



## Our work on Culture



EasyRead version of the Commission  
on Culture and Local Government

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# The Commission on Culture and Local Government

2022			
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	



## Who are we?

In 2022 the Local Government Association asked a group of people to join a committee.



The committee is called the **Commission on Culture and Local Government**. Here we will just call it the **Commission**.

The people on the committee are called **Commissioners**.



The job of the Commission is to look at:

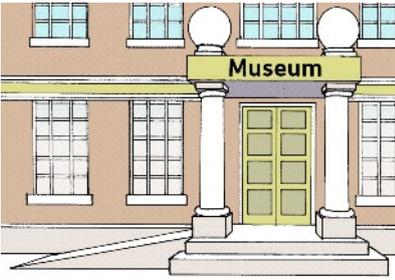
- how local **culture** can help everyone after COVID-19
- how we can '**level-up**' culture across the country.



**Levelling up** means giving everyone, in all parts of the UK, the same opportunities to make the most of their lives.

[tinyurl.com/levellingup-easyread](https://tinyurl.com/levellingup-easyread)

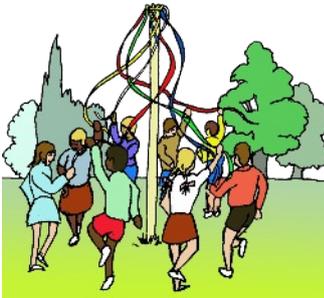
**Culture** is about the arts, ideas and customs in your community including:



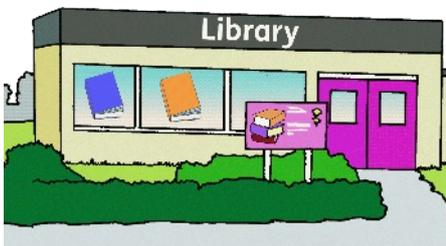
- local museums



- heritage sites



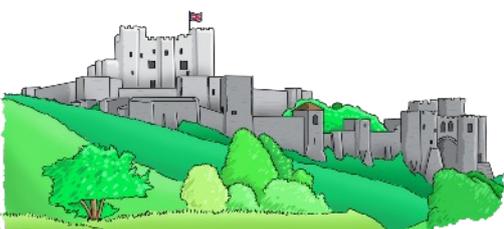
- local festivals and events



- libraries and archives



- arts centres and arts projects



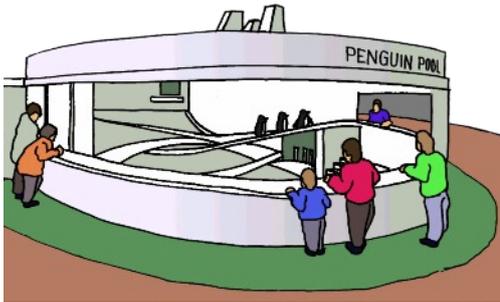
- historic buildings



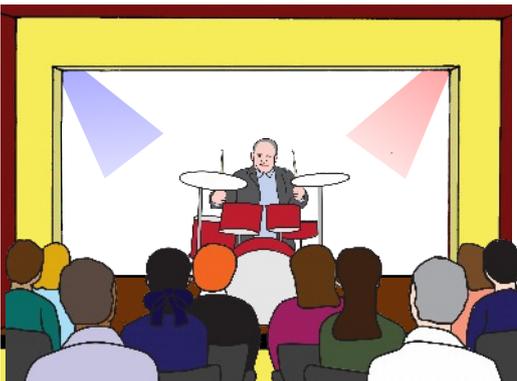
- public art



- the **creative industries** which include art, music, film, games, design, books, fashion



- visitor attractions



- music venues



- theatres



- creative clusters



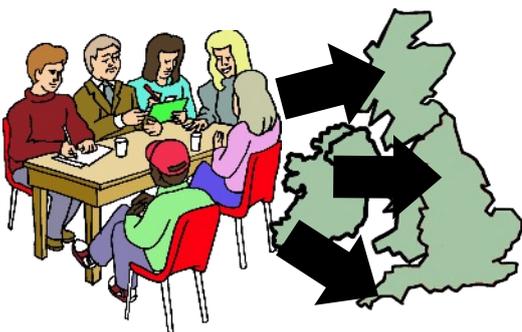
- community hubs for culture



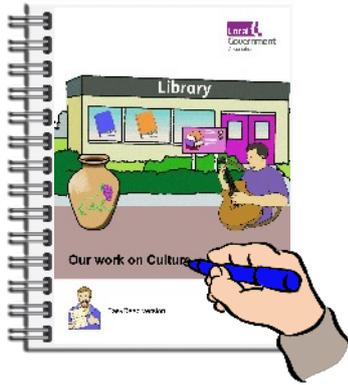
- parks and open spaces.



A lot of the money for culture comes from councils.



The Commissioners talked to organisations all over the country and looked at more than 50 examples of how councils and other local organisations provide cultural services.

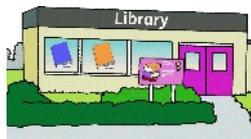


They wrote this report to help everyone plan for the future of culture in our community.

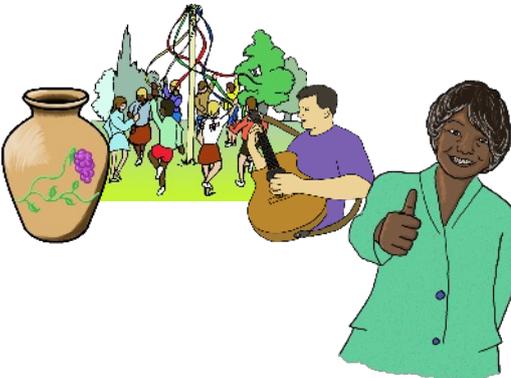
# What councils have to do with culture



Councils lead the way to make culture happen in their community.



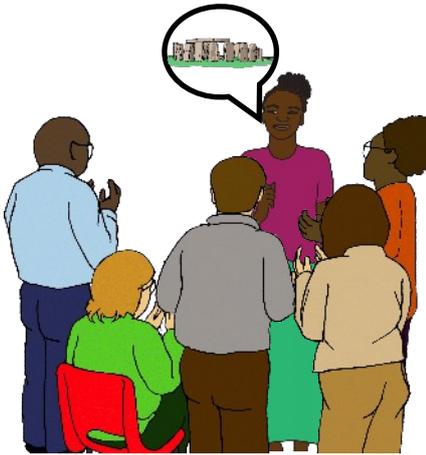
Councils spend over £1 billion on cultural services like museums and libraries and nearly £2.5 billion when you include parks and sport.



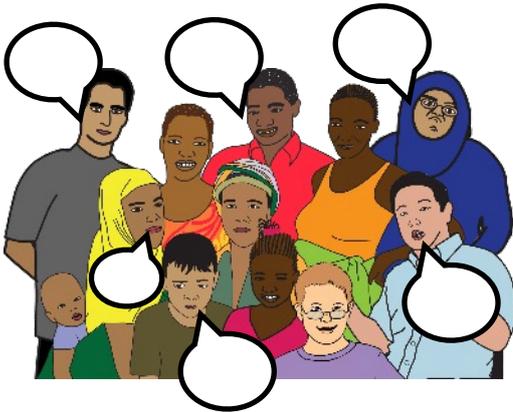
Councils remind other services like health and education that culture is important.



They plan what town centres and high streets should look like.



They bring people together to talk about culture.

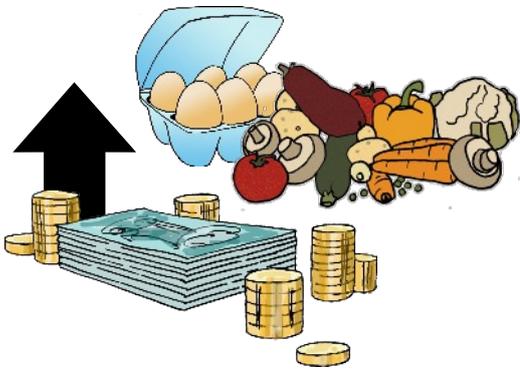


They make sure everyone in the community has a say.



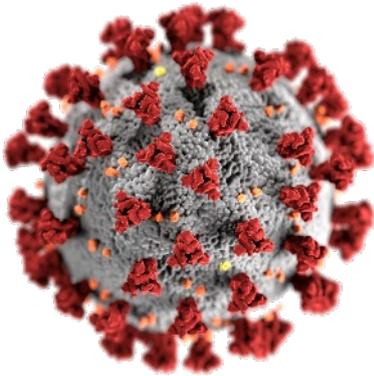
Councils collect information so they can check how their services are helping local people.

# Why culture is important right now

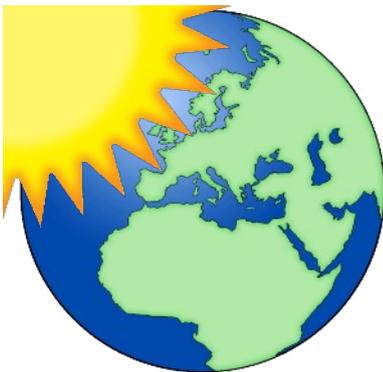


We are having some difficult times because of:

- increasing prices for food and energy



- COVID-19



- climate change

# How culture helps people in their local communities



- it makes more jobs



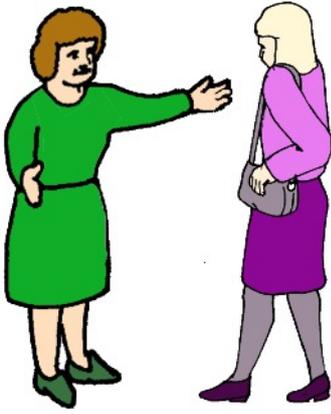
- it supports health and wellbeing



- it helps people to be less lonely and have better mental health



- it helps people to learn new things



- it brings people together



- it brings money to an area



- it helps to make places special.

# What your community needs for culture to happen



## 1. People

- council leaders



- leaders of cultural organisations, creative businesses, volunteer organisations, schools and universities



- local cultural partnerships

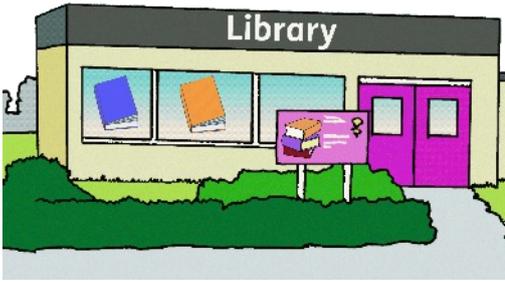


- the community and volunteers



- other community members.

## 2. Places



- buildings like libraries and museums, theatres, arts centres, music venues and parks



- historical places, markets and green spaces



- creative businesses like film and TV companies.

## 3. Money

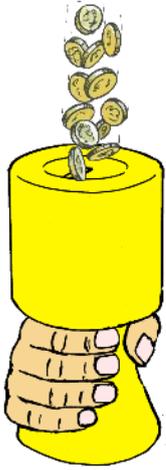
From:



- councils



- regional government (combined authorities)



- Arts Council England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and other organisations that give money to culture



- people who give their own money to support culture



- the Government



- study bodies like the Arts and Humanities Research Council and universities.



## 4. Other organisations

- partnerships of people who work together on culture. For example, **Music Education Hubs**, **Cultural Compacts** and **High Street Heritage Action Zones**



- schools, colleges and universities



- NHS



- business groups.

# What happens when councils fund local culture and heritage



The Commission asked cultural organisations what it means for their community when councils make culture an important priority in their local area.

They found 4 good things.



## 1. Funding culture and heritage makes a community strong

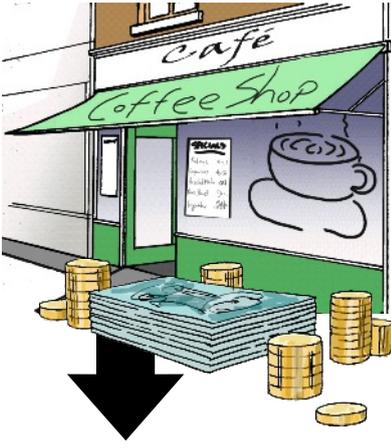
- People said culture makes them feel proud of their community.



- It brings people together. The council meets with people in the community, businesses and other government organisations to plan cultural activities together.



- It helps young people living outside big towns to come together.



## 2. Funding culture in the local area helps us recover from the costs of COVID-19

- During COVID-19 lockdowns lots of people worked from home. So shops and businesses in town centres lost money.



- Many people lost their jobs so had less money to spend.



- Since then, higher costs for food and energy bills has made this more difficult.



- People have told the Commission they want more cultural events in the high streets in their towns.



- People know that the culture and heritage of their town will bring in visitors who spend money. This will make more jobs for local people.

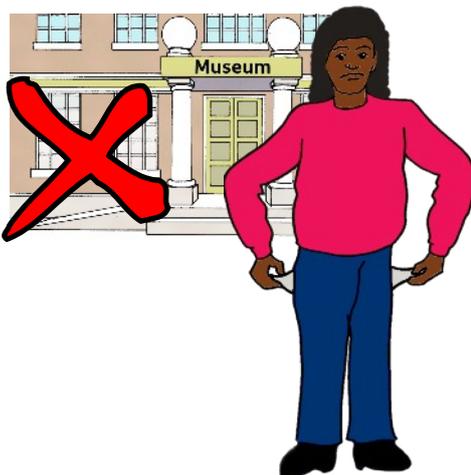


- Some councils have made new cultural attractions that bring more visitors to town centres.



- Creative cultural business like the film and TV companies make more jobs.

### 3. Taking part in cultural activities and using services like libraries can help people to get better jobs and training



- People with not much money or from certain backgrounds often do not have the same access to cultural activities. Councils can help people from diverse backgrounds get involved in culture.



- Using cultural services from a young age can help children to develop new skills and lead happy lives. The new Cultural Education Plan may help children from different social backgrounds to enjoy learning about culture.



#### 4. Funding culture in the local area can improve the health of people

During the pandemic many people became lonely and had poor mental health. COVID-19 affected some people more than others.



These people included:

- people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds



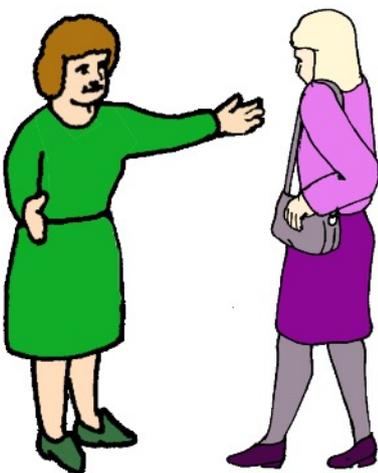
- older people



- people with a physical or learning disability



- and others.

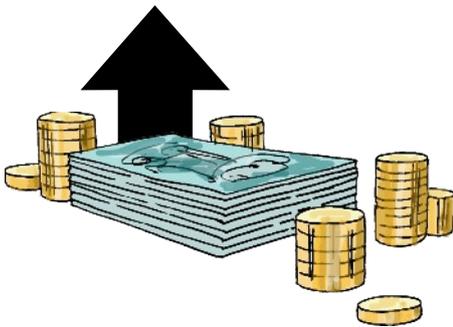


Cultural activity can help people connect and improve their mental health and loneliness.

# What stops people taking part?



The Commission found 6 reasons why people could not take part in cultural activities.



1 Some people could not use cultural activities because:

- they were too expensive



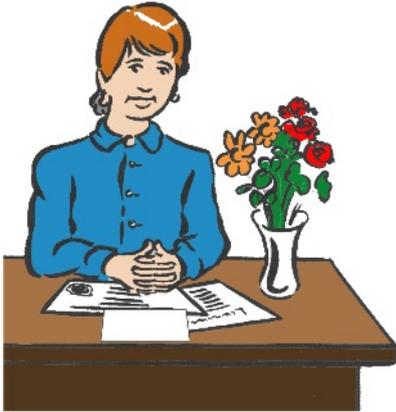
- buildings were not accessible



- they were too far away



- they needed help with technology.



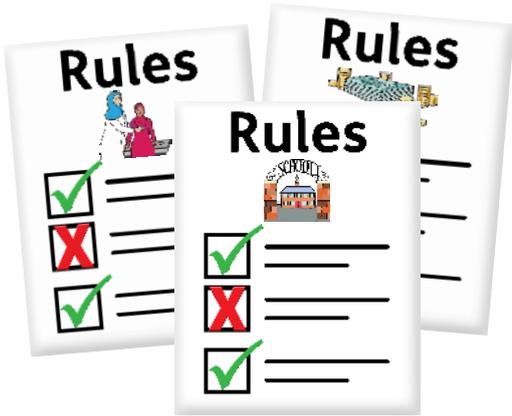
- 2 People working in top jobs in the cultural sector did not always represent the diversity of our communities.



- 3 Some places needed extra help such as support for council teams and leaders in cultural organisations.



- 4 Different areas of the country had different levels of money and other support to plan and run cultural activities.



**5** We have different sets of national and local rules about health, education, and the economy. These can make it more difficult to make a plan for culture at a local level.

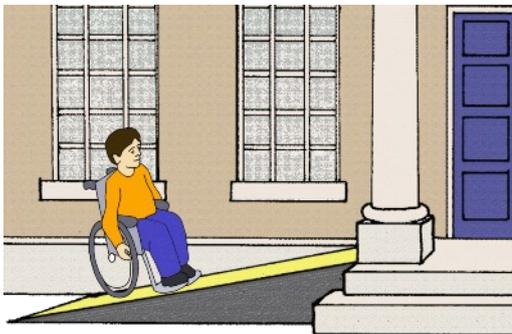


**6** Different ways of measuring information about how cultural services help people makes it hard to understand what is working well.

# What are the 4 goals of the Commission?



The Commission wants local, regional and national government, cultural groups and communities to aim for 4 things:



## 1. Access and inclusion

Local cultural services and buildings will be accessible for everyone.



## 2. Creative growth

There is help for the local creative industries to grow in local areas.



### 3. Education and skills

All people have access to cultural education and skills so everyone can take part in culture.



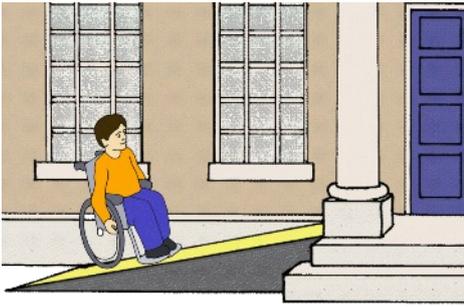
Those who want to can go on to work in the creative industries.



### 4. Health and wellbeing

Local culture is seen as an important way of supporting people's health and wellbeing.

# How can local areas can reach the 4 goals?



- 1 More support for places to make culture accessible for everyone in every area of the country.



- 2 More power to local places to work with their diverse communities and cultural organisations and lead a local plan for culture.



- 3 Money for local places to help them with the cost of the pandemic so they can make a plan for local culture and build local cultural activities.



- 4 Better ways of measuring how well we are doing so we can plan for the future.

## What the words mean

**Commissioners** are the people who make up the Commission on Culture and Local Government.

**Creative industries** include art, music, film, games, design, books, fashion.

**Culture** is about the arts, ideas and customs in your community.

**Cultural Compacts** are local groups like the council and cultural organisations working together in an area to make a plan for local culture. They are supported by Arts Council England.

**High Street Heritage Action Zones** are projects supported by Historic England and Arts Council England that spend money on the historic buildings in an area and bring people together to celebrate local history and heritage.

**Levelling up** means giving everyone, in all parts of the UK, the same opportunities to make the most of their lives.

**Music Education Hubs** are groups like councils, schools, arts organisation and community groups working together to make sure people can get a music education.

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