

# Activating the Cultural Strategy

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**We will make Trafford a place powered by cultural and creative expression that comes from everyone, and which will enrich lives and life chances...**

**Maria Bota, Director of Cultural Transformation**

# Strategic Context

- The Cultural Strategy was adopted by Trafford Council in July 2023
- The Director of Cultural Transformation arrived in post in December 2023, in order to lead the Strategy's activation
- In July 2024, the Council launched its new Corporate Plan, which includes the new priority of **Culture, Heritage and Sport for all.**



# Three Strategic Aims – Leadership, Talent, Communities

1. Trafford will develop a distinctive and inclusive approach to cultural **leadership**, based on a shared set of priorities with key partners.
2. Trafford will become a creative factory – GM’s ‘**talent** belt’ – driving opportunities for embryonic, emerging and established cultural talent, with clear pathways for skills, talent and career development.
3. Trafford will champion and nurture connected cultural **communities** from the grassroots up, by supporting more hyperlocal and community-led activity.



# Leadership

1. The new **Cultural Transformation Hub** is established and delivering. For example, a new heritage framework is in development
2. Trafford Council has registered its interest in applying to Greater Manchester's **Town of Culture** programme (for 2026, 2027 or 2028 in order of preference) as a means of providing impetus to the activation of the strategy
3. The **Director of Cultural Transformation** (3.5 days a week since December 2023) and a **Culture Support Officer** (2 days a week since September 2024) are activating the 'hub and spoke' model
4. The Director of Cultural Transformation is engaging with Council officers and partners to build confidence and opportunities for working together with cultural activities.



Roland JUNO-DI

# Talent

1. The **Creative Cluster programme** is identifying current creative and cultural activities, alongside opportunities and interests
2. A new **Creative and Cultural Leadership Group** is exploring opportunities for collaboration, co-ordination, capability and capacity-building
3. The fledgling **Trafford Cultural Education Partnership (TCEP)**, led by Gorse Hill Studios, has relaunched and is undertaking baselining activity.
4. Third sector and community networks are intrinsic to the Creative Cluster programme, and helping to identify development needs
5. The new **Trafford Creatives** is offering a chance for all creatives to participate in regular gatherings, receive news of funding and development opportunities, and share their needs in order to thrive in Trafford.





# Communities

1. A business case has been developed to build a Trafford listings platform online to position and promote the Borough's cultural offer, and to build sector engagement and partnership. Called **Trafford Is..** the platform would support residents and visitors.
2. Trafford has been divided up into **ten Creative Clusters**, and an extensive programme of engagement will strengthen hyperlocal cultural programming and generate ideas for a Year of Culture.
3. **Trafford Leisure** and **Trafford Libraries** are inviting cultural community groups to explore accessing facilities in an affordable and timely manner.
4. The Creative and Cultural Leadership Group and the Creative Cluster programme are enabling officers to develop a picture of cultural activity and investment.

# Creative Conversations

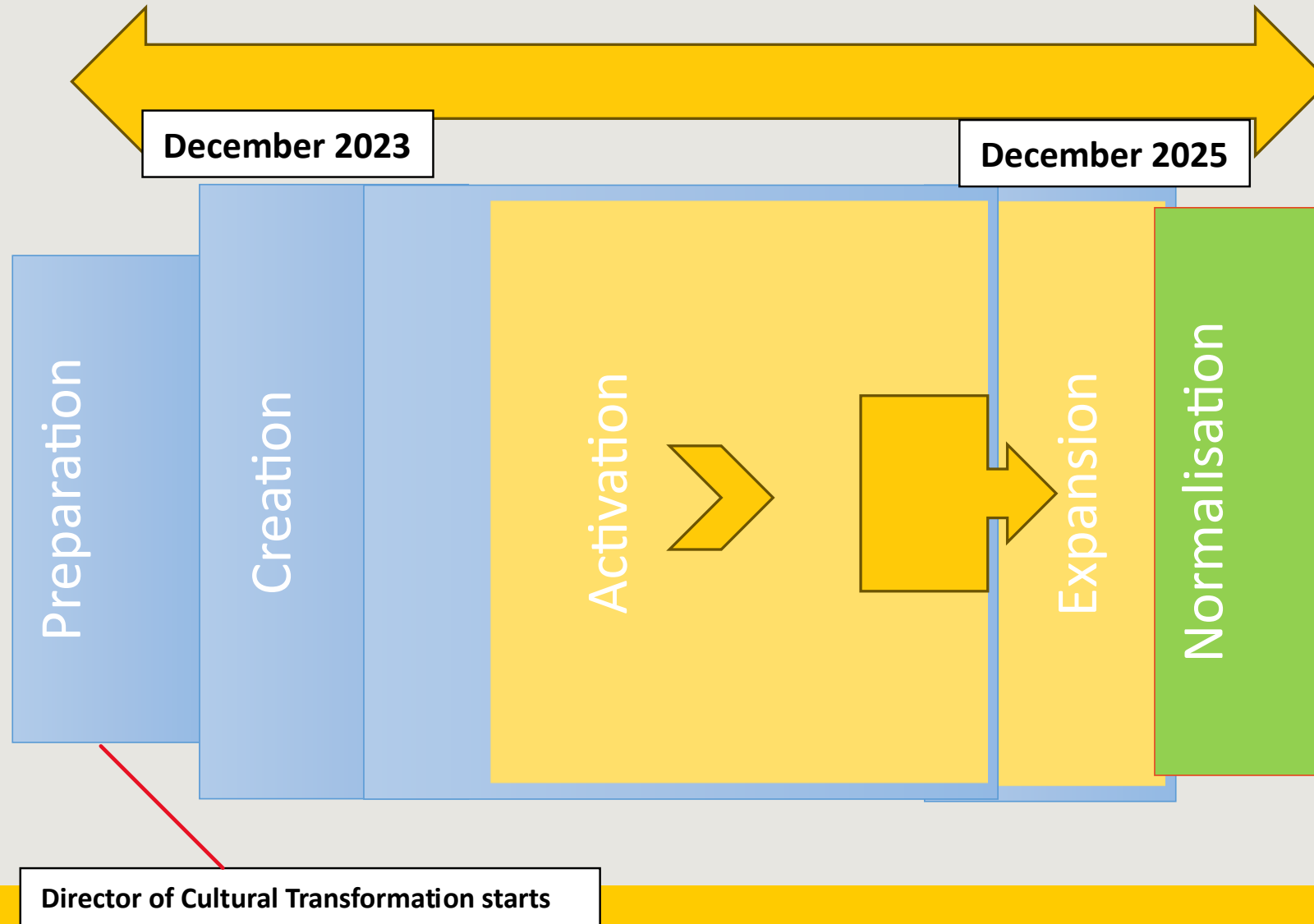
- Old Trafford
- Gorsehill and Cornbrook
- Sale Central, Sale Moor, Brooklands, Ashton Upon Mersey and Manor
- Stretford, Humphrey Park and Longford
- Lostock and Barton
- Urmston, Davyhulme and Flixton
- Bucklow St-Martins
- Altrincham, Broadheath and Bowdon
- Timperley North and Central
- Hale, Hale Barns and Timperley South



# Conversations to enable creative and cultural activity for everyone

- What is currently happening? Who is not participating? How could we reach them? What are the stories of this place that we would like to celebrate?
- What could enable more people living here to experience creative and cultural activity in their daily lives? How could we work together to enable this?
- If we held a Year of Culture, how would you imagine us celebrating in this area together?

# Timing of Cultural Strategy development



# Delivered December 2023-September 2024

- Consultation and business case development for **Trafford Is..**
- Strategic Panel established – the **Cultural Transformation Hub**
- **Creative Cluster** programme commencing
- **Trafford Creatives** launch (Sale Waterside)
- **Creative and Cultural Leadership Group** established
- **Trafford Cultural Education Partnership** relaunch - Gorse Hill Studios
- **Engagement with stakeholders** who contributed to the strategy development to maintain engagement
- Established/maintained relationships with key organisations (**ACE, NLHF and GMCA**) to ensure strategic alignment
- Agreed approach to scoping a **Heritage Framework** for Trafford

# Timing of creative programmes

Two areas of work designed to support **future funding bids**, to be demonstrated from 2026 onwards:

- Creative Cluster programme – The work will provide content for an **Arts Council's Place Partnership funding** in 2025, to support a Year of Culture programme
- Heritage Framework for Trafford – The activity will identify ideas and projects for bids in 2025/2026 to the **National Lottery Heritage Fund** and others, to help to bring together and celebrate Trafford's heritage stories.

# Partnerships - connecting with GMCA, ACE, NLHF and sponsors

- Trafford Partnerships
- Trafford Social Value
- Visitor Economy
- Creative Health and Well-Being
- Skills
- Creative Industries
- Film and Drama
- Animation



# Challenges

- Sector is struggling, with time limited for idea generation
- No funds to sustain hub and spoke model
- Reliant on tremendous goodwill from the sector
- Takes time to build trust and engagement
- No small grants programme to support new ideas
- Need for stronger diversity and representation across the sector
- No match funds for funding bids
- A small team delivering a big programme of work

# What success would look like in 2025..

- Trafford Is.. Delivering increased attendances, profile and benefit
- Hub and spoke model operational and valued
- Benefits of Culture contributing across the Council
- TCEP collaborations underway
- Creative and Cultural Leadership Group collaborations underway
- Small grants programme established, to support the sector
- Museum status secured for Cosgrove Hall Archive
- Development of longer-term plan for creating a Centre of Children's Animation at Sale Waterside and/or artists' studios

# What success would look like in 2025..

- Year of Culture programme ideas shaped and communities activated
- Major bids to ACE and NLHF to support Year of Culture and Heritage projects
- Trafford Partnership aligned with the cultural programme
- Strong National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) bids to ACE shaping up from Sale Waterside and other Trafford organisations
- Substantial bids going into ACE, NHLF and GMCA from Trafford partners, alongside those from Trafford Council, with shared vision.

# Next steps

- Trafford Is... development and activation
- Creative Cluster programme development
- Cultural Transformation Hub – forthcoming focus on Culture and Visitor Economy, Children and Young People, Health and Wellbeing, Climate, Nature and Place
- Development of a Heritage Framework for Trafford
- Supporting the TCEP, and the Creative and Cultural Leadership Group
- Supporting Sale Waterside to develop NPO approach.

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