

A photograph of the Roman Baths in Bath, UK, at dusk. The image shows the Great Bath, a large rectangular pool of water, surrounded by a colonnade of classical columns. The interior walls of the bath are made of stone and feature arched niches. Several statues are visible on the upper level of the colonnade. The scene is illuminated by warm, golden light from the setting sun and artificial lights, creating a serene and historic atmosphere. In the foreground, large, rough-hewn stone blocks are visible, likely part of the bath's original structure. A dark, semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "BANES DRAFT CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN JULY 2025" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

BANES DRAFT CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN JULY 2025

A photograph of the Roman Bath in Bath, UK, at dusk. The scene shows a large, rectangular stone pool of water reflecting the warm, golden light of the setting sun and the interior lights of the surrounding colonnade. The colonnade is composed of tall, classical columns supporting a roof with a decorative balustrade. Several statues are visible on the roofline. In the foreground, large, rough-hewn stone blocks form a low wall or steps leading into the water. A group of people is gathered on the far side of the pool, looking at the architecture. The sky is a pale blue, indicating twilight. A dark, semi-transparent triangular overlay is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the word 'CONTEXT' in white capital letters.

CONTEXT

How did we get here?

- A [cultural strategy](#) was established in 2011 covering the period to 2026
- This was reviewed in 2015 and an [update](#) published
- In 2015 the administration adopted the Cultural and Creative Strategy Review.
- In February 2019, the B&NES Arts Development Team dissolved.
- May 2023, Lib Dem manifesto commitments to culture
- A new economic development and culture portfolio create – Cllr Paul Roper as well as remaining in the Leader's portfolio
- Revised 2023 B&NES Corporate Strategy one of our core priorities: **Cultural life - valuing and developing its contribution to Bath and North East Somerset.**



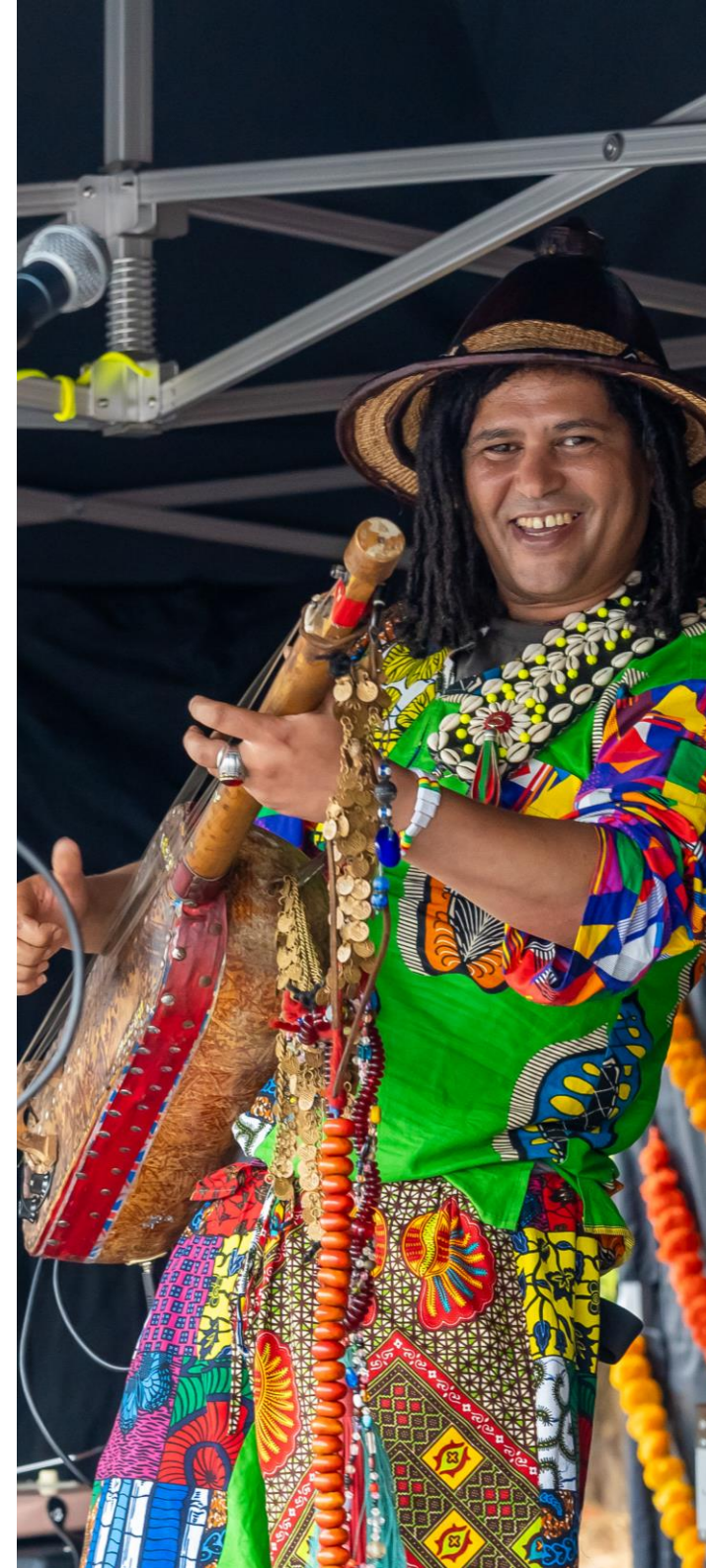
- There are two, key, overarching strategic pieces of work that inform the Council's policy making:
 - [Economic Strategy](#)
 - Culture is referenced under the resilient business strand of the strategy and the visitor economy features under stronger places
 - An action from the economic strategy is piece of work is about to get underway to develop a 'B&NES local Creative Economy plan' focused on future workspace for creative and arts industries
 - [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
 - The JHWS makes the explicit the link between good work and employment – as such, it is an extension of the economic strategy
 - It also has the priorities related to strengthening compassionate and healthy communities in which culture has a clear role to play – again with some alignment to the 'Stronger place' strand of the economic strategy



A photograph of the Roman Bath in Bath, UK, at dusk. The scene shows a large, rectangular stone pool with a low wall of columns and arches surrounding it. The interior is lit with warm, yellow light, and the exterior is lit with warm, yellow light. The sky is a deep blue. In the foreground, there are large, rough-hewn stone blocks. A group of people is standing near the pool. The text "CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Will lay the ground-work to create a place where culture thrives, supports local economy and improves the health and wellbeing of audiences.
- The council will support, facilitate and enable partnership activity and act as a convener
- This strategy covers the period 2025 –2027
- The 2 year period will focus on:
 - Aligning Council generated cultural activities with B&NES corporate priorities
 - Integrating cultural activities into existing and future Council work
 - Working with the sector to understand what they need to make culture thrive in BANES and helping them to make this happen



Draft Definition of Culture

- B&NES Draft definition of culture based on Arts Council England's:

We use 'culture' to mean: collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, heritage buildings, music, theatre, the visual arts, festivals, location filming and large sporting events.

- ACE don't include festivals/events in their definition but mixed discipline community centric activity across the Local Authority make this an important strand of cultural activity in BANES
- Heritage Buildings and location filming are also not included by ACE but are clearly important aspects of the cultural offer within BANES
- In relation to place-making in BANES, and in Bath especially, sport is an important activity. The impact of Bath Rugby on the City, the local relevancy of Bath City FC and large events, such as Bath Half Marathon, warrant the addition of communal sporting activity in our definition.
- The inclusion of the above additions also makes an alignment with the Visit West Destination Management Plan
- The recognition that landscapes and nature are important and relevant to culture in BANES

Draft Vision

The Council's vision for culture in BANES is to be recognised as a region with a vibrant and inclusive cultural offering that contributes to the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of its residents and visitors.

We recognise the transformative power of culture to improve economic, health and wellbeing outcomes and see it as vital component in delivering B&NES' vision to 'improve people's lives'.

'Tackling the climate and nature emergency' is one of the council's core policies and we see culture as a key component of connecting and energising people behind this outcome.

Culture is one of the 9 priorities in the B&NES Corporate Strategy: Valuing and developing the contribution of culture to Bath and North East Somerset

**Cultural Development
Plan Strategic
Objectives**

Taking the strategic context into account there are some clear outcomes that the Cultural Strategy will be required to achieve

It is under these outcomes that action plans would be created

- **Health and Wellbeing**
 - Improve the lives of all people across BANES by ensuring relevant cultural activities are available to them with a particular focus on target communities and issues across the Authority
- **Placeshaping**
 - Ensure BANES distinct identity as an outstanding centre of culture, creativity, heritage and beauty is embedded in Council policy making whilst also being relevant and recognised by residents and non-residents alike
- **Creative Economy**
 - Develop cultural activities that support people of all ages in their creative skills and pathways
- **Visitor economy**
 - Create culture that visitors locally, regionally, nationally and internationally come to enjoy and support BANES as a location for filming and destination for film tourism

**Cross Cutting
Priorities:**

There will be some cross cutting priorities that will help shape the cultural strategy

- **Inclusivity**
 - All parts of the cultural in BANES sector must feel that the cultural strategy is relevant to them.
 - Demonstrable efforts made to ensure a wide range of cultural activities that are accessible to all
 - Audiences should have a voice in cultural policy making
- **Environment sustainability**
 - In-line with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency the cultural strategy should help the cultural sector in BANES to be more environmentally sustainable
- **Financial sustainability**
 - A key concern of the sector is the lack of funding to support new and emerging work and practitioners as well as established institutions and groups. The cultural strategy must be focussed on ways in which the Council can support the financial sustainability of the sector – this could be direct grants but can also extend to waiving fees and charges, marketing support and support for fundraising activities
- **Quality, Experimentation and Creativity**
 - It's important that the cultural sector continues to achieve a quality output but also one where new and exciting work and opportunities are championed

Key Planned Activities:

There are a number of key activities that B&NES will take forward and will form part of the Council's approach to culture

- **The Bath Social Impact Network**
 - Partnership with BSU that will be a way for the sector to hear from the Council and the Council to listen to the sector.
- **Fashion Museum**
 - The Council's largest investment in culture. This significant capital project will deliver on all the Strategic Priorities and Themes
- **Changing the way the council approaches culture**
 - The council needs to change its own organisational culture so that the approach across the council is to make it easy for culture to thrive in BANES.
- **Attainment Gap**
 - B&NES is taking a whole system approach to reducing the educational attainment gap.



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- **Regeneration and green infrastructure programmes and activity**
 - Culture is an important factor in boosting the vibrancy of towns and cities – existing regeneration and green infrastructure programmes,
- **Implementing a strategy to increase creative workspace in B&NES**
 - This Creative Workspaces Strategy aims to retain existing space, and boosting the supply of appropriate, affordable creative workspaces
- **Working with the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority**
 - B&NES will continue to engage with Visit West and the MCA to further the aims of the cultural sector within BANES.



Next Steps

- Share DRAFT Cultural Development Plan and Cultural Audit with sector for feedback
- Feedback required by end of July 2025
- Construct action plan under the Strategic Priorities and Enabling Pillars
- Update Plan for more formal review and adoption Autumn 2025
- Feed into the Citizens Assembly for Culture

