

A conversation on cultural strategies

Friday 5th May 2023

Sir James Matthew Building, Southampton

Overview

This event introduces emerging findings from the project 'Cultural strategies, compacts and futures: The role of local government in connecting culture with place, health and the environment' to inform and facilitate a conversation on cultural strategies.

This project explores how cultural strategies and compacts are both deeply embedded in the specifics of an area and address common and widely identified (inter)national issues. Whilst issues of place, health and the environment often feature within cultural strategies and compacts, there is not a clear understanding of how local authorities do this differently. This project addresses this through identifying and thematically analysing cultural strategies and compacts in England. The resulting policy brief will offer critical reflections and new directions as cultural strategies are created for the first time by local authorities and renewed by others.

This project and event are in partnership with the Southern Policy Centre and funded by Public Policy Southampton at the University of Southampton.

Schedule

Time	
12.00-12.45	Lunch
12.45-1.00	Welcome and context (Dan Ashton and Wassim Dbouk)
1.00-1.15	Encountering cultural strategies (Dan Ashton)
1.15-1.45	Perspectives from local government (Simon Eden)
1.45-2.15	Presentation on Public Policy Southampton (PPS) funded project: 'Cultural strategies, compacts and futures: The role of local government in connecting culture with place, health and the environment' (Dan Ashton and Makanani Bell)
2.15-2.30	Break
2.30-3.30	147 cultural strategies: Insights and prompts (Dan Ashton and Makanani Bell)
3.30-4.15	Perspectives from commissioning and creating a cultural strategy (Emalene Hickman and Claire Gevaux)
4.15-4.30	Closing discussion and next steps (Dan Ashton)

Biographies

Dan Ashton

At the University of Southampton, Dr Dan Ashton is Associate Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries at Winchester School of Art and Fellow in Disparate Data and Unexpected Evidence with Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities. His teaching and research focus on cultural and creative industries policy, work, organisations and economies. His research has been published in academic journals including *Cultural Trends* and *Journal of Cultural Economy* and in publications including *Arts Professional* and *The Conversation*. He is currently co-investigator on two Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded projects – *Diverse Capacities: Building a creative industries network for the Solent* and *Neighbouring Data: The role of qualitative data in place-based decision-making*. Dan and Mekanani have worked on two projects focusing on cultural and the local government - *Cultural strategies, compacts and futures: The role of local government in connecting culture with place, health and the environment* (2022-23, funded by Public Policy Southampton) and *Local government data analytics for culture and creativity* (2021-22, funded by Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities).

Mekanani Bell

Mekanani is a postgraduate researcher at the University of Southampton, co-hosted between Archaeology and the Winchester School of Art. Her research focusses on community archaeology and the evaluation of these methodologies in terrestrial and maritime contexts. Mekanani's research blends her background in anthropology and archaeology. Alongside her own research, she has been a research assistant on projects in Archaeology and the Winchester School of Art, including Dan's *Local government data analytics for culture and creativity*, Southampton's City of Culture bid, and *Maritime Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa (MarEA)*.

Wassim Dbouk

Wassim is a Post-Doctoral Researcher in marine and maritime policy, with a background in maritime law, a broader interest in sustainable development, and an expertise in translating research into policy informing evidence. Through his role at the Southampton Marine and Maritime Institute, he specialises in designing and delivering policy engagement activities to ensure that research projects led by the marine and maritime research community at the University of Southampton inform current and future local, national and international policies. Wassim comes from a flexible background, he studied French and Lebanese Law and specialises in Maritime Law, and has diverse experiences in the private and legal sectors, most notably in the Lebanese Parliament, allowing him to develop an astute understanding of the interaction between research, law and policy.

Simon Eden

Simon is a public policy consultant and a Director of the Southern Policy Centre, the think-tank for the central South. Originally from London, Simon began his career as a research biologist before joining the Civil Service, where he worked on local government funding and policy. In 1999 he was appointed Assistant Chief Executive of Southampton City Council, and became Director of Sustainability & Development in 2001. In 2003 Simon was appointed Chief Executive of Winchester City Council. He led the Council for 13 years before leaving to become a policy wonk all over again.

Claire Gevaux

Claire offers a strategic and empathetic approach to empowering artists and arts organisations to understand their purpose and be fulfilled in their careers and lives. She does this through designing multi-million pound programmes that identify and plug the gaps needed to help creative industries grow and thrive. Whether it's funding that comes exactly at a turning point in an artist's life or raising the profile of public art on international platforms or leading an innovative research programme in the third sector, Claire strives to make a difference to the lives of creatives in the UK. Working extensively across public (Chelmsford City Council, London Legacy Development and Olympic Delivery Authority) and third sector organisations (Culture Chelmsford, Southampton Cultural Trust, Help Musicians, Foundation for Future London, Arts Council England) she has helped them understand their purpose, develop strategy, national programming and empowered artists through mentoring, facilitation and networking. Claire now works part time as Chief Executive at Culture Chelmsford and in her consultancy she has supported clients such as Southampton Cultural Trust, Chelmsford City Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Donne Foundation.

Emalene Hickman

Emalene Hickman is the Culture and Creative Sector Development Officer at Winchester City Council.

Emalene has a broad range of experience in the Public, Private and Third sectors. She has developed and delivered programmes designed to increase engagement through arts, heritage, sports, community, education and volunteering activity. She spends as much time sat behind a desk strategising, planning and fundraising as she does on site managing events.

Emalene supports artists and creatives by providing networking, training and mentoring opportunities as well as acting as an advocate in a variety of settings. She also encourages the next generation through teaching and offering performing opportunities.