



A Cultural & Creative Industries Framework

for Tunbridge Wells Borough

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Recommended Actions for Supporting the Sustainability and Growth of the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells	4
3. The Role of the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells	10
4. Tunbridge Wells: an Enabling Environment for the Creative Industries?	17
5. Nurturing a High Growth & Value-adding Creative Economy	26
6. Overall Development Structure	40

1. Introduction

This short report, commissioned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council, sets out a Framework for the development and growth of the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells Borough. It is written by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy and based on research which included:

- A survey that reached over 500 creative businesses and organisations in Tunbridge Wells Borough and the wider area
- Three sector workshops – reaching over 40 people – to explore the profile, dynamics and development needs of the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells
- Active involvement with sector networks – notably Meejahub and Twuttle
- An additional set of interviews with key sector stakeholders (institutions, organisations and businesses)
- Desk-based research to understand the wider strategic drivers for the Creative Industries from the national to local context.

This research comes at a pivotal moment for the locality, for Kent and for the UK's creative and wider economy. As the UK economy struggles amidst a double dip recession, it is becoming clearer that the economic downturn has only hastened a long-term trend in the UK economy toward a higher-skilled, higher-value knowledge and creative economy. If the UK is able to develop additional capacity and competitiveness in sectors such as the Creative Industries, this will create the types of jobs we need, accelerate growth and add value to the competitiveness of the overall economy.

In Kent, and in particular the west of the County, the Creative Industries have in recent years played an important role in delivering growth and sustaining overall prosperity. They have also played a formative role in shaping new, progressive identity for the County, driving regeneration and adding credibility to inward investment and place-branding activities.

Tunbridge Wells has been understood as a relative (though understated) success story here and is recognised for its strong digital media, PR and

marketing activities, as well as good arts infrastructure (e.g. in Trinity Theatre and the Assembly Hall) and an ecology of performing arts organisations. The presence of BBC Kent in the town also adds to the scale, profile and integrity of the Creative Industries Sector.

Add to this the good schools, excellent retail and overall quality of life, then Tunbridge Wells and the rural areas it serves, has for some got the balance right. However, as this report shows, relative success today does not safeguard success tomorrow.

Indeed, our research shows that Tunbridge Wells is in danger of losing its creative appeal to areas of Kent that have undertaken a more aggressive approach to the Creative Industries and culture-led regeneration. Additional factors such as the high cost of residential and commercial property, expensive rail fares, under-developed creative education offer in schools, and the absence of an active graduate-supplying higher education institution, introduce push and pull factors that might reduce the appeal and compromise the creative dynamism of Tunbridge Wells in the future.

This means that for Tunbridge Wells to build from its existing base, complacency or a 'do nothing' approach are not options. The Borough is well-placed to have a high growth and sustainable sector, but if this is to be nurtured, there is a need to diversify the Creative Industries through a richer mix of sub-sectors; introduce a younger demographic to what is an ageing sector locally through a range of entry-points for younger people (home-grown and in-migrating from elsewhere); and establish visible and high profile hubs for sector activity that encourage collaboration, trade and innovation.

2. Recommended Actions for Supporting the Sustainability and Growth of the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells

This report recommends several main actions, each of which sits under one of three development themes. Main and sub-actions are developed in more detail in **Section 3**.

Collaboration & Exchange:

Set up a Creative Collaboration Steering Group – tasked with co-creating a programme of events and network activities for the sector. This should connect different parts of the sector (across the arts and commercial creative industries), include a series of themed events (e.g. local market-making, skills and education, and trends), and guide the Council and other strategic partners in its approach to sector support.

Market-Making:

Develop a new brand identity and a set of signage and branding activities for the creative economy of Tunbridge Wells. This could include a signature Creative Festival plus activities which give a clear and distinctive identity to the creative credentials of the local area.

Place & Planning:

With urgency develop a set of options for a dedicated creative workspace hub(s). This should be the place for creatives to come together, connect, collaborate and grow their businesses. This is the most critical of all proposed interventions – to build capacity, provide entry points for early stage businesses and give visibility to the sector overall.



2.1 Development Themes

To support the Council and the sector to take our evidence and recommendations forward, we present in this report three core development themes for the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells:

1. Collaboration and Exchange: With opportunities for stronger, and even more productive sector networks; active cross-sector exchange and partnership; stronger links between the sector and education providers; and value-adding regional to international networks. In Tunbridge Wells, there is already a strong culture of self-organisation, networking and knowledge exchange – with public/private partnership more developed than other parts of the country as evidenced by the energy of MeejaHub. But links between different parts of the Creative Industries sector (e.g. the commercial digital businesses and wider arts ecology) are under-explored, and new entrants find Tunbridge Wells a difficult place to build commercial and knowledge-driven connections. This means the full asset base of the sector is being under-leveraged.

2. Market-making: With opportunities for Tunbridge Wells to be positioned as a place of creative excellence, professionalism and competitive edge. The Borough currently lacks a distinctive creative narrative, which in turn makes it less attractive to would-be incoming creative businesses. This also means existing businesses are less able to benefit from a 'Tunbridge Wells brand', and wider sectors such as retail and tourism do not have a contemporary story based on creative production to sell.

3. Place and Planning: With opportunities for creative and cultural businesses and organisations to thrive at the heart of Tunbridge Wells with accessible and distinctive hubs of production linked to the overall fabric of the town centre. Here retail, tourism, inward investment and the creative economy are connected through one clear progressive narrative. Plus approaches to planning encourage workspace and activity space for creative businesses and organisations.

2.2 Delivering Strategic Priorities

Kent's Cultural Strategy 2010-2015 sets out plans to grow Kent's Creative Economy by making Kent a welcoming and cooperative host to the creative workforce. This will be achieved via three main strands:

- **Attracting and retaining creative businesses** by creating a desirable, adaptable and welcoming environment for the creative workforce, developing a range of adaptable and flexible networks and to develop fit for purpose workspaces
- **Unlocking creative talent to support the Kent creative economy** by providing more opportunities for education, research and sector development including clear pathways linking education to employment such as creative apprenticeships
- **Revealing, supporting and growing existing creative businesses** by developing a better understanding of and intelligence on Kent's creative workforce, developing Creative and Media Opportunities for Growth Sector Strategy and maximising inward investment for the sector.

All of the above apply to Tunbridge Wells, and the Borough can be a real driver and aggregator for the overall Kent Economy with a balanced and innovative approach to the Creative Industries. This report sets out why and how.

2.3 Main Recommendation – Collaboration & Exchange: *Develop Network Activity*

Building on the existing success of sector networks (e.g. Meejahub), it is recommended partners co-create an annual programme of Creative Industries network and event activities. This should involve a curated mix of business-business, cultural and skills/training activities.

This would see greater strategic coordination to networking across the Creative Industries sector and enable the Creative Industries sector to address many of the challenges it faces (such as the lack of connections to the wider economy in Kent and under-developed collaboration between sub-sectors). There are five main strategic imperatives that could be addressed through an enhanced network approach:

- **Distinctiveness and place-making:** The network would provide a channel through which Tunbridge Wells' Creative Industries sector could be more centrally plugged-in to the wider agendas of the Borough. This includes providing new opportunities for Creative Industries in social entrepreneurship and community/education projects, cross-over projects with other sectors - particularly developing links with independent retail and food.

- **Grow the creative ecology:** Through developing joint Creative Industries and arts/culture projects (e.g. through a creative festival), training activities, and market-making (see Theme 2). This would open up opportunities for collaboration across different creative sectors, develop progression routes for practitioners and workers, and support and nurture the freelance economy. Freelancers and the self-employed are an existing strength and a growing part of Tunbridge Wells' creative economy. Currently there is very limited support for freelancers who can feel isolated (especially those in rural areas). The network would, encourage peer-to-peer networking (digital and face to face), and focus on growing supply chains and markets.

- **Develop connections to the wider economy:** The low visibility of the sector means that many Kent-based businesses and public sector organisations don't realise they exist or the value they can deliver. The opportunity here is to create dedicated brokered opportunities for dialogue and relationship building - through existing business groups and the Local Enterprise Partnership - creating a clear and way for creatives to (collaboratively) reach different markets.

- **Develop links to international networks:** with close proximity to the Channel ports, Gatwick and London, Tunbridge Wells creative businesses have the opportunity to internationalise. This is to develop new markets, to access diverse knowledge and to transform the brand identity of 'local' creative firms. One quick win here would be to join the European Creative Business Network – which provides business to business networking opportunities and would position Tunbridge Wells as a creative cluster with peers in cities across Europe.

- **Build connections with schools, FE and HE:** Creating links to Universities with a Kent presence - including the University of the Creative Arts - would boost the town's creative profile and provide new opportunities for creative businesses – e.g. through training and skills and events. Additionally, building progression routes and connections with young people through schools and FE (including apprenticeships and Work Related learning), would help to position Tunbridge Wells as a place that enables emergent creative talent to participate and flourish in the local economy. There are also opportunities to more effectively lever capacity and expertise – such as by creating a hub for rehearsal, performance and micro creative businesses.

2.4 Main Recommendation – Market-Making: *Develop a Sector Signing & Branding Exercise*

A key finding of our research and consultation is the lack of a clear identity and brand narrative for the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells and the absence overall of the Creative Industries in formal and informal brand and communication campaigns of the Borough (e.g. for tourism and inward investment). Put simply, without a stronger, sharper profile, opportunities for sector growth will be under-realised. Moreover, without an approach that positions the creativity and cultural vitality of the Tunbridge Wells to the heart of the overall 'story', then the Borough will fail to leverage the true value of its creative and cultural assets.

We recommend here that the Borough work with the sector to co-create a new signing and branding exercise for the Creative Industries of Tunbridge Wells and for the role of creativity in making the Borough special and distinctive. This is essential if the network activities outlined in 3.1.1 are to have their desired effect, and it is vital if the Borough is to make the most of its creative and cultural assets and fulfil its potential across different sectors.

There are three main strategic imperatives here:

- **To work with a consortia of local creatives to co-develop a new brand identity for the Borough's Creative Industries sector.** This should be sufficiently expansive to incorporate the diversity of activities – from digital media to performing arts; and expressive of the unique character of the Borough, its talent and creative offer.

- **To co-develop an overall signage and branding campaign for Tunbridge Wells as a whole** – with the Creative Industries operating as the 'attack brand' for the Borough. This should make direct links to the future development of the town centre, tourism and inward investment agendas.

It should avoid empty 'creative Tunbridge Wells' rhetoric and be expressive of the range of activities underway in the Borough and how/why the Borough is a welcoming and creative host for a rich mix of creative, cultural and knowledge-driven activities.

-To accelerate brand development and animate the qualities of the Creative Industries sector via a set of communication and market-making activities. This could include:

- An annual creative festival for Tunbridge Wells – showcasing the Borough's strengths in production and making links to the retail and tourism sectors. These should strengthen local networks, introduce market opportunities in other sectors, and bring opinion-forming creatives from London and elsewhere to engage with local talent.
- Targeted outward missions to London (and perhaps an international trade opportunity for a consortia of firms). These should be sector-driven and focus on specific market opportunities.
- Leadership for wider 'Made in Kent' activities, staging events and giving personality to any county-wide branding exercises. A 'Created and Made in Tunbridge Wells' approach would add value here. This could include annual awards for the sector – including new talent awards (as a way of supporting pathways from education to the sector) and the ongoing promotion of specific businesses to promote the character and personality of the sector (see Creative Scotland example on Page 32).

2.5 Main Recommendation - Place & Planning: *A Tunbridge Wells Creative HUB*

This is the priority recommendation for the Creative economy of Tunbridge Wells. Developing a physical 'hub' (or hubs) for the creative sector in Tunbridge Wells could provide the cornerstone for the future development and growth of the creative economy in the Borough. By 'hub', we mean a space which provides a mix of flexible workspace – from desks by the day or week to small offices; a home for networking events; and a place for informal and formal mentoring and business support. This would be very much a part of the wider networking and branding/signage activities.

Progress is already being made here – with options for hub activities in the Pantiles, Camden Road and Southborough being explored. However, there is a real need for a full feasibility and demand-side study here before any significant resources are invested in any preferred hub option.

The overriding rationale for the HUB(s) is it makes manifest the Borough's ambitions to have a growing and dynamic creative sector. It will do this by:

- Providing a nexus for Creative individuals, many of whom are freelancers; providing opportunities for peer-to-peer networking, and the development of local markets and supply chains
- Helping to tackle the lack of appropriate and affordable space for creatives and cultural organisations in the Borough through the provision of new workspace
- Developing a centre for cultural production in the town – with the potential to connect with the centres of cultural consumption (e.g. in retail)
- Providing an aspirational and public face for the notion of Tunbridge Wells as a town which values the importance of culture and creativity as a driver of economic growth and continual improvement for the Borough.
- Offering a platform for direct links to the education sector – e.g. project space, rehearsal space etc.



2.6 Challenges & Opportunities in Tunbridge Wells

Our research shows that a real opportunity exists for the Creative Industries to flourish as part of a more holistic approach to planning, economic development, cultural strategy, education and place-making. Indeed, a successful Creative Industries sector is dependent on Tunbridge Wells more effectively leveraging its overall assets.

For example, a successful town centre of the future will involve a mix of independent shops, cultural spaces, production and consumption activities, and a focus on the niche, distinctive and excellent (as exemplified in the recent Portas Review on the Future of our High Streets). Tunbridge Wells has a head start here, but future success is not guaranteed – and creative businesses are already looking elsewhere to towns that have made radical steps to invigorate their town centres.

Moreover, creative businesses are not just attracted to dynamic, distinctive places: they can play a central role in shaping such places. In other words, some of the major challenges for Tunbridge Wells – such as how to close the prosperity gap between different communities, how to regenerate areas of the town centre (such as Camden Road), how to reinvigorate the Museum and Library, or how to increase connectivity with rural parts of the Borough – can each have a Creative Industries dimension to how they are addressed.

There is additional urgency here. At the point of writing an earlier draft of this report, creative and cultural organisations at John Jarvis Yard were served an eviction notice on their tenancy. This means an emergent creative hub that had the potential to lead the regeneration of the Camden Road area as well as to add to the wider energy and distinctiveness of Tunbridge Wells, will be lost. The challenge now for the Borough is to find ways to ensure these businesses and organisations stay in the Borough and to do so in a way that makes it clear such activities are cherished in Tunbridge Wells and positioned to the heart of overall strategies in economy and planning.

A central issue here hinges on the type of town Tunbridge Wells wants to be. With some good fortune, Tunbridge Wells might well continue to have a relatively strong economy with high overall prosperity. It might continue to offer a quality alternative to London for those tired or squeezed by the capital's diseconomies – while benefiting from the power and proximity of London's global economy.

But it might not. Tunbridge Wells might be more vulnerable than otherwise thought. Recent research carried out by Experian for the BBC looked at evidence of growth, or otherwise, in every local authority area in England. Tunbridge Wells had the second biggest rate of decline in Kent, losing 301 companies from 2010-2012. The Borough saw the number of companies fall from 9,506 in 2010 to 9,259 in 2012 - a drop of 1.6% each year. While this research does not factor in the scale of businesses or any recent upturn, it does introduce a set of concerns.

For example, if this trend continues and business closures are not offset by start-ups, then years of relative growth and success could be undermined. If a larger business was to re-locate from Tunbridge Wells, this would further accelerate decline. And if the Borough fails to become a more accessible environment for a greater diversity of businesses, then it will become increasingly susceptible to future downturns.

A stronger, more diverse and more confident Creative Industries sector can help to provide overall balance to the economy, it can operate as an attractor to other sectors, and it can give the Borough additional energy and distinctiveness which is so critical for sectors such as retail.

In this Creative Industries Framework for Tunbridge Wells Borough, we seek to position the Creative Industries as an important sector in its own right, but also as a driver and value-adder for the overall economy and identity of Tunbridge Wells.

3. The Role of the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells

This section of the report sets out the Creative Industries baseline for Tunbridge Wells Borough. It draws on results from our Survey, plus presents wider County and regional baseline evidence. For the purposes of consistency and comparison, we use the DCMS definition of the Creative Industries:

"(T)hose industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property"

(DCMS Creative Industries Mapping Document, 2001).

These are advertising, architecture, arts and antique markets, crafts, design, fashion, film/video/photography, software/computer games/electronic publishing, television/radio.

Of course these sub-sectors do not fit or adequately describe every activity in the Creative Industries, and respondents to the survey frequently made this point. 15% of respondents identified themselves as delivering activities in graphic/web design, PR or marketing.

Our survey was 'live' from January to March 2012 via: www.surveymonkey.com/s/tunbridge_wells

It was also promoted heavily through Meejahub, twitter, twuttle, facebook groups and emailed to over 100 contacts with the above link and a request that they promote it to their networks.

3.1 Survey Results: Sector Profile

The survey reached a total of 509 creative businesses and organisations – 81% of which are based in Tunbridge Wells Borough. Other respondents are all from west Kent, many of which do business in the Borough.

The survey received a 15% response rate, providing significant qualitative evidence on the profile, dynamics and expressed aspirations and needs of the sector. The survey was also used as a way of uncovering and profiling previously 'hidden' creative businesses and organisations. This process revealed a further 58 Creative businesses based in Tunbridge Wells.

The headline sector profile results given by the survey show that:

-The Creative Industries sector in Tunbridge Wells Borough shows a diverse base but it has proportionately higher levels of activity in digital media, advertising and wider communication activities. Figure 2 shows the sector breakdown by sub-sector. However, Figure 3 shows that Tunbridge Wells does not show particularly high levels of specialism or clustering in these sub-sectors: it is below the regional and national average for software, computer games and electronic publishing. What Figure 4 also demonstrates is that the Borough shows above average activities in music and the visual and performing arts. Tunbridge Wells is not then solely a 'media town', even with the BBC factored in.

- The sector is relatively established, with a long-term presence in the Borough: 28% of businesses are over 15 years old. However, 15% are start-ups – which indicates some new entrants, but not a considerable amount given the number of people starting new careers after losing their jobs in the downturn.

- There is little evidence of clustering within the Tunbridge Wells urban area, but the town as a whole is, unsurprisingly, the main location for creative businesses: over 80% of creative businesses are based in the town. There is also no evidence of relative clustering in any of the villages across the Borough.

Figure 1. Profiling Tunbridge Wells' Creative Industries

80% of respondents are based in the Tunbridge Wells urban area, with little evidence of clustering – it is a distributed sector by comparison with other places

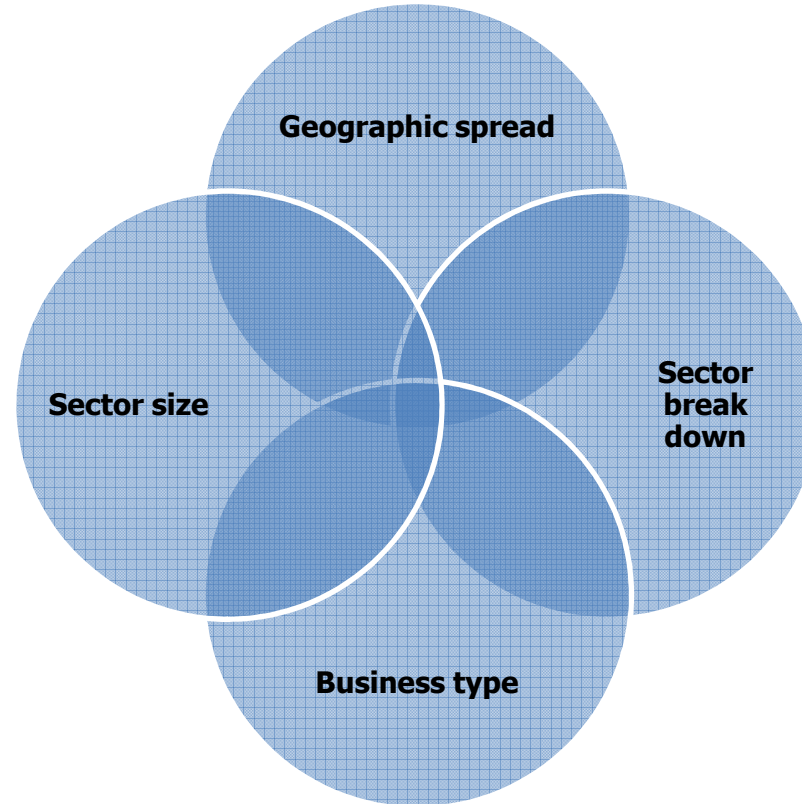
51% limited companies, 30% sole traders, 6% charities, 4% partnerships, 2% public sector, 6% other (e.g. community groups).

57% employ 1-5 people, 17% don't employ any people, 13% employ 6-15 people, 6% employ more than 50, 4% employ 26-50, and 2% employ 16-15 people.

72% have been operating for 15 years or less (15% of which are recent start ups)

58% are VAT registered

28 have an annual turn over of up to £50k; 34% have an annual turnover between £50k - £500k, while only 15% 500k.



- 15% Advertising
 - 13% Video, Film and Photography
 - 10% Visual and Performing Arts
 - 9% Digital and Entertainment Media
 - 7% Art and Antiques
 - 6% Software and Electronic Publishing
 - 5% Crafts
 - 5% Music
 - 5% Publishing
 - 4% Radio and TV
 - 3% Architecture
 - 3% Designer Fashion
- The remaining 15% mainly identified themselves as graphic/web design, PR or marketing commercial creative businesses

50 % Commercial creative or cultural businesses

16 % Arts or cultural organisations or not-for-profit organisations

12% Independent artists

8% Educational organisations working in the creative or cultural sector

6% Not working directly in the creative or cultural industries but often work with others who are part of the creative and cultural sector

The remaining 8% is made up of other type of freelance, or multiple company owners

The Bigger Picture: Creative Industries and the Wider Economy in Kent & the South East

- In 2008, 14,600 people in Kent and Medway were directly employed in the creative industries (Creative Opportunities for Growth 2010).

Local Enterprise Partnership: Creative Industries in Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex

- According to CASE data, there is a total 10,355 business stock for arts, heritage and culture in Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex.
- Predominantly small businesses, sole traders and freelancers serving South East, London and Kent (KEB presentation)
- 15,800 people are employed in 3,850 media and creative industry companies (KEB presentation)
- Unemployment increased in all districts over the last year - East Kent hit hardest, coupled with economic shocks such as Pfizer closure (KEB presentation).

- **The sector is relatively (for Kent) commercially-driven**, with 58% VAT registered. This is indicative of the high proportion of digital media businesses – which tend to be more scalable.

- **The largest firms are in the digital media and software / electronic publishing sectors:** 54% of firms with a turnover of more than £500,000 are in this category, while 38% are in the 'other' category – which includes PR and marketing businesses.

- **The education sector does not show a particular specialism in the Creative Industries:** 8% of organisations operate from within the sector (e.g. charities and social enterprises in the arts); yet just 6% of organisations work with the creative and cultural sector.

3.2 Survey Results: Tunbridge Wells as a Place to do Creative Business

The main sections of the survey asked respondents to describe their perspective on Tunbridge Wells as a place to do creative business. The focus here was on overall perceptions of the Borough; barriers to development and growth; and ideas on how to make the Borough more attractive as a place for existing and potential incoming creative businesses.

Headline results are presented below:

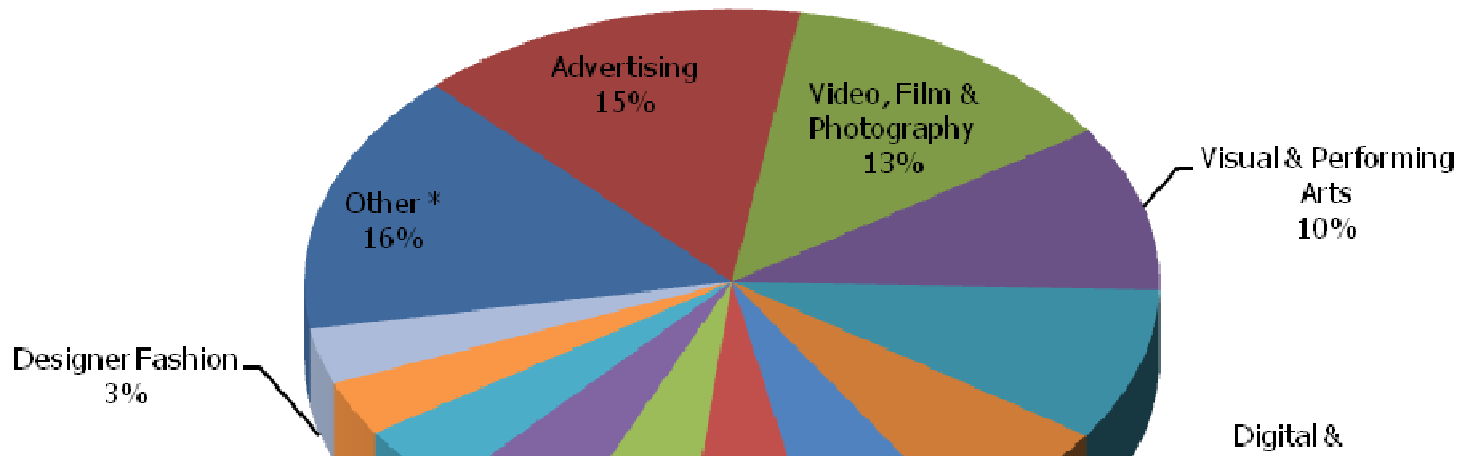
3.2.1 Barriers to Development and Growth

– The most significant barriers are the lack of appropriate business space (47%) and the negative impact of London – attracting audiences/markets that businesses and organisations in Tunbridge Wells are keen to access (46%).

– Competition from other towns (46%) and poor transport links to the rest of Kent (36%) are the 3rd and 4th most significant barriers. Some respondents pointed to the renaissance of coastal Kent as a challenge for Tunbridge Wells - with towns such as Whitstable and Folkestone offering a lifestyle / business mix that Tunbridge Wells is struggling to deliver.

– The lack of a university (37%) and the 'image' or negative/ambivalent perceptions of the town (34%) are the 5th and 6th most significant barriers. This latter reputational issue is cause for concern, with other towns in Kent and elsewhere more aggressive and perhaps more imaginative in the ways they present themselves as a creative place.

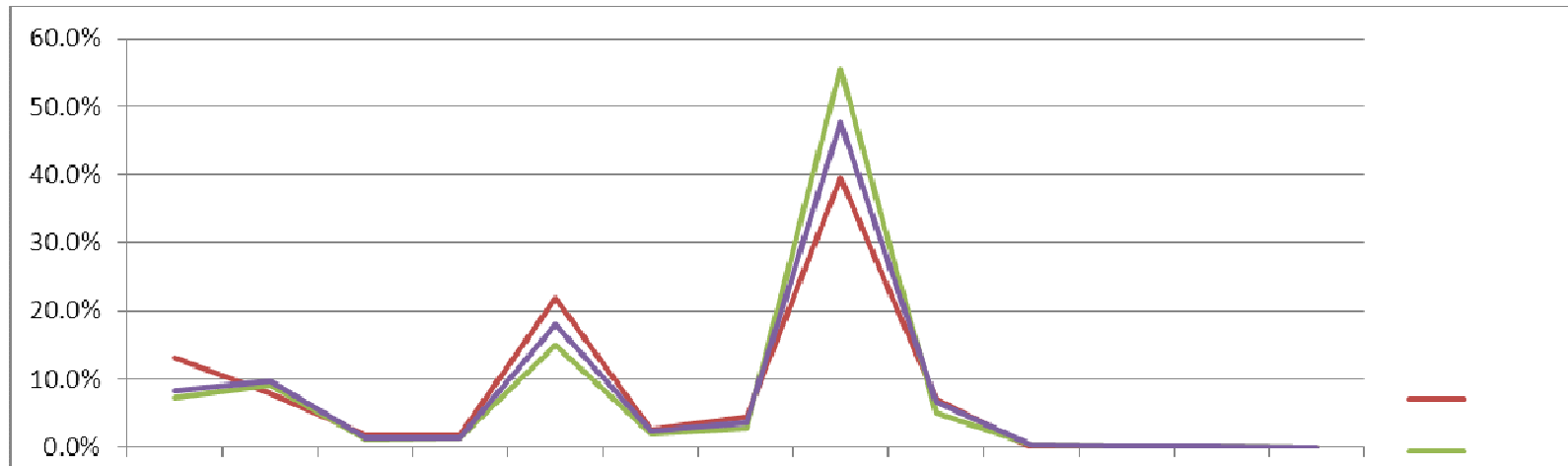
Figure 2. Sub-sector breakdown in Tunbridge Wells



Other:

*Most 'other' responses fell in the commercial creative category. These companies identified themselves as **graphic/web design, PR or marketing.***

Figure 3. Tunbridge Wells sub sector breakdown compared to the South East and the rest of UK (figures based on CASE database)



– Access to fast broadband appears to be the most significant barrier for some but not considered to be a barrier at all by an equal amount of people (both 30%). 13% are unsure about the impact this has on them. This issue was only slightly more significant (39%) in rural parts of the Borough than in the town itself.

3.2.2 Tunbridge Wells as a place for creative businesses

– Overall, Tunbridge Wells is seen as a good location for creative businesses: close to London, Brighton and Gatwick Airport; plus good access to other major economic centres in Kent – e.g. Maidstone and Medway. Reference was also made to East Sussex, with one respondent referring to Tunbridge Wells as *the "Capital of West Kent and North East Sussex"*. However, respondents were consistently critical of the train service (e.g. the cost, early last trains, quality of environment)

– Tunbridge Wells is presented by most as a pleasant place with a *"high quality of Life", "good schools", "excellent shops",* and *"real jewels"* such as the Pantiles. However, for some, the Borough is seen as a little *"slow and conservative", "low risk", "not as nice as it thinks it is",* and *"lacking the energy that a university gives"*.

– The Borough is home to a "wealth of creative talent", but some respondents noted the age and status of many local creative businesses: "we are all growing old together". A connected issue of talent development, retention and re-attraction was raised by some respondents. The Borough is a challenging place for new entrants unless they already have working capital and strong connections. In other words, *"it is not a place where young creative talent can come to – even if they wanted to"*. Costs – such as for workspace and residential property are relatively high, and the cost of the commute to London is simply too expensive for many micro creative businesses to absorb.

-The Borough, and the town in particular, is seen by some respondents as "disjointed". They refer to the apparent disconnect between different parts of the town – from The Pantiles to Camden Road, but they also refer to the way the town is presented and the overall brand narrative. Here the creative sector is seen as under-represented: *"the town is seen as lacking cultural vitality, which isn't true, it's just that the creative sector isn't part of the brand"*.

- The Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells itself is described by many respondents as having strong networks – with Meejahub regularly cited as a useful network. However, some respondents mention a disconnect between parts of the sector (e.g. arts and media), and how the networks *"have a good community feeling but only if you are in the community"*.

- The arts and cultural sector is described by some as very fragile, with infrastructure struggling to deliver to its full potential and too many organisations living a hand-to-mouth existence when with a little support or a stronger role in place-making, they could flourish and deliver both economic and social value.

3.2.3 How to Make Tunbridge Wells More Attractive as a Place to do Creative Business

Responses here were wide-ranging. Below we present some of the more common or urgently articulated responses:

–There is a need to clearly define the aspirations and ambitions of Tunbridge Wells and be clear what the role for the Creative Industries and wider cultural sector should be. *"This is all about understand what Tunbridge Wells wants to/can be"*.

– The Borough and its partners need to *"be radical"* and *"envisage the 'mixed economy' of tomorrow"*. This should involve more visible public sector commitment to the sector – as a driver and value-adder across different strategic agendas. It should also involve a next level of public and private sector collaboration.

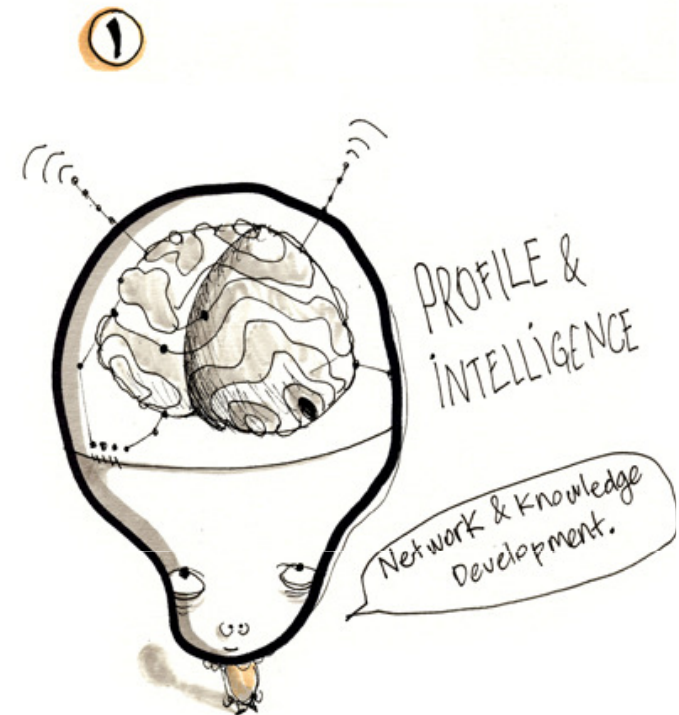
-Some respondents pointed to the opportunity to attract some larger firms to Tunbridge Wells – which can operate as 'aggregators' and drivers for the Creative Industries. The BBC is the only real aggregator in the Borough, but it is duty-bound to work across Kent. A similarly sized commercial aggregator would be a *"big win"* for Tunbridge Wells. However, without the right package and message, this ambition will not be realised.

- The different types of capital (skills, space, markets etc.) of the Creative Industries and especially the arts and education sector are not being effectively leveraged. Major opportunities exist to make better use of existing facilities – from local photography studios to empty shops; from the Salomons facility of Canterbury Christchurch University to Skinners Kent Academy.

- On a related point, more joint work and commissioning across different sector disciplines would encourage deeper collaboration and open up opportunities for innovation and business growth. Currently the innovation capacity between firms and organisations in Tunbridge Wells is very under-developed.

– There is a need for a hub in a dedicated physical location. Different respondents offered different models: including flexible project and activity space, Trinity opening up as an arts centre, a media centre, or a distributed model where different hubs are connected. There is however consensus that urgency is required here.

– In addition: the lack of appropriate space is an issue for some – e.g. a lack of accessible professional exhibition space (49%) and general events space (41%) in the town; and to a lesser extent a lack of rehearsal and performance space (both 30%). While a significant number feel there is insufficient hot desking space (23%) and meeting rooms available for hire (17%); a high proportion do not feel this type of space is applicable to them (48% for hot desking and 36% for meeting rooms).



© Create concrete steps

Image from Creative & Cultural Skills.

4. Tunbridge Wells: An Enabling Environment for the Creative Industries?

In this Section of the Report, we build on these survey results and develop evidence from our workshops and interviews to present overall analysis of the way the Creative Industries currently operate in Tunbridge Wells and how the sector could grow, diversify and play a more value-adding role for the Borough in the future.

For illustration, we present three different case studies of Creative Industries businesses and organisations . They show the diversity of perspectives within the Creative Industries, plus point to some common themes.

To frame our overall argument, in **Figure 5** below, we present the key drivers for the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells. We argue that if the Borough is to have a stronger, more innovative, growth-orientated and resilient sector, then it must improve as a place that delivers the below and it must do so in a way that balances the commercial Creative Industries and wider arts and cultural sector:

Figure 5: Balancing the Creative Economy

For the Commercial Creative Industries

- Lifestyle factors – environmental attractiveness, housing stock, schooling, restaurants etc
- Markets and supply chains – access to London, strength of Kent economy
- Growing creative economy – presence of other creative businesses and individuals
- Freelance economy – increasing numbers of freelancers and self-employed
- Digital and technology – providing new business models, ways of working and access to markets
- Blurring of sectors – leading to the growth of marketing/advertising/design cross-over businesses
- Access to skills and knowledge.

For the Wider Arts and Cultural Sector

- Stronger arts and cultural offer in education and skills.
- Lifestyle factors – environmental attractiveness, housing stock, schooling, restaurants etc
- Kent’s cultural infrastructure – providing venues locations, tours and more
- Cross-over with the independent retail and ‘Pantiles’ effect in Tunbridge Wells
- Strength of schools – providing markets and opportunities for creatives
- Breadth of sectors – provides opportunities across the board
- Affluence and market – relative affluence of area provides local market for artists and crafts
- Proximity to London – Means connections to cutting-edge cultural trends and innovations.



Case study 1: Remedy Creative

Remedy is a creative communications agency based in Tunbridge Wells providing advertising, graphic design and digital communications.

Location: Urban

Type: Limited (private) company

Website: <http://www.remedycreative.com/>

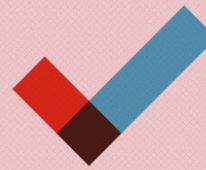
What Remedy does:

Remedy Creative provides advertising, graphic design and digital communications. Since the company started in 2003, its ethos has always been to "get under the skin of the brands" that it works for and to produce creative solutions that engage, inform and persuade building strong relationships with their clients.

Linking to other organisations and services:

Remedy Creative is occasionally invited to guest lecture at both Canterbury Christ Church University and K College. Both of the graphic designers currently employed by Remedy Creative were local graduates who joined the company after completing successful internships there.

WHAT
WEDO



GRAPHIC DESIGN, BRANDING,
COPYWRITING, WEBSITE DESIGN,
SOCIAL MEDIA, ADVERTISING...

Being based in Tunbridge Wells:

The main benefit of being based in Tunbridge Wells for Remedy Creative is the easy rail link to London and relatively good road access to the rest of Kent and East Sussex. Although Tunbridge Wells has a vibrant creative sector and used to be seen as more of a creative hub, this has diminished in recent years. When potential clients look for a creative agency they tend to think of London and Brighton first; Tunbridge Wells is not an obvious choice for them. This is a shared challenge faced by all creative agencies – having to persuade larger clients to consider their experience and relevance to their brief over the 'kudos' of using a London agency. Local talent is generally hidden, in particular freelancers who tend to gravitate towards London or Brighton.

The future for Tunbridge Wells:

Remedy Creative would like to see a creative space made available to be used as a central hub for the creative sector. Suitable studio space is hard to find for smaller agencies and for start up businesses. Having somewhere to network with other creative professionals, attend training seminars and to exhibit work would be important for their business. The company could do more – both as an individual company and as an industry - to involve and keep creative graduates in the area: a creative hub facility would create a point of focus for the sector.

Remedy Creative would also like to see the colleges being more proactive in building links with the sector. Based on their experience, many students are not particularly commercially focused or aware during interviews with potential employers. Stronger links with the sector could provide students with more exposure to the commercial side of design during their studies and make them more prepared for employment.

4.1 A Creative Industries SWOT for Tunbridge Wells District

Strengths

- Growing creative ecology – evidence that there is a healthy mix of start-up, growing and established creative businesses
- Some evidence that there is a Tunbridge Wells ‘specialism’ in digital design, advertising and marketing businesses
- ‘Tunbridge Wells ’ has a distinctiveness – as a place to live, work and – of course - play
- Proximity, connection and links to London on supply and demand side
- International connectivity through Gatwick
- Increasing partnership between businesses
- Growing strength of networks
- Lifestyle factors - attractive to (some) creatives
- Presence of BBC in Tunbridge Wells plus improving local cultural offer



Case study 2: Strangeface

Strangeface is a mask making business and touring theatre company based in Tunbridge Wells.

Location: Urban

Type: Limited (by guarantee) company

Website: www.strangeface.co.uk

What Strangeface does:

Led by Mask Maker Russell Dean, Strangeface has been providing teaching tools to schools, colleges and groups and newly commissioned masks to other organisations in the UK and internationally. All masks are designed and handmade by Russell and are made in dense HIPS plastic to be lightweight, durable and hygienic for sharing, finished to a performance standard. Russell also regularly runs mask making workshops across the UK with his portable vacuum-former.

The company features its trademark half-masks, puppets and original score music performed live. Its participative events have been toured to traditional and non-traditional theatre spaces alongside additional activities such as workshops and consultation events. In 2010/11 the company employed 26 artists to carry out its work and had a turnover of just under £120K - including almost £52K in public subsidy.

Linking to other organisations and services:

Strangeface already has established some links to education networks, via Dave Prodrick, Senior Family Liaison Officer based at St Barnabas, and some social care networks. This is an aspect of their business that has significant potential to grow. The company also runs student placements (currently hosting a mature student) offering a range of creative and arts administration learning opportunities.

Strangeface has links with K College, the University of Creative Arts and some contact with Kent University. Placement opportunities can be difficult at times though due to capacity restrictions, but the company would be willing to take on more placements if there were more drivers and motivators and closer links with the HE institutions.

Being based in Tunbridge Wells:

Strangeface is very happy being located in John Jarvis Yard, Goods Station Road, close to Camden Road. This allows for easy access to the necessary general supplies (e.g. artists materials) and the company can meet visitors at the workshop or in the town centre, both of which are easily accessible by train or road. The Yard has offered reasonable rent for appropriate space - light, bright and warm with parking.

Whilst the area has always been a friendly space, now that the Yard is due to be redeveloped the local community and other tenants are now closer and more supportive of each other. They see this as a space for them to stand out as a cultural organisation, a 'loose collective', in Tunbridge Wells. The company is also aware that Tunbridge Wells is facing potential decline compared to the rest of Kent; and there is a real sense that all the initiatives created to boost creative clusters are in North and East Kent whilst West Kent is expected to be more affluent.

The future for Tunbridge Wells:

Strangeface feel there is an enormous amount of potential in Tunbridge Wells and, despite the apparent conservatism, there are lots of interesting individuals doing their own exciting thing. They also feel that the local authority may be in a position to support the creative sector of Tunbridge Wells - as stronger champion and enabler.

- Tunbridge Wells is not perceived as a 'creative' place internally or externally. It has a strong heritage offer, excellent independent retail, but no connecting creative narrative
- Lack of a university in Tunbridge Wells means that there is not a continual supply of young creative talent. Young creative people from Tunbridge Wells too often move away for FE/HE
- Lack of a central hub or meeting place for creatives beyond the cafes and bars. There is no single recognisable place for creatives
- Tunbridge Wells 'brand' is weak and lacks distinctiveness - particularly when compared to the 'regeneration' towns of East Kent with their strong arts and cultural focus
- Generic weaknesses for businesses in Kent – including transport, rates, access to markets – apply to creative businesses
- Lack of progression routes for young people into creative businesses through apprenticeship, work experience and connections to FE/HE
- Lack of relevant, affordable, space for creative businesses at the different stages of their journeys
- London is still too often perceived as a negative – a drainer of skills, jobs and a 'closed' market for too many creatives
- Local media - beyond the BBC – are seen as weak with limited coverage of creative and cultural activity - which reinforces stereotypes and misconceptions.

Weaknesses

Case study 3: VINCE media

VINCE media is a digital agency based in Tunbridge Wells filming and producing live action TV commercials.

Location: Urban

Type: Limited (private) company

Website: www.vince.co.uk

What VINCE media does:

VINCE media's core business is to shoot live action TV commercials for the advertising industry. They supplement this with a full cycle of production services – pre visualisation of commercials through use of animatics, post –production services where appropriate, as well as clearance of TV commercials and rotation instructions for individual channels. With the advent of digital executions and the higher production values that they demand, VINCE media seeks to provide the same quality of TV commercials as live action digital films.

Linking to other organisations and services:

VINCE media are currently embarking on a commercially focused higher education programme with two universities in London as part of their pre visualisation work for TV commercials. Although they do not run any formal internship programmes, they have recently started to post upcoming shoot information on their website so young people can apply to run on the shoot and gain valuable work experience.

Being based in Tunbridge Wells:

There are a number of benefits and challenges faced by VINCE media as a company based in Tunbridge Wells. Many of the challenges are based around perceptions from people unfamiliar with Tunbridge Wells, with clients often deeming it as 'provincial' (for example, clients sometimes ask "Is that ok to come in for a meeting? I know you have a long way to travel") which can be difficult when competing with London based suppliers. In addition, there is a feeling that by not being in London, creatives can be missing out by not 'being in the mix'. Although most work can be completed remotely, setting up the infrastructure to achieve this has been complicated, and in the cases where remote working isn't the best option, travel can be costly, particularly during peak times. To mitigate some of these challenges, VINCE media has opened up an office in London.



Digital Outdoor

There are numerous benefits to being based in Tunbridge Wells. These range from being close to family to feeling liberated by being outside London. The company also benefits from gaining local clients and from good connections to the heart of London, with better connections being predicted for the future with the opening of the Borough Market underpass.

The future for Tunbridge Wells:

VINCE media would like to see an improved presence of Tunbridge Wells' Creative Industries (and in particular advertising) in London. This can offer new business opportunities for the creative businesses based in Tunbridge Wells and may help improve the town's profile nationally (and potentially internationally). VINCE media would like to see a dedicated facility in the centre of Tunbridge Wells (supported and/or run by the council) which will provide a flexible dedicated creative space offering hot desking, high speed fibre optic broadband, reception desk/call centre, meeting room(s) and an associated/linked building in south London (e.g. Southwark) offering more meeting rooms.

Creative companies wishing to be part of this scheme would pay a monthly fee (which may be subsidised by local government initially to help encourage growth and take up) with the option of becoming full, permanent members if their business has grown sufficiently, paying full rates. This initiative would help raise the profile of Tunbridge Wells' creative sector and establish it as a serious contender to the London scene.

Opportunities

- Connect the creative economy of Tunbridge Wells to the core agendas in the town - including place-making, tourism, retail improvement, inward investment and social cohesion
- Develop and support the natural relationship between Creative Industries, social enterprise and improving public services through procurement, design, and environmental improvement
- Develop the 'aspirational' nature of Tunbridge Wells as a destination and place for creatives.
- Connect creative businesses more closely to the wider economy through networking and events leveraging existing networks
- Build local cultural and creative 'hub' partnerships between schools and creative businesses
- Extend 'Made in Kent' style initiatives to the creative sector, with a focus on making and design
- Encourage and promote public sector procurement engagement.

Figure 6. Relationship to London: Positives and Negatives

The relationship between Tunbridge Wells and London - from the perspective of creative businesses and individuals - is far from simple. Tunbridge Wells' 'distance' from London – both actual and metaphorical – means that it has multiple identities. For some, it is a commuter town (all be it with a scale, strong identity and sense of place); for others it is very much a destination in its own right. What is clear is that many creatives chose – for lifestyle reasons including the countryside and schooling – to relocate here and that of those some have gone on to grow their businesses, developing strong supply chain relationships to the Borough and the surrounding area.

London Positives

- ✓ Supply-side factors – It provides a world-class creative economy of unequalled density, depth, breadth on the doorstep of Tunbridge Wells
- ✓ Demand-side Factors – Tunbridge Wells creatives benefit massively from the market opportunities, brand association, international connections and more that it brings
- ✓ Ecology and nurturing – At an individual talent level and organisational level it provides R&D, HE, and connections to cultural infrastructure
- ✓ Wider economy – London's role as the HQ for much of the UK's economy, especially Finance and FTSE 100 companies, provides much of the market for Tunbridge Wells creatives

London Negatives

- ✗ The sheer scale and size of London's creative economy in almost all sectors means it is a dominating presence not just for Tunbridge Wells but the whole South East
- ✗ In terms of brand and lifestyle, opportunities London is often contrasted against commuter towns and suburbs in the narrative of the creative economy. It is seen as cooler, more connected, not 'provincial'.
- ✗ It will always drain talent, skills and jobs due to its cluster effect and individual aspiration
- ✗ The 'London effect' stretches to house prices, transportation and more making Tunbridge Wells a more expensive base than towns further out from the Capital.

Threats

- The Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells share the same threats faced by all UK Creative businesses. These include fast-growing international competition, changing and rapidly need for more R&D, changing business models driven by technology and changing consumer behaviour
- Weaknesses of UK and European economy – in particular the knock on effects in relation to bank-lending, consumer spending and poor growth forecasts
- The lack of widespread availability of super-fast broadband. This hinders businesses (especially remote editing and file-sharing) and prevents consumer take-up of new products
- London's domination will grow – caused by clustering and multiplier effects. Tech-city is now the fastest growing cluster in the world for digital businesses
- Other parts of South East develop a more compelling and cutting-edge offer combining multiple strengths and building cross-sector partnerships (e.g. Herts film, TV and advanced engineering)
- Lack of visibility of sector makes it weak from a perspective of developers, investors and the wider economy
- Inertia – the fast-pace of change in the Creative Industries sector means that standing still really isn't an option.

5. Nurturing a High Growth & Value-adding Creative Economy

Our research and consultation show that a 'do nothing' approach is not an option if the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells is to grow (and be sustainable) in the future, and if the sector is to play a more significant value-adding role as the economy of the Borough changes. This is not to suggest that a radical set of costly strategic interventions are required, and if they were, they are not affordable. Rather, this is to recommend that the Creative Industries would benefit from a more coordinated, committed and collaborative approach in a way that:

- Attends to the growth and development needs of existing businesses. This includes balancing the needs of higher growth businesses in the digital and media sector, with the role of arts and cultural businesses / organisations – which play such an important role in growing an ecology of activity and giving the Borough energy and distinctiveness.
- Ensures local talent is able to access career paths in the sector – whether this be via brokered access to local businesses, support for creative skills and start-ups, or to nurture an environment so that talent which leaves for London or elsewhere is confident that a return to Tunbridge Wells would not represent failure.
- More effectively maximises the value of the social capital of different assets across the Borough – to include the skills/knowledge/connections of creative businesses and arts and cultural organisations; the capacity and facilities of the arts, cultural and education infrastructure; the distinctiveness and facilities of the retail and tourism sectors; and the technical knowledge of specialist services in law, accountancy and financial services.

The aim here is to nurture and grow the Creative Industries so it plays a central, value-adding and at times transformational role in the culture, economy and identity of Tunbridge Wells. To achieve this, we recommend partners structure their approach around three main themes:



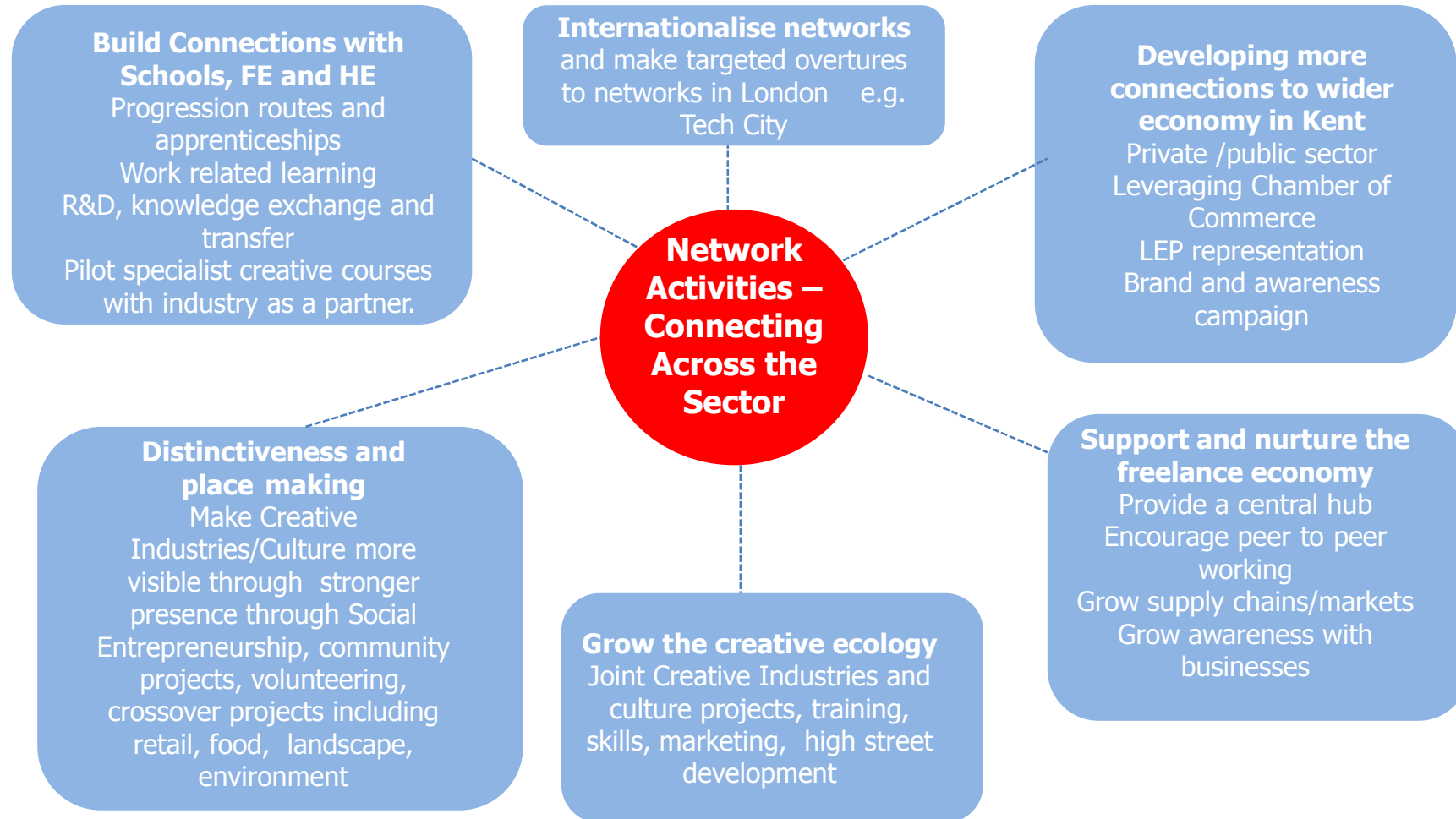
Each of these themes is explored below through a focus on a priority recommendation(s). In turn, these elements constitute the core elements of the Creative Industries Framework for Tunbridge Wells (which is presented theme by theme).

5.1 Theme 1: Collaboration and Exchange.

With opportunities for stronger, and even more productive sector networks; active cross-sector exchange and partnership; and productive regional to international networks. In Tunbridge Wells, there is already a strong culture of self-organisation, networking and knowledge exchange – with public/private partnership more developed than other parts of the country. But links between different parts of the Creative Industries sector (e.g. the commercial digital businesses and wider arts ecology) are under-explored, and new entrants find Tunbridge Wells a difficult place to build commercial and knowledge-driven connections. This means the full asset base of the sector is being under-leveraged.

There is also a real need here to develop more effective collaboration between the arts and creative sector and the education sector, such as through a coordinated approach to arts in schools, internships and apprenticeships, and a long-term commitment to specialist creative education.

Figure 7. Future Network Offer for the Creative Industries of Tunbridge Wells



5.1.1 Tunbridge Wells Collaboration and Exchange

Below we outline how partners, led by the Borough Council, can undertake further feasibility and planning for creative exchange and networking activities.

Action	Description	What difference will it make?	Partners	Indicative Time-frame	Resources and links
Planning & Development	Convene a special meeting with a range of businesses and organisations and create a collaboration and exchange plan for the Creative Industries and for TW with the creative sector at its heart.	Ensures networking and collaboration is more inclusive, goals-orientated and effective.	Led by TWBC and KCC, with creative businesses and organisations, plus the education sector.	End 2012	Commissioning budget
Establish Creative Collaboration Steering Group	This would consist of individuals and representatives of key stakeholders including TW Council, Kent CC, creative businesses and cultural organisations. They will prioritise and stage pilot events.	Sector ownership is guaranteed.	Led by TWBC and KCC, plus private partners, creative businesses, and the education sector.	End 2012	Administration support from TWBC & KCC
Delivery Plan	The Steering Group produces a delivery plan including proposals for business – business networking, commercial creative, education and cultural sector collaboration.	Builds the profile and energy of the Creative Industries in Tunbridge Wells	Led by the Creative Branding group	Early 2013	Administration support from TW BC & KCC
Programme of different network and collaboration activities	A new creative energy and sense of purpose across the Creative Industries of Tunbridge Wells	A game-changer for how Tunbridge Wells is connected and perceived, a market-maker for creative businesses and a place-shaper for the Borough.	Led by the Creative Collaboration Steering Group	Early 2013	Backed by application for grants and other investment.

5.2. Theme 2. Market-making.

With opportunities for Tunbridge Wells to be positioned as a place of creative excellence, professionalism and competitive edge. The Borough currently lacks a distinctive creative narrative, which in turn makes it less attractive to would-be incoming creative businesses, means existing businesses are less able to benefit from a 'Tunbridge Wells brand', and wider sectors such as retail and tourism do not have a contemporary story based on creative production to sell.

5.2.1 Case Study – Sector-led Signage and Branding Through Events

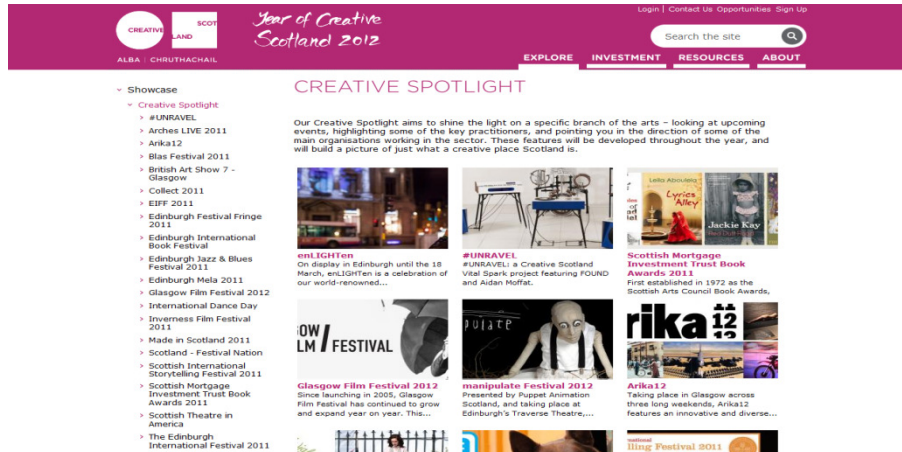


Turku Design Festival, Finland, is a celebration of design and fashion. It brings together local companies, designers and design lovers. The festival involves a range of different events – including exhibitions, open studios, design sales, workshops, seminars and talks.

One of the main venues of the festival is Kontti: a meeting place of design, hub and showcase space for design at the heart of Turku.

- ✓ Sector-led
- ✓ Majors on local strengths
- ✓ Is 'convergent' with other sectors and agendas – e.g. tourism and inward investment
- ✓ Feels 'organic'; true to the locality
- ✓ Isn't expensive
- ✓ Action-driven branding exercise

5.2.2 Case Study – Telling the Creative Story: Creative Scotland.



- ✓ Develops a brand narrative based on the qualities and personalities of the sector
- ✓ Focuses on content, not rhetoric
- ✓ Galvanises pride and gives focus to networks
- ✓ Directly improves the bottom line of participating businesses
- ✓ Links the arts and commercial creative sector

"Our Creative Spotlight aims to shine the light on a specific branch of the arts – looking at upcoming events, highlighting some of the key practitioners, and pointing you in the direction of some of the main organisations working in the sector. These features will be developed throughout the year, and will build a picture of just what a creative place Scotland is".



Possible to develop at a Tunbridge Wells Borough level?

5.2.3 Tunbridge Wells Creative Signing & Branding : Next steps and Delivery

Below we outline how partners, led by the Borough Council, can undertake further feasibility and planning for creative signage and branding:

Action	Description	What difference will it make?	Partners	Indicative Time-frame	Resources and links
Development of Priorities	Convene a special meeting with a range of businesses and organisations and co-create a signing and branding brief for the Creative Industries and for TW with the creative sector at its heart.	Ensures signing and branding is based on solid evidence of demand and has sector-buy in and creative direction.	Led by TWBC, and KCC with creative businesses and organisations.	End 2012	Commissioning budget
Establish Creative Branding Sub-Group (from the Creative Collaboration Steering group) – to lead delivery	This would consist of individuals and representatives of key stakeholders including TW Council, Kent CC, creative businesses and cultural organisations. They will manage the signing and branding exercises.	Sector ownership and delivery is guaranteed.	Led by TWBC and KCC, plus private partners / creative businesses	End 2012	Administration support from TWBC & KCC
Signing & Branding delivery plan	Branding Group produces a delivery plan including proposals for outward missions, events and development of overall brand narrative.	Clear route to delivery of the signing and branding activities.	Led by the Creative Branding group	End 2012	Administration support from TWBC & KCC
Launch of Signage and branding Programme	A new creative identity for TW based on and linked to real creative practice.	A game-changer for how TW is perceived, a market-maker for creative businesses and a place-shaper for the Borough.	Led by the Creative Branding Group	2013	Backed by application for grants and other investment.

5.3 Theme 3: Place and Planning:

With opportunities for creative and cultural businesses and organisations to thrive at the heart of Tunbridge Wells with accessible and distinctive hubs of production linked to the overall fabric of the town centre. Here retail, tourism, inward investment and the creative economy are connected through one clear progressive narrative. Plus approaches to planning encourage workspace and activity space for creative businesses and organisations.

5.3.1 Creating a flexible workspace or HUB: The 'must haves'

- ✓ 'Curated' mix of businesses – mix of sectors, experience
- ✓ Low-barriers to entry - e.g. affordable, limited lock-in
- ✓ Cheap, reliable and super-fast broadband
- ✓ Dedicated and energetic manager(s)
- ✓ Programme of activity – events, breakfasts, talks
- ✓ Direct links to education sector (activities, opportunities)
- ✓ Informal support – mentoring, networks
- ✓ Location near transport nodes or hubs.



"Everywhere you go people are working in cafes, coffee houses or on the move. Some people don't need an office but they do need a place to base themselves from, whether it's to check emails, make an important business call, finish writing that proposal or to hold a vital client meeting. "
(Round Factory Leeds).

Figure 8. Tunbridge Wells Creative HUB - what it could deliver for stakeholders

Creative businesses

Flexible workspace for start-ups and grow-on businesses
Networking and events
Drop in space for freelancers
Informal mentoring and peer-to-peer learning
Access to markets and supply chains

Commercial property

Bridges a gap in the market in Tunbridge Wells
Establishes Tunbridge Wells as a place to develop and grow creative businesses
Will help ensure that a 'property ladder' for creative businesses exists in town

Borough Council, Kent CC and other stakeholders

Provides a visible and effective demonstration of commitment to rebalancing and developing a growing knowledge economy
Connects with place-making, economic development, inward investment, up-skilling, and town improvement strategies.
Has direct links to the education sector – e.g. project space; or it could even be based in an education facility.

5.3.2 Case Study: Fifteen Queen Street, Colchester.

Like Tunbridge Wells, Colchester plays home to a wide range of creative talent – from artists, graphic designers, poets and tailors to milliners, musicians, film-makers, cooks and thespians.

Until now, this talent has been largely disconnected and 'below the radar'. Without a place to collaborate and flourish, many activities have been forced to leave Colchester to practice their trade elsewhere.

In response to this challenge, First Site (a long-standing arts organisation and now a major centre for contemporary visual arts) has collaborated with Arts Council England and The Creative Coop to seize an incredible opportunity to make use of a three storey Georgian building, right in the heart of the town centre.

This building is called 15 Queen Street and the vision is to create a community owned space that helps creativity flourish at grass roots level in Colchester.

Key success factors for 15 Queen Street include:

- ✓ Range of memberships – from £5 a month library membership to £150 for a dedicated desk
- ✓ Active programme of events including talks and connections to wider economy
- ✓ Mentoring scheme for graduates with local design firms
- ✓ Strongly connected to local arts and cultural scene and HE
- ✓ Excellent leadership and management
- ✓ Connected to creative branding activities for Colchester.

"

fifteen Queen Street

The Home of Creativity in Colchester

"Whether you are a commuter from a London design agency, school teacher, community group member or artist based locally, no matter what your creative talent, we want to hear from you and learn what 15 Queen Street can do for you".

Lessons for Tunbridge Wells: The importance of connecting the proposed HUB to other institutions; the balance of sectors and business development stages is critical; programming and events ensure the centre connects to the wider economy; and central location in a distinctive building ensures footfall and recognition.

fifteen Queen Street

The Home of Creativity in Colchester

5.3.3 Case Study: Hub Westminster

Hub Westminster launched on 28th October 2011, with a mission to help 1,000 entrepreneurs and impact businesses & change-makers to start, grow and scale. Located in Pall Mall, right in the heart of London, Hub Westminster is dedicated to drive what they call the "impact economy".

The "impact economy" is being built by businesses & ventures that seek financial returns and positive social, environmental impact. JP Morgan has hailed businesses in the impact economy as the newest asset class and forecasted £418 billion profits for their investors over the next decade.

Hub Westminster's mission is to be:

"A Superstudio for the New Economy...London needs a make laboratory for change-makers to take ideas from action to impact. Hub Westminster provides access to investment, space, programming and a global peer network hosted to foster collaborative practices and learning opportunities."

Covering 12,000 sq ft, the Hub Westminster provides state of the art work space and meeting rooms, a 40 person café lounge, a lecture theatre, innovation workshop space, collaboration booths and a £3m social investment fund. Weekly events, seminars and lectures from leading business and innovation experts are held for people working at the space.

The key factors behind the success of the Hub are:

- ✓ 'Pay as you go' approach - can change per month depending on use
- ✓ Connects social entrepreneurs to creative economy
- ✓ £3 Million innovation fund and various accelerator programmes
- ✓ A Community Interest Company – heavily backed by the Council
- ✓ Links globally to other hubs

Lessons for Tunbridge Wells: A highly flexible approach to workspace rental, strong commitment to business support and growth, partnership between public and private sector, and a clear 'brand narrative' related to the 'impact economy'.

5.3.4 Tunbridge Wells Creative Hub: Next Steps and Delivery

Below we outline how partners, led by the Borough Council, can undertake further feasibility and planning for a creative HUB:

Action	Description	What difference will it make?	Partners	Indicative Time-frame	Resources and links
Demand study	A targeted study to build the evidence base for the Hub and fill in the knowledge gaps. It will explore the demand for the Hub (or Hubs) by sector, size of company, hygiene factors, locational issues and programme essentials. This will include options for links to the education sector – e.g. co-location.	Ensures Hub is based on solid evidence of demand Ensures that the right scale, building and location is chosen Pre-builds interest and ensures that programme activities can start before the physical building	Led by TWBC and KCC, with support from ACE	End 2012	Commissioning budget
Hub Management Framework and Business Plan	Production of a Hub delivery plan including proposal for physical site, business plan, staffing and programme details, partnership requirements and roles	Clear route to delivery of the Hub, including detailed timetable, costings (including sustainability issues), expectations of partners	Led by TWBC, and KCC, supported by the Creative Collaboration Steering group	End 2012	Administration support, strategic leadership.
Launch of Tunbridge Wells Hub	A hub(s) for creative businesses offering a range of workspace, business support, networking events, and mentoring	Providing workspace, helping create jobs, support and grow businesses, providing programming for public space and helping to realise the full potential of the hub to deliver regeneration and economic growth	Led by TWBC and KCC, supported by the Creative Collaboration Steering Group	2013	Backed by application for grants and other investment.

6. Overall Development Structure.

Below we outline an overall development structure for this Creative Industries framework for Tunbridge Wells. It includes a merging of the Creative Collaboration and Creative Signage & Branding Steering groups:



Appendix 1: Consultees

Workshops

Name	Position	Organisation
Hilary Smith	Economic Development Manager	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Lucy Keeley	Arts & Regeneration Officer (West Kent)	Kent County Council
Jackie Sumner	Head of Community Investment	Town and Country Housing Group
Alex Green	Venue Manager	Trinity Theatre
Liz Carter	Company Manager	Claque Community Theatre
Nigel Bolton	Director	Beckwith Consulting Ltd
Jez Timms	Co-founder Director	Meejahub Torpedo Juice Ltd
Mike Goode	Director	Hop House Design
Rob O'Callaghan	Freelance Consultant	
Carl Jeffrey	Founder	Fellow Creative
Adrian Tofts	Planning Policy Team Leader	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Russell Dean	Director	Strangeface Mask Theatre Company
Tony Witton	Arts & Culture Manager	Kent County Council
Ann Emmett	Administrator	Applause Rural Touring
Jo Wiltcher	Manager	Tunbridge Wells Museum & Gallery
Caroline Derrick	Local Councillor	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Dave Prodrick		CREATE
John Martin	Artistic Manager	Trinity Theatre
Stephanie Allen	Relationship Manager, Visual Arts	Arts Council England, SE

Name	Position	Organisation
Jackie Ingrams	Programme Manager – Creative Skills	Kent Adult Education
Hermant Amin	Economic Development Officer	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Bethan Tomlinson	Director	Strangeface Mask Theatre Company
Gaynor Edwards	Co-founder Director	Meejahub Torpedo Juice Ltd
Gudrun Andrews	Planning Officer	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Paul Meyer	Director	Photoshoot Studios
Andrew Metcalfe	Director	Maxim PR
Paul Leaper	Managing Editor	BBC Radio Kent

Additional interviews

Name	Position	Organisation
Ross Gill	Economic Strategy & Policy Manager	Kent County Council
Cathy Westbrook	Director	PANeK
Chris Hare	Assistant Principal	K College
Chris Gane	Director	VINCE media
Dawn Badland	Director	Applause Rural Touring
Esther Van Hout	Business Development Manager	University of Kent
Gabrielle Lindemann	Kent Film Office	Kent County Council
Holly Whytock	Freelance Arts Marketing and Events Management	
Mark Lacey	Practitioner	
Nathaniel Hepburn	Curator	Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood
Sally Staples	Head of Arts Development Unit (2007-2011)	Kent County Council
Sam Marlow	Organiser	Electric Lantern Festival
Sarah Colclough	Support Officer	Kent Apprenticeships

Appendix 2: Survey

See attached file.



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tom fleming / creative consultancy /