

## **Draft South East Creative Economy Network Towards a SELEP Creative Open Workspace Master Plan**

### **Executive Summary**

This plan makes the case for investment in creative open workspace to support the growth of the creative economy across the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) region. The Plan:

- identifies the principles and opportunities for investing in Creative Open Workspace
- identifies key geographical creative clusters
- identifies hard and soft assets to build from
- provides a framework for investment
- supports our ambition to develop a minimum of three Creative Enterprise Zones (CEZ) in the SELEP region

### **Why an Open Workspace Masterplan for the creative economy?**

The growth of the creative industries in the SELEP region to date is significant and the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) is committed to ensuring that this growth continues. Availability of affordable and flexible workspace for creative businesses is vital, not just to provide premises for entrepreneurs in the early stages of their businesses, or to provide appropriate move on space but because open workspace fosters innovation and therefore growth. Clustering of similar businesses increases the productivity of any industry, as knowledge and improvements in techniques and productivity are more likely to be shared, stimulating innovation.

Since 2010, the number of creative businesses in the SELEP area has grown by 30.5%. The proportion of creative industries in the total SELEP business base is growing as well, accounting for 9.6% of total businesses in 2015, compared to 8.5% in 2010. When comparing the region with other LEPS, SELEP is above average regarding the share of creative enterprises, ranking 13<sup>th</sup> of all 39 LEPS. However, growth is below the national average, suggesting that the SELEP region is failing to maximise its obvious potential given its proximity and connectivity to London, and risks losing out to other LEPS.

The creative economy is mainly comprised of micro businesses with 9.6% of the business base accounting for just 3.3% of jobs. 47% of creative workers are self-employed (compared with 15% across the workforce as a whole). There is clearly scope to support and grow micro businesses to translate into employment growth in the future. These key characteristics lead to challenges that need to be addressed to support growth and create move-on space for those businesses.

Creative industries can lack visibility. Flagship buildings which bring many microbusinesses under one umbrella not only support those businesses but tell a story about the impact of the creative industries on the local economy, they send a clear signal that creative microbusinesses are welcomed and valued in

the region and are immediate docking stations for creative businesses to seek out the ecosystem of complementary businesses, business support and camaraderie they need to survive. Furthermore, open workspace can lend authority to brands, supporting marketing and promotion campaigns.

The creative economy, like other sectors, has specific requirements. These requirements are often lighter on infrastructure than other sectors with less need for purpose built buildings or increased demand on over stretched and expensive transport infrastructure. Instead they are likely to have business critical reliance on digital connectivity. Instead they are likely to have business critical reliance on digital connectivity - a robust ultrafast digital infrastructure is crucial in both attracting businesses to workspace developments and in allowing collectives of freelancers and microbusinesses to cluster - and any new developments should incorporate this. This need has been identified in the 2017 Bazalgette Review of the Creative Industries: "To compete and collaborate globally, our Creative Industries must adopt the latest technology and digital infrastructure. Creative clusters should put themselves forward as testing grounds for ultrafast connections and 5G rollout within national plans. LEPs and local councils must treat connectivity as a key factor, shaping where businesses choose to locate, and ensure businesses benefit from the most attractive connectivity offers to support future growth." Equally the sector will hold out for premises which allow them to prioritise lifestyle factors such as sustainable transport options and authentic environments, ideally coupled with natural assets such as coast and countryside.

Attracting creative businesses to the SELEP area is to enter a competitive market, with places nationally and internationally vying to capture the UK's talent. Creative workspace works best and generates greatest positive impact on the economy and community when it is affordable; with the right technology, investing in the long term; is sector-led and provides the potential to raise finance against the security of the capital asset; it enables smaller companies to share the hosting of people seeking work experience, internships and apprenticeships.

Potential investors in workspace will need to be confident of SELEP's support and will want to see their sector embedded in economic and planning strategy leading to access to key assets and low cost finance.

### **An Asset Based Approach**

Creative Open Workspace thrives where it capitalises on existing assets, both hard assets (such as suitable buildings, favourable planning policies, talent, Higher Education partnerships and knowledge, existing creative businesses) and soft assets (including talent, appealing environments offering good work/life balance and networks).

### **Investment Strategy**

In addition to identifying priority clusters, the action plan will generate the tools to identify viable and fit for purpose Open Workspace proposals. This will in turn help us to prioritise open workspaces for investment, building a pipeline of projects ready to be realised.

### Key actions for the South East Creative Economy Network

1. Identify a minimum of three Creative Enterprise Zones
2. Create a pipeline of projects through an investment strategy and toolkit
3. Research and present existing and new options for financial and governance models
4. Develop cultural planning policy that can be adopted by local authorities to support the inclusion of creative workspace in new developments and the re-purposing of under-used buildings as creative workspace.
5. Create a SELEP-wide open workspace property portfolio
6. Continue to grow the evidence base



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## **South East Creative Economy Network**

### **Towards a SELEP Creative Open Workspace Master Plan**

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#### **Source material:**

South East Creative Economy Network Creative Industries Report, Shared Intelligence (2016)

IPPR Start me up: The value of workspaces for small business, entrepreneurs and artists in London (2017)

NESTA: The Geography of Creativity

Prospectus for Enterprise Zones

## **South East Creative Economy Network Towards a SELEP Creative Open Workspace Master Plan**

### **1. Introduction**

This plan makes the case for investment in creative open workspace to support the growth of the creative economy across the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) region. The Plan:

- identifies the principles and opportunities for investing in Creative Open Workspace
- identifies key geographical creative clusters
- identifies hard and soft assets to build from
- provides a framework for investment
- supports our ambition to develop a minimum of three Creative Enterprise Zones (CEZ) in the SELEP region

In 2014 the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) commissioned an impact assessment of the creative industry sector in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) region. In the context of this report and the work of SECEN the creative industry sector includes creative, digital and information technology sub sectors (CDIT). The study established that between 2010 and 2015 local entrepreneurs added 3,500 creative businesses to the business base in the SELEP area, growing the sector by 30.5% to reach a total of 15,000 businesses. Creative industries in SELEP added just under 9,850 jobs to the labour market between 2009 and 2014 with growth of 25% in employment. Both growth rates are more than twice the average for the area's business and employment performance overall.

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper has identified the Creative Industries as one of nine growth sectors. The Creative Industries Federation (CIF), in its response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper has created a blueprint for the future success of the creative industries which includes three specific new proposals. They are:

- Creative Enterprise Zones modelled on the government's successful Enterprise Zone programme
- A national 'business booster' network offering advice on IP, exports and finance for start-ups and small enterprises
- A creative careers campaign to diversify recruitment and counteract misleading and inadequate careers advice

In order for the SELEP to respond effectively to this blueprint and better capture this valuable economic sector, the following SECEN work programmes mirror the CIF priorities and addresses the key pillars required to ensure the continued growth of the creative sector in the region:

- Creative Open Workspace Masterplan
- South East Creative and Digital Support – sector-specific business development programme for start-up and growth businesses
- Talent Accelerator –skills development programme

- Thames Estuary Production Corridor
- Cultural Tourism promotion

SECEN's Prospectus <sup>1</sup> provides the framework for growth: investment in workspace and the potential to develop Creative Enterprise Zones are best placed where there are already strong existing anchor businesses and micro-clusters in several key locations offering greatest potential for sector growth. The SELEP is perfectly positioned to attract and grow this sector for the benefit of the South East LEP economy. The prospectus will support the identification of existing clusters to build on.



### 3. The Creative Industries: what is the growth potential?

Between 2009 and 2013 exports of services by UK creative industries grew by 34.2% whilst in the same period UK services exports overall grew by just 20.6%.

Since 2010 growth in the number of creative businesses in the SELEP area (30.5%) was below the national average (34.7%). The share of creative industries in total SELEP businesses is growing, accounting for 9.6% of total businesses in 2015, compared to 8.5% in 2010. This share is still below that of England (11.3%) and London (19.2%).

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<sup>1</sup> SELEP 2014 Towards a National Prospectus for the Creative Economy in the South East

When comparing the region with other LEPs, SELEP was above average regarding the share of creative enterprises, ranking 13<sup>th</sup> of all 39 LEPs. To reach the same share of creative enterprises as London (19.2%), SELEP should increase its number of creative businesses by 15,000 to reach 30,000 creative enterprises.

The Greater London Authority has estimated<sup>2</sup> that 30% of London's creative workplaces will be displaced from the Capital in the next five years. This displacement presents a significant opportunity for SELEP but this is a highly competitive market and the conditions to attract this highly lucrative sector of the economy need to be put in place.

Unlike other goods export sectors (in manufacturing for example) creative exports will tend to require less raw material or 'intermediate inputs', allowing the creators of products to capture a higher share of value from sales. The higher value-added relative to turnover that many creative professionals are capturing in income is the very definition of 'productivity'.

The growth trajectory of the Creative Industries in the SELEP area to date is significant (see below) and SECEN is committed to ensuring that this growth continues. The sector is mainly comprised of micro businesses which create low numbers of jobs. With 9.6% of the business base accounting for just 3.3% of jobs there is clearly scope to support and grow these micro businesses to translate into employment growth in the future. This key characteristic leads to challenges that need to be addressed to support growth and create move-on space for those businesses with growth potential.

Below the headline figures lie variations in growth in the various sub-category industries. Nationally, IT, software and computer services has grown by 40.5%, adding over £10bn in GVA since 2008. IT, software and computer services accounted for 34.5% of GVA produced in the creative sector, followed by film, TV, video, radio and photography (16.2%) and publishing (15.1%). However, other sub-sectors have seen faster increase in output from 2010 to 2014: product, graphic and fashion design (67.3%), crafts (64.4%), advertising and marketing (63.7%). This reflects a diversification of the creative sector with an increasing contribution of industries other than those related to purely 'digital' activities.

The high GVA and employment growth rates seen will, at some point come up against space and skills constraints, and Creative businesses will have to begin to compete with other sectors for commercial space and workers. This strategy aims to act now to mitigate the possibility that lack of workspace will limit the growth of the creative sector in the SELEP area.

#### **4. What is Creative Open Workspace?**

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<sup>2</sup> GLA (2014) Artists' workspace study: Report and Recommendations, Mayor of London

For the purposes of this report we use the generic term “open workspace” (in line with the IPPR report). Open workspace includes incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, managed workspace, makerspaces and artists’ studios. Open workspaces have grown as a result of global workplace changes, with technology making it possible for employees and the self-employed to work from anywhere with a good internet connection. Most users are microbusinesses and a significant proportion are creative businesses; open workspaces also bring together professionals working in other sectors, including biotech, business services and the charity sector.

It is important to differentiate between the types of workspace and business models as they all offer slightly different things to meet differing business needs. Open workspaces have flexible terms of access; tenants may be members or pay-per-day, they do not need to sign a long lease, which reduces the risk to them of taking on a space. By the same token, a steady flow of multiple users means that risk to the landlord can be kept low. Some open workspaces also offer more ‘dedicated’ spaces that tenants can move into as they become established and scale up, and which are sometimes used to cross-subsidise other spaces.





## 5. Why is open workspace the preferred model for creative businesses?

Because sharing space and resources also reduces costs, tenants can afford higher-grade workspace, which is both preferred by staff and suitable to accommodate customers and funders. It also enables businesses to access more expensive equipment – which is especially important for artists and makers. (London IPPR report established that co-working achieves employment densities of 8sqm per FTE compared to 12sqm for traditional office space).

- Support and advice

The support on offer varies by provider and workspace type, but may include: training opportunities, mentoring, events and linking users with funders. Incubators and accelerators commonly offer all these types of service, as their purpose is to act as a supportive environment focused on growing tenants' businesses. Open workspaces focused on addressing disadvantage typically provide services such as training opportunities to help people become self-employed or find employment.

- Peer-to-peer interaction

Even where tenants have dedicated offices, open workspaces have communal areas that are shared between tenants – whether a kitchen, corridor or office space. Particularly in co-working spaces, shared areas are designed to facilitate serendipitous meetings and collaboration, which may generate new networks, ideas, collaboration and products.

- Complementarity

Open workspaces 'curate' their communities by acting as gatekeepers to the space. In some cases, tenants may be allowed access because of their similarities; artists that use the same materials for instance, or community organisations and charities with common purpose. Often, however, providers will also seek a diverse, complementary mix – makers with different skill levels, graphic designers and PR companies – to create mini ecosystems of skills and interests. The purpose of creating interaction between curated users is to create peer networks that can offer advice and support, enable innovation through collaboration and knowledge exchange, and to create small supply chains within the space.



## **6. A Creative Open Workspace programme for the South East LEP**

### **6.1 Unlocking potential**

The SELEP region can offer competitive land and property values, buildings ripe for repurposing, coupled with the quality of life offered by its countryside, coast, leisure and cultural offer.

The creative industries are geographically dispersed across the region, and while it is the most economically productive sector (when creative, digital information technology are taken together) it lacks visibility which leads to an underestimation of their value, a lack of understanding about the conditions they need to flourish and accidental systemic failure to provide those conditions for growth. Studios and makerspaces sustain the region's cultural life and creative economy, and workspaces with a social purpose can also support communities and help disadvantaged people access employment. The disposable income the sector generates has positive effects on local areas, high streets and the competitiveness of other sectors such as retail, restaurants and high street services.

Flagship buildings and a portfolio of connected workspaces which bring many microbusinesses under one umbrella not only support those businesses but tell a story about the impact of the creative industries on the local economy and in turn signals that they are welcome in the area. Open workspace can lend authority to brands, support marketing and promotion campaigns while clustering of similar businesses will tend to increase the productivity of any industry, as knowledge and improvements in techniques are more likely to be shared.

As the economic contributions of not just the Creative Industries, but the wider creative economy become increasingly well recognised, so we can begin to understand more clearly that the impacts are also cross-cutting and have measurable spill over impacts in a number of areas which can support wider skills and regeneration agenda. SECEN needs to collate and re-present research that demonstrates the positive social, educational and health impacts which are not captured by traditional GVA measures and which highlight the importance from a 'place' perspective.



Attracting creative businesses to the SELEP area is to enter a competitive market, with places nationally and internationally vying to capture the UK's talent.

Creative workspace works best and generates greatest positive impact on the economy and community when it is affordable; with the right technology, investing in the long term; is sector-led and provides the potential to raise finance against the security of the capital asset; it enables smaller companies to share the hosting of people seeking work experience, internships and apprenticeships.

To unlock this potential, property owners, developers, investors, local authorities and planners need to be aware of the value of enabling the development of creative workspace. SECEN will work with influencers and decision makers to grow the understanding and potential of the sector in order to expedite open workspace development. SECEN will create the instrument to raise the visibility of the sector by creating a connected portfolio of workspace that will represent the regions offer.

## 6.2 Characteristics for success

Typically, historical clustering of Creative Industries will tend to have several key assets which have interacted over time to foster clusters, these may include:

- A stock of either relatively low cost, or vacant, often post-industrial spaces
- An increasing supply of skills
- Local existing networks of support for creative entrepreneurs
- A strong, or fast-growing visitor economy
- A strong Higher Education and/or Further Education presence
- A willingness from all parties to develop creative workspace

Indicators of future potential success include but are not limited to:

- Strong existing anchor businesses
- Existing micro-clusters
- Local willingness to adopt appropriate planning policy
- Availability of sector-appropriate investment and business support services
- Proactive developer that supports and values the creative sector
- Sector-led development
- Easy access to London
- Proximity to hub for international travel (ports/airports)
- A strong and growing creative community with access to the arts – galleries, cinemas, cultural and social spaces.
- Strong links to Higher Education
- Inbuilt business and marketing support which both attracts and consolidates creative clusters in open workspaces

SECEN is working to ensure that there is a South East Creative Cultural and Digital Support programme (SECCADS) to support and grow creative businesses in the South East to grow the sector, increase the demand for workspace and grow the skills to create and maintain open workspace.

## An Asset Based Approach

Creative Open Workspace thrives where it capitalises on existing assets, both hard assets (such as suitable buildings, favourable planning policies, talent, Higher Education partnerships and knowledge, existing creative businesses) and soft assets (including talent, appealing environments offering good work/life balance and networks).

A thriving creative sector is characterised by a diversity of spaces and business models. Long term security of tenure creates the opportunity for workspace providers to raise additional capital to reinvest and sustain sector growth. To succeed, providers need to be able to compete within the property market with fast access to low cost capital. Partnership models with local authorities, housing associations, Higher Education Institutions and developers are unlocking options for the sector. The role of creative workspaces in regeneration of places is well documented: public bodies can continue to invest in the regeneration trajectory when considering the disposal of assets to achieve positive community outcomes as well as growing the creative economy.

If a creative community is to stay fresh it helps to have a relationship with HE institutions, ideally with programmes in place which allow for collaboration, nurturing of talent, innovation and blending of theory and practice.



#### **Investment Strategy**

In addition to identifying priority clusters, the action plan will generate the tools to identify viable and fit for purpose Open Workspace proposals. This will in turn help us to prioritise open workspaces for investment, building a pipeline of projects ready to be realised.

### 6.3 Opportunities

Higher rents, business rate rises, lease agreements coming up for renewal and the increasing loss of office space to residential use is leading to the displacement of creative businesses from London. It is predicted that 30% of current studios will disappear in the next 5 years<sup>3</sup>. Many are looking outside of London for alternative premises. The proximity of the SELEP area to the London Cluster ideally places it to capture spill over, aided by the availability and affordability of premises relative to London. The Thames Estuary Production Corridor concept being promoted by the GLA and supported by SECEN will create the opportunity to link the whole of the SELEP region into London, offering considerable market advantage.

The various local authorities represented on SECEN have identified particular empty buildings which are available and public spaces ready for disposal and are considering or planning to develop open workspace. They are also aware of and trying to respond to demand alongside making themselves attractive to inward investment ie increasing demand. This demand is coming from individuals, businesses and workspace suppliers seeking premises. The demand is sometimes a vague ambition and sometimes a clearly developed proposal. SECEN needs to be able to provide the conditions to support third party ambitions and develop vehicles to initiate developments ourselves.

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper suggested that there was an opportunity to seek a 'sector deal'. The Creative Industries Federation have proposed Creative Enterprise Zones to be incorporated into the strategy. SECEN will work to ensure that SELEP is ready to maximise these opportunities when they present themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> GLA Artist Workspace Study 2014



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## SECEN Open Workspace Action Plan

No.	Action	Lead Partner and supporting partners	Timescale	Resource requirements and possible sources
1	<b>Identify a minimum of three potential Creative Enterprise Zones</b>			
1.1	Undertake sector mapping to identify creative industry clusters. An analysis for each priority cluster should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub sector</li> <li>• Supply and demand</li> <li>• Diversification - not just of facilities but diversification of skills/sectors/barriers – who are we not attracting because we are not giving them the right opportunities?</li> </ul>			
1.2	Identify and test the viability of the location for Creative Enterprise Zones (CEZ): Viability to be measured by: strong existing anchor businesses and micro-clusters; willingness to adopt appropriate planning policy and provide appropriate investment.			
2	<b>Create pipeline of projects through an investment strategy and toolkit</b>			
2.1	Following completion of sector mapping, identify and prioritise gaps in provision and opportunities in key clusters / CEZ's.			
2.2	Develop criteria to recognise robust opportunities and guide investment			
2.3	Develop a tool kit to health check proposals: what's the motivation? Is it a long term investment? Prioritise support to organisations that have a track record of delivering (ideally			



No.	Action	Lead Partner and supporting partners	Timescale	Resource requirements and possible sources
	locally) and assist them to become sustainable; is the business support and advice available?			
2.4	Use tool kit to support organisations to develop their ideas so that they are investment ready.			
2.5	Establish a pipeline of investment-ready projects			
3	<b>Research and present existing and new options for financial and governance models</b>			
3.1	Identify the opportunities across SELEP to establish investment vehicle(s) and/or models of ownership including partnerships and property holding trusts.			
3.2	Make the case for use of assets/property transfer for buildings in public ownership			
3.3	Create an open workspace investment fund			
3.4	Provision of tailored business planning to make investment ready			
3.5	Support Creative United proposal for a UK-wide studio stabilisation fund			
3.6	Provide clear signposting to financial tools (grants and loans) to buy property and bring to bear influence on systems for awarding funding to ensure they are fit for open workspace projects			
4.	<b>Develop cultural planning policy</b> that can be adopted by local authorities to support the inclusion of creative workspace in new developments and the re-purposing of under-used buildings as creative workspace.			
5	<b>Create a SELEP-wide open workspace property portfolio</b>			
5.1	Undertake marketing and promotion with inward investment colleagues (Invest Essex/Locate East Sussex/Locate in Kent/Lets do Business) to attract existing businesses to relocate to the			

No.	Action	Lead Partner and supporting partners	Timescale	Resource requirements and possible sources
	SELEP area) to attract existing businesses to relocate to the SELEP area			
5.2	Identify and promote property available to be developed as open workspace that meet published criteria			
5.3	Raise awareness that we are looking for empty properties with agents, Locate agencies, local authority property and asset disposal departments			
5.4	Encourage 'meanwhile' (temporary) open workspaces prior to development, to test the concept and viability of workspace, and to maintain activity in the area during redevelopment			
5.5	Work with existing workspace providers to turn unused spaces into open workspaces			
5.6	Work with developers to unlock the potential within new developments to provide sector-appropriate work and live/work spaces			
5.7	Encourage open workspace providers to consistently measure the same outcomes.			
5.8	Develop series of case studies to demonstrate the impact			
6	Continue to grow the evidence base			

## Appendix 1

### Potential Funding Sources

Growing Places Fund (GPF) – capital loan up to £2m per bid - £7.8m pot.

Bid to go in September/October. Possible to do a SELEP wide bid? With 30% leverage. – so rather than avoid specific ideas, have a fund to distribute. £1.5m is the suitable level of ambition.

Core SELEP budget – some withheld for revenue funding to support the working groups to match ACE?

ERDF bid to deliver business planning development

Charity banks

RGF recycled through Kent and Medway Business Fund for Kent. The repayments are coming back in and they recently launched to offer interest free loans. Investment advisory board. £50k - £500k

<http://www.thecreativesociety.co.uk>

Scheme Enabling Fund - The fund is an East Sussex County Council one-off capital fund designed to:

1. help finance feasibility studies and business case development to support schemes that are not viable without public support, to enable them to apply for public funding (e.g. Local Growth Fund);
2. unlock stalled employment and housing sites that have site-specific reasons for remaining undeveloped with loan or equity share finance.

## Appendix 2: Mapping the journey: Developing Workspaces

Starting point	Shaping an idea	Pipeline Projects that fit investment criteria and are ready for funding	Outcome
<p>Vague Ambition owned by third party</p> <p><b>Emergent:</b> Many smaller emerging organisations are looking for support and signposting to opportunities which will allow them to set up in new spaces and become capable of accessing funds and purchasing their own buildings. They are looking for access to skills, new partnerships, guidance and initial funding to help them maximise opportunities quickly when they arise.</p>	<p>Political will</p> <p>Bespoke business planning support</p>	<p>Business Plan developed</p> <p>Governance solutions explored and agreed</p> <p>Governance set up</p>	<p>Investment secured</p> <p>Building acquired</p> <p>New workspace created</p> <p>Re-purposed building</p>
<p>Clear Ambition owned by third party</p> <p><b>Stabilisation:</b> Midscale providers are seeking skills, knowledge and the ability to strengthen business and financial models to enable growth. This predominantly involves finding the right company structure, defining aims and accessing funding to help stabilise and lay solid foundations for their futures</p>	<p>Political will</p> <p>Bespoke business planning support</p>		<p>Existing businesses move into the area</p> <p>Local businesses grow</p> <p>Increase in employment</p>
<p>Existing building – with local authority holding the ambition</p> <p><b>Established:</b> Often larger providers predominantly looking for ‘fast access to cheap capital’ to enable them to compete with commercial developers when buying property, alongside undertaking high level partnerships and influencing public policy to ensure the right growth environment.</p>	<p>Clarify ambitions</p> <p>Test the market</p> <p>Find someone to own the idea</p> <p>Develop business plan</p>		<p>Neighbourhood regeneration</p> <p>Sustain cultural capital</p> <p>Address disadvantage by supporting community organisations and offering work and training opportunities to local people</p>