



OTTERPOOL PARK

COUNTRYSIDE • CONNECTED • CREATIVE

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT
OP14 – CULTURAL AND CREATIVE STRATEGY



OTTERPOOL PARK

COUNTRYSIDE · CONNECTED · CREATIVE

APPLICATION CONTENTS

Application Administration

OP1	Covering Letter
OP2	Planning Fee
OP3	Outline Planning Application Form, including relevant certificates & CIL Form.

Environmental Statement

OP4	Non-technical Summary
OP5	Environmental Statement which assesses the impact of the proposed development on the following topics:

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Chapter 2	EIA Approach and Methodology
Chapter 3	Development and Consideration of Alternatives
Chapter 4	The Site and Proposed Development
Chapter 5	Agriculture and Soils
Chapter 6	Air Quality
Chapter 7	Ecology and Biodiversity
Chapter 8	Climate Change
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Chapter 10	Geology, Hydrology and Land Quality
Chapter 11	Human Health
Chapter 12	Landscape and Visual Impact
Chapter 13	Noise and Vibration
Chapter 14	Socioeconomic effects and community
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Documents submitted in support

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1

The Vision



“From the very outset, the imaginative and transformative forces of art, culture and creativity will be vital in making Otterpool distinct and authentic, a place which people of all kinds enthusiastically choose to live in and, most of all, a place with a soul.”

Otterpool Park, A Cultural Visioning Report, Peter Jenkinson, October 2018

- 1.1 The Cultural and Creative Strategy for Otterpool Park (Create Otterpool) sits beneath, and should be read in conjunction with, the Otterpool Visioning Report¹. Together they aim to articulate culture’s central role in its development, providing one of the key narrative threads for Otterpool’s future and weaving creativity into the fabric of the garden town and its communities.
- 1.2 Creating and articulating Otterpool’s ‘soul’ sits at the heart of the cultural vision. Although this is a relatively intangible concept, we know instinctively what it means – just as we know how a place can feel ‘soulless’. Culture and creativity will help to define and articulate Otterpool’s soul, playing an important role in shaping the town’s character, spirit, ways of thinking, living, learning, working and playing.
- 1.3 As Otterpool grows it will develop “its own identity, its own values, its own traditions, its own customs and its own culture”². This will be a part-managed, part-organic process and it will happen over several decades. On that basis, this first cultural and creative strategy is a navigation tool. It takes as its starting point the things we know about – the town’s indigenous natural and heritage assets, its existing and neighbouring communities, the details contained in the Masterplan, and Otterpool’s local and national context – and marries these with the range of ambitions expressed for the new garden town and its communities.

- 1.4 Eighty five percent of people in England agree that the quality of the built environment influences the way they feel.³ The Cultural Visioning Report reflects an ambition for Otterpool to be the best new town in the UK, attracting international attention and engendering a real sense of local pride and belonging. It emphasises the importance of this unique opportunity to embrace and integrate culture and creativity from the outset and also sets out a number of propositions and challenges:- to ensure that Otterpool is designed and built with its citizens; to enmesh art, culture and creativity in every aspect of its life; to take a pioneering approach to education and learning; to be innovative and creative in its approach to supporting employment; and to be ‘well connected’ in a local, regional, national and international context. This strategy document considers practical ways to address some of these challenges and move towards delivering the partners’ ambitious vision for Otterpool so that in 10 years’ time we will be able to look back and say that Otterpool:-

- o Has been created with and for its citizens.
- o Has successfully enmeshed art, culture and creativity in every aspect of its life.
- o Has a distinctive and authentic personality and a community that embraces creativity and diversity.

- o Embraces, encourages and enables innovation.
- o Enjoys strong internal/external connections and networks that drive learning, creative expression, participation, employment and investment.
- o Has pioneered and supported different approaches to education and learning, creating a local engine for creativity and community cohesion.
- o Has benefited by encouraging and supporting the creative industries.
- o Is an exemplar of how to use the transformative power of art, culture and creativity to help create the best new town in the UK.



¹ Available on the Otterpool Park website

² Otterpool Park, A Cultural Visioning Report for Creative Folkestone, Peter Jenkinson, 2018

³ Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health & Wellbeing Inquiry, July 2017

2

Executive Summary



2.1 The Cultural Visioning Report reflects an ambition for Otterpool to be the best new town in the UK, attracting international attention and engendering a real sense of local pride and belonging. It emphasises the importance of this unique opportunity to embrace and integrate culture and creativity from the outset and also sets out a number of propositions and challenges:- to ensure that Otterpool is designed and built with its citizens; to enmesh art, culture and creativity in every aspect of life; to provide education and learning; to be innovative and creative in its approach to supporting employment; and to be 'well connected', in a local, regional, national and international context.

2.2 As Otterpool grows it will develop "its own identity, its own values, its own traditions, its own customs and its own culture"⁴. This will be a part-managed, part-organic process and it will happen over several decades. The 'Create Otterpool' strategy considers practical ways to move towards delivering the partners' ambitious vision for Otterpool so that we will be able to look back and say that Otterpool is an exemplar garden town that has successfully enmeshed art, culture and creativity in every aspect of its life and enjoys strong internal/external connections and networks that drive learning, creative expression, participation, employment and investment.

2.3 Create Otterpool, like the Cultural Vision, is aspirational and looks at the potential to integrate culture and creativity over the whole life of the Otterpool Park development.



2.4 At its highest level, the strategy covers a thirty year period (2019–2049), with a focus on the first five to ten years. It anticipates and allows for organic change, growth, opportunism and, importantly, shifts in ownership as the town's own community, management vehicle and future partners take it forward.

2.5 The strategy aims to support the development of Otterpool's *openness and connectiveness*, to weave *creativity* through all aspects of its life, enable *innovation* and encourage *diversity*.

2.6 Five core propositions in the Cultural Vision – cultural integration, creative learning, creative living, creative working and connectivity – are underpinned by the three thematic principles of celebrating and promoting Otterpool's heritage; respecting and enhancing Otterpool's unique landscape and ecology; and bringing people together as a diverse, happy, healthy, inclusive and creative community.

⁴ Otterpool Park, A Cultural Visioning Report for Creative Folkestone, Peter Jenkinson, 2018



2.7 The aims of the strategy include:

- o Making culture and creativity an integral part of the planning, policy and physical development of Otterpool Park
- o Developing a strong, active network of external connections that contributes to the delivery of Otterpool's cultural and creative ambitions
- o Ensuring Otterpool is a place where creative learning is encouraged

- o Aiming to make Otterpool attractive to creative business due to its physical environment, its range of workspace options, its connectedness and its the creative opportunities

2.8 Otterpool Park LLP commit to:

- o Continuing to appoint a Creative Champion; and
- o Establishing a project board/advisory panel for arts and creativity.

2.9 Actions for the Creative Champion and Project Board/Advisory Panel will include:

- o Beginning a dialogue with key partners such as Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery and Kent County Council;
- o Commissioning a Public Art Policy and Strategy to maximise the value, impact and integration of creative interventions in the public realm;
- o Commission a Case for Investment to identify funding sources and create a medium-term fundraising and investment strategy.
- o Devising an Implementation Plan which will include a costed action plan, a funding strategy, a project plan and a risk register; and
- o Continuing to work on early pilot projects as part of the Otterpool programme.

2.10 This 'first edition' of Create Otterpool should be seen as the starting point on a journey that will take several decades. It should be regularly reviewed, refreshed, revised and ultimately replaced as projects are delivered, priorities changed and Otterpool's own communities assume ownership and management of the strategy and take their own vision forward.



3

Introduction



“Each one of our communities has been shaped by a unique combination of landscapes and architecture, traditions and festivals, artisans and artists. We want more local leaders to grasp the potential of culture to achieve their visions for their community.”

DCMS Culture White Paper, 2016

3.1 The overarching vision for Otterpool Park is to ensure that “a unique and new place is created that has a clear and distinct sense of identity, which builds upon the established and existing qualities and infrastructure of the area”⁵.

3.2 The partners Folkestone & Hythe District Council and Otterpool Park LLP have expressed a clear ambition to place creativity at the heart of the new town. This offers a fascinating, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that potentially enables culture to influence, enhance and interact with all aspects of the town’s development from the outset, contributing to economic growth, creating employment and leisure opportunities, enhancing the environment, celebrating its heritage, underpinning social cohesion, and simply helping to make Otterpool Park a unique and more attractive place to live, work and visit.

3.3 On a wider stage, by taking a broad view of what art, culture and creativity can do and by considering its value in all aspects of the developing garden town, from planning and design through to promotion and messaging, Otterpool Park has a clear opportunity to be a national – or international – exemplar.

3.4 Create Otterpool, at its highest level, covers a thirty year period (2019–2049), though its practical focus is on the first five to ten years. It is not definitive, but provides a starting point, a direction of travel and identification of early milestones. It recognises that any strategy for a town that has not yet been made and a community that has yet to be established requires flexibility and fluidity, therefore it anticipates and allows for organic change, growth, opportunism and, importantly, shifts in ownership as the town’s own community, management vehicle and future partners take it forward.

3.5 The strategy places Otterpool’s creative and cultural development in a local, sub-regional, regional and national context, identifying synergies and responding to relevant strategic priorities. It also references the historical, geographical and cultural context of Otterpool, and draws on these as touchstones and inspiration.

3.6 Finally, it sets out some practical steps to encourage and enable the delivery of Otterpool’s Cultural Vision, identifies potential early partners and routes to funding and makes recommendations regarding the strategy’s future



development, management, ownership and its integration into the broader development and management of Otterpool Park.

3.7 Create Otterpool, like the Cultural Vision, is aspirational and looks at the potential to integrate culture and creativity over the whole life of the Otterpool Park development. The next steps, which include the development of detailed strategies for public art and funding, along with a draft project plan and indicative costs will provide opportunities to identify and decide on the deliverable programme.

⁵ Otterpool Park Framework Masterplan Report, March 2018, Arcadis and Farrells

4 Context



4.1 GEOGRAPHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL

4.1.1 Otterpool Park is proposed to be a landscape-led garden settlement. Its boundary extends to the south west of Otterpool Lane between Harringe Brooks Wood and Aldington Road. It will provide around 10,000 homes, up to seven primary schools, at least one secondary school and twelve nursery schools, with a hub of commercial and community development around Westerhanger station. Approximately 50% of the land comprises of green infrastructure, including a network of public open spaces with a wide variety of woodlands, wetlands, meadows, allotments, farmland, riverside walks and orchards which will all be connected by a network of footpaths and cycle routes. There will be a riverside park, a country park and around Westenhanger Castle a town park will provide a distinctive space and key destination.

4.2 HISTORICAL

4.2.1 Otterpool Park has a fascinating heritage. The area has been used as a home and community for millennia and its landscape and built environment, which includes prehistoric barrows, Roman roads and villa, medieval manor houses, a castle, a Second World War airfield and racecourse, is rich, varied and distinctive, reflecting its long history of occupancy. This heritage provides a rich inspiration for creative and cultural interventions, which in turn will help reveal and celebrate the area's history.

4.3 CULTURAL

4.3.1 There is a clear desire to create a sense of civic pride in Otterpool, to make it a place that people enjoy and a town that supports a healthy lifestyle and strong community spirit. Public spaces will be used for events and civic spaces will provide vibrant local hubs. The Create Otterpool strategy suggests ways to enmesh culture into all aspects of Otterpool's life, respecting and enhancing its existing assets and influencing the design of new ones, helping to connect local people, supporting the growth of empathetic communities and promoting health and wellbeing. Otterpool will have its own cultural life, but is well positioned to enjoy the benefits of being well connected to its neighbours, particularly Folkestone, Ashford and Canterbury, and to London.

4.3.2 East Kent's cultural landscape has been transformed over the last 15 years, and the whole area now has a thriving network of cultural organisations and practitioners, many of



whom have been drawn together by a series of partnership bids and collaborative projects since 2002 and 2018. Folkestone, Otterpool's closest neighbour is home to the internationally important Folkestone Triennial and a vibrant collection of artists' studios and creative businesses. There are galleries, event spaces, cafes and micropubs and Folkestone Quarterhouse, a modern venue with a regular programme of theatre, comedy, music and festivals including Folkestone Book Festival. In Ashford there is the Revelation St Mary's, an award-winning arts and music venue and Kent's largest cinema and leisure complex at Eureka Park. A little further afield in Canterbury are The Marlowe and Gulbenkian theatres, museums, galleries and a number of festivals and events throughout the year.





Photography by Peter Tizer

4.3.3 East Kent is literally teeming with creative organisations, many with national/international reputations, who work across the sub-region and beyond. The Otterpool Park development can benefit from being located in such a rich seam of creativity – and in turn, working with Otterpool presents a unique development opportunity for the region’s creative practitioners and organisations.

4.4 POLICY CONTEXT

4.4.1 DCMS Culture and Heritage Capital Programme (Jan 2021)

This programme has been set up to understand and set in place a capital value approach to culture and heritage capital to ensure policy and decision making considers the value of culture and heritage to society. This will aid decisions on public funding (including the green book appraisal process).

Its document ‘Valuing culture and heritage capital: a framework towards informing decision making’ sets out DCMS’s ambition to develop a formal approach to value culture and heritage assets, similar to the approach to

natural capital, where there is now recognised guidance. This has potential value for Otterpool Park LLP, FHDC, Creative Folkestone and other partners in building the case for investment in arts and heritage.

4.4.2 Boundless Creativity: culture in a time of Covid 19 (2021): In response to the devastating impact on the sector due to Covid 19, DCMS established a research project with partners UK Research and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to assess impacts on the cultural and creative sectors, providing recommendations for post-pandemic recovery. It also looked at innovation and emerging use of technology stimulated by the crisis.



Platform

Photo credit: Peter Fry. Artist: Angus Ross. Images courtesy of Canterbury City Council.



4.4.3 Arts Council of England: The Arts Council is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England. It currently provides three different strands of funding – portfolio, open application and strategic. It’s current ten-year strategy for 2020 – 30 “Lets Create” centres around three outcomes:

1. **Creative People:** Everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life.
2. **Cultural Communities:** Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture.
3. **A creative and cultural country:** England’s cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

It has also set out four Investment Principles that all organisations will need to demonstrate that they meet:

- o **Ambition & Quality:** Cultural organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work.
- o **Inclusivity & Relevance:** England’s diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support and in the culture they produce.
- o **Dynamism:** Cultural organisations can thrive and are better able to respond to the challenges of the next decade.
- o **Environmental Responsibility:** Cultural organisations lead the way in their approach to the climate emergency.

These outcomes are all relevant to Otterpool, in particular ‘Cultural Communities’. ACE sees its role in contributing to communities that are socially cohesive and economically robust, where access to a range of arts and culture are diversified. It refers to facilities such as libraries and museums being centres of creative

learning and activity – there is an opportunity for new buildings and facilities to respond to this brief, perhaps building a ‘library of the future’. Early engagement with the Arts Council is recommended to discuss its longer-term role in supporting Create Otterpool.





4.4.4 National Lottery Heritage Fund Strategic

Funding Framework, 2019–2024: The Heritage Lottery Fund is the largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK and a leading advocate for the value of heritage. Their work is underpinned by the belief that understanding, valuing and sharing our heritage brings people together, inspires pride in communities and boosts investment in local economies. The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) launched their new strategic funding framework in early 2019 which identifies two priority areas of focus during this five-year period:

- o landscapes and nature
- o community heritage

It has also introduced a new inclusion outcome applicable to all projects: “a wider range of people to be involved in heritage”. These priorities are very pertinent for Otterpool, as is the emphasis on putting heritage at the heart of place-making. Since the Strategic Funding Framework was produced, the NLHF has had to respond to the significant threats to heritage as a result of lost income due to Covid 19. “Priorities for National Lottery Grants for Heritage 2021-22” sets out priority outcomes that will be used to measure bids. The rich heritage assets at Otterpool Park, including the restoration of the barns and interpretation of archaeology, has the potential for a longer term and more strategic relationship with the NLHF.

4.4.5 Core Strategy Review (2022): this document sets out the spatial strategy for the district to 2037, and includes an allocation for a new garden settlement of 8,000 – 10,000 homes. It has a series of policies (policies SS6, SS7, SS8 and SS9) that set out the requirements that proposals for the new town must meet, including provision of community facilities, green space, employment and a vibrant town centre. It seeks enhancement of heritage features, and specifically refers to provision of public art as part of the design of streets and spaces. It also refers to ‘A Charter for Otterpool Park’ (November 2017) that sets out the council’s aspirations for the new settlement, based on the three themes of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

4.4.6 FHDC Corporate Plan 2021 – 30 “Creating Tomorrow Together”: The Folkestone and Hythe Corporate Plan 2021 – 30 sets out four service ambitions, under which sits a series of priorities. The service ambitions are:

- o Positive community leadership
- o A thriving environment
- o A vibrant economy
- o Quality homes and infrastructure

The fourth ambition specifically has a priority workstream for Otterpool Park – “Deliver a sustainable new development at Otterpool Park” – but several of the other priorities are also relevant, including “improving physical and mental health and wellbeing” and “supporting and empowering our communities”. This provides a good platform to work in partnership with FHDC to deliver these ambitions.

5

Themes and Priorities

5.1 CHARACTERISTICS

- 5.1.1 The creation of Otterpool Park is a hugely ambitious undertaking and the LLP has high expectations for it to become one of the best new towns in the country. Many positive and aspirational words have been used to describe what East Kent's future garden town might become, and a few of these have consistently stood out⁸ including:
- o Open and outward-looking
 - o Vibrant and creative
 - o Diverse
 - o Innovative
- 5.1.2 Create Otterpool's themes, actions and recommendations are designed to encourage and support the development of these key characteristics by:-
- o Harnessing culture to support the development of Otterpool's *openness and connectiveness* with a series of recommendations linking to its closest neighbours, broader East Kent and to its national connections, particularly London.
 - o Infusing the growing town with *vibrancy* by weaving *creativity* through its civic and community life, its green spaces, the built environment and through the growth of jobs in the creative sector.
 - o Encouraging *diversity* by being open, welcoming and actively seeking diversity in its workforce, partnerships, projects and connections.
 - o Enabling *innovation* in both creative practice and product. With little baggage to take forward, Otterpool's approach to its creative future can be pioneering, fresh and unencumbered, offering unique opportunities for managed risk-taking, experimenting with

“Many creative practitioners and leaders of cultural organisations report a retreat from innovation, risk-taking and sustained talent development”

Shaping the Next Ten Years: Developing a new strategy for Arts Council England 2020-2030

new ways of working, piloting and testing new cross-sector partnerships.

5.2 CORE PROPOSITIONS

- 5.2.1 The Cultural Visioning Report identifies five core propositions for Otterpool. These are:
- o Cultural integration – enmeshing art, culture and creativity in every aspect of life.
 - o Creative learning – pioneering creative education and learning.
 - o Creative living – designing and building with Otterpool's citizens.
 - o Creative working – supporting flexible work patterns and new ways of working.
 - o Connectivity – looking inwards to build local networks and outwards to connect in multiple ways with the wider world.

5.3 THEMES

- 5.3.1 These core propositions are underpinned by three thematic principles that are central to the Otterpool development:
- i. Celebrating and promoting Otterpool's Heritage and Local History.

“Landscapes, buildings and archaeological sites play an important part in defining a sense of place”⁹ and Otterpool Park has the advantage of a heritage that is rich and unique, setting it apart from many new developments located on more anonymous sites. The area has been used as a home and community for millennia and its landscape and built environment reflects that

- history. “From prehistoric barrows, Roman roads and farmsteads, to the medieval manor houses and castle, through to the Second World War airfield, there is a distinctive and fascinating history and occupancy”¹⁰ that can be drawn on to define a sense of place, inspire learning and discovery, and be an inspiration for creative projects.
- ii. Respecting, enhancing and bringing to life Otterpool's landscape and its ecology.

The entire approach to the Otterpool Park development has been landscape led, not least because of its important setting in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Green space makes up to 50% of the proposals for the garden town, and its range of habitats – woodland, hedgerows, trees, grassland – and the wildlife they support will be an important influence on early arts projects, encouraging people to learn about their surrounding environment, to celebrate and signpost it, to use it well, and to protect and enhance it in the future.
 - iii. Bringing people together as a diverse, happy, healthy, inclusive and creative community

The Otterpool development is on a significant scale, but to its residents and workforce it needs to feel personal and intimate, comfortable but exciting, familiar but offering opportunities to explore and learn. The power of art and creativity can help deliver experiences in Otterpool that encourage empathy, collaboration, inclusivity, ownership and confidence.

⁸ Otterpool Park, A Cultural Visioning Report for Creative Folkestone, Peter Jenkins

⁹ Draft Shepway Heritage Strategy 2019 (Volume 1, Chapter 7)

¹⁰ Community Engagement Report, June 2018, Kevin Murray Associates

6

Recommendations



6.1 OVERARCHING/STRATEGIC

6.1.1 1. Desired outcome: *Culture and creativity is an integral part of the planning, policy and physical development of Otterpool Park.*

a) Recommendation: *Appoint/retain a cultural expert (Creative Champion) with a remit to develop and drive the cultural strategy forward.*

Delivering the cultural vision will be complex and demanding, with sustained commitment needed over a long period of time. It is recommended that one person should have an overview of the cultural and creative aspects of the Otterpool development, somebody who can take the lead in strategic conversations with current and potential partners and with bodies like Arts Council England, NLHF, Kent County Council etc; somebody who will have oversight of all aspects of the creative commissions and programmes; somebody to be the voice for culture within the Otterpool project and the advocate for Otterpool's cultural ambitions in the wider world.

To ensure cultural planning is integrated into the overall development of the town, the Creative Champion or their delegate should be represented on appropriate panels and project boards and be involved in relevant conversations and decision-making processes.

The budget, remit and reporting lines for this role must be decided by the partners, but the recommendation is to provide strong structural links to Creative Folkestone given the key role this organisation has played in Folkestone's cultural development and regeneration, its strategic position and relationships, its programme of work, its expertise in co-commissioning, co-creation and co-curation and its involvement in Otterpool Park to date.

Priority: *Cultural integration*

b) Recommendation: *Ensure Otterpool's long-term stewardship strategy embraces cultural objectives and includes the commissioning, management, ownership and decommissioning of cultural assets within its responsibility.*

The ongoing management of Otterpool's public and community spaces is likely to be the responsibility of a single, community-led body, allowing future residents and businesses to influence the design and ongoing management of community facilities. Their work will be critical to maintaining and building on the quality of the development, so it is recommended that the management and use of cultural assets is included in the remit of this new body. It is suggested that, when appointed, the Creative Champion is involved in early discussions with Folkestone & Hythe District Council to decide how best to secure this, including formalising links to the cultural vision and strategy, the proposed Public Art Strategy and any other relevant policies/strategies.

Priority: *Cultural integration, creative living*

6.1.2 2. Desired outcome: *Otterpool has a developed a strong, active network of external connections that contributes to the delivery of its cultural and creative ambitions*

a) Recommendation: *Put in place a Create Otterpool Project Board/Advisory Panel.*

Bringing a broad range of skills and experience to the table will not only improve the quality and deliverability of ideas, but it will quickly extend Otterpool's network of connections, knit it into Kent's creative sector and its conversations, and harness the support of some powerful advocates

– all of which will be important in terms of future partnerships, fundraising and strategic planning. The recommendation is to invite a selected group of creative organisations and/or individuals to contribute their expertise, ideas and support by acting as advisor, sounding board and critical friend. Expertise on the group should include commissioning, learning/education, community engagement, creative industries, public art, environment, health & well-being and heritage.

The core group, which should meet regularly in the early years, could be supplemented by a more fluid, broader group that comes together perhaps once a year for themed discussions/workshops. This creates an opportunity to involve and draw on the experience of near neighbours, as well as involving potential partners/funders such as ACE, NLHF, and KCC. It will also be a vehicle to engage a broader range of stakeholders with Otterpool's cultural vision, for example, representatives from education, public health, business, leisure etc.

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative working*

6.1.3 3. Desired outcome: *Otterpool has developed a distinctive and authentic personality, reflected in a cultural programme that is rooted in the community and inspired by its unique heritage and landscape.*

a) Recommendation: *Use art and creativity to capture, record and promote Otterpool's developing story/stories.*

Consider a programme of commissions, over a number of years and using different art forms,

to tell and respond to Otterpool's story. These would create a fascinating and compelling legacy and be a unique, beautiful and thought-provoking way of engaging with Otterpool's heritage, its green spaces, its growing community and its civic life. The work would also be an innovative and creative resource to use in branding and promoting Otterpool.

Priority: *cultural integration, creative living, creative learning, creative working*

b) Recommendation: Develop an ongoing programme of community-focussed arts commissions and activities to begin as soon as possible

This programme could (and probably should) start quickly by tapping into things that are already happening in the wider area and by commissioning modest interventions and pilots that enable and encourage the development of Otterpool's own creative confidence.

Ideally some early projects will reach out to involve neighbouring communities, helping to develop local networks, cementing local relationships and creating an opportunity for them to engage in Otterpool's placemaking narrative.

If appropriate, consider commissioning practitioners and organisations already operating in East Kent as this will help fast track the embedding of Otterpool and its communities into existing networks and partnerships and may also be a route to funding.

Examples of what The Otterpool Programme (TOP) could include are:

- o Extensions of some existing Folkestone festivals and celebrations into the Otterpool Area, for example a Folkestone Triennial commission.

- o A programme of community-focussed projects (either run over several months or involving several linked, sequential projects) rooted in Otterpool's heritage or landscape and culminating in public celebration/sharing.
- o An ongoing programme of artists in residence, attached to places or communities – heritage sites, schools, nurseries, doctors surgeries, businesses etc. Over time, creatives who have moved to Otterpool to live or work may themselves take on the role of artist in residence.

Priority: *Cultural integration, creative learning, creative living, creative working*

c) Recommendation: Utilise the widest range of buildings, heritage and natural assets to inspire, develop and deliver the cultural programme – from civic buildings to individual homes, from public parks to private gardens. Bring Otterpool to life

Examples could include:

- o Experimenting with the use of assets, spaces and buildings for art, cultural and educational activities – this could be on a temporary, pop-up or 'borrowed space' basis to test ideas and inform future decisions and developments.
- o Include the deliberate and purposeful use of spaces and buildings in neighbouring villages (such as village halls), to help break down barriers, encourage positive engagement and build reciprocal relationships.
- o Harness people's enthusiasm for hobbies

and leisure activities to encourage them to use Otterpool's green spaces, explore its heritage and promote health and wellbeing – for example develop a community garden project, set up a Park Run, organise family treasure hunts based on Otterpool's heritage locations and hidden histories.

- o Commission a public art project focussed on the domestic, perhaps using people's homes as its gallery (for example, Bay Windows in Herne Bay created a trail of neon signs around the town that were displayed on buildings and in windows), or taking highly visible, uniform, everyday objects as the subject, for example, wheelie bins.
- o Use discussion and debate around the cultural programme to help define a role for Westerhanger Castle and to consider how the barns could best be used – as cultural/community centre, as creative hub/ workspace etc.

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative learning, creative living*

6.1.4 4. Desired outcome: By considering the potential of culture and creativity in all planning and design processes, Otterpool has become an award-winning exemplar of how to integrate art and creativity into the making of a new town.

a) Recommendation: Ensure that public realm interventions are people-led, purposeful rather than simply decorative and effectively integrated into the Otterpool infrastructure.

For example:

- o Recognise the importance of micro-level interventions by including the design of everyday street furniture like lighting, bollards, bike racks, electric charging points, bus stops, signage, pedestrian crossings, drain covers etc. These are things that will surround the people of Otterpool and be seen and used every day. Engaging artists and designers with these public-sector led commissions will subtly transform the experience of living and working in Otterpool, setting it apart from other new towns and developments.
- o Commission artists to work on designed elements of the three parks and the walking trails through them, including wayfinding signs, pathways and boundaries, interpretation boards, seating etc.
- o Commission environmental artists to create works in the three defined park areas, inspired by their location, natural habitat and heritage.
- o Ensure that some of the early projects in the TOP cultural programme are public art based (see TOP 3.b) above), starting with temporary works to build engagement, raise profile, develop confidence and create opportunities for ongoing community feedback and consultation.

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative learning, creative living*

b) Recommendation: Enlist creative practitioners to help find solutions to Otterpool's design challenges and take full advantage of opportunities to be innovative and surprising.

For example:

- o The ponds, basins, outfalls, vents, swales and wetlands that provide drainage for Otterpool could be made into water features. Involving creative practitioners in the design of these drainage solutions will maximise the opportunity to create beautiful, unique pieces of art that work with and enhance their location. Linked community/education projects could focus on environmental issues, increasing understanding and awareness.
- o All facilities in Otterpool are planned to be within 10 minutes' walk, connected by a network of cycleways and paths that connect facilities and communities with direct commuting routes and leisure routes. Creative practitioners could help to create unique ways of marking these routes and differentiating between them (see recommendation a) above).

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative learning, creative living*

c) Recommendation: Commission a Public Art Policy and Strategy

Public art will play an important role in Otterpool Park, and its value and impact will be maximised if the partners' approach is formally agreed and set in a strategic context of national and local policies, strategies and planning frameworks. A Public Art Policy & Strategy should include a statement on the Otterpool approach to public art, identification of the commissioning opportunities, guidance on the best practice for commissioning and

decommissioning public art and a programme and process for delivery. The strategy would also identify the potential range of funding sources, including planning contributions and budgets for infrastructure development.

The public art policy and strategy should be developed in consultation with partners, residents, the cultural sector (perhaps via the Kent Cultural Transformation Board) and potential partners/investors such as ACE, NLHF, KCC and others.

Priority: *Cultural integration*

6.1.5 5. Desired outcome: Otterpool is known as a place where the development of creative thinking and creative skills is encouraged, nurtured, respected and rewarded from the earliest age. Creativity flourishes in Otterpool.

Analysis of technological, social and economic change suggests that jobs in culture and media will become increasingly important over the coming years (see 6 below), yet skills shortages in key areas continue to exist. This needs to be addressed across the board, from schools through to continuous professional development.

The provision of new nurseries, primary and secondary schools in Otterpool offers a unique strategic opportunity to consider a whole town approach, with the possibility of foregrounding creative education in a way that hasn't been possible since the national Creative Partnerships programme, (which was the first nationally coordinated programme of creative learning anywhere in the world).¹¹ On a practical level, there is an opportunity to design the schools themselves as open and outward

“Reductions in access to cultural education in England and factors impacting funding for creative subjects in Higher Education, could adversely affect the UK’s competitive advantage with regards to the availability of creative talent.”

Experimental Culture: A Horizon Scan commissioned by Arts Council England, March 2018, NESTA

facing facilities –as community hubs, sharing facilities and knowledge with each other and with the broader community and being a key part of the creative learning opportunities available to the whole community.

a) Recommendation: Engage in early conversations with KCC to explore the potential and possibility of adapting an innovative approach to designing and developing Otterpool’s schools as pioneers of creative learning.

Creative Partnerships Kent was one of the of the big successes in the national programme and created a pool of expertise and trained practitioners, many of whom are still located in or connected to Kent and could contribute to this debate and potentially to future delivery.

Priority: *Cultural integration, creative learning*

b) Recommendation: Engage in early conversations with Artwork (South East Bridge).

Artwork encourages arts, culture and education sectors to join together to offer young people rich learning experiences inside and outside school. They promote the Arts Council’s seven quality principles to raise the standard of work being produced by, with and for children and young people and invest in local partnerships on long-term solutions.

c) Recommendation: Work closely with local

partner organisations who are experienced in developing and delivering creative programmes with schools, young people and family communities.

This will fast track Otterpool’s ability to create life-long learning opportunities throughout its cultural programme and could also be a route to funding via collaborative projects and partnership bids.

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative learning, creative living, creative working*

d) Recommendation: Consider ways of creating apprenticeships, internships, placements and mentoring/coaching opportunities across all aspects of the Otterpool development.

For example, by exploring links with Kent’s universities and local schools and colleges to develop intern and mentoring opportunities for students or new graduates.

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative learning, creative living*

e) Recommendation: Encourage and enable the involvement of young and/or emerging talent in the design of Otterpool.

This could be done by:

o Encouraging local creatives and architectural

practices to join in conversations about, and put forward proposals for, schemes and commissions.

- o Creating a model for public art commissions and major cultural projects that places a new/emerging local artist with each lead artist, supporting their skills development, and enriching and replenishing the local creative pool.
- o Ensuring that some of the community-focussed creative projects are school-based, and that children and young people are given the opportunity and support to lead projects, particularly those affecting their own environments, such as schools, play areas etc.

Priority: *Cultural integration, creative learning*

6.1.6 6. Desired outcome: Otterpool is a vibrant hub for East Kent’s creative workforce, who are attracted by its physical environment, the range of workspace options, its connectedness and by the creative opportunities generated throughout the development of the garden town.

The Otterpool Park development will create 8,000 new jobs, with five sectors identified for growth, including creative media and digital. This offers an incredible opportunity to the Folkestone and Hythe district and to broader East Kent, given the creative economy is the fastest growing sector in the UK with a value of around £92 billion.¹² This is predicted to grow to £150 billion by 2023, with research suggesting that while automation is expected to impact most of the labour force over the next decade,

¹² *Otterpool Park, A Cultural Visioning Report for Creative Folkestone, Peter Jenkins*

“The trend towards lifestyle migration (where more and more people are making location decisions based on lifestyle preferences and flexible working arrangements) is also driving the attractiveness of different places amongst the ‘creative class.’”

South East LEP (SELEP) Strategic Economic Plan Evidence Base, September 2017

87% of creative occupations are at a much lower risk.¹³

The creative sector is characterised by a large proportion of freelancers and small SMEs, with many people engaged in part-time working or undertaking multiple jobs. Technological advances have facilitated a significant increase in working from home, including a rise in online business models and companies where employees from the across the country – or even across the globe – work locally, connected via technology. There has also been a huge growth in the use of co-working spaces, shared studios and the use of borrowed spaces, with a mixture of models from traditional serviced rentals to more fluid, subsidised starter units and the rapidly growing, profit-making, subscription-based, shared space model. Otterpool is in the perfect position to respond and take advantage of these trends, particularly with its direct links to London and proximity to continental Europe.

a) Recommendation: Design the living and working environment in Otterpool to be attractive to creative practitioners and businesses by responding to new and future ways of working, encouraging creatives to locate and invest in the garden town.

Attracting the widest range of practitioners and businesses, from start-ups to established businesses, from freelancers and solo enterprises to companies with an employed workforce will help to build a professional network in Otterpool, which in turn will encourage collaboration and new partnerships, create learning and professional development opportunities and support the establishment of local supply chains and joint investment, for example in r&d.

Ways of doing this might include:

- o Ensuring the design of living spaces, and their connectivity, considers and responds to the increasing trend of working from home.
- o Making an early commitment to providing a range of shared workspaces, from full cost to subsidised, to attract clients at all stages of their career/company growth.
- o Creating routes for locally-based businesses and artists to benefit from the opportunities offered by Otterpool’s overall development as well as its cultural programming and commissioning opportunities.

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative learning, creative living*

6.1.7 7.Desired outcome: Otterpool, as an exemplar garden town, has made – and continues to make – important contributions to the bank of knowledge on the role culture and creativity plays in developing a new town and its communities. The Creative Otterpool case study is widely disseminated and influences future developments.

a) Recommendation: Adapt a rigorous approach to data capture and analysis.

If Otterpool does embrace a culture of innovation and experimentation, robust evaluation and honest and wide dissemination will be critical to inform and consult on how its models and methodologies move forward and develop over three decades.

b) Recommendation: From the outset, utilise existing national and international research and others’ experiences in building new communities and new towns. Learn too from local and national models that have successfully used culture to drive and/or support regeneration, health and wellbeing, learning, empowerment and empathy, and build on these examples for Otterpool.

By incorporating research findings into cultural planning and decision-making, this knowledge can be used to build the foundations for boldness and innovation.

Priority: *Connectivity, cultural integration, creative learning, innovation*

¹² Industrial Strategy: Creative Industries Sector Deal, 2018, HM Government

¹³ Experimental Culture: A Horizon Scan commissioned by Arts Council England, March 2018, NESTA

7

Resource



- 7.1 Create Otterpool is not costed and its development and delivery will involve raising significant funds from a range of sources over a number of years.
- 7.2 It is suggested that Otterpool partners identify some initial budget to pay for the appointment/retention of a Creative Champion along with the commissions/services that will be required in 2019/20 to kickstart the process of further developing and delivering the cultural strategy, including commissioning two relatively urgent pieces of work - a Case for Investment and a Public Art Policy & Strategy. This early investment will also be evidence of intent and commitment to potential funding partners and may be used as a lever/match in some early funding bids.

7.3 ROUTES TO FUNDING

- 7.3.1 This will need to be fully addressed in the Case for Investment, but some headlines are provided here:-
- o To attract external funding the Otterpool Park partners will need to make the first investment into the cultural and creative programme. An initial five-year investment plan would support medium-term planning and give funders confidence in the partners' commitment and the deliverability of their ambitions.
 - o By integrating art into the design of the town, its buildings, landscape, street furniture etc, an element of base funding may already exist in the overall budget. This should be analysed, identified and used to lever in additional funding.

- o Developer funding will be an essential part of the package, possibly via Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy contributions, or as a separate budget invested in community-focussed programmes to encourage support and ownership – ideally both.
- o Major contractors engaged in designing and building Otterpool may have budgets for sponsorship and community engagement and this should be explored at the appropriate time.
- o Arts Council of England has set out its 10 year strategy which runs from 2020 – 2030. It will be important to align Create Otterpool, as it develops, with some of the ACE key priorities. In the meantime, dialogue with ACE should be opened at the highest level as soon as possible. This level of advocacy will help ensure that Otterpool is on the agenda and considered on national as well local levels.
- o The NLHF investment framework for the next ten years was launched in 2019. It is recommended that conversations are opened, as there are likely to be multiple projects that could be combined into a larger strategic bid. Advice will be needed from the NLHF on the best approach to take.
- o Kent County Council are potential long-term funders of Otterpool's cultural programme and may also be a partner in major funding bids. Otterpool is referenced in the Creative and Cultural section of the Kent and Medway Growth Infrastructure Framework¹⁴ but it will be critical for its ambitions to also be referenced in KCC's cultural strategy implementation plan.

- o Regionally-based sector partners, like Screen South, could be both strong allies and routes to investment and, once again, dialogue should be opened as early as possible. Artsworld, for example, is a national organisation that enables children and young people to find their voice through arts and culture, and through the South East Bridge delivers Arts Awards, Artsmark and provides professional development training. They also provide investment in education projects that look to find long term solutions and Otterpool could be of particular interest given the scale of new nurseries and schools being planned. This is another early conversation for the Creative Champion along with partners in the education sector.
- o One-off regional or national funding programmes, often direct government funds or a partnership between several NGOs, offer significant, strategically targeted grants from time to time. Previous examples include the Urban Cultural Programme, Pioneering Places, Creative People and Places and the Cultural Development Fund. Given the importance of new town development in England, there must be a strong possibility that there will be a future funding scheme directed towards integrating and foregrounding culture and heritage in new developments. If this is the case, Otterpool, with its clear cultural vision, will be in an excellent position to take advantage of any such scheme.

¹⁴ Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework, 2018 update

8

Next steps

8.1 Otterpool Park LLP has been working with Creative Folkestone as a creative partner and creative champion since 2018. The LLP has committed funding for a three year action plan which began in April 2021, consisting of three work strands in addition to the role of creative champion:

1. Community arts projects, including working with the existing community and schools
2. Public programme delivery, including education projects and collaborating with further and higher education organisations
3. A curator, responsible for bringing artists in to both processes and capital projects (such as schools, streets and spaces; and public buildings)

8.2 Strange Cargo, a local community arts organisation, also led a community project during 2021, running craft workshops for children in local venues based around the history and heritage of the Otterpool area. An educational board game has been produced that has been distributed to 10 local schools.

8.3 To develop this programme of work as part of a wider, long term approach to delivering this strategy, commitments and recommended actions are set out below.

8.4 COMMITMENTS:

i. Otterpool Park will continue to appoint a Creative Champion.

This is critical to implementing this strategy and ensuring the 'Creative' element of the Otterpool vision is not lost. Creative Folkestone is already an active partner in this role, funded by Otterpool Park. A decision will need to be made on where

this role sits in the longer term and the reporting structure that supports it, along with clarity on its scope, responsibilities and accountabilities. A budget beyond the initial three years will need to be identified, pinned to a proposed programme of work to deliver the strategy.

ii. Establish a project board/ advisory panel for arts and creativity:

By involving the broader cultural sector at the outset, Otterpool Park becomes part of their thinking, part of the sector and part of strategic conversations about their own plans and programmes that could forge deeper, collaborative links. It also provides a strong range of skills and experience to call on for expert advice and challenge. The recommendation is that this should be one of the earliest tasks for the Creative Champion.

8.5 ACTIONS FOR THE CREATIVE CHAMPION AND BOARD/ ADVISORY PANEL:

Begin a dialogue with key partners such as Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery and Kent County Council:

It is essential for Otterpool Park to be featured in future strategic cultural planning, so right from the start there need to be strong advocates engaged in the key cultural conversations taking place at a local, regional and national level – and this starts with developing positive, ongoing relationships with ACR, NLHF, KCC and any other strategic partners identified as Create Otterpool moved forward.

Commission a Public Art Policy and Strategy: This is an important early task if culture and creativity is going to be truly integrated into the development and design of Otterpool. It may be possible to access Arts Council, NLHF or Kent County Council funding for this piece of work.

Commission a Case for Investment: A 'Case for Support' is traditionally used as tool to attract high-wealth donors, but in this instance it should be developed as a broader fundraising and investment strategy staged over 10-15 years. This will be a crucial tool in assessing future funding potential, identifying the elements to be funded, articulating the need and identifying potential funding sources, including public sector and statutory bodies, trusts and foundations and philanthropists.



Devise an Implementation Plan: This should include a costed action plan, a funding strategy, a project plan, cross-referenced with the Otterpool development schedule and a risk register. This information will provide the basis for future decision-making.

Continue to work on early pilot projects as part of the Otterpool programme: To create confidence, energy and to 'make it real', the programme should be used to promote the role of creativity and culture and achieve wider objectives of community engagement and development.

Appendix 1



Source Material

- o Core Strategy Review (2022)
- o Otterpool Park Framework Masterplan Report, Arcadis and Farrells (March, 2018)
- o Otterpool Park Creative Visioning Report for Creative Folkestone, Peter Jenkins
- o Statement of Significance: Westenhanger Castle, Arcadis Consulting
- o Conservation Management Plan & Use Strategy, Westenhanger Castle, Arcadis Consulting
- o Otterpool Park – principles of long term stewardship (cabinet paper)
- o Kent Cultural Strategy
- o Draft Shepway Heritage Strategy (Volume 1, Chapter 7)
- o Otterpool Community Engagement Report, June 2018, Kevin Murray Associates
- o Shaping the Next Ten Years: Developing a new strategy for Arts Council England 2020-2030
- o NLHF National Lottery Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024 Consultation
- o Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health & Wellbeing Inquiry, July 2017
- o Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework, 5.4 Community and Culture, 2018 Update
- o Inspirational Creativity: Transforming Lives Every Day, Kent County Council, 2017
- o Industrial Strategy: Creative Industries Sector Deal, 2018, HM Government
- o Experimental Culture: A Horizon Scan commissioned by Arts Council England, March 2018, NESTA
- o SELEP Strategic Economic Plan, Evidence Base, September 2017



OTTERPOOL PARK

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