
BURO HAPPOLD

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Introduction

Mark Phillip Partner

Buro Happold in collaboration with Fisher Dachs and Barker Langham hosted the Venue of Value workshop. Manchester is now considered by some to be Britain's new cultural capital, so it was considered the perfect location in which to explore how the sector can build on the city's recent successes. The workshop aimed to define what a successful cultural ecosystem of the future might look like and how this could be delivered to improve the social and economic benefits to those that it serves.

Sir Richard Leese, leader of Manchester City Council, opened the event with a keynote speech explaining Manchester's approach to culture and why, in an era of financial austerity, the city is continuing to invest in the arts. Sir Richard included statistics on the PR and advertising value of the opening event at HOME, which received extensive global media coverage representing an advertising value equivalent (AVE) of £1.5m.

Sir Richard's introduction was followed by three keynote presentations from Darren Barker (Barker Langham), Joshua Dachs (Fisher Dachs Associates) and Stephen Jolly (Buro Happold). The speakers each looked at the day's topic from a different perspective, ranging from the recession and the effect of the new financial landscape through to inspiring examples of international cultural initiatives that are helping to reshape the sector. We also had the chance to explore some great examples of successful cultural spaces from around the world.

During the workshop, it emerged that successful cultural venues need to be part of a successful ecosystem. Venues were considered in the broader context of such an ecosystem which included everything from policy, national and regional leadership to the flexibility of the venues themselves.

The following pages highlight the eight key themes that emerged from these discussions.



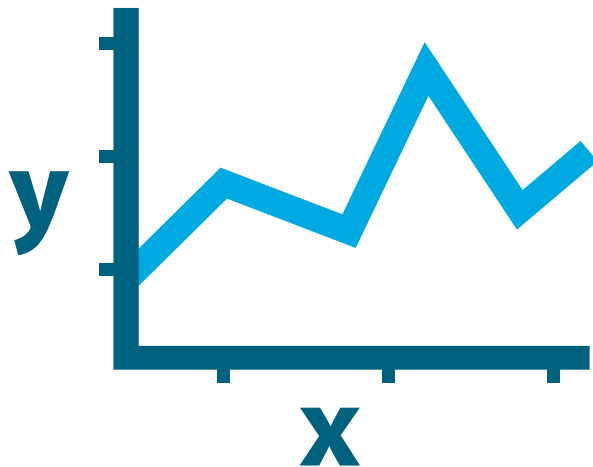
EMERGING THEMES

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◦ REVOLVED DECISION
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◦ MODELS
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The emerging themes

1. A CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM HAS TO BE JUDGED LONGITUDINALLY OVER TIME AND AT MANY SCALES OF ACTIVITY

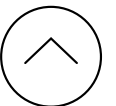


A range of metrics were considered important in a healthy cultural sector ecosystem. In addition to traditional economic measures, these included; the wellbeing of people; demographic diversity; equity diversity and the age of first exposure to the arts. The metrics varied across the different stakeholder groups and even considered whether it is possible to live comfortably as a full-time artist.

Whilst it was acknowledged that there is a need for metrics to judge success, part of the debate focused on the need for self-determination and independence which were considered by some as a key element of the development of successful projects. Some participants voiced the opinion that there should be some freedom given through

refraining from evaluation in certain periods. Others went further to state the importance of recognising wider values and including explicitly non-commercial or even anti-commercial elements in the vision for cultural projects.

The need to judge success both longitudinally and at many scales of activity was debated. Real success considers not only how well an organisation or venue performs at the start, but also how that success changes over time.

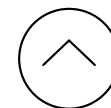


2. CULTURE NEEDS TO BE PUT AT THE CENTRE OF NATIONAL POLICIES

Ideas were put forward about how the profile of culture could be raised through stronger links to the creative industries and the more commercial aspects of culture. There was also discussion in the keynote speeches about how culture should be tied more strongly into education with Sir Richard Leese advocating that the current focus on STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) should be expanded to include the arts, turning STEM into STEAM.

The debate also considered different approaches to taxation in the cultural sector and other economic models that could capture some of the financial value created and direct that value back into the organisations from which it originated.

Culture should be tied more strongly into education.

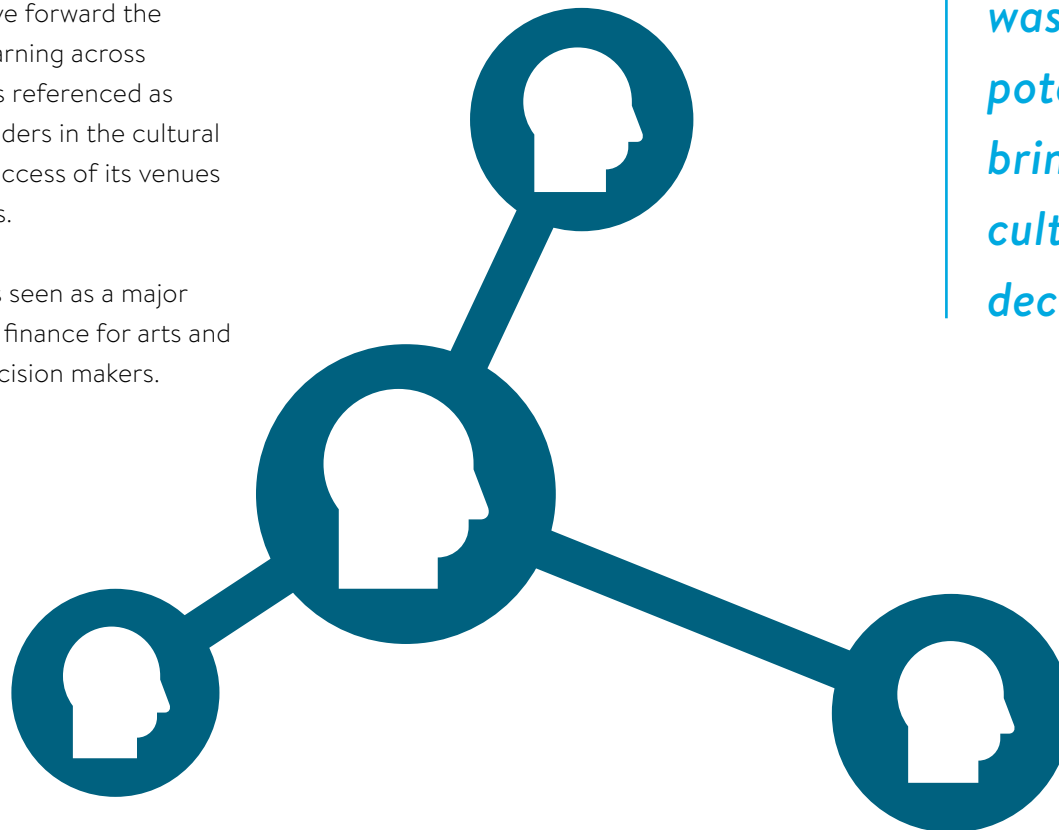


3. STRONG CITY SCALE LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR ECOSYSTEM

Success can often be attributed to individuals who are well connected with a network of stakeholders, and who have a passion to drive forward the agenda. This also facilitates learning across organisations. Manchester was referenced as having several inspirational leaders in the cultural sector which has driven the success of its venues and institutions in recent years.

Devolved decision making was seen as a major potential opportunity to bring finance for arts and culture a lot closer to local decision makers.

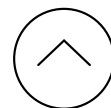
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4. PEOPLE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES NEED TO BE AT THE HEART OF SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL VENUES

This means projects reflect the local context and those groups who will be using the venues and spaces created. There was agreement that this should be an ongoing process, rather than focused at the start of capital projects. There is a need to engage more broadly, and more deeply with communities to do this. This could be done through education or perhaps through less traditional organisations such as Housing Associations, who have strong links to the communities that they serve.

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5. CULTURAL ECOSYSTEMS NEED TO PRODUCE AS WELL AS PRESENT

There is a need for cities to have a cultural network comprising of many different kinds of venues operating at many different scales and in differing ways; for example some venues that produce and some that present. This requires further thought about what is the right number and mix of typologies of venues in a particular location, to ensure that they are complementary.

There is a need to get the right level of flexibility to ensure that venues are both fit for purpose and are able to be modified to reflect changes over time. The challenge is achieving flexibility without compromising quality, and the importance of a well written brief, innovative design, engineering and the appropriate use of innovative technology was seen as key to achieving this.

There is a need for new business models which allow institutions to focus on their strengths. Innovative ownership models, such as those in place at HOME involve the council holding the freehold and maintaining the building and the organisations occupying the venue. This allows institutions to focus on their strengths, for example, supporting and incubating artists and/or presenting the best performances.

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6. SOCIAL MEDIA NEEDS TO BE USED TO ADVOCATE VALUE AND OUST BAD PRACTICES

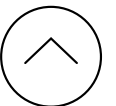
Earlier in the keynote presentations, social media was highlighted as a tool which could be used to better understand the opinions of the venues' visitors. This feedback could then inform future design and operation decisions.

In the workshop session, social media was also considered a potential vehicle to give recognition to those who provide services, or the politicians that support it. Importantly, it provides a means of connecting with audiences and sharing activities that are happening locally. Whilst potentially providing a communication tool to help exhibitions, shows and performances 'go viral', it should not be necessarily seen as part of the experience.

The media was considered to have a role in advocating the value of culture. This considered how social media could have an advocacy role, but could also play a role in ousting worst practice. The role of social media was expanded up, with reference to the Paul Cummins', *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* installation at the Tower of London. The media, including social channels, drove interest in this exhibition, but ultimately this created a pilgrimage effect, with more people wanting to experience it in reality.



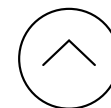
Social media provides a means of connecting with audiences and sharing activities that are happening locally.



7. BUSINESS HAS A GREATER ROLE TO PLAY IN NURTURING THE CULTURAL SECTOR ECOSYSTEM

Culture and the creative industries are complementary and should support each other. This is evident in Manchester where the creative industries cluster is the second largest within Europe and a sector which continues to grow at a faster rate than the baseline economic growth.

However, it was also mentioned that property owning organisations could be encouraged to release some of their space with the purpose of exhibiting culture and providing places for artists. This could be incentivised by local authorities providing business rate reductions for those giving space to artists and this was seen as an indirect way of helping to maintain a more sustainable cultural sector infrastructure.

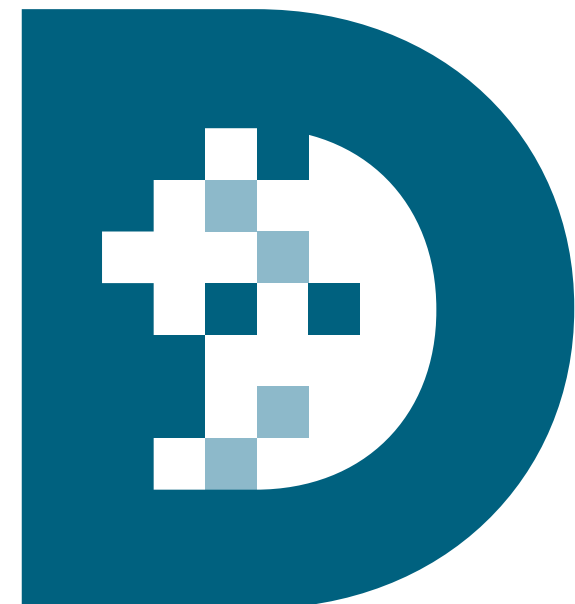


8. DATA AND BEST PRACTICE NEED TO BE BETTER SHARED

Events and conferences currently represent the best way of sharing success stories across the industry. However, the workshop identified that there is a growing need to share data across institutions in an effort to grow the sector as a whole rather than an individual organisation's market share. Currently there is a reluctance of cultural organisations and artists to share their data, particularly if the data is not positive as this can be deemed to highlight an organisation's 'failures'.

Improved sharing of data across institutions will involve a change in culture across the sector. To improve the cultural ecosystem there is also a need to learn from other sectors with respect to sharing data. This will enable the sector to take a more structured approach to its future development. The sector would benefit from an improved capacity to analyse and use data in the most effective way.

There is a growing need to share data across institutions in an effort to grow the sector as a whole.



TALK TO US



Talk to us

Across all sectors, Buro Happold has a proven track record of adding value to our clients' existing assets using simple and cost effective solutions. If you'd like to know how we can help you add vitality to your cultural venue, please contact:

Stephen Jolly, Partner, Global Cultural Sector Lead

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E: stephen.jolly@burohappold.com

www.burohappold.com

RELATED PROJECTS:

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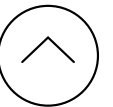
[St. Ann's Warehouse](#)

[Xiqu Centre](#)

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Stephen Jolly

MSc BSc CEng MCIBSE MIEE

Partner, Global Cultural Sector Lead, Buro Happold

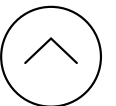
A truly multidisciplinary engineer with a diverse background and a fantastic portfolio of projects, Stephen is one of Buro Happold's partners and one of our best building designers. He acts as a focal point for our activities in the Cultural and Civic sectors and has a wealth of experience and skills in projects of this type.

Based in the UK, Stephen leads integrated teams of engineers and specialists. He joined us in 2003 and has contributed significantly to the development of our work, creativity and innovation.

With his background in environmental performance and integrated design, Stephen's approach to projects is multidisciplinary in nature. His broad range of skills and experience enables him to influence strategic project development from an early stage.

For more than 22 years Stephen has successfully designed and delivered many projects for both public sector and commercial clients in the UK and internationally. Since being at Buro Happold this list has included the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the Grand Egyptian Museum and the Louvre, Abu Dhabi. He also led the planning and engineering of the Carlyon Bay Development in Cornwall, UK to design a sustainable luxury residential resort.

Committed to the continual development of performance and effectiveness, Stephen helps to advance our creativity and innovation at every stage of our work. His ability to build strong and lasting client relationships combines with his profound technical understanding of building lifecycles and processes, resulting in stunning structures met with critical acclaim worldwide.





Mark Phillip

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Partner, Buro Happold

Mark has over 20 year's experience as a consulting engineer, during which time he has delivered many high profile and award winning projects. Mark joined BuroHappold in 1998 and became a partner in 2008.

His role as the Partner of the Leeds office includes a regional footprint from Birmingham to Newcastle. His project focus ensures that Mark is directly engaged with client and rigorously pursues technical solutions that deliver care, value and elegance. He has a multidisciplinary background and understands the critical importance that fabric and environmental design have in integrating to deliver successful buildings for all our clients and stakeholders.

He knows the importance of communication and collaboration on projects and has an industry leading knowledge and experience of BIM and advanced technologies.

Mark is active in the business and academic community, supporting local universities and encouraging the offices to engage with local communities. He is currently Chairman at the University of Sheffield Industrial Liaison Committee.





Sir Richard Leese CBE

Leader, Manchester City Council

Sir Richard was elected to the Manchester City Council in 1984 and was its deputy leader from 1990 until 1996, having previously chaired the Education Committee (1986–1990) and Finance Committee (1990–1995). As of 2011 he is a Labour councillor in the Crumpsall ward.

Knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2006 List after overseeing the 10-year regeneration of the city after the IRA bomb of 1996. He was awarded a Knighthood for services to local government.

He is current chair of the North West Regional Leaders Board (4NW).



Joshua Dachs

Principal, Fischer Dachs Associates

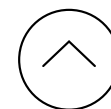
Joshua Dachs is recognized as one of the world's leading theatre consultants. Drawing on a background as a violinist, an architect, and theatrical set and lighting designer, he has led FDA's consulting practice for over 30 years, providing planning, programming, and design leadership for hundreds of successful projects. In early phases he focuses his work on helping clients conceptualise and plan their projects, and during the design phase focuses on room shaping, seating layouts and sightlines, backstage layouts, and overall spatial organization.



Darren Barker

Director, Barker Langham

Darren is a founding Director of Barker Langham and leads the company's work across its strategic and business planning portfolio. He is an experienced cultural and business planner, and has developed a diverse range of cultural schemes, from museums and historic buildings to parks and landscapes – with work covering vision, options appraisal, business and operational planning.





Get involved

WE INVITE YOU TO GIVE YOUR OPINION ON THESE THEMES,
BY TAKING PART IN OUR SURVEY

WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/VENUEOFVALUEWORKSHOPSURVEY



BURO HAPPOLD

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