's ambitions as a cultural and commercial destination. In 1997 the City Council published the first *Bristol Local Plan* for 20 years. By the following year, the residential developments at *Poole Wharf* and *Capricorn Quay* provided a spatial context for the development of the north side of the Floating Harbour. In the same year *Crest Nicholson* delivered residential and commercial plans for 16 acres on Canons Marsh to which rival schemes and interest groups responded energetically during a contentious period of public consultation. By the turn of the decade large amounts of time and money had been spent but little had been decided.

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While these developments were unfolding, a new source of public investment had dramatically changed the landscape for culture-led regeneration. In 1993 the UK's first state-franchised National Lottery was established under government license. By 2007, over £20bn (28% of lottery-generated revenue) had been raised for designated "good causes". When the necessary matching funds were taken into account, very large sums became available for investment in Britain's arts and heritage buildings. Harbourside's infrastructure prospered during this long window of opportunity. Nearly all its major cultural organisations benefitted from lottery capital investment from either the Arts Council or the Heritage Lottery Fund - some more than once. They included tens of millions of pounds awarded to *Arnolfini*, *Watershed*, *M Shed*, *SS Great Britain*, *Spike Island*, *Bristol Old Vic* and the *Colston Hall*. The recent stage one award of £3m by HLF to *Underfall Yard* suggests that, though the flow may have slowed to a trickle, the process isn't complete.

In terms of cultural regeneration, two high profile and expensive new-build projects warrant closer attention. One of them happened and one of them didn't. The *Millennium Commission* was set up at the lottery's inception to support major projects celebrating the turn of the millennium. The work carried out by the *Bristol Initiative* in bringing together the public and private sectors meant that Bristol was well positioned to respond to a national call for ideas. In the first instance an informal committee was formed to determine which of two schemes should become Bristol's millennium project; once again the *Bristol Cultural Development Partnership* was closely involved. The two options under consideration were *@Bristol* (a £90m science centre building on the success of the *Bristol Exploratory* and the presence of the *BBC Natural History Unit* and including an Imax cinema and public square) and a *Centre for the Performing Arts* (a 2,500 seat concert hall at similar cost with a second 400 seat dance auditorium plus education and community spaces). The decision was to pursue both - with £45m sought for the former from the Millennium Commission by the Bristol 2000 committee and another £45m pursued from ACE for the CPA through its own separate committee. Strategically both aimed to unlock the development of Canons Marsh and ensure a strong public domain presence. Together they would have provided a group of highly distinctive public cultural buildings of national significance at the heart of the docks with a project cost of nearly £200m. Nothing of comparable scale had ever happened in the city.

With the encouragement of the lottery funders, both committees were chaired by high profile Bristol businessmen. They also contained senior political and officer representation from the City Council (by now enthusiastically engaged) as well as other interested parties. It was the first time Bristol's public and private sectors had worked together on culture-led regeneration projects of such ambition. Design team appointments, cost assessments, build schedules, business planning, partnership funding and executive management structures were grappled with over an extended period. It isn't perhaps surprising that the developments weren't always straightforward. Although different parties had different expectations of both the process and the outcome, a great deal was learned about collaboratively working. In the end, the £97m *@Bristol* project went forward and was opened more or less on time and within budget in 2000. Having invested £4.8m of lottery money in developing a £96m scheme, it was a shock when ACE support for the *Centre for the Performing Arts* was suddenly withdrawn in 1997. Although the blame was attributed to cost over-runs linked to late design changes at a time of increasing pressure on lottery resources, to many in Bristol it was never entirely clear why ACE withdrew its funding at such a late stage.

If the failure of the *Centre for the Performing Arts* was the most frustrating cultural story of the 1990s, it was balanced by many more successes. The celebration of the 500th anniversary of John Cabot's departure from Bristol in 1497 to discover Newfoundland was celebrated by the launch of the replica *Matthew*. The keel was laid in 1993 and attracted consistent attention as

the ship was built on Redcliffe Wharf. Its £4m funding was linked to the first ticketed *International Festival of the Sea* in 1996 – an event which set a precedent for large scale animation of the docks as 375,000 people (and 34 million TV viewers) were attracted to Harbourside over four days. 1998 saw the opening of the lottery-funded *Spike Island* as a major international artists studio collective on Cumberland Road. In 1999 the decade ended on a high as the artist-designed (and JT-resourced) *Pero's Bridge* provided a pedestrian route across St Augustine's reach – one of a number which have been proposed to connect both sides of the floating harbour. It made sense of the *Brunel Mile* project (linking *Temple Meads* and the *Great Britain*) in a pedestrian and cycle way which formed part of the *Brunel 200* anniversary celebrations. By the year 2000 it was almost possible to walk round the complete *Harbourside Walkway*. The docks had been given back to the people.

Harbourside in the 21st century

Until the 2008 banking collapse, the 2000s had largely built on the success of the 1990s. By 2002 the shortlisted bid to become *Capital of Culture 2008* suggested that Bristol was finally punching its cultural weight. In 2001 *Crest Nicholson's* revised proposals for Canons Marsh had been accepted by planners and work got underway. A general sense of disappointment in the architectural and urban design outcomes coincided with the economic downturn to stall at least some of the optimism of the first part of the decade.

Harbourside's cultural asset base was incrementally strengthened as lottery-funded developments which had begun their planning in the 1990s came to fruition. The *JT Group* continued its long involvement with the opening of *Bordeaux Quay* as part of an attempt to change the late night drinking culture which had begun to undermine the area. In 2007 *Watershed* consolidated its position through the RDA-supported acquisition of the leases of the ground floor spaces. Gaining control of the building increased the resilience of its business model through rental income and made possible its continuing expansion through the 2008 *Pervasive Media Studio*. New collaborations with both universities took *Watershed* into territory which wouldn't have been possible 20 years earlier. *Arnolfini* also gained control of *Bush House* as part of a £12.5m refurbishment completed in 2005. In the same year the £11.5m refurbishment of the *Great Britain* secured another world-class heritage attraction. The £27.5m Museum of Bristol (*MShed*) opened in 2011 on the site of the old Industrial Museum. Its community responsive approach to social history attracted over a million visitors in its first 18 months – against a target of 450k. The launch of the *Brunel Institute* in 2010 reinforced the power of institutional collaboration.

For more than 40 years, Harbourside's regeneration has mirrored the national economy. The recession of the 1970s and the early 1980s downturn marked its starting point and inhibited its take-off. Since then the rhythm of growth and decline has set the parameters of the possible. The period of greatest development coincided with sustained growth from 1992 to 2008. The arrival of lottery capital funding combined with the potential for significant returns on property investment made possible the physical consolidation of existing cultural assets and the development of important new ones. Conversely, the scale of the recession since 2008 has affected public investment of all kinds as well as curbing developer appetite for speculative investment.

In 2013 most of Harbourside's independent cultural organisations are benefitting from strong leadership and working from largely fit-for-purpose buildings. Although the shadow of public sector funding cuts looms large, a hard-won resilience and optimism offers hope for the future. Over the last decade the city has established robust collaborative networks. Both universities have stepped forward as engaged institutional citizens. The BBC has committed

itself to maintaining Bristol as a centre of broadcast production. The creative industries have developed into a mature and robust economic sector. The City Council is moving towards a different kind of regional city government for the 21st century. As a result, the suspicions and misunderstandings which sometimes characterised the early responses to lottery opportunity and the development of Canons Marsh now feel a long way away. Bristol's Harbourside has grown into a mature culture-led regeneration story of international significance.

2.2 Bedminster and Southville

Bedminster and Southville are closely related inner city suburbs on the south side of Bristol. Over the last 25 years social and economic change has happened at different speeds in the areas around East Street, West Street and North Street. They therefore represent an intriguing case study through which to untangle the factors affecting the nature and the pace of regeneration and, in particular, of culture's role in the mix.

Legacy of the past

Until 1831 Bedminster was a small market town in Somerset with roots stretching back through Domesday and the Anglo Saxons to the Roman period. By the end of the 18th century 18 working coal pits operated across Bedminster and Ashton Vale. Between 1804 and 1809 the New Cut re-routed the tidal Avon to provide constant water levels and reduce silting in what became known as the Floating Harbour. It now forms the northern boundary between Southville and the city centre. Driven by coal and shipbuilding and by smelting, tanneries, glue-works, paint and glass factories, Bedminster's population grew rapidly from 3,000 in 1801 to 78,000 in 1884. By the 1880s the Wills tobacco company had become a significant employer. A late Victorian building boom produced dense housing communities with churches, public houses and shops clustered along East, West and North Streets. Responding to the damage caused by the blitz, post-war planners re-located most of the industry to the south of the parish at the same time as many people were moved to new estates in Withywood and Hartcliffe. The decline of the tobacco industry was witnessed by Imperial Tobacco's opening of Europe's largest cigarette factory in 1974 - and its closure only 16 years later. Reflecting the zeitgeist, it has now been converted by Urban Splash into the Lakeshore eco apartments.

Patterns of regeneration

By 1980, Bedminster had entered economic and social decline as the foundations for its prosperity disappeared. What has happened since and what part has culture had to play in a classic regeneration story? In the 80s and 90s a number of characteristics (often not present in the outer estates to which some long-standing Bedminster residents had been moved) suggested the area was ripe for regeneration – especially in the parts of Southville estate agents came to call "Lower Clifton" during the long years of rising property values. Proximity to the city centre ensured it was close to new job opportunities in financial services and the creative/learning industries as well as to the expanding leisure opportunities in and around Harbourside. There was money to be made in the buildings left behind by the disappearance of the area's traditional industries. Relatively affordable Victorian and Edwardian houses began to provide attractive homes for families and young professionals. By contrast, in the rest of Bedminster circumstances often made it hard for older communities to gain access to these opportunities as stubborn pockets of genuine poverty prevailed. Educational underachievement compounded entrenched economic and social problems. Retail blight followed declining industry and low levels of disposable income. The lack of community

infrastructure and political will made it hard to grapple with underlying issues like transport and the value of green spaces.

25 years later, while some wards continue to demonstrate high indices of deprivation, others have changed significantly. Although the process isn't complete, the area around North Street has been transformed - with a largely positive response from existing communities. The arrival of creative and professional families (investing in the condition of the housing stock) has driven up house values in areas closer to the centre and in an arc spreading south. The proximity of UWE's Bower Ashton campus has speeded things up. A wider demographic and a more broadly based economy have created independent community initiatives and opportunities for entrepreneurs. Retail and leisure offers have strengthened and diversified as café/bars and restaurants have responded to demand. Schemes to reclaim the streets for children by managing traffic have accompanied the active development of community-owned green spaces. As a result upper North Street is now an animated and busy public space. A sense of people being in it for the long haul (without either the sense of transience or the lack of options that characterise some other parts of the city) has led to a strong sense of cultural identity. An active and engaged community now seeks solutions to its problems rather than waiting for an increasingly cash-strapped public sector to provide the answers.

Community development

From a cultural perspective it is tempting to suggest that the development of the *Tobacco Factory* has been largely responsible for these changes – and that other comparable schemes could repeat the process in other parts of the city. Tempting, but too easy. Although in many respects it has been an exemplary intervention driven by passion and vision, other factors needed to be in play for the *Tobacco Factory* to succeed. For 30 years Bedminster has quietly nurtured a strong community infrastructure which formed the foundations for its regenerative impact. Since 1976, the much-loved *Windmill Hill City Farm* has been a classic example of sustained community-led renewal. To understand the impact of the *Tobacco Factory* we also need to understand the role of the *Southville Community Development Association* (SCDA) and its committed leadership. This is where the regeneration story starts and where it may finish as new schemes like *Way Out West* work with the *Bedminster Town Team* to spread the North Street impact into the hinterlands of East and West Streets.

The *Southville Centre* is a good place to begin the story. The building itself was made available by the City Council in 1991 on a long-term peppercorn rent lease - an example of the creative use of public assets for social purposes in ways that don't drive up hard-pressed revenue budgets. The "network and exchange" characteristics of cultural regeneration were established early as *Local Exchange Trading Schemes* provided a framework for volunteering and skills bartering which pre-figured more recent Big Society rhetoric. Small amounts of public investment have been shrewdly targeted to provide maximum impact as the SCDA has used its small team to support and float off independent initiatives with strong community roots. There are over 40 examples - many of which have used different forms of culture to survive and thrive.

In 2007, when BCC initiated its *Neighbourhood Partnership* initiative, the SCDA was well placed to become its delivery mechanism in Bedminster – initiating the *Greater Bedminster Community Partnership*. Formally constituted and working to clear terms of reference, 14 such arrangements were established across the city during the following year. Some have worked better than others. In Bedminster the Partnership had two main objectives. Firstly, to coordinate activities in response to issues prioritised by the community and, secondly, to provide local people with opportunities to engage with and participate in the area's continuing

regeneration. The approach built a sense of local ownership of future options. Consistent concerns about traffic and green spaces have been engaged with through projects such as the *Front Garden Awards* - responding to the desire to develop a greener city and limit the space available to concrete and cars. Over 10 years it has expanded geographically to the extent that over 2,000 awards were made in 2012. Interestingly, Stokes Croft chose not to follow the Neighbourhood Partnership route.

The strength of this community framework has been as important to greater Bedminster's economic and social regeneration as its proximity to the city centre and the nature of its housing stock. Without all three, culture-led regeneration would have been compromised and the *Tobacco Factory's* impact diminished. In early 2012, their existence made possible a successful bid to central government's retail initiative fronted by *Mary Portas*. The proposal argued for an event-based regenerative approach in which animated streets offer security and choice in support of a thriving network of independent traders. It drew heavily on existing creative assets – including *The Tobacco Factory Theatre*, *Show of Strength* and *UPFest*. Of the 471 town centres applying to the scheme only 12 were successful in the first round. That Bedminster was among them validates 20 years of community development work and offers the potential to extend the impact of Southville's regeneration further south. Although at £100k over a 12 month period, the amount of hard cash involved is small, establishing a *Business Improvement District* (through which local companies agree to pay an additional 1.5% in business rates for five years into a not-for-profit company that they control) will hopefully allow the *Bedminster Town Team* to be consolidated and sustained. The story shows the strength of the relationship between culture, economic and social development when energetic individuals and engaged communities work together.

The Tobacco Factory

Although it certainly benefitted from these supportive circumstances, the rescue of the *Tobacco Factory* remains a powerful story of culture-led regeneration. Sharing aspects of its DNA with pioneering creative industry initiatives like the *Leadmill* in Sheffield and Birmingham's *Custard Factory*, it has provided a critical mass of cultural activity through which to build local confidence and identity. As in other European examples (including the network of French Creation Centres) a high profile industrial building with strong local employment resonance has been developed as a powerful engine for economic and social change. In 2013 its web site summarises the ethos: "*The businesses located in the Tobacco Factory are from the creative industries, including graphic design, publishing, advertising, PR and marketing, internet services, website design, music promotion, animation, art conservation and theatre production. The building has a creative buzz about it with several businesses within the building working together.*" This clustering has elements in common with Watershed's *Pervasive Media Studios* and *Hamilton House* in Stokes Croft. *Paintworks* has provided a similarly successful social and commercial hub within the Enterprise Zone.

The Tobacco Factory's 1995 acquisition by George Ferguson started as a defensive intervention to prevent the loss of an important local asset. Against the backdrop of Southville's regenerative attributes, its subsequent development has been instinctive and opportunistic rather than strategic. High levels of energetic flexibility have benefitted from a finely tuned sense of the wider urban context and the local community. Experience, investment, connections and energy have allowed good decisions to build on each other and minimised the impact of those that have worked less well. Although the balance of commercial and social use has been explicit, public benefit hasn't always attracted public funding. In fact, significant financial risks have been taken as a series of entrepreneurial leaps of faith have created and responded to opportunity. Cultural and social activities (markets, a

ground floor café bar and a first floor theatre) have driven footfall in a 24 hour building which seeks to balance commercial profit with public benefit. The mix of tenants on the second and third floors has provided mutual support with wider links to the city's creative industries and education connections. Loft apartments on the top floor have added an important residential component to the mix. The design aesthetic has reinforced a collaborative social ethos to which the creative industries respond and which provides a nurturing environment for small-scale cultural business within and beyond the building itself.

Just as it has on Stokes Croft, an emphasis on independent locally built businesses (rather than corporate franchises) has also characterised the strengthening retail and catering offer on and around North Street. The positive economic impact is thus embedded in the community rather than feeding off it. As a result, the density of activity surrounding the *Tobacco Factory* has created a market for local traders to which other entrepreneurs have responded. Just as importantly, it has kick-started a self confidence and local pride which increases this market's sustainability. At the same time the ripple machine of the building's regenerative impact continues to spread along North Street in both directions. In Southville, an elusive and fragile tipping point seems to have been reached in which economic and social regeneration have become mutually reinforcing propositions.

Cultural development

As it has followed its own development logic, the *Tobacco Factory* has responded to existing cultural initiatives which have intensified its impact. Some of them had been trail blazers before it opened; others have occupied the terrain it has opened up. Many of them have also benefitted from the framework made possible by the SCDA. The earliest example was perhaps the high quality theatre produced in an upstairs room at the *Hen and Chicken* pub and its relationship with jazz promotions at the *Albert*. Rooted in the energy of passionate individuals with strong community links, these initiatives opened up live performance to local audiences and bought people from north Bristol south of the river. After looking for a pub venue with a large upstairs room and sympathetic landlords, *Show of Strength* presented its first of four seasons at the *Hen and Chicken* in 1989. The company quickly established itself with an emphasis on new writing and on "found" work which had fallen out of the mainstream repertoire. For the first time it became possible for a group of actors, writers and directors from Bristol's theatre networks to make a modest professional living without either leaving for London or being part of the *Bristol Old Vic*. That this has remained an achievable aspiration (with more and more young practitioners building a working life in Bristol) demonstrates an important shift at the performance end of the city's creative spectrum.

The *Hen and Chicken* residency was dependent on the good will of the landlords and vulnerable to a change of brewery ownership. After five years, when the position became unsustainable, BCC supported *Show of Strength* by making a city building in Quakers Friars available. It didn't prove a satisfactory solution. The company fragmented before re-surfacing in different forms in response to the *Tobacco Factory* opportunity. The core company was instrumental in opening the highly distinctive first floor theatre space in 1999 and went on to produce work of genuine relevance to local audiences – notably the 2002 production of *The Wills' Girls*. In 2000, *Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory* (established by people who had also been part of the original *Show of Strength*) presented an opening season of what has become an annual programme receiving glowing critical acclaim and playing to a consistent 20,000 people each year. In 1980 it would have been hard to imagine a Bristol suburb producing such work and performing it to sell-out audiences and rave national reviews. That the programme was delivered through a risk-sharing structure with no public funding in the financial mix increased the sense of something new happening south of the river.

The *Tobacco Factory Theatre* thus established itself some time before the 2002 launch of the *Tobacco Factory's* own ground-floor café/bar. The theatre was largely staffed by volunteers as a found industrial space evolved into a professional venue. The subsequent roll-out of cafes, restaurants and delis as part of North Street's thriving independent retail and catering offer quickened the pace of change in Southville. An evolving pattern of "outposts" and "infill" (helped by the wide pavements allowing both a café culture and market atmosphere) spread the *Tobacco Factory's* economic impact along North Street. A link between cultural animation, markets, leisure, food and regeneration (pre-figuring more recent developments in Stokes Croft) was established with remarkable speed. The bounce back from recession-related setbacks (such as the closure of two chains and two independents in 2010) suggests an it has a valuable underlying resilience.

The *Tobacco Factory Theatre* has subsequently developed into an important independent part of Bristol's cultural infrastructure. Actively supported for several years by the landlord, it became a full-time proposition in 2001 with its own legal status in 2003. In 2009 it expanded activities into the more intimate adjacent *Brewery* space – extending the regenerative impact down towards the park while providing a small-scale showcase for emerging talent. As an independent trust with a secure lease, a stable board and strong artistic leadership, TFT now delivers an eclectic programme to a wide range of audiences. In the last five years annual attendance has risen from 40,000 to 100,000 – of which 20,000 are at the *Brewery*. Over the same period turnover has nearly tripled from £600k to £1.7m.

Although the *Tobacco Factory* is the headline story for the culture-led regeneration of Southville, its success hasn't happened in isolation. Other arts and cultural schemes have also made important contributions to the area's regeneration. Two deserve particular mention. In 2008 the first self-funded *UPFest* responded to the energy of Bristol's urban art scene. With support from the *Tobacco Factory*, its founders and a team of volunteers brought 50 unpaid graffiti artists to work on TF's car park and surrounding areas. In 2009, over 100 artists attracted around 3,000 visitors to a closed Raleigh Road. Growth continued in 2010 (150 artists) and 2011 (200 artists) as the festival reached further into North Street and a gallery was established. Last year, *UPFest* attracted 250 artists from 17 countries and some 18,000 visitors over three days to seven key sites and a replica New York subway train. Audience research suggests that 40% of the visitors came from outside Bristol. The May 2013 festival attracted positive national coverage on the BBC. The *UPFest* team has professionalised (with five directors and a core team of 30 volunteers providing production and event management skills) and is now closely engaged with the Bedminster Town Team's *Bug Project*. It also provided production support for BCC's annual *See No Evil* venture in Nelson Street. It is interesting to compare the city-wide impact of urban street art across Stokes Croft, *UPFest*, *See No Evil* and the *Banksy versus the Bristol Museum* exhibition.

The *South Bank Arts Trails* has a longer tradition and is more closely connected with SCDP's community development process. Started by a group of local artists in 1979, it responded to a desire to make and show work locally and to a perception that established Bristol visual arts networks were difficult to engage with. With active support from the *Southville Centre*, it followed an existing self-funding and self-managed model in which artists show work in their homes plus a small network of public spaces while audiences move from place to place. The first *South Bank Show* in 2003 attracted 62 responses to a call for artists – a participation rate which has more than doubled in subsequent years. Around 3,000 people are attracted each year. In 2008 a performance week embracing musicians and poets was added. A wide range of professional and amateur work is shown with no curatorial control. Different themes are introduced annually with a strong element of participation from local schools.

Although this section tells a positive regeneration story, the process in North Street isn't yet complete and its expansion into East and West Streets is far from secure. The lower levels of both public and private investment in Bedminster over the last 20 years have perhaps made the impact of the wider economy less significant than on Harbourside. The long period of growth has still been a predominant influence on the pace and direction of change. Southville's closeness to the City Centre linked to the area's housing stock has significantly altered the local demographic – a development reflected in both North Street's retail offer and in the value of property in adjoining streets. By contrast, continuing high indices of deprivation in the wards surrounding East Street and West Street show how other parts of Bedminster have remained stubbornly resistant to regeneration. The gains in Southville may yet prove fragile. Momentum needs to be sustained if the benefits are to be consolidated and spread. Continuing regenerative impact depends on not standing still.

2.3 Stokes Croft

In June 2012 Stokes Croft featured in the Guardian's weekly "let's move to..." feature. In answer to the primary "what's going for it?" question the piece started with:

"When the revolution comes, it'll probably start here. They live their ideals round these parts. What was a few years ago a scruffy lair of crackheads and clubs has been spirited into [Bristol's Most Bohemian Neighbourhood](#), magnificently free of chain stores, alive with alternative ways of living... Thing is, this isn't anti-capitalism old-style, with hair shirt and poor personal hygiene, but with sassy glamour. The streets are painted in vast, colourful murals."

Although this is something of a media caricature, it points up both the strengths and weaknesses of the extraordinary changes seen in Stokes Croft over the last few years – changes which have largely coincided with the post-banking crash recession of 2008. On the one hand there is a sense of strong community identity resisting the imposition of both corporate business and formal politics; on the other there is a perception of the creation of a playground for invading "trustafarians". It certainly seems that something has been going on which runs counter to the notion that culture-led regeneration is a function of economic growth. What has been happening in Stokes Croft to turn this idea on its head, what does it have to say about the 21st century city and what does it have to do with culture and creativity?

This story is different in kind rather than degree from the previous two narratives. While Harbourside's 40 year history only really comes into focus with a "view from space" (and Bedminster's occupies a 25 year middle ground), the ten year flowering of Stokes Croft is best understood at an "inch to the mile" scale. While Harbourside brings a sense of the permanence of large scale investment-driven regeneration, the Croft has an ephemeral energy which flows from and through the streets. As a community-engaged incremental process, Southville perhaps sits part way between the two.

Stokes Croft's history

Although it has become synonymous with an informal district embracing Jamaica Street as well as the Picton Street and Ashley Road junction, Stokes Croft is the name of a road rather than an area. Before the motorways were built, the main A38 from Bristol to Gloucester flowed out of the city centre, past the *Full Moon* (an historic coaching inn located on the historic border between the City of Bristol and Gloucestershire) and out along the Croft. Heading north with St Pauls, Montpelier and Easton to the east and Kingsdown and Cotham

to the west, this “forgotten half mile” has long been a transitional and marginal territory on the edge of the city before the traveller reached the quieter suburbs of Bishopston and Horfield. The *St James Fair* held at the southern end of Stokes Croft had been established by 1174 and was an annual commercial attraction by the 13th century. In the early 18th century the *Stokes Croft Theatre* at the foot of Nine Tree Hill presented pantomime and drama beyond the reach of the City’s stringent by laws. A riding school was established in the mid 18th century with circular stables around an open amphitheatre behind Stokes Croft. From 1834 until its destruction by fire in 1895 these premises became the home of Bristol’s first commercial circus.

The wider area is now characterized by a mix of 18th and 19th century housing left behind by the development of the better-off Clifton, Redland and Cotham. Stokes Croft itself adds industrial and commercial buildings from the late 19th and early 20th century to the mix – structures like Westmoreland House and the Carriageworks for which a viable future has long been sought and not yet found. At its southern end, many buildings were damaged by war-time bombing and, as elsewhere in the city, re-developed haphazardly. In the late 1960s, what is effectively Bristol’s northern gateway was cut off from the city centre by the construction of the St James Barton roundabout and the subsequent construction of Avon House North – the monolithic headquarters built for the late *Avon County Council*.

A different kind of regeneration

In urban development terms these changes created fertile ground for Bristol’s version of a recurring pattern of art-led inner city regeneration – as played out across many European and North American cities over the last 50 years. It starts with the occupation of decaying inner city buildings by radical artists at sufficient density to create a critical mass. Their involvement responds to the nature and cost of the available spaces during periods of post-industrial re-adjustment. The result is a mutually reinforcing cluster – which sometimes retrospectively comes to be called a cultural quarter. Its development follows its own logic and is only rarely the result of a formal public strategy. A critical mass having been reached, the area develops a distinctive atmosphere which attracts like-minded people to the area. It also creates an environment which young urban professionals find attractive. Developers follow close behind in a pursuit of an emerging residential market. A tension is then established with long-standing residents who feel that the ethos they value is under threat from a process they don’t fully understand and feel powerless to control.

In Stokes Croft this is a recognisable pattern. During much of the post-war period the area resisted the regenerative impact of periods of growth from which much of the rest of the city benefitted. In the early 1970s the building of the M32 as the main route into the heart of the city from the north triggered a wave of compulsory purchase which speeded up the process of social change. Across the surrounding area, 18th and 19th century houses were converted into flats and bed sits. An increasing amount of social housing further changed the demographic during the 1960s and 70s. So too did the significant increase in immigration (especially from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent) as St Pauls, Montpelier and Easton became the focal point for Bristol’s own brand of nascent multi-culturalism.

Throughout this time, alongside the negative expressions of urban blight (street drinking, homelessness and decaying building stock) the Croft attracted increasing numbers of cultural radicals. During the 1980s the area built on the growing reputation of its music venues, comedy clubs, squatted centres and artists studios to become a magnet for the city’s increasingly influential underground art and music scenes. *Banksy* and other urban artists, *Ronni Size*, *the Wild Bunch*, *Massive Attack* and the *Bristol trip-hop* culture emerged from this

anarchic, sybaritic and intensely creative environment - alongside post-punk, rave, house, soul and indie musicians and radical performance artists. The multi-cultural communities of St Pauls and Easton added to the potency of the cultural brew as significant public capital and revenue funding was invested in the *Inkworks/Kuumba* project in Hepburn Road. Longer-standing building blocks of the cultural scene such as *Jamaica Street Studios* (one of the largest artist-led studio collectives outside London established over 15 years ago in a former carriageworks), the *Cube Cinema* (a volunteer-run organisation occupying the King Square home of the *Bristol Arts Centre* since 1998), the *Bank* (also opened in the late 80s), *Lakota* (Bristol's first rave club opened in a warehouse in 1992) and the *Attic Bar* all added to a vibrant mix of creative energy as Stokes Croft turned into one of Bristol's primary night time destinations – adding cultural tourists, middle-class students and suburban hipsters to people drawn to the area by life-style, cultural and political choices.

During the long period of growth from 1992 to 2008 investors slowly responded in different ways. Small clusters of residential and studio developments combined with changes to the retail profile began to suggest a wave of gentrification might be on the horizon. It was by no means always welcomed. An increasing number of planning applications kick-started active resistance to developer-led regeneration. As the scale of the 2008 financial crisis became apparent, tensions arose between the denizens of Stokes Croft who valued the area's spirited cultural ethos (with its implied commitment to localism and independent trading) and what it saw as the invading forces of capitalism, characterised by developers and corporate retailers - backed up by BCC planners and the banks. In April 2011, things came to a head when long-term resistance to the opening of a Tesco Metro store escalated into violence when a squatted property opposite (known as *Telepathic Heights*) was raided by police. The area was suddenly receiving national media attention. It rapidly came to focus not just on what was largely reported as politically motivated violence, but also on what, by then, had become an increasingly seductive narrative about the grass-roots regeneration of a decaying inner city area and its relationship with Bristol's institutions, planning frameworks and cultural identity.

People's Republic of Stokes Croft

Although they don't tell the whole story, two particular organisations reveal the spectrum of energetic activity which produced so much change so quickly in such a small area. In its 2007 mission statement, the *People's Republic of Stokes Croft* (PRSC) sought "to promote the interests of the area by working with the skills of the whole community to influence the direction in which this area develops". It proposed boundaries for a self-styled cultural quarter within which it would work to "enhance the reputation of Stokes Croft as a globally renowned centre of excellence in the arts" and defined the community as "those who live in, work in or pass through Stokes Croft and its surrounding area." Constituted as a Community Interest Company, PRSC is run by volunteers (with informal but charismatic leadership) from a base in Jamaica Street. It is responsible for a range of creative initiatives including the *Museum of Stokes Croft*, exhibitions, film and video, music and a lively online presence.

PRSC is rooted in a sense of local ownership, radical individuality and of the community value of independent traders – characteristics it shares with Old Market and comparable parts of other major post-industrial cities. By the same token it is resistant to corporate interests and what it describes as the long-term collusion with these interests by Bristol's formal power structures. To counteract what it sees as a supine civic response in the face of the sustained imposition of corporate control, PRSC has vigorously resisted them in the long-term interests of the community. It does so against the background of what it sees as a moment of profound social change rooted in post-digital universality of information and the related ability to trade trans-nationally in ideas and artefacts. This is reinforced by the perceived need to balance

economic metrics with social values as a true measure of community regeneration. Though reluctant to act as a mouthpiece, PRSC unsurprisingly became a focus of media attention during the “Tesco Riots”. The focus sharpened when Banksy contacted PRSC’s Chairman to say he had created a poster to commemorate the riots and would like to donate the profits from its sale to PRSC - an act of support which led to significant challenges for the organisation even though the posters rapidly sold out.

The People’s Republic has been closely identified with the area’s development as a centre for urban graffiti art (on designated sites) and the distinctive flavour of its public spaces. The collective act of painting public-facing buildings is seen as a metaphor for the community’s control of its own environment. Banksy’s early freehand mural *The Mild Mild West* next to The Canteen (with its teddy bear hurling a Molotov cocktail at three riot policemen) has been emblematic of Stokes Croft’s playful radicalism since it was first painted at the turn of the millennium. It is notable that when it was defaced in 2009, the mural was restored following the results of a PRSC straw poll. All this reflects how, since 2006, PRSC has consistently used different forms of cultural expression to promote its strongly held views. Though these views may not be shared by everybody, the support it receives perhaps demonstrates how they reflect some of SC’s most distinctive attributes.

Hamilton House

If the *People’s Republic* is the political life blood of Stokes Croft, then perhaps *Hamilton House* and *Coexist* represent its social heart. As development barometers, they reflect different approaches to cultural change. Built in the early 1990s, HH offers relatively cheap high volume space – the classic art-led regeneration mix. Describing itself as “a vibrant community hub”, the web site suggests its primary purpose is “to support innovative solutions” through “an art, music, enterprise and innovation cluster”. To do so it provides flexible studios, offices and hot-desking for creative start-ups, events and workshops, courses and classes, exhibitions, well-being treatments, therapies, and a programme of live music. In the *Canteen* it also provides an informal social, eating and drinking space (run alongside a community kitchen) with a distinctive aesthetic. The 55,000 sq ft building was acquired in 2006 by Connolly and Callaghan - developers with a long Bristol history in social housing and eco friendly construction. Although this was an unpropitious moment in which to develop a building of this scale for housing, they made an extraordinary leap of faith in the young entrepreneurs who make up *Coexist* – an organisation invited to take on a lease for a significant proportion of the building and to use it as an experiment in creativity-driven regeneration.

Coexist was set up in August 2008 and has grown organically in the five years since it first engaged with *Hamilton House*. It is now constituted as a Community Interest Company. An integrated approach to trading, creativity, health, well-being and food seeks innovative and ethical approaches to the development of a sustainable urban community. In contrast to *SCDP* and the *Southville Centre* they have not chosen to take the formal Neighbourhood Partnership route and have preferred not to chase the small pots of public money which have been used incrementally in Bedminster. High value has been placed on independence with a sense that it could be undermined by public support. The strategy has been to work with existing community groups (such as the bike project, the community kitchen and the well-being centre) and to host events with local people. Such an approach requires an instinct to collaborate and low levels of organisational ego. The initiative has been committed to make things happen and to seek creative solutions to entrenched urban problems. A lack of capital financing led to an ad hoc opportunistic approach which has sometimes played fast and loose with the planning process. The principle that it is sometimes easier to ask forgiveness after

the event than to seek permission before it has built a strong momentum in which the perception of energetic success has contributed to a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy.

Although there have been suggestions by some in Stokes Croft that *Hamilton House* and *Coexist* represent another, more subtle, form of white middle-class cultural invasion, there is widespread agreement that its focus on social enterprise and “cultural well-being” have been a significant catalyst for change. It was perhaps this sense that triggered *Coexist*'s early involvement alongside *Invisible Circus* with the Enterprise Zone's (sometimes contentious) *Creative Common* initiative which is currently testing out ways in which public spaces might be effectively animated. The “temporary use” project is in the second of three years.

In Stokes Croft the relationship with the wider economy is different in kind rather than degree than those experienced in Harbourside and Bedminster. Here, social change appears to have drawn strength from the downturn over the last five years. Since 2008, community politics (especially the tensions between corporate culture and local identity) has fuelled a radical cultural response. It remains to be seen whether this represents an exhilarating (if ephemeral) burst of social energy or a sustained model of social and economic regeneration. Whatever its long-term impact, Stokes Croft has become a magnet for certain kinds of maverick creativity which chime with Bristol's history of radical non-conformism and the unorthodox. It therefore has a particular relationship with the small-scale end of the creative industries spectrum.

2.4 Common Factors

The stories of Harbourside, Bedminster and Stokes Croft have as many differences as they do common factors. Section 3 looks at some of the implications. Although the lessons to be learnt need to take account of both, it is perhaps easier to focus on similarities. In a sense they summarise the key attributes of successful culture-led regeneration. The most “headline” common factors running across all three narratives are therefore:

- The significance of underlying cycles of economic growth and recession
- Flexible public sector responses to evolving patterns of social change
- Strategic and mutually supportive connections between public and private investment
- Targeted, integrated and sustained investment in culture and creativity
- A complex and nuanced role for independent cultural organisations
- A light footprint approach to public sector cultural planning
- Collective action involving different parts of the public sector
- Creation of an environment in which entrepreneurs can flourish
- Support for independent local traders and businesses
- Importance of risk-taking individuals taking leaps of faith at key moments
- Key role of public domain buildings as social and cultural hubs
- Proactive development of accessible public domain space
- Proactive understanding of the role of the public realm in a dynamic city culture
- Collaborative power of networks and cross-sectoral collaborations
- Evolving and increasingly significant contribution from Higher Education Institutions
- Achieving a critical mass of sustainable activity and infrastructure
- Engaged community ownership of problems and solutions
- Visionary leadership creating a forum for collective community action

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3 The Next Decade

What are the implications for the future?

This final section draws together some of the culture-led regeneration issues flowing from the three stories and considers their implications for the future. The main themes emerging from the May 2013 seminars have been incorporated.

3.1 Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone

Nobody sat down in 1970 to produce a detailed blue print for Harbourside, The regeneration of North Street wasn't formally planned and the outburst of creative energy in Stokes Croft didn't respond to public policy. All three were based on a light hand on the strategic tiller (getting lighter in each case) and used culture as part of a wider set of regeneration drivers. Like cultural developments in most cities, they resulted from a potent mix of opportunism, individual energy and serendipity combined with targeted public and private investment and an enormous amount of hard work. By contrast Temple Quarter has a clear planning context and an explicit starting focus on the creative industries. As one of the last major city centre development areas, its 70 acre site benefits from Enterprise Zone Status and a close relationship with the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Enterprise Zone process has moved at a cracking pace since the opportunity emerged in late 2011. Although, in most respects (the linking presence of water combined with areas of dereliction, the absence of an existing resident community and an important proportion of publicly owned land) it is closer to Harbourside than to Stokes Croft, it has the same patchwork of existing uses and ownership that characterises all three case studies. There are specified mechanisms (such as business rate discounts) to attract incoming investment and specified returns – notably the use of business rate increases to fuel continuing regeneration. Linked to these, the Zone has challenging employment targets (17,000 sustainable jobs) reflecting growth and new companies rather than the relocation of existing business. They are likely to be subject to slow early take-up followed by incremental increases as the Zone achieves critical mass. Some of the people who will work there probably aren't yet born.

The Harbourside story suggests that medium-term planning (embracing statutory processes and partnerships) will benefit from a clear and sustained long-term vision - though not necessarily articulated and managed through a detailed Master Plan. On the other hand, Stokes Croft clearly suggests that leaving creative gaps within the planned environment can be as important as the larger building blocks of development. In this context, short-term decisions through which to animate the Zone such as the *Creative Common* and the *Bristol Temple Quarter Commissions* (coordinated by *Watershed* and funded by *ACE*) are obviously helpful. The use of public space and the temporary occupation of existing buildings open the area up through testing different kinds of temporary cultural engagements. Existing private sector assets (like *Paintworks* and the old HTV studios on the Bath Road) will play a distinctive role. The involvement of sympathetic smaller-scale developers who are in it for the long haul rather than the quick buck will be highly desirable. The active engagement of institutional partners (especially both universities) will also increase critical mass. Defined contributions from the city's independent "mixed economy" cultural organisations will speed up economic impact and increase social returns. The networks which make these

partnerships function need to be sustained and nurtured so that the sometimes tortuous process on Canons Marsh in the 1990s can be avoided. The early development of the Empire and Commonwealth Museum building at Temple Meads (as the *Engine Shed*) represents an excellent start.

3.2 Bristol City Council

Increasing pressure on budgets implies that, over the coming years, a shrinking public sector will continue to move away from service delivery. Faced with diminishing resources, local government's future cultural purpose may be to create and sustain a strategic context rather than to run an arts team, a museums service or a concert venue. If so, its most important function will be to articulate and lead the City's cultural ambition and provide a framework for collaboration in which individuals, organisations and institutions can achieve it collectively. Economic conditions are likely to inhibit cultural investment from Treasury and local government sources for at least another five years. At such a time it is more important rather than less to maintain a strategic focus in defence of hard-won cultural assets so that they can play their full part in the return to economic growth. This is all the more significant as we move from a period of capital investment in cultural infrastructure into one in which its maturing economic and social return is maximised by creative animation and cultural programmes.

The key political change in Bristol from the last 40 years lies in last year's decision to move to an elected Mayor (working with a cabinet of councillors) and its implications for consistent civic leadership which isn't linked to political control of the City Council. The March 2013 decision to move from annual local elections to a four year cycle aligned to the mayoral election has further strengthened the growing sense that Bristol may now benefit from a period of sustained leadership through which to achieve policy objectives through targeted investment. That its first task was to set a budget making £35m year-on-year savings (to be followed by a three year budget saving another £65m) shows the scale of the task. The period of public debate through which a zero-based budget will now be set provides an important opportunity to consider the appropriate role for a City Council in the early 21st century and the kinds of structures and process through which it should be played out.

BCC has already drastically reduced its internal arts team staffing in order to defend support to independent providers. Even under these circumstances it still controls important cultural levers – notably in terms of asset ownership (land and buildings) and statutory planning. Combined with strong political leadership and the ability to align different kinds of spending with a well-articulated cultural strategy of ambition, the City Council therefore remains the single most important building block in the pursuit of culture-led regeneration. While it is important (as a strong statement of intent for culture's innate value) that the Council's financial support for independent cultural organisations remains in place, in the long term its ability to provide strategic leadership, broker sustainable partnerships and create a planning environment in which culture flourishes may prove more significant.

3.3 Cultural Assets

At the end of the 1992 recession, many of the city's arts and heritage organisations were in difficulties. Buildings were crumbling and business plans had been undermined by 13 years of below-inflation funding settlements. The sector's morale was low as generations of creative talent looked elsewhere for a living in the face of apparent government indifference. 20 years later most of Bristol's major cultural buildings have been made largely fit-for-purpose and

important new ones have been built. Although for some the task remains unfinished, the city's cultural infrastructure in 2013 is in much better shape than it was in 1990. At the same time, between 1997 and 2008 annual Treasury investment in culture more than doubled as the economic and social value of the creative industries became much better understood.

Section 2 clearly shows that public investment in arts and heritage isn't just about middle class leisure choices. Since 2008, public cultural funding has nonetheless come under the same massive pressure as other service areas. The last DCMS settlement to ACE involved a 30% cut over three years; all over the country local authorities are cutting grant budgets and other cultural services – some by 100%. The lesson from Section 2 is that the City needs to understand the value of its cultural assets and do what it can to defend them over the continuing years of difficulty to ensure they are still around when the economy returns from growth. Assets include buildings, infrastructure and public domain space as well as companies and institutions. Almost more importantly they include people and the networks through which they function. Bristol is fortunate in its current generation of cultural leaders – not just within arts and cultural heritage organisations but in wider communities and interest groups, key parts of BCC, both universities and the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative. The stories in Section 2 all suggest that promoting and maintaining the networks through which they relate to each other is a key priority for the coming period.

3.4 Cultural Planning

It would be good to be able to report that the success stories in Section 2 followed a long-term, public sector-led strategic programme planned and delivered in good order. The truth is that a combination of serendipity and opportunism marked by periodic leaps of faith and injections of entrepreneurial energy would be closer to the mark. Section 2 shows that the nature and pace of culture-led regeneration is largely determined not by planning but by the availability of investment combined with political will and collective action. The key players have circled each other, fallen out and made up repeatedly as they have inched their way towards common ground. Some important individuals have moved on and been replaced, some have died and some have lost interest. Organisations and government departments have risen and fallen. One or two have been fixed points throughout the process.

There are a number of lessons to be learnt. The first focuses on the relationship between strong leadership and community planning. BCC is perceived by some to have suffered from a lack of continuity in political leadership over the last 40 years. This is certainly true compared with rival cities like Manchester over the same period and may be addressed through the new elected Mayor. The closure of the Regional Development Agency and its replacement by a Local Enterprise Partnership with a sub-regional perspective is also an important change in the planning context. Section 2.1 suggests that the planning process in Harbourside (especially in the development of Canons March) followed rather than led the central relationships between BCC (as a landowner and in its statutory planning role), public stakeholders, other landowners and preferred developers with their design teams. Community consultation tended to be post-hoc and frequently prompted strong feelings from a range of interest groups. The May seminars suggest that a light-touch approach should reflect the move away from detailed master planning (led by a paternalistic local authority) towards a flexible development framework which responds to the character and attributes of different areas. Temple Meads, for example, will act as both an interchange and a gateway – with structures, spaces and activities which reflect and reinforce these characteristics.

3.5 The Independent Cultural Offer

Section 2 shows the significance of a thriving independent cultural offer – both in managing the physical infrastructure and in delivering the programmes through which it makes its social and economic impact. This is certainly important across Harbourside and the city centre (with major organisations receiving public support as well as trading commercially), but it is also true in other parts of the city - the *Tobacco Factory* being a significant case in point. Section 3.2 also points out the funding threat with which independent “mixed-economy” cultural organisations have been faced since 2008.

Like all cities, over the next decade Bristol will need to be clear whether (and how much) they are valued and, if so, how their role might evolve in changing times. This sector includes the city’s main independent cultural building blocks – *Watershed*, *Arnolfini* and *Bristol Old Vic*. It also embraces important buildings like *St Georges* and the *RWA* and smaller organisations some of whose contributions have been of great significance to the stories in Section 2. The establishing of the *Bristol Music Trust* in 2011 (to manage the *Colston Hall* and to drive music development in the city) and the proposed floating off of the *Museum Service* to independent trust status adds to the collective value of these independent organisations with their capacity to marry an entrepreneurial approach to public investment for public benefit.

3.6 Creative Industries

Bristol’s creative industries (on which the success of the Enterprise Zone is predicated) have their own characteristics and attributes. As we move further into a post-manufacturing world, products and services based on content, ideas, concepts, images and designs become ever-more significant. The creative industries both feed off and generate these profound changes in our working culture. Many (but not all) are either rooted in or make active use of digital technologies. Rapid increases in high bandwidth connectivity over the next period will transform them and their impact on all our lives. The way people earn their living in these industries is changing in response. So too is the nature and purpose of the city centre and its relationship with the inner and outer suburbs as work becomes less office-based and more flexible. The case studies nonetheless suggest that, in Bristol, creative people want to work in social city centre spaces. The notion of a job for life in a big company is disappearing as freelance and short-contract lifestyles become commonplace. More people work fluidly in small groups in which they change their employment relationships regularly. Under these circumstances, the “second job” syndrome becomes significant to a creative individual’s decision to relocate to a city. So too does the quality of life in a city and its relationship with the cultural offer.

Section 1.1 talked about the spectrum of activity beneath the creative industries’ umbrella. The relationship between scale, density, critical mass and energy will be critical as start-ups become scalable businesses and creative ideas evolve into products and services. The Zone needs to build on the success of *Watershed’s Pervasive Media Studio* and commercial ventures like *Paintworks*. Large-scale prestige offices of the kind implied by the financial and legal services new builds on Temple Quay are unlikely to work in isolation. Experience in Shoreditch (repeated in Stokes Croft) suggests the need for modular studio spaces which new creative businesses can occupy on short-term flexible leases. The old Sorting Office complex is probably the most suitable set of unused buildings in the Enterprise Zone for such businesses. How it is brought back into use is likely to be a defining point for the Zone’s animation and feel.

3.7 Networks and Citizenship

Culture delivers maximum public benefit through the active collaboration of public and private sectors based on a mutual understanding of their roles and functions. Each draws strength from the health of the other; both are diminished if either is disproportionately weak. Regenerative impact requires partnerships which are strategic, dynamic and flexible. Section 3.3 touched on the success of Bristol's formal and informal cultural networks. Collaborations between city institutions (including universities, health trusts and the BBC) add economic and social value to the city at the same time as reinforcing individual missions.

Over the last ten years Bristol has developed unusually strong personal and professional links based on trust and mutual respect. They will be of central significance as the city pulls out of recession in the coming years. Helpfully, Bristol seems now to have moved away from the misleading stereotypes which sometimes blighted the early relationships described in Section 2.1. As a result, the city is better equipped to respond to a return to growth later this decade than it was last time around in the early 1990s. Some part of this is attributable to the lessons learned over the 40 years of cultural change described in Section 2.

Lying behind this enhanced instinct for collaboration, the concept of citizenship will become increasingly important. In this sense the term embraces the individual, the institutional and the corporate. Section 2 points up the role played by key people at moments of opportunity. Dozens of others have also displayed the entrepreneurial spirit on which the city's complex cultural offer depends. They require acknowledgement and support as well as a supportive framework in which to operate. Over the last decade the city's institutions have reached a much more nuanced understanding of their relationship with a thriving Bristol and its broadly defined cultural offer. They have been increasingly ready to step up to the plate through collaborations which are in their own interests and those of the wider city. This is certainly true of both universities and the BBC and may now be able to extend to the three major professional sports teams (with their potential new stadia) and perhaps the Health Trusts. An evolving role for corporate Bristol (individually as well as through the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative) is likely to be a strong determinant of cultural success with all its related economic and social benefits.

Conclusion

In April 2005, the introduction to a report on creativity on Bristol¹ suggested:

“These are tricky times for local government. Political uncertainties have complicated Bristol City Council’s challenging task in turning policy expectation into service realities. The Council faces budgetary pressures as substantial as they are well-documented. Faced with entrenched problems it’s not always easy for politicians to head for the broad sunny uplands of ambition. Talk about “creativity” can seem self-indulgent in a city faced with seemingly intractable day-to-day problems in health, housing, transport, education and social services.

By the same token there’s no expectation that a short burst of city-wide talking will convert those unconvinced of the value of creativity as a real-world agent of change. So why re-visit the discussion now? The answer lies in the mirror image of the previous paragraph’s dilemma. In a Europe of the regions, a city is diminished if its long-term civic ambition is sacrificed on the altar of short-term problems. A city in which the urgent takes precedence over the important risks permanent second division status. To ensure this doesn’t happen in Bristol we need to articulate and press the vision of a creative future.”

In the eight years since these words were written we have experienced the most serious economic downturn since the 1930s. In response, the coalition government has seen the management of public debt as its primary economic driver. The related constraints on public spending and private sector profit look likely to continue – at least until such time as growth returns to the economic cycle.

Under such circumstances, it wouldn’t have been surprising to find a weary cynicism and a deep-seated pessimism among those to whom we have spoken. Curiously, the opposite has been the case. Competitive advantage among cities is a relative phenomenon which exists in recession just as it does in growth. The three stories in Section 2 show both what has been achieved in Bristol and what remains to be done. We have found widespread understanding and support for the role played by culture and creativity in delivering social and economic regeneration and an energetic optimism about Bristol’s ability to create competitive advantage from its current circumstances.

Perhaps this is due to a sense of change accompanying the first months in office of the city’s first elected Mayor. Whatever the reason, we have encountered a strong will to seize a moment for change by implementing a creative vision of high ambition for Bristol and the city-region. What is important now is to articulate and sustain a strategic approach which defends existing cultural assets (buildings and public spaces, organisations and institutions, people and networks) and uses them with strong social purpose to maximise Bristol’s collective response to a return to economic growth.

¹ The Bristol Hum, Peter Boyden Consultants, 2005

Annex A: A 40 Year Timeline

Section 2 tells the story of the cultural development of Harbourside, Bedminster/Southville and Stokes Croft. This annex demonstrates the scale of both the task and the achievement by setting key events from all three in a decade by decade time line.

1970s

- 1970: *SS Great Britain* returns from the Falklands to Great Western Dock
- 1972: Bush warehouse leased by *JT Group* to develop as home for *Arnolfini* and JT
- 1973: First power boat grand prix in city docks celebrates the Bristol 600 anniversary
- 1973: Formation of *City Docks Group*
- 1974: *Sir Hugh Casson's report* into the future of Bristol Docks commissioned by BCC
- 1974: BCC opens *Bristol Industrial Museum* in Princes Wharf transit shed
- 1974: The *Inkworks* opens as African and Caribbean arts centre in St Pauls
- 1975: Commercial closure of *Bristol Docks*
- 1975: First "*20 Ideas for Bristol*" exhibition at *City Museum and Art Gallery*
- 1975: *Arnolfini* opens at Bush House
- 1976: Volunteer group establishes *Windmill Hill City Farm*
- 1977: Closure of Bristol's final shipbuilding company at *Albion Yard*
- 1978: *Ferry service* established through floating harbour

1980s

- 1982: *JT Group* acquires 125 year head lease on E & W sheds and adjacent U and V sheds
- 1982: *Watershed* opens in E & W Shed as UK's first Media Centre
- 1984: *Thekla* arrives from the Baltic and is permanently moored on *Mud Dock*
- 1984: Housing at *Merchant's Landing* completed
- 1986: *Baltic Wharf* housing scheme on the south bank of the Floating Harbour completed
- 1986: *Jamaica Street Studios* established as artists collective
- 1988: Demolition of bonded tobacco warehouses on *Canons Marsh*
- 1989: Formation of the *Bristol Initiative*
- 1989: *Bristol Development Corporation* set up by Conservative government
- 1989: First *Show of Strength* season at *Hen and Chicken* in Bedminster

1990s

- 1990: *Lloyds TSB* retail headquarters completed on derelict Canon's Marsh site
- 1990: *L and R Leisure* planning and urban design study into development of HS
- 1991: New headquarters of *Aardman Animations* opens on Gas Ferry Road
- 1991: *Southville Centre* opens after being made available by BCC
- 1992: *Drivas Jonas* produce HS development framework
- 1992: *Lakota Club* opens on Stokes Croft
- 1992: *Inkworks* re-launched as *Kuumba* after capital development project
- 1993: Architect-led *Concept Planning Group* delivers HS viability plan
- 1993: Landowners respond through development of *Harbourside Accord*
- 1993: Accord leads to the establishment of the *Harbourside Sponsor's Group*
- 1993: Publication of first *Bristol Cultural Strategy*
- 1994: Camelot awarded the franchise for the first National Lottery
- 1993: Formation of the *Bristol Cultural Development Partnership*
- 1995: George Ferguson acquires *Tobacco Factory* building in Raleigh Road
- 1996: Major *International Festival of the Sea* establishes precedent for major HS Festivals
- 1996: *Architecture Centre* opens on Broad Quay
- 1996: Abolition of Avon County Council leaves BCC as unitary authority
- 1996: *Matthew* Launched – a replica of the ship in which John Cabot discovered America
- 1997: Publication of the first *Bristol Local Plan* for 20 years
- 1997: *Harbourside Design Forum* established
- 1998: *Cube Cinema* established by four artists in King Square
- 1998: ACE withdraws support for *Centre for the Performing Arts* on key HS site
- 1998: Lottery funded *Spike Island* artist studio collective opens in Brooke Bond tea factory
- 1998: Residential development completed at *Capricorn Quay*
- 1998: First *Crest Nicholson* residential and commercial plan for 16 acres on Canons Marsh
- 1999: First shows from *Show of Strength* at the Tobacco Factory Theatre
- 1999: Rival schemes proposed during difficult period of consultation
- 1999: JT development of U and V sheds complete
- 1999: Artist-designed *Pero's Bridge* provides pedestrian link across St Augustine's Reach
- 1999: Residential development completed at *Poole's Wharf*

2000s

- 2000: Banksy's free-hand mural *the Mild, Mild West* appears in Stokes Croft
- 2000: £97m *@Bristol* Science Centre opens at Millennium Square

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- 2000: Opening season of *Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory*
- 2001: *Bristol Legible City* place-making initiative provides first formal use of HS name
- 2001: Revised *Crest Nicholson* proposals for Canons Marsh accepted by planners
- 2001: *BOV* community production of *Up the Feeder Down the Mouth* in *M Shed*
- 2002: Bristol's bid for *Capital of Culture 2008* shortlisted to the final six
- 2002: Opening of the *Tobacco Factory* café/bar
- 2002: Seminal production of the *Wills' Girls* by *Show of Strength* at the *Tobacco Factory*
- 2003: *Tobacco Factory Theatre* independently constituted
- 2003: *South Bank Arts Trail* features 62 artists in first *South Bank Show*
- 2005: *Arnolfini* re-opens after major £12.5m re-development of Bush House
- 2005: *Watershed* completes £2.5m redevelopment
- 2005: £11.5m refurbishment of *SS Great Britain* "re-launched" as heritage visitor attraction
- 2006: Developers *Connolly and Callaghan* acquire *Hamilton House* on Stokes Croft
- 2006: *Brunel 200* celebrates bicentenary of Brunel's birth
- 2006: Informal establishment of *People's Republic of Stokes Croft*
- 2007: SWRDA supports *Watershed* in acquisition of leases for ground floor spaces
- 2007: *SCDA* appointed to deliver *Neighbourhood Partnership* in Southville
- 2008: *Watershed* opens *Pervasive Media Studio*
- 2008: First *UPFest* responds to Bristol's growing reputation for urban art
- 2008: *Coexist* set up as Community Interest Company to manage *Hamilton House*
- 2009: 200th anniversary of the opening of the *Floating Harbour*
- 2009: *Tobacco Factory Theatre* opens the *Brewery*
- 2009: *Kuumba* arts and community teams made redundant after loss of revenue funding
- 2010: The *Canteen* opens at *Hamilton House*
- 2011: *M Shed* Museum of Bristol opens on Princes Wharf at a total project cost of £27.5m
- 2011: So-called *Tesco Riot* focuses national attention on Stokes Croft
- 2012: Refurbished 18th century *Theatre Royal* reopened by *Bristol Old Vic*
- 2012: Opening of the *Brunel Institute* by the SS Great Britain Trust
- 2012: *Underfall Yard* awarded stage one £3m capital funding by Heritage Lottery Fund
- 2012: Bedminster wins government investment in Mary Portas-led *Town Centre Initiative*
- 2012: *Coexist* and *Invisible Circus* launch *Creative Common* project in *TQEZ*

Annex B: Consultees

This is a list of people interviewed on a one-to-one basis. Informal conversations with others have also happened. People who also attended one of the May seminars are marked *.

- John Adams, University of Bristol & ex-Chair, Watershed *
- David Alder, University of Bristol *
- Tom Archer, BBC
- Ben Barker, Bedminster Neighbourhood Partnership *
- Paul Bristow, Arts Council England (National Office) *
- Marti Burgess, Lakota
- Nick Capaldi, Arts Council of Wales & ex-Arts Council England South West *
- Nick Childs, Childs and Sulzman Architects *
- Simon Cook, Bristol City Council (Culture and Arts Portfolio Holder) *
- Chris Chalkley, Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft
- John Durant, BDH *
- James Durie, Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative *
- Julie Finch, Head of Museums and Archives, Bristol City Council *
- Andy Gibbins, Bristol City Council *
- Phil Gibby, Arts Council England South West
- Professor Paul Gough, University of the West of England
- George Ferguson, Bristol City Council, (Elected Mayor)
- Neil Fountain, ex-Manchester City Council
- Sheila Hannon, Show of Strength *
- Steve Hayles, UPFest *
- Martyn Heighton, ex-Bristol City Council *
- Andrew Hilton, Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory
- Glen and Tony Eastman, South Bank Arts Trail *
- Stephen Hilton, Bristol City Council *
- Helen Holland, Bristol City Council (Leader of the Labour Group) *
- Peter Holt, Bristol City Council *
- David Johnstone, JT Group
- Andrew Kelly, Bristol Festival of Ideas & Bristol Cultural Development Partnership
- John Manley, Hewlett Packard *
- Laura Marshall, Icon Films & Bristol Old Vic
- David Mellor, Alec French Partnership *
- Simon Mellor, Arts Council England (National Office)
- Professor Guy Orpen, University of Bristol
- Alun Owen, Bristol City Council

Culture, Creativity and Regeneration in Bristol: Three Stories

- Dick Penny, Watershed *
- Alf Perry, Director, Underfall Yard Trust *
- Jamie Pike, Coexist *
- John Pontin, JT Group
- Derrick Price, Chair, Watershed *
- Clare Reddington, iShed & Pervasive Media Studios
- Arne Ringner, Glass Boat, Spyglass and Clifton Lido
- Ali Robertson, Tobacco Factory Theatre *
- John Savage, Business West
- Alastair Sawday, Sawday's *
- Richard Smith, Harbour Master, Bristol City Council *
- Sarah Smith, Tobacco Factory Theatre & ex-Bristol Old Vic
- Bob Smyth, ex-Burges Salmon and Circomedia *
- David Sproxton, Aardman Animations *
- Matthew Tanner, SS Great Britain Trust
- Tom Trevor, Arnolfini
- Stephen Wray, Bristol City Council *
- Zoe Willcox, Bristol City Council *

The following people attended one of the May seminars but did not participate in the earlier research.

- Stacey Bartlett, Harbour Master's Office, Bristol City Council
- Cassie Farrell, Independent TV and Film Director
- Ted Fowler, Bristol City Council
- Alison Griffiths, University of Bristol
- Lycia Harper, Glow Consulting
- Helen Legg, Spike Island
- Daniel Oliver, Working Knowledge
- Thomas Paine and Dave Harvey, Team Love
- Paul Taylor, Bristol City Council

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